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BONES OF CONTENTION

Muslim Shrines in Palestine

Andrew Petersen

Heritage Studies in the Muslim World

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Muslim Shrines in Palestine

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This book is for Rowan.

Notes on Reading the Text

This book is aimed at a wide readership, including people interested in a range of subjects, from archaeology, architecture, Islamic studies, and history to anthropology. Given this range of different disciplinary backgrounds, the transliteration of Arabic terms avoids the use of diacritical marks, which, although technically useful for language scholars, can cause confusion for non-Arabic specialists. The only exceptions to the use of diacritical marks are where direct quotations are made from other texts.

Chronology

Early Islamic Period 636–1099

622–632 Expansion of Islam in Arabia under Muhammad
638 Arab Muslim conquest of Jerusalem
661–750 Umayyad rule from Damascus
750–945 Abbasid rule from Baghdad
970–1099 Fatimid rule from Egypt

Medieval Period 1099–1517

1099–1187 Crusader rule of most of Palestine
1187–1260 Ayyubids rule of most of Palestine
1260–1517 Mamluk rule in Palestine

Ottoman Period 1517–1918

1517 Ottoman conquest of Jerusalem
1798–1799 Napoleon leads French invasion of Palestine
1831–1840 Egyptian rule under Muhammad ʻAli Pasha
1914–1918 First World War ends Ottoman rule in Palestine

Modern Period 1918–Present

1920–1948 British Mandate
1948 Israel declares independence

1967 Six-Day War extends Israeli rule to include all of Palestine
1995 Oslo Accords signed, establishing the Palestinian Authority as legal entity for governing West Bank and Gaza

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PART I

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Definitions, History and Context

Abstract This chapter forms an introduction to the book and includes a discussion of its scope and purpose. The first part of the chapter includes a definition of the term 'shrine' as used in the book, followed by a discussion on the origin of shrines in Islam and their place in the modern world. The final part of the chapter provides an outline structure of the remainder of the book.

Keywords Kaaba • Dome of the Rock • Mecca • Medina

The land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River has remained one of the most bitterly contested areas of the world for nearly two millennia, and at the heart of the conflict are the sacred places of the three main religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Whilst Christian and Jewish claims to sacred sites are well known outside the region, with the exception of Jerusalem and Hebron, the Muslim shrines are not well known and poorly understood. The principal aim of this book is to understand how Muslim shrines have become integrated into the fabric of Palestinian history and landscape. As a starting point, we can consider the following passage from the book of Joshua:

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> And Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants. (Joshua 24:32)

The above verse has been used by both Jews and Muslims as proof of the authenticity of the shrine of Joseph's Tomb (Qabr Yusuf) outside the West Bank city of Nablus (Fig. 9.1, No. 17). Whilst the shrine will be discussed in more detail in Chap. 8, the biblical quotation encapsulates three major issues which set Muslim shrines at the heart of many debates in the contemporary Middle East. The first question relates to competing claims between Islamic and Jewish traditions, which both claim custodianship of shrines and, by extension, ownership of the land. The second issue relates to the existence of shrines built over graves—whilst this is a widespread phenomenon in the Muslim world, it is increasingly being called into question by advocates of fundamentalist Islam. The third issue relates to authenticity—and the importance of graves and human remains in the creation of Muslim shrines. To secular observers, the identity of a particular burial place is in many cases open to question, yet graves remain the most powerful and significant feature of most Muslim shrines. This book aims to address these questions and also explore other issues relating to the origins, development and current condition of Muslim shrines, which form a unique aspect of the Palestinian heritage.

Although the book will discuss a wide range of different forms of shrine, it will not include either the Haram in Jerusalem or the Mosque of Abraham in Hebron. This is because both these shrines are exceptional and do not easily relate to the typical shrines of Medieval and Ottoman Palestine. In any case, both Hebron and Jerusalem have been discussed in considerable depth elsewhere, and their inclusion would tend to overshadow the many important issues surrounding the other shrines. In addition to describing the context for the creation and use of the shrines, the book will focus on the architecture and history of the shrines rather than the many and varied ways in which the shrines were used by their local regional communities. This is partly because some of these issues have been examined by a number of publications, including Tewfik Canaan's detailed study (see Chap. 3 for a discussion of Canaan's work), and partly because this requires a more specialised approach grounded in ethnology and anthropology. As a consequence, the book will also not discuss the important role of women in relation to the use, maintenance

and veneration of shrines, although there is certainly considerable scope for further research in this area (see also discussion in Chap. 10).

Whilst the rest of this book (Chaps. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10) will be firmly focussed on shrines in Palestine, this chapter will discuss a number of general issues of relevance to understanding the historical and cultural contexts of the Muslim shrines. Three main issues will be addressed: (1) the concept and definition of shrines, (2) the development of shrines within Islam and (3) the significance of shrines in the modern world. The final part of the chapter will give an outline of the structure of the book.

Concept and Definition of Shrines

Shrines exist in most world religions and, in particular, within Palestine, where each of the three main faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam has both major and minor shrines. Although there are many definitions of the word shrine, the continuities between religions demonstrate that there are certain important and recurring characteristics. The term 'shrine' derives from the Latin term *scrinium*, which refers to the box or receptacle holding relics or other material regarded as sacred. According to Tim Insoll, the term is inadequate for describing the range of locations and features which can be regarded as shrines (Insoll 2004, 105). Probably the most basic definition of a shrine would be 'a material focus of religious activities'. Although this definition describes a necessary attribute of shrines, it is not a sufficient definition of shrines within a Muslim context. For example, it could be used to describe a mosque or specifically the *mihrab* within a mosque, which is explicitly not a shrine. Allowing for this exception, a wide variety of locations and objects within the Muslim world can be considered within the general classification of shrines. This is a reflection of the huge geographical range, cultural complexity and religious groupings which can be regarded as part of Muslim civilization.

Although there are examples of religious objects or relics which could be regarded as shrines within Islamic culture, it is the location of the relics which are designated as shrines rather than the objects themselves. Portable or mobile shrines certainly existed amongst the pre-Islamic Arabs who would often carry them into battle. These tribal shrines comprised stone idols carried within wooden boxes which could be carried to different locations and set up within a campsite. It is probably because of this association with idols that portable shrines are such a rare feature of Muslim religious practice. Exceptions to this general aversion might include the

portable shrines or *tabaqs* containing depictions of ʻAli and other imams carried by Shiʿas during festivals in the month of *Muharram* (Denny 2016, 310). The *mahmal* or empty camel litter which accompanied the Hajj annually to Mecca should not be regarded as a shrine despite bearing a superficial resemblance to portable shrines in other cultures and religions (Robinson 1931). Instead, the *mahmal* symbolized the authority of the secular ruler who was unable to accompany the Hajj.

For some Muslims there is only one shrine in Islam, which is the Kaaba in Mecca, which comprises a square box-like structure surrounded by a sacred precinct. Other major shrines within Islam which are accepted by the majority of Muslims are the Prophet's Mosque in Medina and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock has certain similarities with the Kaaba, including its pre-Islamic origins, the presence of a stone or rock at the centre of the shrine (the Kaaba has a black stone *hajar aswad* embedded in one corner) and the practice of circumambulation or circling the shrine. Certainly, the importance of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount was established early on within the Muslim community, and for the first few years, Jerusalem functioned as the *qibla* or direction of prayer before it was changed to Mecca. There were even attempts to re-direct the *qibla* towards Jerusalem during the Umayyad period when Mecca was under the control of Ibn Zubayr. The importance of Jerusalem within Islam is further demonstrated by the construction of the Dome of the Rock by the caliph 'Abd al-Malik' at the relatively early date of 691 AD.

Whilst Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock are fairly unproblematic as Muslim shrines, the Prophet's Mosque in Medina poses a different problem. Certainly, Medina has a central place within Islam as the home of the first Muslim community, the location of Muhammad's house and the first mosque. The problematic part is that when he died, Muhammad was buried within his house—a custom which is not alien to pre-Islamic Arabian culture and can still occasionally be seen today (see, e.g., Petersen 2001, 128). Although the building was designated as Muhammad's house, it also fulfilled the function of a mosque and was the centre of the nascent Muslim community. Whilst Muslims revered Muhammad as a prophet and as the person to whom the Quran was revealed, he was explicitly only a messenger and was not the focus of the religion. The fact that Muhammad's grave was located within the house/mosque later caused problems for some Muslims, such as Ibn Taymiyya, who was worried that people might inadvertently pray towards Muhammad's grave rather than towards the Kaaba in Mecca. However, for most Muslims, the direction of prayer

towards Mecca was well enough established that there would not be a chance of confusing this with Muhammad's grave. Also, Muhammad's pre-eminent position within Islam meant that the location of his grave within the mosque would only enhance the importance of the mosque and the prayer towards Mecca. Muslims would still be able to pay their respects to Muhammad and also follow his teachings in relation to the prayer towards Mecca.

The Development of Shrines Within Islam

Although shrines do not need to incorporate the tomb of a deceased person, the vast majority of Muslim shrines are associated with graves or presumed burial places of people considered to be exceptional in terms of piety, relationship to the Prophet or other religiously important figures. However, as Thomas Leisten has pointed out, a substantial group of Muslim religious texts, including the Hadith, regards them (Muslim tombs) as distinctly unreligious, pagan and anti-Islamic (Leisten 1990, 22). The scholars seemed particularly anxious that the tombs should not become shrines; thus the early thirteenth-century *Hanbali* theologian Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi (d. 1223) wrote 'the special treatment of graves by praying by them is similar to the veneration of idols by prostrating oneself before them and wishing to draw near them' (Ibn Qudama, *Mughni* 2:508, cited in Leisten 1990, 14). With statements like this, it is very surprising that Muslim shrines were not only built but flourished especially from the twelfth century onwards. There is, in other words, a huge gap between what is stated in religious and legal texts and the surviving architecture of Muslim shrines which are found throughout the Islamic world. It seems, therefore, that the numerous legal rulings and prohibitions were a reaction to the construction of domed buildings over tombs, which the scholars and lawyers were powerless to prevent. In this context, it is worth noticing that although building over graves was explicitly forbidden, it was not described as *haram* (i.e. forbidden) but rather as *makruh* (objectionable, disapproved of). One of the biggest problems with the legal prohibitions against funerary architecture was that Muhammad himself was buried within his house, which subsequently developed into one of the principal shrines of the Islamic world.

It can be argued that Muhammad's tomb in Medina is a special case, and certainly it appears that for the first few centuries of Islam there were no other built tombs which developed into shrines. There is, however,

some evidence that shrines developed around the graves of members of the Prophet Muhammad's family, although the exact form of these shrines is not known (Bernheimer 2013). In particular, the locations of the graves of some of the imams (descendants of Muhammad through Ali and Fatimah) were known but there is no surviving architectural evidence for these from before the beginning of the tenth century. For example, the twin shrine of the imams al-Hadi and al-'Askari at Samarra was founded in 944, although it is not clear if anything survives from this period and the earliest inscription within the complex dates from the early thirteenth century (Northedge and Kennet 2015, 203–204). There has been an assumption that the development of shrines connected with Muhammad's family was primarily connected with Shi'ism; however, Bernheimer has shown that they were visited and perhaps developed by Sunni Muslims (Bernheimer 2013, 1).

One of the problems is distinguishing between a mausoleum and a shrine. Whilst some mausolea developed into shrines, this was not always the case, and not all shrines were based around tombs.

For example, many of the mausoleums in the larger medieval cemeteries, such as that of Bab al-Saghir in Damascus, could be construed as family tombs rather than as shrines. Similarly, large numbers of shrines are either natural sacred features or feature relics, such as footprints of the Prophet. Until recently, the octagonal domed building of Qubbat al-Sulaybiyya at Samarra in Iraq was thought to be an early example of an Islamic mausoleum, as it contained three burials, although these are now interpreted as a later intrusion (e.g. Grabar 1966, No. 2). Instead, Alastair Northedge has intriguingly suggested that Qubbat al-Sulaybiyya was a fabricated shrine representing the Kaaba created by the caliph as an alternative Hajj destination for his Turkish troops (Northedge 2006).

The earliest dateable Muslim mausoleum which has survived in more or less its original condition is the tomb of the Samanid Nasr ibn Ahmad ibn Ismail, who died at Bukhara in 943 AD. The mausoleum comprises a square room (5.7 × 5.7 m internally) built of fired bricks with a doorway on each of the sides and a decorative arched frieze at roof height which hides the transition to the octagonal transition to the dome. It is perhaps significant that the mausoleum has the same basic proportions and shape associated with the majority of Muslim shrines throughout the world. Whilst it is likely that there were other mausolea of similar date which have not survived, it is apparent that from the tenth century onward, shrines and mausolea began to appear in diverse parts of the world, perhaps

indicating a major social or political change within Islamic society. The most obvious change which occurred in the tenth century was the final break-up of the caliphate into disparate political units. Prior to the tenth century, there was at least a theoretical idea that the Islamic world comprised a unified political and cultural entity—by the eleventh century, the political fragmentation of Islam meant that there were numerous rulers competing for secular authority. By the middle of the twelfth, all provinces of the Muslim world had acquired large numbers of mausoleums which functioned as shrines (Grabar 1966, 72). There were regional variations in the architecture of these structures; thus Iraq had a series of buildings roofed with *muqarnas* (conical or honeycomb) shaped domes, whilst in Iran double-shelled domes were developed during the eleventh century along with a series of round tower-shaped tombs. There was also considerable variation in the size of these structures, from the relatively modest Tomb of the Samanids in Bukhara to the immense structure (27 m per side and 38 m high) built over the tomb of the Seljuk ruler Sultan Sanjar (r. 1118–1153 AD) in Merv (for a full description of Sanjar's tomb, see Hillenbrand 1999, 278, 283, 294).

Within Palestine, the earliest shrine for which we have evidence after the Dome of the Rock (built 691 AD) is the Haram at Hebron. According to the writer al-Muqaddasi writing in 985, Muslims built a stone dome over the tomb of Abraham in the latter part of the tenth century. The tombs of the other patriarchs were not included within the domed structure but were included within the sacred enclosure (*Haram*), which also had a hostel with a bakery and other facilities for pilgrims (Le Strange 1890, 309). As will be demonstrated in the remainder of this book, the real growth in the number of shrines in Palestine occurred directly after the Crusaders had been expelled, starting in the late twelfth century.

The Significance of Shrines in the Modern World

Unlike many aspects of the medieval and pre-modern world, Muslim shrines continue to have considerable direct relevance in the contemporary world. Although not every shrine is well known, or fully investigated, as a building type shrines continue to attract attention both from scholars and, in recent years, from the news media. Two issues of particular interest are the roles of shrines within the religious political conflict between Palestine and Israel and the increasing fundamentalist rhetoric and, more recently, action against Muslim shrines. Whilst these issues

will be discussed in more detail later in the book, it is worth noting that in both cases, shrines are being used to support particular views of history. In the case of the Israel-Palestine conflict, shrines are often used as territorial markers, with ownership of a shrine used to support ancient claims to land. For example, Israeli extremists regard both the Tomb of Rachel near Bethlehem and the Tomb of Joseph as concrete proof of divinely sanctioned Jewish ownership of the land. Amongst Muslim fundamentalist extremists, shrines are regarded as an innovation within the Islamic tradition and the destruction of structures built over graves is regarded as a return to the purity of early Islam. In both cases the appeal is to an idealised past which ignores other religious traditions and the complexities of historical development embedded in the fabric of the shrines themselves. In order to reject these hard-line views, which are an affront to modern civilised society, it is important that these locations and structures are documented and investigated in a scientific manner which reflects the true nature of the past.

Structure of This Book

This book is arranged into three parts: Part I: Introduction, Part II: Types of Shrines, and Part III: Shrines in the Contemporary World. The aim of this approach is both to set the shrines within an historical context and also to show how they remain relevant today.

Part I is divided into three chapters—the present chapter (Chap. 1), Chap. 2, which discusses the Arabic and Islamic historiography, and Chap. 3, which reviews the European and secular literature relating to Palestinian shrines.

Part II is arranged into four chapters, each describing a different form of shrine. The categorization is based on the types of people or groups who developed the shrines in the first place rather than either the architecture or the identity of the personality buried within the shrine. There may be considerable overlap in the categorizations but the idea is to emphasize the different aspects of how shrines were developed and used. The first category (Chap. 4) is shrines built and developed by rulers which, for obvious reasons, tend to be architecturally significant and commemorate major figures. The second category (Chap. 5) considers the role of Sufism in the creation and maintenance of shrines. One of the principal arguments of this book is that the rise of Sufism coincided with an increase in the number of shrines and was the context within which the cult of saints

flourished. The decline of Sufism within Muslim society may also be equated with a decrease in the practice of visiting tombs. The third category (Chap. 6) discusses local tombs which may have been built either by Sufis or by local people and which form the majority of shrines within Palestine. The final category (Chap. 7) discusses those Muslim shrines which are not from the dominant Sunni tradition, demonstrating considerable continuities between different religious traditions.

Part III is divided into three chapters, the first of which (Chap. 8) examines the factors which have led to the destruction and disappearance of many shrines throughout the country. Chapter 9 investigates how shrines can be managed and conserved to provide a future for these important but endangered buildings. The final chapter (Chap. 10) provides an argument for why the shrines are important in the twenty-first century.

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CHAPTER 2

Arabic and Muslim Historiography

Abstract This chapter is concerned with the origins and development of Muslim traditions relating to shrines and saints. The role of Palestine as the Holy Land is also discussed, as well as the significance of Jerusalem within the Islamic tradition. The final part of the chapter reviews the work and contribution of seven Muslim writers who provide descriptions of Muslim shrines in the region. The authors are discussed in chronological order from Nasir i-Khusraw in the eleventh century to Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi in the seventeenth century.

Keywords Historiography • Sufism • Sacred geography • Jerusalem

There are two historiographies related to Muslim shrines in Palestine: one European and the other Muslim. The earliest traditions naturally relate to the Muslim perspective, which dates back to the origins of Islam in the region. The European perspective is predominantly Christian (although see below for important exceptions to this) and dates primarily from the early modern period and later. In the following discussion the medieval Muslim perspective (circa 1000–1500 AD) will be discussed first. The Ottoman period will be dealt with in less detail partly because there are fewer published accounts from this period (for a discussion of this problem see Mattar 2000). From the 1500's onwards there are large numbers

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of European accounts which provide both physical descriptions and historical discussions of shrines. By contrast, the medieval European visitors to the region have little to say about Muslim places of veneration, and what is written is often both hostile and incorrect. However, from the sixteenth century onwards European descriptions improve both in quality and in number. This is partly as a result of the Ottoman conquest, which opened up the region to European traders and pilgrims. Other factors which encouraged the production of travellers' accounts include the invention of the printing press, which allowed for a wide dissemination of literature, and the growth of Protestantism, which had a need for more accurate and independent information about the 'Holy Land'. Taken together, the two historiographical traditions give an extensive coverage of the development of Muslim shrines, although because of their differing perspectives, there are also some lacunae in particular in relation to the role of women and the economic role of shrines.

The Muslim Tradition

Before looking specifically at Palestine, it is worth considering how holy men or saints fit within the Muslim theological tradition. Whilst some writers (e.g. Ibn Taymiyya) have asserted that there was no tradition of saints in early Islam, others have argued that a number of men noted for their piety in the early Islamic period were instrumental in the development of Islamic society—in particular, the transmitters of *hadith* (traditions) and others associated with the development of the law or other aspects of establishing the early Arab Islamic caliphate. The memory of these people was firmly established through their presence in literature, law and theology and was later adopted by Sufi writers as *abdal* or (substitutes) without whom the world would not function.

The Muslim historiographical tradition in relation to Palestine is immense and has been discussed in depth by a number of scholars (see, e.g. Amikam Elad 2002). In this section the aim is not to discuss these traditions in great detail but to select some significant observers whose writings give some idea of the origins and development of shrines. As might be expected, Muslim interest in Palestinian shrines focussed on the city of Jerusalem, and to an extent, as in the European tradition, this overshadowed any interest in shrines outside the Holy City (*Bayt al-Maqdis*). Although historically there has been some debate about the sanctity of Jerusalem (see, e.g. Ibn Taymiyya's discussion in Matthews 1936) and also (for other reasons) amongst contemporary scholars, it is clear that most

Muslims regarded the city as sacred. Most modern research on the subject (e.g. Goitein 1966; Kister 1969) has supported the early sanctity of the city and shown the religious foundation of Palestine as a Muslim Holy Land. In any case, the religious status of Jerusalem within the Islamic world was undoubtedly great and by the ninth century (800s AD) 'most of the great mystics of the eastern and western caliphate such as Sufyan al-Thawri, Ibrahim b. Adham, Abu Yazid al-Bistami, Sari al-Saqaṭi and Dhul-Nun al-Misri—are reported to have visited Jerusalem' (Ephrat 2008). Even the prominent early mystic Bishr al-Hafi (b. Merv, d. Baghdad 841), who never visited Palestine, is reported to have said 'Nothing is left to me of the pleasures of this world but lying down on my side under the heavens in the Dome of the Rock'. The place of Palestine in general and Jerusalem in particular was embedded within Muslim tradition by its inclusion in Hajj itineraries. For example, one early tradition recommended that Muslims performing the Hajj should pray in the three mosques of Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem (Kister 1969). Certainly for pilgrims from the Eastern Caliphate—Iran, Khurassan and Transoxiania—travel via Syria and Jerusalem was more practical than other routes. However, travel to Jerusalem was more than a matter of convenience—it directly related to the tradition that Jerusalem was *al-Aqsa* (the furthest place) where Muhammad travelled on his night journey (*miraj*) and from where he ultimately ascended to heaven/paradise. Of course this tradition originates in the close relationship between the Quran and the Bible, which later formed the basis for a Muslim sacred geography of Palestine.

Whilst Palestine certainly had a sacred connotation for Muslims before the Crusades, the arrival of the Frankish armies in 1099 and the ensuing war over two and a half centuries gave it added significance. On the one hand, the fight for the Holy Land (*Ard al-Muqaddasa*) meant that its value was increased in the eyes of the combatants who were involved in a multi-generational struggle to recover territory. Also, it is probable that the Christian veneration for the Holy Land and associations through Biblical figures and religious shrines must have influenced the Muslims in their development of their own shrines. In any case, it is generally agreed that there were many more Muslim shrines after the Crusades, commemorating not just figures from ancient times but also recent martyrs fighting against the Crusaders. For example, the grave of al-Fandalawi, a Maliki scholar who died in 1148 defending Damascus from the Crusaders, became a place of pilgrimage (Talmon-Heller 2007, 192). Also following the re-conquest, Christian shrines which had been established by the

Crusaders were often taken over and re-designated as places of Muslim pilgrimage. Daniella Talmon-Heller has argued that the difference between the period before the Crusades and after was the development of a Muslim sacred geography. Prior to the Crusades there were only a few sacred sites outside Jerusalem, and authors generally gave little detail about their names and locations, whereas after the Crusades there were many more sites with more discussion of their origins and authenticity (Talmon-Heller 2006–2007, 618–620).

Although the increase in the number of Muslim shrines by the fourteenth century may be attributed to the addition of tombs associated with the wars against the Franks, the other factor is the growth of Sufism as part of mainstream religious life in the region. Although Sufism evidently existed before the period of the Crusades and, according to Sufi texts, can be traced back to the time of Muhammad, in practical terms, it was not developed as a recognized religious tradition until the tenth century. During this period, Sufism was mostly confined to Iraq, Iran or Central Asia and the most prominent proponents either came from or lived in the Eastern Islamic world. Famous early Sufi writers include Sarraj from north-eastern Iran, who died in 998; Kalabadhi from Central Asia, who died c. 995; Abu Talib (d. 996), who was born in Mecca but lived most of his life in Iraq; Daylami from northern Iran; and Sulaimi also from north-eastern Iran, who died in 1021. The advent of Sunni Turkish rulers in the eleventh century spread the Sufi tradition much wider into the Bilad al-Sham and North Africa. The Turks added elements of shamanism as well as ecstatic and subversive tendencies to the Persian Sufi intellectual tradition. It was during this period that methods of institutionalizing Sufi practices were developed, including manuals and the creation of lodges (for a history of the development of Sufism, see Baldick 2012).

Turkic warriors were largely responsible for the Muslim re-conquest of Palestine under the Ayyubids and Mamluks. The new rulers re-arranged the social and religious structures of the region, establishing Sunni emirates nominally loyal to the caliphs in Baghdad. Sufism was particularly favoured partly because it was prevalent in those areas of the Muslim world bordering on the Turkic homelands of Central Asia and also because it seemed compatible with their pre-Islamic Shamanistic belief system. There are two interlinked elements of Sufi thought which favoured the development of shrines; one is the notion of friends of God and the other is the concept of spiritual leaders who founded groups or brotherhoods. The concept of friends of God was developed from the Quranic verse 10:62

('the friends (*awliya' Allah*) of God will have nothing to fear nor shall they grieve') into an elaborate hierarchy of saints. Biblical and Quranic figures were generally counted amongst the friends of God as well as prominent Muslim spiritual leaders some of whom were Sufis. The graves of friends of God (sing. *wali*) were often converted into shrines and the term *wali* is one of a number of terms used to describe a Muslim shrine. This process was noted by Ibn al-'Adim (d. 1262) who described the recent construction of a mausoleum on ancient tombs of righteous men (Talmon-Heller 2006–2007, 603).

The other factor linking Sufism with the development of Muslim shrines is the position of Sufi teachers or elders. From the eleventh century onwards the guidance of an elder or a shaykh became an essential component of Sufism, and from the twelfth century, institutionalized brotherhoods or orders developed (Green 2012, 58). With the patronage of powerful rulers, dedicated Sufi lodges were built, which, in addition to teaching rooms and a prayer room, usually had a mausoleum which would contain the body of the founder of the order. These tombs subsequently became shrines, which could be visited by both members of Sufi brotherhoods and others seeking spiritual guidance or blessings. This stage in the development of Sufi practice coincided with the re-conquest of Palestine and so led to the proliferation of shaykhs' tombs within the region.

One further factor which needs to be considered is the development of a cemetery culture based around the graves of relatives or important personages. During the medieval period, large cemeteries developed around the major cities and became places of excursion and visitation. Although it is possible that there was a funerary culture in the early Islamic period, the available evidence indicates that this developed from the eleventh century onwards (for a discussion of medieval Islamic funerary culture, see Talmon-Heller 2007, 151ff). For example, in Egypt a range of medieval and early Ottoman funeral manuals testify to the growing social and cultural importance attached to the burial of the dead. Funerals are also portrayed more generally in medieval Islamic texts, and there is evidence that the process became ritualized during this period. For example, the *Maqamat* of al-Harīrī produced in the early twelfth century features a scene (the 11th *maqama*) at a cemetery. The narrator is in the town of Saweh in Iran (between Rayy and Hamadan) and decides to visit the cemetery as a cure for his hardness of heart as recommended by a hadith. The visit is described as follows: 'and when I had reached the mansion of the dead, the storehouse of mouldering remains, I saw an assemblage over a grave that was

being dug, and a corpse that was being buried … an old man stood forth on high, from a hillock, leaning on a staff. And he had veiled his face with a cloak, and disguised his craftiness. The old man proceeded to give a sermon castigating the mourners for their lack of remorse and at the end collected money from them' (Cherney 1876, Vol. 1, 164). The scenes at Saweh are illustrated in a number of extant manuscripts of the Maqamat and give some idea of the appearance of cemeteries in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Rice 1959). Two of the miniature paintings depict square domed tombs (Bibliotheque Nationale Paris, MS Arabe 5847 and John Rylands Library Manchester Arab 680) of the form that became typical of Muslim shrines throughout the Islamic world. Whilst the domed tombs are not unusual, their depiction shows that they were considered a normal part of medieval Arabic culture.

The final part of this section will look at some representative examples of Muslim travellers and scholars who wrote about Muslim shrines in the region. The aim of this section is not to provide an exhaustive list of Muslim writings on shrines nor a comprehensive geographical coverage of shrines but rather to give an idea of how shrines were viewed and experienced by Muslims at different periods in history. The authors considered are (1) Nasir i-Khusraw, (2) Ibn Jubayr, (3) Al-Harawi, (4) Ibn Battuta, (5) Mujir al-Din, (6) Ibn Taymiyya and (7) Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi. Each of the authors had a different perspective and together they demonstrate the cultural and religious importance attached to Muslim shrines.

Nasir i-Khusraw

By the eleventh century, the religious status of Palestine as a whole was confirmed by the accounts of the Persian pilgrim Nasir i-Khusraw. Whilst most of his account is concerned with Jerusalem, on his way there, he describes frequent stops at shrines which were either the tombs of prominent Muslims (e.g. Abu Shu'ayb) or figures from the Bible. For example, he describes a visit to the village of Irbid as follows:

> On the mountain there is an enclosure which contains some graves—those of the sons of Ya'qub [Jacob]—peace be upon him!—who were the brothers of Yusf [Joseph]—upon him too be peace! And going forward I came to a hill, and below the hill a cavern, in which was the tomb of Moses—peace be upon him!—and I made my visitation there also. (PPTS, Vol. 9 Diary of a Journey through Syria and Palestine by Nasir i-Khusraw in 1047 AD, trans. G. Le Strange 1893, London)

Ibn Jubayr

With the arrival of the Crusaders (Franks) in 1099, the development of Muslim shrines was interrupted. On a practical level, many major Muslim shrines, such as the Dome of the Rock, were converted into Christian buildings. Also, Muslim descriptions of Palestine during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are rare. For example, the famous Anadalusian traveller Ibn Jubayr was unable to visit Jerusalem on his way to perform the Hajj; however, he did manage to travel through Crusader-controlled Acre, where he describes how the Franks had converted the mosques into churches. However, he notes, 'God kept undefiled one part of the principal mosque … near its mihrab is the tomb of the prophet Salih … God bless and preserve all the prophets. God protected this part [of the mosque] from desecration by the unbelievers for the benign influence of this holy tomb' (Ibn Jubayr, September 1185, pp. 303–304). Ibn Jubayr also mentions a sacred spring to the east of Acre 'Ayn al-Baqqar, which was revered by both Muslims and Christians. Ten years earlier, 'Ali of Herat had described this shrine as a mashhad dedicated to 'Ali b. Abi Ṭalib (Ali al-Harawi 23; Le Strange 331).

Al-Harawi

The first comprehensive guide to places of pilgrimage in the Islamic world was written by Abu Bakr al-Harawi (d. 1215) originally from Baghdad. Al-Harawi moved to Syria, where he served Saladin (the Ayyubid Sultan Salah al-Din, r. 1169–1193) as advisor and ambassador. He travelled extensively, visiting the major shrines of the Islamic world, including the Dome of the Rock, the tomb of 'Ali in Najaf and the mosque of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina. In addition to the major shrines, he also visited numerous less well-known sites, and his book lists more than 200 shrines. Al-Harawi's narrative includes sites sacred to Jews and Christians, including the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the tomb of Ezekiel (*Dhul Kifl*) near Baghdad (an annotated translation of al-Harawi has been published by Josef Meri 2005). Although al-Harawi is clearly enthusiastic about shrines, he is not uncritical of claims of authenticity at different sites. Many of al-Harawi's doubts concern the tombs of bibilical or Quranic figures located in northern Syria, which he suggests are more likely to be located in Palestine or the Hijaz. For example, the guardians of a shrine near al-Ma'arra in northern Syria

claimed that it was the tomb of Joshua b. Nun, whereas al-Harawi pointed out that the authentic tomb was located in Nablus (Talmon-Heller 2006–2007, 617–618, note 99). He is also doubtful about a tradition that locates the tomb of the Muslim prophet Nabi Salih at Qinnasrin, whereas he believes the true location is at Shabwa in Yemen (Meri 2005, 44–45). However, in other cases, al-Harawi designates previously unrecognized graves as sacred; thus he gives a list of shaykhs and holy men buried in a former cemetery in Damascus. He also lists the tomb of Nur al-Din as one of the sacred sites in Damascus and is the first to name him as one of the *awliya* (friend of God).

Ibn Battuta

Following the Muslim re-conquest, the number of shrines in Palestine seems to have increased significantly (for a discussion of this phenomenon, see Talmon-Heller 2006–2007, 601ff). For example, in the early fourteenth century, the famous Morroccan traveller Ibn Battuta described Ramla as a city containing more than 300 Muslim saints. Ibn Battuta's description of Palestine (with the exception of Ramla) is mostly copied from the work of al-'Abdari, who made a pilgrimage to Palestine starting in December 1289. Ibn Battuta's travelogue appears to be structured around visits to Muslim shrines and can be summarised as follows: al-Khalil (Hebron), Nabi Yaqin, the tomb of Jonah (Halhul)—Bayt Lahm (Behtlehem)—Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem)—Asqalan—Ramla—Nablus—'Ajlun—al-Ghur (the Jordan Valley) the tomb of Abu 'Ubayda b al-Jarah ('Amta)—al-Qusayr—the tomb of Mu 'adh b. Jabal—'Akka (Acre)—Sur (Tyre)—Sayda (Sidon)—Tabariyya—Beirut (Elad 1987, 259). Whilst in geographical terms Ibn Battuta's journey makes little sense crossing from one end of Palestine to the other (this is probably because of his incorporation of different texts), the journey does provide a complete coverage of the country from north to south and from east to west. This suggests that Ibn Battuta (or more correctly the scholar Ibn Juzay, who recorded Ibn Battuta's narrative) wanted to include the whole of Palestine within the account. Whilst the encyclopaedic nature of Ibn Battuta's travels may have influenced the inclusion of other accounts, it is also probable that a complete description of Palestine was required because of its significance to Muslim culture, both from the early Islamic times and from the period of the Crusades and Muslim re-conquest. The cultural and religious significance was made manifest by the numerous shrines throughout the country

recalling both Biblical figures and Muslim heroes and martyrs (cf. Talmon-Heller 2006–2007, 604).

Mujir al-Din

Mujir al-Din al ʻUlaymi al-Hanbali was the chief judge of Jerusalem although his family was originally from Ramla. He wrote a number of books on various subjects, including the Quran (two vols.), a history of the world and a book on the visits (*ziyarat*) to sacred sites. However, the only book to survive is the historical work *al-Uns al-Jalīl bi tarikh al-Qūds* (the merits of the history of Jerusalem and Hebron) written in 1495–1496. Mujir-al-Din's account is very accurate and was valued both by later Arabic historians and also western (European) authors as a source for the history of Jerusalem and Hebron (Schick 2010). His detailed description of the Haram in Hebron containing the tombs of Abraham, Rebecca, Isaac, Jacob and Leah is still one of the best descriptions of this highly contested holy site. The internal measurements given by Mujir al-Din correspond exactly to those of a modern survey (Le Strange 1890, 324). Although as its title suggests the book is primarily concerned with Jerusalem and Hebron, there are descriptions of other historic and sacred locations throughout Palestine, with a particular emphasis on Ramla where he had served as a *qadi*. For example, he gives detailed descriptions of a number of sacred tombs in Ramla, including the tomb of al-Fadal ibn al-Abbas, a cousin of the prophet Muhammad who died in 639 (this tomb still exists; see Petersen 1995, 80). Mujir al-Din also describes the tomb of the Muslim prophet Nabi Salih which was located within a cave in the White Mosque.

Ibn Taymiyya

From these accounts it should be clear that the number of sacred sites increased significantly during the medieval period. It is also evident that for some particularly important figures there were multiple locations; thus the tomb of Nabi Salih was variously located at Qinnasrin in northern Syria according to a local tradition (see above), at Ramla in Palestine according to Mujir al-Din, the Hijaz according to al-Thaʻlabi (Brinner 2002, 114–123) and Shabwa in Yemen according to al-Harawi (Meri 2005, 44–45). However, there were some Muslims such as Ibn Taymiyya who regarded the proliferation of shrines with scepticism. Ibn Taymiyya

(1263–1328) was born in Harran and later moved to Damascus, where he was educated in religious law. He quickly became established as a reformer with the aim of purging Islam 'of the heresies and corruptions which threatened to destroy it … saint worship, pilgrimage to holy shrines, vows offerings and invocations' (Matthews 1936, 2). He wrote many works (estimates vary from 300 to 500 treatises) on different aspects of Islamic law and practice although many of these have not survived (Bori 2009). The best-known works which relate to the visitation of graves and veneration of saints' tombs are *al-Qa'ida fi ziyarat bayt al-Maqdis* (The foundation for the visitation to Jerusalem) and *Ziyarat al-Qubur* (The Visitation of Graves). Although Ibn Taymiyya is often characterized as being totally opposed to the cult of saints, it has been argued that he only wanted to curb the excesses of this tradition by restricting the number of sacred places and by making sure that visits to shrines were conducted in conformity with Islamic law (Grehan 2014, 102). For example, he was against extravagant displays of devotion at the tombs of the saints but also believed that the bodies of the prophets did not decay and were preserved in a 'death-sleep' till the day of judgement (Matthews 1936, 5). One of the problems in understanding Ibn Taymiyya's views is the sheer number of writings attributed to him and the fact that in some places his ideas seem to contradict each other or perhaps develop over time and are therefore not always consistent. The fact that 200,000 people attended his funeral and that his own tomb became a place of visitation shows both the strength of the belief in shrines and possibly that his own opposition to such tombs was either less well known to ordinary people or were less important than his views on other matters (e.g. divorce). In any case, although Ibn Taymiyya's views continued to be developed and propagated by his disciples, they remained a minority view until their adoption by the Wahhabis in central Arabia in the mid-eighteenth century. Even then the defeat of the Wahhabis by Muhammad 'Ali Pasha of Egypt in the early nineteenth century meant that the widespread application of Wahhabi ideals had to wait until the early twentieth century.

Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi

The Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt at the beginning of the sixteenth century (1515–1516) gave an economic stimulus to the region and, in particular, Palestine. The walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, the roads were provided with fortified guard posts and caravanserais were built. In

religious terms the Ottoman rulers were similar to the Mamluks with an attachment to Sufism and Sunni Islam. However, the first years of Ottoman rule saw an inclination to support the major orthodox elements of Islam with the revival of the Hajj route from Damascus to Mecca and an imperial edict to ensure that every village within the empire was provided with a mosque and a religious leader. Although Sufism continued to be practised and saints' tombs were established, this took second place to the religious life of mosques and the official pilgrimage to Mecca.

As imperial authority began to diminish in the seventeenth century, Sufism and the cult of saints developed as major components of the religious life of the region. The most famous advocate of Sufism during this period was Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (1641–1731) whose visits (*ziyarat*) to holy tombs and shrines are recorded in a series of written accounts (*rihalat*). The rihalas describe spiritual journeys through Bilad al-Sham, including Lebanon (*Rihala al-Sughra* and *Rihala al-Tarabulusiyya*), Palestine (*Rihala al-Qudsiyya*) and northern Syria, culminating in the Hajj to Mecca (*Rihala al-Kubra*). Although there are no complete translations of his travelogues visiting Muslim shrines, parts of his work have been discussed and translated by a number of scholars, including Elizabeth Sirriyeh (2005) and Samer Akkach (2007). Much of the accounts of these journeys is taken up with descriptions of visits to tombs, including those of his own family. For example, in the *Rihala al-Kubra,* he describes visiting the family turba built for his great-grandfather Shaykh Isma'il al-Nabulusi by the sixteenth-century governor of Damascus Darwish Pasha (Sirriya 1979, 111). Although Nabulusi appears very keen to visit as many spiritual sites as possible, he is not uncritical; for example, at the village of al-Tall, 11 miles from Damascus, he visits a shrine known as Shaykh Qusaym, which he corrects to Shaykh Qutham. He also states that the locals believe this to be the grave of the Prophet's cousin Qutham b. al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muttalib; however, he says this must be incorrect because Qutham died at Samarkand (Sirriya 1979, 113). On other occasions al-Nabulusi seems more credulous; thus he visited the shrine of Abu Yazid al-Bistami at Rastan. He describes the shrine in detail, noting that it was located on a hill and comprised a mosque with a colonnade and service rooms as well as the tomb itself contained within a domed *qubba*. Nabulusi was obviously impressed with the shrine which he described as authentic because it was surrounded by 'splendour and awe'. He entered the *qubba* and stayed by the tomb where he performed the midday prayer. Although he was

aware of al-Harawi's opinion that the true grave of Abu Yazid was in Bistam in Iran, he appears to ignore this in favour of this site in northern Syria (Sirriya 1979, 116–117).

Observations

A number of remarks on the Muslim writers are possible. First, it is clear that all of the writers give rational and accurate first-hand information about the shrines. In many cases, this is followed up with references to earlier writers and information provided by local inhabitants and guardians. As all of the authors were educated in Islamic history and religion, they were able to give judgements or opinions on the authenticity of particular sites. In some cases as with Ibn Taymiyya, this judgement could be quite scathing, but with other authors such as al-Harawi, the judgement was left open; thus he always finishes with the statement 'and God knows best'.

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CHAPTER 3

Muslim Shrines in European Descriptions of Palestine

Abstract This chapter is concerned with European descriptions and studies of Muslim shrines in Palestine, starting from Henry Maundrell's observations in the seventeenth century. The chapter shows the gradual development of European interests, from curiosity to a deep fascination with Muslim shrines as a potential insight into religion in early biblical times. The early twentieth century saw a plethora of European studies of shrines as well as the most important documentation by Tewfiq Canaan, who, although Palestinian, wrote within the European tradition. The final part of the chapter considers recent studies of shrines written from the 1990s to the present day.

Keywords Biblical • Maqam • Rituals • Folklore • Tewfiq Canaan • Henry Maundrell

The Medieval Period

Since the widespread adoption of Christianity in the early Middle Ages, Europeans have travelled to the Middle East primarily as pilgrims. Amongst the first Christian Europeans to leave a description of Palestine after the Muslim conquest is the Frankish monk Arculf, who visited Jerusalem in the 670s. Arculf's description is incorporated into Adamnan's *De Locis Sanctis*, which is a descriptive account of Jerusalem and other places in

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Palestine. Arculf's account is of significance as it provides a description of the Haram al-Sharif before the construction of the Dome of the Rock and possibly before the Aqsa Mosque. Arculf portrays the religion of the Arab ruler Mavias (Muawiyya, r. 661–680) as a form of Christianity and describes a large, poorly built, house of prayer which could hold up to 3000 worshippers (Wilkinson 1977, 93–116). From the perspective of Muslim shrines, this account is of importance partly because there was no distinctive Muslim shrine in Jerusalem in this period and also because Arculf could not see a clear distinction between Islam and Christianity. During the next four centuries, Jerusalem and Palestine developed a distinctive Muslim identity, starting with the construction of the Dome of the Rock in 691. For much of this period, Christian pilgrims continued to visit Jerusalem, although the conditions deteriorated under the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim, who persecuted Christians and Jews and, in 1009, ordered the destruction of the Christians' most important shrine, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The destruction of the Holy Sepulchre was cited as one of the causes for the First Crusade, which captured Jerusalem nearly a century later in 1099. During the period of Crusader occupation and in the subsequent period of medieval Muslim (Ayyubid and Mamluk) rule, Christian European views of Islam in general and Muslim shrines in particular were characterized by ignorance, suspicion and often hostility. There were, of course, some exceptions to this, but in general, Europeans were disinterested in Muslim beliefs, and in any case, when they did venture into Palestine, their movements were often strictly controlled. For example, when they arrived, pilgrims had to stay in caves at the ruined port of Jaffa until they were picked up by Fransiscans, who would escort them to Jerusalem and other Christian shrines (for medieval pilgrims' accounts of Palestine after the Crusades, see Chareyron 2005; Pringle 2012).

The Early Modern Period

With the Ottoman conquest of Palestine in 1516, the situation for Christian visitors to Palestine improved. On the one hand, the Ottomans were more confident of their military power than their Mamluk predecessors and were not threatened by Christians visiting the region. In any case, by the sixteenth century, Ottomans had control of the Eastern Mediterranean, reducing the likelihood of a renewed Crusader invasion. The Reformation had divided Europe between Catholics and Protestants,

and Muslims were no longer automatically regarded as the primary enemy. This situation was favourable to the establishment of trading links with some European countries; thus in 1581, the English Levant Company was established by Elizabeth I to trade with the Ottoman Empire with a regional base in Aleppo. Although conditions for pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem remained difficult, the number of pilgrims increased considerably. In addition to pilgrims, there were now merchants who were also interested in understanding the culture with which they were trading. For example, Henry Maundrell and his associates from the Levant company made a journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem in 1697. They travelled with an escort, staying in Khans with local merchants and other travellers. On March 3, 1696, the bad weather induced them to seek permission to stay in a nearby Muslim shrine. At first, the local Shiʿa population objected to Christians defiling their sanctuary but were eventually persuaded to allow Maundrell and his travelling companions to place some of their baggage within the shrine although they themselves were still excluded. However, at nightfall the travellers sneaked into the shrine, where they spent the night. Maundrell gives the following account of the shrine:

> Being now crept into the inside of the Shecks house, I must not omit, in requital for our lodgings, to give some account of the nature of such structures. They are stone fabrics, generally six or eight yards square (more or less) and roofed with a cupola; erected over the graves of some eminent Shecks, that is, such persons, as by their long beards, prayers of the same standard, and a kind of pharisaical superciliousness (which are the great virtues of the Mahometan religion) have purchased to themselves the reputation of learning and saints.
>
> Of these buildings there are many scattered up and down the country (for you will find among the Turks far more dead saints than living ones). They are situated commonly, though not always, upon the most eminent and conspicuous ascents. To these oratories the people repair with their vows and prayers, in their several distresses, much after the same manner as Romanists do to the shrines of their saints. Only in this respect the practice of the Turks seems to be more orthodox, in regard that though they make their saint's shrine the house of prayer, yet they always make God alone, and not the saint the object of their addresses. (Maundrell 1703 [1836], 16–17)

Maundrell's description of Muslim shrines is notable for its accuracy, and although he does not appear that well disposed towards the religion of Islam, he is more critical of Roman Catholics (the Romanists). At the

end of his book, he gives some general comments about the religion of the Turks and again compares the behaviour of Muslims to that of the Jewish Pharisees, as depicted in the Gospels.

Maundrell's account is, however, not typical and the majority of European accounts of Palestine were focussed on the biblical associations of the Holy Land with very little interest in the beliefs of the local Muslim population. For example, the account of Richard Pococke, who travelled to the region some 50 years later, is entirely concerned with antiquities and biblical associations. Although he does provide a plan of the Dome of the Rock described as a mosque, he gives virtually no information about the local inhabitants except where they interfere with his investigations into biblical antiquity. Within the two volumes covering a journey which includes Egypt and Syria, he only has a very small section which discusses Muslim beliefs and practices, which he describes as follows:

> They think the greatest villanies are expiated, when once they wash their hands and feet. This is their preparation to go to prayers which all the polite people constantly do: for the outwards appearance of religion is in fashion among them and it is look'd on as genteel to say their prayers in any place at the usual hours. Their prayers are very short, and repeated five times; but they may perform all these devotions at one time. They always pray on a carpet or cloth, to avoid touching anything that is unclean. They pray in the most publick wherever they are; and when they are in visit, will call for water to wash their feet, and so perform their devotions. The Arabs that live in tents seldom pray. (Pococke 1743, Vol. 1, 181)

Although Pococke's account summarizes some of the basic facts about the Muslim faith, it is also a misleading and superficial view with little attempt to understand the theological basis of Islam. Instead, Pococke's main interest in the local inhabitants is concerned with describing their military and political structure. Pococke's account is not unique in its dismissive attitude to Islam and Muslims. His main interest, like that of many other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travellers, is the search for historical evidence of the Bible. Instead of the medieval pilgrim's implicit devotion and belief in the authenticity of the Bible, the post-Reformation traveller was interested in finding scientific evidence for biblical narratives. The beliefs of local Muslims were generally considered irrelevant to this investigation except where they restricted access to biblical sites or contained some reference to biblical traditions.

Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

With Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1799, the European investigation of the region reached a new stage with detailed maps and descriptions accompanying the military conquest of the region. From this point onwards, the European descriptions became part of the process of controlling the region militarily and ideologically. This was the high point of 'Orientalism' as defined by the renowned Palestinian Egyptian author Edward Said (1978). As part of this process, all aspects of the culture of the region, including religion, history and archaeology, were valid subjects to study. The foundation of the Palestine Exploration Society in 1863 was one expression of this all-embracing interest in the culture of Palestine and the surrounding region. It is in this context that Muslim shrines became a subject of detailed academic enquiry at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

Five Studies of Muslim Shrines

Although Muslim shrines are mentioned in many of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century travellers' accounts of Palestine, there are only a few detailed academic studies. The earliest study was carried out as a by-product of the Survey of Western Palestine carried out during the 1870s. The other four studies were all carried out in the early years of the twentieth century. Within this section, these studies will be looked at in detail, paying particular attention to the context and purpose of the studies.

1. The earliest systematic study of Muslim shrines was published in the *Palestine Exploration Quarterly Statement* (Conder 1877) and later included in the publications of the *Survey of Western Palestine* volume, *Special Papers on Topography, Archaeology, Manners and Customs* and so on (Wilson et al. 1881). The 15-page study by Claude Conder appeared under the title 'Moslem Mukams' and was based on his fieldwork in Palestine. Conder was a soldier in the Royal Engineers before being seconded to work for the *Survey of Western Palestine* between 1875 and 1878 and again from 1881 to 1882. In addition to his work as surveyor, editor and contributor to the Survey of Western Palestine, Conder also published his own popular account of the survey, *Tent Work in Palestine* (Conder

1878). Conder was fluent in Arabic and, although he did not consider himself 'a competent Arabic scholar' (Conder 1877, 272), translated the Arabic names of the more than 10,000 villages recorded during the making of the maps for the Survey of Western Palestine (Jacobson and Cobbing 2005). The study of the 'Mukams' was firmly based on the experience of encountering more than 300 of these buildings during the survey. The mapping of the country was carried out using trigonometrical observations from elevated points throughout Palestine. Given that many of the high points were occupied with Muslim shrines (Mukams), it is evident that Conder developed an appreciation of their special significance. Conder's interest in the shrines is clearly expressed at the beginning of the study and is worth quoting in full:

> Next to the study of the language of the peasantry in Palestine there is probably nothing that will throw more light on the question of the origin of the race than that of the vulgar faith exemplified in the local sanctuaries scattered over the country, a study which is also of no little importance in relation to the ancient topography of Palestine, as is shown by various sites which have been recovered by means of the tradition of sacred tombs preserved after the name of the site itself had been lost. (Conder 1877, 258)

In other words, Conder's primary interest in the shrines was that their names might help in the identification of ancient biblical sites. After a brief introduction describing the physical characteristics of Muslim shrines, Conder divided the shrines into seven categories based on their names although, as he acknowledges, 'the distinction [classification] is not observed by the natives'. The categories are as follows: (1) Biblical characters, (2) Christian sites, (3) Native heroes, (4) 'Later and known historic characters', (5) Saints names relating to the place, (6) Sacred sites with no saint's name and (7) Ordinary Muslim names. Whilst this categorization appears logical, it is notable that, in practice, there could be considerable overlap and/or confusion particularly in categories 3–7. For example, a shrine Naby Yukîn, which is identified with the biblical town of Cain, appears both in the first category (Biblical names) and in the fifth (saints names relating to the place). In some cases the placing of a shrine in one or other of these categories seems arbitrary; thus, 'Neby Dŭhy'

is included in the category of Biblical characters (category 1), as it might be equivalent to Gideon, whilst Naby N'amăn is listed in category 4, which relates to native traditions (N'amăn has biblical associations either through Na'aman the leper or as Micah a name frequently encountered in the Hebrew Bible). In other cases, Conder's knowledge of Muslim beliefs is limited; thus in category 4 (Native traditions), he notes, 'Neby Săleh … has four Mŭkams, one of which is shown as the place of his martyrdom'. He then asks the question, 'Who was Neby Săleh?' For those familiar with the Quran, Salih is an Arabian prophet who appears nine times in the Quran, appealing to the people of Thamud to repent (the name is preserved in the name of Medain Saleh in modern Saudia Arabia). Despite his familiarity with Arabic, Conder was evidently more concerned with identifying biblical characters rather than those from Muslim tradition.

One further methodological problem with Conder's work on Muslim shrines was that some of his biblical identifications were regarded by his contemporaries as erroneous. This was one of the reasons that Kitchener was promoted as Survey leader above Conder whose identifications were regarded as 'too speculative' (Jacobson and Cobbing 2005, 171). Despite the reservations about categorization and the etymology of names, Conder's work on shrines is important as the first attempt to discuss them as a whole, taking into account both their distribution and their local identifications. In addition to his discussion of shrines, Conder was also responsible for the descriptions of many of the shrines listed in the three volumes of the *Memoirs* as well as for their depiction on the Survey's maps. Without the work of the Survey of Western Palestine and, in particular, Conder's contributions, the names, locations and even the existence of many of these shrines would not have survived.

2. In the summer of 1903, nearly a quarter of a century after Conder's article was published, two Americans, Lewis Paton (1864–1932) and Samuel Curtiss (1844–1904), made a trip through the rural districts of Syria and Palestine, looking at Muslim shrines as part of an investigation of 'primitive religion'. Both Patton and Lewis were biblical scholars and the Muslim shrines were primarily seen through the prism of the biblical scriptures. Instead of seeking direct continuity of names and places from biblical times in the manner of Claude Conder, the Americans were interested in how shrine

veneration at the beginning of the twentieth century might shed light on ancient practices. They were particularly interested in how the shrines were used by the local people and especially the tradition of animal sacrifice. Despite their biblical perspective, these accounts (Curtiss 1904; Paton 1919–1920) provide valuable information about a number of Muslim shrines in Syria and northern Palestine. Curtiss' death in 1904 (Paton's 1919–1920 article was also based on the 1903 trip) and the outbreak of the First World War meant that the project was never completed and it was superseded by subsequent much more detailed studies (see Nos. 3–6 below).

3. The third work on shrines was a series of articles published by the distinguished orientalist Paul Kahle (1875–1964) based on his time in Jerusalem during the last years of Ottoman. Prior to his arrival in Palestine, he had been pastor to the German community in Cairo (1903–1909), where he also carried out research on Arabic folk poetry. Although Kahle was only in Jerusalem between 1909 and 1910, he managed to publish three articles based on his observations of Muslim shrines (Kahle 1910, 1911, 1912; for English translations, see Schick 2010, 64–164). Unlike Conder, Kahle's interests were primarily in Muslim religious practice, although as a trained clergyman, he was also aware of the possible biblical and Christian associations of the various Muslim shrines. Kahle's approach was systematic and based on an interest in popular Muslim culture.

   His first article was limited to the shrines around Jerusalem, which was a deliberate policy to enable him to not only deal with individual shrines but also achieve a comprehensive list of types. As sources for his study, he used Mujir al-Din, Abdel Ghani al-Nabulusi (see Muslim authors above) and a Muslim guide to shrines around Jerusalem produced by the Haram and compiled by Yusuf al-Ansari (1906). Apart from these sources, the main source for Kahle's article on the Jerusalem region was oral history or folk tales. The article divides the discussion of shrines into three main sections, the shrines of Muslim personages, shrines relating to biblical figures and natural shrines, including trees, rocks and water sources. Because of his interest in living narratives, Kahle was able to trace the evolution of shrines from living holy men (or women) to the recently deceased, and link this to Muslim saints who died during the early years of the Muslim conquest of Palestine. One of his findings is that stories are often forgotten or changed over time so that the name of the shrine

can completely change. Of course, this has implications for narratives such as that of Conder, who assumed that names remained the same throughout the centuries. Kahle devotes proportionately less time to the shrines connected with biblical figures (both from the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels). He concentrates his attention on the four main figures Abraham, Moses, David and Solomon, stating that the other biblical figures cannot compete. The final section dealing with natural shrines firmly links these with ancient pre-Islamic nature veneration. He includes the rock within the Dome of the Rock within this section as well as numerous other natural features, such as a sacred stone (*ḥajar debken*) near the orthodox monastery of Mar Saba.

The second article (Kahle 1911) is concerned with the physical appearance and daily operation of shrines most of which are in the region of Jerusalem. He describes a variety of forms and features commonly found in shrines (e.g. grave, *miḥrab*, *taqa* or niche for offerings, *qubbe* or dome, prayer room etc.) although he is careful to point out that none of these features is mandatory. The remainder of the article discusses methods of administering the shrines and the various powers benevolent and harmful attributed to shrines. In all cases, the emphasis is on showing the variety of practices and also the oral testimony of local people. The final article (Kahle 1912) is a continuation of the second and deals with gifts (and sacrifices) at various shrines as well as a detailed description of a day at the Nabi Musa festival.

4. The third study of Muslim shrines was written by another American, Chester McCown (1877–1958), a noted biblical scholar and one-time director of the American School (now Albright Institute) in Jerusalem. In addition to being a biblical scholar, McCown was also a Methodist minister and, before studying for his PhD, spent four years in Calcutta as Principal of the American Methodist Institution (Albright 1958). His study of Muslim shrines was carried out whilst he was Professor of the New Testament at the Pacific School of Religion at Berkley in California. The fieldwork in Palestine was carried out with the assistance of Mr Haddad of the Syrian Protestant Orphanage, and he was also sometimes accompanied by W.F. Albright. McCown was interested in Muslim shrines because their veneration 'represents the persistence of ancient and universal impulses', whereas in Christian countries 'a relatively more

enlightened theology has gradually strangled them or set them operating in other directions' (McCown 1923, 47). He was keen to distance himself from the idea that Muslim shrines were direct ancestors of ancient re-Islamic Semitic shrines and therefore of direct use in reconstructing biblical topography and beliefs, as argued by Conder (1877). As a fluent German speaker, McCown was influenced by Paul Kahle's publications on Muslim shrines (Kahle 1910, 1911, 1912), and in many ways, his work can be seen as a continuation of Kahle's research. Although he does discuss the architecture and appearance of a few domed shrines, he was much more interested in the way the shrines were used. He was particularly interested in the use of oil lamps in shrines and the construction of stone mounds ('Stones of Witness') within view of shrines as a substitute for visiting on a particular occasion (see, e.g. McCown 1923, 79, Plates 21 and 22) Also, he draws attention to the vast number of Muslim shrines 'which were never tombs and do not have the remotest connection with saints' (McCown 1923, 55).

5. The largest and probably the most important study of Palestinian Muslim shrines was by Tawfik Canaan (1882–1964), a medical doctor born in Beit Jala near Jerusalem (al-Nashef 2002). Unlike the other studies of Muslim shrines, Canaan's study was carried out from the perspective of a Western-educated indigenous Palestinian. His interest in Muslim shrines was part of a wider interest in Palestinian folklore, and he also wrote a book about superstition and popular medicine as well as some books discussing the political situation in Palestine. His interest in folklore originated from his medical work, where he found that many of his patients used amulets as part of their healthcare. Canaan's work on shrines was originally published as a series of articles in the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* and later published in London by Luzac and Co. as a single volume with the title *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (Canaan 1927).

   Besides being a native of Palestine, Canaan had a number of other advantages in his research on shrines, including the fact that he could draw on the work of the previous studies of Conder, Kahle and McCown. In a number of places, Canaan takes issue with other writers on Palestinian shrines; thus he disagrees with Chester McCown, who wrote that there was little correlation between elevated locations and the occurrence of shrines (Canaan 4–5; cf. McCown 1923,

63–64). The motivation behind Canaan's work was to record information quickly because 'the primitive features of Palestine are disappearing so quickly that before long most of them will be forgotten'. Canaan made no pretence of expertise in archaeology or biblical studies and stated in the preface that he was 'not attempting to do more than place on record the bare material which I have collected, leaving the task of comparison with other data to the professional archaeological and biblical student' (Canaan 1927, v).

In total, Canaan refers to 235 shrines which he had personally visited as well as a further 348 shrines of which he had detailed information. The result is a book of more than 320 pages divided into two sections: Section A (pages 1–84) discusses the structure and location of different forms of shrine, whilst Section B (pages 85–310) describes the rituals and practices associated with the shrines. Canaan's scientific training is in evidence in a number of places where he compares features or attributes of a number of shrines as a method of characterization. For example, he looks at the relationship between shrines and cemeteries and comes to the conclusion that 63% of the shrines in a sample of 17 are situated in a cemetery. However, he also writes that 'the general percentage of such a combination [shrine and cemetery] amounts only to 30%' (Canaan 1927, 7). One of the problems of the work is that the attempts to provide quantitative data are often thwarted by the complex and diffuse nature of the material; thus in this case, it is not clear how he arrived at the 30% for shrines associated with a cemetery. One of the other frustrations is that Canaan obviously had at his disposal a vast amount of material about shrines, which he used to produce the book, yet his presentation uses this material selectively. This is not to question Canaan's integrity in presenting his arguments, but it does mean that it is difficult to compare the shrines or analyse the data independently. Despite these few reservations, Canaan's work remains the most comprehensive treatment of Palestinian Muslim shrines and is still a rich resource for those wishing to study the subject.

6. The fifth study was carried out by Antonin Jaussen (1871–1962), a Dominican priest who was one of the first students at the École Biblique in Jerusalem. Whilst based at the École, Jaussen developed an interest in Arabian tribes and became fluent in a number of Arabic dialects. He published a number of important works on the Arab

tribes in Jordan and, with Raphael Savignac, undertook a pioneering project investigating the archaeology of north-west Arabia, published in three volumes as *Mission Archaeologique en Arabié* (1909–1914). During the First World War, he was briefly imprisoned by the Turks and later seconded to help the allied forces. In 1928, he left Jerusalem for Cairo, where he established a new Dominican institute. With this deep knowledge of Arabic and the geography of the region, his last major project in Palestine was a book on the city of Nablus (Jaussen 1927). Part of this book was devoted to religion and contained a detailed study of the mosques and Muslim shrines in the city (Jaussen 1927, 146–173). Although Jaussen's study was only concerned with Nablus, it contains one of the first detailed and systematic studies of shrines outside Jerusalem. The distinguishing feature of Jaussen's study is that it integrates shrines into the wider context of Islam in Nablus, looking also at the mosques which functioned in the city as officially recognized places of prayer whilst the shrines were for popular devotion. The focus on the shrines of a particular city allows him to set the shrines within the very specific religious context of Samaritan, Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions. In addition to describing the physical appearance of the shrines, Jaussen's use of local informants is more systematic than some of the other studies. Instead of giving generalized information about the powers of a particular shrine or saint, he gives detailed accounts of conversations with visitors to the shrines. However, it is clear that he does not take the stories too seriously and is more interested in the origins of the shrines either as Islamic foundations or as pre-Islamic antiquities. Also, unlike any of the other early-twentieth-century studies, Jaussen sets the shrines within a geographical context, carefully describing the location of the shrine in relation to both the city and the underlying natural topography.

Observations

Each of these accounts was written by an author of different nationality, demonstrating the growing international interest in the region. For example, Claude Conder's article displays a suspicious attitude towards the Palestinian peasants and a preoccupation with the shrines as vestiges of biblical names, which may be seen as a precursor of Britain's eventual colonial occupation of Palestine. On the other hand, Paul Kahle's articles were

written at a high point in German Turkish relations which had seen the German emperor's visit to Jerusalem in 1898 and, in 1914, a treaty between Germany and the Ottoman Empire. In Kahle's work the Muslim shrines were simply an aspect of folk belief incorporated into a Muslim context and were just as valid as German folklore. A decade later the Ottoman Empire had been defeated and Palestine was under the rule of a British Mandate. As an American, the biblical scholar Chester McCown was able to travel around the country with an ease that was impossible before the war. His work on Muslim shrines was infused with both his experiences of Muslim culture in India and his expertise in biblical scholarship. Although he did not seek direct continuity of tradition in the Muslim shrines, he did think that they were a method of 'opening the door back into the atmosphere of the ancient East'. Just as the British Mandate provided unprecedented opportunities for Americans and Europeans to travel and study in Palestine, so the end of Ottoman Muslim rule should have been seen as beneficial to Christian Palestinians such as Tawfik Canaan. However, Canaan saw that this was a double-edged sword, as he explained in the preface to his work on shrines, 'The simple, crude, but uncontaminated patriarchal Palestinian atmosphere is fading away and European civilization, more sophisticated but more unnatural is taking its place' (Canaan 1927, v). Canaan's account is infused with the traumas of the recent war which, as well as destroying some shrines, had led to the dislocation of traditional Palestinian society. For Antonin Jaussen, the Muslim shrines of Nablus were a part of the landscape of an Islamic city and a place for the expression of natural and spontaneous religious impulses. The fact that Jaussen was able to move so freely within the city and argue with Muslim clerics indicates the new-found confidence of Christian Europeans in Palestine.

The fact that four of the studies were written within 20 years of each other is indicative of a growing feeling that the Muslim shrines were an essential component of the Palestinian landscape as it emerged out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. During this period, there was a unique freedom to travel and the opportunity to see the shrines as part of a living popular religion. Since the 1920s, growing political problems combined with increasing urbanization and literacy has meant that veneration of shrines has become marginalized. As a result, there are few general studies of Muslim shrines after the 1920s and the subject was not revived as an area of academic interest until the 1990s. At this point it is worth mentioning the work of the Finnish anthropologist Hilma Granqvist who

made a detailed ethnographical study of the village of Artas near Bethlehem during the 1920s and 1930s. She studied all aspects of life in the village with a particular emphasis on the lives of women. The part of her work most relevant to Muslim shrines is her documentation of death and burial published in 1965 (Granqvist 1965).

Modern and Contemporary Studies of Muslim Shrines

Since the 1990s, there has been a renewed interest in Muslim shrines in the region. This interest may be attributed to a number of factors: (1) the growing role or religion in the politics and culture of the Middle East, (2) a growing interest in medieval and Ottoman texts which relate to the origins of shrines, (3) the fact that abandoned shrines are increasingly become objects of archaeological and architectural interest and (4) the growth of Palestinian (as opposed to Arab) national identity which regards shrines as part of the lost Palestinian heritage.

This renewed interest will be discussed in more detail in Part III. For the present, it is worth providing a brief introduction to current and recent research relating to shrines. One of the most important books on the historical development of shrines is Josef Meri's 2002 book, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria*. This book investigates the development of the veneration of saints in eleventh- to sixteenth-century Syria, drawing attention to parallel developments in Jewish and Muslim practice. This was followed three years later by a translation of al-Harawi's guide to pilgrimage (Meri 2005), which was one of the first practical guides to saint veneration in the region (see Chap. 2 of this volume). Complementary to Meri's work are the publications of Daniella Talmon-Heller (2006, 2007) which look specifically at the relationship between orthodox Sunni religion and the development of saint veneration in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. Daphna Ephrat has looked closely at the development of Sufism in Palestine, which has a direct link to the growth of shrines and saint veneration. She has also linked Sufism directly to particular shrines and locations in medieval Palestine (2006, 2008). More recently, James Grehan has looked at the cult of saints in the Ottoman period from the perspective of social history (Grehan 2014). His main thesis is based on a development of Canaan's concept of a popular religion into the idea of agrarian religion. According to Grehan, this religion was practised both by urban and rural Muslims and was shared

with members of both the Jewish and Christian communities. One of the key sources in Grehan's work is the Syrian Sufi writer Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (1641–1731).

In addition to works dealing with shrines from an historical perspective, there have been a number of articles (see, e.g. Bowman 2014; Firro 2005) which discuss the role of Muslim shrines within contemporary heritage and politics; these will be discussed in more detail in Part III. There are also a few studies dealing with the architecture and archaeology of specific shrines in Palestine (see, e.g. Petersen 1995, 1996, 1999, 2001; Taragan 2000, 2004), which will form part of the discussion in the following section (Chaps. 4, 5, 6, and 7).

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PART II

Types of Shrines

CHAPTER 4

Shrines Sponsored by Sultans

Abstract This chapter discusses the roles of sultans and other high Mamluk officials in the creation and embellishment of shrines. Significantly, the chapter shows that although shrines existed in Palestine before the Mamluks, they did not become a significant architectural feature of the landscape until after the Crusades. It is also apparent that the early Mamluk sultans sponsored shrines connected either with early Islamic history or biblical history but did not seem interested in commemorating the graves of warriors of the faith.

Keywords Baybars • Bilad al-Sham • Abu Huryara • Nabi Musa

Much of the discussion around Muslim shrines in Palestine is concerned with traditional village shrines and the associated rituals and beliefs; however, there are a wide range of different building types. Some of the oldest and architecturally most impressive buildings are those endowed or commissioned by sultans, emirs or other state officials. These buildings are significant not only because of their high-quality architecture but also because they tend to be better documented than many of the other shrines, both through inscriptions embedded in the buildings themselves and also through historical references from travellers and, in some cases, even royal decrees. However, it is rarely the case that the origin of the shrine or tomb

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in question is well documented, and in most cases, the sultans or other high officials will build a structure at or around a pre-existing shrine whose origins are often obscure. It is also the case that these larger well-endowed shrines will often form the architectural model for less well-known shrines. The following discussion does not aim to provide an exhaustive study of shrines built through royal or high status patronage but instead will discuss some examples or case studies which shed light on the process and motivation behind the construction of these buildings.

Although writers such as al-Muqaddasi and Nasir i-Khusraw indicate that several important Muslim shrines existed in Palestine before the Crusades, with the exception of Jerusalem and Hebron, no pre-twelfth-century buildings have survived. Even for the Ayyubid period, there are few examples of Muslim shrines or mausolea in Palestine with the few known examples confined to Jerusalem (and possibly one building in Nablus). The reason generally given for this situation is that the Ayyubids were too preoccupied with fighting the Crusaders to invest in the construction of shrines, mosques and other non-military structures. The majority of Ayyubid buildings which have survived in Palestine are different forms of fortifications, including the fortresses of Jabal al-Tur (Battista and Bagatti 1976) and Qal'at Subayba (Sharon 1999, 59–87) as well as towers such as in Daburiyya (Petersen 2001, 131). There are a few examples of mosques either built or renovated under the Ayyubids; thus a sketchy inscription found at Ramla testifies to the rebuilding of a mosque (probably the White Mosque) by Iyas ibn Abdullah in 1190 (Mayer 1959). However, for practical purposes, the earliest shrines in Palestine built by known royal or official patrons belong to the Mamluk period.

Before considering some examples of Mamluk shrines and by way of introduction, we will first consider the case of victory monuments (*mashhad al-nasr*), which share some of the outward characteristics of religious shrines but in other ways are fundamentally different. The second part of this chapter will consider some shrines connected with the first Mamluk sultan Baybars I (al-Malik al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baybars al-Bunduqdari 1222–1277).

Mashhad al-Nasr

Although there are no surviving Ayyubid shrines, it is perhaps worth mentioning a related form of building, which is the *Mashhad al-Nasr* or victory monument, which was built at the summit of Jabal Hattin north of

Lake Tiberias in 1187. The Arabic geographer al-Dimashqi (1256–1327) gives the following account:

> He[Salah al-Din] broke the Franks (*al-afranj*) on the Horn (*qarn*) of Hattin, and killed many of them, and took their kings prisoner. And he built on the Horn [of Hattin] a dome, which is called the dome of victory (*qubbat al-nasr*). (al-Dimashqi 1866, ed. Mehren, 212)

Thirty years later, the Christian pilgrim Thietmar visited the site and described it as follows:

> Here I crossed the field where the army of the Christians were defeated and the Holy Cross taken as booty by the enemies of the Cross. At this place and on a high certain ground, Saladin built a temple to his gods for the victory gained. It is still there today but it is neglected and fallen into ruins. (Thietmar, trans. Pringle 2012, 95)

The site was visited by a number of nineteenth-century travellers, including Guérin, who notes a rectangular plaster-lined cistern and next to it 'A côte se apient les arrasements d'une petite construction mesurant huit pas carrés, et qui passé pour être un ancient oualy' (the ruins of a small structure measuring 8 paces per side which seemed to be an ancient *wali*) (Guérin 1880b, Vol I, 194). Excavations of the Iron Age fortification of Hattin during the 1990s uncovered the remains of a structure which was described as a medieval building made of comb-dressed masonry and plaster. The remains comprised the foundations of a rectangular building (8.6 × 10 m) separated into two sections (3.75 × 6 m and 2.5 × 6 m) by an internal dividing wall (Gal 1992, 214). Whilst it is probable that the remains are those of Saladin's victory monument, they give little indication of its original appearance.

In a study of Islamic victory monuments, Thomas Leisten has drawn attention to two other related monuments in the region (Leisten 1996). One is the monument erected by the Mamluk sultan Baybars to commemorate the victory over the Mongols at 'Ayn Jalut. Unfortunately, this building has not survived and there is no description of its appearance. The other monument is a fourteenth-century structure known as Qubbat al-'Asfir, which stands on the roadside between Damascus and Homs. The building comprises a tall square chamber capped with a dome resting on an octagonal drum. Above the entrance there is an inscription which attributes the construction to the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Nasir in 741

AH (1341 AD). The interior is empty, with the exception of a concave mihrab in the south wall. The building and inscription were first published by Sauvaget (1939–1940, Vol. 3, 15–18), who suggests that the building commemorates a Mamluk victory over the Mongols in 1303 AD. Leisten observes that without the inscription 'the qubba could have been taken for one of the numerous mausolea built over the tomb of a Mamluk emir or local saint' (Leisten 1996, 20). Lesiten also suggests that the victory monuments at Hattin and 'Ayn Jalut may have disappeared because they were not tied to any endowments or *waqf* for their upkeep in which case Qubbat al-'Asfir is a rare survival. This may give a clue about one of the essential differences between a Muslim shrine and a victory monument. A shrine is a place endowed with spiritual significance by the visits and attention of pilgrims, whereas a victory monument is a secular construction devoid of spiritual meaning unless it commemorates individuals who may have died in the conflict.

Shrines Sponsored by Baybars

As the Muslim ruler to finally re-conquer all of Palestine from the Franks, the Mamluk sultan Baybars may be regarded as the architect of post-Crusader Palestine. His rule has been the subject of many studies concerned with the twin themes of his own legitimacy as a Muslim ruler and also his re-construction of a Muslim Holy Land based around shrines and religious buildings (see for example Frenkel 2001; Taragan 2006b; Aigle 2010). In order to get an idea of how this was achieved, this chapter will focus on three relatively well-documented shrines which illustrate different aspects of Baybars' patronage of shrines. The first example is the tomb of Moses, who, after Abraham, is one of the most prominent figures in the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths; the second example is the tomb of Ali ibn Alil, who despite his relative obscurity nevertheless also had some significance for Christians. The third example is the tomb of Abu Hurayra, a very well-known Muslim figure who was a companion of the Prophet.

Nabi Musa (Figs. 4.1 and 4.2; Fig. 9.1, No. 9)

The shrine of Nabi Musa (biblical Moses) is located in the Jordan Valley 20 km east of Jerusalem and 11 km south of Jericho. Moses is a very important figure within the Islamic tradition and his name appears in the Quran more than any other prophet or personality from the Bible. He was

Fig. 4.1 The Nabi Musa complex located in the Jordan Valley near Jericho. Most of the outer part of the complex is Ottoman and dates from the nineteenth century

also seen as a model for Muhammad, as he devised a constitution for his people and spoke directly to God. According to the Hebrew Bible, Moses died in the land of Moab and was buried somewhere in the valley of Moab, though significantly, his exact burial place was unknown (Deuteronomy 34, 4–6). Christian tradition locates his grave on the east side of the Jordan Valley at Mount Nebo, which became a pilgrimage centre in the Byzantine period. However, according to an early Muslim tradition dated to 154 AH (771 AD), Moses died and was buried within a stone's throw of the Holy Land in a place next to a road and under the Red Hill. According to the same tradition, Muhammad passed by the tomb on his night journey to the furthest place (al-Aqsa—generally interpreted as Jerusalem) and saw Moses standing in his grave praying (Elad 1988, 1–3). During the eighth century AD, there was an attempt to relocate this tradition to the region of Damascus in order to restore some prestige to Syria after the Abbasids had seized the caliphate and moved the centre of the Islamic world to Iraq. However, it seems that the tradition of locating his tomb within the

Fig. 4.2 The cenotaph marking the grave of Musa (Moses) covered by a domed chamber dating to the thirteenth century

vicinity of the Jordan Valley in Palestine prevailed to the extent that al-Harawi (d. 1215) located the tomb of Musa (Moses) near Jericho (Meri 2005, 26).

Today, the tomb chamber and prayer hall of Nabi Musa form the centre of a large two-storey complex surrounded with a vast cemetery and two subsidiary shrines or tombs. According to his biographer, Ibn Shaddad, Baybars 'built over the grave of Moses—may Allah have mercy on him—near the Red Hill south of Jericho a dome and a mosque. He created as *waqf* for it for expenditures on the *muezzin*, *imam*, those who lived in its immediate vicinity and those who came to visit' (trans. in Amitai 2006, 45). Although the complex was significantly expanded under the Ottomans, the domed mausoleum and the mosque mentioned by Ibn Shaddad have survived. The mosque comprises a rectangular space in which the mausoleum forms the north-west corner. From the design it is evident that the mausoleum was built first with the mosque built around

it afterwards. The mosque or prayer hall is roofed with five domes and has mihrab in the centre of the south wall. Although the mosque was originally built by Baybars, it has been remodelled several times and an inscription above the doorway records the rebuilding by Abdullah Pasha in 1819 (Taha 2015, 54).

The mausoleum comprises a nearly square room (6.60 × 5.45) with a huge cenotaph or tomb (5 m long) aligned approximately east-west. The cenotaph occupies most of the south side of the tomb chamber and obscures the view of the concave mihrab which is set in the centre of the south wall. The mihrab has a hood in the form of a two centre arch decorated with zig-zag moulding and supported on slender marble columns decorated with Corinthian capitals. Above each of the capitals, decorated with two tiers of acanthus leaves, there is a floral frieze also made from marble. Hana Taragan has drawn attention to this marble decoration, which is also seen flanking the entrance to the shrine and suggests that it is re-used Crusader material derived ultimately from the Temple Mount workshop (Taragan 2006b, 622–623). The dome which rises to a height of over ten metres is supported by four squinches, one at each corner. Each squinch comprises a series of two tiers of pointed arched niches supported by a small scallop-shaped niche lower down which acts as a form of pendentive.

To the left of the entrance to the shrine there is a window connecting with the shrine and above this there is a panel set in a shallow arched recess containing Baybars' foundation inscription dated 668 AH (1268–1269 AD). According to the inscription, the construction of 'this noble sacred place over the tomb of Moses' was begun after Baybars had completed his Hajj to Mecca and before he visited Jerusalem. As Reuven Amitai has pointed out, this does not give an accurate picture of Baybars' movements, as it is known that he visited Damascus and Aleppo immediately after his visit to Mecca and Medina and visited Jerusalem only afterwards, towards the end of 668 AH (Amitai 2006, 48). Baybars' movements were famously erratic, designed to surprise both his adversaries and his subordinates; thus his detour to northern Syria is not unusual. However, what is interesting is that within the inscription he wished to present his movements in the context of pilgrimage first to Mecca and Medina and then to Jerusalem via this sacred place where Moses was reputed to have been buried. In other words, Baybars wanted to present himself as a legitimate Muslim religious leader directly connecting Jerusalem and Mecca with the tomb of Moses. In this context, Reuven Amitai has drawn attention to the term *qasim*

amir al-mu'minin (associate of the Commander of the Faithfull), which appears immediately after Baybars' name in the inscription and also appears on Baybars' coins (Amitai 2006, 50–51).

Harram Sidna 'Ali at Arsuf (Fig. 4.3 and Fig. 9.1, No. 6)

The Shrine of Sayyidna 'Ali at Arsuf is one of the more enigmatic shrines sponsored by Baybars. Unlike Abu Hurayra or Moses, there is very little independent information about the identity of Sayyidna 'Ali and the earliest source of information is contained in a passage of Baybars' official biography written by Muhyi al-Din b. 'Abd al-Zahir (d. 1292). The passage describes Sayyidna 'Ali as 'one of the famous holy men who are famous for their wonders and miracles. One of the wonders is that he is buried right at the gate of Arsuf' (trans. in Taragan 2004, 88–89). The passage also relates that he was revered by the Franks because of his miraculous powers, which included the ability to prevent pigs from entering the

Fig. 4.3 Harram Sidna 'Ali at Arsuf (near modern Herziliyya) during restoration work in 1992. The tomb of 'Ali ibn 'Alil is in an unroofed enclosure on the right

vicinity of his tomb. Further information about Sayyidna ‘Ali is provided by the fifteenth-century writer Mujir al-Din, writing at a time when the shrine was being renovated and expanded. He describes Sayyidna ‘Ali as first and foremost a holy man with exceptional powers as well as a leader of the Holy War (*Jihad*) who died on Saturday 12th, Rabi‘Awal 474 AH (August 20, 1081) and was buried in Arsuf. He further relates that he was a direct descendant of ‘Umar b. al-Khattab one of the companions of the prophet and was also recognized as a saint by the Franks (Sauvaire 1876, 212–213; see also Mayer et al. 1950, 36–37; Taragan 2004, 83–84).

However, there is still considerable confusion surrounding Sayyidna ‘Ali, including the circumstances of his death (Was he killed in the Holy War?—if so, against whom?) and why he is not mentioned by any writers prior to the thirteenth century. Baybars’ visit to the tomb took place in April 1265, prior to his attack on the Crusader-held city of Arsuf. As mentioned in the texts, the tomb of Sayyidna ‘Ali is located directly outside the main gate to Arsuf and thus would have been a natural place to visit and occupy prior to an assault on the city. According to Mujir al-Din, Baybars camped next to the tomb prior to his attack on the city, prayed and made vows, including the dedication of a *waqf* for the shrine. The subsequent victory over the Crusaders provided further confirmation of the powers of the saint. Although the sources agree that a *waqf* was established for the shrine, no details of this have survived, nor are there any identifiable parts of the shrine which can be attributed to the work of Baybars.

On the basis of the available information, a few general remarks are possible in relation to this shrine. In the first place, it is clear that Baybars’ visit to the shrine and subsequent creation of a *waqf* were the first time that the shrine received official recognition. Prior to this time, the shrine may have been regarded as powerful by the people of Arsūf, but it was not sufficiently famous to be included in, for example, al-Harawi’s book of sacred places. It is also notable that Yaqut (1955–1957, Vol. 2, 151–152), writing in 1225, does not mention Ali bin Alil by name as one of the famous *murābiṭūn* from Arsūf. In any case, Baybars interaction with the shrine marks a part of the process by which a local shrine is given external validation. The shrine then had to wait another two centuries until 1482–1485 AD when it was provided with appropriate infrastructure, including marble cladding on the tomb, a well and a minaret or watch-tower by the Shams al-Din Abu al-Awn head of the Qadariyya Sufis (for a more detailed discussion of the architecture and archaeology of the shrine, see Chap. 5).

The second observation relates to the multi-confessional nature of the shrine. Both the medieval sources make it clear that the tomb of Sayyidna ‘Ali was also venerated by the Franks who took possession of Arsuf in 1101. Given that Sayyidna ‘Ali’s death occurred in 1081, nearly two decades before the arrival of the Crusaders in the region, was he a local inhabitant who resisted the attacks of the Turkic tribal invaders or the Shi‘a Fatimid forces in the anarchic conditions prior to the Crusader conquest? Alternatively, he could have been a holy man unconnected with warfare who had earned the trust of both local Christians and Muslims. The sources do not provide enough information but what is clear is that Baybars regarded him as an important saint whose powers would be reserved for Sunni Islam.

Maqam Abu Hurayra (Figs. 4.4 and 4.5; Fig. 9.1, No. 8)

One of the most significant monuments associated with Baybars’ rule in Palestine is the Maqam of Abu Hurayra. The shrine of Abu Hurayra is located in the modern town of Yavneh (Ar. Yubna) in the southern coastal

Fig. 4.4 The *riwaq* or porch added to the tomb Abu Hurayra by the Mamluk sultan Baybars in 1274

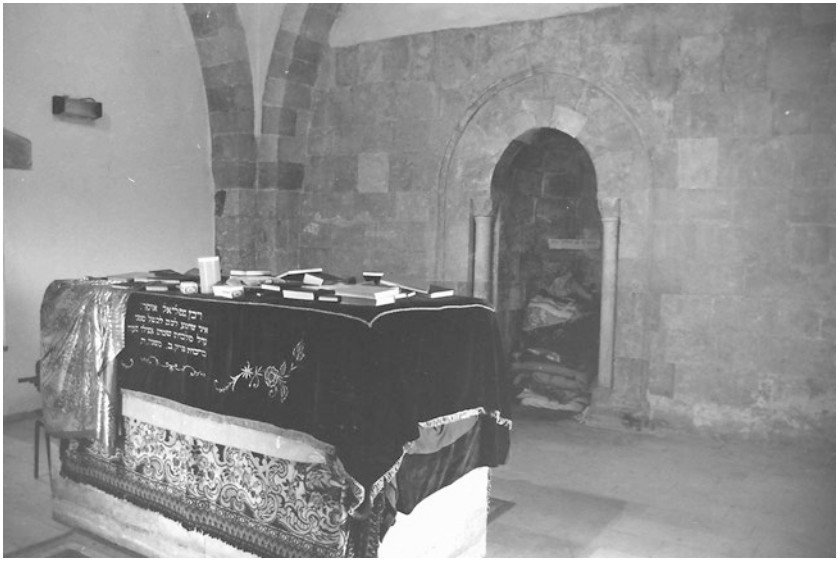

Fig. 4.5 Interior of the tomb chamber of Abu Hurayra rebuilt by the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf in 1294. The cenotaph in the centre is covered with a cloth embroidered with Hebrew characters, reflecting a minority Jewish belief that this is the tomb of Rabbi Gamliel

plain between Jaffa (modern Tel Aviv) and Ascalon (modern Ashkelon). The town is identified with the ancient biblical settlement of Jabneh/Yabneh and the classical city of Jamnia. By the fourth century AD, the town had a population of Christians and Samaritans, and in 480 AD, the Empress Eudocia established a church and hostel. The city was captured by the Muslim Arabs under the general ‘Amr ibn al-As in the seventh century, and by the tenth century, the town had a mixed population of Muslims Christians and Samaritans but no Jews. Al-Muqaddisi notes that there was a beautiful mosque and a coastal lookout station at the nearby coastal station of Mahuz Yubna. During the Crusades, Yubna was close to or the site of three battles between the Crusaders and the Fatimids (August 12, 1099; August 27, 1105; and August 29, 1123). The conflict had a negative impact on the settlement, so by 1123, it was reduced to the site of a small village (for a recent review of the archaeology and history of Yubna/Yavneh, see Fisher and Taxel 2007).

The maqam of Abu Hurayra is located to the west of the tell which formed the nucleus of the ancient city. The origins of the shrine are obscure, although al-Harawi mentions a shrine of Abu Hurayra at Yubna in the 1170s (Meri 2005, 88; Sourdel-Thoumine 1957, 77). The identification of the tomb of Abu Hurayra is problematic, as most Arabic authors state that he died and was buried in Medina. The shrine at Yubna is also mentioned by Yaqut (1179–1229), who notes that the shrine either contains the tomb of Abu Hurayra or ʻAbd Allah ibn Saʻad ibn Abi Sarh, who was governor of Egypt 646–656 (Yaqut, ed. Wüstenfled 1866–1870, Vol. 4, 1007). Another suggestion is given by the anonymous author of a fourteenth-century text known as *Muthir al-Gharam* who stated that the tomb contained the remains of a son of Abu Hurayra (cited in Mayer et al. 1950, 21). Since the creation of Israel in 1948, the building has been adopted as a Jewish Shrine and the tomb is said to contain the remains of Rabbi Gamliel who lived in Yavne in the first century AD.

The shrine has been the subject of a number of architectural studies (e.g. Clermont-Ganneau 1896–1899, Vol. 2, 179–180; Mayer et al. 1950, 21; Petersen 2001, 313–319; Taragan 2000) and is generally regarded as one of the finest domed mauslea in Palestine. The building consists of a domed tomb chamber and a six-domed portico or riwaq set within a stone-walled enclosure. The portico is enclosed on three sides, and on the north side, there are three tall pointed arches springing from the side walls and two rectangular free-standing piers. The central arch is decorated with a chevron moulding and the arches either side are decorated with cushion voussoirs. The interior is divided into six domed bays supported by two marble columns with Corinthian capitals divided into two acanthus bands. Five of the domes rest on pendentives whilst the sixth dome adjacent to the entrance to the tomb chamber is raised above the other domes and rests on squinches. The entrance to the tomb chamber is a deeply recessed portal covered with a *muqarnas* hood and decorated with alternating bands of *ablaq* red and white masonry.

The tomb chamber is a large square room (6.2 m per side) covered with a (11.5 m) high dome sitting on top of an octagonal drum. In the centre of the south wall, there is a tall concave mihrab flanked by two slender marble columns with *muqarnas* capitals. The rectangular masonry cenotaph stands in the centre of the chamber and is aligned east-west (i.e. a typical Muslim alignment). The lower four courses of the cenotaph are made of plain ashlar blocks whilst the upper part is decorated with marble panels decorated with Gothic trefoil arches (pos-

sibly re-used from the nearby dismantled Crusader church). On the exterior there is a set of steps giving access to the roof. The complex contains three medieval inscriptions, the earliest, dated 673 AH (1274), states that the portico was built by Sultan Baybars. The second inscription is carved into the lintel and around the entrance to the tomb chamber is dated to 692 AH (1293 AD) and states that the mausoleum (Mashhad of Abu Hurayra) was built by al-Malik al-Ashraf. The third inscription is no longer visible but was originally built into the gateway of the compound and was dated to 806 AH (1403 AD) (Clermont-Ganneau 1896–1899, Vol. 2, 179–180).

As with many shrines, the history of this building is complex and there is little certainty about its origins. Whilst the identity of the shrine with Abu Hurayra may be doubtful (perhaps less so than the current Jewish identification of the tomb with Rabbi Gamliel), it is clear that this had become a firmly established tradition as early as the twelfth century. The fact that the shrine was partially rebuilt by at least two Mamluk sultans (al-Zahir Baybars and al-Malik al-Ashraf) clearly indicates that it was regarded as an important structure.

Hana Taragan (2000, 2006a, 54–56) has argued that Baybars' motivation in renovating the shrine by the addition of the porch was a complex piece of symbolism. In the first place, he wished to signal his victory over the Crusaders by the creation of a distinctively Muslim building incorporating recognizable Crusader decorative elements. Through the actions of its ruling family, Ibellin (Crusader Yubna) had become one of the most important Crusader lordships in the Kingdom of Jerusalem and its final transfer into Muslim hands in the 1230s will have been regarded as a symbolic victory for the Muslims. Denys Pringle has shown how at the end of Crusader rule the church in Yubna (Ibellin) was converted into a mosque by blocking the west door and adding a new door in the north wall. In addition, the size of the prayer areas was reduced by the demolition of the south aisle and construction of a new south wall (Pringle 1998, 378–384). The exact date of the conversion is not known although it probably occurred before Baybars instigated the work at the shrine of Abu Hurayra. In any case, the façade of the portico was decorated with cushion voussoirs and zig-zag mouldings, which would have been regarded as typical of Crusader architecture (see for example Salam-Liebich 1983, 221–223). It is possible that this masonry was re-used from the destroyed portion of the church, as it is known that the blocked west door of the church (destroyed in 1948) was decorated with cushion voussoirs.

The other symbolic aspect of the construction of the *riwaq* relates to its claim to be the tomb of Abu Hurayra. Although Baybars' inscription (now lost) referring to the construction of the riwaq does not explicitly refer to Abu Hurayra, the fact that it was first identified as his tomb by al-Harawi in the 1170s suggests that this attribution was probably taken for granted by Baybars some hundred years later. In any case, when the domed mausoleum was rebuilt 19 years later by Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil in 1292, the foundation inscription explicitly refers to Abu Hurayra, the companion of the Prophet (*RCEA*, XIII, 4965; Petersen 2001, 315). Abu Hurayra is also known to Muslims as one of the most prolific and respected transmitters of hadith (more than 1500). Hana Taragan has suggested that as a new Muslim, Baybars would have felt the need to legitimize his power and that an association with such an important figure as Abu Hurayra would have been one way to add to his Islamic credentials. There are two other aspects to Abu Hurayra which might be of significance in this context. The first is that he was explicitly against the veneration of tombs; thus he transmitted the following hadith: 'The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: Let Allah destroy the Jews for they have taken the graves of their apostles as places of worship' (Sahih Muslim Book 4, No. 1080).

However, within the context of thirteenth-century Bilad al-Sham, the construction of shrines was normal, and this hadith was one of thousands transmitted by Abu Hurayra and was not one of his more famous narrations. Probably of more significance is the fact that the Shiʿa Muslims have a very negative view of Abu Hurayra, stating that he converted to Islam only two years before his death and that only those hadith corroborated by other sources can be accepted. In this context the sponsorship of Abu Hurayra's tomb gives a very positive Sunni message in an area which, prior to the Crusader conquest, had been under Shiʿa Fatimid control. Also of possible significance is that 25 km to the south, at Ascalon, was the Mashhad of Husayn's head which had been built by the Fatimids in the tenth or eleventh centuries. The shrine remained in use during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries even after the city itself had been destroyed (Talmon-Heller et al. 2016, 194–6). In this case, the renovation of the shrine of such an important Sunni figure as Abu Hurayra would have been an appropriate means of countering the attractions of the predominantly Shiʿa shrine at Ascalon. The fact that the sultan Ashraf Khalil chose to continue the restoration of the shrine nineteen years later by the rebuilding of the mausoleum itself is further evidence of the symbolic importance that was attached to the Abu Hurayra shrine.

Conclusions

A number of observations can be made based on this review of shrines sponsored by Baybars.

The first and most important is that none of these shrines was a new creation by Baybars—in each case there was a pre-existing tradition connecting the person concerned with the particular location. The newest shrine—that of ʻAli ibn ʻAlil—has the least antiquity both through the dates of the individual concerned (he died less than two centuries before Baybars' visit) and through the fact that the shrine appears in writing for the first time in connection with Baybars' visit in the Spring of 1265. The description of ʻAli ibn ʻAlil in Baybars' biography is very general and says little about him beyond the fact that 'he was one of those righteous men famed for their wonders and miracles' (Taragan 2004). The identification of ʻAli as a warrior of the faith (*mujahid*) and as a direct descendant of ʻUmar ibn Khattab only occurs later in the work of Mujir al-Din so that just as the shrine complex was developed in the fifteenth century so also the biography of the saint was augmented at this time. The other two shrines, Nabi Musa and Abu Hurayra, are both mentioned by al-Harawi and thus have more credibility. This credibility is very important, as in both cases the claims are very big and contradict established scriptural traditions about the place of burial.

The second observation is that construction activity at all three of these shrines was minimal; thus at the tomb of ʻAli ibn ʻAlil, there is no evidence of any construction activity associated with Baybars. At the Maqam of Abu Hurayra, Baybars' building work was limited to the *riwaq* (porch), whilst at Nabi Musa, arguably the most important shrine, he built only a small domed *maqam* and a prayer area. In contrast to this rather limited building activity, it should be noted that at each of the shrines Baybars endowed a *waqf* (foundation) for the maintenance of the shrine. In view of the revenues assigned to the shrines, it appears that lack of finance was not amongst the reasons for the limited construction work at each of these sites. Instead, it seems likely that Baybars was reluctant to be seen as an innovator of shrines but rather as a ruler who sought to support what had already been established by recognized Islamic traditions. The same conservative policy is evident in Baybars' work on other religious buildings and shrines in Palestine; thus in Jerusalem, he had the Dome of the Rock covered with a new lead roof, and in Hebron, he had the sanctuary painted white and also refurbished the tombs and re-paved the floors of

the sanctuary. It is also worth noting that Baybars' patronage of these shrines provided a basis for their subsequent development with both Nabi Musa and Harram Sayyidna 'Ali expanding to become major complexes with annual festivals during the Ottoman period.

The third observation is that despite his martial prowess, Baybars did not seem particularly interested in building or sponsoring shrines connected with warriors of the faith (*mujahid*). Within the three examples looked at here, only the tomb of 'Ali bin Alil has been identified as a warrior and this seems to be a later attribution not connected with Baybars. If we look beyond these three examples, at other shrines in Palestine sponsored by Baybars or his followers, none of them is primarily known as a warrior and his preference seems to have been for companions of the Prophet. Thus at Isdud near modern Ashdod, one of Baybars' commanders built a mausoleum and mosque for Salman al-Farisi, the first Persian to convert to Islam (Petersen 2001, 156–157), and on the east side of the Jordan, Baybars built a shrine for Abu 'Ubayda b al-Jarrah (*RCEA*, Vol. 12, 208–209), another *sahabi* (Companion of the Prophet). The only shrine sponsored by Baybars which is explicitly that of a warrior is the tomb of Khalid b. al-Walid, the early Muslim general credited with the conquest of Syria. The tomb is located at Homs in central Syria and thus outside Palestine. Although Khalid was also one of the Companions of the prophet, the inscription on the tomb clearly identifies him for his military prowess, describing him as *sayf Allah* (Sword of God) (*RCEA*, Vol. 12, 104–106). However, it is interesting that Khalid b. al-Walid is still regarded as a controversial figure amongst the Shi'a and it may be that Baybars sponsored this tomb for the same reasons that he chose to build a *riwaq* for the tomb of Abu Hurayra in Yubna (i.e. as part of a Sunni revival).

There are two possible reasons that Baybars may not have been keen to support a shrine of a Muslim warrior in Palestine. One is that he may have wanted to keep Palestine as a Holy Land, emphasizing its holiness and antiquity rather than any recent warfare. The other possibility is that Baybars wished to portray himself as the epitome of Muslim warriors and did not wish to be outshone by any other Muslim leader of the recent past. Support for this view is contained in an article by Denise Aigle (2006) which shows how Baybars portrayed himself as the ideal Muslim sovereign, a fighter for the faith and just ruler. Although Baybars sought the validation of the Abbasid caliphs, he was apparently afraid that their attempt to recapture Baghdad would threaten his own pre-eminence as a Muslim ruler.

The last point considers how the shrines were part of a process of reconfiguring the landscape of Palestine. In order to discourage the return of the Crusaders, Baybars destroyed the coastal towns, personally taking part in the destruction of Jaffa's harbour. Instead of its ports, Palestine was provided with roads, bridges and khans to facilitate rapid overland transport between the twin capitals of Cairo and Damascus. Whilst the shrines emphasized both the biblical antiquity of Palestine and its connection with early Islam, Baybars' destruction of the coastal towns cut it off from its Mediterranean heritage and links to Christian Europe.

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CHAPTER 5

Major Sufi Shrines

Abstract This chapter discusses the development of Sufism in the Islamic world and also its growth within Palestine. The chapter includes a case study of the Qadiriyya order of Sufis and shows how they established a network of shrines and festivals in central Palestine. In addition to relatively literate and well-documented shrines, there were also shrines such as Dayr al-Shaykh which are only known through local history but which nevertheless had a significant presence within the Palestinian landscape. The final part of the chapter describes shrines associated with the Yashrutiyya order in Acre during the early nineteenth century.

Keywords Sufism • Dayr al-Shaykh • Acre

It will be apparent from Chap. 4 that the development of shrines in Palestine is intimately connected with the growth of Sufism, particularly in the period following the expulsion of the Crusaders. Whilst the history of Sufism in general and in Palestine in particular have been the subjects of detailed study, the relationship with the architecture of shrines has been little investigated (for some examples from other parts of the Islamic world, see Blair 1990; Yusupova 1999). Part of the reason for this is that Sufism is a spiritual form of Islam, and although buildings obviously played a role in the diffusion of Sufi thought and in the maintenance of certain

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rituals, the buildings are generally regarded as secondary. This can be seen, for example, in some of the terms used to describe Sufi architecture. For example, the term *zawiya* comes from the Arabic word for corner and originally means a place (corner) where Sufis would meet to engage in rituals or a location where a Sufi mystic or elder would reside. As the name implies, a *zawiya* or corner is usually part of a larger building, such as a mosque, which was then used by Sufis. In other words, although the term *zawiya* can be used to describe a purpose-built Sufi structure, it can also refer to a location in a building which otherwise has little to do with Sufis. For example, al-Ghazzali is known to have resided in a *zawiya* above the Bab al-Rahma in the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem (al-Tibawi 1965, 73). Although this was later rebuilt specifically as a *zawiya* at the time of al-Ghazzali's residence, it was probably a room that was available at the time. Similarly, the term *khanaqah* is a Persian word which refers to the place where a meal cloth is laid out and, as in the case of *zawiya*, can refer to multiple locations which may be outside or inside buildings. The term was first applied to buildings in the ninth century AD when the Sufi Muhammad ibn Karram (d. 839) established a *khanaqah* as a meeting house for his followers. Other terms which are also used interchangeably include *tekke* (Sufi residence) and *khalwah* (individual Sufi retreat).

One of the most problematic words is the term *ribat,* which in the early Islamic period (pre-eleventh century AD) was used to describe a fortress, fortification or tower where religious Muslims would reside to defend Islam from external attack (for a detailed discussion of the origin of the term, see Masarwa 2006, 54–105). Many of the surviving examples of early Islamic *ribats* were located on the coast, which for much of the Islamic world constituted the border, although *ribats* also existed along the inland frontiers. With the decline of the Abbasid caliphate in the tenth century and the disintegration of the Islamic world, many of the *ribats* fell into ruin through either warfare or neglect. The ruins of these ribats were associated with a more glorious past and the former inhabitants were regarded as holy men who had dedicated themselves to Islam (see, e.g. the Haram Sayyidna 'Ali at Arsuf discussed below). At roughly the same time as military *ribats* were falling into disrepair, Sufism was gaining ground as a form of Muslim religiosity. It is in this context that ribats started to be built specifically as Sufi institutions devoid of their earlier military character. Nile Green has pointed to the earliest surviving example of this transformation in the form of the Guardamur ribat on the south-eastern coast of Spain built in 944 AD according to its foundation

inscription. This *ribat* contains 13 cells for the Sufi inhabitants as well as accommodation for pilgrims, a mosque and other ancillary rooms. Although it is not certain that this was a Sufi establishment, the presence of mihrabs in each of the 13 cells, together with Arabic graffiti by pilgrims asking for intercession, is strongly suggestive of a Sufi institution (Green 2012, 56–57).

Historically, at least 11 Sufi orders are known to have operated in Palestine and 6 of these (al-Qadiriyya, al-Rifa ʻiyya, al-Disuqiyya, al-Ahmadiyya, al-Wafa ʻiyya al-Shadhiliyya and al-Yunusiyya) can be traced back to the early Mamluk period whilst the other five were introductions of the Ottoman era (Mawlawiyya in the sixteenth century, al-Sa'diyya in the seventeenth century, al-Wa'faʻiyya al-Saʻdiyya in the seventeenth century, al-Naqshabandiyya also in the seventeenth century and the al-Yashrutiyya in the nineteenth century). One of the notable features of Palestinian Sufism is that each of the orders appears to have been autonomous, and although the name of a particular *tariqa* might be the same as a larger group elsewhere, it may have had little in common in terms of either organization or spiritual beliefs. The one exception to this is the al-Mawlawiyya, which was ranked as a Mevlevikhane of the second order and had its leader appointed direct from Konya (De Jong 1983).

As Sufism developed in Palestine during the medieval and Ottoman period, purpose-built Sufi meeting houses were established referred to variously as *khanaqahs*, *zawiyas* or *ribats*. The first designated Sufi lodge in Palestine was the khanaqh al-Salahiyya founded in 1189 within the former palace of the Latin patriarch. The first Mamluk sultan Baybars continued this policy by giving the church of the Crucifixion in Jerusalem to his favoured Sufi Shaykh Khadir as a Sufi lodge (Frenkel 2001). In addition to zawiyas, there were also Sufi mosques (*masjid* or *jami'*) as well as *mashhad*'s and other buildings. Because Sufism was based around groups of teachers and their pupils when the founder of a particular group died, he was often buried within the building complex where he lived. In this way, many Sufi buildings came to incorporate tombs which were then venerated not only by the pupils of the deceased teacher but by people from other orders and from the wider population if the person was sufficiently well known or had special powers. Thus, Sufi practices provided an accelerated method of developing Muslim shrines.

The other means by which Sufism encouraged the veneration and visitation of shrines was through the appropriation, repair and modification of earlier shrines and the organization of festivals (*mawsim*) associated with

these shrines. For example, the shrine of Nabi Rubin was rebuilt or renovated by the Qadiri Shaykh Shihab al-Din Ahmad (d. 1440), who also established the festival of Nabi Rubin, which continued into the twentieth century (Sauvaire 1876, 211).

In order to get a better idea of the architecture connected to Sufi mystics, this chapter will look at some well-documented examples of Sufi shrines, looking first at buildings connected with the Qadariyya order, then at the tomb of Shaykh Badr at Dayr al-Shaykh and finally at the Yashrutiyya shrine complex in Acre. In each case the shrines comprised complexes of buildings, which included both prayer areas as well as one or more tombs.

Muhammad Abu al-'Awn and the Qadariyya Order

The Qadariyya order is named after 'Abd al-Qadir al-Gailani (d. 1165), who was born in Gilan, northern Iran, and lived most of his adult life in Baghdad, where he was employed as a Hanbali jurist. Although he was known for his ability in preaching and his asceticism, he does not seem to have been the founder of the order which bears his name. Instead, as a leader of the Sufis, his writings inspired others to establish an order (*tariqa*) based on his teachings which are derived from Hanbali law and amongst other things refer to a Sufi hierarchy (Baldick 2012, 71–72). As with many of the other Sufi orders, it first appears in Palestine during the early Mamluk period and remained one of the main orders into the twentieth century (cf. De Jong 1983, 156). The order was introduced into the Syria Palestine region in the thirteenth century by the Ibn Qudama and Yunini families. Both these families were prominent followers of Hanbali law and fostered the order within the Hanbali religious institutions of Damascus and Aleppo. However, during the fourteenth century, the followers of the Qadiriyya *tariqa* were predominantly adherents of the Shafi'I school of law. The two personalities credited with the expansion of the Qadariyya into the region are Sharf al-Din Yahya (d. 1333) in Hama and Shihab al-Din Ahmad, also known as Ibn Arslan (d. 1440), in Palestine. Both leaders claimed descent from 'Abd al-Qadir, although according to Daphne Ephrat, the Palestinian Shihab al-Din Ahmad did not transmit authority or spiritual knowledge through his family but rather through disciples inspired by his teaching and charisma (Ephrat 2009, 3).

Muhammad Abu al-'Awn (d. 1504) was one of Shihab al-Din Ahmad's disciples and became his successor as leader of the Qadariyya in Palestine

in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. He was born in Gaza before moving to the village of Jaljuliyya, where he established his reputation as a religious charismatic and later settled in Ramla where he eventually died and was buried. According to a seventeenth-century biography, Abu al-'Awn was a charismatic figure noted for his wondrous deeds, mystical revelations and elevated mystical states. He was also known for his social justice, treating both the rich and the poor in the same manner and redistributing gifts which he received from wealthy donors to the more needy (al-Ghazzi, cited in Ephrat 2009, 5–6). He is well known both through the buildings associated with him and through the writings of his near contemporary Mujir al-Din. Muhammad Abu al-'Awn represents the high point of Sufism under the Mamluks and illustrates the local networks of buildings and people which constituted the religious fabric of late medieval Palestine. Three buildings associated with Muhammad Abu al-Awn have survived: (1) a mosque in Jaljuliyya, (2) a mosque in Ramla and (3) the Haram Sidna 'Ali (near modern Herziliyya), which was introduced in the previous chapter.

1. It is not clear when or for how long Muhammad Abu al-'Awn lived in Jaljuliyya, although he must have been there early in his life or have had family connections to have acquired the epithet al-Jaljuli in the biography by al-Ghazzi (Vol. I, 74–77). The town always appears to have been fairly small, although during the fourteenth century, it acquired some significance because of the establishment of a khan by the Mamluk emir Sayf al-Din Tankiz (1312–1340) (al-Nu'aimi, trans. Sauvaire 1894), which served the Cairo-Damascus highway. In addition to the large khan which had its own mosque with a minaret, there was also a small mosque to the north and the larger complex known as the Mosque of Abu al-'Awn to the south (Petersen 1997). Although now in a ruinous condition with less than half of the original structure still standing, the form of the Abu al-'Awn mosque can be reconstructed from early descriptions and photographs (Fig. 5.1). The mosque was divided into two main interconnected bays, one roofed with a folded cross-vault (the East bay) and the other roofed with a large dome resting on a decagonal fenestrated drum (the West bay). In the south wall of each bay there was a projecting *mihrab* flanked by windows which looked out on a cemetery to the south. In the east wall of the east bay there were three small arched doorways leading into three separate small chambers.

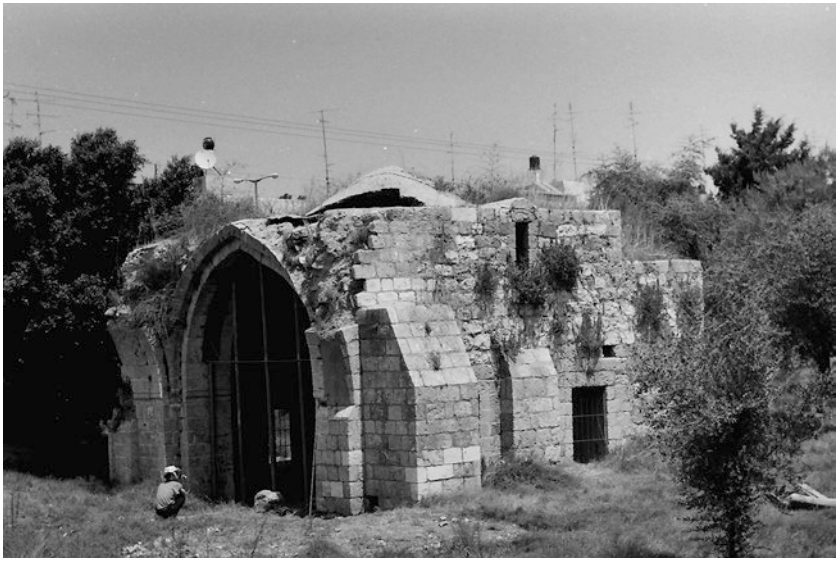

Fig. 5.1 Exterior of the mosque Jaljuliyya, which may have originally been built as a mausoleum for Muhammad Abu al-'Awn

The form of the building is unusual, especially the three small chambers and the arrangement of the cross-vaulted and dome, and it is probable that it served as a *zawiya* or Sufi lodge rather than as a Friday mosque. It is possible that the area beneath the large dome may have been intended as a burial place for the founder of the building, either Abu al-'Awn himself (who was actually buried in Ramla—see below) or perhaps his father or spiritual mentor. In any case, the presence of graves on the south side of the building suggests that the building may have been regarded as a shrine. The building is too ruinous to detect whether there was originally a tomb in this location; only excavation would resolve this question.

2. The mosque of Abu al-'Awn in Ramla is in a much better condition and has recently (since 1992) been restored for use as a mosque. Like the Jaljuliyya building, this mosque is located at the edge of the town on the main road from Cario to Damascus. The Ramla mosque has a more conventional design for a mosque, comprising a prayer hall divided into six bays roofed with shallow

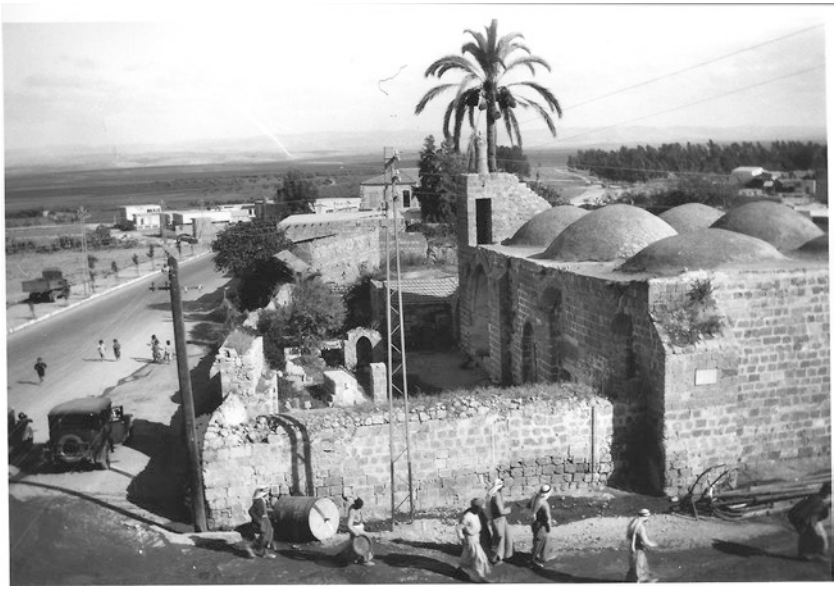

Fig. 5.2 The Mosque of Abu al-'Awn in Ramla which contains the tomb of Muhammad Abu al-'Awn and his wife

domes (Fig. 5.2). There is a *mihrab* in the centre of the south wall, and in the 1950s, there was a tall *minbar* (or pulpit) adjacent to this. On the roof there is a small unroofed staircase minaret capped with marble finial. The area beneath the central dome on the north side of the prayer hall (i.e. adjacent to the courtyard and opposite the *mihrab*) is divided from the rest of the prayer hall by low walls and contains two marble-clad cenotaphs, one of which belongs to Abu al-'Awn. The courtyard of the mosque contains a number of tombs also clad in marble and engraved with inscriptions (for photographs and a full description of this building, see Mayer and Pinkerfeld 1950, and for inscriptions on the tombs in the courtyard, see Sauvaire 1874, 183–223). The tomb of Abu al-Awn and his wife have clearly been inserted into the prayer hall of a building designed as a Friday mosque. It seems likely that the mosque at Jaljuliyya with its tall dome was built as a funerary mosque for Abu al-'Awn, who had expected to die and be buried in Jaljuliyya. Instead, it appears that he had

died in Ramla and had to be interred in the Friday mosque, which subsequently became his shrine.

3. According to Mujir al-Din, the greatest achievement of Abu al-'Awn was the refurbishment and revitalization of the shrine of 'Ali ibn 'Alil at Arsuf (al-'Ulaymi, trans. Sauvaire 1876, 212–213). In his discussion of the shrine, he states that it was one of the most important saints' tombs in the land of Palestine. He also states that 'Ali bin 'Alil (d. 1081 AD) was noted for his pursuit of *jihad*, miracles, asceticism and noble lineage going back to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (583–644 AD). His grave was venerated by both Christians and Muslims, including Sultan Baybars, who refurbished his tomb possibly including the construction of a domed mausoleum (see above, Chap. 4 and Taragan 2004, 96–97). Mujir al-Din specifies the work at the shrine carried out by Abu al-'Awn included cladding the tomb with marble, digging a well in the courtyard and building a minaret at the west end of the courtyard. In addition to the building work, Abu al-'Awn was also responsible for organizing the annual summer pilgrimage to the site, which brought visitors from near and far.

   Haram Sidna 'Ali is located at the north edge of modern Herziliyya and to the south of the ruined city of Arsuf (Fig. 9.1, No. 8). The complex comprises an approximately rectangular enclosure (50 × 38 m) aligned east-west with the main entrance at the north side (Fig. 4.3). The enclosure is divided into two courtyards, a small outer courtyard on the north side and a larger courtyard to the south. The sides of the main (south) enclosure are lined with cross-vaulted arcades and there are further rooms on an upper floor. In the centre of the south side of the courtyard, there is an unroofed walled enclosure containing the cenotaph or tomb of the Sayyidna 'Ali bin 'Alil. According to Guérin, the tomb was covered by a vault when he visited in 1873 although this appears to have been subsequently removed.

   The majority of the standing structure dates to the Ottoman period and later although there are some areas of the complex which may be earlier. For example, the folded cross-vaults which line the *qibla* (south) side of the courtyard may date to the late fifteenth century. Taragan (2004, 92–102) suggests that the entire inner courtyard dates from the Mamluk period; however, the well

is located in the smaller northern courtyard, and according to Mujir al-Din, this was located within the courtyard. On this basis, it seems likely that the late Mamluk courtyard was much larger, incorporating the area of both the present courtyards. Taragan also dates the minaret to the early Mamluk period on the basis of the similarity between its doorway and the portals of the Red Mosque in Safed (1274–1275 AD), the Maqam of Abu Hurayra in Yubna (1292 AD). In particular, she draws attention to the lintel supported on corbels and the recessed inscription panel above (Taragan 2004, 97–98). However, both features can also be found later in Ottoman architecture in the region (see, e.g. Petersen et al. 2012, Chap. 9). Taragan further suggests that the doorway between the two courtyards may be re-used Crusader masonry possibly inserted during the early Mamluk period (Taragan 2004, 98–100 and Fig. 3, p. 94); however, this also seems unlikely as both the form of the arch (horseshoe shaped) and the quality of the masonry suggest an Ottoman date.

Although little of the standing structure dates from before the Ottoman period, the size, location and layout of the complex bear a striking resemblance to the early Islamic *ribat* identified at Ashdod Yam (57 × 38 m) and at Kafr Lam (46.6 × 62.8 m) (cf. Petersen 2016, 191). Given that Arsūf was identified by Muqaddasi as one of the *ribats* along the coast of Palestine, one would expect to find a building similar to those at Ashdod and Kafr Lam. Just as the *ribat* at Ashdod lies outside the main Byzantine and early Islamic city, so the shrine at Arsuf also lies outside the walls of the city. Taragan (2004) has suggested that ʻAli ibn ʻAlil was one of the *muraabit* religious fighters resident at Arsūf; if so, it is probable that when he died he was buried in the *ribat*. After the Crusader conquest in 1101, the *ribat* was probably destroyed to provide building materials for the Crusaders and to prevent its being used as a base for anyone attempting to besiege the city. When Baybars came to Arsuf in 1265, the grave of ʻAli bin ʻAlil was probably a shrine amongst the ruins of the destroyed *ribat*. Although Baybars may have rebuilt the actual shrine, perhaps the renovation of the whole complex had to wait until the work of Muhammad Abu al-ʻAwn in 1482.

Fig. 5.3 Dayr al-Shaykh—exterior of complex with large dome covering the prayer area and the smaller dome covering the tomb of Shaykh (Sultan) Badr

Dayr al-Shaykh (Figs. 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5; Fig. 9.1, No. 1)

Unlike the shrines associated with Abu al-'Awn, there is very little written information about the Dayr al-Shaykh shrine. There are, for example, no inscriptions on the building itself and only a few historical references. The primary sources of information are provided by some passages in Mujir al-Din (Vol. 2, 146–147) and some oral history collected by Tawfiq Canaan (1927, 305–308). According to these sources, the shrine at Dayr al-Shaykh was established around the tomb of Sultan Badr who made the place his home sometime during the thirteenth century. Badr acquired the title Sultan not because of any political power but because of his spiritual significance at a *quṭb* within the Sufi movement. According to some accounts, he originated in the Hijaz later migrating to Khurasan (North-East Iran) before arriving in Palestine whilst other accounts state that he was born in Khurasan. Although neither his date of birth nor the year of his death is known, he seems to have lived during the thirteenth century given that his first son Muhammad died in 663 AH (1264–1265 AD).

Fig. 5.4 Interior of tomb chamber at Dayr al-Shaykh. The cenotaph marking the grave of Sultan Badr is behind the low wall and can be accessed through the rectangular opening on the left

Many of Sultan Badr's descendants (both men and women) became spiritual leaders in their own right and Mujir al-Din gives an account of the location of shrines which developed around their tombs. Mujir al-Din also states that his lineage went back to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and that all the other Sufis of the time followed his teachings. He established a *zawiya* in the Wadi al-Nasur, where after his death he was buried. His tomb became a

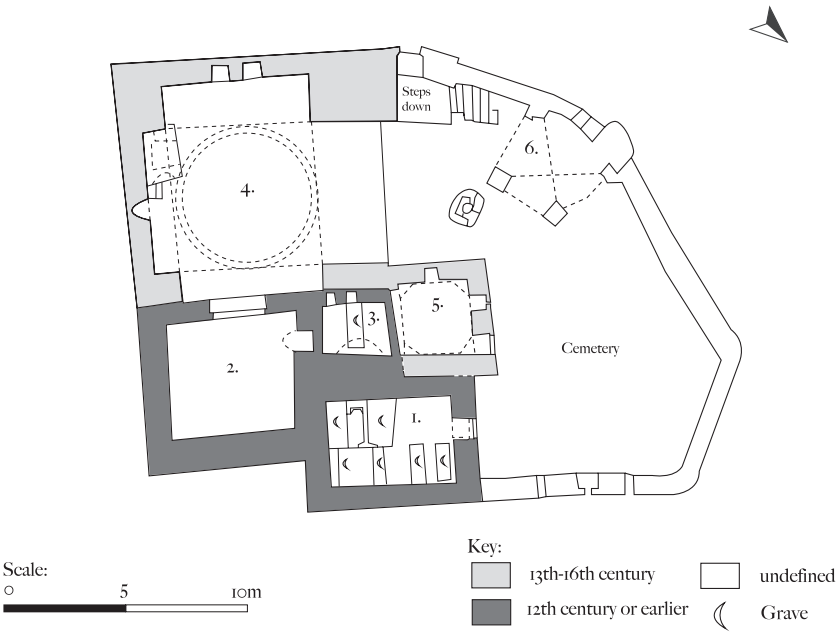

Fig. 5.5 Plan of shrine complex at Dayr al-Shaykh showing two main phases of construction. (1) Vault containing tombs, (2) vaulted room, (3) vault containing tomb of Sultan Badr, (4) domed prayer room, (5) domed anti-chamber to Sultan Badr's tomb and (6) cross-vaulted canopy used as kitchen area (Drawing by Ifan Edwards)

place of veneration and was even visited by animals and birds. His son Muhammad was buried near him after his death in 663 AH (1264–1265 AD).

In order to get some understanding of the shrine, it is necessary to give a physical description of the complex and then set it within the wider context of Sufi shrines (the following description is based on a survey of the building carried out in 1995 and published in Petersen 1996).

Dayr al-Shaykh is built in a remote location on the south side of a steep and narrow valley (Arabic Wadi Nasur or Hebrew Nahal Soreq) to the south-west of Jerusalem. Even today the complex is difficult to access although its white dome can be seen amongst the surrounding trees from a considerable distance. The shrine is a compact complex of buildings built into the hillside and surrounded by an enclosure wall. Adjacent to the

shrine there are traces of ruined buildings, probably houses, as well as fruit trees and some terraces, indicative of former agriculture in this otherwise wild landscape.

The shrine is entered through a single doorway on the west side of the enclosure wall which opens onto a platform and a set of steps leading downwards into a small courtyard. Within the courtyard, there is a well and a cross-vaulted canopy resting on stone piers. To the south there is a large open arch or *iwan* covered with a white dome. This is the largest and most visible part of the complex and comprises a rectangular room with a concave *mihrab* roughly in the middle of the south wall. Next to the *mihrab* (on the west side) there is an uneven rectangular shape which may represent a grave or cenotaph or the remains of some earlier structure. An arch at the eastern end of the room leads into a low vaulted room with a blocked doorway or niche in the north-west corner. It is probable that the original floor level was considerably lower as the vault appears to spring from the current floor level and there is very little height within the room.

The other part of the complex is located to the east and comprises a series of small rooms. Immediately east of the domed prayer hall there is a small domed chamber which opens into a small low vaulted chamber to the south. The dome is supported on arched squinches and there are windows on the west and east sides. The vaulted chamber contains a rectangular cenotaph or grave and is separated from the small domed chamber by a low wall. Another doorway at the east end of the courtyard leads into a large room containing a series of six graves. Like the vaulted room adjacent to the prayer hall, the floor level of this room was probably considerably lower originally and it is currently not possible to stand upright in this room.

Based on the architectural survey, two main periods of construction are evident, an initial phase comprising two or more vaulted rooms followed by a second phase which includes both buildings covered with domes. The first phase appears to represent the remains of some earlier ruined structure which was then used as a basis for the construction of the domed shrine complex. The second phase comprises the domed prayer hall, whilst the small domed building or *maqam* must be contemporary or slightly later, as it is built against the east side of the archway of the prayer room.

In the absence of any inscriptions, precise dating of the complex is not possible although the architecture gives some approximate dates. The earlier building uses vaults of pointed profile, suggesting a date in the thirteenth century or later, possibly associated with a Christian monastery.

Fig. 5.6 The interior of the Yashrutiyya complex in Acre showing the unused fourth mausoleum built for the current head of the order

The use of squinches in the small domed *maqam* suggests an Ayyubid or Mamluk date (i.e. pre-1500), whilst the use of pendentives in the dome of the prayer hall suggests that it was built after 1300 AD.

Yashrutiyya Shrine Complex in Acre (Fig. 5.6)

The majority of studies of Sufi shrines in Palestine are concerned with sites established in the medieval and early Ottoman periods and there are few studies of late Ottoman and contemporary Sufi shrines. One exception to this is the shrine of the Yashrutiyya order in Acre, which is currently undergoing restoration and is still a place of veneration. The Yashrutiyya order was a branch of the SP Shadhiliyya order which developed in North Africa and traced its origins back to Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali al-Shadhili (d. 1258) (Trimingham 1971, 47–48). The founder of the Yashrutiyya was Ali Nur al-Din al-Yashruti, who was born in Bizerte (Tunisia) in 1208 AH (1793–1794 AD) and educated at the Zaytouna Great Mosque in Tunis, where he was inducted into the SP Shadhiliyya

order by Sheikh Muhammad Hassan Bin Hamza Dhafer al-Madani (d. 1852 AD). In 1846 AD, he moved to the Hijaz from where he made his way to Palestine, arriving in Acre in 1850. He soon became popular establishing *zawiyas* in Tarshiha (near Acre), Jerusalem, Haifa, Beirut and Rhodes. His success initially caused alarm to the Ottoman authorities (possibly influenced by the British) who exiled him to Rhodes for 21 months. Ali Nur al-Din al-Yashruti (d. 1892) nominated his son Ibrahim to succeed him as leader of the order. Ibrahim died in 1928 and was, in turn, succeeded by his son Muhammad al-Hadi, who moved the order to Beirut following the establishment of Israel. On his death in 1982, Muhammad's body was returned to Acre for burial (Abu Hannieh 2011, 138–139). Although the Yashrutiyya are primarily based in Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon, there is also a branch of the order in the Comoro Islands established by Sa 'id ibn al-Ma'ruf (d. 1904), who had been initiated in Acre.

Initially Ali prayed and held gatherings in the Zaytunia mosque (built in 1754–1755) but his followers soon became too numerous to be accommodated within the existing building, so in 1862, he established his own *zawiya*. The *zawiya* complex is located in the north part of the Old City of Acre, next to the citadel between Jami Magdala and the Hammam al-Pasha bathhouse. It is approached via a ramp which leads up to the meeting room or prayer hall which comprises a tall square building roofed with a large dome supported by buttresses of similar design to those on the Ahmad Jazzar Pasha Mosque (built 1781–1782 AD). Although the building resembles a mosque, it has neither a *mihrab* nor a minaret and is built on the site of one of the towers of the Hospitaller compound and may incorporate some of the structure. Adjacent to the prayer hall there is a rectangular building or pavilion with a wooden tiled roof and large arched windows supported on slender columns on two sides. The interior is divided into three aisles with the central aisle supported on slender columns similar to those supporting the arched windows. In each of the four corners there is an octagonal mausoleum only three of which contain tombs (in 1996, the fourth tomb remained unoccupied). The earliest tomb contains the remains of Ali Nur al-Din al-Yashruti (d. 1899), whilst the second oldest contains the grave of Ibrahim al-Yashruti (d. 1925–1926) and the third mausoleum contains the remains of Shaykh Mohammad al-Hadi (d. 1980–1981), which were transferred from Beirut (for translation and discussion of the inscriptions on the mausolea, see Sharon 1997, 74–75).

Each mausoleum has a similar design comprising a central marble-clad cenotaph contained within an octagon, with arched windows on each side and a doorway on one side. The upper part of each mausoleum has the form of a fenestrated octagonal drum above which there is a dome which is visible from the exterior of the building. The marble decoration of the mausolea is similar to that used on buildings associated with Baha 'ullah, who was resident in Acre from 1868, although it also resembles the marble decoration on the *sabil* outside the Jazzar Pasha Mosque (built 1781–1782 AD). In addition to the meeting hall/mosque and the *mashhad*, the complex also comprises a large courtyard or *haush* which contains apartments and accommodation for guests, visitors and residents of the Yashrutiyya order.

The complex fell into disrepair after the creation of Israel in 1948, which isolated Acre from the majority of the Yashrutiyya adherents who had moved to Lebanon, Jordan and the West Bank. Also, the *waqf* established by the founder of the *tariqa* 'Ali Nur al-Din al-Yashruti was confiscated by the Israeli authorities, which 'deprived the *tariqa* of the principal financial basis for the upkeeping of the remaining *zawiya* which fell into a state of dilapidation in consequence' (De Jong 1983, 179). However, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967 allowed refugees elsewhere in the Middle East to send money for the upkeep of the *zawiya* in Acre. By 1979, a complete restoration of the main hall and the *mashhad* had been completed (De Jong 1983, 180). A second major restoration project has been carried out in recent years (Luz 12.03.2014).

Discussion

On the basis of the examples presented in this chapter, it can be seen that there was an intimate connection between the development of Muslim shrines and the growth of Sufism as a central part of Muslim religious experience. The nature of Sufi practices often led to the development of complexes built around the tomb of the founder of a particular order or *tariqa*. Subsequently, these complexes developed into shrines which in some cases were accessible to all as in the case of Muhammad Abu al-'Awn's complexes in Ramla and Jaljuliyya (both located on the main road). In other cases, such as Dayr al-Shaykh, the shrines would be likely to attract only the serious pilgrim. In addition to shrines developed around a particular Sufi holy man, it is clear that Sufis developed the cult of shrines more generally. For example, both Muhammad Abu al-'Awn and his

predecessor, Shaykh Shihab al-Din Ahmad (d. 1440), developed pilgrimage sites around the tombs of figures (Nabi Rubin and ‘Ali bin ‘Alim), neither of whom was a noted Sufi. In the case of ‘Ali bin ‘Alil at Arsuf, we know that a *waqf* to provide for the tomb had already been established by Sultan Baybars and that Muhammad Abu al-‘Awn expanded the shrine, making it a pilgrimage centre of regional significance. It is not clear whether the tomb of Nabi Rubin (Fig. 9.1, No. 2) existed before the intervention of Shaykh Shihab al-Din Ahmad (d. 1440) although it is probable that there was some form of shrine before this period. For example, Conder (1886, 447–448) states that during the twelfth century there was an annual market which was the precursor of the annual Nabi Musa festival (unfortunately, he does not give the source for this information). The motivation for developing connections with older figures either from biblical times or from the early Islamic period was probably to establish Sufism as part of an ancient tradition. Nile Green has argued that the rise of institutional Sufism was directly linked to the collapse in the central caliphal authority and the instabilities of the tenth and eleventh centuries. In this context, traditions were an essential component of Sufi Islam which was used both to validate current practices and to give them added authority (Green 2012).

The Yashrutiyya complex at Acre provides a clear example of the role of tradition in creating a major Sufi shrine. The fact that the tombs of the hereditary leaders are all concentrated in one building in Acre adds to the spiritual importance of a shrine physically demonstrating the continuity of place and of doctrine. This is especially important when the order is faced with physical separation from the majority of its adherents located elsewhere in the Middle East (the Palestinian Diaspora) and also as far afield as the Comoro islands near Madagascar. The proximity of the Bahai’s in Acre and the surrounding district may have provided some form of competition for the Yashrutiyya tariqa who also had adherents in the vicinity, and it is known that ‘Ali Nur al-Din al-Yashruti ‘became deeply involved in the controversy and the debate surrounding the Bahá’i Faith’ (Abu Hannieh 2011, 138).

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CHAPTER 6

Shaykh's Tombs

Abstract This chapter is concerned with the large number of Muslim tombs and sacred sites which have been identified in archaeological surveys and maps throughout Palestine. The chapter discusses the distribution of sites throughout Palestine in relation to topography and settlements. Whilst some of these sites are associated with Sufi leaders, others are the tombs of either the founders of settlements or local holy men.

Keywords Shaykhs tomb • Cemeteries • Ramla

The previous two chapters have discussed Muslim shrines which are known both through historical references and, in many cases, also through inscriptions. The present chapter will discuss shaykh's tombs which are known only on a local scale and are often undocumented in the written historical sources. Despite their historical obscurity, these tombs are the most numerous form of Muslim shrine in Palestine and are the subject of the majority of the academic literature (for a recent bibliography of local shrines in Palestine, see e.g. Frantzman and Bar 2013). The most comprehensive study of local shrines is Tewfik Canaan's book on *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries* (Canaan 1927; see also discussion in Chap. 3), which is based on a study of 583 shrines, 235 of which were personally investigated by the author.

A. Petersen, *Bones of Contention*, Heritage Studies in the Muslim World, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6965-9_6

The definition of a shaykh's tomb or local shrine is not absolute or precise but, within the present context, can be taken to refer to a tomb or place of burial associated with a person who has some significance within the local community but is unknown on a provincial or regional scale. Thus visitors to a tomb will predominantly come from nearby villages if in a rural context or from the adjacent quarters of a town if in an urban context. This does not mean that local tombs are never visited by pilgrims from further afield, as the travelogue of Nabulusi (Sirriyeh 2005) makes clear; however, it does mean that both the maintenance of the tomb and the traditions associated with the tomb will be primarily a local affair. The perceived identity of the person within a tomb can vary from legendary heroes such as Alexander (Ar. Iskander) to the deceased head of a local family or clan.

Before discussing the different types of shaykh's tombs, it is worth looking at some of the general characteristics in terms of architectural form, site location and geographical distribution. Although each tomb has its own particular form often with unique details, there is a remarkable consistency in the architecture which is usually based around a square domed chamber (Figs. 6.1 and 6.2). Shrines of this type are entered by a

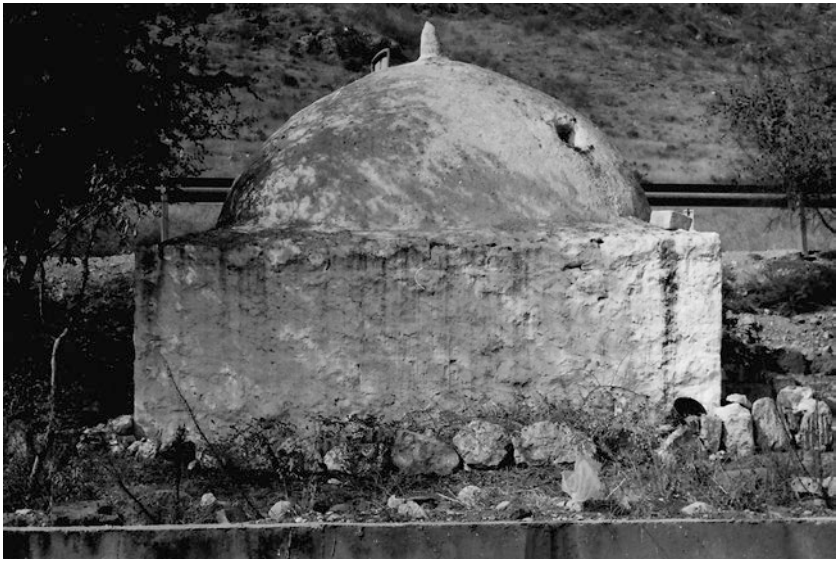

Fig. 6.1 Exterior of the tomb or maqam of Muhammad al-'Ajami at Majdal near Tiberias

Fig. 6.2 Interior of the maqam of Muhammad al-'Ajami at Majdal. There appear to be two graves inside, each covered with a green cloth

single door which leads into a square space with a *mihrab* in the south wall (opposite the door). In most cases the centre of the shrine is a rectangular cenotaph aligned east-west which marks the burial place of the shaykh. If the shrine is in religious use the cenotaph will be covered with a green cloth. There is usually at least one window or opening in addition to the door and a number of niches set into the walls. The interior is generally whitewashed and sometimes it is decorated with henna in the form of geometric patterns or stylized vegetal forms (e.g. see Canaan 1927, 33 Plate I).

Although the domed cube is not universal, it is certainly the most common architectural form for shrines to the extent that the Arabic term *qubba* has become synonymous with shaykh's tomb (Canaan 1927, 11). A basic typology for the architecture of local shrines can be proposed which at its simplest comprises a marked grave. A second stage of development is represented by a rectangular cenotaph, often with a rounded or keel-shaped top. A third stage might involve the construction of a square domed tomb chamber over the tomb, whilst subsequent stages might

involve the construction of a *riwaq* or vaulted stone canopy adjacent to the tomb chamber. Multiple variants are possible, and in many cases, the actual tomb or cenotaph might be outside the domed chamber. The domes have a variety of forms in terms of both profile and setting. The most basic form of dome has a hemispherical form and rests on spheroconical pendentives which spring directly from four square corner piers. More complex forms include the use of octagonal or polygonal drums which may either rest on pendentives or squinches (arched recesses which bridge the corners of a square). The shape of domes may vary to include two-centre pointed arch profiles and stilted arch profiles. However, sophisticated double shell domes, which are relatively common in Iranian architecture, were not used in Palestine.

In addition to the built tombs, there are a number of shrines which are either natural features (e.g. springs, wells, caves, water courses, rock outcrops and trees) or simple man-made features such as a pile of stones or part of some ruined structure (see below ancient sites). In many cases, one or more natural features may be found in the vicinity of a built shrine; thus Canaan (1927, 31) states that 60% of shrines are associated with one or more trees. Also, in cases where there is a solitary tree identified as a shrine, it is usually associated with a niche or cleft in a rock which can be used either for lamps, offerings or prayers. Where natural features are identified as shrines, the spirit of a saint or other venerated personage is said to inhabit the feature. For example, Canaan (1927, 68) lists a number of wells inhabited by saints who, amongst other things, would save people who accidentally fell into the water.

The geographical distribution of local shrines has been discussed by a number of authors, including Conder (1877), McCown (1923) and Canaan (1927); however, the most systematic and comprehensive study is that of Frantzman and Bar (2013), which used data from the British Mandate period (1918–1928). This study was primarily based on the analysis of 181 maps initially issued between 1929 and 1930. The maps were produced at a scale of 1:20,000, covering all of the country with the exception of the Negev, which was mapped at a scale of 1:100,000. The authors also consulted the village and urban maps which were produced at larger scales and cross-referenced the names with the *Palestine Index Gazetteer* published in 1941. The maps created by the Survey of Palestine for the Palestine Exploration Fund were also used for comparison. Within the whole of Palestine, a total of 786 shrines were identified as being in use during the Mandate period. In addition to the general survey of the whole

country, Frantzman and Bar also carried out a detailed study of the Judean hills using both maps and field visits. For the first time, many of the theories and ideas of spatial distribution suggested by earlier authors could be tested against comprehensive survey data.

One of the topics most frequently discussed by nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century authors was the question of whether Muslim tombs were predominantly located on hill tops and high places. The majority of scholars (Conder 1886; Paton 1919–1920; Canaan 1927) agree that the most shrines were located on mountain tops and other elevated locations, whereas McCown (1923, 63) wrote that 'there is that vast number of shrines … which are not easily seen because they are not on hill tops'. From their detailed survey, Frantzman and Bar have been able to show that statistically most Muslim shrines were located in elevated places with the average elevation of 347 m in the hills and 181 m in the coastal plain. The other major area of debate was the relationship of shrines to built-up areas such as villages and towns. The mapping data has shown that although only 14% of the rural shrines were located in villages, the majority were located in close proximity to villages with an average distance of 760 m. It seems likely that the reason for this situation is that many of the local shrines are associated with cemeteries, which for obvious reasons are more likely to be located outside villages but within easy walking distance (cf. discussion of cemetery location in Bradbury 2016, 211). The number of shrines within urban areas varied considerably, with Beersheba and Jenin having none, whilst the cities of Jerusalem, Ramla, Hebron, Gaza, Jaffa and Safed had many tombs.

Sufism and Local Shrines

As we have seen in the previous chapter (Chap. 5), Sufism was one of the main factors behind the establishment of many of the more important medieval Muslim shrines in the Palestine. However, Sufism was also a factor in the establishment shrines at a local level, as observed by Nile Green, who writes, 'While by no means every venerated saint was a Sufi in medieval Islam any more than every Sufi was a saint the ideas and institutions of Sufism nonetheless became inextricably woven with the saintly practices that came to play a central part in the Islam of the ordinary believer' (Green 2012, 93).

Whilst the larger and more important shrines are well documented, many of the smaller local shrines are invisible in the written historical

sources and the connections with Sufism are not always clear. It is, for example, noticeable that Tewfik Canaan, writing in the 1920s, does not discuss Sufism in relation to local Muslim shrines although he does mention dervishes. This may, in part, be because Sufism was in sharp decline during the early part of the twentieth century, culminating in the abolition of the Sufi orders in 1925 (Green 2012, 209). Other factors which obscure the role of Sufism in the establishment of local shrines can be attributed to two factors related in particular to Sufism in Palestine. The first factor relates to the rather unregulated development of Sufism in Palestine whereby Sufi shaykhs were able to establish their own *tariqa* which still bore the name of one of the major Sufi orders but in other ways was only loosely connected. This led to the proliferation of Sufi groups which were nominally related but effectively independent, establishing their own *zawiyas* which subsequently developed into local shrines. In Egypt, by contrast, all Sufi orders were registered and regulated, which meant that a new branch of an order was required to register under a separate name to receive recognition (for a discussion of this situation, see De Jong 1983, 151–155). The second factor which has impeded the study of local shrines in Palestine is the Egyptian occupation in the early nineteenth century (1831–1840). In an effort to improve the agricultural productivity of the country, many of the *waqfs* dedicated to local shrines were dissolved, depriving the leaders of local *tariqas* of their revenue and, in the process, breaking the link between the shrines and local Sufi orders (De Jong 1983, 156). Deprived of revenue for their maintenance and connections to the local hierarchy, many of the shrines became neglected or taken over by local villagers who assumed communal ownership of the shrines.

One of the most interesting examples of a local Sufi tomb is the maqam of Shaykha Badriya located in the Sharafat region outside Jerusalem. Badriya was one of three daughters of Shaykh or 'Sultan' Badr, whose shrine complex in Wadi Nasur was discussed in the previous chapter (Chap. 5). She died before her father moved to Wadi Nasur and is buried in the village where the family was living at the time. Badriyya's shrine is one of the few well-known female shrines and forms the centre of a small shrine complex which includes a mosque and the tombs of Badriyya, her husband and her children. The shrine is still in religious use and is venerated by the people of the village. Tewfik Canaan investigated the shrine in detail and published a plan of the complex as well as photographs to illustrate the layout of a typical shrine.

Cemeteries and Holy Men

> Very important is the fact that the shrines or graves of many holy men are situated in the midst of cemeteries or adjacent to them. (Canaan 1927, 7)

As Canaan observed, there is a very strong association between the local shaykh's tombs and cemeteries. What is sometimes less clear is whether the shrine is the first feature to be established at a particular site, forming the nucleus of a cemetery, or whether the tomb of a 'Holy Man' is discovered within an existing cemetery. Generally, cemeteries will develop around the tombs of holy men (or sometimes women), although in large cemeteries such as the graveyard of the White Mosque in Ramla or some of the cemeteries in Jerusalem shrines developed within an existing funerary context. Daniella Talmon-Heller has given some examples of this process from the early thirteenth century whereby long-forgotten graves within an existing cemetery were rediscovered and provided with mausolea (2007, 191). At Tell al-Hesi in southern Palestine, the relationship between a shaykh's tomb on the top of the tell and the surrounding cemetery has been investigated in detail through archaeological excavation. Whilst the results are not definitive, it appears that the shaykh's tomb was built within an existing cemetery. However, the presence of the shrine affected the layout of subsequent graves with a shift towards the shaykh's tomb at the southern end of the tell (Toombs 1985, 30–32).

The process by which a grave becomes a shrine has been described in detail by Paul Kahle in the first of his three articles on Muslim Shrines. He gives the example of a tomb in the Burj Laqlaq cemetery next to the city walls 'which is scarcely distinguished from the other graves' and is only differentiated by 'a pole that stands in a pile of stones and on which are a few nails'. Oil lamps were sometimes hung on the pole at night and a flask of oil lay adjacent to the grave. A simple inscription states that this is the grave of the *wali* Hasan Abu al-Halawa who died in 1305 AH (1887/1888 AD) only 22 years earlier. In his lifetime, he was known for his ability to cure infirmities of both humans and animals (Kahle 1910, 67–68). In other examples, Kahle notes that domes were sometimes built over the graves of revered personalities although this was not always required. An early example of the creation of shrine in a graveyard is provided by Ibn Kathīr, who relates how a 'painted edifice' was built above the graves of Yusuf al-Kamini and Ibrahim b. Said Ji 'ana. The presumably wooden building was used as accommodation for those who came to visit

the shrine, demonstrating the functional purpose of building over graves (Talmon-Heller 2007, 191–192). In Egypt, at Qarafa and other places, the custom of building over graves reached a highpoint with wealthy citizens of Cairo establishing house like mausoleums next to the shrines of favourite Sufi saints (Abdalfattah 2016, 84).

Although a dome or *qubba* above a grave often indicates a degree of holiness, the presence of a dome also served a function for those visiting the grave of a holy person. In the first place, it helps visitors identify a shrine amongst large numbers of graves. Also some form of covering in the form of either a dome or a canopy would provide relief from the sun for those people who came to visit a particular grave. In some cases the creation of an enclosure around the grave of a *wali* would serve as a sacred space in which items could be left without fear of theft.

Categories of Local Saints

The range of people or rather graves of people that could develop into Muslim shrines is quite considerable, from early Islamic companions of the Prophet to local village ancestors and heroes. At a local level, two main categories of people were represented in shrines: (1) spiritual leaders and (2) village founders or ancestors.

1. In addition to the major Sufi shrines discussed in the previous chapter (Chap. 5), many of the local shrines evolved around the graves of local spiritual leaders, many of whom were considered to be Sufi. Although well known at a local level, these local Sufis are not famous on a regional scale and do not appear in written historical accounts. The important feature of these personalities is that they are considered as spiritual leaders during their lifetimes, so when they are buried, there is often an expectation that their graves will develop into a shrine (Canaan 1927, 265). This is well documented by Paul Kahle, who observed this process first-hand and gives the following account of the foundation of village shrines:

> There are many dervishes who come from afar, perhaps after long journeys, and end their life in a village. They undoubtedly as *shēks* of a *ṭarīqa* (an order of dervishes), would lead the *dhikr* in the village and they would gain a certain reputation in their lifetimes through the

> writing of *ḥijābs* (amulets) and healings. After their deaths, their graves would be visited. Also people from the village itself can become welis. (1910, 70–71)

2. In many villages the grave of the founder of the village will develop as a shrine which is visited by subsequent generations. The ancestral link between the present inhabitants and the founder of the village interred in the shrine is occasionally fictitious although there is usually some familial relationship. Canaan (1927, 302) observes that the direct descendants of the village founder will enjoy an elevated status and that the eldest will be known by the title Shaykh. When the descendants die, they will be interred in close proximity to the shrine. In some cases such as Dayr al-Shaykh (see Chap. 5), the founder of a village will be a Sufi or other form of spiritual leader.

A typical example of a Muslim shrine related to the foundation of a settlement is the tomb of Shaykh Baraz al-Din at Majdal Yaba (Fig. 9.1, No. 18). Although the exact identity of Shaykh Baraz al-Din in relation to the foundation of the Majdal Yaba is unclear, it is known that he was a member of the al-Rayyan family which founded the village (Tsuk et al. 2016). It is also known that Shaykh Baraz al-Din died some time before 1873, when his tomb was already an established feature of the landscape, as it appears on Sheet 14 of the Survey of Western Palestine (Conder and Kitchener 1882, 360–361). The shrine comprises a square domed chamber built directly on the rock to the north of the village and fortress of Majdal Yaba. The door to the tomb is flanked by two windows and there is a *mihrab* in the south wall. A line of stone stones aligned east-west on the floor of the building represents the destroyed remains of a cenotaph marking the grave of Baraz al-Din (for photographs and a full description, see Petersen 2001a, 214–215).

Amongst the Bedouin, the veneration of the grave of the founder of a part12icular settlement or lineage appears to be particularly common. Paul Kahle gives two examples of Bedouin shrines located in the vicinity of Jerusalem. In both cases the shrine consisted of an ordinary grave in a cemetery, distinguished from the other graves by a simple whitewashed cenotaph and the presence of broken pots and glass bangles (Kahle 1910, 75–76, Fig. 3). In the desert areas to the south of Palestine, ancestral

Bedouin tombs provide places of ancestral memory which can be used to strengthen oral histories and tribal genealogies. For example, the presence of the ancestral tombs of 'Atiyah and Naba' located in the Wadi Watir south of Thamad helps confirm the history of the Tarābīn tribe in Sinai, which dates back to the fifteenth or sixteenth century (Bailey 1985, 42). The location of shaykh's tombs also provides a cultural topography for the desert regions with the place names along the main caravan routes reflecting the names of prominent shrines (Bailey 1984, 47). The living significance of ancestral tombs for the Bedouin has recently been highlighted by Pävi Miettunen in her study of the Bedul shrines in the vicinity of Petra, where she states that 'the religious identity of the Bedouin was closely interrelated with the tribal identity and religious devotion expressed in the vernacular was often more concerned about the matters of this world than what may wait beyond. Even the ancestors and local saints, those who had already passed away, were not really absent but still continued to be present in the everyday life as guardians, protectors and providers' (Mietteunen 2013, 165).

Probably the most famous example of an ancestral village tomb is the mausoleum of Shaykh Mustafa Abu Ghosh located in the village of the same name. Abu Ghosh was the leader of a group of bandits controlling the pilgrimage route between Jaffa and Jerusalem and, in the nineteenth century, became so famous or notorious that the village of Qaryat al 'Inab was renamed after him. The mausoleum is the focal point of a Muslim cemetery located on a hill to the north of the Benedictine convent. The tomb comprises a square building (approx. 5 × 5 m) covered with a domical vault. Whilst there is a door and window on the east side, the main decorative feature of the exterior is a projecting arched gable housing a rectangular marble inscription praising Mustafa [Abu Ghosh] and dated 1260 AH (1863/1864 AD). Inside the building there is a large cenotaph marking the grave of Abu Ghosh and a small *miḥrab* in the south wall (for a detailed description, see Sharon 1997, 7–13). Despite its typical appearance, there is some dispute about whether this building was ever actually used as a shrine. Paul Conder (1878, 231), writing soon after its construction, thought that the tomb was a shrine, whilst McCown used a photograph of the building to illustrate 'the appearance of the typical *ḳubbi* in the average Palestinian village'. However, McCown was unsure whether it really was a shrine, stating

that he was doubtful 'whether the people as yet make vows and pray to the former bandit' (McCown 1923, 50 and Plate 4). Paul Kahle is more definite, stating that the grave of 'the robber chief is not considered to be a shrine today; I think it doubtful if it was ever to be considered one'. The fact that the mausoleum of Abu Ghosh does not appear to have been venerated despite its appearance indicates that shrines required some degree of reverence from local people and visitors. Paul Kahle's discussion of the formation of shrines in the Jerusalem region gives a number of requirements for the establishment of a local shrine, which include the fact that the person concerned enjoyed a high reputation in their lifetime, they are considered to have special God given powers, and that when they are buried, they continue to have intercessionary powers (Kahle 1910, 68).

Architecture and Chronology

Buildings identified as Muslim shrines span a huge array of architectural forms (from simple cenotaphs to monumental buildings) and a very long time span from the pre-Islamic period to the present day. There is also the problem that many shrines form part of complexes with a variety of architectural forms sometimes developed and rebuilt over several centuries. However, the central part of the majority of shrines can usually be set within one of three main periods: pre-Islamic, Medieval or Ottoman. Pre-Islamic shrines are those in which the main structure was either built before the advent of Islam (circa 622 AD) or contains a significant amount of pre-Islamic material. In theory, there should be a large number of early Islamic (circa 622–1099 AD) shrines given that many shrines incorporate the graves of early Islamic warriors and religious leaders. However, in practice (with the exception of the Dome of the Rock and other major shrines which are outside the scope of this chapter), there are few, if any, local Muslim shrines with structural remains dating to the early Islamic period. There are, however, a number of shrines which can be dated to the Medieval period (circa 1099–1516 AD), especially the time after the rise of the Mamluks in 1260. The largest number of extant shrines within Palestine date to the Ottoman period (1516–1918), although it is likely that a significant portion of these are built on older sites or contain earlier elements.

Re-used Pre-Islamic Shrines

Just as some of the more famous shrines built by emirs, sultans and other notable persons were built over ruins or incorporated ancient features, so local shrines also often included pre-Islamic elements. In Syria for example, Jennie Bradbury noted a large number of re-used Roman and Byzantine architectural fragments incorporated into the tomb of the local "holy man" at the village of Dimeni al-Gharbiyya (Bradbury 2016, 208). Canaan (1927, 9) stated that approximately 32% of the shrines which he had visited in Palestine were in the vicinity of ancient ruins. In some cases an ancient feature on its own such as a column capital or an ancient grave will be enough to designate a local shrine. For example, Canaan describes a shrine in the Hauran associated with the prophet Job, which comprises a single slab of rock or stella inscribed with a hieroglyph in the name of Rameses II (Canaan 1927, 78).

For many of the nineteenth-century European and American scholars, the principal value of these local shrines was that they preserved ancient place names and associations with biblical narratives (see, e.g. the discussion of Conder in Chap. 1). However, for the average Palestinian peasant the construction or veneration of a Muslim shrine around an ancient feature could be interpreted as an act of social memory—a means of establishing a connection with a particular place either for ownership of land or as a means of re-enforcing communal identity (cf. Bradbury 2016, 211–215). Alternatively, the identification of an ancient feature as a Muslim shrine could be interpreted as a means of Islamiscizing the pre-Islamic past in a continuation of the process begun by Ayyubid and Mamluk sultans. Just as Baybars had appropriated the memory of Moses by establishing the tomb of Nabi Musa near Jericho, so the local shrines were a means of establishing Muslim associations with the landscape. The fact that this often represented a localized version of Islam for people who may not have had easy access to a mosque should not detract from the fact that these were regarded as shrines by a population which professed Islam.

Another incentive for the creation of Muslim shrines around ancient structures may have been to prevent them from being taken over by the *jinn*. Although in theory the *jinn* can be either good or evil, they are generally associated with evil and harmful behaviour. According to the fourteenth-century theologian Ibn Taymiyya, the *jinn* 'only have the right to reside in places not occupied by humans like abandoned buildings and open country … or places of impurity like toilets, garbage dumps and

graveyards' (Phillips 2007, 45). Within Palestinian folklore, good spirits such as the *awlia* (friend of God) were perpetually at war with the bad and evil spirits of which the *jinn* were the most powerful (Canaan 1927, 281). As the *jinn* were often thought to inhabit abandoned structures and ancient ruins, the creation of a Muslim shrine in the vicinity would make such a location safer. For example, the Muslim saint al-'Ajami asked to be buried at the entrance of Bayt Jibrin to prevent the *jinn* from entering the village (Masterman and Macalister 1915, 172).

Probably the most spectacular example of the appropriation of an ancient structure for a local tomb is Naby Yahya near the former village of Mezra'a (now destroyed) at the foot of the Judean Hills. The shrine of Nabi Yahya (John the Baptist) is located in a very well-preserved late Roman family tomb (circa 300 AD). The date of the conversion is not certain, although it is known that the building was already a Muslim shrine by the mid-nineteenth century when it was visited and described by a number of European visitors (see, e.g. Conder and Kitchener 1882, Vol. 2, 365–367). The tomb consists of a nearly square rectangular building with a portico resting on square corner piers and two central columns topped with Corinthian capitals. The interior is divided into two chambers, a small rectangular room (2.04 × 5.7 m) to the east containing the remains of a staircase to the roof and a large square main chamber (4.8 × 5.7 m) to the west. The main room is entered via a small low doorway and has a corbelled roof supported by large transverse arches. Originally this room would have contained sarcophagi but these have long since disappeared (Kochavi and Beit-Arieh 1994; Site 263). The only recognizably Muslim features are a plastered *mihrab* located in the south-east corner of the main room and a low rectangular cenotaph aligned east-west adjacent to the south wall. It is probable that the cenotaph may originally have formed the base of a Roman sarcophagus. It is not known when the *mihrab* was added, although Conder and Kitchener (1882, 357), who visited in 1873, thought that it was a modern addition. The *mihrab* was already in situ when it was seen by Consul James Finn, who first visited the building in 1848 (1868, Frontispiece). It is probable that the mihrab was at least several decades older than this. Excavations in and around the mausoleum by Jacob Kaplan in 1964 and 1983 found large numbers of Muslim burials (Kaplan 1985).

The fact that this building survived more or less intact for more than one and a half thousand years suggests that it was protected from stone robbing and other damage largely because of the protection of the local

people. The reasons for its preservation may have included the fact that it was an architecturally impressive building and also that it was part of the social memory of the area. Whatever the reason for its preservation, the conversion to a Muslim shrine would have provided religious protection to the monument. Ironically, the building came close to destruction after 1948 when it was used as target practice by Israeli tanks (Rapoport 2008). In this new context, it was the archaeological significance which saved the building, which had probably been targeted because it was a Muslim shrine.

Another example of a Muslim shrine which incorporates significant amounts of ancient architecture is the nearby shrine of Abu ʻUbayda at Emmaus (Figs. 6.3 and 6.4; Fig. 9.1, No. 10). During the early Islamic period, the town of Emmaus (Arabic ʻImwas) was the administrative base for the Arab armies in the region. In the year 18 of the hijra (639 AD), the camp was devastated by a plague which spread throughout the region and killed many of the leaders of the Arab army, including Abu ʻUbayda. By the thirteenth century, ʻImwas was known for the many graves of the companions of the Prophet (Sharon 1997, 82). Two standing buildings venerated as shrines remain; these are the tomb of Ibn Jabal and the tomb of Abu ʻUbayda. Both attributions are unlikely, as according to al-Baladhuri (trans. Hitti, 215) and other local traditions, both men died in the area of modern Jordan. The shrine of Ibn Jabal is in the form of a traditional Palestinian Muslim tomb with a central dome flanked by two windows (for a description prior to its recent rebuilding, see Sharon 1997, 183–184). However, the tomb of Abu ʻUbayda is a re-used Roman-Byzantine bath house complete with a hypocaust. During the Crusader period, a mezzanine floor was inserted so that the building could be used as a store house, and in the fourteenth century, it was converted into a Muslim Shrine (Gichon 1979). As with the Roman tomb at Mazor (Mezra'a), the reasons for using an existing building as a shrine are unknown although it is possible that the ancient building was associated in people's minds with the famous plague and was therefore a point of contact with the times of the initial Arab conquests. The fact that al-Harawi also gives Baysan (Beth Shean) and ʻAmta in Jordan as burial places for Abu ʻUbayda testifies to the significance of this early Islamic personality. The selection of this ancient building as his tomb may therefore have lent a degree of authenticity to the shrine at ʻImwas (Emmaus).

Fig. 6.3 Roman bath house at Emmaus re-used as tomb of Abu Ubayda

Fig. 6.4 Section through the shrine of Abu Ubayda at Emmaus showing different stages of construction (Drawing by Ifan Edwards)

Medieval Shrines

There are very few shrines in Palestine which can, with any certainty, be dated to the Ayyubid period, although there are a number of twelfth- and early-thirteenth-century shrines in Syria (see, e.g. Talmon-Heller 2007, 190–198). In Jerusalem and other cities, there are a few examples of Ayyubid shrines, although in most cases they were remodelled in the later period. Jaussen cites an interesting example of a shaykh's tomb in Nablus which dates to the Ayyubid period. This is the shrine of Shaykh al-Mussalm al-Samady located in the east of the old city of Nablus near the al-Anbiya mosque (Mosque of the Prophets). Beneath the window of the shrine there was an inscription giving the date of 623 AH (1226/1227 AD). Jaussen (1927, 162–163) had some difficulty transcribing the inscription and was helped by a local visitor to the shrine who explained that Shaykh Musallam was his ancestor who had died during Saladin's conquest of Nablus. The building has not been the subject of a detailed architectural survey and it is not clear whether the present structure dates from the Ayyubid period (i.e. early thirteenth century). One of the few examples of an Ayyubid period rural shrine from Palestine is the Maqam al-Shaykh Ridwan at 'Arura 10–15 km north of Ramallah. An inscription set into the side of the cenotaph indicates that this is the tomb of Shaykh Ridwan who was carried to this location in June/July 1230 after his death in Egypt in January of the same year. Unfortunately, the building itself was rebuilt in Ottoman times and more recently so that little remains of the early-thirteenth-century shrine (Sharon 1997, 121–123).

For the Mamluk period (1260–1516), there are a number of dated examples of Muslim shrines as well as a much larger number of undated tombs which are almost certainly of Mamluk date. The previous two chapters (Chaps. 3 and 4) featured some of the larger shrines developed during the Mamluk period, including Maqam al-Nabi Musa, Dayr al-Shaykh, Maqam Abu Hurreira, Haram Sidna 'Ali at Arsuf as well as the two shrines of Abu al-'Awn at Jaljuliyya and Ramla.

The majority of dated examples of medieval shrines are located in the cities of Palestine with large numbers in Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus, Hebron and Ramla. Examples from Ramla include Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Bataihi (1469 AD), Sitt Halima (1399 AD), Shaykh Raslan (1404 AD) and Abu Fadl (1450 AD). In addition to the tombs which are dated by inscription, there are a number of shrines in Ramla which, on architectural

grounds, are certainly of Mamluk date. One of the best examples is the tomb of Shaykh Hammar located in the west part of the old city. The shrine comprises two main structures, a prayer hall and a mausoleum linked together with a courtyard. As with many of the other local shrines, it fits into a narrow rectangular space in the urban layout, suggesting its possible origin as a domestic property. The mausoleum of Shaykh Hammar is a small square chamber with a cenotaph in the centre and a dome resting on a small octagonal drum supported by squinches alternating with blind arches. The cenotaph itself is aligned diagonally to the orientation of the tomb chamber and has four octagonal stone corner posts, which is a characteristic feature of Mamluk tombs. The prayer hall which unusually has a corner mihrab was subsequently also used as a burial place and contains another cenotaph (for a discussion of shrines in Ramla, see Petersen 1995).

Within a rural context, dated Mamluk shaykhs' tombs are more unusual. Even where a dated inscription exists, this does not necessarily reflect the date of the structure. For example, the Maqam of Shaykh Zayd at Bayt Jiz (located approximately mid-way between Jerusalem and Ramla) comprises a single square chamber with a narrow *mihrab* located on the left (east) side of the south wall. The building is in a ruinous condition, and although no internal features are visible, there was probably a cenotaph located on the west side of the interior of building which would account for the positioning of the mihrab at the east end of the south wall. During excavations in the vicinity of the shrine during the 1970s, an inscription was found recording the reconstruction of a building in 734 AH (1334 AD) by the Mamluk Amir Sayf al-Din Aqul (Amitai-Preiss 1994, 235–237). The building is currently roofed with a domical vault, and although vaults of this type existed in medieval Islamic architecture, their use in Palestine is mostly a late Ottoman innovation. In this case, it seems that the shrine was once more renovated in the late Ottoman period (Petersen 2001a, 123–124).

Two undated examples of smaller rural shrines which almost certainly belong to the Mamluk period are the Maqam of Nabi Thari and the Maqam of Nabi Yamin. The Maqam of Nabi Thari (Fig. 9.1, No. 4) is located near the modern Israeli settlement of Kefar Sirkin and in the general vicinity of Ben Gurion airport. Excavations in 1996, 1999 and 2000 indicate that the shrine was built in the Mamluk period on the ruins of a site dated to the early Islamic period (Negev and Gibson 2001, 358). The shrine has a similar plan to the mosque of Abu al-'Awn at Jaljuliyya com-

prising a large central domed area with two vaulted side aisles. The tomb of Nabi Thari is marked by a marble column embedded in the floor of the east aisle. The large central dome was supported by an octagonal drum resting on four large corner squinches (for photographs and a plan, see Petersen 2001a, 232–234; Mayer et al. 1950, 35). The building is currently in ruins although photographs taken in the 1940s indicate that the central dome was decorated with a monumental painted inscription (Quran 2, 256).

Nabi Yamin (Fig. 6.5 and Fig. 9.1, No. 7) is a small domed mausoleum which stands in the centre of a larger complex which includes a *riwaq* (arcade with mihrab) and a *sabīl* (drinking trough and fountain), both of which may be dated to the Ottoman period. The mausoleum comprises a small square room with the cenotaph of Nabi Yamin in the centre and a projecting *mihrab* in the south wall. The structure is roofed, with a dome resting on an octagonal drum supported by internal corner arches (squinches). Although the tomb itself is not dated, the architectural style

Fig. 6.5 The tomb chamber at the centre of a complex dedicated to Nabi Yamin. The tomb chamber appears to be of fourteenth or fifteenth century, whilst the rest of the complex (not in the photograph) dates from the late Ottoman period

of using an octagonal drum and squinches to support the dome is indicative of a Mamluk date. Further corroboration of a Mamluk date is provided by two inscriptions from within the complex, one dated to 1312 AD and the other dated to 1300 AD (for a full discussion of the building, see Petersen 2001b).

Ottoman Shrines

By far the largest group of shrines are those built or rebuilt during the Ottoman period (1516–1918). These buildings range from sophisticated pieces of architecture to very simple vernacular structures. Most of the shrines discussed by Canaan were built in the Ottoman period and Ottoman shaykhs' tombs form the bulk of the shrines mapped by Frantzman and Bar (2013).

Architectural features typical of Ottoman shrines include domes supported on pendentives (triangular corbels supporting the dome) rather than squinches (corner arches). Also, in shrines built during this period, the dome is often built directly on the roof of the shrine without an octagonal drum. The domes of Ottoman shrines are usually built out of rubble stones rather than the cut stones used in Mamluk era shrines. From 1750 onwards, domes are sometimes made out of ceramic vaulting tubes rather than stone. In some of the simpler shrines, domes are dispensed with altogether and the mausoleum is covered with either a cross-vault or a domical vault. In general, however, some form of dome is preferred as an indicator that a particular building is used as a shrine. The cenotaphs in Ottoman era shrines tend to have a single headstone and footstone rather than the four corner posts in Mamluk era cenotaphs.

The shrine of Shaykh Abdallah al-Sahili in Balad al-Shaykh, which was built in the sixteenth century, represents a more elaborate example of an Ottoman rural shrine (Petersen 2001a, 108–109; Ronen and Olami 1983, xvii, 40). Shaykh Sahili lived in Balad al-Shaykh at the time of the Ottoman conquest and was granted the ownership of Balad al-Shaykh as well as Rushmiyya by Sultan Selim I in 1517 (Yazbak 1998, 133). The shrine which also functions as a mosque comprises a rectangular building set into the north-facing slope of Mount Carmel. The interior comprises three vaulted bays with a mihrab in the south wall opposite the entrance. The tomb of the Sufi 'Abd Allah al-Sahili and his two sons are located in the western bay. Each bay is roofed with a folded cross-vault with a small dome at the apex. Until the 1980s, there was a large vaulted building to

the south-east of the shrine which may have served either as a meeting room for Sufi rituals or as some form of accommodation for pilgrims visiting the shrine (for a detailed description of the building before its destruction, see Ronen and Olami 1983, xvii). In this case the shrine clearly formed the centre of the settlement, providing both the local mosque and the tomb of the founder of the village.

An example of a much simpler and more typical shaykh's tomb is provided by the anonymous maqam at Khirbat Ja'athun in Galilee. Khirbat Ja'athun is a ruinous farmstead developed on an ancient site during the rule of Zahir al-Umar in the mid-eighteenth century (Petersen 2001a, 180–182). The ruinous *maqam* is located to the east of the main buildings and comprises two rooms, a square room (6.6 × 6.5 m) possibly originally covered with a cross-vault and a smaller room (2.5 × 2.5 m approx.) with a mihrab in the south wall. The walls are built of roughly squared re-used Byzantine blocks and are built directly onto the bedrock. The smaller room is roofed with a dome made of rubble stone set in mortar and supported by spherical pendentives. Because both parts of the structure are ruinous, there are considerable quantities of rubble lying on the floor obscuring any traces of a cenotaph or grave. The date of this *maqam* is unknown, although its location on a site developed during the mid-1700s suggests a date in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. The shrine is fairly unusual, as it does not seem to be associated with any graveyard or cemetery, although this could be obscured by the vegetation cover in the area. In other respects the shrine is a typical Ottoman Shaykh's tomb with its use of re-used ancient blocks, its use of spherical pendentives and its location at the centre of a settlement.

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CHAPTER 7

Shiʿa, Druze and Bahai Shrines

Abstract This chapter discusses how non-Sunni Muslim shrines fit into the cultural landscape of Palestine. Although the religious beliefs of these groups may be very far from those of Sunni Islam, the appearance of the shrines is indistinguishable, suggesting a common architectural vocabulary.

Keywords Shiʿa • Druze • Bahai

As we have seen in the previous chapters, Muslim shrines in Palestine were mostly connected with the Sunni branches of Islam and, in particular, with the growth of Sufi brotherhoods. However, there are a few areas of northern Palestine contiguous with Lebanon which historically had a Shiʿa population. In addition to the mainstream Shiʿa adherents, Palestine also has a population of Druze whose beliefs and practices developed out of Shiʿa Islam. Another faith present in Palestine, which amongst other influences has a strong Shiʿa component, is the Bahai religion. Although the Bahais originated in nineteenth-century Iran, historical circumstances meant that they had to relocate to Palestine, which became the world centre of this global religion. Whilst Sunni Muslims might reluctantly accept Shiʿa Islam as a part of the Muslim faith, both Druze and Bahais are usually considered to be outside Islam. Nevertheless, the material culture and the geographical origins of both Druze and Bahais are strongly related to Muslim

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culture and theology. In addition, it is probable that the development of Muslim shrines during the medieval period was heavily influenced by the Shiʿa practices of veneration of members of the Prophet Muhammad's family. For example, Daniella Helmon-Teller (2007, 197–198) has shown that during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Sunni Ayyubid rulers initially sought to pacify the Shiʿa population by not only tolerating their religious practices but also supporting their shrines (see also Mulder 2014). Later the Ayyubid rulers gradually took over the Shiʿa shrines, establishing them as places for Sunni veneration, leading the Shiʿa to establish their own alternative shrines (Helmon-Teller 2007, 198).

Shiʿa Shrines

Given that most of the events concerned with the development of Shiʿa Islam took place in Iraq, it is not surprising that there are no major Shiʿa shrines in Palestine (for a discussion of the Shiʿa shrines in Iraq, see Allan 2012). Also, the fact that the majority of the Muslim population in Palestine have been followers of Sunni Islam, even during the short period of Fatimid domination in the tenth and eleventh centuries, has meant that there are only a handful of Shiʿa Muslim shrines. Despite their limited number, the Shiʿa shrines are of considerable historic and religious significance.

Shrine of Husayn's Head

Probably the most important Shiʿa shrine in Palestine is the *mashhad* in Ascalon built to house the head of Husayn after he had been killed (martyred) at the battle of Karbala in Iraq on October 10, 680 AD. According to several traditions, Husayn's head was removed from his body and sent to Yazid in Damascus, where it was kept in a niche in the Great Mosque, whilst the body remained in Iraq and was interred in a grave, which became the centre of the famous shrine at Karbala. According to some views, Husayn's head was returned directly from Damascus to Karbala (Meri 2002, 192), whilst other traditions relate that it was removed from Damascus and taken in secrecy to Ascalon by order of the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir (d. 906). When the Fatimids gained control of Ascalon, they established a shrine for the head which remained there until 1153 when the city fell to the Crusaders. To protect the sacred relic, the Fatimids transferred the head to al-Qaraffa in Cairo where another shrine was built

around the relic. According to the later Egyptian author al-Maqrizi (1364–1442 AD), the head was taken to Cairo by the Fatimid vizier in a green silk bag after paying a ransom to the Crusaders (Meri 2002, 193). The Crusaders finally departed from Ascalon in 1247, leaving the city and the fortification in ruins, although the shrine of Husayn's head appears to have survived intact, judging from the accounts of later Muslim visitors to the city.

Although the original structure in Ascalon has been destroyed (see below), the location of this shrine continues to have considerable significance for Shi'a Muslims who come from as far away as India to visit the shrine. According to some scholars, the location of the *mashhad* on a hill outside the city was previously known as the place of martyrdom of two beheaded Christian martyrs. If this is the case, it is another example of a sacred place being appropriated and re-invigorated as a Muslim shrine.

The history of the Ascalon shrine of the head is a complex phenomenon with some significant gaps, which has recently been reconstructed in some detail (Talmon-Heller et al. 2016). It is not clear when a shrine for the head was first built in Ascalon, although a number of medieval Arabic authors attribute the construction of the *mashhad* to the Fatimid vizier Badr al-Jamali (d. 1094). The clearest physical evidence for the shrine is a wooden *minba*r in the shrine of the Patriarchs in Hebron. The *minbar* which was made in 1091–1092 AD (484 AH) carries a long inscription which commemorates the construction of the *mashhad* in Ascalon and the endowment of properties for the upkeep of the shrine. In addition to the *minbar*, there are reports of five inscribed stones within the mosque at Hebron which may actually be from the destroyed shrine at Ascalon (Talmon-Heller et al. 2016, 187, note 2). Apart from the inscription on the *minbar*, the earliest historical reference to the shrine of the head at Ascalon is by the twelfth-century author Muhammad b. 'Ali Ibn al-'Imrani (d. 1185) who records how the head was brought to Ascalon in the seventh century during the reign of the Umayyad caliph Yazid (r. 683–684 AD) (Talmon-Heller et al. 2016, 190).

There are only a few descriptions of the shrine in Ascalon (Grabar 1966, 29–30) and all of these are from the period after the removal of the head to Cairo. One of the earliest descriptions is by the geographer Qazwini (d. 1283) who describes 'a large shrine with columns'. The Moroccan traveller al-'Abdari visited Ascalon in the 1290s and described the *Mazar Ra's Husayn* (Shrine of Husayn's head) as a tall mosque built by the Fatimids, according to an inscription above the entrance (Talmon-Heller et al. 2016,

195). The shrine was singled out for particular criticism and ridicule by Ibn Taymiyya, who described it as a fabrication of the Fatimids with no historical basis (Matthews 1936, 15). Despite this criticism, the *mashhad* continued to be an important shrine during the subsequent centuries and was mentioned by both Mujir al-Din (d. 1522) and al-Nabulsi (d. 1731). By the nineteenth century, the building was in ruins, and in 1876–1880, it was rebuilt on the initiative of local villagers who also endowed it with *waqf* properties to pay for its upkeep (Talmon-Heller et al. 2016, 198). This building continued to be a place of visitation (*ziyara*) throughout the final years of the Ottoman period and during the British Mandate until its demolition by the Israeli army in 1950. The shrine comprised a central courtyard built up on three sides with a prayer room on the south side. According to Canaan, the former resting place of Husayn's head was marked by a pillar capped with a green turban over a red cloth (Canaan 1927, 151). Unfortunately, no plan of the building was made and the reconstructions of the shrine by Talmon-Heller et al. (2016, 202, Fig. 4) are based on a few photographs and Canaan's observations of the interior.

Despite the limited information on the physical configuration of the building and the absence of the primary relic (Husayn's head) for the majority of its existence, the shrine continued to be of great significance up to its destruction in 1950, so much so that a commemorative prayer platform was built on the site in 2000 AD. One of the interesting features of this continued veneration is that throughout its history, visitors to the shrine have been both from the Shiʿa and Sunni branches of Islam. This is despite the Shiʿa origins of the shrine and the fact that its authenticity has always been in question. If, as asserted by Ibn Taymiyya (Matthews 1936, 15–16) and more recently by De Smet (1998), the site was previously a shrine for two beheaded Christian martyrs, this is a very strong argument for the persistence of a sacred location which survived major changes in professed faith and belief systems.

Nabi Yusha (Fig. 7.1 and Fig. 9.1, No. 3)

Unlike the shrine of Husayn's head, which has considerable historical documentation but no surviving ancient structure, the shrine of Nabi Yusha has a large ancient structure but very little historical documentation.

Nabi Yusha is located at the north-east of Palestine, on the border with the modern country of Lebanon. The shrine formed the centre of a small village at the edge of a ridge overlooking the Jordan valley and Lake Huleh

Fig. 7.1 The shrine of Nabi Yusha (Joshua) located high on a mountain to the north of the Sea of Galilee. In addition to the tomb chamber and prayer hall, there are rooms providing accommodation and facilities to the pilgrims

(now drained). During the Mandate period (1918–1948), Nabi Yusha was one of a few sacred sites in northern Palestine where Lebanese pilgrims were allowed to cross the borders to visit the shrine. During the month of Shaʻban, thousands of Shiʿa pilgrims from all over southern Lebanon gathered at the shrine. Nabi Yusha was exceptional because in addition to pilgrims, the terms of the 'Bon Voissinage' agreement allowed Lebanese police to accompany the pilgrims to the shrine (Abou Hodeib 2015, 392).

According to local oral history, the village was first settled by members of the Elghoul family in the mid-eighteenth century (Mohammed Elghoul September 30th, 2002). The Elghoul family were Shiʻa Muslims originally from the village of Mai al-Jabal in southern Lebanon. This tradition also states that the village was built at a site already known as Nabi Yusha (the Prophet Joshua). Certainly there are biblical traditions (Joshua XI, 1–11) which associate the region with Joshua, a fact which was noted by Van de Velde, one of the first nineteenth-century travellers to visit the shrine (Van de Velde 1854, Vol. II, 416–417).

Possibly the first indication of a Muslim shrine at the site is provided by the Jewish traveller Rabbi Yizhaq Elfarra from Malaga in Spain, who visited Galilee in 1441. He states, 'In Temnat Seraḥ, called in Arabic Kefar Hanun [are the graves] of Nun, father of Hosea and his son Joshua and Kaleb b. Yefuneh. A large sepulchre (*binyan*) [stands] on each of them. The attendants are Muslims. They kindle lights over them and let in the Jews. They sing songs of praise (*shirot*) and say penitential prayers (*ṣliḥot*)' (trans. Meri 2002, 246).

Although the shrine was noted by a number of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century visitors to the region (e.g. Curtiss 1904, 101), there was no archaeological investigation until 1966, when an emergency archaeological survey established the need for a full documentation of the site. In 1994, a detailed architectural survey of the shrine was carried out followed by an excavation in 2014. The architectural survey revealed that the shrine was a multi-period construction with the majority of structures dating to the Ottoman period (Petersen 1996). The archaeological excavations were carried out at three locations in the vicinity of the shrine and revealed pottery and other objects dating from the late Ottoman to Mandate periods (circa 1700s–1948), thus confirming the oral history (Berger 2015).

A number of observations about Nabi Yusha are possible. The first is that unlike Mashhad Ras Husayn, which has an explicit Shi'a connection, there are no particular Shi'a connections with Nabi Yusha' (Joshua). Although not certain, it appears that in the fifteenth century, Nabi Yusha was a shrine visited by probably Sunni Muslims. At some time after this date, the shrine was abandoned until the eighteenth century, when it was rediscovered and taken over by the Shi'a population of the village. In this case, it is the local population and visitors to the site which give it a Shi'a identity. The complex of buildings around the shrine is similar to those at other Palestinian shrines catering for large numbers of pilgrims such as Nabi Musa or Nabi Rubin. This suggests a common concept of shrine architecture to accommodate festivals with little to no differentiation between Sunni and Shi'a shrines.

Druze Shrines

The Druze are a small ethnic religious community whose population is divided between Syria (approx. 50%), Lebanon (approx. 40%), Jordan (approx. 3%) and Israel/Palestine (approx. 7%). Although it is probable

that the ancestors of the Druze had some form of ethnic or religious identity before the eleventh century, they do not appear in history before this time. Historically, the Druze trace their origins back to the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim (985–1021 AD), who also figures as one of the spiritual leaders of the faith. In religious terms the Druze can be regarded as an offshoot of Ismaili Shiʿism, although in practice the faith shares little in common with mainstream Shiʿa beliefs. Within Israel/Palestine, the Druze are principally located in the hills and mountains of Galilee and since the creation of Israel in 1948 have been unique amongst the Arab populations in embracing and supporting the state of Israel. Although in religious beliefs the Druze differ significantly from their Arab Muslim neighbours, in cultural terms they are very similar and historically have shared many of the same customs and sacred sites. However, since 1948, the Druze in Israel have developed a more distinct identity, demonstrating their enhanced status under Israeli rule. One of the main features of the new identity is a preoccupation with sacred sites which, historically, were only peripheral to the religious life of the community (Firro 2005, 219). A recent study by an Israeli scholar gave a list of 67 Druze holy places within Galilee (Avivi 2000). According to this study, an emphasis on Druze sacred sites was encouraged by the Israeli state, which saw them both as a means of claiming territory within a predominantly Muslim and Christian Galilee and also as a means of establishing a distinct Druze identity. Within Israeli law, legal protection for a holy site was only given to sites which comprise a mausoleum and preferably associated buildings. However, until recently, the majority of Druze sacred places were not built structures but instead comprised trees, springs and other natural features. In order to gain recognition for these sites, many of them were converted to *maqams* by the addition of buildings (Firro 2005, 223).

Nabi Shua'ayb (Fig. 9.1, No. 5)

Amongst the many sacred sites associated with the Druze, the shrine of Nabi Shu'ayb has developed to become a major site of exclusively Druze pilgrimage.

The shrine of Nabi Shu'ayb is located on a north-facing hillside to the north-east of the village of Hattin. Much of the current shrine has been rebuilt since 1948, although a series of cross-vaulted halls dates to the Ottoman period or earlier (Petersen 2001, 148–150). One of the earliest descriptions of the shrine is by the Persian traveller Nasir i-Khusraw, who

travelled eastwards from Acre in 1047 specifically to visit sacred sites. His description of the shrine is as follows:

> In this valley is a spring of clear water gushing out from a rock, and over against the spring, and upon the rock, they have built a mosque. In this mosque are two chambers built of stone, with the ceiling likewise of stone; the door of the same is so small that a man can only enter with difficulty. Within there are two tombs, placed close side by side, one upon which is that of Shu'ayb (Jethro)—peace be upon him!—and the other that of his daughter, who was the wife of Musa and on him too be peace! The people of the village are assiduous in keeping the mosque and the tombs swept clean, and in the setting here of lamps and other such matters. (trans. Le Strange 1893, 15–16)

Apart from the intrinsic interest of this early description of Nabi Shu'ayb, this description is of importance because it indicates that this was a significant Muslim shrine before the advent of the Druze as religious faith. It is likely that the shrine became more significant after the defeat of the Crusaders in 1187 at the nearby Horns of Hattin. The shrine was also visited by the fourteenth-century pilgrim al-Harawi (1957, 51–52), who noted that there was another tradition placing Shu'ayb's grave at Mecca. In the seventeenth century, the Turkish traveller Evliya Çelebi (1980, 51–52) visited Nabi Shu'ayb, noting the gardens and caves in the vicinity of the shrine. Evliya Çelebi (1980, 51–52) also relates a tradition that Saladin entrusted the safe keeping of the shrine to Shaykh Imad al-Din, who was a descendant of the Fatimids. Regardless of the origins of the tradition, that fact that there was a Fatimid association in the seventeenth century suggests that the Druze may have established some form of custodianship of the shrine at this relatively early date. The earliest discussion of the site within the Druze tradition occurs in the seventeenth-century manuscript of Muhammad al-Ashrafani, which describes the shrine as follows:

> [Shu'ayb] had migrated from hijaz to Ard al-Sham [Greater Syria] and settled in a village called Hattin where he died and was buried close to its western side, in a valley which had no exit. The revered maqam is situated at the edge [of the valley]. (Firro 2005, 225)

By the nineteenth century, the shrine of Nabi Shu'yab had become the centre of an annual Druze religious festival. With the creation of the state

of Israel in 1948, Nabi Shu'ayb was made into an exclusively Druze shrine and the centrepiece of Druze identity in Israel (Firro 2005, 239).

Bahai Shrines

The Bahai faith originated from the teachings of Baha'ulla in nineteenth-century Iran. Baha'ulla was himself a disciple of Ali Muhammad Shirazi, also known as the *Bab* (Ar. door), who in 1844 founded the movement known as Babism in expectation of the return of the twelfth Imam predicted in Twelver Shi'ism. Persecution of the Babi community in the late 1840s culminated in the execution of the *Bab* (Ali Muhammad Shirazi) and many of his followers. Baha'ulla was imprisoned by the Qajar rulers but eventually released, choosing exile within the territory neighbouring Ottoman empire. The Ottoman authorities at first treated Baha'ulla as an important guest, but following a series of controversies and court cases, he was sent into internal exile in Acre, where he and his family arrived in 1868. On arrival in Acre, Baha'ulla was kept a prisoner in the citadel but was later allowed to move outside the city, eventually being housed in a large summer house outside Acre known as the Bahji Mansion, where he died in 1892.

There are two major Bahai shrines in Palestine, one is the tomb of Baha'ulla at the Bahji house outside Acre and the second is the tomb of the *Bab* ('Ali Muhammad Shirazi) whose remains were removed from Iran in 1909 and are now interred in a specially built mausoleum in Haifa. In addition to these two official Bahai shrines, there are a number of graves of Baha'ulla's relations and other people connected with the early history of the movement which can be regarded as shrines (Ruhe 1986; Sharon 1997, 66–74). For example, the grave of 'Awdah, a Christian (Greek Orthodox) merchant who gave a house to Baha'ulla, is located within the house at Bahji. His white marble tomb is located in a room in the south-east corner of the mansion and identified by an Arabic *naskhi* inscription. It is not clear whether 'Awdah is to be regarded as a Christian or an early convert although he clearly has a high status within the Bahai faith. On the other hand, Baha'ulla's son Muhammad 'Ali Baha'i is not regarded with favour by the Bahai community because he opposed the succession of his half-brother 'Abd al-Baha to leadership of the faith. Muhammad 'Ali Baha'i is buried in one of the two private Bahai cemeteries in a square mausoleum covered with a white dome.

Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh

When Baha'ulla died, he was interred in a tomb in the garden of the Bahji mansion. The tomb is set within a square building covered with a ceramic tiled roof. In front of the mausoleum there was a rectangular paved area with a tree at the centre, which was subsequently enclosed and covered with a pitched tiled roof with a glass clerestory. Both the entrance to the enclosure and the door to the mausoleum itself are marked by identical Arabic inscriptions on brass discs praising the splendour of God (Sharon 1997, 69). This is the holiest Bahai shrine and it also forms their direction of prayer (*qibla*). Whilst the mausoleum complex is relatively simple, it is located in the centre of a geometrically planted garden which recalls the Persian origins of Bahá'u'lláh.

Tomb of the **Bab**

Before his death, Baha'ulla had travelled to Mount Carmel outside Haifa and indicated the place where he thought the *Bab*'s remains should be buried. Following the First World War and the defeat of the Ottoman empire, the Bahais were able to construct a huge nine-roomed mausoleum at the site and inter the mortal remains of the *Bab,* which had been brought out of Iran. During this same period, the Bahais were ordered by their second leader to live outside Palestine to allow the movement to grow as a global faith. In consequence, the design of the shrine of the *Bab* at Haifa has more in common with western architectural tradition than with the architecture of Muslim shrines. The shrine is a massive classically inspired building covered with a golden dome and sits at the centre of a huge ornate set of terraced gardens which have become one of the defining features of modern Haifa.

Conclusions

A number of observations are possible based on this review of Shiʿa and other non-Sunni Muslim shrines in Palestine.

The first and most obvious point is that there are not many Shiʿa shrines in Palestine compared with the thousands of Sunni shrines revealed in the research of Frantzman and Bar (2013). The non-Sunni Muslim shrines are limited in number, and in the case of the Shiʿa and Druze shrines, most were either shared with Sunnis or primarily Sunni at some time in the past.

This is a very different situation from Iraq, Syria and Lebanon and is indicative of an unusual degree of religious homogeneity amongst the Muslims of Palestine.

The second point is that shrines can be used by different Muslim groups and are not restricted to particular Muslim sects. For example, the tomb of Nabi Shu'ayb was revered by Muslims even before the foundation of the Druze faith just as the shrine of Nabi Yusha appears to have been revered by Sunni Muslims and Jews prior to the arrival of Shiʿa families in the mid-eighteenth century. This point is well known in relation to shrines shared with Christians or Jews where different religious groups can share a shrine or, in some cases, take over exclusive use of a shrine when the community which founded the shrine has moved elsewhere (see, e.g. the Tomb of Abu Hurayra/Rabbi Gamliel in Chap. 4).

The third point, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, is that the creation and maintenance of shrines can be a very political process. In the case of the Druze, there was a political need for a separate non-Muslim identity, which was met by the recent conversion of large numbers of natural shrines into identifiable Druze shrines (*maqamat*) complete with tombs and prayer rooms. Political needs probably also led to the construction of the shrine (*mashhad*) of Husayn's head at Ascalon in the final years of Fatimid rule in the city. In the case of the Bahais, political considerations meant that Muhammad 'Ali Baha'i (one of Baha'ulla's sons) was buried in a private cemetery and despite the shrine-like appearance of his mausoleum, his tomb did not develop as a shrine.

The final observation is that the physical appearance of Shiʿa, Sunni and Bahai shrines does not differ from the more numerous Sunni shrines. Whilst each shrine is, by definition, unique, there are few outward features indicating whether a particular shrine is Shiʿa, Druze, Bahai or Sunni. Inscriptions are probably the most useful indicator of the sectarian affiliation of a particular shrine, although these can sometimes be cryptic, as in the case of the Bahai shrines, or generic with little indication of the allegiances of the visitors to the shrine (as in the case of the inscriptions at Nabi Yusha).

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PART III

Shrines in the Contemporary World

CHAPTER 8

Destruction, Neglect and Appropriation: The Demise of Muslim Shrines

Abstract This chapter discusses the decline of Muslim shrines during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The creation of the State of Israel in 1948 has resulted in the destruction of some Muslim shrines, the abandonment and neglect of many more and the appropriation of others. Whilst some of the damage to tombs might be a direct result of Israeli actions, it is suggested that a large number of Muslim shrines have suffered because of a decline in Sufism and the growth of fundamentalist Islam.

Keywords Rachel's tomb • Ramla • Nablus • Israel

It is difficult to gauge when Muslim shrines reached their maximum number in Palestine. The numerous descriptions and discussions of shaykh's tombs and maqams at the beginning of the twentieth century suggests that the period immediately prior to the First World War may have marked the high point of Muslim shrines in the country. Frantzman and Bar (2013, 98–99) have argued that the high point was reached during the Mandate period, as the Muslim population of the country was higher in this period than during the late Ottoman period and because the shrines were 'still popular amongst the local population'. However, De Jong (1983, 156) suggests that Muslim saints' shrines may have suffered a

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decline prior to the twentieth century which was caused by the Egyptian occupation of the early nineteenth century. Without quantifiable data from the early nineteenth and late eighteenth centuries, it is difficult to assess how this compared with either the late nineteenth century or the Mandate period. However, what is clear from the work of Paul Kahle is that there was probably a constant change in which particular shrines were in use at any one time. Writing in the last years of Ottoman rule, Kahle notes that whilst some shrines were forming around the graves of recently deceased Sufis, other longer-established shrines were falling out of use. Shrines which became neglected were usually those without an endowment or *waqf* to pay for their maintenance. Another cause of shrines falling out of use could be the movement of a population to another area, although, of course, there are many examples of shrines continuing to be visited in these circumstances.

According to Canaan, many shrines were either damaged or destroyed during the First World War; thus he states that Shaykh Nuran between Shallaleh and Khan Yunis was completely levelled 'in order to deprive the enemy of a mark for his guns' (Canaan 1927, 11). However, there may have been a revival in the use and maintenance of shrines after the war; thus Frantzman and Bar (2013, 98–99) argue that shrines reached their maximum number during this period. However, the period since 1948 has seen a sharp decline both in the numbers of the shrines and in the numbers of visitors to the shrines. This is the result of a number of different processes which are related to issues such as the founding of the State of Israel, the various conflicts and civil unrest which have become characteristic of the region and changing perceptions on the role of shrines within Muslim religion and culture. The combined effects of these factors have led to a variety of outcomes, including (1) deliberate destruction or demolition of shrines, (2) abandonment, neglect and disintegration of shrine buildings and (3) appropriation of Muslim shrines by other religions.

Destruction

The destruction of shrines can be of several types, from deliberate targeted destruction of particular buildings to generalized destruction or levelling of abandoned settlements, which may include the demolition of shaykh's tombs as well as other buildings. In addition, buildings may be destroyed or damaged accidentally, either as a result of conflict or during military training exercises. The outright targeted destruction of Muslim shrines

appears to be fairly rare and was mostly carried out during the early years of Israeli independence. Thus, Modechai Bar-On, a company commander in Central Command, stated, 'The villages were levelled and the mosques disappeared with them, but I am not familiar with an order to demolish only mosques. It doesn't sound reasonable to me' (cited in Rapoport 2008, 84).

One of the most famous examples is the Mashhad Ras Husayn or the shrine of Husayn's head in Ascalon, which was blown up by the Israeli army in 1950 (for a discussion of the Shi'a origins of this shrine, see Chap. 7). Whilst at first the destruction of the shrine was presented as an unfortunate mistake which went against the expressed policy of the Israeli government, recent research has shown that it was carried out under the orders of Moshe Dayan, commander of Israel's Southern Command. It is likely that this was part of a wider policy designed to encourage the Arabs inhabitants of the region to leave the country (Talmon-Heller et al., 2016, 205–206). It is not clear why this particular shrine was targeted when there were a number of other shrines and Muslim religious buildings in the vicinity of ancient Ascalon, including the Shrine of Shaykh 'Awad and Sittna Khadra (Hammami 1994, 24). It is possible that the buildings of the Mashhad Husayn were regarded as architecturally unimportant, especially as there had been some dispute about whether the building destroyed was located in the same place as the shrine built in the twelfth century. Certainly, it is known that the shrine complex was rebuilt in the late nineteenth century with money collected from the local villages, and extant photographs of the shrine indicate that it was a roughly square complex of buildings of late Ottoman design. During the Mandate period, the building was not recorded in detail by the Department of Antiquities partly because it was in religious use and partly because it was thought to be mostly a modern (i.e. nineteenth century) structure. More recent research has shown that the destroyed structure was likely to have been at the same location as the Fatimid building and probably contained parts of the ancient shrine. However, the main reason that the shrine was destroyed was probably because it was a major centre of pilgrimage for the local population and held one of the five major annual festivals (*mawasim*) celebrated in Palestine (Canaan 1927, 214–215). The destruction of the shrine would therefore remove an incentive to return for the displaced population of the region and also provide a psychological victory for the Israelis. The fact that the shrine does not appear to have contained any human remains (as most accounts agree that the head was removed to

Cairo in the twelfth century) will have made the destruction easier in ethical terms. Ironically, the destruction of the shrine by the Israeli Army has enabled the site to be re-used and developed by a Shi'a Muslim sect (the Daudi Bohras) from India who rebuilt in the year 2000 (Talmon-Heller et al. 2016, 211).

The former village of Isdud located approximately 15 km to the north-west of Ascalon provides another example of deliberate destruction. The village of Isdud was located to the east of the modern Israeli town of Ashdod and part of the village was built over the ancient site of Tell Ashdod. Prior to its capture by the Israelis in 1948, Isdud was a densely built settlement with a population of 4000–5000 people living mostly in mud-brick houses with thatched roofs made from date palm leaves (Khalidi 1992, 110). The village had two mosques as well as two shrines. Today, only one of the mosques and one of the shrines is still standing (Petersen 2001a, 156–157). In 1948, the village was the site of fierce conflict between Egyptian troops and Israeli forces which ended in an Israeli victory. It is not clear how much of the village was destroyed, but in 1949, Trude Dothan and L.A. Mayer carried out a survey of the abandoned houses in the village as well as the Muslim shrine complex containing the tombs of Ibrahim Matabuli and Salman al-Farisi (Dothan 1964). By this time the shrine was certainly known as an important historical monument given that two inscriptions from the shrine dated to 1269 AD and 1472 were published by L.A. Mayer in issues of the *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine* (Mayer 1933, 24–25). It is not known when the shrine was destroyed, although a large part of the village had either been destroyed or completely fallen into ruin by 1962, when a joint Israeli-American expedition began the excavation of the tell. The shrine had certainly been destroyed by the time Trude Dothan published her description of the shrine in 1964. Neither the motivation nor the people responsible for the destruction of the shrine are known, although given that some of the buildings have survived, it was certainly a deliberate act carried out after the Israeli's had gained control of the site in 1948.

Whilst it is unlikely that the building housing the shrines of Ibrahim Matabuli and Salman al-Farisi was destroyed to allow archaeological excavations to take place at Isdud, the demolition of the houses in the village would certainly have made excavation of the tell much easier. Many of the other ancient sites identified with biblical narratives also had Palestinian villages built over them with Muslim shrines in their centres.

Following the expulsion of the Palestinian inhabitants in 1948, many of these villages were demolished, sometimes leaving the odd isolated structure and in other cases leaving a hill or a tell completely free of buildings and available for archaeological excavation of the pre-Islamic levels. The Israeli historian Aron Shi'a has recently produced evidence that the clearance and levelling of villages was carried out in collaboration with archaeologists from the Israel Archaeological Survey Society (IASS). Between 1965 and 1969, the IASS was paid by the Israel Land Administration to carry out a survey of more than 100 villages prior to their destruction, to record features of archaeological importance. In some cases, important buildings or features were designated for preservation although the majority of buildings were 'levelled' (Shai 2006). Examples of villages located on major biblical sites include the village of Zar'in, which occupied the ancient site of Tel Jezreel, and the village of Abu Shusha, which occupied the summit of Tell Gezer. In both cases the villages were levelled, leaving the site available for archaeological excavation. Whilst there is direct evidence of the destruction of the medieval tower at Zar'in/Tell Jezreel (Rapoport 2008, 87), the circumstances of the destruction of the shrine at Tell Gezer are less clear. Tel Gezer was first excavated in the early 1900s by a team led by R.S. Macalister from the University College Dublin. In the resulting publication, Macalister published a transcription and translation of an inscription dated 1607 AD carved into a stone above the doorway of a shrine at the summit of the tell. Macalister clearly found the presence of the shrine difficult, describing it as 'a serious obstacle to our excavation' (Macalister 1912, 43). Following the creation of Israel in 1948, the village of Abu Shusha was the site of a battle resulting in the expulsion of the Palestinian inhabitants and a possible massacre. The remains of the village were destroyed sometime in 1965, and it is probable that the shrine was also destroyed at this time (Shai 2006, 86–106).

The situation within the old Arab Palestinian towns and cities such as Haifa, Jaffa, Ramla, Lid/Lydda, Acre, Tiberias and Safed was similar but different. In practical terms, it was impossible to demolish whole cities and in any case would probably attract too much attention. Instead, large parts of the historic centres of cities were demolished; thus in Tiberias, in August 1948, 'the army began to blow up a hefty strip of buildings in the Old City' (Pinkerfeld, cited in Rapoport 2008, 88). The demolition included much of the old walls of the city including designated antiquities. Similarly in Haifa, large sections of the Old City were indiscrimi-

nately destroyed, including mosques and synagogues (Rapoport 2008). In such case, many Muslim shrines were destroyed as part of the general destruction though others survived. Within the historic centre of Ramla, approximately half of the designated historic buildings were destroyed in 1948, including the majority (10 out of 16) of the Muslim shrines (the buildings designated as mosques had a better survival rate: 6 out of 15). When the actual buildings destroyed are looked at in more detail, it is evident that the six mosques destroyed could equally well be designated as shrines (e.g. they were built around tombs), whilst the mosques which survived were those which had prayer halls that had been in frequent use (Petersen 1995, 78, Fig. 3). This may be because there was a specific injunction against the destruction of mosques; thus Lieutenant Colonel Michael Avitzur wrote that the demolition of the mosque in Yavneh (Yibna) took place in July 1950 before 'the date on which the cessation of blowing up mosques was announced' (Rapoport 2008, 84). Thus in Ramla, it appears that Muslim shrines suffered disproportionately because they did not have the protection given to mosques. Amongst the shrines in Ramla which were destroyed was the Maqam Sitt Halima, which was a square Mamluk domed building with a tomb in the middle dated to 1405 AD (807 AH). The walls of the building were lined with marble panels and the dome rested on four squinches (Petersen 1995, Fig. 3, No. 37, Figs. 25–27).

Abandoned and Neglected Shrines

Although it is evident that large numbers of shrines were demolished as a result of warfare and its aftermath, it is likely that the vast majority of shrines indicated in the maps of the Mandate period were not destroyed. This is partly because many of the shrines were located outside the residential areas of villages and also because they were simply too numerous. However, the circumstances following the War of Independence in 1948 and the subsequent expansion into the West Bank and Gaza in 1948 meant that many of the shrines have since been abandoned and neglected, often falling into ruin or disappearing beneath vegetation or rubbish. At this point, it is worth noting that the fate of Muslim shrines within the 1948 boundaries of Israel differs significantly from those within the West Bank and Gaza. In order to gain a better idea of how shrines are either used or abandoned in the whole of pre-1948 Palestine, the two areas, Israel and the Palestinian territories, will be discussed separately.

Israel Within the 1948 Boarders

It will be evident that the demolition of Palestinian villages and large sections of towns not only led to the destruction of individual shrines but also caused significant damage to the shrines which remained standing. In addition, it should be pointed out that not all of the shrines identified before 1948 were either in religious use or in a good physical condition. For example, photographs of the shrines in Ramla show buildings in a wide variety of conditions, from complete and well maintained to ruined and apparently abandoned. Some of the buildings may have been damaged in an earthquake which struck Palestine in 1927, whilst other buildings may have lacked funds for their maintenance due to decisions of the Supreme Muslim Council, which, in 1922, had taken control of the *awaqaf* (Ar s. *waqf*) funds for the maintenance of shrines. However, it is clear that some buildings which were in a good condition before 1948 have since been abandoned and allowed to fall into ruin. Examples include the shrine of Shaykh Abdallah al-Bataihi (Petersen 1995, Fig. 3, No. 30), which has now virtually disappeared beneath vegetation and rubble but which, though ruined, seemed to be well maintained and in use during the 1930s when it was photographed by the Palestine Department of Antiquities. Other buildings in Ramla which are in a ruinous condition and stand neglected include the shrines of Shaykh Stuh, Shaykh Sa'd wa Sa'id and Shaykh Muhammad al-Qubbi (Petersen 1995, Fig. 3, Nos. 21, 23 and 32).

Throughout Israel there are similar examples of abandoned and neglected Muslim shrines; documented examples include Maqam Shaykh Zayd, Maqam Shaykh Musafir, Maqam al-Nabi Bulus, Nabi Kifl, Nabi Thari, Maqam Shakykh Ghazi and Maqam 'Abd al-Nabi (Petersen 2001a, 123, 195, 225–226, 227, 232–233, 282–283 and 298–299). In the majority of these cases, the shrines are abandoned and falling into ruin because the local Arab Palestinian population has been dispersed and is no longer in a position to maintain the shrine. There also are many examples of shrines which appear to be still maintained in some form even if the village or settlement in the immediate vicinity no longer exists. Evidence for continued use of shrines includes the presence of a green cloth draped over the tomb or cenotaph as well as candles and, in some cases, olive oil containers. In the better-maintained or well-used shrines, there may also be mats and copies of the Quran. One of the best examples of a well-maintained tomb where the local population has dispersed is the Maqam

Shaykh Tamim adjacent to the abandoned village of Bayt Jibrin. The shrine comprises a domed mausoleum with an arched portico, a vaulted prayer hall with mihrab and a well. The entire complex is surrounded by a tall (1.5 m high) enclosure wall (Petersen 2001a, 122–123). However, the majority of Muslim shrines which are well maintained are located either in or adjacent to settlements with a Muslim population. For example, there are many well-maintained shrines in Galilee, where a higher proportion of Palestinian villages survived. In many cases, these appear to be in frequent religious use. For example, in the twin villages of Shaykh Danun and Shaykh Daud in northern Galilee, the respective shrines have prayer halls attached which seem to function as the village mosque on a daily basis (Petersen 2001a, 281–282). In both cases the mausoleum containing the tomb of the saint is in a separate room, which means that modern ideas of Muslim worship are not directly confronted with the veneration of shaykh's tombs (see below for a discussion of the impact of modern Islam on Muslim shrines). In many cases, modern prayer halls are built next to existing shrines; thus in the village of Shaykh Maysar a small domed maqam is located next to the modern mosque. There have been attempts to modernize the appearance of the shrine; thus the exterior is covered with irregular stone cladding, whilst the interior walls are covered with modern ceramic tiles.

The Palestinian Territories (West Bank and Gaza)

The Palestinian territories were first brought under Israeli control in 1968 and remained under military occupation until 1996. The current situation within the Palestinian territories is complex with some areas under Palestinian control, other areas under joint Israeli-Palestinian control and some places where Israeli authority has been retained. Within this area, the fate of shrines resembles the situation in Galilee where many shaykh's tombs continue to be used and maintained. Salah al-Houdalieh's study of the Maqam of Shihab al-Din, 21 km north-west of Jerusalem, provides a good example of a local village shrine which is still in religious use, yet is also valued for its historical significance see (al-Houhdalieh 2010). However, in many cases there is a tendency to build new mosques either next to the older shrines or, in some cases, over the shrines—a situation which has also been observed in Lebanon, where historical Muslim shrines are concealed within modern buildings. There are, however, some exceptions to this general situation—in the first place, there are some shrines

Fig. 8.1 Maqam Shaykh Zaytoun located on a high mountain near Ramallah. Although technically within the designated Palestinian territory, the shrine is in a zone controlled by the Israeli military

which although in the Palestinian territories are not accessible to either Palestinians or civilians. Examples include shrines in Israeli controlled areas such as Maqam Shaykh Zaytun which is located on a hilltop to the west of Ramallah in an area controlled by the Israeli military (Fig. 8.1). Whilst the building is not threatened with imminent destruction, its exposed location and the fact that there is no access for repairs or maintenance means that it will eventually fall into ruin. Secondly, there is the situation where Islamic shrines are appropriated and Muslims are either excluded or have very restricted and partial access to particular Holy places.

Contested Shrines

Whilst the fact that some shrines are used by two or more of the major faiths (Muslim, Christians, Jews and Druze) has often been celebrated, it has also caused some of the biggest controversies in the region. This of course applies to the most famous shrines such as the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem and the Haram in Hebron. In Jerusalem, to a certain extent the

problem is contained by the fact that the Jewish population has had exclusive religious access to the Western wall, which is generally accepted as part of the Temple, whilst the Muslims have exclusive use of the enclosure above, which only contains buildings of the Islamic period. In Hebron, the situation is more problematic, as the Tombs of the Patriarchs are claimed by both Jews and Muslims—the resulting compromise, whereby the interior of the shrine is split between Jews and Muslims, is less clear than Jerusalem and there are frequent eruptions of violence.

In addition to Hebron and Jerusalem, there are many examples of shrines with shared Muslim and Jewish associations. For example, many of the medieval shrines built or revived by the Mamluks related to figures from the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) rather than to figures shared with the Christian tradition (see, e.g. Petersen 2001b; Frenkel 2001, 154). One of the most important shrines built or rebuilt by Baybars was the tomb of Moses near Jericho. Although the site became a major pilgrimage centre for Palestinian Muslims, it never acquired a Jewish following partly because biblical tradition explicitly locates the tomb of Moses at an unknown location outside Palestine. The site has also been protected from appropriation because the site has had a continuous Muslim presence even though the annual festival (*mawsim*) was banned during the British Mandate because of its links to Palestinian nationalism.

There are, however, many other shrines connected with Old Testament figures where there are disputes, confrontations and occasional violence. Outside Jerusalem and Hebron, probably the most famous example of a contested shrine is the tomb of Rachel which stands on the road between Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

Rachel's Tomb

According to biblical tradition, Rachel died whilst giving birth to Benjamin and was buried where she died on the route from Bethel to Ephrath (for a detailed structural history of the shrine, see Pringle 1998, 171–172). The site identified with her place of burial has a long history and was first mentioned by Eusebius in the *Onomasticon*, stating that her grave was to be found at the fourth milestone from Jerusalem. In the seventh century AD, the site was visited by the monk Arculf, who stated, 'Rachel's tomb is … on your right as you go towards Hebron. It is of poor workmanship, unadorned and protected by a stone rail. Today they point out an inscription giving her name, which Jacob her husband erected over it' (Wilkinson

1977, 208–209). The first description of a building at the site was by al-Idrissi, who, in 1154, wrote, 'The tomb is covered by twelve stones and above it is a dome vaulted over with stone' (trans. Le Strange 34; Le Strange 1890, 299). The shrine was renovated in the fifteenth century according to al-Dhahiri, who stated that his own father had built a dome over the grave as well as a cistern and public drinking fountain (Marmardji 1951, 35). In the seventeenth century, Richard Pococke observed that the arches supporting the dome were filled in to prevent the Jews coming into the shrine whilst the surrounding area was a Muslim cemetery (Pococke 1743, Vol. II, 39). In the nineteenth century, the site increasingly attracted the interest of European visitors to Palestine, who were coming to Palestine in increasing numbers. One of the most prominent visitors was the Jewish businessman Sir Moses Montefiore and his wife Judith, who visited the tomb twice in 1827 and 1839. The second visit took place after the earthquake in 1837, and Lady Montefiore convinced Sir Moses to pay for the renovation of the shrine, including the construction of a Muslim prayer room or mosque attached to the tomb (Loewe, ed. 1890, Vol. 1, 182). The renovation was completed by 1841 and included arrangements for joint Jewish and Muslim access to the chamber containing the tomb (Bowman 2014, 38). Although there are no descriptions of the tomb in the Montefiore diaries, the fact that Sir Moses chose a replica of Rachel's tomb for his own mausoleum in Ramsgate indicates that the tomb had a profound effect on both him and his wife (Kadish 2006, 58–62). Following the renovation work paid for by Sir Moses, Rachel's tomb increasingly became available to Jews who now had their own keys to the tomb chamber. From the late Ottoman period through to the end of the British Mandate in 1948, there was joint Jewish and Muslim access to the shrine. Between 1948 and 1967, Jewish access to the site was virtually non-existent as the shrine lay within Jordanian control. Following the occupation of the West Bank in 1968, the shrine became a predominantly Jewish pilgrimage site with decreasing access to Muslims. In 1995, a Yeshiva (Jewish Religious College) was built at the site, and five years later, in 2000, the entire complex was surrounded with a concrete wall and turned into a fortress. As a result, since 2000, there has been virtually no access to Muslims and Rachel's tomb has become an exclusively Jewish shrine (Bowman 2014, 36–37).

From this brief review, it is evident that for much of its history the shrine was considered as a Muslim holy place, although it was evidently also revered by people of other faiths. It is also clear that for some of this

period Jews were excluded from the shrine but that for much of its history the shrine was visited by Muslim, Jewish and Christian pilgrims. The fact that Sir Moses Montefiore built a mosque at the site clearly indicates that he regarded the shrine as a place to be shared between Jews and Muslims. However, Bowman has argued that the provision of the mosque meant that Muslims were increasingly separated from Jewish pilgrims and that this strengthened Jewish claims to the site (Bowman 2014, 43–44). In any case the current situation with the shrine encased in a six-metre-high wall denies Muslim access to the site which for much of its existence was a testimony to the shared heritage of Muslims and Jews.

Nabi Samwil (The Prophet Samuel)

The shrine of Nabi Samwil (Samuel) to the west of Jerusalem has had a more complex history both in terms of the structure itself and because of its location. The shrine is located on the summit of a hill (800 m above sea level) within sight of Jerusalem and has many ancient traditions linking it to the Prophet Samuel. By the sixth century, a Byzantine monastery was established at the site, providing pilgrims with accommodation and facilities on their way to Jerusalem. The Crusaders established a church at the site in the twelfth century, which was later converted to a mosque during the rule of Saladin. Although technically the shrine is located within the Palestinian Territories, it is now within an area known as the 'Seam Zone', which is the territory between the Green Line (1948 Armistice Line) and Israel's separation barrier. For practical purposes, this means that the shrine is located within Israel. Prior to 1967 (the Six-Day War), the shrine stood at the centre of a village which was subsequently depopulated and demolished. In 1995, the area was declared an Israeli National Park and there have been archaeological excavations of the former village to reveal Crusader, Byzantine and earlier remains. Although Muslims continue to use the mosque (formerly the Crusader church), they are excluded from religious visits to the tomb chamber below, which is reserved for Jewish ritual use (Mizrachi and Sulymani 2013).

Qabr Yusef (The Tomb of Joseph)

Whilst there are clearly some contentious issues surrounding the Tomb of Samuel such as the fate of the Palestinian village or religious access to the tomb chamber, these have not resulted in violent clashes. The same cannot

be said for the Tomb of Joseph located in the eastern part of Nablus, which has been the focus of religious and communal violence culminating in repeated attempts to destroy the tomb since the year 2000. Besides damage to the tomb, the attacks have also resulted in many Palestinian and Israeli deaths.

The association of the site with Joseph's burial place is of considerable antiquity and can be traced back to the Book of Joshua 24:32 (see Chap. 1 "Introduction"). The biblical site of Shechem is now generally acknowledged to be the archaeological site of Tell Balata located to the east of Nablus and near the building identified as the tomb of Joseph. Although there is no comparable statement in the Quran, several Muslim traditions identify Nablus as the burial place of Joseph. For example, Ali of Herat, writing in 1173, notes that Joseph is buried at the foot of a tree near Nablus although he also notes another tradition that he was buried in Hebron (Le Strange 1890, 512). The fifteenth century writer Mujir al-Din appears to give preference to Hebron as the place of Joseph's burial although he also notes that there is a tomb of Joseph near to Nablus as well as the tombs of other prophets (Sauvaire 1876, 21–23, 216–217). In the eighteenth century, the tomb was visited by Abd al-Ghani al-Nalbusi, who noted that although the shrine was covered with a dome, it was not architecturally impressive (ed. al-Haridi 1986, 144).

The most detailed structural description of the shrine is provided by the *Survey of Western Palestine*, which notes that it was repaired by Mr E.T. Rogers, the British Consul at Damascus in 1868. Kabr Yusef is described as a large rectangular structure (6' × 3' and 4' high) with a ridge along the top and pillars at either end. The pillar at the foot of the tomb contained a cup-shaped recess 'where oil lamps are lighted and incense burnt by the Jews and the Samaritans'. The tomb itself is enclosed within a square courtyard (18'7" × 18'7") with whitewashed plastered walls 10 feet high. On the south side of the enclosure wall, there was a mihrab niche and two modern Hebrew inscriptions. To the north of the recently repaired building, there was a ruined enclosure containing the remains of a small building covered with a dome (Conder and Kitchener 1882, 194–195). It is not, however, clear whether the tomb itself was covered with a dome at this point, although photographs of the tomb from the end of the nineteenth century indicate that it had the form of a typical shaykh's tomb comprising a domed tomb chamber, an arched portico and a small enclosure.

During the 1920s, the tomb was visited by Jaussen as part of his study of Nablus. After describing the physical appearance of the shrine with its

external courtyard and domed shrine, he notes that it was visited by Muslims of all types ('Le tombeau est visite par touse les Musulmans de Naplouse et des villages voisoins'), women seeking reconciliation with their spouses or men searching for their lost brothers (Jaussen 1927, 156–157).

Within the present context of the continuing violence surrounding the Tomb of Joseph, it is difficult to discuss either ownership or rights of access to the shrine. However, it is clear that in the past the shrine was utilized by Samaritans, Jews and Muslims. With the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967, the tomb increasingly became identified as a Jewish ritual site by Israeli settlers, leading to the exclusion of Muslims in 1975. The shrine was then developed by an Israeli settler group linked to an adjacent Israeli army post. With the implementation of the Oslo Accords, Nablus, including Joseph's tomb, was placed in 'Zone A', which meant that the area was totally within the control of the Palestinian National Authority. However, Israeli settlers and extremists continued to visit the tomb with resulting conflict over access. Since 2000, there have been repeated attacks on the shrine and the Yeshiva by Palestinian activists angered by the presence of Israeli settlers visiting the tomb (see, e.g. Levinson 2015).

Conclusion

During the years since 1948, there has certainly been a decrease in the number of Muslim shrines in Palestine. The decrease is due to a number of factors which are both religious and political. In religious terms, there has been a move away from the creation of new saints or shaykh's tombs, which is connected with a decline in Sufism and increased participation in formal worship in mosques. In the course of time, one would normally expect some shrines to deteriorate, as they no longer had visitors, whilst other new shrines would gain in importance. However, this situation is no longer the case and the shrines which have fallen out of active use have generally not been replaced. Although the graves of a few prominent figures such as Iz al-Din Qassam have achieved shrine-like status, this is very much the exception. Certainly, this is not the same situation as during the early twentieth century when there were numerous shaykhs and holy men, both living and recently died, whose places of burial were expected to develop as shrines. This change may partly be connected with an increase in literacy as well as the influence of Salafists in Saudi Arabia and

other Gulf countries, where many Palestinians have been employed as expatriate workers.

Whilst shrines are no longer a mainstream part of religious Islam in Palestine, the political and cultural significance of the existing shrines has increased. As detailed above, large numbers of shrines, particularly in southern Palestine, were destroyed as part of a planned policy of village demolition. The same also occurred in towns such as Ramla and Lydda, where large sections of the historic cores were destroyed. In some cases the depopulated villages were destroyed but the shrines were left standing. Many of these standing buildings are left derelict or in a neglected condition because there is no longer a local Muslim population to maintain and visit them. Sometimes, expelled villagers will make considerable efforts to visit the shrines such as the case of ‘Ain Haud, where visitors will come from Lebanon and Jordan to visit the shrine of Husam al-Din Abu al-Hayja whose origins are traced back to the time of Saladin (Slymovics 1998, 130–131; Petersen 2001a, 196–197) (Fig. 8.2). In some cases the

Fig. 8.2 Cenotaph marking the grave of Husam al-Din Abu al-Hayja within the maqam of the same name in the village of Kawkab. Note the hand prints and inscriptions painted in henna on the white walls of the shrine

shrines are taken over by the new local Jewish population, as is the case with the shrine Nabi Yamin near Jaljuliyya, which is now maintained as a Jewish shrine probably because of its association with Benjamin, son of Rachel. In other cases the name of the shrine is changed to reflect a perceived Jewish link with a particular tomb or location (Petersen 2001b). The most well-known example is the tomb of Abu Hurayra near Yavne (see Chap. 3), which has been renamed as the tomb of Rabbi Gamliel, who was the leader of the Sanhedrin in the first century AD (Petersen 2001a, 313–316; Taragan 2000, 2006).

Within the Palestinian Territories (West Bank), many shrines have been maintained and continue to be used; however, in a few cases where there is disputed access, there can be violent clashes. Much of the violence has occurred since the West Bank has been brought under the control of the Palestine National Authority. The shrines have been used by Israeli settlers as a means of disputing and undermining Palestinian control and, in the process, have meant that some of the most famous shrines, such as Rachel's tomb and the Tomb of Joseph, are currently inaccessible to Muslim pilgrims. In each case, previously shared tombs have become politicized and used as a means of justifying territorial acquisitions.

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CHAPTER 9

Heritage and Conservation

Abstract This chapter focuses on a more positive outlook for Muslim shrines and shows how they can be used and re-interpreted for thier cultural and historical value. There are a number of ways in which the heritage of shrines can be used and promoted. These include the documentation and presentation of existing and destroyed shrines on the Internet, the use of shrines for the promotion of tourism, the preservation of shrines as a form of resistance to extremist interpretations of Islam and the role of shrines in the promotion of interfaith understanding.

Keywords Heritage • Conservation • Internet

The previous chapter highlighted some of the difficulties faced by Muslim shrines in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These problems are derived mostly from the current political situation as well as changing religious attitudes to shrines within Islam. The current chapter will focus on the more positive outcomes for Muslim shrines and show how they can be used and re-interpreted for their cultural and historical value. There are a number of ways in which the heritage of shrines can be used and promoted. These include the documentation and presentation of existing and destroyed shrines on the Internet, the use of shrines for the promotion of tourism, the preservation of shrines as alternatives to Salafist versions of

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Islam and the role of shared shrines in promoting interfaith understanding. Before looking at these different contemporary roles, it is worth reviewing the close connection between shrines and pre-modern views of the past.

Shrines as an Historical Resource

Palestine has a deep and rich archaeological heritage which was of great significance in the pre-modern past just as it is today. One of the best examples of this concern with relics and sacred locations is the alleged discovery of the 'True Cross' by St. Helena, mother of the emperor Constantine in the early fourth century AD. According to a number of later sources, the relics of the True Cross were excavated from the site of The Temple of Venus, which was subsequently demolished to make way for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In this case, the presence of these ancient relics was seen to lend authenticity to the site, which was subsequently developed as the foremost Christian shrine. Many other sites were subsequently developed as shrines commemorating the life and works of Jesus; thus an ancient tomb at Bethany was identified as the tomb of Lazarus and a church built over the site. With the Crusader conquest of Palestine in the eleventh-century, Christian shrines were developed around the country, often based on the existence of ancient remains where the remains lent authenticity to otherwise uncertain locations. For example, it seems likely that the presence of a spring and a ruined caravanserai lent some degree of authenticity to the Crusader Church at Qarayat al-'Inab (Abu Ghosh), which was mistakenly identified with biblical Emmaus (for a detailed discussion of the site, see Pringle 1993, 7–17). Similarly, the Crusaders misidentified the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem as the Jewish Temple. In all these cases an ancient structure (the Dome of the Rock would have been 400 years old when the Crusaders occupied Jerusalem) provided a physical location to which biblical narratives could be attached. Thus the topography of the Holy Land became a physical embodiment of biblical narratives.

With the Islamic re-conquest of Palestine in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, ancient sites were often developed into Muslim shrines. Whilst some of these shrines were built by Mamluk sultans or other high-ranking officials, large numbers were also established at a local level either by Sufis or by prominent members of local communities. It is known that some of these shrines were originally established by Christians, Samaritans or Jews and later remodelled as Muslim shrines (as in the case of Nabi

Yusef in Nablus). In other cases, ancient objects or sites were discovered and re-interpreted within a Muslim context—one of the best-known examples is the Rock of Job in the Huaran, which was locally referred to as Shaykh Sa'd. The centre of the shrine comprised a rock or stelæ engraved with a hieroglyphic inscription commemorating the victories of the Egyptian Pharaoh Rameses II. Next to the stelæ there was a prayer hall with a mihrab (Curtiss 1902, 85–86). Curtis saw the stelæ as a reversion to a pagan religion with the mihrab as an incidental Islamic feature. However, it seems more likely that Muslims had incorporated this ancient feature from the past within their mosque as an example and perhaps proof of the pre-Islamic past referred to in the Quran.

The many Muslim shrines to biblical figures are also examples of this need to relate to the pre-Islamic heritage of Palestine. One of the most impressive examples of relating an ancient site to Islamic narratives is the cave of the Daughters of Jacob (*Magharrat Banat Yaqub*) set into the side of the hill beneath the Mamluk citadel in Safed (Petersen 2001, 265–267). The cave is probably a natural feature which was first modified in the Roman or Byzantine period for use as a place of burial with 16 rock-cut *kokīm* (rectangular burial chambers). In 1412 AD, the caves were remodelled as a place of pilgrimage to the biblical Jacob by the Mamluk Emir Husam al-Adhami. The Mamluk additions comprised two prayer niches or mihrabs and five cenotaphs, one of which marked the grave of Sudun al-Dawadari (d. 909 AH, 1502/1503 AD), daughter of the Mamluk governor of Safed (Mayer 1933, 128). The shrine was evidently run by the Sufi order of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Gilani, and in the seventeenth century, the rituals carried out within the shrine were recorded by the Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi (Stephan 1935–1944, Part II, 163). It is clear from the inscription above the entrance that the Mamluk governors recognized the pre-Islamic character of the cave tomb. By placing their own burials within the cave, they made the shrine both familiar and relevant to their own histories.

Alan Walmsley gives another interesting example of the Islamic re-interpretation of an ancient site near Amman (Jordan) where a Roman cave tomb was identified as the cave of the sleepers, as related in the Quranic story (Quran 18, 9–26). Christian tradition has a similar story dated to the fifth century AD, which is located in a cave outside Ephesus. According to the Quranic narrative, some young men fell asleep and awoke 309 years later, thinking they had only slept one day. There are two mosques next to the cave, one of which is probably of Umayyad date

(seventh–eighth century) and a later mosque built in the thirteenth or fourteenth century (Walmsley 2001, 534–536). The presence of two mosques of different dates indicates that this shrine was venerated by Muslims over an extended period of time and that the cave was regarded as part of an Islamic heritage. In other words, the cave, together with the mosques, presents an enduring relationship with a sacred past.

Both these examples show that medieval Muslims were able to recognize subterranean pre-Islamic features and set them within their own conceptualization of the past. James Grehan noticed that a large number of shrines in the region were either underground or below the average ground level. Grehan convincingly argues that this was because caves were seen as spiritual zones where the living could communicate with the dead and could gain many useful secrets and cures (Grehan 2014, 125–130). However, it is also clear that the pre-modern inhabitants of Palestine recognized the archaeological phenomena by which older features were buried beneath the present ground level. In other words, it was understood that subterranean features such as caves and excavations gave direct access to the past. Similarly, it was recognized that ancient archaeological remains buried beneath the ground could be disturbed by modern activities; thus al-Harawi noted that the location of many important tombs in Damascus was unknown because the cemetery had been ploughed up and used for agriculture (Meri 2005, 14–15). Other medieval authors demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the history of archaeological features; thus Ibn Shaddad related the history of a marble seat from its use in a pagan fire sanctuary to its successive veneration by Christians and then Muslims as a relic relating to either Jesus or one of the apostles (Talmon-Heller 2007, 188–189).

Although for modern scholars many of the historical claims of shrines may seem unlikely, for a pre-modern society, such physical markers of past events and locations were a useful way of understanding and relating to the past. Visiting the tombs and burial places of family or tribal ancestors was a particularly important means of relating to the past and using history as a method for understanding the present. In many ways, the past was seen as intimately connected with the present and the need for ancestors to be involved in the present meant that particularly important graves had to be identified and maintained. Curtis gives an example from the early twentieth century:

> the Dhiab Arabs in the district known as el-Kasebi, east of the upper end of the Sea of Galilee … were much alarmed during the spring of 1903 because

> of the prevalence of cholera at Tiberias. Their weli is Dhiab, whom, according to the custom of other Arab tribes, they regard as their progenitor. They had never erected a shrine in his honor, but when the cholera was at its height in Tiberias, they built a shrine of rude stones under the open heavens to their ancestor Dhiab. (Curtiss 1904, 96)

In this case the construction of the shrine was not only a connection with the past but hopefully an insurance for the future to protect the tribes from cholera.

Virtual Preservation: Muslim Shrines on the Internet

The previous chapter documented how the number of Muslim shrines fell from their probable maximum at the beginning of the twentieth century to a much smaller and unquantified number by the end of the same century. It is also noticeable that whilst in the early twentieth century many Muslim shrines were in frequent religious use, by the twenty-first century the veneration of shrines became an unusual practice, and in many cases, people were reluctant to admit to visiting shaykhs' tombs. The combined effects of the physical disappearance and destruction of Muslim shrines by non-Muslims, together with increasing indifference to shrines amongst the increasingly sophisticated and urban population, have meant that this distinguishing feature of the Palestinian landscape is in danger of disappearing.

There are, however, several individuals and organizations which appreciate the cultural and heritage value of shrines and have introduced a number of initiatives to make sure that they are a recognized part of the landscape. Some of the most significant efforts have used Internet websites as a means of publicizing shrines, preserving evidence of their physical structure and supporting efforts to encourage their use as either religious or cultural monuments.

One of the most useful and widely accessed Internet sites is an anonymous blog called 'Muslim Shrines in Israel' written under the pseudonym of Borisfenus (https://borisfenus.blogspot.co.uk/). The blog combines information from a variety of sources and includes recent digital photographs of many of the shrines. Although there is no information about the purpose of the blog or the background of the blogger, the site does give an extensive bibliography and references it sources. The shrines are

arranged according to regions and types in a fairly systematic manner, although there are some sections missing and it is sometimes difficult to find a particular shrine. However, the blog is an invaluable resource for keeping knowledge of the shrines up to date and it is also very reliable in terms of its information. The following sections were available when the blog was viewed on 15th July 2016, (1) Turbas in Jerusalem, (2) Tombs of the Prophets, (3) Maqams. Judaean Mountains, (4) Maqams. Shfela, (5) Maqams. Coastal Plain, (6) Maqams. Sharon Plain and Carmel, (10) Rebuilt Maqams and modern replicas of Maqams, (11) Lost shrines, (12) Maqams that were Judaized, (14) Not Maqams, (14a) Abandoned Mosques South, (15) Sacred Springs and Sabils.

Another website with wide coverage of shrines is known as Palestine Remembered (http://www.palestineremembered.com/index.html). The website is primarily concerned with the displacement of the Palestinian people and the history of the towns and villages formerly inhabited by Palestinians. The website includes photographs and descriptions of many locations which may include Muslim shrines. The website includes photographs from before 1948 as well as more recent dated photographs which may show abandoned shrines or sites of a destroyed shrine. The website has a core database much of which is derived from Walid Khalidi's 1992 work on destroyed Palestinian villages (Khalidi 1992). In addition, the website includes large amounts of information which has been uploaded by Palestinians and other members of the public. As the primary purpose of the website is to document settlements as a whole, shrines and individual structures are not always included. There is also the problem that some of the photographs of shrines on the website do not coincide with either descriptions of the shrines or photographs from other sources. Nevertheless, the website provides an essential resource for any research on shrines and provides a record of the urban and rural context of the shrines.

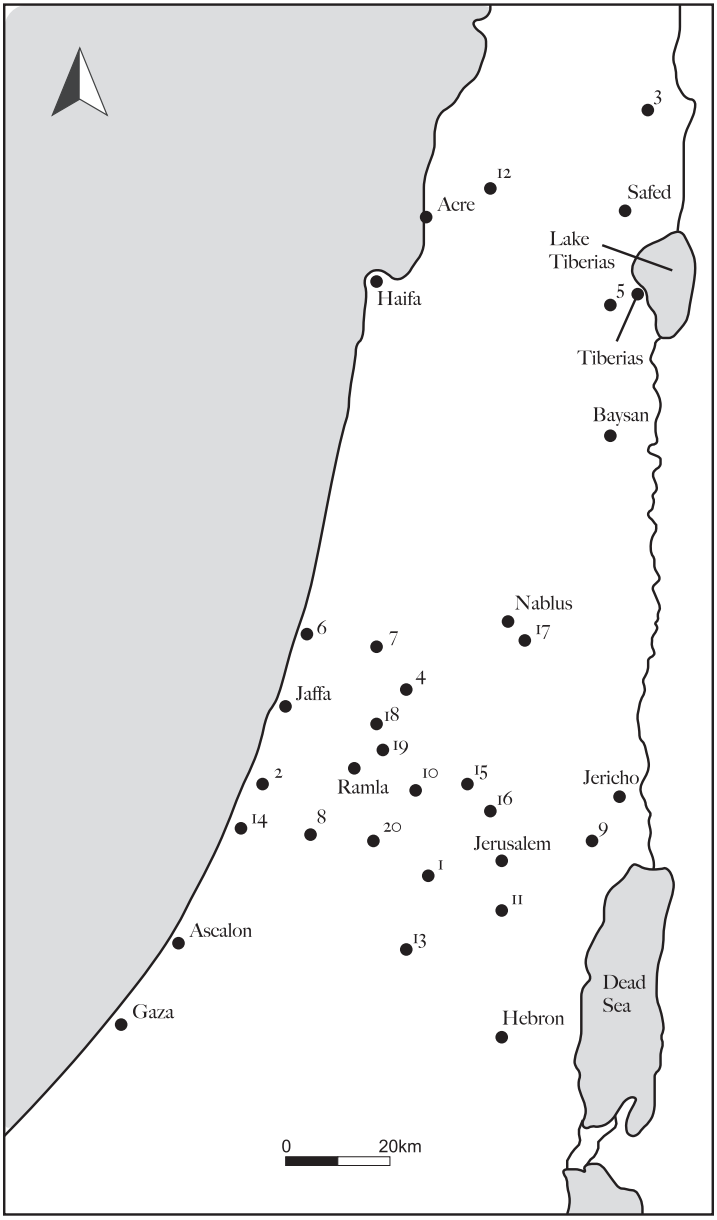
In addition to the websites which cover Palestine as a whole, there are a number of websites which focus on aspects of Muslim shrines. One of the more interesting examples is a website with the title 'Sufi Trails in Palestine' (http://www.sufitrails.ps/index.php) which focusses on a number of shrines in the vicinity of Ramallah. The website is run by Palestinians with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The aim of the website is to promote walking tours to Sufi shrines and also promote an understanding of the local people and natural landscape. Within this website, the shrines are promoted as heritage assets with links to the deep past as well as to the medieval and Ottoman periods. The

shrines are not presented as particularly Muslim structures but rather as symbols of continuity and harmony with nature. Another website of relevance to Muslim shrines in Palestine called 'Sacred Sites in Contested Regions' (http://sacredplaces.huji.ac.il/) which is part of a project directed by Nimrud Luz and Nurit Stadler and funded by the Israel Science. Although the website has much less coverage of Muslim shrines, it addresses some of the issues relevant to contested shrines and also sets Muslim holy places within the broader context of contemporary religion.

Actual Conservation and Preservation

The examples from the Internet show a wide range of different approaches to shrines, ranging from simple documentation to heritage development and political analysis. Whilst these different methods certainly raise the profile of Muslim shrines and keep them in the public consciousness, the actual preservation, conservation and rehabilitation of shrines is a much more complex and expensive process.

The complexity of conserving or restoring an ancient shrine derives from a number of issues which depend on the location of a particular shrine (e.g. Israel, East or West Jerusalem, the Palestinian Territories A, B and C), the relationship of the shrine to current or past inhabited settlements and its religious significance and association. Within Israel (defined by the 1948 Green Line), once the legal ownership of a particular building has been established, the process of conserving or restoring a shrine can be fairly straightforward. Where a building has been registered by the Israel Antiquities Authority, it may be conserved and repaired as national monument. For example, the Muslim shrine of Nabi Yahya near the former village of Mezra'a was renovated and conserved in the 1980s mostly because the Muslim shrine was housed within a very important third-century Roman family tomb (Fig. 9.1, No. 19). However, in most cases, even when Muslim shrines are registered as ancient monuments within Israel, they are not a priority for scarce conservation resources. Within the Palestinian Territories, whilst some shrines are still in active use, there are some shrines which, for a variety of reasons, are no longer visited or maintained despite their historical significance. One of the problems with most of the Muslim shrines is that because of their function as religious buildings and as mausolea, they are not easily adapted for re-use. A similar problem has been documented in Indian-administered Kashmir, where the architecturally significant early Mughal shrine of Thag Baba was the


3
12
Acre
Safed
Lake
Tiberias
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Tiberias
Baysan
Nablus
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6
7
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18
19
2
Ramla
10
15
Jericho
16
14
8
20
9
Jerusalem
1
11
Ascalon
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Dead
Sea
Gaza
Hebron
0
20km

subject of a conservation project by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage. A comprehensive restoration programme involved restoring the building to its original sixteenth-century appearance as well as enhancing the immediate environment to encourage tourism and visitors to the site. Unfortunately, sectarian problems within the local Muslim community, together with a relatively low status for the saint interred in the mausoleum, mean that the shrine gets few visitors (Hamdani 2016, 193–194, 199, note 37).

In some places, particularly in Galilee, shrines are maintained and used by the local community, although sometimes the buildings are modified with modern materials which may be inappropriate from a strict heritage and conservation perspective. For example, the shrine of Shaykh Maysar in the village of the same name comprises a small rectangular building (7.5 × 5 m) covered with a dome and the cenotaph of Shaykh Maysar (Petersen 2001, 283). The exterior of the building is clad with stone slabs and the interior surfaces are covered with modern glazed ceramic tiles all of which would be considered inappropriate in conservation terms. In other cases, however, buildings are consolidated and repaired in sympathy with their historic appearance. For example, the shrine of Husam al-Din at Kawkab near Haifa has been strengthened by the addition of massive concrete corner buttresses and re-enforced concrete tie beams (Petersen 2001, 196–197). Despite these major structural interventions, the historic appearance of the building has been maintained both outside and inside. In a number of cases where Muslim shrines in Israel have been appropriated by Jewish communities, the fabric of the buildings concerned have been maintained and well conserved. Two notable examples are the Mausoleum of Abu Hurayra (now known to the Israeli community as the tomb of Rabbi Gamliel) and the shrine of Nabi Yamin (Benjamin) near

Fig. 9.1 Map of Palestine showing principal cities and the location of shrines mentioned in the text. (1) Dayr al-Shaykh, (2) Nabi Rubin, (3) Nabi Yusha, (4) Nabi Thari, (5) Nabi Shua'ayb, (6) Haram Sidna 'Ali, (7) Nabi Yamin, (8) Maqam Abu Hurayra, (9) Nabi Musa, (10) Abu 'Ubayda, (11) Rachel's Tomb, (12) Shaykh Danun and Shaykh Daud, (13) Shaykh Tamim in Bayt Jibrin, (14) Isdud shrines of Ibrahim Matabuli and Shaykh Salman al-Farisi, (15) Shaykh Zaytoun near Ramallah, (16) Nabi Samwil, (17) Qabr Yusuf (Joseph's Tomb), (18) Shaykh Baraz al-Din at Majdal Yaba, (19) Nabi Yahya at al-Muzayri'a, (20) Shaykh Zayd at Bayt Jiz (Map by Ifan Edwards)

Petah Tikvah. The mausoleum of Abu Hurayra has been cleaned and the portico has been enclosed with glass which does not detract from the appearance of the building and also protects some of the architecture from atmospheric pollution (Figs. 4.1 and 4.2). There have been no major structural changes to the shrine of Nabi Yamin (Fig. 6.5) although the presence of a caretaker has meant that the complex has been continuously maintained and protected from vandalism.

In recent years, one of the incentives behind the restoration or rehabilitation of shrines has been the need to generate income from the many tourists who annually visit Israel/Palestine. The idea of developing tourism around religious sites is, of course, of considerable antiquity though its application to Muslim shrines (outside Jerusalem and Hebron) is a more recent phenomenon which was first developed in Jordan by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities during the 1990s. One of the main products of this initiative was a book listing the principal holy sites (Muslim and Christian) in Jordan (Malkawi et al. 1996). The Muslim shrines are placed into three groups: the tombs of the prophets, tombs of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad and other Muslim holy sites such as the Cave of the Sleepers referred to above. Interestingly, some shrines are listed twice because they are of significance to both Christians and Muslims. The book is of significance because it includes a *fatwa* which specifically endorses the visitation of holy sites by Muslims (Malkawi et al. 1996, 22–23). In addition to publications relating to the holy sites of Jordan, the initiative involves the physical restoration of shrines and the development of associated touristic infrastructure. The fabric of the shrines varies considerably from medieval domed chambers marking the tomb of Aaron (Harun) above Petra and the tomb of Joshua near Salt (Malkawi et al. 1996, 37 and 41) to the modern structures built around the tombs of the Companions of the Prophet Zayd ibn Al-Harithah and Abdallah bin Rawahah (Malkawi et al. 1996, 57–58). This was the first time since the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 that specifically Muslim shrines (apart from Jerusalem and Hebron) were promoted as part of the cultural and religious heritage of the region.

The example set by Jordan has been followed in a few cases within the Palestinian Territories. For example, the Sufi shrines promoted by the website Sufi Trails in Palestine (referred to above) have been carefully conserved to retain their historic character. The most significant shrine restoration project has been the work on the Nabi Musa shrine near Jericho (Figs. 4.1 and 4.2; Fig. 9.1, No. 9). The work was carried out as

a partnership between the United Nations Development Programme, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Ministry of Waqf, the European Community and the local community. As well as stabilizing the structure and enhancing the historic features of the shrine, the conservation programme included training local workers in traditional construction techniques. The shrine has particular significance for Palestinians as the annual festival (*mawasim*) was banned by the British Mandate government, as it was regarded as an incubator for Palestinian nationalism. During the 1990s, the annual *mawsim* was re-instated, and in 2012, the shrine was included as one of a number of sites within the al-Barriyah zone nominated for World Heritage Status (UNESCO 2016). The location of Nabi Musa within the Jordan valley near Jericho means that it can be included in a religious tourism itinerary which includes Christian monasteries as well as linking to the Muslim shrines in neighbouring Jordan.

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CHAPTER 10

Conclusions

Abstract This final chapter discusses how shrines relate to a number of issues within Palestinian heritage and contemporary society. The first question is how the shrines relate to the expression of national identity within modern Palestine. The second question relates to the role of women both as saints and as visitors of shrines, and the third question considers whether the shrines should be regarded as a purely Muslim phenomenon. Finally, the chapter discusses the future of shrines within the context of global Islam.

Keywords Nationalism • Women • Agrarian religion • Salafi

From this review of the history of Muslim shrines, there are a number of issues which relate to how they have developed and functioned more generally within Palestinian society. First of all, there is the question of the position of shrines within the historic landscape; second, there is the question of the participation of women; third, there is the question of how shrines relate to Islam and other 'official' religions; and finally, there is the question of what will happen to shrines in the future.

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Landscape and Nationalism

Canaan's study has shown that the majority of Palestinian shrines are located next to trees, and in some cases, the shrine comprises a tree without any building or recognizable tomb in the vicinity. Within Ghareeb Asqalani's story cited at the beginning of this book, the mulberry tree next to the shrine of Sheikh 'Awad stands as guardian of the inheritance rights of the displaced Palestinian family, a role which echoes ancient customs of leaving valuables within the vicinity of a shrine. From a wider perspective, this story demonstrates how Shaykh's tombs have become identified with Palestinian nationalism, both as architectural markers and as links with the ancient past. Although the majority of Shaykhs' tombs were either built or used by Muslims, within Palestinian nationalist dialogues, they are not identified as specifically Islamic monuments but rather as symbols of the enduring presence of Palestinians within the landscape. The sheer number of domed shrines within the landscape of Mandate era Palestine has already been noted, and together with their often raised position on hilltops, they provide a visual network over the whole country. Although not all shrines were intra-visible, the visibility of shrines, particularly within rural settings, was of considerable significance and has been noted by many authors. In many cases, piles of stones mark the location where a particular shrine first becomes visible. According to tradition, the stones are set in place either by travellers who do not have time to visit a shrine on a particular occasion or by pilgrims wishing to mark their first sight of a shrine (see Grehan 2014, 120; Fig. 4.3). The combined effect of the shrines and the piles of witness stones means that the whole landscape lay within the protection of holy places. Grehan has made the point that for the pre-modern inhabitants of Palestine, the countryside was often seen as a dangerous place filled with not only natural dangers but also various malevolent supernatural beings. The near-ubiquitous presence of shrines inside and outside villages meant that there were refuges from these forces available for travellers and others. Although the majority of twenty-first-century Palestinians probably do not have the same superstitious attitudes towards their natural environment, shrines still retain their beneficial aura as symbols of national identity and belonging.

Women and Gender

The majority of shrines discussed in this book are associated with male figures who were prophets, companions of the Prophet, Sufis or other prominent holy men. This partly reflects the historical sources which tend

to write more about male figures than women and also scarce information about who exactly visited shrines in any particular period. Based on this partial information, this short section will point to some ways in which women were involved in shrines, both as venerated saints and as patrons and visitors to particular shrines, and also point the way to more detailed research.

First of all, it should be pointed out that in the wider Islamic world, women were often associated with shrines and religious architecture. For example, in the ninth century the pilgrimage road from Kufa to Mecca was renamed the Darb Zubayda in honour of Zubayda, wife of Harun al-Rashid, who paid for the renovation of the route and provided it with extensive facilities. Also, the shrine of Bibi Mariam at Qalhat in Oman was built by Mariam for her husband Baha al-Din Ayaz, although it is often assumed that Mariam herself is buried within the tomb. Within Palestine, the two most significant female personalities revered by Muslim women (and men) were the Virgin Mary and Rachel, mother of Benjamin; in both cases, this veneration was shared with women of other faiths. This may be a coincidence, although it may also reflect the universality of issues surrounding childbirth.

Tewfiq Canaan pointed out that one in seven or 13.2% of shrines in Palestine were those of female saints (Canaan 1927, 235–236). He goes on to state that shrines associated with women were more likely to have a significance beyond their immediate area; thus he states that 60% of women saints were known over a wide area whereas only 30% of male saints were known beyond their immediate vicinity. In some cases the female saints were the sisters of male saints who had their shrines nearby. In rare cases, only women were allowed to visit certain shrines; thus men were not allowed to enter the shrine of Fatima al-Barri in the village of Zakariyya. From Canaan's observations, it can be seen that women were fully, if not evenly, represented within the culture of Muslim shrines.

Within Palestine, one of the best-known female saints was Badriyyah, daughter of Shaykh (Sultan) Badr whose tomb is at Dayr al-Shaykh (see Chap. 5 in this volume). According to the local tradition, Badriyyah was married to her cousin Ahmad but she died shortly afterwards, leaving her husband a widower. Ahmad was so distraught at her death that he tried to have her embalmed and twice destroyed the domed mausoleum her father Badr had built for her. At the third attempt, Ahmed himself died and so was interred next to his wife in the mausoleum (Canaan 1927, 307). Badriyyah's tomb formed the centre of a large complex at Shurafat on the

outskirts of Jerusalem. The complex included a domed mausoleum (containing the tombs of Badriyyah, her husband and children), a prayer hall, three courtyards, a cemetery and a garden containing a number of trees (a lemon tree, two olive trees and five oak trees) (Canaan 1927, 48–49). The fact that the shrine is that of Badriyyah and not her husband partly reflects the way a saint's status was passed through the family line (cf. Grehan 2014, 88) but probably also reflects something about Badriyyah's spiritual presence, which was enough for the construction of a domed mausoleum. The continued popularity of her shrine into the twentieth century indicates her considerable reputation.

The Finnish anthropologist Hilma Granqvist (1965) observed that during the early part of the twentieth century, shrines were an alternative religious location for Muslim women who were not allowed to use mosques which were reserved for male use (an idea also supported by Shoshan 1991, 83; Hammami 1994). The available evidence from earlier periods also indicates that considerable numbers of women visited shrines from the medieval period onwards, and at some of these shrines, they appear to have been the main visitors (Talmon-Heller 2007, 208; Meri 2002, 168–171). Some shrines were founded or endowed by women; thus Dawlat Khatun, daughter of the governor of Damascus, built a hostel for visitors at a shrine in the village of Ruhin near Damascus during the early 1200s (Ibn Shaddad, ed. Sourdel 1953, 55–56; Meri 2002, 204; see also Humphreys 1994). A more extreme form of devotion was demonstrated by Bint al-Ba'uni, who not only built a wooden cenotaph over the grave of Shaykh Isma'il b. 'Abd Allāh al-Salihi but also had a house built for herself in the cemetery opposite his tomb.

Sociological studies in North Africa and elsewhere indicate that women were often the main visitors to shrines. There is no published data indicating the proportion of women to men visiting tombs in Palestine although anecdotal evidence suggests that women were at least as likely as their male counterparts to visit shrines. Women were attracted to shrines for a number of reasons, including the fact that it gave them the opportunity to go somewhere outside the domestic space. Also, the association between shrines and healing meant that women often used shrines as a means of dealing with health issues on behalf of their families. One area where women particularly sought help from shrines was for aid in fertility and other issues connected with child bearing. For example, visits to the tomb of Rachel were often a quest for either a cure for infertility or help with a pregnancy (Bowman 2014, 35). Canaan also cites the example of

women bathing in the basin of Mary (*Jurn Sitti Mariam*) near St. Stephen's gate in Jerusalem to enable them to become pregnant (Canaan 1927, 66 and 111).

Islam or Agrarian Religion

A recent book on the cult of shrines in Palestine by James Grehan suggested that whilst Muslim shrines were a common feature of the landscape of pre-modern Palestine, they should not be regarded as part of Islam but rather as part of a syncretistic agrarian religion (Grehan 2014). The book is based on a study of the cult of shrines in Syria and Palestine from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. The author's argument is based on a number of observations, which may be summarized as follows:

1. Islam did not penetrate deeply into the countryside, and even in large areas of towns, there was ignorance about the tenets and beliefs of Islam.
2. The veneration of shrines runs counter to the example of canonical Islam.
3. Many of the shrines in the region were shared by people of other faiths, Jews, Christians, Samaritans and others.
4. Many of the shrines or practices related to shrines can be traced back to pre-Islamic and even pre-Christian times.

Certainly, many of Grehan's observations are valid, for the period he is dealing with (eighteenth–twentieth century), and his argument for an agrarian religion seems to be convincing. Also, it is evident that many of Grehan's ideas are supported by Tewfiq Canaan's work on Muslim shrines. Canaan's views on shrines are particularly significant, as he lived at a time when the veneration of shrines was widespread throughout Palestine and was, to a certain extent, shared with Christians. His training as a medical doctor meant that Canaan studies the subject with a scientific methodology based on personal observation and statistics. Also, it is evident that Canaan is sympathetic to the culture of shrines, and as a doctor, he took a particular interest in medical claims associated with shrines. To a certain extent, Canaan's interests ran counter to those of established religions at the time, which were attempting to present themselves both as more rational and less local than the veneration of shrines which he presented. At this point, it is worth remembering that Tewfiq Canaan was both a Protestant

and a Palestinian Nationalist. It may be argued that his Protestant faith enabled him to study the often superstitious and mysterious beliefs surrounding Muslim shrines with a certain detachment, as they did not impinge on his own rationalist views. Also, Canaan's Palestinian Nationalist views meant that he regarded the shrines as an intrinsic part of Palestinian identity rooted deeply in the past and available to both Christians and Muslims. In other words, writing during the period of the Balfour Declaration (1917), which favoured the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, Canaan was keen to emphasize the shared religious and customary practices of Muslims and Christians (not Jews).

If, however, we look at the work of Canaan's contemporaries who were studying Muslim shrines, there is a different emphasis. Thus, Paul Kahle's work on Muslim shrines in the vicinity of Jerusalem views them within the context of Islam and, in particular, through the perspective of Sufi beliefs. Thus, he observes living Sufis whose graves may become shrines once they are dead. Kahle views the vast network of Muslim shrines as a constantly changing landscape in which the relevance of particular saints rises or falls depending on the number of followers their beliefs attract either during their lifetime or after they are dead. The shrines are not viewed as centres of superstitious and irrational beliefs but as memorials for pious Muslims who had established a close understanding of God. The fact that people continued to visit the grave of a particularly enlightened Sufi after he was dead was a testament to the enduring value of his spiritual status. In this context, it is noticeable that Canaan barely mentions Sufism in relation to Muslim shrines, which he presents mostly in terms of folklore.

Whilst Grehan acknowledges that Sufism developed from, and is completely part of, Islam as a faith, he downplays its role in the establishment and continued veneration of Muslim shrines. Instead of seeing the shrines as part of a heterogeneous spiritual Islam expressed through Sufism, Grehan sees the shrines as part of a chaotic and organic religion deeply rooted in local beliefs and agrarian cycles.

Part of the problem is deciding on the meaning of shrines. Within the literature, shrines can include a wide range of locations from large well-endowed religious complexes such as Nabi Musa to single trees, springs or even rocks. Within Christianity, there are also a range of places considered as sacred, from large buildings around the tombs of saints to natural features. The designation of a particular place as an official shrine derives

from a combination of accepted local practice and authorization from the church of whatever denomination. Within Christianity, this is often quite clear, and Grehan gives some examples of how the Maronite church adopted some sites which local people already regarded as sacred. Within late Ottoman Palestine, there seems to have been some dislocation amongst the Sufi orders which had been responsible for many of the Muslim shrines. This can be traced to the Egyptian invasion of the early nineteenth century when the *waqfs* of many of the shrines were dissolved to allow re-distribution of land for agricultural improvement. At the same time, the actual functioning of the Sufi orders appears to have been curtailed; thus, official records of Sufi orders in Syria and Palestine examined and published by Grehan show very few Sufi lodges in Palestine, and those that are registered are only in the main cities.

With this background in mind, what appears is that the disruption to the Sufi orders and shrines in the early nineteenth century encouraged the growth of small independent Sufi groupings which were not registered by the state. These small unofficial Sufi lodges had been deprived of much of their income and were unable to maintain many of the shrines—hence their dilapidated condition later in the nineteenth century—and the care of particular shrines became a very local responsibility. Instead of being part of a network of Sufi Muslim shrines, the Shaykh's tombs of Palestine became much more local affairs and disconnected from the literate and urban network that had sustained them prior to the nineteenth century. As local affairs, the shrines could still enjoy considerable fame and importance, but only the larger shrines such as Nabi Musa, Nabi Rubin and Haram Sidna 'Ali could retain their connections to the major Sufi orders.

The Future of Muslim Shrines

The rich and varied heritage presented by the remaining Muslim shrines in Palestine has an uncertain and difficult future. The potential threats to this heritage, which were discussed in Chap. 8, can be broadly classified into two types—(1) deliberate destruction and (2) neglect as a result of a variety of factors.

1. In Chap. 8, the destruction of shrines in the past was mostly connected with the creation of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent confiscation of territory by the Israeli state. However, since the 1990s, there has

been a growing awareness of the value of Muslim shrines within the Israeli archaeology and heritage community. Whilst this has not resulted in a popular appreciation of Muslim shrines within Israeli society, it has meant that the deliberate and targeted destruction of Muslim shrines has largely ceased. However, whilst the threat from Israeli ideology may have reduced, the threat from fundamentalist Islam has increased since the 1990s.

As we have seen, Ibn Taymiyya was the first Muslim cleric to explicitly denounce shrines built around the graves of prominent Muslims. Ibn Taymiyya's views were partly a reaction to the numerous tombs which had become shrines in his native Syria and partly a specific objection to the way Muhammad's tomb had been incorporated into his mosque in Medina (Beranek and Tupek 2009, 15–16; Ibn Taymiyya 2005, Vol. 27, 58). Whilst Ibn Taymiyya's views may have had little practical impact in the fourteenth century, in the eighteenth century, his views were taken on by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, the Muslim cleric who forged an alliance with the first Saudi dynasty. The alliance of ruler and cleric let to the destruction of large numbers of shrines in Arabia (Beranek and Tupek 2009, 17–18). The resurgence of the Saudi state in the early twentieth century combined significant oil wealth with fundamentalist religious beliefs to propagate Salafist views throughout the Islamic world. As a result, since the 1990's, there has been growing support for extremist groups both within Muslim Israeli society and amongst Palestinian Muslims; this has meant that shrines are increasingly at risk from deliberate destruction.

In May 2011, a fundamentalist group possibly affiliated with al-Qaeda destroyed the shrine of Shaykh Zuwayd in the northern Sinai, on the border with Gaza. A report by Reuters gives the following account:

> A pile of rubble at a local shrine bears witness to the lengths to which zealots will go to impose their vision on how religion should be practiced here. On May 15 last year, five men blew up the shrine revered by Sufi mystics, whose beliefs are viewed as heretical by the puritanical Islamists.
>
> A white flag raised by the Sufis flutters over what is left of the shrine of Sheikh Zuweid, viewed as one of the earliest Muslims in Egypt and after whom the town is named. (Elyamin 2012)

With the advent of Islamic State (*Daeesh*), the destruction of Muslim shrines has become a feature of world news. Throughout Iraq and Syria,

scores of ancient Muslim shrines have been destroyed as part of an ideological attempt to return Islam to a constructed past in which there were no shrines apart from the Kaaba in Mecca. So far, there has been little impact within Palestine, and to date (December 8, 2016), no shrines within Palestine have been destroyed as a result of Salafist ideology. It is of course possible that shrines may be destroyed by fundamentalists in the future although the fact that they have remained undamaged till now suggests that Palestinian shrines may escape such deliberate destruction.

2. Whilst the deliberate demolition of shrines has considerable dramatic effect, especially when it is filmed and presented on the Internet, in recent times, this has only happened on a large scale in territories controlled by the Islamic State or its affiliates. For Muslim shrines in Palestine (including Israel), a much more real threat is posed by the neglect and abandonment of shrines. Many of the shrines within the internationally accepted borders of Israel have fallen into ruin because the local populations which formally maintained and visited these shrines no longer have access. In some cases the shrines are adopted either by Jewish religious groups or, in some cases, by Palestinians living within Israel. However, within Muslim Palestinian society as a whole, there is less interest in visiting shrines which are regarded as of less importance than the construction of large new mosques with towering minarets. Whilst many Muslim Palestinians do not subscribe to Salafist views on shrines, they are often regarded as irrelevant and perhaps embarrassing to modern rationalist Muslims. This may be the reason why new mosques are often built next to some of the shrines, which then appear to be little used. There is the additional problem that unless shrines are adopted or incorporated into modern mosque complexes, the responsibility for maintenance falls either to local families with some connection to the shrine (as in the case of the shrine of Husam al-Din in Kauwkab) or to anyone with the resources and inclination to take over their care. As we have seen, many of the *waqf* lands associated with the older shrines were confiscated in the nineteenth century as part of land reforms introduced by the Egyptian authorities. In the twentieth century, *waqf* land was also confiscated by the Israeli authorities under a variety of pretexts, which has also impoverished many of the traditional shrines.

Against these twin threats of destruction and neglect, there is a rising interest in Palestinian heritage and history in which the shrines are an

essential component. However, the question is whether the shrines can be maintained as functioning religious structures or simply as reminders of historic heritage. One of the problems of maintaining shrines as historic heritage is that they do not lend themselves to adaptive re-use. Whilst it may be possible to find alternative and modern uses for a caravanserai or an old house, this is not the case for shrines which usually incorporate graves and also have very specific religious associations. From a religious perspective, the main problem is the decline of Sufi beliefs amongst the Muslim population, as the veneration and visiting of shrines is difficult to reconcile with modern mainstream Sunni beliefs. It is perhaps ironic that the network of shrines developed from the thirteenth century onwards as symbols of Islamic ownership are now regarded as suspect by a religious establishment under the influence of Salafist views on the visitation of graves. The most promising future for these shrines is one where they are kept and maintained (for either religious or secular reasons) as reminders of a diverse and more complex history of Muslim society than that which is presented by mainstream Sunni Islam.

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Glossary

Ayyubids Sunni Muslim dynasty which ruled over much of greater Syria (the modern states of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan) from the late twelfth century (circa 1170 AD) to the mid-thirteenth century (1260 AD), when they were replaced by the Mamluks.

Bahai adherent of the Bahai faith. The Bahai faith was founded in Iran by Bahá'u'lláh in 1863. Persecution in Iran meant that the religion moved first to Ottoman Palestine and later outside the Middle East to the wider world. The Bahai faith is a universal religion which accepts other religions and advocates universal peace.

Bilad al-Sham originally this was a province of the early Islamic state incorporating all of the coastal territories of the eastern Mediterranean or Levant. The term is today used by historians and archaeologists to describe the area covered by the modern states of Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

Caliph from the Arabic term *khalifa*—term for leader of the Islamic state after the death of Muhammad.

dayr Arabic term for a Christian convent or monastery.

Fatimids the Fatimid caliphate was a Shi'a dynasty which ruled much of North Africa, Egypt and parts of Greater Syria between 909 and 1271 AD, when they were overthrown by the Ayyubids.

hadith Arabic term for traditions recording the actions, words and habits of the prophet Muhammad.

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Hajj one of the five pillars of Islam involving a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Hajj must be performed at a specific time over five days during the Islamic month of Dhul Hijja.

Hanafi one of the four schools of Sunni law. This currently has the largest number of adherents and is the predominant school of law followed in much of the Middle East and Central Asia.

Hanbali one of the four schools of Sunni law. This is the main school of law followed in Saudi Arabia and parts of the UAE, Bahrain and Qatar. Historically, this school of law had fewer adherents but was made more significant as it was used as the basis for the Wahhabi-Salafist views of Islam from the eighteenth century onwards.

haram Arabic term meaning forbidden. By extension, the word is also used to denote an area or enclosure which is sacred (i.e. where fighting and other objectionable actions are forbidden). The most famous examples are the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca and the Haram al-Sharif (Noble sanctuary) in Jerusalem which contains the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque.

Hijaz mountainous area on the western side of Arabia, containing both Mecca and Medina. The name derives from the Arabic term barrier, which gives some idea of the region's geographical distinctiveness. During the early twentieth century (1916–1923), there was a separate kingdom of the Hijaz.

jami' Arabic term for a congregational mosque where the larger Muslim community would pray on Fridays.

jihad Arabic term for struggle which was used to describe both the early Muslim conquest and also the conflict with the Franks (Crusaders) in Palestine.

jinn Arabic term for another class of beings, along with humans and angels, which inhabit the earth. Although *jinn* can be either good or bad, they are often regarded as malevolent beings in traditional Muslim societies.

khalifa see caliph.

khanaqah or khanqah Persian term for a building used as a meeting place for Sufis. Derived from the Persian term for napkin or tablecloth indicating the communal nature of Sufi life.

mahmal an empty litter or frame draped with fabric introduced in the thirteenth century to symbolize the presence of the ruler on the Hajj.

Maliki one of the four schools of Sunni law. Historically, this school had large numbers of adherents in North and West Africa as well as in the

Muslim provinces of Spain. This was the amin school of law under the rule of the Umayyad caliphs in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Mamluks rulers of Egypt and Syria from 1260 to 1517. Originating as slave soldiers for the Fatimids and later the Ayyubids, mamluk soldiers first gained control of Egypt and Syria in 1250 and consolidated their power with a victory over the Mongols at ‘Ayn Jalut in Palestine.

maqam (pl. **maqamat**) Arabic term for a place. Within Sufi tradition, a maqam is a station on the route to illumination. By extension, the term is also used for a place where a saint or other holy person’s presence can be experienced, usually a tomb or shrine.

mashhad Arabic term for a shrine or place of martyrdom.

masjid Arabic term for a mosque, literally the place where the prayer prostrations (sajid) are carried out.

mausoleum part of a shrine complex containing the tomb of a holy person.

mawsim (pl. **mawasim**) Arabic term for a market or festival usually associated with shrines. These are usually seasonal events.

mihrab concave niche within a mosque, indicating the direction of prayer towards the Kaaba in Mecca.

minbar staircase and raised platform used like a pulpit—usually found in Friday mosques.

Mongols central Asian nomads who invaded large areas of China and the Middle East in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries AD. Their advance into the Middle East was stopped by the Mongols at the Battle of ‘Ayn Jalut in Palestine in 1260.

Muharram the first month of the Muslim calendar—it is the second holiest month in the Muslim calendar and is particularly important to Shi‘as as the tenth day of the month commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn, son of ‘Ali, killed at Karbala on the sixth of Muharram 61 AH (680 AD).

muqarnas geometrical arrangement of squinches and arches to form three-dimensional geometric architectural features. Often associated with domes, doorways and windows.

murabit (pl. **murabitun)** inhabitant of a ribat.

musalla open-air prayer area from the Arabic place of prayer.

nabi Arabic term for a prophet or important holy person.

pendentive architectural term for a feature which supports the transition from a square corner to an octagonal or circular base of a dome.

Pendentives are usually triangular sections of a sphere and, as such, extend downwards into the building.

qubba Arabic term for a domed mausoleum, tomb or shrine.

Quran sacred text for all Muslims; unlike hadith and other Islamic texts, this is accepted as a message from the divine for all Muslims.

qutb literally celestial axis or pole. In Sufism this is a spiritual leader often described as the perfect human being who provides a direct connection with God.

ribat Arabic term for a fortified or enclosed building often on the frontiers of the Muslim world. The term later came to also mean a place for Sufis to congregate and live with a spiritual leader.

riwaq Arabic term for an arcade supported on pillars, piers or columns, often forming part of an entrance to a shrine or other religious building.

sabil public fountain suplying water as part of a religious duty.

Salafists see Wahhabis.

Samaritans religious sect linked to Judaism but distinct in terms of religious practice and ethnic history. The sect is centred around the site of Mount Gerazim near Nablus.

Shafi'i one of the four schools of Sunni law today mostly prevalent in Yemen as well as parts of Egypt and Iraq.

shaykh Arabic honorific title which may refer to the head of a village, tribe or even a country. Within the Sufi tradition, the term *shaykh* is a leader who is authorized to teach, initiate and guide students as well as lead a Sufi community. In practice, the term is often used in Palestine to refer to the tomb or shrine of a religious leader.

sheikh see shaykh.

Shiʿism this is the second-largest sect in Islam after Sunnis. Shiʿas adhere to the religious teachings of Muhammad and his descendants, giving particular reverence to ʿAli and his son Husayn. Today, adherents of Shiʿa Islam are found in many parts of the Islamic world but only from the majority of the population in Iran and Iraq.

shiʿa see shiʿism.

squinch architectural term for a small arch used in sets of four to convert a square or rectangular space into an octagon as a setting for a dome.

sufi see Sufism.

Sufism a form of spiritual Islam organized around religious leaders and traditions which emphasize the inner aspects of Islam. Sufism is generally associated with Sunni Islam, although historically there have also

been Shiaʿ Sufi orders. Although Sufism may have originated as early as the eighth century, it became politically important from the eleventh century onwards and was particularly significant in Palestine during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods.

Sunni the major sect of Islam comprising the majority of Muslims. Sunnism is based on the belief that Abu Bakr was the rightful heir to Muhammad. Sunni law is based on an adherence to the Quran and the four schools of Sunni law (Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki and Shafi'i).

taqa colloquial Palestinian Arabic term for a niche within a shrine.

tariqa a spiritual path or way in Sufi Islam. Sufis are arranged according to orders, each with their own *tariqa* usually founded by an individual Sufi Shaykh.

tell also spelled tel, Arabic tall, ("hill" or "small elevation"), is a raised artificial mound formed from the accumulated debris of people living on the same site for centuries.

voussoir architectural term for a wedge-shaped stone used in the construction of an arch.

Wahhabi follower of a fundamentalist form of Sunni Islam developed by the Arabian preacher Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), who formed an alliance with the first Saudi ruler, Muhammad bib Saud (d. 1765). Adherents are also known as Salafists and Muwahhiddun. Although the movement began in the eighteenth century, it has roots in medieval Islam and is particularly influenced by the writings of the Ibn Taymiyya, who advocated a return to Islam as practised by the first three generations of Muslims (*salaf*).

wali (pl. **awliya**) Arabic term for guardian, helper or friend. Within Islam, the term is often used as a shorthand for friend of God to indicate a person who was particularly favoured or close to the divine. By association, the word has come to be used as a term to designate a Muslim shrine containing the remains of a particularly religious or spiritual person.

waqf (pl. **awqaf**) Arabic term for a charitable trust which is often used to support the activities of a religious complex or shrine.

ziyara Arabic term for visit. In religious context, the term is often used to describe visits or pilgrimages to places or tombs associated with significant religious figures.

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Abbreviation

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