

Concluding Report and Recommendations of the Fifth Seminar of Scientific Centres and Organizations interested in the Studies of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula held at King Abdul Aziz Research Centre, Riyadh Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the period from 16 — 18/6/1401 H. Corresponding to 20 — 22/4/1981 A.D.

First . The Report

At the invitation of "King Abdul Aziz Research Centre", Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Fifth Seminar of Scientific Centres and Organizations interested in the Studies of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula was held in the city of Riyadh in the period from 16 — 18/6/1041 H. corresponding to 20 — 22/4/1981 A.D. under the patronage of His Royal Highness "Prince Salman Ibn Abdul Aziz" Governor of Riyadh Region and the supervision of His Excellency Sheikh "Hassan Ibn Abdullah Al Al Sheikh", Minister of Higher Education and Chairman of the Board of Directors of King Abdul Aziz Research Centre.

The Seminar was attended by delegations from the following Scientific Centres and Organizations.

1. Documents and Studies Centre of Abu Dhabi.
2. Historical Documents Centre of Bahrain.
3. King Abdul Aziz Research Centre, Riyadh.
4. The Gulf Studies Centre of Basra University, Iraq.
5. Historical Documents Centre of Qatar.
6. The Magazine of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies of Kuwait University.
7. The Yemeni Studies and Researches' Centre of the Yemeni Arab Republic.

The delegation of the Omani Archives and Publications of Oman did not attend the meeting.

A Supervisor for United Arab Emirates attended the Seminar

A preparatory meeting of the executive committee of the General Secretariat of Centres and Organizations interested in the Studies of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula was held at 6 p.m. on Sunday 15/6/1401 H (19/4/1981 A.D). The items of the agenda, schedule and general regulations of the Seminar were approved taking into consideration the recommendations

adopted in the Fourth Seminar held at Abu Dhabi last year as well as the outcome of the bi-meetings that took place in Kuwait and Bahrain. The meeting ended approximately at 8 p.m.

At 10 a.m on Monday morning 16/6/1401 H. (20/4/1981 A.D.) the opening session began by a recital from the Holy Koran. Then His Excellency Sheikh Abdul Malik Ibn Abdullah Al Al Sheikh, Secretary General of King Abdul Aziz Research Centre delivered his speech where he welcomed the participating delegations and audience. Sheikh Abdul Malik pointed out that the establishment of these Scientific Centres and Organizations in the Arab Gulf States was an evidence of enlightenment and progress in the field of scientific research. He also stressed that the acquisition, collection and studying of documents should be one of the most important subjects for discussion in addition to other scientific issues.

Then Dr. Mustapha Abdul Kader Al Najjar Secretary General of Scientific Centres and Organizations interested in the Studies of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula was given the floor. He spoke of the dire need for integration and coordination among scientific research centres in this area. He also stressed the necessity of the establishment of common scientific projects and the collaboration of these centres in the publication and original studies that adopt the sound Arab point of view and the study of our legacy manuscripts and Arabic manuscripts.

Then, His Royal Highness Prince Salman Ibn Abdul Aziz Governor of Riyadh Region delivered his speech where he welcomed heads and delegates of Scientific Centres and Organizations interested in the Studies of the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula. He extended to the delegates the compliments of His Majesty King Khalid Ibn Abdul Aziz and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Fahd Ibn Abdul Aziz. He said that King Abdul Aziz Research Centre was established in commemoration of King Abdul Aziz who propagated enlightenment, knowledge and education in the Kingdom. At the end of the opening ceremony Sheikh Abdul Malik Ibn Abdullah Al Al Sheikh presented the shield of King Abdul Aziz Research Centre to His Royal Highness Prince Salman Ibn Abdul Aziz in appreciation of his patronage of the opening ceremony.

The opening session ended at 11 a.m The Seminar took three working sessions as follows :

The First Session

The First Session started at 5 p.m on Monday 16/6/1401 H. corresponding to 20/4/1981 A.D. Sheikh Abdul Malik Ibn Abdullah Al Al Shiekh Secretary General of King Abdul Aziz Research Centre was chosen as chairman of the seminar and Abdul Rahman Al Sarra as rapporteur. The wording committee was chaired by Dr. Abdullah Yusuf Al Ghoneim. Then the head of each centre, organization or his representative spoke of the activities of the centre or organization he represented, its achievements in the past years and future. at the end of this session Dr. Mustapha Al Najjar expressed the readiness of the Arabian Gulf Studies of Basra, Iraq to carry out the following : -

(A) Bearing the expenses of printing of two books prepared by the Yemeni Studies and Research Centre the latter wishes to publish.

(B) Extending invitation to Dr. Khalid Al Hamidh representative of United Arab Emirates University to visit the Arabian Gulf studies Centre of Basra, Iraq. Mr. Ahmad Al Enany head of the Historical Documents Centre of Qatar expressed his readiness to furnish all Centres with copies of the book entitled "The Arabs in the Sind" by an Indian author. This book speaks about the role of the Arab tribes in the conquest of the Sind.

The Second Session

The Second Session was held at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday 17/6/1401 H. corresponding to 21/4/1981 A.D. The recommendations endorsed in the previous seminar were discussed in order to define what were executed of their items and exploring the sufficient means to consolidate cooperation among centres in different fields that serve their objectives. The working paper submitted by the Magazine of the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula Studies was discussed as to the preparation and execution of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Atlas. The steps taken in this project have been reviewed so that the step taken by the Gulf studies Magazine shall be the historical atlas. The competent centres shall provide the Gulf Studies Magazine with the pertinent scientific matter and maps necessary for the execution of the project. The subject of editing an encyclopaedia of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula was also discussed. It was decided that King Abdul Aziz Research Centre shall prepare an integrated project for the encyclopaedia. And the subject of the contemporary intellectual

personalities in the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula was also discussed. The Arabian Gulf Studies Centres of Basra, Iraq presented a model of this work. It was agreed that the General Secretariat shall distribute this book among the member centres so that they might be able to study it thoroughly and complete any deficiency that may arise.

The subject of the year book having researches from the different Centres was discussed as well. King Abdul Aziz Research Centre expressed its readiness to print that book at its expense. The idea of issuing a calendar having the title of the Centres and Organizations interested in the Studies of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula was considered. It was agreed that each centre or organization shall have its own calendar. The subject of designing an emblem having the name of General Secretariat was also discussed. The Historical Documents Centre of Qatar was entrusted to present the said design for endorsement in the next session.

The Third Session

The third session began at 4 p.m. on Thursday 17/6/1401 H. corresponding to 21/4/1981 A.D. A discussion took place concerning recommendations of the coordinating committee of historical documents of Bahrain State on 3/4/1401 H. (7/2/1981 A.D.). The delegates exchanged information on what has been achieved in the field of collecting and indexing of documents and urging the different centres to expedite the work of indexing. This matter was referred to the different centres to be defined according to their capabilities taking into consideration the general framework of indexing. The subject of translating the documents as well as the necessity of cooperation and the exchange of experience in this respect were also discussed.

The meeting of the libraries seminar in Basra was discussed as well. It was approved in principle to hold the next meeting in next January on condition that the Arabian Gulf Studies Centre of Basra shall submit a working paper to be despatched to other Centres for consideration. Proposals for the promotion of work in the general secretariat was discussed too. Dr. Mustapha Al Najjar displayed his conception in this matter by submitting a comprehensive working paper of his own. The Seminar adopted most of the items of that paper. Dr Najjar requested the joining of Kuwaiti proposals in this respect to the paper of the Arabian Gulf Studies Centre of Basra.

The delegates in this meeting agreed to hold an exhibition of publications documents and manuscripts published or

acquired by the different centres provided that this exhibition coincides in time with the future sessions of the general Secretariat.

There was also an agreement on the necessity of joining the general secretariat to the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science of the Arab League, and asking the Secretary General of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies Centres and Organizations to take the necessary measures in this respect.

The two requests submitted from the Gulf Arabic Studies affiliated to the Gulf House of Press, Printing and Publishing and the Arab Education Bureau of the Gulf States to Join the membership of the General Secretariat of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies Centres and Organizations. were considered. It was decided to delay the consideration of their membership until laying down the regulations of joining other organizations and centres to the membership of the Secretariat.

The meeting ended at 6 p.m.

Second - Recommendations

First — In the field of boosting co-operation among the eight member Scientific Centres and Bodies :

The participants confirmed the importance of promoting relationships among the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies Centres and Bodies to guarantee a more effective work performance and a positive joint co-operation. To accomplish this the following steps should be observed :

1. The exchange of bibliographical data of their library holdings of reference books, documents, manuscripts, Arabic and foreign publications and periodicals as preliminary to preparing a unified bibliographical directory.

2. The exchange of maps and aerial photographs as necessary for a unified cartographic directory.

3. The exchange of statistical data in demographic, petroleum, economic, social, and other fields. This constitutes materials for issuing a unified statistical yearbook.

4. To support the Yemeni Research and Studies Centre through publishing some of its works and providing the expertise it needs. The Centre for Arabian Gulf Studies of Basra University offered to finance the publication of two books of the Yemeni Centre.

5. The General Secretariat, with the help of the member Centres and Bodies, is requested to provide training facilities in documentation for the local cadres. This shall be done through contacting the regional and international specialized agencies.

6. The participants recommend the use of the word 'Session' instead of 'Seminar' for the annual meetings.

7. The "Session on Libraries" will be held at the Gulf Studies Centre of Basra University in January 1982. A worknig paper is recommend to be sent beforehand to the Centres and Bodies for any additional suggestions.

8. The approval of the General Secretariat's proposal to make a show, at every meeting, of the documents, manuscripts and publications acquired by the member Centres and Bodies, and to participate in the annual bookfairs under the name of the General Secretariat.

9. Due concern should be given to contemporary documents and their preservation. Government authorities should be encouraged to enact the necessary legislations for that end.

Second - In the field of joint projects :

1. The member Centres and Bodies are requested to support the effort of the Arabian Gulf Studies Centre of Basra University in preparing the unified 'Who is Who' of the contemporary outstanding intellectual figures of the member Gulf and Arabian Peninsula States. Complete lists have to be provided according to the assigned specifications.

2. King Abdul Aziz Research Centre of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shall prepare an integrated working paper on the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula encycloepedia. The Centre shall set the methodology, the objectives and the scientific content of the encycloepedia before submitting it for discussion in the 'Sixth Session'.

3. King Abdul Aziz Research Centre shall finance publishing the first yearbook which will contain researches done by the member Centres. The book cover shall bear the name of the General Secretariat.

4. It was approved to go on with the project of the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Atlas in successive stages. The first shall be the historical atlas based on the plan of the Magazine for the Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies. The atlas has to cover the whole regoin. The member Centres are requested to supply the Magazine with the available materials (documents, maps or manuscripts). As for the work process separate maps have to be prepared. The parts completed are to be sent to the General Secretarit' meetings to authorise their publication.

Third - In the field of foreign Arab Relations.

1. The General Secretariat is requested to prepare a list of the local, regional and international conferences, concerned with the problems of the area, and to have this list distributed among the member Centres and Bodies. Participations in these conferences have to be co-ordinated to ensure a permanent Arab Gulf presence in such meetings.

2. The reports submitted to these conferences by any member Centre should be sent, likewise, to the other member Centres and Bodies.

3. To confirm the importance of establishing close relationships with all organisations and governmental and non-governmental bodies concerned with boosting interregional co-operation i.e. development funds, research institutions, United Nations regional offices and specialized agencies.

4. To consolidate relations with the International Council of Archives and make use of its expertise and training facilities. The Secretary General is requested to promote this relationship.

5. Establishing relations with the Arab League offices in the area and with the regional centres of its specialized agencies (The Arab labour Organisation, the Economic Unity Council, the Arab Universities Union, the Gulf Broadcasting Stations Union etc).

6. Authorising the Secretary General to take the necessary measures for the General Secretariat to join the Arab Organisation For Education, Culture And Science of the Arab League.

7. Recommending the holding of a biannual conference with the objective of forecasting future development in the light of expected regional and international variables.

8. The General Secretariat is requested to formulate a detailed plan for the restitution of rare documents and manuscripts acquired now by foreign countries and dealing with the region. Prior to this each member Centre has to make surveys of these documents and manuscripts in a number of these places together with making transcriptions and photocopying.

The Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies Centres and Bodies approved to hold the next session in Qatar at the opening of 1982 (1402 A.H.) The Centre For Historical Documents of Qatar will notify the General Secretariat after consulting the concerned Qatari authorities.

In The Name Of God

By

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JEDDAH - SAUDI ARABIA

In The name of God
Most Gracious Most Merciful

The Aqsa Mosque
Its origin and its architecture
through the Ages.

The Aqsa Mosque, as Ibn Fadl (1) Allah el Amry says :-

The Colledge of Prophets,
The House of Believers,
The Second Sacred Building,
And the First Mihrab in Islam.

The word (Aqsa) means in Arabic "The remotest sanctuary" and is first found in the Qur'an (Muslim Holy Book) in Sura (chapter) = XVII Bani Israel, verse (2) :

Glory to Him
who did take His Servant,
For a Journey by night,
From the Sacred Mosque
To the Remotest Sanctuary
Whose precincts We did
Bless, - in order that We
Might show him some
Of Our Signs : For He
Is the One who heareth
And seeth (all things)

This explanation is connected with our prophet Muhammed's Journey in the night, (isra') to Jerusalem and al (mi'radj) that is to say, his nocturnal Journey from Jerusalem to the heavens.

Jerusalem became of real significance when the Prophet turned at prayer in the direction of the Holy city. We must notice here that the expression (almasdjid - al aksa indicates Jerusalem as the goal of the Prophets nocturnal journey, not,

however, the later mosque of the name but the site near which the prophet followed his journey from Jerusalem to the heavens (mi'raj).

Traditions gave the greatest importance for Jerusalem, for on it is based the classing of the sanctuary at Jerusalem among the three (3) most holy places of prayer in the Muslim world (in MECCA, MADINA and Jerusalem).

Archeological Origin

To begin from the beginning, we have to deal with Jerusalem from the early Islamic era, that is to say from the
A.D H
Rashidun Caliphates (Rightly Guided 638 - 661 A.D (11 - 40 H).

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The beginning of (638)/(11) saw the victorious Arab armies encamped about Jerusalem and upon the Mount of Olives. They have already conquered the coastline and Damascus had fallen to the outstanding cavalry of Khaled ibn al-Walid, two years earlier. Khaled ibn al-Walid, though commanding a far smaller force than the Byzantine, drove into his enemies ranks from out of the sun and with the terrible wind behind him, by the banks of the Yarmuk river (4).

The battle was waged for three days, after which, the Byzantines withdrew to Constantinople, never to return. In reality Yarmuk battle was a turning point in Muslim history as a whole and to Byzantine resistance in particular.

The Patriarch Sophronius who witnessed, twenty - two years ago, the Persian invasion must have crowded his mind with memories of previous sackings and slaughter.

He also remembered the Persian demolishing of everything in Jerusalem even the tomb of Christ.

This memory made the Patriarch's departed Emperor
A.D
Heraclius in (633) take the precautionary step of removing the true Cross to Constantinople.

Two different accounts of the taking of Jerusalem by the Arabs have been handed down, but the most reasonable one according to the most usual version, was that the Arab general
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Abu Ubaida in (638/17) conveyed to the Caliph Omar Ibn al-Khattab, the message of Sophronius, the Jerusalem's

According to Josephus's description we can easily give the measurement of the Royal Stoa of Herod, which was replaced by 'Omar's mosque, for its width (the three aisles 30+30+45 = 105 f.T) (35.m) and the length (40 columns each arcade X 2m) 80, makes 2800 m square.

This measurement justifies the traditions which say that 'Omar's Mosque gives place for three thousand men (that is the Muslim Army) to do their prayer at a time.

Its Architecture Through the Ages.

As for the first Aqsa Mosque built in the days of the Rashidun Caliphates' period, there is no doubt that some primitive structure was erected at 'Omar's days. Though none of the early Islamic historians, such as Baladhuri and Tabri, speaks of the construction of a mosque when Jerusalem

H A.D

capitulated to 'Omar in (17 / 637), yet the statement of the

A.D

early pilgrim Arculf, (22) who visited Jerusalem in (670), and the description of Josephus (23) give us a reasonable idea about the site and description of the first Aqsa Mosque built in the Rashidun Caliphates Period.

The description of the first Aqsa Mosque, as proposed by the author, is as follows :-

The mosque is situated in the south eastern part of the city (See map (2)) where municipal debris covered the Herodian (24) platform around the Rock. At that site 'Omar built a mosque at the southern part of the sanctuary (Haram) (see map (1)) near the place at which our Prophet Mohammed, had tethered his miraculous Buraq, (horse) before ascending to heaven.

It is a quadrangular (25) place for prayer, probably oblong rectangle measuring about (35)m from north to south and (80)m from east to west, (26) that makes (2800) m square, a space large enough to accommodate about three thousand men at a time.

This dimension is the standard basilica measurement in Syria before Islam and mosques measurement after Islam (27).

It was probably constructed of wood and undressed stones taken from the round debris, according to Arculf statement who said, constructing it by setting great beams on some remains of ruins.

The Omayyad Period (46 - 132 H/661 - 749 A.D)

At the time of Caliph 'Omar, the name Aqsa (the furthest) was given to the whole area of the Haram.

In the Omayyad period the name Al Aqsa refers to the mosque, and not to the Haram, (Sancturay).

As for the Second Aqsa Mosque built in the Omayyad Period, Muslim and non - Muslim authors conflicted among themselves and gave us three statements : -

1) According to the first group of writers such as Al-Mugaddasi, (28) Al-Musharraf, (29) Ibn-Askir, (30) Abu-al-Mahsen Ibn Taghribirdi, (31) Mudjir al-Din (32) al-djalil, Ali Bey, (33) non-Muslims, De Vogue, (34) Baedeker, (35) Marguerite G. Van Berchem and Solange (36) Ory, some of them said that the Caliph Abd al-Malik, may well have built the Aqsa Mosque, others added that Abd al-Malik, built small mosque adjacent to the side of 'Omar's original wooden mosque, out of the ruins of the Justinian Church of St Mary (pl. 1 , 2).

2) Though the second group of historians are few, such as Ibn al-Battriq (37) and Ibn el-Fakih, (38) Yet we have among them the great archeologist Creswell, (39) they said, it was the Caliph al-Walid and not Abd - al-Malik who built the second Aqsa Mosque.

To prove this, Creswell gave the following documents : "Fortunately we now possess a better authority than the others, the earliest of whom wrote over two centuries after the event". Creswell continued "I am referring to the contemporary Aphrodito (40) papyri, the official correspondence (in Greek) of Qurra ibn Shark, Governor of Egypt from (709 to 714).

With the Prefect of the District of Aphrodite in Upper Egypte No. (1403) refers to the maintenance of Labourers and skilled workmen employed on the Mosque of Jerusalem, (3) persons for (12) months (41). Likewise Nos (1414 and 1435) which is dated Hathyr 20.14 Indication year 97 H (= A. D. 715 - 16) (42) Creswell, then concluded, "thus there cannot be any doubt that it was al-Walid and not Abd al-Malik, who built the Second Aqsa Mosque" He also added that the arcades on marble columns to right and left of the dome may go back to this period (43) (see p 1. (4)).

3) The third group gave a conciliative statement, saying, (44) that Abd al-Malik may well have built a small mosque, adjacent to the site of 'Omar's original wooden mosque, although we can assume that Caliph Abd al Malik ordered

the building of the mosque, but was finished in (715) by his son Al-Walid who succeeded his father in (705).

Discussing the previous ideas we find out that the third decision is quite logical and reasonable for the following reasons : -

A) Under the Omayyads the political conditions contributed in a peculiar way to increase the prestige of Jerusalem in Abd al-Malik (45) period, and so it is impossible to leave the Holy City Jerusalem, without reconstructing its congregational mosque, so as to match the Dome of the Rock's building.

B) We cannot deny that Abd al-Malik died and his son Caliph Al-Walid finished the reconstruction of the Aqsa Mosque, but at the sametime we do not agree with Prof. Creswell, that Al-Walid and not Abd-al-Malik who reconstructed the Second Aqsa Mosque just because, some Egyptian labourers and skilled workmen were brought and employed on the Mosque of Jerusalem as documented by the Aphrodite papyrus, (46).

C) The magnificent wooden panels, which were covering the Aqsa Mosque's ceiling (47) (see PL. 7 to 14) and influenced by the Greco - Roman (48) Style, the beautifully decorated sheet - metal, covering every two tie beams together, (Pl, 4 , 15), the still existing golden and coloured mosaic coating the spandrels of the arches carrying the dome in front of the Mihrab (niche) Pl. 15, 16) (49) Marguerite Van Berchem, after thoroughly studying them all, get out with the conclusion that they are contemporary to the Dome of the Rock and very possibly, done by the artists and workers of the Dome of the Rock. (50) CPI. 17).

The description of Aqsa Mosque in the Omayyad

Period (see Fig : 4)

Al-Muqaddasi (51) described the Aqsa Mosque as follows :- There is a great part of the Omayyad Aqsa Mosque still remaining in the Mosque which was rebuilt by Al Mahdi the Abbasid Caliph. These parts consist of arcades resting on marble columns running from north to south and is now incorporated in the mosque of al Mahdi (PL. 4) (52).

It is not difficult to find out the dimension of the Omayyad mosque after the discovery which was made under the

pavement when part of it was removed, part of an earlier north wall, found and traced, for over (18.m). It was (1.m) thick, and its south face was about (18, 4.m.), which is exactly the distance from the inner face of the present north wall.

According to this discovery, Creswell (53) said, consequently the earlier mosque, presumably Omayyad, was only (50, 80.m.) from north to south, instead of (69,20.m.) (54) but its width cannot be fixed.

According to Josephus description of 'Omar's mosque which we have mentioned before, we can guess that its measurement from east to west cannot be less than (100,m.) the same as that of Omar's (Fig.3).

At the end of the transept (55) and just in front of the mihrab, a dome was built. When the dome was inserted by al-Walid to the previous building of Abd al-Malik, it was naturally necessary to provide abutment to east and west by transverse arcades running through to the side walls and consisting of a series of arches resting on independent supports placed on either side of the corresponding column of the longitudinal arcades, the old arcades being nipped between the new transverse arches (56).

Creswell (57) gave us some details of the first arcade (Plate 7), the height of columns and capitals, (5.m) and the springing of the arches (fig 1) begin at (7,23m) and the height of the apex (9,2m.) The height of the ceiling, which was covered with carved wooden panels (Plate from 7 to 14), about (12, 40.m).

A most important innovation made in the Aqsa Mosque by Al-Walid, after the Mosque of Madina (58), was the mihrab, which was made in the form of a niche which is called architecturally a (concave - mihrab).

The Aqsa Mosque in the Abbasid Period :

The Aqsa Mosque was badly damaged in the great earthquake of (747 or 748 A.D).

Muqaddasi relates the accident (who wrote in 985 A.D.) as follows: an earthquake in the days of the Abbasids threw down the sanctuary except the part round the mihrab, and was rebuilt stronger and more massive in construction than it had been, and the more ancient portion remained, even like a beauty (60) spot in the midst (of the new).

This portion extends as far as the limits of the marble Columns, Al-Muqaddasi (61) added : the later part (that rebuilt by the Abbasid) commences where the columns are built up (Piers).

Although al-Muqaddasi did not mention which Caliph carried out the work, yet the First Muthir, (62) attributed the work to al-Mansur (754 - 55). According to the same reference, another earthquake took place a few years later and Caliph al-Mahdi rebuilt the part damaged (63). Al-Tabri mentioned

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in the important events of the year (163) Al-Mahdi went to Jerusalem and prayed in the Aqsa Mosque.

The only historian who gave us the description of the Abbasid Aqsa Mosque, was the Muqaddasi, he says :

The Sanctuary has twenty-six doors, the door, opposite the mihrab is called the Great Brass Door, plated with gilded brass. To the right hand of it are seven large doors. The central one is plated with gilded brass and on the left the same.

And on the eastern side are eleven doors, unornamented. Over the fifteen arcades (i.e) the center of the Sanctuary is a mighty gable roof, above which rises a beautiful dome. The roofs everywhere except the back one are sheathed with lead. The back roof is coated with big mosaic (64).

Ibn Tahir erected external marble colonnade to form a porch on the north face in front of the fifteen doors.

Now let us put Muqaddasi's description into modern architectural language :

Al-Mahdi's mosque consists of a rectangular oblong, its width extends from east to west and its length extends from north to south.

This rectangular is divided into fifteen aisles by fourteen arcades going from north to south perpendicular to the quibla wall (Fig : 5), the central nave is wider than the side aisles. Each aisle corresponds to a door in the north side of the mosque. The door opposite to the mihrab, which corresponds to the central nave is the great central gateway, called the Great Brass Door, with seven smaller ones to right and left.

Mahdi's aisles must have been of the same width as now, for their axes are fixed by the three existing central doorways (65).

Each arcade consists of eleven columns supporting eleven arches. Mahdi's mosque was partly on marble columns and partly on round piers, built in courses (66) of stone. Just as the present mosque.

It is quite remarkable that the eleven doors in the east side of al-Mahdi's mosque, correspond exactly to the number of arches of to - day. Taking all these points in consideration we come to the conclusion that the width of al-Mahdi's mosque must have been (11.80m) for the central aisle, plus (6.5X14)m equals (102. 80.m.). The length from north to south (6.5X11 m.) equals (69. 30.m.) (67).

Fifteen aisles (fig. 5) would mean adding four aisles on either side of the present mosque.

The central part of the mosque was covered by a mighty gable roof, over which rose a beautiful dome, and the roofs everywhere are sheathed with lead. There is a porch (68) on the north face of the mosque made of marble colonnade in front of the fifteen doors.

To continue the history of the Aqsa Mosque according to Tabari, Baladhuri, Ya'qubi and others, they said that major work of the Abbasid period was the restoration and the rebuilding of the Aqsa Mosque by the second Abbasid Caliph, Abu Jafer Al Mansur.

In (771) Al Mansur visited Jerusalem and prayed there noting the damages done by the earthquake of (747 A.D.) to the Aqsa Mosque (69). The Caliph ordered his Emir (Prince), the gold and silver ornamentation on the doors were to be melted down in order to pay for the Aqsa restoration (70). In (780 A.D.) under the next Caliph Al Mahdi rebuilt the Aqsa Mosque and from that date until 985 (71) (780 - 985 A.D.), the mosque remained substantially, of not exactly as described by Al-Muqaddasi (72) in (985) A.D.).

In conclusion, I have to say that the Aqsa Mosque reached its uppermost extension in the Abbasid (73) period and the recent (74) mosque is just a part of it, as we will see in the next pages.

The Fatimid Aqsa Mosque

During the reign of the Caliph Al-Hakim Bi - Amrillah, and amid his political upheavals, an earthquake in (1016) damaged the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock (75). The

vision of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities (118). This is recorded on a marble tablet on the western side of the main entrance :-

The Supreme Council has restored the eastern transept, the central aisle and the face of the northern aisle of this blessed Mosque Al Aqsa, under the supervision of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities.

The work began in the year 1357 H and completed in 1362 H. The Egyptians renewed the wooden ceiling of the central aisle in the reign of H.M. King Farouk I ; May God preserve him and support his Kingdom in the year 1363 H.

The Supreme Council of Jordan, in (1952) sent and appealed for funds to restore the holy places in Jerusalem. Over 525,000 dinar (Jordan dinar) (119) were donated by the Arab rulers and governments and individuals. The work commenced in 1656 by Saudi Arabian contractors. The Egyptian government in addition to money, gave technical and architectural services valued at (70,000 dinars) and King Muhammad V of Morocco gave new carpets for the ambulatories, worth 35,000 dinars (120). Some further work was also commenced in Al Aqsa Mosque.

During the Israeli occupation in 1967 series of obstacles were put by the Israelis to the work of restoration and renovation of the holy building. Moreover, excavations were carried out by Israeli archeologists (121) along the side of the Haram walls which threatened the safety of the holy places (122).

On the 21st of August (123) Israel burnt the Aqsa Mosque, and much damages happened, the most important of which was the uniquely beautiful minbar of the Aqsa Mosque. The southern part of the building was badly damaged including the dome and the beautifully decorated ceiling. Plans are in hand to make an exact replica of the destroyed minbar, but this as with other repairs will take time.

(1) Ibn Fadl Allah - el - Amry : Maslek el - Absar fi - Mamalek el - Amsar : Part 1. - P. 133 (Egyptian Library, Cairo 1924/1342 h.)

(2) A. Yusuf Ali : The Holy Quran : Translation and commentary (New York, 1964).

(3) The Masdjid al - Haram in Mecca. The second is the Masdjid in Madina and the third is al - Aqsa.

(4) The Yarmuk river joins the Jordan Just below the sea of Galilee,

(5) Balad thuri, Futuh al - Buldan. P. 139 & Tabari, I P. 240 and others.

(6) Gildemeister : Die arabischen Nachrichten Zur Geschichte der Harambauten XIII

(7) The full text of the treaty in Arabic and English; -

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

هذا ما أعطى عبد الله عمر أمير المؤمنين أهل إيليا من الأمان - أعطاهم أمانا لأنفسهم ولأموالهم ولكنائسهم وصلبانهم وسقيها وبرئيتها وساير مملكتها ، انه لا يسكن كنائسهم ولا تهدم ولا ينقص منها ولا من خيرها ولا من شيء من أموالهم . ولا يكرهون على دينهم ولا يضار أحد منهم ولا يسكن بإيليا أحد من اليهود . وعلى أهل إيليا أن يعطوا الجزية ، كما يعطى أهل المدائن ، وعليهم أن يخرجوا منها الروم واللصوص ، فمن خرج منهم فهو آمن على نفسه وماله حتى يبلغوا ما منهم . ومن أقام منهم فهو آمن ، عليه ما على أهلي إيليا من الجزية ومن أحب من أهل إيليا أن يسير بنفسه وماله مع الروم ويغلب بيعهم وصلبهم . فأنهم آمنون على أنفسهم حتى يبلغوا ما منهم ، ومن كان بها من أهل الأرض فمن شاء منهم قعد وعليه مثل ما على أهل إيليا من الجزية ومن شاء سار مع الروم ومن شاء رجع إلى أهله . لا يؤخذ منهم شيء حتى يعصدهم حصادهم . وعلى ما في هذا الكتاب عهد الله ، وذمة رسوله وذمة الخلفاء وذمة المؤمنين إذا أعطوا الذي عليهم من الجزية .

كتب وحضر سنة ١٥هـ

شهد على ذلك

خالد بن الوليد عمرو بن العاص عبد الرحمن بن عوف معاوية بن أبي سفيان
عمر بن الخطاب =

= In the Name of God, Most Gracious Most Merciful.

This is the covenant which Omar, servant of Allah the Commander of the Faithful, grants to the people of Aelia. He grants them security of their lives, their possessions, their churches and crosses, they shall have freedom of religion and none shall be molested unless they rise up in a body. They shall pay poll-tax instead of military service, and those who leave the city shall be safe guarded until they reach their destination.

(8) A. Duncan : The Noble Sanctuary P. 22.

(9) He lived in the tenth century and wrote about Jerusalem Annales ed. Pocoke II 285 & Vincent and Abdala (Jerusalem II P. 243).

(10) Gibb & Kramers: Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam.

(11) Le Strange : Palestine Under the Moslems (1890).

(12) Abn 'Asukir : al - Djami al - mustaksa fi fada il al Masjid Al-Aksa. I P. 56.

(13) Tabri, I. P. 240 & Baladhuri P. 139 & Ya' Kut II P. 122. & Al Bakri : Mu'gam ma Esta' goim vol II P. 599 & Ibn said el - Batriq, vol. II P. 17.

(14) Al Baladhuri : op. cit. P. 141 & Ibn - Asakir : op cit P. 282. Ibn Hisham, I P. 311.

(15) Tabari, opt cit. P. 242.

(16) Greswell : Early Muslim Architecture P. 10 (Ashort account).

(17) Gibb & kramer : opt cit, P. 170.

(18) Itinera Hierosolymitane ed, P. Geyer 1898 P. 226 & transl by Mickley 1917 P. 19.

(19) The text in Latin

Sacaceni, quadrangulan orationis donum quam subrectis tabulis et magnis trabibus super quasdam rwnarum reliquias construentes vili fabricati sunt opere ipsi frequentant), but it could hold 3,000 men.

(20) Creswell : op cit. P. 10.

(21) Josephus : Antiquities of the Jews XV P. II P. 5.

(22) Tobler's ed. Itimera Hierosolymitana I P. 145.

(23) Antiquities of the Jews XV, P. 5.

(24) According to Josephus description. op cit P. 5.

(25) Arculf : op. cit P. 145.

(26) These measures are, that of the temple area, which the mosque replaced and which can accommodate about three thousand people at one time.

(27) It is nearly the same dimension of the Great mosque of Damascus, built by Al-Walid in 88 - 90 H (707 - 9 A.D) which measures (122) m length in (50) m. width.

(28) Ahsan al-taqasim - fi - mi'rifat al-Aqalim. P. 36.

(29) Al-Musharraf : Fada'il Bait al-Makdis wa-l sham I. P. 576. .

(30) Al-Djami al-mustaksa fi-Fada'il al Masdjid al-Aksa.

(31) Ibn Taghribirdi : Al-Nugume al-Zahira. vol. II P. 175.

(32) Mudjir al Din : Al-Kuds wa-al Khalil vol I P. 212.

(33) Travels of Ali Bey vol, II P. 214 (London 1816).

(34) De Vogüe : Le Temple de Jerusalem (Paris) 1864.

(35) Baedeker : Palastine und Syrien. P. 54.

(36) Marguerite van Berchem et Solang : La Jerusalem Musulmane. P. 75.

(37) Ibn al-Battriq : IIP. 67.

(38) Ibn el-Fakih : Kittab el Buldan P. 100.

(39) Creswell is considered the father of Muslim architecture, and his publication covered nearly all the Muslim era in the Arab world.

(40) Aphrodite : is the name of Faiume Province in Egypt in the Greek Period.

(41) H. I Bell : Greek Papyri in the British Museum. IV. The Aphrodite Papyri P.P. 75 & 76.

(42) Life of John, Archbishop of Alexandria, Gelzers'ed. P. 37 and notes on P.P. 137 - and Bell : Ibid III & IV P. 93 - 5.

This dispatch of workmen from Egypt to Jerusalem was new thing, for we learn from Leontius of Neapolis (wrote 645 A.D) that Modestus, about (629 A.D) sent thousands of Egyptians to Jerusalem to assist in rebuilding the churches which had been destroyed by the Persians in (614 A.D.).

(43) Creswell : Early Muslim Architecture II P. (43).

(44) Duncan. A: The Noble Sanctuary. P. 40.

(45) We do not agree with the Arab historians, especially, Ya' quibi, Baladhuri, Yakut and Ibn al-Athir, who said that Abd al-Malik forbade the Syrians from doing their pilgrimage to Mecca, lest the anti-caliph Ibn Zubair might persuade or force them to join him. This is a mean fake and invented by the Omayyad's enemies in the early Abbasid period, for Abd al-Malik was a devoted Muslim and it is impossible for a man like him to abolish one of the five poles of Islam, that's the Pilgrimage.

(46) It is not strange to employ Egyptian labourers in constructing a mosque, for copts were sent to Madina to rebuild our Prophets' mosque, in the days of Caliph Al-Walid (88 - 90). (Baladhuri. P. 148).

(47) Some of these wooden panels are now kept in the Archeological Museum of Jerusalem and the others are in the Haram Museum.

(48) Errar and Gayet : L'art Byzantine P. 32.

(49) Clermont - Ganneau : Recuildo' archeologie oriental II P. 130.

(50) Marguerite G. Van Berchem : Jerusalem Musulmane. P.P. 75 , 80.

(52) Al-Muqaddasi : Ahsan al-Taqasim. P. 122.

(52) The arcades mentioned by Muqaddasi still exist to the east and west of the domed part of the mosque.

(53) Creswell. op. cit P. 213.

(54) This is the measurement of the Abbasid period.

(55) The transept is a central wide aisle perpendicular to the mihrab, it was first built in Islam by Al-Walid in the Great Mosque of Damascus.

(56) R. W. Hamilton : During the work of 1938 - 42, when the plaster was stripped off, Hamilton was able to see that the masonry of the spandrels of the transverse arches is not bonded into the masonry of the spandrels of the first longitudinal arcade to the east of the dome (op. cit. P.P. 10 - 15).

(57) Creswell : opt. cit. P. 212.

(58) Ibn Duqmaq and al-Maqrizi, quoted from al-Waqidi (who died in 823 A.D) that the first who made a mihrab in the form of a niche was 'Omar ibn Abd al-Aziz when he rebuilt the Mosque of Madina by the order of al-Walid. The Samhudi said that the niche mihrab in Madina was in the part constructed by the Copts and suggested that it was a Coptic origin. That suggestion made as-Suyuti (in the fifteenth century) say as follows : -

“ At the beginning of the second century Hijra (shortly after 88 - 96 H) it was forbidden, according to the Tradition not to make use of it, as it was a feature of Coptic and Christian churches”. (Mut'at al Arib fi bid'at al-mahareeb) But whatever it may be said about the niche mihrab yet nearly all mihrabs in the Islamic world were concave mihrabs after the Madina Mosque rebuilt (90 - 96 H).

(59) Al-Muqaddsi wrote :

وَدَّ بَنِي عَبْدِ الْمَلِكِ الْمَسْجِدَ الْأَقْصَى بِجَارَةِ صَفَارٍ حَسَانٍ وَشَرْفُوهِ . وَكَانَ أَحْسَنَ مِنْ جَامِعِ دِمَشْقَ . لَكِنْ جَاءَتْ زَلْزَلَةٌ فِي دَوْلَةِ بَنِي الْعَبَّاسِ فَطَرَحَتْ الْمَقْفَى إِلَّا مَا حَوْلَ الْمِحْرَابِ . فَبَنَوْهُ أَوْثَقَ وَأَعْلَفَ صِنَاعَةً مِمَّا كَانَ عَلَيْهِ .
(٦٠) وَبَقِيَتْ الْقِطْعَةُ شَامَةً فِيهِ . وَهِيَ إِلَى أَحَدِ أَعْمَدَةِ الرَّخَامِ .

Ahsan al-Taqasim fi - marifat al - Aqalaeem P. 370.

(61) Al-Muqaddasi : op. cit (P. 138) .

(62) The First Muthir : late work written in 1351.

(63) Creswell comments by saying : I cannot help feeling that these two earthquakes may be duplication of the same event, of which the former is well documented but not the second. Greswell added: "even Muqaddasi a native of Jerusalem who wrote in (985) A.D does not give its date, merely referring to it as an earthquake in the days of the Abbasids.

(64) I found it suitable to give Muqaddasi's description in his language :

وَلِلْمَقْفَى سِتَّةٌ وَعِشْرُونَ بَابًا - بَابٌ يُقَابِلُ الْمِحْرَابَ يُسَمَّى بِبَابِ النَّحَاسِ الْأَعْظَمِ مَصْفَحٌ بِالضَّفْرِ الْمَذْهَبِ . عَنْ يَمِينِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ كِبَارٍ فِي وَسْطِهَا بَابٌ مَصْفَحٌ مَذْهَبٌ عَلَى الْيَسَارِ مِثْلَهُنَّ - وَمِنْ نَحْوِ الشَّرْقِ أَحَدُ عَشَرَ بَابًا سَوَاجِحٌ . وَعَلَى الْغَمْسَةِ عَشْرٌ بَابًا رَوَاقٌ عَلَى أَعْمَدَةِ رَخَامٍ . وَعَلَى وَسْطِ الْمَقْفَى جَمَلٌ (جَمَالُونَ) عَظِيمٌ خَلْفَ قَبَةِ حَسَنَةٍ .
وَالسَّقُوفُ كُلُّهَا . إِلَّا الْمُؤَخَّرَةَ . مَلْبَسَةٌ بِشَقَاقِ الرِّصَاصِ وَالْمُؤَخَّرِ مَرْصُوفٌ بِالْفَسِيْقِ سَاءِ الْكِبَارِ .
(أَحْسَنُ التَّقَاسِيمِ فِي مَعْرِفَةِ الْأَقَالِيمِ ص ١٢٨)

(65) Creswell : op. cit. P. 210 : " two of which cannot be later than the eighth century ('Omayyad).

(66) This recalls the words of Muqaddasi "The more ancient portions remained even like a beauty spot in the midst of the new. This portion extends as far as the limit of the marble columns, for beyond, where the columns are built up, the later part commence.

(67) Creswell : (op, cit. P. 210 comments on the proportion of the Aqsa mosque built by al-Mahdi by saying "we have a proportion of almost exactly (3 : 2) a favourite ratio in Abbasid architecture.

(68) This porch was erected by Ibn Tahir as Muqaddasi said.

(69) Le Strange : Palestine under the Muslims. P. 194.

(70) Mathews : Palastin - Muhammedan Holy City. P. 183.

(71) The Days of Al-Muqaddasi.

(72) Michel - Join Lambert : Jerusalem P. 195.

(73) Kathleen M. Kenyon : Jerusalem P. 167.

(74) Hamilton : The Structural History of the Aqsa Mosque P. 121.

(75) Colin Thubron : Jerusalem P. 69.

(76) Nasir - i - Khusrau : Safer Nama. tran. P. 121.

(77) Maqrizi : Al-Khitat wa - al - Athar vol. II P. 27.

(78) Abu Al-Mahasin : Al Nujume El Zahira vol. V P. 18.

(79) Found by the Turkish architect Kemal AD - Din in (1924 - 27).

(80) Al-Bakri : Mu'gam ma-esta'gam vol. II P. 599.

(81) Creswell : op. cit. P. 205.

(82) Abu Al Mahassen : op. cit. vol V p. 212.

(83) R. W. Hamilton : op. cit. P. 25.

(84) Kamal ad-Din op. cit. 205.

(85) Hamilton : op. cit. P. 39.

(86) Creswell : op. cit. P. 207.

(87) Calin Thubron : op. cit. P. 70.

(88) S. Runciman : A History of the Crusader vol. I A 53.

(89) Creswell : op. cit. P. 207.

(90) A. Duncan : The Noble Sanctuary P. 50.

(91) William of Tyre : Shorter Encyclopadia. P. 634.

(92) Ibn Al-Athir : vol. III p. 135.

(93) Al Herawi : Al Isharat fi - Marifat al Ziarat, P. 172.

(94) Ibn Surour Al Muqaddasi : Mothir al Garam fi - fad'il al gods wa - al - Sham P. 100.

(95) Ibn Al-Haqui : Marasid Al-Etela'i ala-Asma'i al-Amkina wa-al Biqu'ai P. 139.

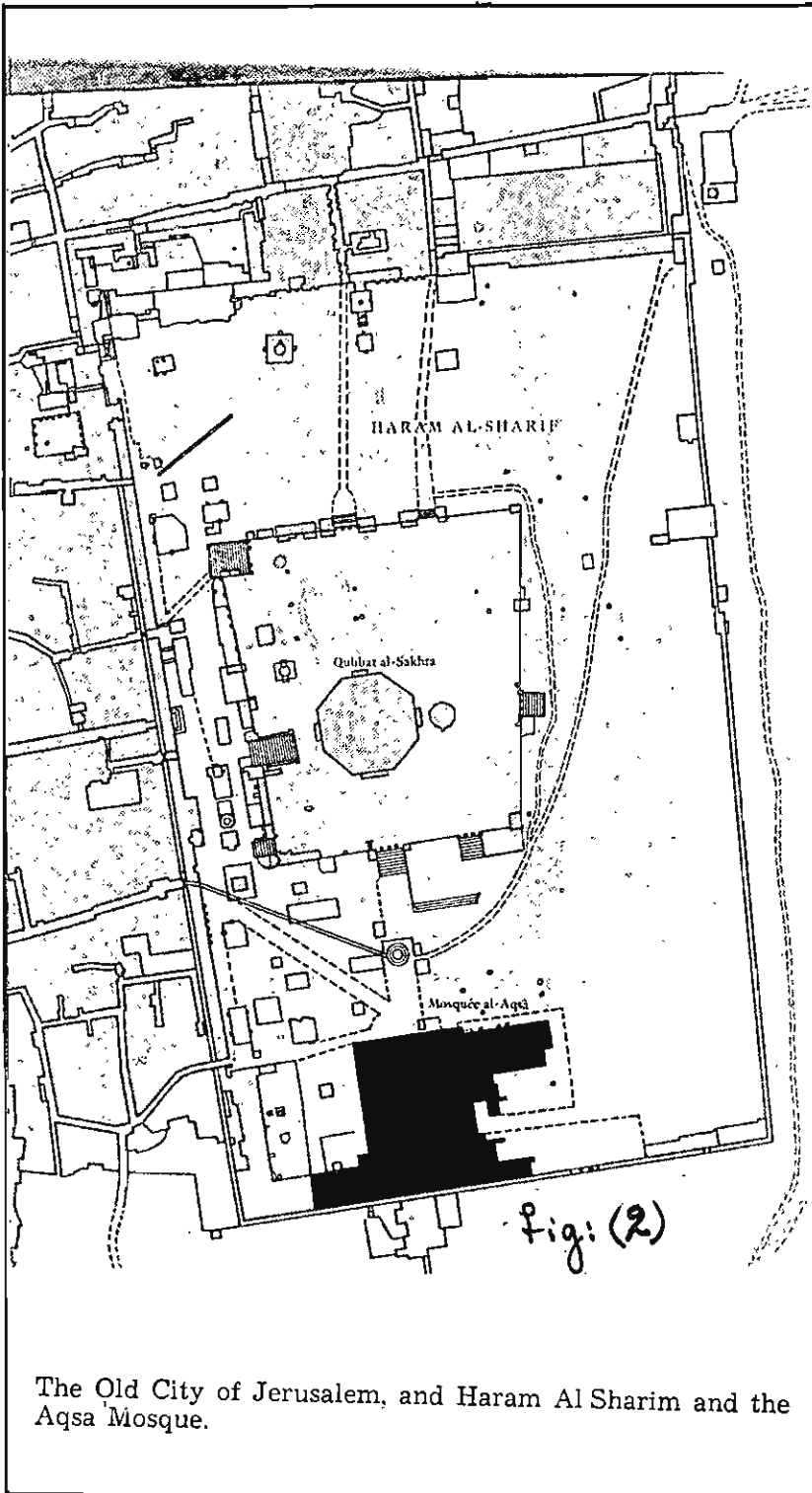
(96) A. Duncan : op. cit. P. 56.

(97) S. Runciman : A History of Crusades vol. I P. 117.

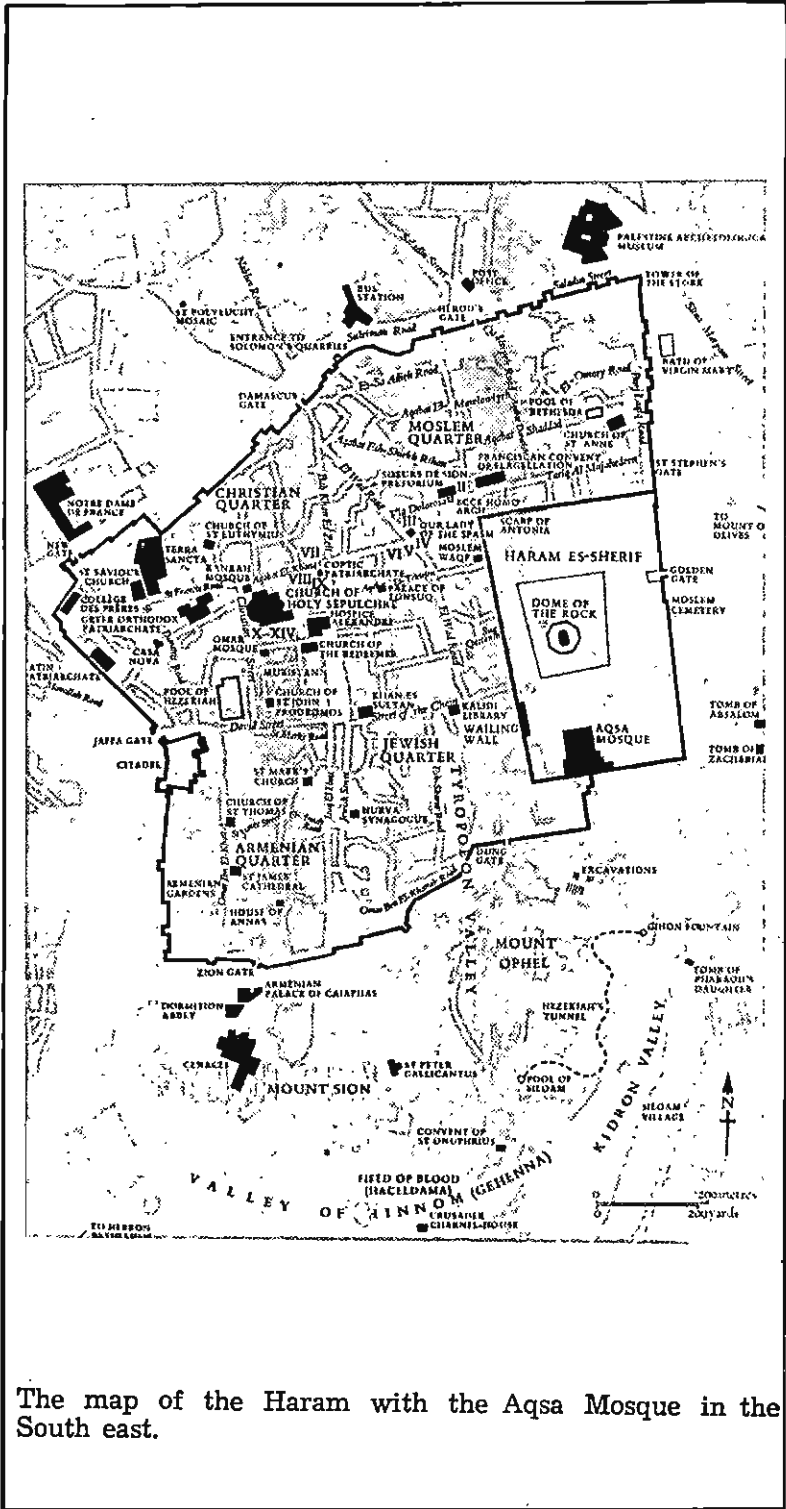
The name of Nur Ed-Din was written on both side of the minbar as follows : -

« بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم امر بعمله العبد الفقير الى رحمة الذاكر لنعتمته المجاهد في سبيله ، المرابط لأعداء دينه ، الملك العادل نور الدين ، ذكر الإسلام والمسلمين منصف المظلومين من الظالمين أبو القاسم محمود بن زكي أبو سيف ناصر أمير المؤمنين أعز الله انتصاره وأدام اقتداره ، وأعلى مثاره ونشر في الغائقين الويته وأعلامه وأعز أوليائه دولته وأزال كفار نعمته وفتح له وعلى يديه وذلك في سنة ٥٦٤ هـ »

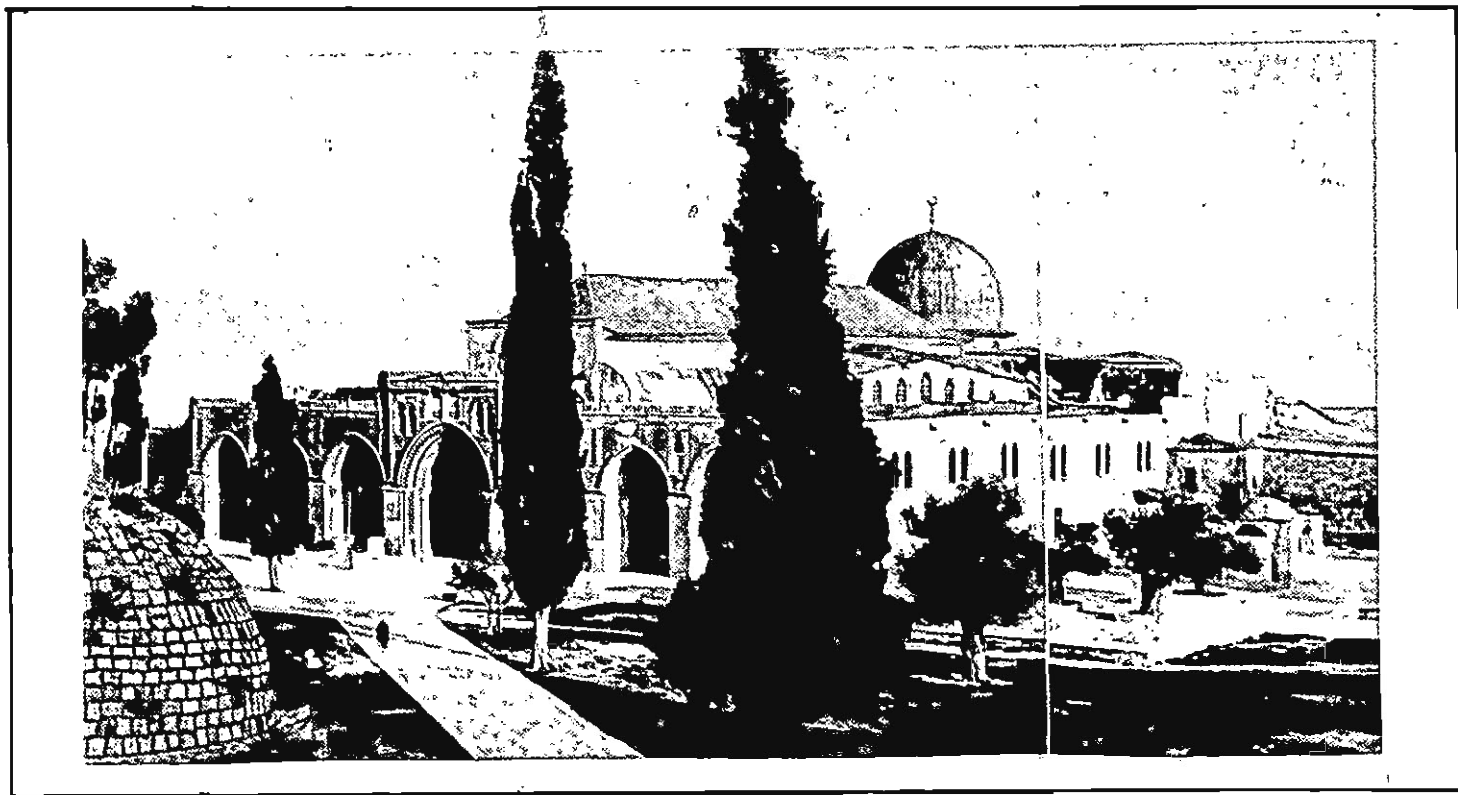
- Ibn Al 'Emad : Shatarat Al Thahab P. 321
 & Al Qadi Al Fadil : History P. 221.
- (99) Al Herawi : op. cit. P. 175.
 (100) Muggir Al-Din Al'Elimi Al-Unsi : Al Galil fi Tarik Al Quds wa Al Khalil P. 373.
 (101) Ibn Abd Al Haque : op. cit P. 119. & Al Hirawi : op. cit. 180 & Duncan : op. cit. P. 62. and others.
 (102) Mahmoud Al Abidi : Mihnat Bait Al Maqdis P. 67.
 (103) Muqaddasi who died in (985).
 (104) Creswell : op. cit. p. 205.
 (105) R. W. Hamilton : R. W. Hamilton : op. cit P. 20
 (106) Creswell : op. cit PP. 206 & 207.
- (107) Abd Al Rah Muggir AlDin was born in Jerusalem and was Hanbalite. He was appointed supreme judge of Jerusalem. He published a book called :-
 " Al Unns Al Jalil fi Tarik Al Quds wa Al Khalil" He died in (901 H./1496 A.D.).
- (108) He said cubit of work which equals (75 cms).
 (109) Most of the windows of the mosque are modern copies replacing the old ones.
 (110) R.W. Hamilton : op. cit. P. 21.
 (111) Pere L. Hugues Vincent : The Recovery of Jerusalem P. 138.
- (112) Duncan : op. cit. P. 66.
 (113) Mahmoud Abid : op. cit 72.
 (114) Done under the supervision of the Turkish architect Kamal Al Din.
- (115) Mahmoud Al Abid : op. cit. P. 172.
 (116) Duncan : op. cit. P. 68.
 (117) Georg Antonius : Arab Awakening P. 138.
 (118) Warrenard Wilson : The Recovery of Jerusalem P. 171..
 (119) One Jordan dinar being of £ pound or S 2. 80.
 (120) Duncan : op. cit. P. 70.
 (121) Prof. Beniamin Mazar was the supervisor of the Israeli excavation.
 (122) Duncan : op. cit. P. 70.
 (123) Mahmoud Al Abid : op. cit. P. 172.



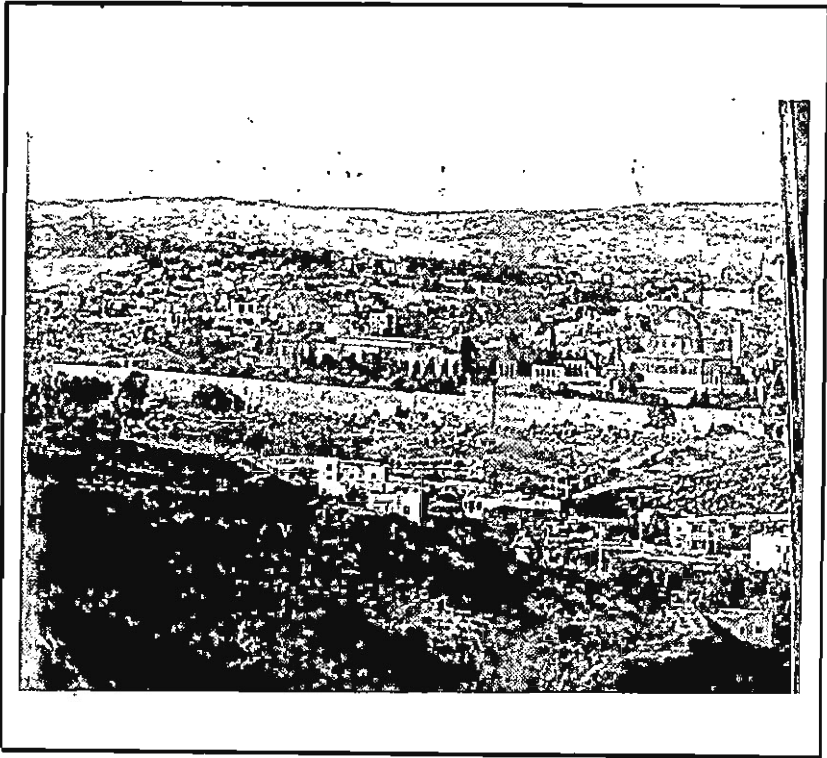
The Old City of Jerusalem, and Haram Al Sharim and the Aqsa Mosque.



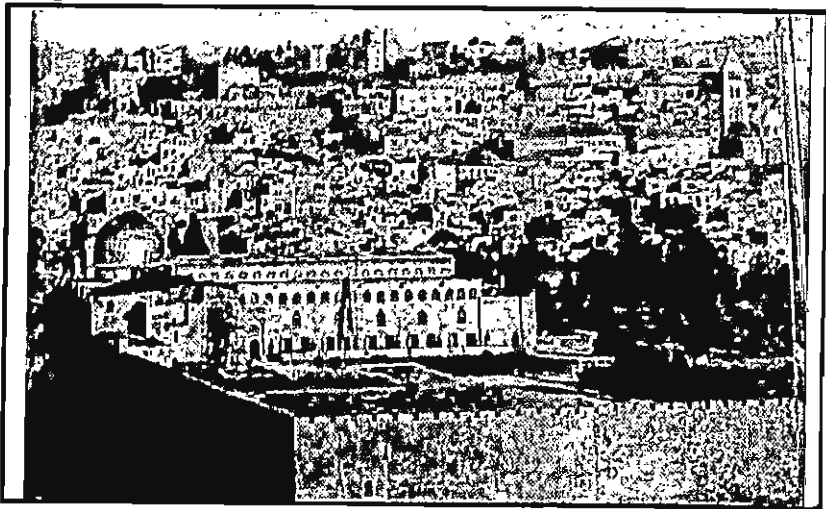
The map of the Haram with the Aqsa Mosque in the South east.



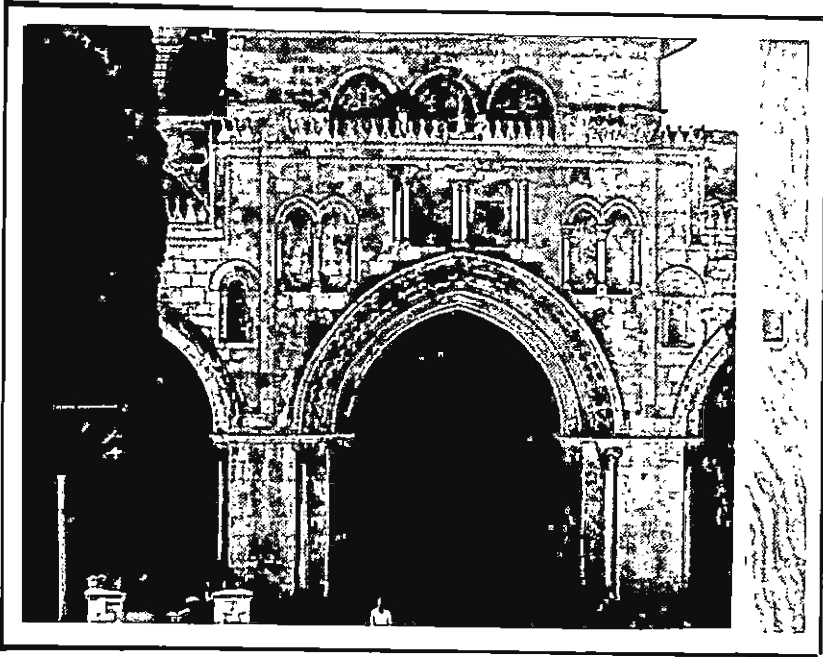
The Aqsa Mosque of the Caliph Omar as proposed reconstruction by (Soad Maher).



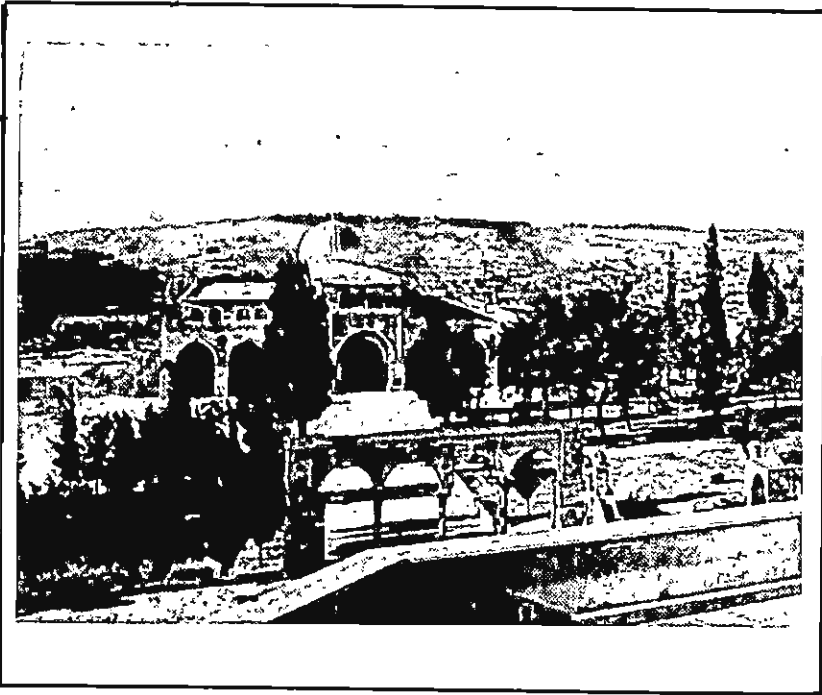
Jerusalem Haram seen from the Mount Scopus, from the north - east the Qidrun Valley. (after Duncan)



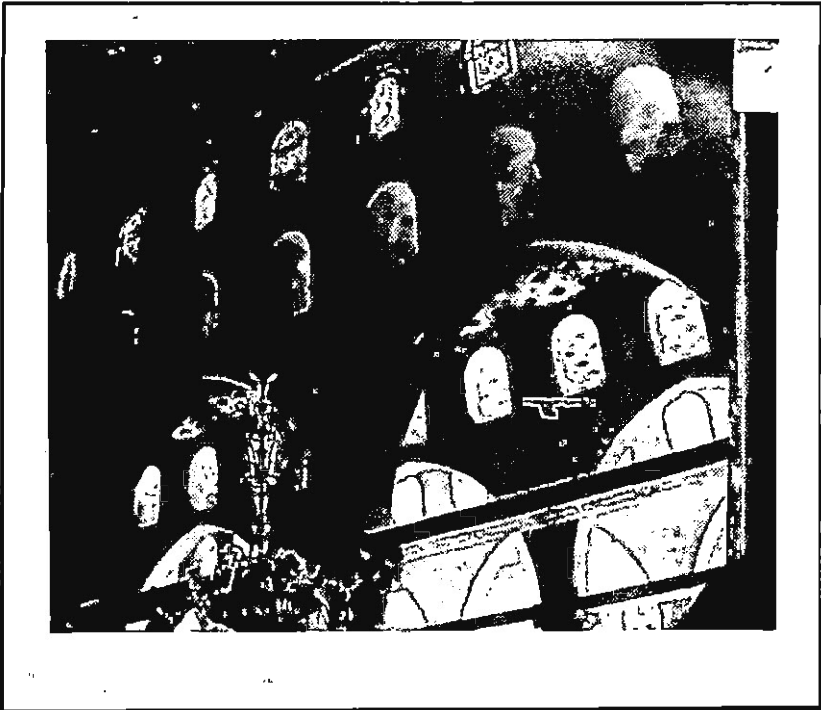
A general view of the Aqsa Mosque and the south east corner of the Haram.



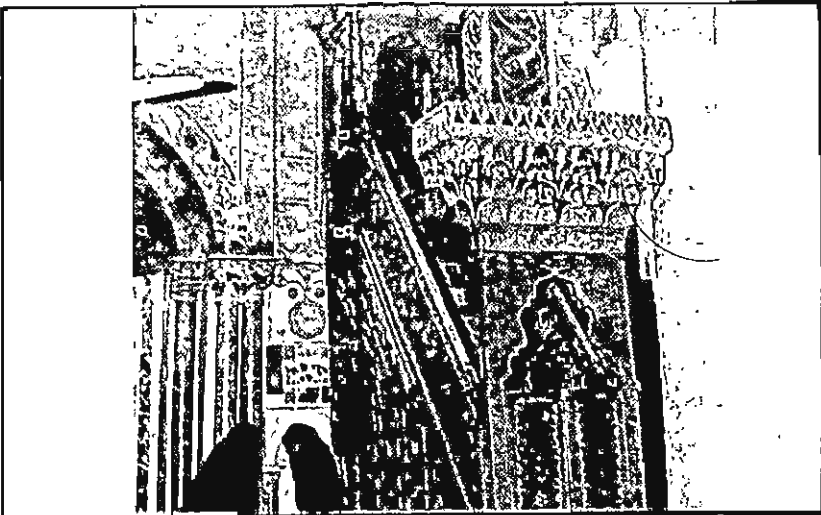
The north front of the Aqsa Mosque with the main entrance.



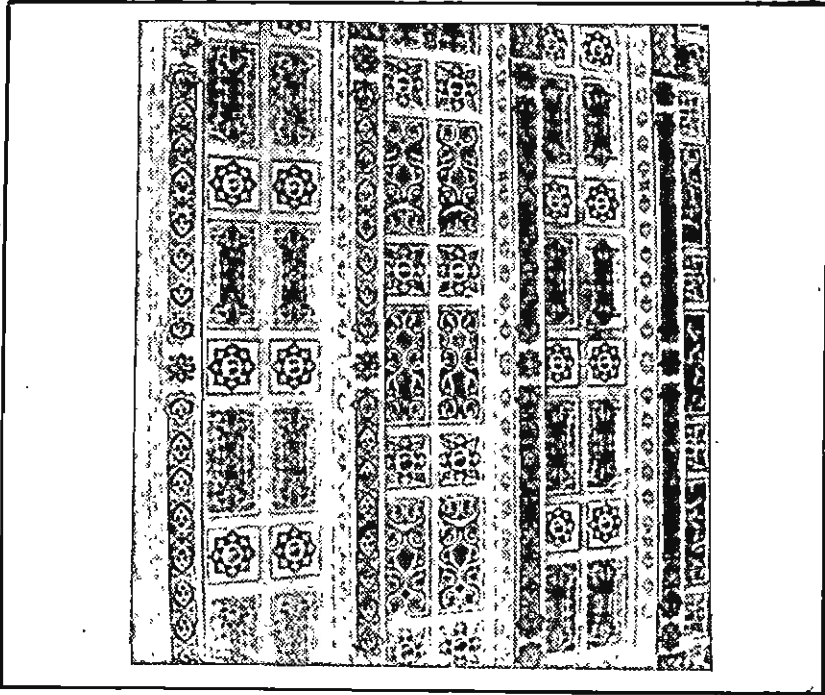
(A) The north façade of the Aqsa Mosque.



The central gable roof has two rows of windows. The upper row consists of coloured glass windows, the lower of stained glass. The beautiful Ottoman crystal chandelier is also seen.



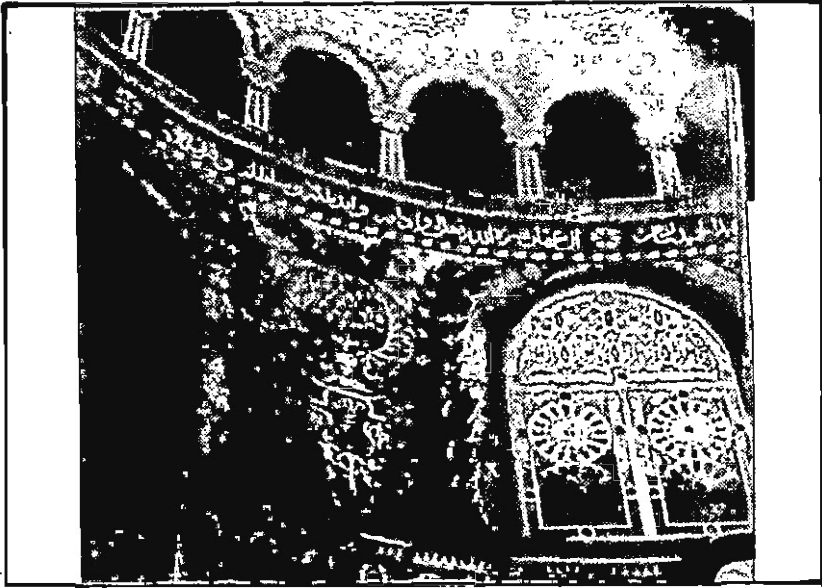
Six colonnades flanking the main concave mihrab.



The restored painting of the ceiling after the Fatimid style, badly damaged by the Zionists in 1969.



The interior of the Aqsa dome, with the Mameluke painting and a band of inscription with the names of Salah Al Din; Al Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawoon and the Sultan Muhammad II . The coloured windows were badly damaged by the Zionists in (1969).



Details of the drum, showing the Turkish designs and the coloured windows and the band of inscription which reads :-

Abd Al Hamid Khan from Ottoman Dynasty. may God protect him and his Kingdom and grant him success in all his deeds.



27. The central aisle as restored in the twentieth century; the circular piers with the Byzantine gilded capitals; the Umayyad mosaic in the spandrils of the main arch and the paintings of the ceiling.