

# BAYT AL-MAQDIS

*Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*

PART ONE

EDITED BY

JULIAN RABY & JEREMY JOHNS

PUBLISHED BY OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
FOR THE BOARD OF FACULTY OF ORIENTAL STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

# WHAT IS THE DATE OF THE DOME OF THE ROCK?

*Sheila S. Blair*

The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (**Fig. 1**) is well known as a masterpiece of Islamic architecture. It is also the earliest extant Islamic monument, with an inscription originally stating that it was built by the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik in 72/691–92. What is less clear is its function. Muslims today regard it as the site of the *mi'rāj*, Muḥammad's mystical journey to heaven, but this is a later and secondary meaning.<sup>1</sup> Goldziher, trying to situate it in Umayyad history, proposed that 'Abd al-Malik ordered it built as a counter-Ka'ba to divert the pilgrimage when Mecca was in the hands of his rival, 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr,<sup>2</sup> but Goitein found that theory an anti-Umayyad polemic and felt that the pious 'Abd al-Malik would never have envisaged replacing the holiest spot in Islam.<sup>3</sup> Oleg Grabar, basing his argument on its location, inscriptions, and decoration, suggested it was built to represent the triumph of Islam, particularly over Christians.<sup>4</sup> It is doubtful that we will uncover any new sources to tell us why 'Abd al-Malik ordered the Dome of the Rock, but re-examining the dating inscription puts the building into a precise historical context and scrutinizing the decorative programme reveals the building as an example of artistic adaptation in which early Islamic patrons and builders modified existing traditions to meet the needs of a new religion and culture.

The Dome of the Rock is an annular building with two ambulatories surrounding a central domed space (**Figs. 2–3**). A high wooden drum rests on a rotunda just large enough to cover a rocky outcrop. The rotunda consists of four piers and twelve columns arranged so that each pier alternates with three columns and is set in an octagon, approximately twenty metres to a side, with doors in the centre of the four cardinal sides. The space between the circle and the octagon is too large to be spanned by single beams, so an intermediary octagon consisting of eight piers and sixteen columns, arranged so that each pier alternates with two columns, has been inserted to support the roof. The rotunda has been rotated slightly within the octagon so that the piers and columns do not

1. Grabar (1980).

2. Goldziher (1967–1971), 44–45, also cited in Creswell (1969), 65.

3. Goitein (1966).

4. Grabar (1959).



Figure 1. Dome of the Rock, general view.

conceal each other, but allow a view from the interior across the building.<sup>5</sup>

The dating inscription runs around the outer face of the octagonal arcade (Fig.4). Reading clockwise from the southeast corner, the text is divided into six sections by rosettes (Appendix 1). The first five are introduced by the invocation to God (*basmala*) and contain Qur'ānic or pious texts. The final section, beginning on the east side and running across the south-east, contains the foundation text. It now reads, 'The servant of God, al-Ma'mūn, commander of the believers, built this dome, may God accept [it] from him and be pleased with him, in the year 72 [corresponding to 691–92]. Amen. Lord of the Worlds and praise to God,' but van Berchem showed that as a *prise de possession* in the 3rd/9th century the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Ma'mūn simply inserted his name in place of that of the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik.<sup>6</sup>

The foundation text conforms to the standard Umayyad formula with the name of the builder and his titles, a verb, the structure commissioned, and a date.<sup>7</sup> Most authors have interpreted it as meaning that the building was finished

5. Basic description in Creswell (1969), 42–94 and 151–228 with plates.

6. van Berchem (1920–27), no.215; a more accurate reading of the text is given in Kessler

(1970).

7. Gaube (1982), 214, comparing it to Qasr Burqu', dated 81/701 and Qasr al-Milh, dated 109/727.

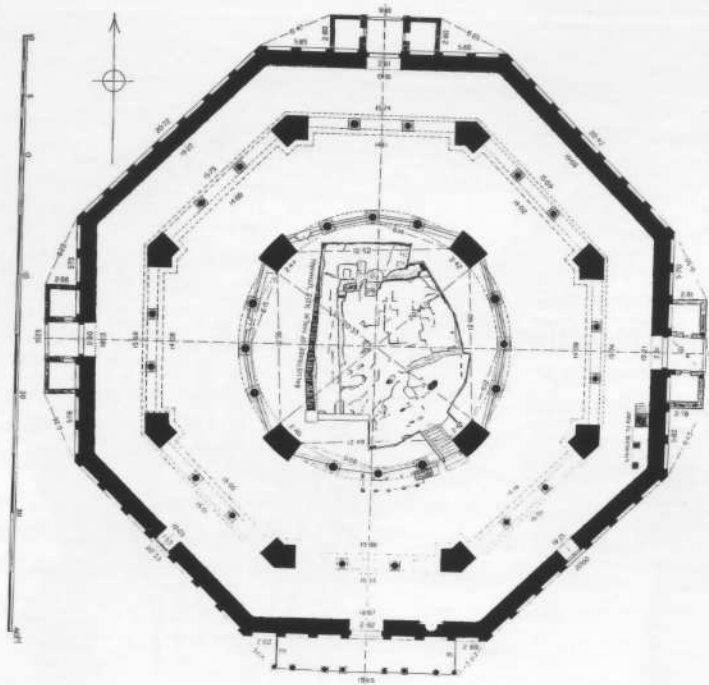


Figure 2. Dome of the Rock, section (Creswell, fig.19).

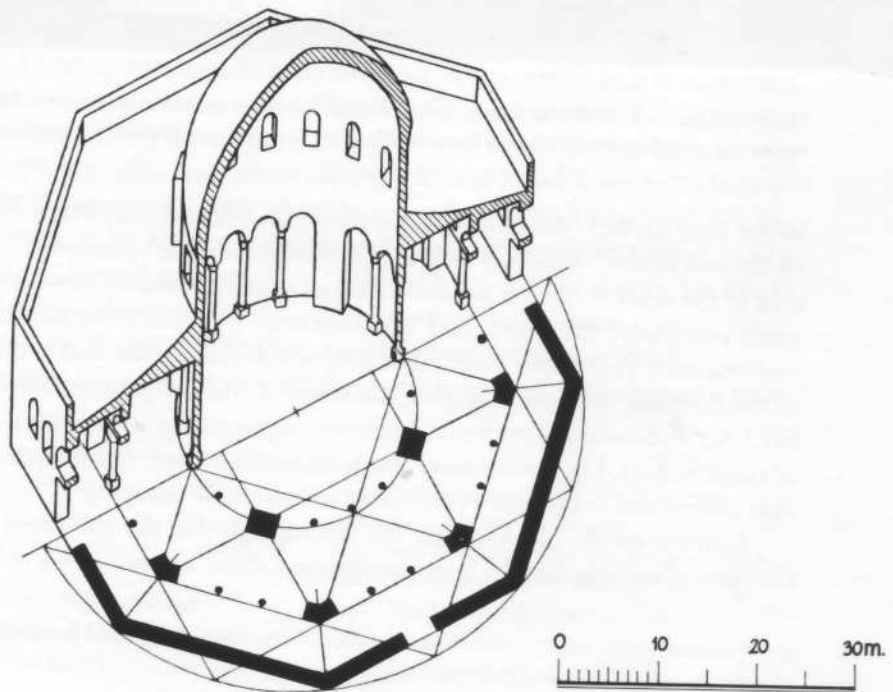


Figure 3. Dome of the Rock, plan (Creswell, fig. 21).

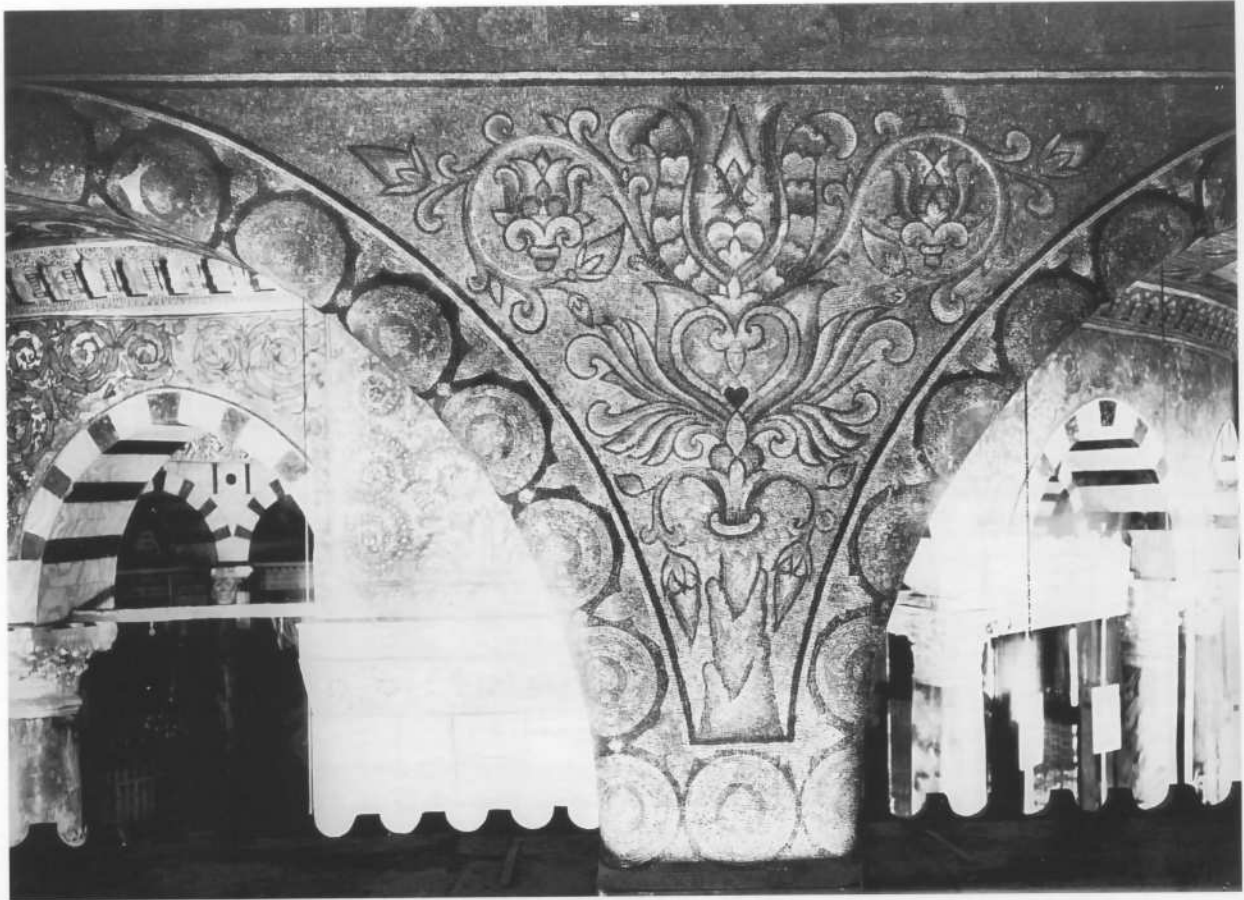


Figure 4. Dome of the Rock, mosaic decoration in the outer ambulatory, the outer face of the octagonal arcade with epigraphic band and bulb of Sasanian inspiration (Creswell, pl. 6a).

in the year 72/691–92. Creswell, for example, blithely states that ‘the date given by the inscription obviously refers, as is usual in Arabic epigraphy, to the completion of the work.’<sup>8</sup> Such a *terminus ad quem* causes problems, however, for the previous years were filled with civil war and strife not conducive to financing major construction. Peters speculated that preparation of the site and even construction of the building took place during the reign of Mu‘āwiya some twenty years earlier.<sup>9</sup> No architectural evidence, however, supports the idea of such a long period of construction. On the contrary, both architecture and decoration show remarkable clarity and consistency consonant with a single campaign.

Instead, we should question the assumption that the inscribed date refers to the time of completion. In later inscriptions, dates usually give a *terminus a quo*. In

8. Creswell (1969), 72.

mentioned the same possibility.

9. Peters (1983); Goitein (1980), 325

discussing Saljuq Anatolia, for example, Rogers showed that while an inscription could not be put up until the building was completed, the inscribed date referred to the time of ordering or foundation.<sup>10</sup> The same is true for construction texts from early Islamic Iran.<sup>11</sup>

Too few Umayyad inscriptions survive to permit the establishment of any hard-and-fast rules about meaning during this formative period. Most of the few that do survive give the date that the patron ordered the construction/making/building.<sup>12</sup> Sometimes it is impossible to tell whether the date refers to conception or completion, but in the closest comparable case, that of al-Walid's foundation text in the mosque at Damascus, al-Mas'ūdī tells us that the inscription in gold mosaic on a blue ground read that 'al-Walid ordered the building of the mosque and razing of the church within it in Dhū'l-Ḥijja 87' [November-December 706].<sup>13</sup> This clearly refers to the date of commencement, for work progressed for the better part of a decade until al-Walid's death in 96/715.

No textual evidence contradicts the assumption that the date of 72/691-92 refers to the time of the Dome of the Rock's inception. The foundation inscription of 65/684-85 reported by a European traveller is clearly false.<sup>14</sup> None of the early Muslim chroniclers, such as Ya'qūbī, Mas'ūdī, Balādhurī, Muqaddasī, Ibn al-Faqīh, or Ibn al-Athīr, gives a date for commencement of the work. The only early source to do so is Eutychius, repeated by Makīn, Maqrīzī, and Diyārbakrī, but van Berchem pointed out that from the context Eutychius's date of 65/684-85 refers to 'Abd al-Malik's accession.<sup>15</sup>

The earliest Muslim source to give a date for the commencement of the building is the *Mi'rāt al-Zamān* of Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d.654/1256). It is in turn cited in two 8th/14th-century sources. The *Muthīr al-Ghīrām* (composed in 752/1351) says that according to Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, the Dome of the Rock was begun in 69 and finished in 72, but adds that others say that 'Abd al-Malik's son Sa'īd built it. It was probably the source for Abū'l-Maḥāsīn ibn Taghrībirdī and Suyūfī.<sup>16</sup> Ibn Kathīr (d.774/1377), in his history *al-Bidāya wa'l-Nihāya*, says that according to Sibṭ work was begun in 66 and finished in 73.<sup>17</sup> He, in turn, was the source for Mujīr al-Dīn.<sup>18</sup> Le Strange showed, however, that these post-Crusade sources were tinged with romantic notions of the Holy Land and are totally unreliable.<sup>19</sup>

Taking the date of 72/691-2 as a *terminus a quo* is supported by evidence from

10. Rogers (1978), 72-73.

11. Blair (1992).

12. *R.C.E.A.* (1932-75), nos.8, 14-19, 25-28, 38, and 40.

13. Mas'ūdī (1966-79), 844, 2116; van Berchem (1920-27), 232; *R.C.E.A.* (1932-75) no.18; Creswell (1969), 153-54.

14. van Berchem (1920-27), no.214 was already dubious of its veracity.

15. van Berchem (1920-27), 226 and note 2.

16. Le Strange (1887), 280 and (1890), 144.

17. Ibn Kathīr (1932-39), viii, 280.

18. Mujīr al-Dīn (1973), i, 272 and 275.

19. Le Strange (1890), 138-39.





Figure 5. 'Imitative' dinar with three figures (no mint, no date). ANS 1002.1.107

two other media – coins and milestones. At the time of the Islamic conquest, no Byzantine mints were operating in Syria, and apparently no mints were set up in Syria for the first sixty years of Islamic rule. Since the caliphate of 'Alī, taxes were not paid to Medina, and existing supplies of imported Byzantine or Arab-Sasanian coins were sufficient to meet the limited local demands.<sup>20</sup>

Minting began under 'Abd al-Malik.<sup>21</sup> We can trace three distinctive phases, with parallel issues in gold, silver, and copper. Only Damascus issued gold and silver coins;<sup>22</sup> copper ones were issued at an increasingly wide range of mints. At first, copper was issued only at Damascus and mints in its military district (*jund*), and those to the north and south. During the second phase minting spread to 15 sites, from the northernmost military district of Qinnasrīn to the southernmost Filasūn, and in the Jazīra across the Euphrates from Syria which was only split off as a separate region in the 690s. Even more mints are recorded during the third phase.

The first issues imitate earlier Byzantine or Sasanian coins. The first *dīnārs* have three standing figures on the obverse (Fig. 5) and imitate issues by Heraclius but alter the Christian iconography. Byzantine imperial costume has been changed to what seems to be Arab dress, the crosses on the crowns are removed, and the orbs that the figures hold are transformed into staffs. On the reverse the cross-on-steps is reduced to a vertical bar ending with a knob. A legend in Arabic encircles the flan and gives the Islamic profession of faith: 'In the name of God, there is no god but God alone, Muḥammad is the messenger of God.'<sup>23</sup>

'Abd al-Malik's first copper issues are similar imitations of Byzantine icono-

20. Bates (1976).

21. This section on the introduction of Muslim coinage is closely based on Bates (1986).

22. One dirham is known from Ḥimṣ.

23. Bates (1986) distinguished an earlier phase consisting of four gold coins with similar iconography but with Greek rather than Arabic inscriptions. He notes that the dura-

tion of this phase and its significance in the evolution of official minting in Damascus is quite unclear. As the coins are so few in number and so closely linked to the next issues (my Phase One, his Phase Two), I consider them precursors rather than an independent phase, and Bates has kindly informed me that since his article was published, he too has dropped his earliest phase.



Figure 6. 'Adaptive' dinar with standing caliph (no mint, dated 75/694-95). ANS 1970.63.1

graphy, but without specific prototypes. On early issues from Damascus, for example, the obverse has either an enthroned emperor (rare), standing emperor (typical) or two standing imperial figures (rare). The reverse has a large uncial M flanked by legends which change from Greek to Arabic.

The first *dirhams* imitate Sasanian models. Traditional Sasanian coins show the emperor with a winged crown on the obverse and two attendants flanking a fire altar on the reverse. When the Arabs took over mints in the east, they simply added a short phrase in Arabic to the standard issue. About 670, they replaced the name of the Sasanian emperor with that of an Arab official, but still written in Pahlavi. The earliest silver issues from Syria continue the visual iconography of Sasanian *dirhams*, with the emperor's bust on the obverse and the fire altar on the reverse. They mingle Pahlavi and Arabic, naming Khusraw as on the older Arab-Sasanian issues, but adding the profession of faith, mint, and date in Arabic. The first phase with imitative issues can be dated to the years 72-74/692-94. The *dirhams* bear these dates, and Bates used a combination of historical and numismatic evidence to show that the gold and copper coins must have been issued at the same time. Balādhurī and Ṭabarī preserve the report of a late Umayyad scholar, Abū Zannād 'Abd Allāh ibn Dhakwān (d.130-132/747-50), that 'Abd al-Malik was the first to strike gold and silver coins in the 'year of unity' ('*am al-jama'a*'). The 9th-century Byzantine chronicler Theophanes mentions that 'Abd al-Malik began minting after the civil war, but before the battle of Sebastopolis in which an Arab army defeated the Byzantines (beginning of 73/summer of 692). Furthermore, the archaic Arabic script on the new *dinārs* and *dirhams* issued at Damascus resembles that on the Arab-Sasanian issues from the East, and Bates argued that 'Abd al-Malik imported engravers to Syria following his victories in Iraq in Jumāda I or II 72/October-November 691. The minting of gold and silver coins at Damascus must have begun a few months later, in late 72/early 692. Like the *dirhams*, the imitative *dinārs* must have ended in 74/693-94 when a second, adaptive phase began.

On the obverse the adaptive *dinārs* show a single standing figure (Fig.6), no longer an altered Byzantine personality, but a portrait of the caliph, dressed in Arab headdress and robe and holding a sword in a scabbard. The Byzantine





Figure 7. 'Epigraphic' dinar (no mint, dated 77/696–97), University Museum, Philadelphia, on loan to ANS 1002.1.406.

crown has become a *kūfiyya*; the *loros*, a mantle or *burda*; the cross, a sword. The iconography of dress is so detailed and so specific that the cord with three strands hanging from the caliph's wrist or forearm must have had a specific meaning, although it is not clear today. The profession of faith, found on the reverse of the imitative issues, has been moved to primary position on the obverse. The reverse of the standing-caliph issues keeps the iconography of the previous type, the transformed cross-on-steps, but the marginal legend now contains the date (74–77/693–97).

The copper standing-caliph issues were not as progressive as the *dīnārs*. Instead of moving the profession of faith to the obverse legend, the copper issues maintained the tradition of the older three-figure *dīnārs* in keeping the profession of faith in the reverse legend surrounding the modified cross. This left the obverse legend free. As copper coins were intended for local circulation, these legends show more variation than do *dīnārs* issued at a single source. Some standing-caliph copper coins use the same religious formula found on the *dīnārs*, 'Muḥammad, messenger of God' (*Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*). Others use the caliph's name and titles: 'for the servant of God, 'Abd al-Malik, commander of the believers' (*li-'Abd Allāh 'Abd al-Malik amīr al-mu'minīn*), the appellation used on the Dome of the Rock inscription. Two small mints in the Qinnasrin region, Manbij and Ma'arrat Miṣrīn, substituted the titles, 'caliph of God, commander of the believers' (*khalīfat Allāh amīr al-mu'minīn*), perhaps because of administrative confusion. Coppers issued at Jerusalem continue the reverse of the older, imitative issues – an uncial M. The mint at Baysān, the Greek Scythopolis, the old Byzantine military headquarters in southern Syria, issued another local type with two imperial figures, imitations of Nikomedian issues of Justin II and Sophia struck from 565 to 578.

Adaptive *dirhams* survive only from the year 75/694–95. On the reverse the fire altar is replaced by the figure of the standing caliph, as on the obverse of the gold and copper adaptive issues begun the year before. The figure is identified as 'caliph of God, commander of believers'. The *dirhams* were used for other, more radical experiments in creating visual symbols. One type replaced the Zoroastrian fire altar with a niche (a *mihrāb*?) enclosing the prophet's lance and

pennant. The legend reads *naṣara-hu Allāh* (may God grant him victory).<sup>24</sup>

These experiments in manipulating visual symbols on the coinage ended dramatically. Beginning in 77/696–97 in gold and in 79/698–99 in silver, ‘Abd al-Malik issued a new type that was not merely an alteration of older types, but a revolutionary, epigraphic type struck at a new weight standard (Fig.7). Metrologically, the new *dīnār* no longer continued the weight standard of the Byzantine solidus but was adjusted to domestic standards and struck to twenty Arabic carats (approximately 4.25 grams).<sup>25</sup> Iconographically, it rejected all attempts at finding Muslim replacements for Byzantine and Sasanian pictorial symbols in favour of a verbal iconography. The figure of the standing caliph was removed from the obverse field. The profession of faith was expanded so that the first half (‘there is no god but God alone, without partner’) filled the field and the remainder was included in the margin, followed by Qur’ān 9:33 about the prophetic mission (‘Muḥammad is the messenger of God who sent him with guidance and the religion of truth so that he might uplift it above all religions’). The reverse field has Qur’ān 112, the statement of God’s oneness and denial of the Trinity. The reverse margin contains the invocation and the date. Remarkably free of experimentation or fumbling, the same epigraphic type remained standard throughout the Umayyad and early ‘Abbāsīd periods and continued well into the 10th century in North Africa.

The coins, then, tell us that ‘Abd al-Malik began coining in Syria in late 72/early 692 following the end of the second civil war and his return from Iraq; milestones tell us that at the same time he started to improve the roads around Damascus and Jerusalem. In the late 19th century four undated examples were discovered in Palestine (Fig.8); their inscriptions say that ‘Abd al-Malik ordered the construction of roads and the erection of milestones to indicate the number of miles from Damascus or Jerusalem. Two were found on the road north-east from Jerusalem to Jericho, one on the road north-west to Tel Aviv, and the fourth is seven miles outside Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup> A fifth milestone discovered in the 1960s in the Sea of Galilee/Lake Tiberias describes the levelling of a difficult pass near the village of Fiḡ on the road from Damascus to Jerusalem in Muḥarram [7]3/May–June 692. ‘Abd al-Malik’s maternal uncle and governor of Palestine, Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥakam, supervised the work.<sup>27</sup> These milestones must have been part of ‘Abd al-Malik’s plan to build up greater Syria, an enormous construction project

24. Miles (1967) originally attributed this coin to 75/694–95 as he thought that the reform of the gold coinage took place in that year; in fact the reform did not begin until 77/696–97 in gold and 79/698–99 in silver so the niche type could have been issued from 75

to 79/694–99.

25. Grierson (1960).

26. *R.C.E.A.* (1931–75), nos.14, 16, 15 and 17 respectively.

27. Sharon (1966).



Figure 8. Milestone ordered by 'Abd al-Malik 109 miles from Damascus (Istanbul, Türk ve Islam Museum 2511)

financed in part from the booty and bullion he had gained in Iraq and paid for with the coins he issued from new mints in the region.

Damascus, the capital of Syria, was one urban focus of these projects; Jerusalem was another. 'Abd al-Malik must have restored the Ḥaram area, shoring up the substructure, rebuilding the Aqṣā Mosque on a new scale, and aligning it with his other major construction in the centre of the Ḥaram space, the Dome of the Rock. These were vast construction projects that used expensive materials like marble, gold, and mosaics. The entire project must have taken several years to complete, perhaps even a decade.

In addition to war and politics, dating the Dome of the Rock and the Aqṣā Mosque to the years 72–82/692–702 better fits the artisanal history of the area. Syria had a long tradition of mosaic decoration in the early Christian and Byzantine period, and the best workers were obviously recruited for the most important monuments, such as the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Constantine had ordered the original basilica, Justinian had added the apses, and in the early Muslim period the nave was reportedly divided so that Muslims could pray in the south aisle and Christians in the north. Fragments of mosaics survive along the walls of the nave. Those on the north illustrate six provincial councils; those on the south seven ecumenical ones. Stern showed that those on the south wall can be attributed stylistically to the 12th century AD and are a later replacement for the original programme in which six panels with ecumenical councils would have juxtaposed the six provincial ones. The original mosaics formed a coherent programme following a standard Byzantine arrangement, beginning to the left of the altar and ending to the right, having encircled the nave.<sup>28</sup> He attributed the original programme to the late 7th or early 8th century, and André Grabar suggested a date not long after AD 680–81 when the delegates from the patriarch in Jerusalem had returned from the sixth ecumenical council in Constantinople.<sup>29</sup> The atelier of skilled mosaicists who had decorated the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in the 680s would have been ready to work on the Muslim monuments of Jerusalem in the 70s/690s and from there could easily have moved to the Great Mosque of Damascus, begun by al-Walīd in 87/706.<sup>30</sup>

In view of epigraphic, textual, numismatic, and artisanal history, then, we should reread the date of 72/692 in the Dome of the Rock's foundation inscription as a *terminus a quo*. The building then belongs to 'Abd al-Malik's general build-up of Syria following his return from Iraq.<sup>31</sup> When he had come to the throne in Ramadān 65/April-May 685, he was secure only in Syria and Egypt. Zufar ibn al-Ḥārith held the north; 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr had been proclaimed caliph in Mecca and was recognized, at least nominally, in most provinces. In order to free his hands to deal with these internal problems, 'Abd al-Malik concluded a ten-year truce with Byzantium and agreed to pay an annual tribute of 365,000 solidi in return for the removal of the Mardaites from Syria.

It took 'Abd al-Malik several years to clear up his problems in Iraq and the Ḥijāz. In the summer of 69–70/689, he set out from Damascus for Iraq against 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr's brother, Muṣ'ab. However, a revolt by 'Abd al-Malik's cousin 'Amr ibn Sa'īd in the capital forced him to return home to put down the insurrection. The following year (summer 70–71/690) his luck began to turn. He overcame Zufar and reoccupied Mesopotamia, then defeated Muṣ'ab in Iraq in Jumāda I or II 72/October–November 691, and returned victorious from Iraq, with booty, bullion, and even die-engravers.

'Abd al-Malik sent his general Ḥajjāj against his remaining rival 'Abd Allāh ibn

28. Stern (1936–38), (1948), and (1957).

29. A. Grabar (1957), 50–61.

30. This was already suggested by A. Grabar (1957), 63.

31. The general events of this period are discussed in Wellhausen (1927), Chapter III; Shaban (1971), Chapter 5; and Hodgson (1974), 223–30.

al-Zubayr in Mecca. He charged Ḥajjāj to negotiate with ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr and then, if necessary, to starve him out, but on no account to spill blood in the Holy City. Accordingly, Ḥajjāj set up a base in his native Ṭa’if, but when negotiations failed, he ran out of patience and asked ‘Abd al-Malik for additional troops and permission to bombard the city. Ḥajjāj laid siege on 1 Dhū’l Qa’da 72/25 March 692. It lasted six months, including the month of pilgrimage. ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr was finally killed in Jumāda I or II 73/October-November 692.

Ḥajjāj’s defeat of ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr is often considered the end of the second civil war and the ‘year of unity’. Ḥajjāj’s campaign was a mopping-up operation,<sup>32</sup> however, and a better date for the end of the second civil war is mid 72/Autumn 691, the date of ‘Abd al-Malik’s victories in Iraq. At this point, he returned to Syria and began to consolidate his power base there, based on force and then on religious allegiance by maintaining central authority over tribal factionalism. He began minting coins, and as his supply of bullion increased (his victory at Sebastopolis in the summer of 692 meant that he no longer had to pay the annual tribute of 365,000 solidi to the Byzantines), he opened more mints in Syria. He used the new coins partly to pay new stipends to the Syrian troops and partly to finance major building campaigns. Damascus was an obvious choice: it was the capital and the major mint, the only one to issue gold and silver coins. In Jerusalem, he ordered the Ḥaram rebuilt with restorations to the Aqṣā Mosque and a new cultic building, the Dome of the Rock. It is unlikely that we will discover any new sources to understand why he did so, but by scrutinizing the mosaic programme, we can understand how the building was used and put it into context as an example of artistic adaptation.

The Dome of the Rock belongs to a type already known to the classical world, that is, the ciborium or reliquary built above a sacred place, and Creswell has already shown that its plan and elevation echo those of the nearby Church of the Anastasis: it copies not only the size and proportions of the drum, but also the internal alternation of piers and columns.<sup>33</sup> Like the architecture, the decoration was also planned in concentric rings. Gold mosaics originally covered the building, both outside and inside, but the Ottoman Sultan Sulaymān the Magnificent replaced the outer ones with tile decoration in 959/1552, so we know little about them. The interior ones, however, are still intact, though certain details of the programme, especially on the west side of the drum, may be later restorations.

The outer face of the octagonal arcade has thirty-two separate panels with huge hybrid plants of Sasanian inspiration (**Fig.4**).<sup>34</sup> Each has a central stalk supporting a bulbous pistil surrounded by two corollas. Borders and bands surround

32. Wellhausen (1927), 199 calls it an epilogue.

33. Creswell (1969), 101–09; on medieval imitations and their relationship to their

models, see Krautheimer (1942).

34. Creswell (1969), pls.6–9.



What is the date of the Dome of the Rock?



Figure 9. Dome of the Rock, mosaic decoration in the inner ambulatory.



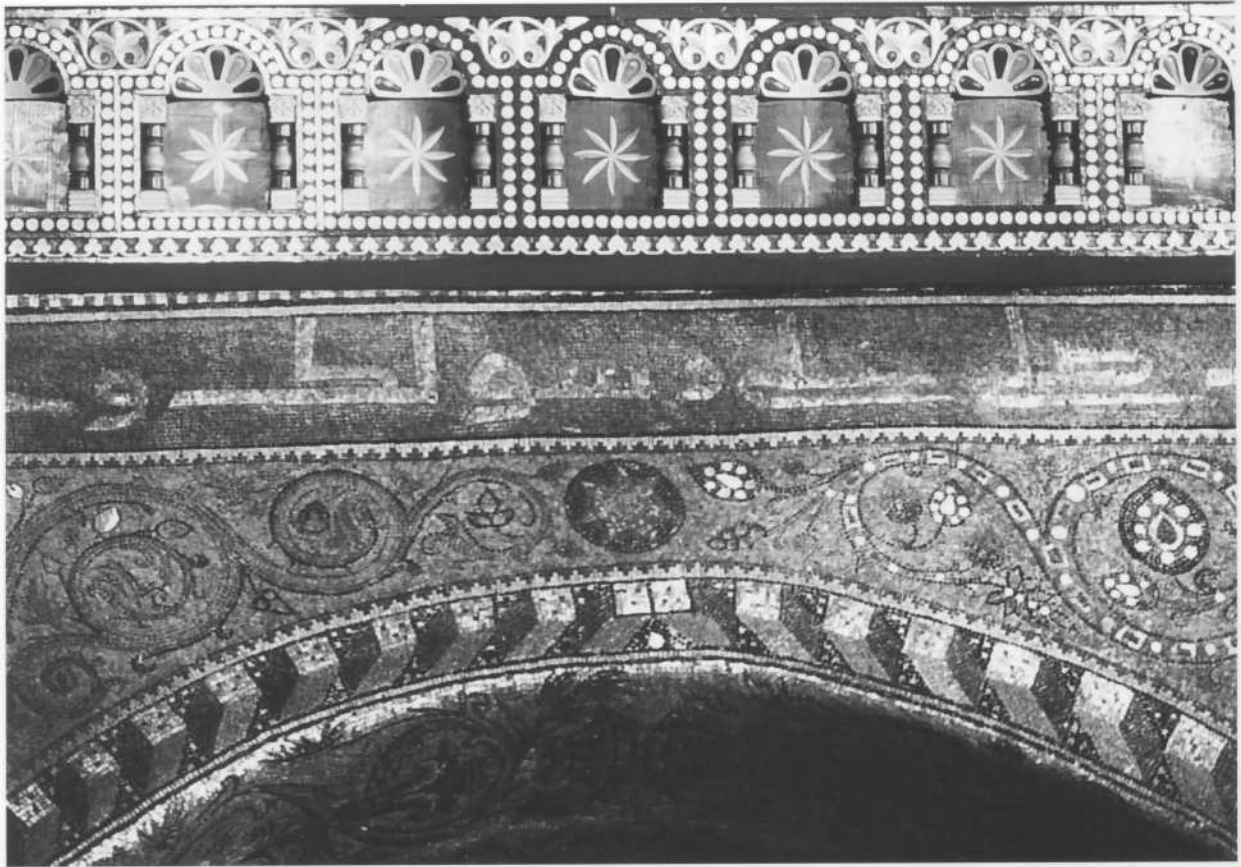


Figure 10. Dome of the Rock, mosaic decoration in the inner ambulatory, detail of inscription.

these major motifs and fill the spandrels. The inscription band mentioned above crowns the arcade: it ends with the historical text following five Qur'anic or pious texts, each introduced by the *basmala* (Appendix 1). Section one, running along the south face, contains the invocation, the first and second parts of the profession of faith,<sup>35</sup> Qur'an 112, and the third and fourth parts of the profession of faith. Section two, running along the southwest and half of the west face, contains the invocation, first three parts of the profession of faith, and Qur'an 33:54/56.<sup>36</sup> Section three, running along half the west, the northwest, and half the north face, contains the invocation, first part of the profession of faith, Qur'an 17:111, and the

35. The parts of the profession of faith are (1) there is no God but God alone, (2) He has no partner, (3) Muhammad is the messenger of God, and (4) may God bless him [and

grant him peace].

36. The verse numbers refer respectively to the Flügel and to the Standard Egyptian editions of the Qur'an.

third and fourth parts of the profession of faith with an additional ending. Section four, running along half the north and the northeast face, contains the invocation, first two parts of the profession of faith, Qur'ān 64:1 conflated with Qur'ān 57:2, third and fourth parts of the profession of faith, and a benediction for Muḥammad. Section five, running along most of the east face, contains the invocation and the full profession of faith.

On the inner face of the octagonal arcade (**Fig.9**), the eight piers have large, concave rectangular panels with acanthus plants issuing S-shaped scrolls set symmetrically around a central axis.<sup>37</sup> On the flanks of the piers are rectangular panels with trees or plants.<sup>38</sup> Over the sixteen columns are sumptuous composite motifs of vases, goblets, and balustrades supporting acanthus, calices, and flowers bedecked with diadems, pendants, and crowns.<sup>39</sup> The inscription band at the top contains a single text, introduced by an invocation and running counter-clockwise from the southwest corner (**Fig.10**, Appendix 2): invocation, first two parts of the profession of faith, Qur'ān 64:1 again conflated with Qur'ān 57:2, third part of the profession of faith with an additional phrase, Qur'ān 33:54/56, fourth part of the profession of faith, Qur'ān 4:169–71/171–72 (part), prayers for Jesus, Qur'ān 19:34–37/33–36 (paraphrased), and Qur'ān 3:16–17/18–19.

The scheme on the exterior of the rotunda (**Fig.11**) is similar to that on the interior of the octagonal arcade. Over the four piers are flat square panels filled with amphorae or acanthus plants issuing vine scrolls organized symmetrically around a central axis.<sup>40</sup> On the flanks of the piers are eight rectangular panels with vases of acanthus plants issuing vine scrolls which spiral toward the apexes of the adjacent arches.<sup>41</sup> Over the twelve columns supporting the arcade are similar acanthus plants and amphorae issuing scrolls.<sup>42</sup>

The mosaic decoration on the drum supporting the dome (**Fig.12**) is divided into two registers.<sup>43</sup> In the upper register, sixteen screened windows alternate with sixteen mosaic panels over the supports. The two panels with geometric patterns are probably later restorations; the fourteen original ones have amphorae issuing scrolls or palm leaves surmounted by bulbs, eleven of which are framed by winged motifs. The continuous band of the lower register has sixteen

37. Creswell (1969), pls.11a, 12a, 14a, 15a, 17a, 18a, 20a, and 21a.

38. Creswell (1969), pls.11b–c, 12b–c, 14b–c, 15b–c, 17b–c, 18b–c, 20b–c, and 21b–c.

39. Only six of the eight are illustrated in Creswell (1969): southeast, fig.191; east, pl.13; northeast, fig.192; north, pl.16; west, pl.19; and south, pl.22.

40. Creswell (1969): southeast, pl.36a; southwest, pl.34a mis-labelled northwest;

northwest, pls.34b and 35c in colour, mis-labelled southwest and southeast, respectively; and northeast, pl.36b.

41. Only four are illustrated in Creswell (1969): northwest, pl.33b; southwest, pls.33c and 31c; and southwest pl.33d.

42. Creswell (1969): south side, pl.31b; east side, pls.31b and 32a; north side, pl.33a; west side, pl.32b and fig.363.

43. Creswell (1969), figs.364–65.

similar composite arrangements of vases-bulbs-scrolls aligned with the sixteen panels in the upper register and connected by vine scrolls.

In analysing the mosaic decoration, Marguerite van Berchem and Stern noted that the representational motifs were adapted to fit the surfaces, with tall trees on the flanks of piers or flowering plants blossoming over the piers.<sup>44</sup> The inscription bands were also planned to fit the surfaces. Both bands fill the space exactly<sup>45</sup> and are aligned with the architecture. Both begin in a corner of the building just above the edge of a mosaic panel.<sup>46</sup> The beginning of a new thought is often aligned with the representational panels. On the outer face, for example, both the south-west and east sides begin with an invocation, and the north-east with Qur'ān 64:1. Qur'ān 33:54/56 wraps around pier 7 but is divided so that one thought – that God and His angels bless the Prophet – ends on the south-west side, and the next – asking believers to pray for him too – begins on the west side, with the exhortation 'O believers' lining up exactly with the edge of the panel containing the hybrid plant.<sup>47</sup>

The inscriptions were laid out to achieve symmetry. A single letter falls in the centre of the concave pier above the central axis and reinforces the bilateral symmetry of the vine scrolls below.<sup>48</sup> On pier 7 where there was no convenient break in the word, the mosaicist stretched out the space between *ṭā'* and *kāf* in *al-ḥākim* so that a horizontal bar bridges the central axis.<sup>49</sup>

To achieve this alignment of text and surface, the designer manipulated both content and style. The inscriptions contain six sorts of text – invocation, profession of faith, eulogies of Muḥammad, prayers for Jesus, Qur'ānic excerpts, and the foundation inscription. The text is dotted and pointed, and both the kinds of strokes and the archaic orthography are similar to the earliest known Kufic Qur'ān manuscripts.<sup>50</sup> The inscriptions thus present some of the earliest securely dated material for the history of the Qur'ān and of religious script.

The invocation occurs six times – five times on the outer face of the octagonal arcade and once on the inner. Tradition requires that the initial *alif* of *ism* be suppressed because 'Umar is supposed to have told his scribe to 'lengthen the *bā'*, make the teeth of the *sīn* prominent and round off the *mīm*, and that is the way *bism* is written here. Tradition also requires that the second *lām* of Allāh be inclined, as it is in many early manuscripts, but here that is not done.<sup>51</sup> In all cases

44. Creswell (1969), 213–322 and Stern (1972).

45. Grabar (1959), 54, n.116 that the last few words are missing is wrong.

46. Creswell (1969), pl.21a shows the beginning of the interior band in the south over the right edge of a rectangular floral panel.

47. Creswell (1969), pl.7a.

48. The letter *wāw* on piers 1, 2, and 5, Creswell (1969), pls.11a, 12a, and 17a; a vertical stroke on piers 6 and 8 (pls.18a and 21a) and *dāl* on pier 4, (pl.15a).

49. Creswell (1969), pl.20.

50. Kessler (1970).

51. Carra de Vaux (1959), 1084; illustrated in Creswell (1969), pl.21a.

What is the date of the Dome of the Rock ?

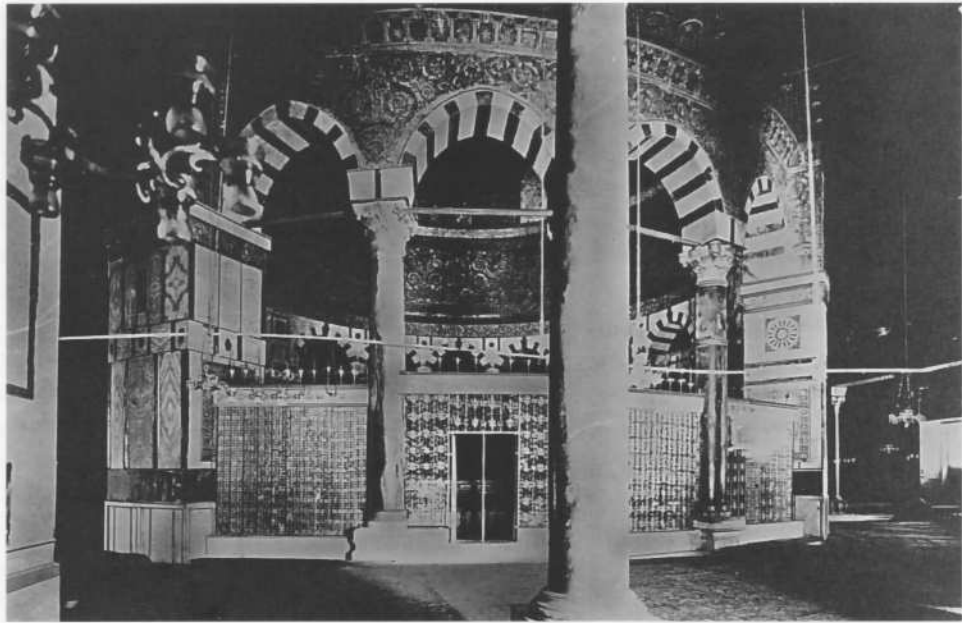


Figure 11. Dome of the Rock, mosaic decoration on the exterior of the rotunda (Creswell, pl.32b)



Figure 12. Dome of the Rock, mosaic decoration on drum.

in the Dome of the Rock inscriptions, the invocation is followed by the beginning of the profession of faith which contains four parts in its full form. The parts can be arranged in combinations of 1, 1-2, 1-2-3, 1-2-3-4, or 3-4, and part 4 can be followed by further eulogies of the Prophet. On the outer face, the north side adds 'may His angels and His messengers bless him and may God grant him peace and mercy,' and the northeast adds 'may God bless him and accept his intercession on the day of judgment for his community'; on the inner face, the south-east adds 'may God have mercy on him' to the fourth part and the end of the south band recognizes Muḥammad as God's servant and His messenger (*Muḥammad 'abdallāh wa rasūlu-hu*).<sup>52</sup>

Like the profession of faith, the Qur'ānic fragments were adapted and varied to fit the space. Rather than any metropolitan variant such as the Kūfan text of Ibn Mas'ūd or that of 'Ubayd ibn Kalb favoured by Syrians, the texts on the Dome of the Rock essentially follow the version of Medina canonized by 'Uthmān, although spellings sometimes differ.<sup>53</sup> Two texts are non-standard: Qur'ān 64:1 and 57:2 are conflated, both on the exterior and interior, and in 19:34/33 Jesus' words are in the third rather than the first person as quoted in the Qur'ān, to flow with the preceding prayer, 'O God, pray for Your messenger and servant 'Īsā ibn Maryam.'

The mosaicists also adapted the size of the letters in the inscription bands in the Dome of the Rock. The same phrase from Qur'ān 33:54/56 is spaced differently on the interior and exterior,<sup>54</sup> and some letters, like the *kāf* in 'Abd al-Malik's name in the original inscription, were extremely attenuated.<sup>55</sup> A rough count shows that the number of letters on each side varies widely.

Since the mosaic decoration was deliberately planned to modulate the architecture, its subtle variations can help us understand how pilgrims were supposed to use the building in 'Abd al-Malik's time. Information about the exterior is limited, but as one of the few contemporary buildings expressly fitted with decoration, it must have carried a significant message. We can surmise that the message cued the pilgrim to enter the building through the south door so that once inside, he faced the one section of the outer ambulatory whose inscription contains a complete text between rosettes. The text is Qur'ān 112 about God's omnipotence, and the designer specifically squeezed the letters so that they fit exactly across the south side.

The pilgrim was not meant to linger in the transitional space of the outer ambulatory, for the representational decoration consists of an undifferentiated

52. This part of the inscription was covered by dust in van Berchem's day but is visible in Creswell (1969), pls.11a and 11c and was read by Kessler (1970).

53. Jeffery (1937-51).

54. Creswell (1969), fig.191 and pl.7b.

55. van Berchem (1920-27), fig.35.



ring of bulbs of Sasanian inspiration<sup>56</sup> and the text is almost totally obscured in darkness at the top of the narrow ambulatory. If he quickly circumambulated in a clockwise direction, he passed a text fragmented into six sections by rosettes. Passing by five with invocations and pious texts, he would have ended with the historical fragment in the name of 'Abd al-Malik.

The pilgrim was meant to pass through the south side of the octagonal arcade. Bronze repoussé work covers the twenty-four tie beams connecting the arches. Of the sixteen patterns, one is repeated nine times, while fifteen are unique. As Creswell noted, the most exquisite example, with a central vase issuing bilateral vine scrolls, is located in the centre of the south side.<sup>57</sup>

Entering the inner ambulatory, the pilgrim could see across the balustrade enclosing the rock and glimpse the spandrels across the rotunda because of the slight twist to the inner colonnade (**Fig. 13**). In the Holy Sepulchre, the pilgrim would have been overwhelmed by the large central space, but here form and decoration reduce the role of the domed rotunda (**Fig. 14**). The dome is hardly visible, and its mosaics form another undifferentiated ring of static vases and scrolls derived from a classical vocabulary.

Instead, the pilgrim was meant to turn and circumambulate counter-clockwise (**Fig. 9**). Form and decoration made the inner ambulatory a more important space than the outer one. It is wider so that its decoration is more visible. The representational decoration includes unusual motifs such as diadems, pectorals, and other jewels highlighted in glittering mother-of-pearl. The text (**Fig. 10**) is more legible, particularly in slanting light,<sup>58</sup> and pointing<sup>59</sup> enhances the legibility of the band which contains a single continuous text addressed to believers and the people of the book. The pilgrim was meant to begin in the south-west corner, for that is where the single, continuous text begins.

The decoration on the inner face of the octagon also cues the pilgrim that the south is the *qibla* façade. On six of its arcades – south-east, east, north-east, north-west, west, and south-west – vine scrolls issue from the cornucopias in the spandrels flanking the pier and spiral toward the adjacent piers. On the north and south arcades, however, the plants issue from the flanks of the piers and grow

56. The use of Sasanian motifs would fit with a date after Jumāda 72/Oct.–Nov. 691 when 'Abd al-Malik had returned from Iraq, bringing rich booty that must have contained luxury objects made for the Sasanian court.

57. Creswell (1969), 86–87 and pl.27a.

58. Julian Raby tells me that once the spotlights on the dome are extinguished, the inner

inscription sparkles quite noticeably and would have done so even more before Sülayman introduced the present window grilles with their double walls.

59. Kessler (1970) notes that 89 of the 92 diacritical marks occur in the inner inscription; only one word in the outer inscription is pointed.





Figure 13. Dome of the Rock, view from edge of inner ambulatory across the rock showing twist to colonnade.

away from the piers toward the centre.<sup>60</sup> The vegetal motifs on the north resemble some of the other vine scrolls: a cabuchon-studded tendril on the right side and an acanthus scroll on the left side. Those on the south arcade, however, are distinct: rather than vine scrolls, they are plants with central stalks and bilateral sets of leaves. The tendrils on the south side radiate diagonally, whereas all the other vine scrolls form S-curves. The text reinforces the cues given by the representational decoration. The band across the south side of the interior of the octagon forms an integral, coherent text: invocation and a major Qur'ānic statement about Islam (64:1 conflated with 57:2 about God's omnipotence) flanked by parts of the profession of faith.

Scrutiny of the mosaic decoration of the inner ambulatory also shows that the

60. South arcade, Creswell (1969), pls.21a left and 11a right; north arcade, Creswell

(1969), pls.15a left and 17a right.

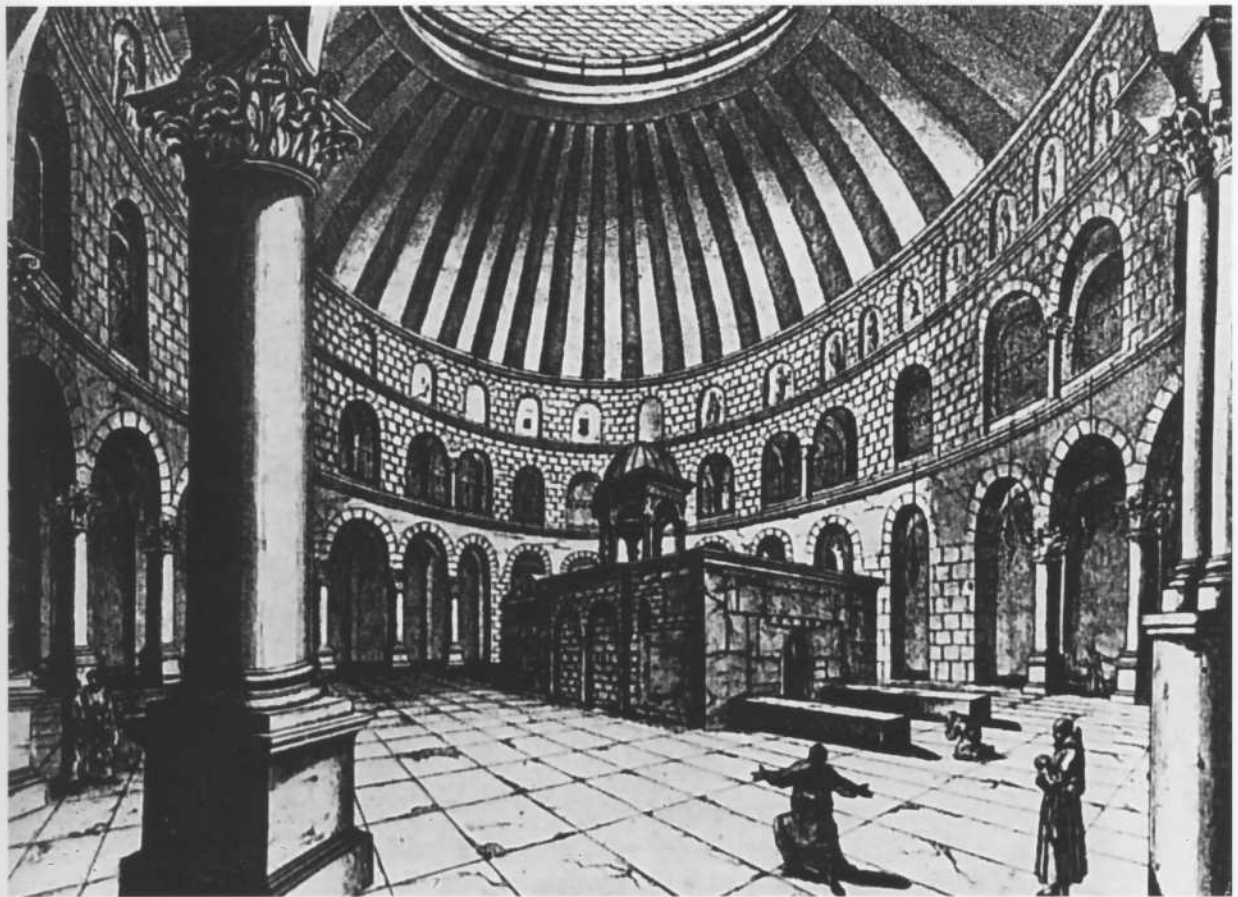


Figure 14. Holy Sepulchre, view of interior.

representational decoration is divided along a southeast-northwest axis, running from the corner of pier 1 to the corner of pier 5. The clearest distinction occurs on the piers: the flanks of all the piers to the east have naturalistic plants (**Fig. 15**): palm trees,<sup>61</sup> almonds,<sup>62</sup> and reeds,<sup>63</sup> whereas all those to the west have stylized plants growing out of vases and bedecked with jewels (**Fig. 16**).<sup>64</sup> The faces of all the piers have acanthus plants issuing two tendrils symmetrically arranged as scrolls (**Fig. 17**), but the five piers to the east (piers 1-5) have cabuchon-studded

61. Left flank of pier 1, Creswell (1969), pl. 11b; right and left flanks of pier 2, pls. 12c-b; and right flank of pier 3, pl. 14c.

62. Left flank of pier 3, Creswell (1969), pl. 14b and right flank of pier 4, pl. 15c.

63. Left flank of pier 4, Creswell (1969),

pl. 15b and right flank of pier 5, pl. 17c.

64. Left flank of pier 5, Creswell (1969), pl. 17b; right and left flanks of pier 6, pls. 18c-b; right and left flanks of pier 7, pls. 20c-b; right and left flanks of pier 8, pls. 21c-b; and right flank of pier 1, pl. 11c.

tendrils, either grape or laurel,<sup>65</sup> while the three piers to the west (piers 6–8) have plain acanthus scrolls with crowns astride the two tendrils (**Fig. 18**).<sup>66</sup>

This distinction between types of tendrils carries over from the piers to the arcades. Those to the east are cabuchon-studded;<sup>67</sup> those to the west are naturalistic, bearing clusters of grapes and flowers.<sup>68</sup> It is difficult to be more precise about the arcade decoration, for only six of the eight sides have been published, but those to the west seem more sober and lack the profusion of jewels found on those to the east.

Unlike the demarcation of the south side, the division of the representational decoration along a south-east–north-west axis does not correspond to a similar alignment in the text. The text begins in a different place (the south-west corner), and attempts to divide the text along the same axis do not lead to significant results.<sup>69</sup> The same axiality does not occur elsewhere in the mosaic programme of the Dome of the Rock (the outer ambulatory, rotunda, and dome have undifferentiated rings of representational decoration) but was reserved for the inner ambulatory, the most significant interior area of the building. How can we explain the axial division into two distinct types of representational decoration?

One possibility is that they were the work of two different teams who both began in the south-east corner but worked in opposite directions. The team working counter-clockwise worked a bit faster and ended up in the north-west corner of pier 5, covering five pier faces to the three of the clockwise team. To test this hypothesis, one needs to check on the spot for slight differences that cannot be determined from photographs, such as variations in materials or size of tesserae.

Another possibility is that the designer(s) was unaccustomed to working on an

65. Grape tendrils on piers 1, 3, and 4 illustrated in Creswell (1969), pls. 11, 14, and 15; laurel on piers 2 and 5; pls. 12 and 17.

66. Creswell (1969), pls. 18, 20 and 21.

67. Creswell (1969), figs. 191–92, pls. 13 and 16.

68. Creswell (1969), pls. 19 and 22.

69. One can divide the text along a similar south-east–north-west axis, beginning in the same place on the face of pier 1 but ending in the middle rather than the edge of pier 5, Creswell (1969), pls. 11a and 17a. The text to the east contains Qur'ān 33:54/56, a benediction for Muḥammad, Qur'ān 4:169–71/171–72 (part), and a prayer for Jesus; that to the west a paraphrase of Qur'ān 19:34–37/33–36, 3:16–17/18–19, and the text of the south façade (invocation and profession

of faith flanking the major Qur'ānic statement of 64:1 conflated with 57:2). The text to the east asks believers to bless the Prophet and the people of the book, to accept Jesus as a prophet rather than as the son of God and to believe in God as one not three. The text to the west grants peace to Jesus on the day of his birth, death, and resurrection; rejects the divinity of Christ on the grounds that only God has the power to create; asserts that God, His angels, and wise men attest to God's omnipotence; and grants God power over the living and the dead. No clear distinction divides the two sets of texts: both have Qur'ānic citations; both include parts addressed to believers and parts to the people of the book.



Figure 15. Dome of the Rock, inner ambulatory, flank of pier 1 (Creswell, pl.11b).



Figure 16. Dome of the Rock, inner ambulatory, flank of pier 5.

octagonal building. Such an axial division was much easier to work out in the rectangular nave of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, with its six provincial councils on the north wall and six ecumenical ones on the south wall. The representational decoration on the interior ambulatory of the Dome of the Rock would then show how the new Islamic civilization was trying to adapt Byzantine iconography to its own ends.

The suggestion of iconographic adaptation is strengthened by the fact that parallel changes were going on at the same time between Byzantine and Muslim coinage. The long-familiar Byzantine solidus had the emperor's portrait on the obverse and the cross-on-steps surrounded by the legend *Victoria Augusti—Deus adjutor Romanis* on the reverse (Fig. 19). During his first reign (685–95) Justinian II issued a new gold solidus with a bust of Christ *Rex Regnantium* with long flowing hair and beard on the obverse and a standing emperor wearing the *loros* and

crown with a cross, holding the cross potent on two steps, and identified as *Servus Christi* on the reverse (Fig. 20).<sup>70</sup>

Justinian II's new type is undated, but Breckenridge connected its introduction with the contemporary religious climate.<sup>71</sup> In 692 the emperor had convened the Quinisext Council to regularize Christian practices and eradicate heresy. A large part dealt with standardizing the performance of church ritual, including replacing the lamb as a symbol of Christ with a figural representation. Breckenridge, following André Grabar, showed how obverse and reverse of the coin are complementary images forming one iconographic whole. He interpreted Justinian II's new solidus as commemorating the emperor's apostleship to the Son of God. The reverse portrait of the standing emperor holding the stepped cross had evolved from the older concept of imperial victory to a new concept of the emperor as the instrument of Divine Will in achieving its own victory. The standing emperor is the living apostle, the servant of Christ in his aspect as Pambasileus, the king of those who rule.

If we accept Breckenridge's date of 692 for the introduction of Justinian's new type of solidus, then we can fit it neatly into the evolution of Muslim iconography on coins. 'Abd al-Malik had started issuing his own coins (the imitative type) at the beginning of 692. According to Theophanes, Justinian refused to accept these new Muslim coins, thereby provoking the battle of Sebastopolis which took place in the summer of the same year.

'Abd al-Malik must have soon become aware of Justinian's new solidus, for he adapted its iconography for his 'adaptive' coins issued from 74 to 77/693-97. The standing emperor on the reverse of Justinian's solidus was transformed into the standing caliph on the obverse of 'Abd al-Malik's *dīnārs*. The figure was intended as a specific portrait, for on *dirhams* he is identified as 'commander of believers, caliph of God' and on copper coins he is surrounded by the legend 'for the servant of God 'Abd al-Malik commander of the believers.' As well as pictorial adaptation, there seems to have been ideological emulation. The Byzantine solidus reflected the emperor's apostleship to the Son of God and his role as the instrument of Divine Will in achieving victory. The caliph is the servant of God to whom God will grant victory (the legend on the silver *dirhams* with the niche). Justinian had stressed the emperor's apostleship to the Son of God by moving the portrait of Christ to the obverse field; the Muslim adaptive coins stress the primacy of God by moving the profession of faith to the obverse margin.

70. Breckenridge (1959), 18-22, types I and II.

71. Breckenridge (1959), 78-88; see also Bates (1986), 253 who notes that one of the bases for accepting the date of 692 is that there is absolutely no other evidence since

nothing is known of internal Byzantine events in Justinian's reign. He cautions that the date should be accepted as a plausible hypothesis, not a fixed datum and could be several years earlier or later.



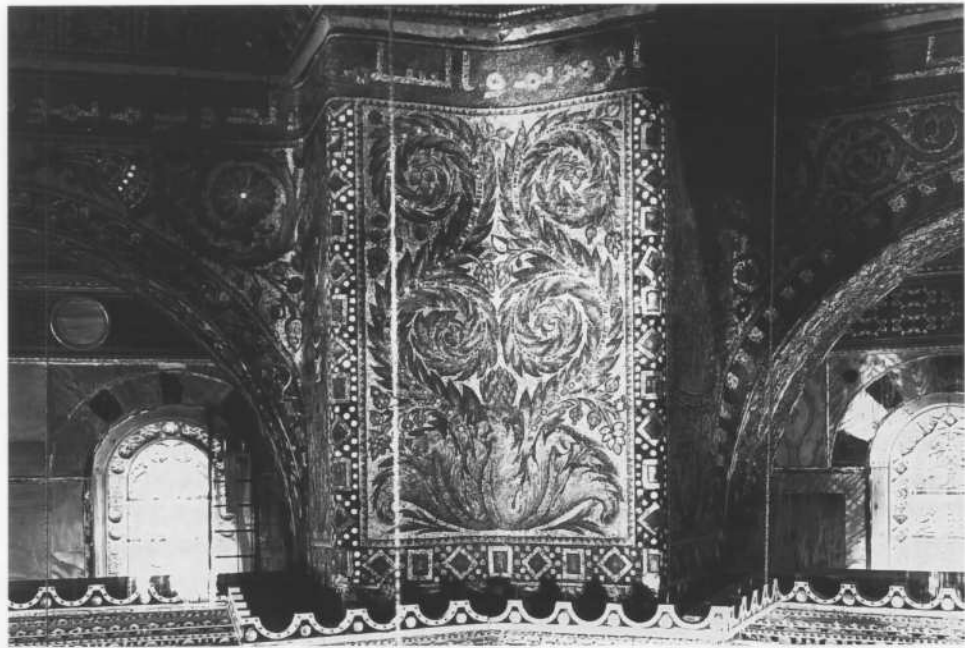


Figure 17. Dome of the Rock, inner ambulatory, face of pier on the east, pier 5 (Creswell, pl.17a).

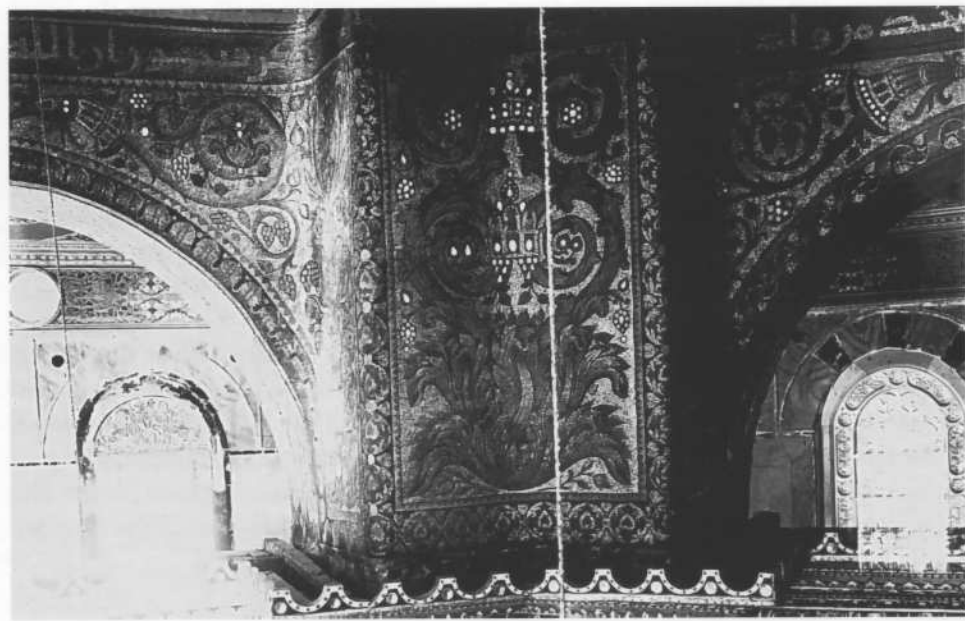


Figure 18. Dome of the Rock, inner ambulatory, face of pier on west, pier 6 (Creswell, pl.18a).





Figure 19. Type I solidus issued by Justinian with bust of the emperor (Constantinople, no date): ANS 1986.177.1.

Such adaptive iconography must have been found unsuitable on coins, for it was soon abandoned and the cult of the caliph diminished. Not only was his portrait removed from the coinage; so was his name. The rule was so strong that only in 145/762–63 did the heir to the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Mahdī dare to break the anonymity of the coinage by adding his name to coins struck under his authority. Instead, ‘Abd al-Malik’s new epigraphic issues add the prophetic mission (Qur’ān 9:33) and the central statement of divine unity (Qur’ān 112).

The mosaics of the Dome of the Rock illustrate the same adaptation of Byzantine iconography as the coins. They adapt Byzantine motifs such as vine scrolls, amphorae, and acanthus (and Sasanian ones such as bulbs and crowns), and the inscriptions reiterate the profession of faith, which always follows the invocation. It is also placed in the primary position on the south side of the inner octagon flanking the major Qur’ānic statement conflating 64:1 and 57:2 where it is expanded by the phrase ‘God’s servant’ (*‘abd allāh*), a phrase used on some of the standing-caliph copper coins. The phrase *‘abd allāh* could simply be a space-filler to allow the next Qur’ānic text to begin at the inner face of pier 1, but it is also the caliph’s attribute,<sup>72</sup> and its use on the interior band of the Dome of the Rock to refer to the Prophet echoes its use in the foundation inscription on the exterior band to refer to his successor, the caliph. And like the adaptive coins, the mosaics in the Dome of the Rock combine pictorial iconography with text.

In summary, then, we can place the Dome of the Rock in a precise historical context: ‘Abd al-Malik ordered it in the second half of 72/first half of 692 on his victorious return from Iraq as part of a major build-up of Damascus and Jerusalem. When ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, but it is unlikely that he intended it as a counter-Ka‘ba, for such an act would have been anathema to a pious person like ‘Abd al-Malik who had re-issued the standardized ‘Uthmānic text of the Qur’ān,

72. The first attested epigraphic use is an inscription dated 58/677–68 in the name of

Mu‘āwiya on a dam near Ṭa‘if, Miles (1948).



Figure 20. Type II solidus issued by Justinian with Christ *Rex Regnantium* (Constantinople, no date): ANS 1948.19.474.

and pilgrimage continued throughout 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr's occupation. But the Dome of the Rock could have been an ex-voto or some sort of alternative goal of the pilgrimage, for architectural features like the circumambulation of the rock counter-clockwise and decorative ones like the hanging of jewels and crowns do evoke ideas associated with the Ka'ba.<sup>73</sup>

The mosaic decoration on the interior of the Dome of the Rock was executed in the years following 72/692 by craftsmen who might have worked on the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in the previous decade. The mosaic programme shows that the focus of devotion was the inner ambulatory where pilgrims were meant to circumambulate around the rock in a counter-clockwise direction, as they did around the Ka'ba. The representational decoration (especially the sumptuous jewels worn by Byzantine princes or Christian saints) and inscription (a single continuous text about the uniqueness and power of God and blessings on the Prophet and Jesus who is accounted a messenger, not the son of God) represent Muslim adaptations of Byzantine iconography, partly because the craftsmen who executed these mosaics had been trained on Byzantine monuments and partly because this was the time when the Muslims, having freed themselves from paying tribute to the Byzantines, adapted the sumptuous visual world of their erstwhile rivals for new purposes.

73. Grabar (1959), 46-52.

## Appendix 1: Inscription on the Outer Face of the Octagonal Arcade

**S:** \* *Basmala*. There is no god but God alone, without partner. Say: He is God, One, God, the Everlasting, who has not begotten and has not been begotten. He is without equal. [Qur'ān 112] Muḥammad is God's messenger, may God bless him.

**SW:** \* *Basmala*. There is no god but God alone, without partner. Muḥammad is God's messenger. God and His angels send blessings on the Prophet.

**W:** O you who believe, send blessings on him and salute him with all respect. [Qur'ān 33:54/56] \* *Basmala*. There is no god but God alone. Praise

**NW:** to God who has not taken a son and who doesn't have any partner in dominion nor any protector out of humbleness. Magnify Him with repeated magnificats. [Qur'ān 17:111] Muḥammad is God's messenger,

**N:** may God, His angels and His messengers bless him and God grant him peace and mercy. \* *Basmala*. There is no god but God alone, without partner.

**NE:** To Him belongs dominion and to Him belongs praise. He gives life and He makes to die; He is powerful over all things. [conflation of Qur'ān 64:1 and 57:2] Muḥammad is God's messenger, may God bless him and accept his intercession on the day of resurrection for his community.

**E:** \* *Basmala*. There is no god but God alone, without partner. Muḥammad is God's messenger, may God bless him. \*: God's servant,

**SE:** 'Abd al-Malik, commander of believers, built this dome in the year seventy-two, may God accept [it] from him and be pleased with him. Amen. Lord of the worlds. Praise to God.

## Appendix 2: Inscription on the Inner Face of the Octagonal Arcade

**S:** *Basmala*. There is no god but God alone, without partner. To Him belongs dominion and to Him belongs praise. He gives life and He makes to die; He is powerful over all things. [conflation of Qur'ān 64:1 and 57:2] Muḥammad is God's servant and His messenger.

**SE:** God and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe, send blessings on him and salute him with all respect. [Qur'ān 33:54/56] May God bless him and grant him peace and mercy. O people of the book, do not go beyond the bounds in your religion,

**E:** nor say anything but the truth about God. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only God's messenger, His word that He committed to Mary, and a spirit proceeding

from Him. So believe in God and His messengers. Do not say 'three'. Refrain,  
**NE:** it is better for you. For God is one god. Glory be to Him – that He should have a son! To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth. God suffices for a guardian. The Messiah will not disdain to be

**N:** God's servant; nor will the angels who are stationed near to Him. Whoever disdains to serve him and waxes proud, He will muster them to Him, all of them.

[Qur'ān 4:169-71/171-72] O God, bless your messenger and servant, Jesus

**NW:** son of Mary. Peace be upon him the day he was born, the day he dies, and the day he is raised up alive. That is Jesus son of Mary, in word of truth, about which they are doubting. It is not for God to take a son. Glory be to Him.

**W:** When He decrees a thing, he only says to it 'Be' and it is. God is my lord and your lord. So serve Him. This is a straight path. [Qur'ān 19:34-37/33-36 paraphrased] God, His angels, and men possessed of knowledge and upholding justice bear witness that there is no god but He. There is no god but He

**SW:** the all-mighty, the all-wise. The true religion with God is Islam. Those who were given the book did not dissent except after knowledge came to them, when they became envious of each other. Whoever disbelieves in God's signs, God will swiftly call to account. [Qur'ān 3:16-17/18-19].