THE DOME OF THE ROCK:
A RICH HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC ACCOUNT

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by

Feda W. Suleiman

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Thesis written by

Feda W. Suleiman

B.F.A., Kent State University, 2010

M.A. Kent State University, 2016

Approved by

___________________________________________
Diane Scillia, Ph.D., Advisor

___________________________________________
Christine Havice, Ph.D., Director, School of Art

___________________________________________
John R. Crawford-Spinelli, Ed.D., Dean, College of the Arts
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

المقدمة

The beauty of Jerusalem (القدس) (Fig. 1) has always been the city’s rich, religious connections to the monotheistic, Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Since the destruction of Herod’s Temple by the Romans (الرومان) under Titus in the first century, the Temple Mount has undergone many changes. The early Christian community did not build on the remains of the temple; however the Umayyad Caliphs (الاموية) erected a splendid structure reflecting artistic influences from Byzantine (البيزنطية) and Persian (الفارسية) sources, containing some of the earliest surviving inscriptions of the Quran. Today, the Dome of the Rock (الصخرة) stands proudly on the site, and is an iconic structure representing Jerusalem (القدس) for millions of people across the globe. This shrine, begun in the late seventh century, was the first important public building of the Islamic faith. As such, it is a cultural focal point for the entire Islamic world and a monument that preserves the historic (تاريخي), cultural (عادات) and religious (ديني) heritage of the site from the time of the First Temple to the present day.

The Dome of the Rock (الصخرة) in Jerusalem (القدس) is not a mosque. The octagonal ground plan (المخطط الارضي الثماني) takes its inspiration from other local shrines. There are many in the area built over the sites where martyrs died. In the case of Jerusalem, the site of the First Temple was where Adam (الدم) was created and where the patriarch Abraham prepared to sacrificed his son (تحضير ابراهيم لپضحي بابنه). Unlike the earlier Christian examples of octagonal shrines (المعبد الثماني الشكل)، the exterior of The Dome is beautifully ornamented in rich, colored
marble and is topped by a semi-spherical dome. Glass mosaics (الزجاجي الفسيفساء) once covered the upper parts of the exterior walls and the drum. These were replaced by ceramic tiles (البلاط الفسيفساء) in the sixteenth century and the original dome was replaced by the ogival (حاد) dome seen today.¹

The four main doors to the interior are aligned to the four cardinal points and have arrangements of beautiful marble columns reused from antique sources. The building we see today, updated the original Dome of the Rock (الصخرة قبة) but followed its original design and intent. It is unique in the beautiful mosaics on the interior walls of the side aisles and the drum, which include the earliest texts of the Quran (القرآن) and lead the visitor into the space and to the center of the structure. (These texts are given in Appendix A.) Persian or Sasanian (بلاد الفرس) motifs decorate the drum supporting the dome above the final texts of the Quran (القرآن). Islam does not use images of human beings in sacred spaces; “later doctrines of Islam dating from the eight century and originating from the Hadith, forbade the use of such icons in architecture, specifically those of humans and animals.”² Therefore, the play of light on these tesserae (some backed with gold leaf) and the beautiful stone work (some restored) is what creates a mood and a special environment conducive to prayer and meditation. At the end of the pilgrimage through the side aisles is the center space where you see the rock itself.

It is this combination of materials -- stone work, glass tesserae and ceramic tiles -- used without and within a sacred octagonal space that attracted me as an art historian. For a Muslim woman, the whole environment of the Dome of the Rock (الصخرة قبة) and its sacred site is holy.

My thesis will try to analyze how such man-made beauty can be so moving and expressive. As such I will bring in my personal experiences and responses to the site and to the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة).
CHAPTER II

LOCATION HISTORY

الموقع التاريخي

The Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) (Fig. 2) was built over the ruins or remains of the first and second temples of Solomon in Jerusalem (معبد سليمان في القدس). The site, also known as Mount Moriah, is associated with the creation of Adam, and with Abraham’s sacrificing of Isaac.\(^3\)

Although the Dome was built by the Umayyad Caliph Abd Al-Malik Ibn Marwan (عبد الملك ابن مروان) and finished around 691-692,\(^4\) the actual reason for its construction remains a mystery.

The Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) (Fig. 2) was one of the first remarkable and stunning Islamic buildings ever made. There are two parts to the interior of the Dome of the Rock, the tall cylinder and the octagonal ring. The tall cylinder (20 meters in diameter and 25 meters high) was set over a large natural fossil rock and topped by a glided dome made of aluminum alloy. The second part, the octagonal ring (about 48 meters in diameter) is made of two ambulatories on piers, and columns surrounding the central fossil rock.\(^5\)

The site of the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) and the other buildings surrounding it attract tourists and visitors from all over the world. To the east of the historic Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) (Fig. 3) there is a grove of olive trees, covering that side of the Haram al- Sharif (الحرم الشريف) as Mount Moriah is now known. However, the view on the west side is jam-packed with building after building creating a much less attractive scene. With the bright sun overhead,

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\(^4\) Simon Goldhill. “*JERUSALEM City of Longing*”, 108.

the striking, octagonal tiled building with its golden dome (القبة الذهبية) glows brilliantly (Fig. 2) like an earthly sun. Located at the southeastern corner of the old, walled city of Jerusalem (القدس), and whether the travelers comes from the east or from the south, and approximately in the middle of the western half of the former temple precinct, the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) will appears with clean gilt shining cupola (Fig. 4).6

King David (الملك داود) undertook all the preparations for his son Solomon to build the House of the Lord God; “Before David’s death, there remained but two things for him to do: he charged Solomon with the task of building the Temple, and he purchased the land surrounding the sacred rock from Ornan the Jebusite - who had used it as a threshing floor - for fifty shekels of silver. ‘Here,’ David said, ‘shall be the house of the Lord God.’”7 Solomon (سليمان), King David’s son came to power in 967 B.C.E., and built the First Temple (Holy Temple), after his empire was pacified in Jerusalem (القدس). When the First Temple was done, Solomon (known as “the wisdom king”) dedicated the Holy Temple for public ceremonies of prayers and sacrifices.8 According to the Jewish Virtual Library, King Solomon invited non-Jews to visit Jerusalem (القدس) and pray inside the Temple; “Thus all the people of the earth will know Your name and revere You, as does Your people Israel; and they will recognize that Your name is attached to this House that I have built”. In 586 B.C.E., this First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians some four hundred years after it was built, yet, seventy years later, a number of Jews including the prophets Ezra and Nehemiah, had been returned to Jerusalem (القدس) and built the Second Temple over the First one. During the first century B.C.E., Herod was installed as a governor of Jerusalem (القدس), by the Romans and appointed head of Judea, and faced all the logistical

6 Grabar. The DOME of the Rock, 7-10+22.
8 https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Solomon.html
problems. In 70 C.E., the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans, under Titus command.\(^9\)

In the second century, the Roman Emperor Hadrian erected pagan temples with large statues in Jerusalem (القدس), including one on the temple mount.\(^10\) Under Constantine’s rule, there was a lessening of the enforcement of the Hadrianic banishment of Jews from Jerusalem. This allowed the Jews to visit the ruined Temple once a year to mark the anniversary of its destruction. “The Bordeaux Pilgrim tells us that there was a perforated stone, to which the Jews come every year and anoint it, bewail themselves with groans, rend their garments, and so depart.”\(^11\) Between the fifth and sixth century (C.E.), the city was revived and reached its zenith. The Byzantine monarch Justinian I and his flamboyant empress Theodora reigned (ملك) during this time, and are responsible for building and restoring many basilicas and numerous Churches.\(^12\)

The Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) was begun by Abd Al-Malik Ibn Marwan (عبد الملك ابن مروان) an Umayyad Caliph (اموي خليفة) in 689 CE. Two engineers, Yazid Ibn Salam (يزيد ابن سلام) from Jerusalem (القدس), and Raja Ibn Haywah (رجاء ابن حايوا) from Baysan (بيسان) were in charge of its construction. However, the engineers used the measurements from the plans (Fig. 5) of the nearby Church of the Holy Sepulcher (Fig. 6), which had been built and expanded upon between the fourth and seventh century CE by both Roman and Byzantine emperors.\(^13\)

\(^9\) http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/The_Temple.html
\(^10\) Grabar. The DOME of the Rock, 30.
\(^12\) Ibid, 48.
\(^13\) Landay. THE DOME OF THE ROCK, 67-68  
http://jerusalem.com/articles/islam/dome_of_the_rock-a711
A topographic map of Jerusalem (القدس) in the second century (Fig. 7) shows the city as much smaller than it was later in the seventh century (Fig. 8). There were peculiarities in the terrain topography, on which Jerusalem (القدس) was built, which affected the layout of the city. In the second century (C.E.), the Tyropoeon Valley lies between the eastern side of the Temple Mount, or Mount Moriah, and the western ridge of Mount Zion. To the southeast (Fig. 7), was a series of low ridges and gullies which continued eastward to the steep slope of the Kidron Valley and the Mount of Olives. These heights allow you, on a clear day, to see the Mediterranean Sea from the western side of the Temple Mount, and from its eastern side you can see the Dead Sea (البحر الميت).

According to a seventh century map (Fig. 8), the city extension to the south was identified by Eudocia’s wall. What had been the Tyropoene Valley was filled in by the Romans and a new street grid established. The Byzantine Empress Eudocia (450 – 460 C.E.), who had been exiled to Jerusalem, was a major patron of architecture. She built a wall to include Mount Zion, the highest point, all the way to the southeast corner.

As Grabar stated, the old city was walled for four specific reasons;

1 – As a symbolic one, so that on the hills of Judea and the city were identified as a holy space, setting them apart from residential or public terrain.

2 – As reflecting 5th century Jerusalem’s origin as a military camp for the Romans, major gates on all four sides generated a grid of straight streets crossing one another.

3 – As sufficient defense against threats from the tribes of nomads who inhabited the arid land that surrounded the city.

4 – As protection against the pilfering and thievery of sanctuaries by pilgrims.
These walls mark the final steps in “Romanizing” Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{14}

The Holy Sepulchre was originally built by Constantine the Great in the first half of the fourth century. The Church was later redone by order of the Byzantine emperor Justinian in the sixth century (Fig. 6). In 614 CE, the Persians under the rule of Shahrbaraz (شهرباز) exiled the relic of the True Cross from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to northern Iraq. Starting in 615 C.E., the Persians (الفرس) or Sasanians mismanaged the city of Jerusalem (القدس) for several years. It wasn’t until 628 C.E. that the Christians (المسيحيين) eventually took over the city. In 629 CE, Byzantine emperor Heraclitus took over Jerusalem, and in 630 CE he entered the city from the east, like Christ did on Palm Sunday and returned the True Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.\textsuperscript{15} In 638 C.E., and six years after the death of Muhammad the Prophet, after a brief period of time while the Persians were ruling Jerusalem (القدس), the Holy Land was captured by the Muslim Caliph Umar (الخليفة عمر). Umar (عمر) cleansed the Temple Mount, building a small mosque for Muslim worshippers, and Caliph Abd Al-Malik Ibn Marwan (الخليفة عبد الملك ابن مروان) was sent to establish such a beautiful structure. Yet, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (كنيسة القيامة) remained the inspirational structure for Muslims to apply on the Dome of the Rock.\textsuperscript{16}

There are a number of reasons for the long association with Jerusalem as a holy city, which began even before Abd Al-Malik (عبد الملك) had the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) built starting in 689. In 746 CE through the early 9th century, an earthquake was a big impact on the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In the years of 841, 938, and 966 centuries, the

\textsuperscript{14} Grabar. \textit{The Dome of the Rock}, (2006), 22.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 20-23, 24-25, 39-40, 43-44.
\textsuperscript{16} Brandia Ratliff, \textit{Byzantium and Islam}, (2012), 632.
building was further destroyed by fire. Fatimid caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah ordered a complete
destruction, in October of 1009. The crusaders started to renovate the church after they took

The period from the eighth through the tenth centuries (700-900) was a golden age for
the city of Jerusalem (القدس). Christian and Muslim pilgrims streamed through the city’s gates,
and the Holy Land thrived upon their piety, energy, and wealth.\footnote{Brandi Ratliff’s “Christian Communities during the Early Islamic Centuries” in Byzantium and Islam. Age
of Transition, 7th to 9th centuries. Edited By Helen C. Evans and Brandia Ratliff (New York: The
Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012), 32 – 39.} Several early sources, both
visual and textural help fill in what we know from the time before the Dome’s construction up to
the time it was repaired and rebuilt for the first time in the eleventh century.

The first of these sources is the Madaba Mosaic Map (خريطة مادبا الفسيفسائية), depicting the
biblical Holy Land and dating to the mid-to-late sixth century (Figs. 9, 10). Fig. 10 identifies the
built structures (public buildings, roads, churches, gates, and walls of the city) and the map
shows the temple mount (no. 7) off the east branch of Cardo Maximus (no. 10) as open space
without any building on it. The Cardo Maximus is the main street establishing the Roman street
grid of the city;

On it the Roman imperial system imposed a structure of walls, gates,
and streets, which sometimes followed the terrain and at other
times challenged its constraints, but always compelled a shape that has
functioned until the nineteenth century, if not until today.
The Roman Empire made that effort in a place without economic or
administrative significance because of the long history of a faith
attached to it already in 135 C.E. It was also a faith that gave
a new flesh and a new skin to the skeleton built on a hallowed
terrain by engineers of the imperial army.\footnote{Grabar. The Dome of the Rock, (2006), 74.}

\footnote{Oleg Grabar, THE SHAPE of the HOLY EARLY ISLAMIC JERUSALEM. (United kingdom: Princeton
University Press, 1996), 25- 27.}
This map (Fig. 9), was found in the last decade of the nineteenth century during the construction of a new church on the site of the old Church of St. George (سيبنت جورج) in Madaba (مادبا), (a historic town 30 kilometers southwest of Amman (عمان), Jordan (الاردن)) and documents the importance of Jerusalem (القدس) both politically and as a religious site. Originally, the mosaic, floor map was four times larger than what survives and included the territory of the twelve biblical tribes of Israel and the surrounding regions.

As we can see in the Madaba Mosaic Map (خريطة مادبا الفسيفسائية), among the important sites: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre (no. 2); the Probatike Gate (no. 9), the Beautiful Gate/Golden gate (no. 8); the Nea Church (New Church) (no. 6), the Cardo Maximus (no. 10), Eastern Branch (no. 11), Main Branch and the Damascus Gate Plaza (no. 1). The city of Jerusalem (القدس) is shown as the center of the Christian world.20

The second set of important texts begins at the time of Procopius of Caesarea and Emperor Justinian in the mid-sixth century and continues through 1096 when the Crusaders entered Jerusalem (الصليبيين دخلوا القدس).21 In 830 C.E. Bernard the monk was reportedly the last Western pilgrim in the holy city. He left long and detailed statement accounts about the city. These accounts are collected in a book edited by, John Wilkinson.22

The third source, by the geographer Muqaddasi (المقدسي) born in the city around 945 and was the son of a notable family of trade. He left an outstanding description of the entire Muslim world during the tenth century including a large section on Jerusalem (القدس).

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21 Grabar, *THE SHAPE of the HOLY EARLY ISLAMIC JERUSALEM*, 9-10, 26, 27.
22 Ibid, 9-10, 26, 27.
Enhancing Muqaddasi’s (المقدسي) accounts are those of the fourth source belonging to the religious thinker and poet, Nasir-I- Khusro (ناصر اخوسرو). Khusro (خوسرو) served the Fatimid dynasty in Cairo (القاهرة) and became a "government sponsored" tourist to Jerusalem (القدس) in 1047, afterwards writing and drawing about the city and his travels.

Finally, written before the twelve century, there are the fada’il (الفضائل), meaning virtues (مزايا) or praises, which document the pious beliefs and religious legends about Jerusalem. The most accessible of these books is al-Wasiti’s Fada’il al-Bayt al-Muqaddas (الفضائل الوسيطي للبيت المقدس) written before 1019.²³

²³ Grabar, THE SHAPE of the HOLY EARLY ISLAMIC JERUSALEM, 9-10, 26, 27.
CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS SITE

Ibn Battuta (ابن بطوطة), writing about the Dome of the Rock around 1355, stated: "This is one of the most fantastic of all buildings. Its queerness and perfection lie in its shape, though it has more than its fair share of other charms. It is so amazing it captivates the eye." (Fig. 11)

It was an incredible feeling when I entered this beautiful architectural monument and stood in front of the huge, irregular shaped rock. Its length from north to south is 17.70 meters, and width from east to west is 13.50 meters (Fig. 12). The rock stands approximately 1.5 meters in height (Fig. 13). This rock has been stamped with numerous legends and stories throughout history. What follows is a brief list of some of these remarkable traditions: it is a rock sent from heaven, it turns into a white rock, it is the lady, mother-rock of all Holy Land (الارض المقدسة), all of the water in the world comes from beneath the rock, the footprint of the Prophet Mohammed was imprinted into the rock, angels’ fingerprints mark the rock, during his journey to the sky, Prophet Muhammad raised the rock after him but Angel Gabriel ordered it to stay and the rock obeyed, and finally, the rock is of the same type and grade as the Black Stone enshrined in the Kaaba in Mecca (Fig.12).

Until 624 C.E., Jerusalem (القدس) was the original qiblah (القبلة) or direction in which Muslims faced during prayer. “The Prophet Muhammad followed Jewish-Christian practices until 624, when, in the second year of the hijrah (الهجري) ([literally “migration,” the year 622 CE), the

25 Amhed Yasin, Dome of the Rock; the High Level of Beauties, (Palestine: Jerusalem), 4-5.
Prophet moved from Mecca (مكة) to Medina (مدينة) and established the first year of the Muslim calendar, he turned away from them and proclaimed the sacred Ka’ba of Mecca (الكعبة في مكة) as the new direction for prayer.”

In the second chapter of the Qur’an, especially in verses 112 onward it states, “has turned man from the qiblah (القبلة) to which he was accustomed toward a qiblah (القبلة) that shall please men, turning their faces in the direction of the Meccan sanctuary.” Also see, Finbarr B. Flood and Garry Wills about Nasir-I Khusro and upon al-Malik’s and al-Walid’s architectural commissions.

In the 1047, Nasir-I-Khusro (ناصر اخوسرو), a Persian Muslim from the Ismaili sect wrote this response after visiting the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) mosque:

This stone of the Sakrah is that which God commanded Moses to institute as the qiblah. Then came the days of Solomon -- upon him be peace! who seeing the Rock was the qiblah built a mosque around it [the First Temple]. So it remained until the days of our Prophet Muhammad, the Chosen One - upon him be blessings and peace! - who likewise recognized this to be the qiblah, turning towards it at his prayers; but God -- be He exalted and glorified -- afterwards commanded him to institute as the qiblah the House of the Ka’ba [Mecca].

Francois Rene De Chateaubriand, who traveled to Jerusalem (القدس) and the Holy Land (الارض المقدسة) in 1804, recounted:

Upon this rock sat the angel, who, as a punishment

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27 Ibid, 48.
29 Goldhill, JERUSALEM City of Longing, 116-117.
for David’s inconsiderate numbering of the people, slaughtered them till God commanded him to return his sword into the scabbard. This rock, previously to the arrival of our armies, was naked and uncovered, and in this state it remained for fifteen years; but those to who care this place was afterwards entrusted covered it again, and erected upon it a chapel and an altar for the performance of divine worship.

Francois Rene’ De Chateaubriand
Travels to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, 1804.30

The earliest, definitively dated (AH 72/692 CE) verses from the Quran decorate the mosaic panels of the double ambulatory inside the Dome of the Rock (الصخرة القبة) and continue on the drum under the Dome (القبة) itself. These verses literally engulf this entire spiritual environment. The specific verses that captured my eyes during my visit were those that spoke about Jesus. The epigraphy of (AH 72/692 CE) read as follows (counter clockwise from the qiblah (القبلة) near the arcade):

\[
\begin{align*}
In the name of God, \\
The Beneficent, the Merciful, \\
No god exists but God alone, \\
Indivisible without peer. \\
All things unto God \\
and unto God all praise. \\
The Lord giveth life, giveth death - the power of all things made possible. \\
Muhammad is a servant and messenger too! \\
Angels and Allah, all praise the Prophet. \\
So you who consider yourself a believer, go ahead, honor and pray for him too. \\
God has prayed for the Prophet Muhammad, 
\end{align*}
\]

so peace and God’s blessings be upon him,
By the grace of God.

O People of the book!
Don’t be excessive in the name of your faith!
Do not say things about God but the truth!
The Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, is indeed a messenger of God:
The Almighty extended a word to Mary,
and a spirit too.

So believe in God and all the messengers,
and stop talking about Trinity.
Cease in your own best interests!
Verily God is the God of unity.
Lord Almighty! That God would beget a child?
either in the Heavens or on the Earth?

God alone is the best protector.

Neither Christ nor the angels in heaven
scorn servitude and worship of God.
Whosoever looks down upon worship,
considering it something beneath him...
they will be swept unto God in the end.

O God, bless your messenger
and servant, Jesus son of Mary.
Peace be upon him
The day he was born,
the day he dies,
and the day he is raised again.
Say only the truth about Jesus over whom you dispute:
he is the son of Mary!
It is not fitting that God should beget or father a child.
Glory be unto God! 31

Also see my Appendix A for translation of all of the Quranic inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock, and Flood and Wills re-actions to these verses.32

Nasir-I-Khusro (ناصر خسرو) saw the marks of Abraham (ابراهيم) and Isaac's (اسحاق) feet on the Rock. Goldhill relates that when Muhammad (محمد) rose toward heaven, the rock (الصخرة) tried to follow him, but he had to press on the rock down with his foot to keep it down, thus leaving his footprint embedded in the rock.33 In Surat Al-Israa (سورة الیسراء), about the Night Journey (رحلة لیلیة), the Quran states:

Exalted is He took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing. (17:1) 34 During Muhammad’s journey (الاسراء والمیراج) , he met other prophets including Moses (موسى) and Jesus (عیسی), and he witnessed both heaven (الجنة) and hell (النار). Ultimately, at the end of his miraculous journey he saw God upon His throne, circumambulated by His glorious angels.35

The Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) remains to this day to be one of the most remarkable, early, artistic and architectural achievements of Islam. Inside the monument, there is access to a cave below the Rock and this cave is now used for private devotion. It contains a pair of mihrabs (محراب) and a prayer niche facing Mecca (Figs. 14+15). The cave (الکیف) and its access has been modified, cut and recut throughout history making it almost impossible to find visual evidence as to its original shape.36

33 Goldhill, JERUSALEM City of Longing, 117 - 118.
34 Quran.com
36 Grabar, DOME of the Rock, 22.
CHAPTER IV

THE SITE SHAPE AND MOSIACS

The Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) is a shrine, but people also use it for prayer. Jerusalem (القدس) was the center of the world in both the Jewish (اليهودية) and Christian (النصرانية) religions. A hadith (الحديث) saying of Prophet Muhammad cited by Muqatil ibn Suleiman (مقاتل ابن سليمان), an early luminary, writing in 767-68 CE states:

“The Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis, in Jerusalem, is the closest place to heaven”. Muqatil (مقاتل) further stated that “the rock which is in Bayt al-Maqdis is the center of the world.”

This unique building carries a golden dome (قبة ذهبية) above a circular drum (طبل دائري), rising from the center of a beautiful octagonal base (قاعدة مثمنة) (Fig. 15). The octagonal shape (الشكل المثمن) is derived from, and reflects Byzantine church architecture (مبني الكنيسة البيزنطية). According to Muslims scholars, the octagonal shape (الشكل المثمن) came from unifying the two qiblah (القبلة) shapes. It incorporated the square shape (مربع الشكل) (Fig. 15) of the Ka’ba in Mecca, the second qiblah (القبلة) for Muslims, with that of the first qiblah (القبلة) the site of Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem (معبد سليمان في القدس), to introduce the eight sided octagon (الشكل الثماني) of the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة).

As described by American architectural historians, the external appearance of the monument expresses the essential massage of this faith. The transition from the double square that forms the basic octagon to the

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38 Ibid, 164.
40 Ibid, 116-117.
spherical cupola (Fig. 15) symbolizes the transition from Earth to Heaven as it does in the most ancient cosmogonies of the Middle East. It may also be said, however, that in 6th century Byzantine architecture the central plan of buildings used as shrines was round or octagonal. These formulas derived from the Roman mausoleum were obviously influential in this design as well. Inside the shrine, the spaces (Dome of the Rock) were made proportionately, designed, and decorated in such a way that whenever a worshipper (عبادة) enters the architectural space to pray (الصلاة), they would not feel like a stranger, but rather as if they were home. The four main doors were made in all compass directions of the Octagonal shrine. They all lead to the rock being at the center of the shrine. Deep welcoming decorations all over the inside from floor to ceiling, give a warm atmospheric environment to the worshipper (عباد). The size of the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) was made according to Islamic standard measurements, but also came to represent the model to be followed afterwards in Islamic architecture (Fig. 16a-16b).

From its inception to the present day, the interior space has not changed significantly. Because the dome is set on firm bedrock, it has survived earthquake damage and natural decay throughout the centuries, demonstrating that it is far more resilient than many of the buildings surrounding it. The exterior of the building, including the low profile dome, was maintained and burnished until the tenth century (900 C.).

The roof and dome were covered in dull, grey lead until the early twentieth century. In 1964, Egyptians engineers resurfaced the dome with gold (ذهب), anodized (باكسيد), aluminum sheets (صفائح الالومينيوم). Unfortunately after this, there was leakage to the inside whenever it

41 http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/ARCH499/NONWEST/JERUSALEM/DOME.HTM
42 Yasin, Dome of the Rock; the High Level of Beauties, 32.
rained. Then in 1994, King Hussein of Jordan (ملك الأردن الحسين) who had the official responsibility for the up-keep of all Muslim holy places in Jerusalem (الأماكن المقدسة في القدس), commissioned the Dome to be covered in its iconic gold (ذهب مبديع) by the process of electro-chemical plating. The extensive project was completed by an Irish engineering (مهندس ايرلندي) firm hired by King Hussein (الملك حسين). Copper (النيكل) and nickel (النحاس) were layered together onto brass plates (اللوحات نحاسية). These plates (اللوحات) were then fused (تنصهر) with an extremely thin film of gold (طبقة رقيقة من الذهب) only two microns thick (سمكها اثنين ميكرن). The copper (النحاس) and nickel (النيكل) shines through the gold, giving a matte finish that is dazzling and glows as it catches and reflects the sun. Goldhill sees an ironic twist in that Europeans from Catholic Ireland, working for an Islamic ruler gave Jerusalem the refurbished roof and restored the golden dome (القبة الذهبية).

By the end of the seventh century (late 600’s), Muslim artists had still not yet acquired the intricate skills of mosaic (الفسسفة). Therefore, most probably the designers of the decorations at the Dome of the Rock came from Constantinople and the Persian Empire. The Byzantine Empire (الإمبراطورية البيزنطية) was able to maintain craftsmen with the highest level of technical competence at that time. So did the Persians.

The many components that make up the Dome of the Rock (الصخرة) signifies its importance. The mosaics and tiles (البلاط والفسسفة), as well as the striking, intricate marble (الرخام) also adds credibility to this point. The structure inside, circles the median with marble-built piers (عواميد من رخام). Light travels the interior by the use of gold, reflective mosaic plastered to the walls (Figs. 17), as seen in this Persian or Sasanian design. Byzantine craftsmen (الحرفين البيزنطيين) produced intriguing mosaics composed of glass (فسيفساء تتالف من زجاج), gold

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43 Goldhill, JERUSALEM City of Longing, 112 - 113.
(الذهب، الفضة). Symmetry can be found in framed and flattened vessels and vegetation (as we see in Fig. 18). The flatness of the designs enhance the structure’s geometrical features. In (Fig. 19), the exterior tiles seen replaced earlier examples. The Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) remains true to its purpose as a place of worship by providing the correct ambiance through the precise usage of materials.

As Grabar said in his book:

> The most important and most spectacular inscription is located inside the building, as a continuous mosaic frieze of some 240 meters just below a cornice that supports the ceiling on either side of the octagonal arcade. It was thought by some that the inscription originally continued on the outer side of the circular arcade (see my Appendix A). Still, the possibility cannot be excluded that some additional statement on either or both sides of the arcade disappeared when the crusaders refurbished the building for their own purposes, or during the numerous repairs of Mamluk and Ottoman times.45

The writer and publisher Max van Berchem of the textbook *The Inscription*, came to this conclusion; the eastern doorway inscription had seven lines which was made in the Umayyad period (العصر الأموي) in the time of Abd al-Malik (عبد الملك), in the late of seventh century. The last two lines were replaced in the beginning of the ninth century during the time of al-Ma’mun's reign (عبد المامون). The northern doorway was not complete until some twenty centuries later, which make them different from each other.46

From the 12th century onward, bright and colorful glass mosaic tiles were increasingly used on both the exterior and interior of the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة).47 The beautiful 45,000 blue and gold colorful exterior tiles which we see today were put in place on the order of

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45 Grabar, *THE SHAPE of the HOLY EARLY ISLAMIC JERUSALEM*, 56-57.
46 Ibid, 60.
47 Bloom and Blair. *And Diverse Are Their Hues COLOR IN ISLAMIC ART AND CULTURE*, 44.
Suleiman the Magnificent (حكم القانوني سليمان) in 1552 (Fig. 19). No early writer, including Muqaddasi, Ibn Battuta (ابن بطوطة), and Jamâl ad-Din Ahmad (جمال الدين احمد) saw these amazing tiles. Yet they, like any other material exposed to the elements, have needed continual repairs and restorations especially after the building has gone through so many disasters including fires, and the repercussions of harrowing political events. Most recent repairs took place in the 1960’s and early 1990’s.\(^4\)

Until 1453, and the fall of Constantinople (القسطنطينية) to the Ottoman Turks (العثمانيين الاتراك) and the resulting collapse of the Byzantine Empire (الاربعاء البيزنطينية), Jerusalem (القدس) had been considered an extension of the Byzantine world (العالم البيزنطي). After the rise of Islam in the seventh century during the Umayyad period (العهد الاموي), the mosaic tile decorations (ديكورات البلاط الفسيفساءي) in Jerusalem (القدس) and elsewhere in the Levant, reflected the Byzantine influence (التأثير البيزنطي). This is especially seen in the decorations of the Dome of the Rock (الصخرة). On the east side of the building, motifs from the old Sasanian or Persian Empire (الامبراطورية الفارسية) which collapsed when Arabs (العرب) took over in the mid-seventh century, are readily apparent. The Sasanians (الفارسيين) in Jerusalem (القدس) had been initially routed by a Byzantine army (الجيش البيزنطي), which soon fell to a Muslim one. Although the Sasanians (الفارسيين) were vanquished, their winged crown motifs (زخارف التاج المجنح) were incorporated into the mosaic panels that can be found in the Dome of the Rock building (Figs. 17 and 20).\(^5\) The Dome of the Rock (الصخرة) is the perfect model of interaction among Byzantine artistic (الفن البيزنطي) and architectural tradition (التقليد المعماري), Sasanian design

\(^4\) http://domeoftherock.net/dome-of-the-rock-architecture/
\(^5\) Goldhill, JERUSALEM City of Longing, 112.
motifs (النمط التصميم الفارسي) and early Islamic patronage.\textsuperscript{51} The original form of the dome followed the low profile one seen in Byzantine churches (الكنائس البيزنطية). In addition, the interior mosaic decorations (زخارف الفسيفساء الداخلية) are drawn from and reflect Byzantium mosaic techniques and aesthetics (الفسيفساء البيزنطية جمال وتقتنيات). This may best be seen in the vegetal motifs which combine with Sasanian iconographic elements. While the Quranic inscriptions (القرآن) on the outer and inner ambulatories declare the virtues of the Islamic faith (الدين الإسلامي) over Christianity (الس ayrية), the decorations are derived from the earlier, Byzantine, Christian artistic tradition with each new group – whether pagan (الوثني), Christian (مسلم) or Muslim (مسلم) -- that conquered Jerusalem (القدس), a new identity developed serially and transformations were made through successive restoration projects. Hence, when the Abbasid caliph al-Ma’mun (العباسي المامون الخليفة) added his inscription to the inside of the Dome of the Rock (الصخرة) in the tenth century CE, he was acting as a witness overseeing a restoration of the monument. Later, Crusaders (الصليبيين) used the building as a church beginning around 1100 CE, and replaced the crescent (الهلال) over the dome with a cross.\textsuperscript{52} And four hundred years later under Sulieman the Magnificent the whole structure was repaired and restored.

In the sixteenth century, al-Kashani (القاشاني) adornments (Figs 21-22-23), were installed on all the exterior walls of the Dome of the Rock (الصخرة). This decorative art form is Persian in origin, and was used between the sixteenth and eighteenth century AD, in Iran and all through the Near East to replace earlier mosaics on the exterior of buildings. The Al-Kashani (القاشاني) name came from Kashan (قاشان), a city located in Khorasan province (ولاية خوراسان) in Persia. As


Irwin states, “Mamluk emirs made use of Iranian tile makers for the decoration of mosques in Cairo, and later Suleiman the Magnificent similarly called on craftsmen from Tabriz to work on the tiling of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.”

The moving of many artists from Persia (الفرس) to Egypt (القاهرة) and Turkey (تركيا) to decorate walls in important public buildings (المباني العامة) such as mosques (المساجد), shrines (الاضرحة), palaces (قصور) and tombs (مقابر) created a taste for such works. By the eighteenth century, monuments all through Belad Al-Shaam (بلاد الشام) (which included Palestine (فلسطين), Syria (سوريا), and Lebanon (لبنان)) were known for their Al-Kashani Adornments (الزخرف القضاشاني). These square (مربع الشكل), ceramic tiles (فسيفساء) covered with their vitrified (مزجج), colorful decorations in cobalt blue (الازرق), turquoise (فيروزي), green (أخضر), black (أسود), and brown (بني). These were used to form the letters of Quranic verses as well as sentences referring to historical incidents of the Persian dynasty. Additionally, they were used for decorations based on nature (الطبيعة), such as a lily ponds (البركة), cypress trees (السرو), or flowers like carnations (القرنفل) and roses (الورود). And finally, these magnificent tiles could be used to make up the forms and shapes of complex mathematical designs.

In 1552, by the order of the Ottoman Emperor Suleiman (known as “The Magnificent” in the West and as “القانوني” or “The Lawgiver” in the East) some 40,000 to 50,000 blue and gold tiles (فسيفساء مملوكي) were used to replace the earlier Mamluk mosaics (فسيفساء مملوكي) on the exterior of the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة). These new decorations, the al-Kashani

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56 Yasin. *Dome of the Rock; the High Level of Beauties*, 28+ 33.
Adornments (الزخرف الفئائاني), were the work of professional masters from Kashan in Persia (من قاشان في بلاد الفرس). Crowning the sixteenth century tile work and placed along the parapet of the exterior octagon are large white letters set on a deep, blue background which make up the thirty-sixth surah of the Quran. Landay tells us; “Years after Suleiman’s restoration, a Turkish traveler (Evliya Chelebi) passed by the Dome of the Rock mosque and recorded his delight upon seeing the Dome: ‘One is struck dumb at the very sight of it ... Verily, it is a replica of a heavenly palace...this site stands unique amongst the buildings I have seen, as if it were one of the seven Paradises.’” 57

57 Landay. The Dome of the Rock, 113-119.
CHAPTER V
MY EXPERIENCE
خبرتي

At the age of ten, I left my native homeland – Palestine (فلسطين). Then in 2011, all my hopes and dreams were realized when I saw it again. The great journey energized my body and soul. In Palestine (فلسطين) and in Jerusalem (القدس) I saw many different places and observed marvelous buildings. Yet undoubtedly, the most beautiful architectural structure and designs I have ever seen is the Dome of the Rock (الصخرة). From the moment I entered Jerusalem, the Dome was shining far off in the distance. It was glowing, shining on the Al-Haram Al-Sharif (الحرم الشريف) in Arabic, the Temple Mount, in English, and the Mount of the House of the Lord (har habayit), in Hebrew. I felt the presence of all three Abrahamic religions right there at this holy place. Protecting them with their guardianship, possession, and their symbolic value.58

Recently I was privileged with an opportunity to visit Jerusalem again. It was an experience that shaped my research and changed my perspective on art by adding a myriad of viewpoints. When I stood in front of the Dome of the Rock (الصخرة), I now saw the aesthetics of the structure as a Muslim, an art historian and as a ceramicist. I stood in awe of one of the world’s most significant and holiest landmarks and witnessed its all-encompassing beauty on levels I had not been aware of before.

As stated at the beginning of my thesis, the beauty of Jerusalem has been relatable to the city’s rich, religious connection to the monotheistic, Abrahamic faiths of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims. As a Muslim woman from an indigenous, Palestinian family, I experienced what it was like to pray inside the Dome of the Rock (الصخرة) for the first time. It was a dream of

58 Goldhill, JERUSALEM City of Longing, 47.
mine for years, and remains a dream for millions of Muslims worldwide. With my first step inside the building came a spiritual awareness and calmness deep inside me; it was as if I was returning to a place I knew well, like returning home. Completing my pilgrimage to Jerusalem (القدس) filled my eyes with tears and my heart with joy.

Many prophets (from Islamic perspective point of you) have visited this site, rich in historical significance, including Abraham (إبراهيم), Solomon (سليمان), and Muhammad (محمد). Each prophet, has tremendously enhanced the richness of the architectural complex by his visit, this brings pleasure to my ears and eyes and magnifies and glorifies the building from the interior to the exterior. All followers of Abraham, whether Jews, Christians or Muslims call Jerusalem the Holy Land. Experiencing a visit to the site and then analyzing the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) for this thesis has allowed me to deeply appreciate this structure for reasons far beyond just a religious outlook.

Given that my roots are Palestinian (فلسطينية), I feel I had the opportunity to experience the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) and indeed all of Jerusalem from a unique perspective. While Jews and Christians believe that the sacred rock beneath the Dome is where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac, Muslims believe this event took place in Mecca. It is here, however, that Muslims believe Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven during his night journey. My interest in choosing this topic is because the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) is a bridge between the three major religions of the world.

The astonishing design of this earliest, surviving Islamic architectural monument, with doors that open at the four compass points framing the colossal rock dating back to the time of the prophets is breathtaking. The plan and designs on the exterior of the Dome of the Rock
Copa de la roca (قبة الصخرة) has become representative and a trademark of Islamic art (الفن الإسلامي). Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) was the inspiration of so many Islamic architectures afterward.

Inscriptions from the Quran in beautiful Arabic calligraphy (الخط العربي) surround the building encircling its corners with protection and warmth. And the dramatic designs in tile work on the exterior of the structure are particularly noteworthy works of art for any ceramicist.
CONCLUSION

الخاتمة

The Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) is the most beautiful sight I have personally witnessed in my life. To me the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) is all at once a work of splendor and creativity, of engineering and architecture; the noble product of centuries of man’s struggle to manifest glory to God on Earth. The dome has survived through the successive ages, through destruction and trauma, through occupations and wars. The Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) has remained secure and rises proudly above the city protecting its treasure beneath. This spiritually charged site attracts visitors from all over the globe, inspiring them all. Writers, believers, travelers and historians have written down the site’s glorious history to be preserved for generations.

The shape of the Dome of the Rock (قبة الصخرة) sets it apart as religious space and scholars argue that this is either a reflection of the tholos of antiquity, of earlier church plans, or that the octagonal shape is derived from the change in rotating a cube when the second qiblah (القبلة) was established in Mecca (مكة). It is reasonable to presume in this case, that it is not one of the possibilities, but all of them simultaneously. The octagonal space creates a cavernous, spiritual feeling as you enter. The rock inside the Dome determines the direction of prayer and the architecture. In the course of history, the actual dome went through many changes. Beginning as a low profile Byzantine dome it was then transformed to the distinctive Abbasid ogival shape. Then, after being rebuilt by Suleiman the Magnificent (سليمان القانوني), with known period of time, dome was dull and covered with lead plates. Now, it sits proudly displaying its golden dome achieved by the modern electro-chemical metaling technique.
The interior of the building has not dramatically changed from the time of Suleiman’s restoration. The most notable change being the beautiful tile work on the inside, upper section of the dome itself. While the exterior was being continuously modified through the centuries, improvements were taking place within. The original glass mosaics installed by Byzantine craftsmen were replaced with the Ottoman-Persian Kashani glass tiles added during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. This remarkable historical collaboration has been overlooked by many writers and historians. When writing of the Dome’s interior, they write only of the survival of the glass mosaics and concentrate on Byzantine and Sasanian iconography elements.

The Dome of the Rock sits on the Haram, the Temple Mount, and is a place of sanctity for worshippers. All the noise and distractions of everyday life outside in the old temple precinct have been kept at bay by the buffering effects of the complex, decorative tile work. Quranic verses on the exterior, elegant depictions of natural flowers and plant forms on the interior, and the pure clean lines of mathematical architecture allow the space to be quiet and free from worldly distractions.

Whatever happened to the Dome of the Rock over the long centuries since ca. 690 CE, it remained a historic building filled with spiritual and religious meanings as well as one with a history of constant use, additions and alterations -- even under the control of different religious groups -- it retained its original form and regional identity.\footnote{Nuseibeh and Grabar \textit{THE DOME of THE ROCK}, 27.}
GLOSSARY OF ARABIC TERMS
Glossary Of Arabic Terms

BAYT AL-MAQDES (بيت المقدس)
A place that is found in Jerusalem.

AL-KASHANI (القاشاني)
Refer to the name Al-Kashani artist, whom lived in the city of Kashan, which was famous in architecture and adorments.

HADITH (الحديث)
A body of literature (often called the Tradition in English) describing the deeds and sayings of the Prophet, and considered one of the authoritative sources for Islamic law and conduct.

HARAM AL-SHARIF (الحرم الشريف)
“The Noble Sanctuary”; the large, flat, open, trapedoidal- shape platform on top of Mount Moriah in Jerusalem’s Old City on which the Dome of the Rock is built; also known as the Temple Mount.

HIJRA (الهجري)
Prophet Muhammad’s flight from persecution in Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E., the base year of the Muslim calendar.

ISRA’ (الاسراء’)
Prophet Muhammad’s mystical Night Journey, or flight from Mecca to Jerusalem, as told in the Koran.

KORAN (القرآن)
The Islamic scripture, composed of revelations of Allah made to Muhammad through the archangel Gabriel. Also spelled Quran.

MIHRAB (المحراب)
An arch or niche for prayer in the qibla that indicates the direction of Mecca.

MI’RAJ (المعراج)
The Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad through the seven heavens at the end of Night Journey, as told in the Koran.

QIBLA (القبلة)
The direction towards which Muslims pray; commonly refers to the wall in a mosque that indicates the direction of the Ka’aba in Mecca.
MUSLIM DYNASTIES OR PERIODS

*UMAYYAD (الأموي)
661-750 C.E. (the year Jerusalem fell to Abbasida).

*ABBASID (العباسي)
749-1258 C.E. (the year the Mongol conquest overwhelmed and sacked Baghdad).

*FATIMID (الفاطمي)
969-1169 C.E. (the year the dynasty was supplanted by the ruler of Salah ad-Din).

*AYYUBID (الايوبي)
1169-1250 C.E.

*MAMLUK (المملوكي)
1250-1517 C.E.

OTTOMAN (العثماني)
1299-NOW C.E.

APPENDIXES
Appendix A

Dome of the Rock, diagram identifying the mosaics on the circular arcade and deums (cardial points) and on the octagon (angles on a north-south axis).
(From; Oleg Grabar, The Shape of the Holy Early Islamic Jerusalem)
Epigraphy from the outer octagonal arcade
72 A.H./692 C.E.

(Clockwise from the qibla, by arcade)

In the name of God,
the Beneficnet, the Merciful....

No god exists but God alone,
Indivisible without peer.
Say, God is One,
God is central -
birthing no child, nor birthed in turn -
nothing and no one is comparable.

Muhammad is the messenger of God,
the Lord God bless him.

In the name of God,
the Beneficnet, the Merciful....
No god exists but God alone,
Indivisible without peer.
Muhammad is the messenger of God.
Angels and Allâh, all praise the Prophet.
So you who consider yourself a believer,
go ahead, honor and pray for him too.

In the name of God,
the Beneficnet, the Merciful....
No god exists but God alone,
indivisible.
Praise be to God who never gathered a child.
No peer exists in all of creation,
nor has God need of counsel.
In every way elevate and magnify God!

Muhammad is the messenger of God;
The Lord God bless him,
and God's angels and all the messengers
bless and invoke peace upon him,
by the grace of God.

In the name of God,
the Beneficent, the Merciful....
No god exists but God alone,
indivisible without peer.
All things unto God
and unto God all praise.
The Lord giveth life,
giveth death-
the power of all things made possible.

Muhammad is the messenger of God.
May the Lord God bless him
and, come the Day of Resurrection,
accept his intercession
on behalf of his own community.

In the name of God,
the Beneficent, the Merciful....
No god exists but God alone,
indivisible without peer.
Muhammad is the messenger of God.
The Lord may bless him.

The servant of God Abd [allah
the Imâm al-Ma' mùn],
Commander of the Faithful,
built this dome in the year seventy-two.
May God accept it from him and be satisfied with him. Amen.

Lord of two worlds-
All praise goes to God.

Epigraph from the inner octagonal arcade
72 A.H./692 C.E.

(counter-clockwise from the qibla, by arcade)

In the name of God,
the Beneficent, the Merciful....
No god exists but God alone,
indivisible without peer.
All things unto God
and unto God all praise.
The Lord giveth life, giveth death-
the power of all things made possible.

Muhammad is a servant and messenger too!
Angels and Allâh, all praise the Prophet.
So you who consider yourself a believer,
go ahead, honor and pray for him too.
God has prayed for the Prophet Muhammad,
so peace and God's blessings be upon him,
by the grace of God.

O People of the Book!
Don't be excessive in the name of your faith!
Do not say things about God but the truth!
The Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, is indeed a messenger if God.
The Almighty extended a word to Mary,
and a spirit too.

So believe in God and all the messengers,
and stop talking about a Trinity.
Cease in your own best interests!
Verily God is the God of unity.
Lord Almighty! that God would beget a child?
either in the Heavens or on the Earth?

God alone is the best protector.

Neither Christ nor the angels in heaven
scorn servitude and worship of God.
Whosoever looks down upon worship,
considering it something beneath him...
they will be swept unto God in the end.

O God, bless your messenger
and servant, Jesus son of Mary.
Peace be upon him
the day he was born,
the day he dies,
and the day he is raised again.
Say only the truth about Jesus over whom you dispute:
he is the son of Mary!
It is not fitting that God should beget or father a child.
Glory be unto God!

When God ordains a matter
God merely says to it, "BE",
and it is.

God is indeed my Lord as well as your Lord.
So serve and worship your Lord:
this is the straight path of righteousness.

Verily God witnessed: there is no god but God!
The angels and those endowed with knowledge of fairness declare: No god but God alone,
all-cherished, all-wise!

The religion before God is Surrender:
the people who were given the Books
did not argue about this until after receiving knowledge
and they became envious of one another.

Whosoever denies the signs of God...
God is swift in judgment.
Appendix B

The Inscriptions of the Dome of the Rock

Arabic Text

Outer Face of the Octagon

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له
قل هو الله أحد
الله الصمد
لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفون أحد
رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له
قل هو الله أحد
الله الصمد
لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفون أحد
رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

وبكره تكبيرا محمد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
ومن仓ط وت로서مة وهداهن له وللملك وللملكة
وصلوا عليه وسلموا تسليما

هاء هذه القبة عبد الله الامام المامون امير المؤمنين
في سنة اثنين وسبعين
قبله الله
وعبد الله
ورضي عنه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له
محمد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

وهي هذه القبة عبد الله الامام المامون امير المؤمنين
في سنة اثنين وسبعين
قبله الله
وعبد الله
ورضي عنه

Indicates the location of possibly diacritical marks on the mosaics

Inner Face of the Octagon

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له
محمد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

فسيحرةهم (ه) ملكين (ه) المقربين (ه)
فسيحرةهم (ه) ملكين (ه) المقربين (ه)
مكلبين (ه) ملكين (ه) المقربين (ه)
مكلبين (ه) ملكين (ه) المقربين (ه)

وهي هذه القبة عبد الله الامام المامون امير المؤمنين
في سنة اثنين وسبعين
قبله الله
وعبد الله
ورضي عنه

Indicates the location of possibly diacritical marks on the mosaics
1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

هَمَّدُ للهُ الَّذِي لَا شَرِيكُ لَهُ الْحَقُّ الْقَيْمُ يُبِيعُ السُّمُوتَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَنُورُ السُّمُوتِ (2) وَالْأَرْضِ وَقِيَمُ السُّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الآخِدُ الصَّمِّدُ لَمْ يَلْدُ وَلَمْ يَولِدْ وَلَمْ يُكْنِي لَهُ كَفُؤٌ أَحُدُّ (3) الْمَلِكُ تَوْتِي الْمَلِكُ مِنْ نُشَأَةٍ وَتَنْزِعُ

الْمَلِكُ مِنْ نَشَائِهِ كَلُّ مَلِكٍ كَ لَّوْنَكَ رَبِّنَا وَالِيَ مَصِيبِهِ رَبَّ الْعَزْةِ (4) الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ كَثْبٌ عَلَى نَفْسِ الرَّحْمَةِ وَسَعَتُ رَحْمَتَهُ كَلَّا شَيْءًا بَعِيدًا وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشَرَّكُونَ نَسَأَ (أَ) لِكَ بَرًّ (5) حَمَّالُ وَمَسِائِلُ الْحَسْنِ وَيَوْهُجُ الْكَرِيمُ

وَسَلَّمَ الْعَلِيمُ وَبَكَلَمَ الْعَلِيمُ التَّامِنَةَ الَّتِي بَيْنَ الْسُّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ (6) وَبَا نَعْصَرُ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَنَنَجِي بِهَا مِنْ عَذَابٍ يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ وَبِنَعْمَتِ الْمَلِكِ وَفَضْلِ الْمَلِكِ الْعَظِيمِ وَبِحَمَّادِهِ الْكَبِيرِ (7)

وَتَعَاوُنُوا وَهُمْ يَقْبِلُونَ الْعَفْوَ وَبِعَفْوٍ إِنَّ الْعَفْوَ وَلَيْسَ عَفْوِ الْكَبِيرِ وَلِيْسَ عَفْوُ الْأَصِيلِ (8) مُّلْكُ الْعَبْدِ تَوْتِي مُّلْكِ الْعَبْدِ تَوْتِي مُّلْكِ الْعَبْدِ مَنْ تَشَاء الْمَلِكُ وَتَنْزِعُ مَلِكَتُ الْعَبْدِ مَنْ تَشَاء الْمَلِكُ لِيَلْهَبُ الْأَمْامَ الْمَوْمِنِينَ "أَيْ أَسْحَاقَ بْنَ أَمْيَرٍ (9) الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الرَّشِيدِ أَبَاهُ"
ILLUSTRATIONS
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(From: Grabar, The Dome of the Rock)
Figure 3. Map of Jerusalem, the Holy site.  
(From: Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy-Early Islamic Jerusalem*)
Figure 4. The Dome of the Rock seen al-Kas (the cup), a fountain for the wudu’ (ablutions) obligatory for Muslims.
(From: Grabar, The Dome of the Rock)
Figure 5. Dome of the Rock: plan, section, and elevation. The porches have been eliminated since their exact shape is not certain. And diagram identifying the mosaics on the circular arcade and drums (Cardinal points) and on the octagon (angles on the north-south axis).

(From: Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy-Early Islamic Jerusalem*)

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Figure 6. This drawing of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem with the domed Anastasis to the left. 
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Figure 7. Topographic map of Jerusalem showing the abrupt descent toward the east and the Kidron Valley, as well as the Tyropoeon Valley between the eastern and the western hills of the city. 
Figure 8. Jerusalem circa 640 with the major Christian sanctuaries in the western section of the city and the extension to the south identified by what is called Eudocia’s wall. (From: Bahat, Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem)

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Figure 9. A fragment of mosaic on the floor of St. George's Church in Madaba, Jordan (sixth century). The Christian building of the city are concentrated on the western (lower) part, and the large open space of what became the Haram al-Sharif is practically invisible. (Erich Lessing/ Art Resource, NY.)
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c7/Madaba_map.jpg
Figure 10. The plan is based on the mosaic map of Madaba.
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c7/Madaba_map.jpg
Figure 11. The two domes of (Dome of the Rock and Church of Holy Sepulchre). http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2015/04/armenians-jerusalem-traditions-alive-150425085954476.html
Figure 12. The Rock, seen from above. It has been cleaned and polished for centuries, and its present surface configuration is more or less the one it had in the Fourteenth century. (Said Nuseibeh)
(From: Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock*)
Figure 13. The height of the Rock according to human height.  
(From: Landay, *Dome of the Rock*)  
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(From: Grabar, *The Dome of The Rock*).

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Figure 16a. The intricate mathematical relationships on which the design of the Dome of the Rock is based are both aesthetically intriguing and architecturally sound. In essence, the floor plan (below) consists of two sets of interlocking squares: the inner pair determines the circumference of the dome itself; the outer pair delimits the octagonal exterior of the building. The result is a soaring central cupola (top) encircled by two concentric ambulatories.

(From: Landay, *Dome of the Rock*)
Figure 16 b. Section model of the Dome of the Rock.
Figure 17. The golden mosaic tiles inside Dome of the Rock. 
(From: Grabar, The Dome of the Rock).
Figure 18. Vegetation mosaics inside Dome of the Rock.
(From: Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock*)
Figure 19. Geometrical shapes at the exterior of the Dome of the Rock.
Figure 20. Sasanian winged crowned mosaic motif.
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Figures 21-22-23. Examples of Kashani tiles motifs.
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