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Islamic Jerusalem? Conflicting Memories of the Holy City in the Eighth/Fourteenth Century

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Abstract

It is widely said that Jerusalem is regarded by Muslims as the third holiest city, after Mecca and Medina. Yet alongside all of the evidence for Muslims venerating Jerusalem as a sacred space and holy city, there are always indications of the possible controversies that such veneration could raise. These controversies could be said to have come to a head during the lifetime of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), when he issued a relatively lengthy judicial opinion (*fatwā*) arguing very strongly against a whole host of pilgrimage practices involving Jerusalem and attempting to undermine as far as possible claims for the sanctity of that city and of many widely venerated sites within it, particularly the rock. In this *fatwā*, Ibn Taymiyya even questioned the significance of the famous Dome of the Rock as well as Jerusalem's status as a *ḥaram*. With Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwā*, there is very clear evidence of both the existence of a controversy around Jerusalem's veneration, on the one hand, but also of how that controversy revolved around conflicting memories of Jerusalem's sites' relevance in Islamic salvation history. To understand those conflicting memories, this article will consider a number of political and social developments in the Mamluk empire, developments that involved its Christian and Jewish as well as its Muslim inhabitants.

Keywords

Jerusalem – Ibn Taymiyya – Mamluks – holy cities – sacred space

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It is widely said that Jerusalem is regarded by Muslims as the third holiest city, after Mecca and Medina. As is also widely known, this ranking of Jerusalem as one of Islam's holiest sites and as a pilgrimage destination is well attested in texts that date back at least as early as the late second/eighth and early third/ninth centuries. A very famous *ḥadīth*, perhaps already in circulation in the early second/eighth century, has the Prophet Muḥammad declare, "You shall only set out on pilgrimage for three mosques: the Sacred Mosque [in Mecca], my mosque [in Medina], and al-Aqṣā Mosque [in Jerusalem]."¹ Prophetic authority for pilgrimage to Jerusalem was also provided in other *ḥadīths* noting the relative merits of prayer at different sites in the Islamic world. In one example, a Companion of the Prophet reported, "I asked the Messenger of God (ṣ) about Jerusalem. He replied, 'What a residence Jerusalem is! Whoever prays there, that prayer is worth a thousand prayers anywhere else.'"² These are only a small handful of traditions that proclaim Jerusalem's *faḍā'il*, those special merits that make it distinctive, that have been circulating ever since the first century AH.³ The very name that the city most commonly went by in early Arabic sources, *Bayt al-Maqdis* ("House of the Holy"), makes general perceptions of its sanctity clear.⁴

1 A more literal translation of the first part of this *ḥadīth* would be, "Saddles should only be fastened for three mosques." For a discussion, see Meir J. Kister, "You Shall Only Set Out for Three Mosques': A Study of an Early Tradition," *Le Muséon* 82 (1969): 173–196.

2 al-Wāsiṭī, *Faḍā'il al-Bayt al-Muqaddas*, ed. Muḥammad Zaynahum Muḥammad 'Azab (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1422/2001), 32. There are plenty more examples of these traditions in Kister, "You Shall Only."

3 There is quite a bit of scholarship on the emergence of *faḍā'il* traditions for Jerusalem, but see esp. Amikam Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995); Isaac Hasson, "Muslim Literature in Praise of Jerusalem: Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis," *The Jerusalem Cathedra* 1 (1981): 168–184; *idem*, "The Muslim View of Jerusalem: The Qur'ān and ḥadīth," in *The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim Period, 638–1099*, ed. Haggai Ben-Shammai and Joshua Prawer (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1996), 349–385; Meir J. Kister, "A Comment on the Antiquity of Traditions Praising Jerusalem," *The Jerusalem Cathedra* 1 (1981): 185–186; Ofer Livne-Kafri, "Christian Attitudes Reflected in the Muslim Literature in Praise of Jerusalem," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 54 (2004): 347–375; *idem*, "The Muslim Traditions 'In Praise of Jerusalem' (*faḍā'il al-Quds*): Diversity and Complexity," *Annali* 58 (1998): 165–192; *idem*, "A Note on Some Traditions of Faḍā'il al-Quds," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 14 (1991): 71–83; Suleiman A. Mourad, "A Note on the Origins of Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis Compilations," *al-Abḥāth* 44 (1996): 31–48; *idem*, "The Symbolism of Jerusalem in Early Islam," in *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality*, ed. Tamar Mayer and Suleiman A. Mourad (London: Routledge, 2008), 86–102; Uri Rubin, *Between Jerusalem and Mecca: Sanctity and Redemption in the Qur'ān and the Islamic Tradition* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023).

4 The most comprehensive study of the names Jerusalem was known by in Arabic before the Crusades is Andreas Kaplony, *The Ḥaram of Jerusalem, 324–1099: Temple, Friday Mosque, Area of Spiritual Power* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2002), 214–224, 384–386, 560–563.

Sites in Jerusalem have long held political as well as religious significance for many Muslim rulers. Many Umayyad caliphs seem to have been particularly drawn to Jerusalem. According to one contemporaneous Christian source, the so-called *Maronite Chronicle*, Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān (r. 41–60/661–680) received the oath of allegiance as caliph in Jerusalem before touring its notable sites, including Golgotha, Gethsemane and the tomb of Mary.⁵ It may have been the case that in the 680s, when the Frankish bishop Arculf probably visited Jerusalem, the Muslim presence on Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf was marked only by the presence of “an oblong house of prayer, which they pieced together with upright planks and large beams over some ruined remains,” but this all changed during the reigns of ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 65–86/685–705) and his son al-Walid (r. 76–96/705–715).⁶ During their caliphates, Jerusalem’s holiest site for Muslims came to be adorned by structurally and visually impressive new monuments, the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqṣā Mosque.⁷ After

- 5 Andrew Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), 31; discussion in Andrew Marsham, “The Architecture of Allegiance in Early Islamic Late Antiquity: The Accession of Mu'āwiya in Jerusalem, ca. 661CE,” in *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Alexander Beihammer, Stavroula Constantinou and Maria Parani (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), 87–112.
- 6 For the quotation, see John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1977), 95. There is a relatively large body of literature on the discussion of whether anyone called Arculf really visited Jerusalem in the mid-to-late seventh century; for two of the more recent analyses, see Robert G. Hoyland and Sarah Waidler, “Adomnán’s *De locis sanctis* and the Seventh-Century Near East,” *English Historical Review* 129 (2014): 787–807; Lawrence Nees, *Perspectives on Early Islamic Art in Jerusalem* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016), 33–57.
- 7 Again, the literature is enormous, but see with further references the studies collected in Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns, ed., *Bayt al-Maqdis: ‘Abd al-Malik’s Jerusalem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), as well as Nili Liphshitz, Gideon Biger, Georges Bonani and W. Wolffi, “Comparative Dating Methods: Botanical Identification and ¹⁴C Dating of Carved Panels and Beams from the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem,” *Journal of Archaeological Science* 24 (1997): 1045–1050; Amikam Elad, “‘Abd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock: A Further Examination of the Muslim Sources,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 35 (2008): 167–226; Oleg Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); *idem*, *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Milka Levy-Rubin, “Why Was the Dome of the Rock Built? A New Perspective on a Long-Discussed Question,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 80 (2017): 441–464; Marcus Milwright, *The Dome of the Rock and Its Umayyad Mosaic Inscriptions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016); Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Dome of the Rock as Palimpsest: ‘Abd al-Malik’s Grand Narrative and Sultan Süleyman’s Glosses,” *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 17–105; Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, *The Early Islamic Monuments of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf: An Iconographic Study* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Institute of Archaeology, 1989); and also the interesting thoughts in Chase F. Robinson, *‘Abd al-Malik* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 95–100.

the Abbasids seized power from the Umayyads in the middle of the second/eighth century and the center of caliphate moved from Syria to Iraq, the level of caliphal interest in Jerusalem appears to have waned, although it never entirely disappeared. We are told that the second and third Abbasid caliphs, Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775) and his son Muḥammad al-Mahdī (r. 158–69/775–785), ordered restoration work on the monuments on Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf;⁸ the latter's grandson, ʿAbd Allāh al-Maʾmūn (r. 198–218/813–833), is also famous for having had ʿAbd al-Malik's name in the dedication inscription on the Dome of the Rock replaced with his own.⁹

Muslim encroachment on Christian sites in Jerusalem away from Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf is not seen all that clearly in the period of Umayyad and Abbasid rule in Palestine, although that began to change over the fourth/tenth century.¹⁰ In 323/935, for example, Muslims took over part of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre's front courtyard to build a mosque commemorating the spot where the second caliph and conqueror of Jerusalem, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 13–23/634–644), had supposedly prayed. In 1898 an undated Arabic inscription seemingly forbidding non-Muslims from entering a mosque was found near this site, which may be connected to this patronage of the site.¹¹ Then, in the late fourth or early fifth/early eleventh century, the Fatimid caliph al-Ḥākim (r. 386–411/996–1021) ordered the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.¹²

8 Ibn al-Murajjā, *Faḍāʾil Bayt al-Maqdis wa 'l-Khalīl wa-faḍāʾil al-Shām*, ed. Ofer Livne-Kafri (Shafāʾ Amr: Dār al-Mashriq, 1995), 63 (§49).

9 For some discussion of the Abbasid era in Jerusalem more generally, see Meir Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple: The Discovery of Ancient Jerusalem*, trans. Ina Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), esp. 323; Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634–1099*, trans. Ethel Broido (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 279–334; Jodi Magness, “Early Islamic Urbanism and Building Activity in Jerusalem and at Hammath Gader,” in *Money, Power and Politics in Early Islamic Syria: A Review of Current Debates*, ed. John F. Haldon (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 147–163.

10 For the Fatimid period in Jerusalem, see Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple*, 323–41; Gil, *History of Palestine*, 335–429; Grabar, *Shape of the Holy*, 135–169; Daniella Talmon-Heller and Miriam Frenkel, “Religious Innovation under Fatimid Rule: Jewish and Muslim Rites in Eleventh-Century Jerusalem,” *Medieval Encounters* 25 (2019): 203–226.

11 Dan Bahat, “The Physical Infrastructure,” in *History of Jerusalem*, ed. Prawer and Ben-Shammai, 38–100 at 59–60. For the Arabic text of the inscription, see Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum arabicarum, deuxième partie: Syrie du sud*, 3 vols. (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1920–1927), 2:53–54.

12 For different Arabic accounts of this, one by a Christian and one by a Muslim, see I. Kratchkovsky and A. Vasiliev (ed. and trans.), “Histoire de Yahya-ibn-Saʿīd d'Antioche, continuateur de Saʿīd-ibn-Bitriq,” fasc. 2 in *Patrologia Orientalis* 23 (1932), 347–520 at 490–492; Ibn al-Qalānīsī, *Dhayl Taʾrīkh Dimashq*, ed. Henry F. Amedroz, *History of Damascus*,

Alongside these developments, Muslim pilgrimage practices involving sites in Jerusalem emerged. A Jewish Karaite, perhaps Daniel al-Qūmisī (active late third/ninth and early fourth/tenth centuries), complained that Jews did not travel on pilgrimage to Jerusalem as the other nations – presumably meaning Christians and Muslims – did: “Do not nations [other] than Israel come from the four corners (of the earth) to Jerusalem, every month and every year, in awe of God?”¹³ Works were also eventually composed dedicated to promoting Jerusalem’s sanctity and its *faḍā’il*: the earliest surviving texts are both from the early fifth/eleventh century, by Abū Bakr al-Wāsiṭī (d. after 410/1019–1020) and Abū al-Ma‘ālī b. al-Murajjā (d. after 438/1046–1047), but it is known that there were earlier such texts as well.¹⁴ Ibn al-Murajjā’s text includes a fairly detailed itinerary for Muslim pilgrims to Jerusalem, including recommended prayers to recite at different places, as well as an account of a pilgrimage performed during a dream.¹⁵ Some extracts from works of the Andalusī scholar Abū Bakr b. al-‘Arabī (d. 543/1148), who spent time in Jerusalem during the 480s/1090s, give an impression of an international and interreligious milieu in the city and that pilgrims and scholars from across the Islamic world could be found in Jerusalem.¹⁶ We also have narratives of Muslim pilgrims to Jerusalem from the decades before the arrival of the First Crusaders in the region, which emphasize the Dome of the Rock’s particular significance. The Transoxanian

363–555 A.H. by Ibn al-Qalānisi from the Bodleian Ms. Hunt. 125. *Being a Continuation of the History of Hilāl al-Sābi* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1908), 66–68. For discussion, see Marius Canard, “La destruction de l’église de la résurrection par le calife Ḥākim et l’histoire de la descente du feu sacré,” *Byzantion* 35 (1965): 16–43; Paul E. Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, 996–1021* (Cairo: AUC Press, 2009), 209–211.

- 13 Leon Nemoy, “The Pseudo-Qūmisian Sermon to the Karaites,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 43 (1976): 49–105 at 77; some discussion in Marina Rustow, *Heresy and the Politics of Community: The Jews of the Fatimid Caliphate* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 27–28.
- 14 Ibn al-Murajjā, *Faḍā’il Bayt al-Maqdis*; al-Wāsiṭī, *Faḍā’il al-Bayt al-Muqaddas*. For some discussion of the other texts, as well as the references in n. 3, see also Paul M. Cobb, “Virtual Sacrality: Making Muslim Syria Sacred before the Crusades,” *Medieval Encounters* 8 (2002): 35–55.
- 15 Ibn al-Murajjā, *Faḍā’il Bayt al-Maqdis*, 64–81, 268–269 (§§52–69, 407). For the guide with prayers to recite, see also the discussion in Ofer Livne-Kafri, “*Faḍā’il Bayt al-Maqdis* (‘The Merits of Jerusalem’): Two Additional Notes,” *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 19 (2001): 61–70 at 66–70.
- 16 Joseph Drory, “Some Observations During a Visit to Palestine by Ibn al-‘Arabī of Seville in 1092–1095,” *Crusades* 3 (1994): 101–124; see 107, for example, for a reference to pilgrims in Palestine from Khurasan who wanted to pray in al-Aqṣā Mosque (by which term Ibn al-‘Arabī seems to refer to the whole of Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf) and also to visit Hebron/al-Khalil.

Ismāʿīlī missionary (*dāʿī*) Nāṣir-i Khusraw arrived in Jerusalem in 438/1037 and within his lengthy extant description of the city notes that the Dome of the Rock, always full of worshippers, “is the third of God’s houses.”¹⁷ The famous Sunni theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) tells us in his autobiography that he visited Jerusalem in 489/1096 and while there he went to the Dome of the Rock every day and shut himself inside.¹⁸

It clearly did not, therefore, require the Crusades and the conquest of 492/1099 to consolidate Jerusalem as an important holy site for Muslims. One possibly very early (perhaps early sixth-/twelfth-century) Persian response to the Crusaders’ conquest of Jerusalem clearly builds on existing ideas about Jerusalem’s significance for Muslims to make its author’s point about the shame of that event for the Muslim community.¹⁹ That said, the efforts of the Zengid ruler of Damascus Nūr al-Dīn (r. 541–569/1147–1174) and his Ayyubid successor Saladin (r. 564–589/1169–1193) to encourage support for the ultimately successful effort to reconquer Jerusalem may have helped to focus attention for many Muslims on the city’s *faḍāʾil* and sanctity. In an inscription set up in the Qubbat Yūsuf (“Dome of Joseph”) on Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf after the reconquest and dated to 587/1191–1192, Saladin became perhaps the first Muslim ruler to adopt the specific title “custodian of the two noble sanctuaries [i.e. Mecca and Medina] and this holy house [i.e. Jerusalem],” emphasizing the point that he ruled over all three of the Islamic world’s holiest sites.²⁰ Saladin’s secretary, ʿImād al-Dīn al-İṣfahānī (d. 597/1201), in his work commemorating the reconquest of Jerusalem, referred to that city as the first of the two

17 Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Safarnāma*, ed. and trans. Wheeler M. Thackston, *Nasir-i Khusraw’s Book of Travels* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2001), 27–44, quotation from 40. (I have not followed Thackston’s translation, “is God’s third most holy place,” in favour of a more literal alternative.) For a discussion of Nāṣir’s time in Jerusalem, see Alice C. Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 109–114, 134–139.

18 al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, ed. and trans. Farid Jabre, *al-Munqidh min aḍalāl (Erreur et délivrance)* (Beirut: Commission Internationale pour la Traduction des Chefs d’Œuvre, 1959), 38; discussion in Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī’s Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 45–47.

19 al-Ghazālī (attrib.), *Tuḥfat al-mulūk*, ed. Nasrollah Pourjavady in his *Dū mujaddid: pizhūhishhāyī dar bārah-yi Muḥammad Ghazālī wa-Fakhr Rāzī* (Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāhī, 1381/2000), 345–412 at 407. For a discussion, see Alex Mallett, “A Neglected Piece of Evidence for Early Muslim Reactions to the Frankish Crusader Presence in the Levant: The ‘Jihad Chapter’ from *Tuḥfat al-mulūk*,” in *The Character of Christian-Muslim Encounter: Essays in Honour of David Thomas*, ed. Douglas Pratt, Jon Hoover, John Davies and John Chesoworth (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015), 95–110.

20 Étienne Combe et al. (ed.), *Répertoire chronologique d’épigraphie arabe*, 18 vols. (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1931–91) [henceforth *RCEA*], 9:174–175 (no. 3447).

directions of prayer (*awwal al-qiblatayn*, the other being Mecca), the second of the two houses/temples (*thānī 'l-baytayn*, the other being in Mecca), and, somewhat awkwardly, as the third of the two sanctuaries (*thālith al-ḥaramayn*, the others being Mecca and Medina).²¹

It is with this background in mind that we can now turn with interest to the early eighth/fourteenth century and, in particular, to the figure of Taqī al-Dīn b. Taymiyya (d. 728/1328). For alongside all of this evidence for Muslims venerating Jerusalem as a sacred space and holy city, there are always indications of the possible controversies that such veneration could raise. These controversies could be said to have come to a head during the lifetime of Ibn Taymiyya, when he issued a relatively lengthy judicial opinion (*fatwā*) arguing very strongly against a whole host of pilgrimage practices involving Jerusalem and attempting to undermine as far as possible claims for the sanctity of that city and of many widely venerated sites within it, particularly the rock. In this *fatwā*, Ibn Taymiyya even questioned the significance of the famous Dome of the Rock as well as Jerusalem's status as a *ḥaram*. With Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwā*, we therefore have very clear evidence of both the existence of a controversy around Jerusalem's veneration, on the one hand, but also of how that controversy revolved around conflicting memories of Jerusalem's sites' relevance in Islamic salvation history. To understand those conflicting memories, we need to consider a number of political and social developments in the Mamluk empire, developments that involved its Christian and Jewish as well as its Muslim inhabitants.

1 Ibn Taymiyya: A Controversial Legacy

Relatively few figures in Islamic history have inspired quite such extremes of devotion and censure as Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Taymiyya. He was born in Ḥarrān (in today's southeast Turkey), but his family left for Damascus when

21 'Imād al-Dīn, *al-Faṭḥ al-qussī fī al-faṭḥ al-qudsī*, ed. C. de Landberg (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1888), 51. For other attempts to promote Jerusalem's sanctity in the era of the Crusades, see Emmanuel Sivan, "Le caractère sacré de Jérusalem dans l'islam aux XII^e–XIII^e siècles," *Studia Islamica* 27 (1967): 149–182; Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 141–167; Anne-Marie Eddé, *Saladin*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2011), 177–81; Osman Latiff, *The Cutting Edge of the Poet's Sword: Muslim Poetic Responses to the Crusades* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018), 82–88, 93–95, 99–128; Kenneth A. Goudie, *Reinventing Jihād: Jihād Ideology from the Conquests of Jerusalem to the End of the Ayyūbids (c. 492/1099–647/1249)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2019), 114–116.

he was only six years old in 667/1268–1269 in the face of a Mongol invasion. In Damascus, he became a very active religious scholar and social leader – he was an adherent of the Ḥanbali school of Islamic law – acquiring a number of very dedicated followers alongside far more avid enemies.²² Despite the fact that he clearly worked at times in greater alignment with the interests of the Mamluk ruling elites than many modern scholars have suggested, those opponents did sometimes include Mamluk sultans and their officials.²³ It was these opponents' actions that resulted in him spending several stints in prison, both in Damascus and in the Mamluks' capital city, Cairo. He eventually died in prison in the citadel in Damascus in 728/1328.²⁴

His followers and supporters, both contemporary to him and after his death, praised his learning and scholarship. The great Damascene traditionist Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) noted, "He had an in-depth knowledge of the orientations of the Companions and the Successor doctrines. He would rarely

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- 22 By Ibn Taymiyya's time, there were broadly speaking four accepted schools of legal thought and jurisprudence among Sunnis, each named after an eponymous founder of the 2nd/8th or 3rd/9th century: the Ḥanafī (after Abū Ḥanīfa, d. 150/767), the Ḥanbali (after Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, d. 241/855), the Mālikī (after Mālik b. Anas, d. 179/795) and the Shāfi'ī (after Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, d. 204/820).
- 23 See, for example, Caterina Bori, "The Collection and Edition of Ibn Taymiyah's Works: Concerns of a Disciple," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 2 (2009): 47–67 at 48–50, n. 6; Mehdi Berriah, "The Mamluk Sultanate and the Mamluks Seen by Ibn Taymiyya: Between Praise and Criticism," *Arabian Humanities* 14 (2020). On the role of scholars within the Mamluk sultanate more broadly, see Yaacov Lev, "Symbiotic Relations: Ulama and the Mamluk Sultans," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2009): 1–26.
- 24 The principal work dedicated to Ibn Taymiyya's biography was composed by one of his students, Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *al-'Uqūd al-durrīyya min manāqib shaykh al-islām Ibn Taymiyya*, ed. Ṭal'at b. Fu'ād al-Ḥulwānī (Cairo: al-Fārūq al-Ḥaditha, 1422/2002). There is a great deal of further information about Ibn Taymiyya's life found throughout a range of other contemporary and later sources, much of which has been gathered together in Muḥammad 'Uzayr Shams and 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-'Umrān, *al-Jāmi' li-sīrat shaykh al-islām Ibn Taymiyya khilāl sab'a qurūn* (Makka: Dār 'Ālam al-Fawā'id, 1420/1999–2000). There are many, much more detailed, modern studies of Ibn Taymiyya's life, thought and wider circle, but see for example Henri Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Taqī-d-Dīn Aḥmad b. Taymīya* (Cairo: L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1939); *idem*, "La biographie d'Ibn Taymiyya d'après Ibn Kaṭīr," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 9 (1942–1943): 115–162; Muḥammad Abū Zahra, *Ibn Taymiyya: ḥayātuhu wa-'aṣruhu – āra'uhu wa-fiqhuhu* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, n.d.); Donald P. Little, "Did Ibn Taymiyya Have a Screw Loose?" *Studia Islamica* 41 (1975): 93–111; Caterina Bori, "A New Source for the Biography of Ibn Taymiyya," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 67, no. 3 (2004): 321–348; Jon Hoover, *Ibn Taymiyya* (London: Oneworld, 2019); and the essays collected in Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed, ed., *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010).

talk about a subject without quoting the schools of the four *imāms*.²⁵ An initial supporter of his, the grammarian and exegete Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī (d. 745/1344), declared, “I have never seen anyone like this man” and labelled him “the *imām* we are expecting.”²⁶ His opponents, however, could be equally enthusiastic in their denunciations. A slightly later Damascene jurist Taqī al-Dīn al-Ḥiṣnī (d. 829/1426) called him “the heretic/atheist (*zindīq*) from Ḥarrān.”²⁷ Perhaps most famously, the well-known traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who claims to have been in Damascus at the time of Ibn Taymiyya’s final trial and imprisonment in 726/1326, suggested that he might, in a famous if slightly free translation, have “had a screw loose” (*illā anna fī ‘aqlihi shay*).²⁸ Even many of his supporters had a difficult time and found it hard not to criticise him. Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī’s early optimism eventually passed and he turned against Ibn Taymiyya. Al-Dhahabī, who ultimately remained a supporter, still felt the need to criticise him. In a letter entitled *al-Naṣiḥa al-dhahabīyya li-Ibn Taymiyya* he criticised him for engaging in unnecessary polemics;²⁹ in another work, al-Dhahabī criticised him for failing to issue rulings consistent with the doctrine of a specified law school.³⁰ As with most legal systems, that which functioned under Mamluk rule was dependant to a large extent on jurists adhering to recognized precedent (*taqlīd*) when issuing rulings.³¹ A decree of

25 Bori, “New Source,” 333/342. The four imams are the eponymous founders of the four classical schools of Sunni law.

26 Cited by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī aʿyān al-mīʾa al-thāmina*, 4 vols. (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʾārif al-Uthmāniyya, 1348–1350/1929–1932), 1: 152; see also Walid A. Saleh, “Ibn Taymiyya and the Rise of Radical Hermeneutics: An Analysis of *An Introduction to the Foundations of Qurʾānic Exegesis*,” in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, ed. Rapoport and Ahmed, 123–162 at 123.

27 Cited by Khaled El-Rouayheb, “From Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 1566) to Khayr al-Dīn al-Ālūsī (d. 1899): Changing Views of Ibn Taymiyya among non-Ḥanbalī Sunni Scholars,” in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, ed. Rapoport and Ahmed, 269–318; at 271.

28 Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *al-Riḥla*, ed. and trans. C. Defrémery and B.R. Sanguinetti, *Voyages d’Ibn Batoutah*, 4 vols. (Paris: L’Imprimerie Impériale, 1853–1858), 1:215–218; Little, “Did Ibn Taymiyya,” 95–96. For some discussion of al-Ḥiṣnī’s and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s wider anti-Ibn Taymiyya agendas, see Livnat Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam: The Challenge of Traditionalism (700–1350)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 330–333.

29 al-Dhahabī, “al-Naṣiḥa al-dhahabīyya li-Ibn Taymiyya,” in *Bayān zaḡhal al-ʿilm wa ʿl-ṭalab*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat al-Tawfīq, 1347/1928–1929), 31–34; Bori, “New Source,” 327.

30 Bori, “New source,” 333/342.

31 See, for example, Yossef Rapoport, “Legal Diversity in the Age of *Taqlīd*: The Four Chief *Qādis* under the Mamluks,” *Islamic Law and Society* 10 (2003): 210–228. On Ibn Taymiyya’s challenge to this principle, see *idem*, “Ibn Taymiyya’s Radical Legal Thought: Rationalism, Pluralism and the Primacy of Intention,” in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, ed. Rapoport and Ahmed, 191–226.

the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (r. 693–694/1293; 698–708/1299–1309; 709–741/1310–1341), issued in 705/1305 to rebuke Ibn Taymiyya formally, mentioned among its many complaints that the latter had, through his *fatwās*, confused the commoners through his insistence on issuing rulings variant with those of the other scholars of his age.³² This suggestion that Ibn Taymiyya might have worked to confuse the less well-educated also, however, draws attention to the fact that he does seem to have worked hard to have his voice heard among such non-scholarly audiences; at times, indeed, he advocated for their right to pose questions that other scholars thought should not be among their concerns.³³

Donald Little has efficiently summarized the main cause of his steadfast unpopularity in many circles: “It is Ibn Taymiyya’s distinction that he opposed by word and deed almost every aspect of religion practiced in the Mamluk Empire.”³⁴ These aspects included a number of the most widespread rituals and practices, such as the celebrations of the Prophet Muḥammad’s birthday (*mawlid*) in the month of Rabiʿ I.³⁵ That his activities could attract the unfavorable attention of the ruling Mamluk authorities is clear from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s decree and his multiple arrests and periods of imprisonment. Of particular interest for our discussion over his views on pilgrimage to Jerusalem is the cause of his final imprisonment, during which he died. The historian Shams al-Dīn al-Jazarī (d. 739/1338) tells us that notification came to Damascus on 6 Shaʿbān 726/8 July 1326 that the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had ordered Ibn Taymiyya’s arrest:

32 See the text of the decree provided by Ibn al-Dawādārī (fl. eighth/fourteenth century) in Shams and al-Umrān, *Jāmiʿ*, 173.

33 Livnat Holtzman, “The Bedouin Who Asked Questions: The Later Hanbalites and the Revival of the Myth of Abū Razīn al-ʿUqaylī,” in *Islamic Philosophy from the 12th to the 14th Century*, ed. Abdelkader Al Ghouz (Bonn: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), 431–468, esp. 451–454.

34 Donald P. Little, “Religion under the Mamluks,” *The Muslim World* 73 (1983): 165–181; at 180. Ovamir Anjum has also noted that Ibn Taymiyya offered little short of “a total critique of the contemporary Muslim society, starting with its intellectual apparatus and social and political institutions”; see his *Politics, Law, and Community in Islamic Thought: The Taymiyyan Moment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 177.

35 Raquel M. Ukeles, “The Sensitive Puritan? Revisiting Ibn Taymiyya’s Approach to Law and Spirituality in Light of 20th-Century Debates on the Prophet’s Birthday (*mawlid al-nabī*),” in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, ed. Rapoport and Ahmed, 319–337. On the history of the *mawlid* celebrations, see Marion Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet Muḥammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam* (London: Routledge, 2007).

The reason for this was that he had issued a *fatwā* in which he had discussed the famous *ḥadīth* “You shall only set out on pilgrimage for three mosques,” and [argued] that pilgrimage to the tombs of prophets (peace be upon them), such as the tomb of our father Abraham, or the Prophet (peace be upon him), or others among the prophets and the righteous (may God bless them all) was not included.³⁶

Ibn Taymiyya's opposition to widely followed religious practices had run into a bit of a brick wall, notwithstanding that he apparently alleged that he was the victim of a plot to falsify his exact views of pilgrimage to tombs.³⁷ The suggestion, as seemingly understood by the authorities, that good Muslims should not perform pilgrimage specifically to the graves of the prophets, including that to the grave of the Prophet Muḥammad in Medina (*ziyārat al-nabī*), found relatively little support and plenty of opposition.³⁸ Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355) composed a treatise refuting Ibn Taymiyya's argument and he was followed in this by many more Muslim scholars thereafter.³⁹ The episode is a good indication of how far Ibn Taymiyya may have been ready to go to advance his iconoclastic agenda.

Before we turn to the Jerusalem *fatwā* itself, it is worth highlighting that although Ibn Taymiyya was apparently happy to encounter opposition to his writings and pronouncements from multiple different sides, he was not normally much of a practical activist. A handful of reports aside, for example

36 al-Jazarī, *Ta'riḥ ḥawādith al-zamān wa-anbā'ihī wa-waḥayyāt al-akābir wa 'l-a'yān min abnā'ihī: al-ma'rūf bi-Ta'riḥ Ibn al-Jazarī*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī, 3 vols. (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 1419/1998), 2:111. For another account of this arrest together with the text of the *fatwā* that caused the confrontation, see Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *al-'Uqūd al-durriyya*, 258–269; and for recent discussions, that makes clear the background was slightly more complex than al-Jazarī suggests, see Hoover, *Ibn Taymiyya*, 36–39; Berriah, “Mamluk Sultanate,” §§47–48. For a study of Ibn Taymiyya's views on pilgrimage to the Prophet's tomb, see Laoust, *Essai*, 352–353; Niels Henrik Olesen, *Culte des saints et pèlerinages chez Ibn Taymiyya* (661/1263–728/1328) (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1991), 63–72; Marco Schöller, *The Living and the Dead in Islam: Studies in Arabic Epitaphs, 11: Epitaphs in Context* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 70–76; Ondřej Beránek and Pavel Ťupek, *The Temptation of Graves in Salafī Islam: Iconoclasm, Destruction and Ideology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 52–58.

37 Berriah, “Mamluk Sultanate,” §50.

38 The most common term in Arabic for a “pilgrimage” other than the *ḥajj* or *ʿumra* is *ziyāra*, “visitation.”

39 Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Shifā' al-saqām fī ziyārat khayr al-anām*, ed. Ḥusayn Muḥammad 'Alī Shukrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1429/2008). For discussion of later refutations, see Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, 76–82; El-Rouayheb, “From Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī,” 287–295.

of his efforts to lead some disciples to destroy a rock that some people had started venerating, he does not commonly seem to have seen it as his responsibility to enforce actively the measures he preached.⁴⁰ In fact, it seems that Ibn Taymiyya generally upheld the right of the governing authorities (*ūlū al-amr*, “those who command”) to enforce the law or, as it would have been put in his own time, “to command right and forbid wrong” (*al-amr bi ‘l-ma‘rūf wa ‘l-nahy ‘an al-munkar*).⁴¹ He once wrote, for example, that “The summation of religion and the entirety of the [governmental] offices are but command and prohibition.”⁴² In this respect, Ibn Taymiyya offers a very different model of activism than some of his predecessors. He does not appear to have acted in any way, for example, like the famous Baghdadi Ḥanbalī demagogue al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī al-Barbahārī (d. 329/941), who throughout the 320s/930s caused considerable problems for the caliphal authorities in Baghdad, raiding houses in the city, pouring away wine, beating singing girls and smashing musical instruments.⁴³

2 The Jerusalem *fatwā*

A very large number of works by Ibn Taymiyya, of considerably varying lengths and on a wide range of theological, doctrinal, and legal topics, have survived.⁴⁴ Within this oeuvre, Ibn Taymiyya made his opinions about pilgrimage to

40 Though cf. in part Anjum, *Politics, Law, and Community*, 188. For the rock, see the brief discussion by Ibn Taymiyya’s associate, ‘Alam al-Dīn al-Birzālī (d. 739/1339), in Shams and al-‘Umrān, *Jāmi‘*, 156. There is also the version from Ibn Kathīr’s *al-Bidāya wa ‘l-nihāya* in Shams and al-‘Umrān, *Jāmi‘*, 355; discussed further in Laoust, “Biographie,” 133. In another report, for example, Ibn Taymiyya once kicked over a backgammon table when he encountered a couple of men playing the game in Cairo; see Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 68.

41 Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 155. For a broader discussion of Ibn Taymiyya’s political thought, see Anjum, *Politics, Law, and Community*, 173–265.

42 Cited in Anjum, *Politics, Law, and Community*, 244.

43 See, for example, Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-ta’rīkh*, ed. C.J. Tornberg, 13 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1851–1876; reprinted with different pagination Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965–1967), 8:307. For further discussion of al-Barbahārī and his followers, see Cook, *Commanding Right*, 116–118; Christopher Melchert, “The Ḥanābila and the Early Sufis,” *Arabica* 48 (2001): 352–367 at 364–367; Nimrod Hurvitz, “From Scholarly Circles to Mass Movements: The Formation of Legal Communities in Islamic Societies,” *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 985–1008 at 1002–1006.

44 For an interesting discussion of how many of these may have been transmitted, see Bori, “Collection and Edition.”

Jerusalem and the sanctity of various sites within that city clear on several occasions. They form part of the discussion in works on wider issues, including his famous polemic against a whole host of Islamic practices that he viewed as heretical innovations (*bidaʿ*, sing. *bidʿa*), the *Iqtidāʾ al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaḳīm mukhālafat aṣḥāb al-jaḥīm* [“The necessity of [following] the straight path contrary to those in the hellfire”].⁴⁵ He also issued at least two *fatwās* dedicated to the question of Jerusalem’s sanctity, which can be counted among the more than one hundred *fatwās* and other works he composed on the topic of the veneration of tombs and the visitation of shrines.⁴⁶ One of these two is quite brief and deals with the issue of pilgrimage to Jerusalem alongside that to the tomb of Abraham in Hebron/al-Khalīl.⁴⁷ The other is much more detailed and offers Ibn Taymiyya’s most thorough discussion on the matter; this *fatwā* will be the focus here.⁴⁸ The text of this *fatwā* offers no date for its publica-

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- 45 For the Arabic text, see (ed.) Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiḳī, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya, 1369/1950), 433–439 for the section on Jerusalem. The work can also be consulted in English translation in Muhammad Umar Memon, *Ibn Taymiyya’s Struggle against Popular Religion* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), 316–319 (ch. 23) for the argument about Jerusalem. For a very brief overview of this work, see Jon Hoover, “Ibn Taymiyya,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 4 (1200–1350)*, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallett with Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala, Johannes Pahlitzsch, Mark Swanson, Herman Teule, and John Tolan (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 824–878 at 865–873.
- 46 That he composed more than one hundred such works on this topic, see Daniella Talmon-Heller, “Historiography in the Service of the *Mufti*: Ibn Taymiyya on the Origins and Fallacies of *Ziyārāt*,” *Islamic Law and Society* 26 (2019): 227–251; at 228.
- 47 Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ fatāwā*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim al-ʿĀsimī al-Najdī al-Ḥanbalī and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad, 37 vols. (Riyāḍ: Dār ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1412/1991; reprint of Riyāḍ: Maṭābiʿ al-Riyāḍ, and Makka: Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥukūma, 1961–1970) [henceforth *MF*], 27:20–24.
- 48 I have generally relied upon two editions of the Arabic text: *MF*, 27:5–19; and Charles D. Matthews, “A Muslim Iconoclast (Ibn Taymiyyeh) on the ‘Merits’ of Jerusalem and Palestine,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 56 (1936): 7–21 [henceforth Matthews]. There are only very slight differences between the texts of these two editions. A third edition can also be found in Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿat al-rasāʾil al-kubrā*, 2 vols. (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿĀmira al-Sharafiyya, 1323/1905–1906), 2:53–63. It is very difficult to establish which manuscript(s) provided the basis for the Riyādh or Cairo editions. In the introduction to *MF* at 1: *alif-sīn* (though be aware that this pagination is not distinctive and is repeated in other parts of the introduction), Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad provided an overview of his and his father’s (and co-editor’s) travels to find manuscripts of Ibn Taymiyya’s works, some of which are apparently in the latter’s own hand, but did not offer many details about the manuscripts, including the dates they were copied, nor for the most part did he note which manuscripts provided the text for which *fatwās* and other works. Matthews’ edition, at least, is based on a twelfth-/eighteenth-century manuscript, Yale Landberg 295, fols. 23b–29b. For a discussion of this manuscript, see Leon Nemoy, *Arabic Manuscripts in the Yale University Library* (New Haven:

tion or composition, but it is assumed by modern scholars to have been issued in response to the visit to Jerusalem of the chief judge Badr al-Dīn b. Jamā'a (d. 733/1333) and the new governor of Syria, Sayf al-Dīn Tankiz, in 716/1316.⁴⁹

The *fatwā*, which is divided into seven sections (*fuṣūl*, sing. *faṣl*),⁵⁰ begins, after the traditional opening prayers and blessings, with the "three mosques" *ḥadīth* referred to at the start of this chapter.⁵¹ This is an important *ḥadīth* in Ibn Taymiyya's writings about pilgrimage, since for him it outlines clearly what is undeniably lawful, thus allowing him to declare what it does not mention to be unlawful.⁵² In this case, what it apparently tells us is that "all Muslim scholars agree upon the desirability of journeying to Jerusalem for lawful worship there, such as ritual prayer (*ṣalāh*), invocation (*du'ā'*), remembrance (*dhikr*), recitation/reading of the Qur'an, and secluded contemplation (*i'tikāf*)."⁵³ Ibn Taymiyya then provides a further *ḥadīth* in which we are told that Solomon asked three things of God, the third of which being that no-one would travel to Jerusalem with the intention of doing anything other than pray there without being granted God's forgiveness. This is followed with the account of how the Prophet's Companion Ibn 'Umar would not even drink water in Jerusalem when he came there because of Solomon's request.⁵⁴ There is then a discussion on whether or not it is obligatory to fulfil a vow to journey to Jerusalem for a lawful act of worship.⁵⁵

This in turn leads into a discussion of the ranking of these three most distinguished mosques – Ibn Taymiyya, as is common in Islamic texts, discusses them in terms of which has more distinction (*afḍal*) rather than explicitly in terms of holiness/sanctity – which results, as is to be expected, in the usual hierarchy of Sacred Mosque in Mecca, Prophet's Mosque in Medina, and finally al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem.⁵⁶ Then we have a relatively lengthy section in which the

Yale University Press, 1956), 91. Caterina Bori has noted in general the difficulty still today of discovering where in the world manuscripts of Ibn Taymiyya's works can be found; see her "Collection and Edition," 54–55.

49 Laoust, "Biographie," 157; Olesen, *Culte des saints*, 16, 18, n. 49. There is also a brief discussion of Ibn Taymiyya's views on pilgrimage to Jerusalem in Beránek and Ťupek, *Temptation of Graves*, 48–52.

50 I am not sure when this division into seven sections happened or who was responsible for it, but it appears in all of the editions mentioned in n. 48 above.

51 *MF*, 27:5–6/Matthews, 7.

52 See the discussion in Olesen, *Culte des saints*, 72–79, 199–203; Beránek and Ťupek, *Temptation of Graves*, 49.

53 *MF*, 27:6/Matthews, 7.

54 *MF*, 27:6/Matthews, 7–8.

55 *MF*, 27:6–7/Matthews, 8.

56 *MF*, 27:7–8/Matthews, 8–9.

argument is made that pilgrimage to any place other than these three, such as Abraham's tomb or Mount Sinai, is banned on the basis that they are not mentioned in the "three mosques" *ḥadīth*. The argument against pilgrimage to tombs in particular is supported by one *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet supposedly declared, "May God curse the Jews and Christians who take the remains of their prophets as mosques," and another in which he says, "Those before you used to take graves as mosques, but don't you take graves as mosques. I forbid you from doing that."⁵⁷ The first section of the *fatwā* then ends with the argument that the Prophet prayed in Jerusalem (*bayt al-maqdis*, which can often refer specifically to Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf) during his night journey but nowhere else, so there is no precedent there for performing pilgrimage to pray at any other site.⁵⁸

The next section covers which acts of worship are permissible in Jerusalem.⁵⁹ The main point of this section is to argue that nobody should in any way attempt to replicate *ḥajj* rites in Jerusalem: "There is no place on earth that can be circumambulated as the Ka'ba should be and whoever believes that circumambulating anything else is lawful is worse than someone who believes that praying towards anywhere other than the Ka'ba is permissible."⁶⁰ This is then followed up with a case against praying towards any site in Jerusalem: "Whoever takes the rock [in Jerusalem] as a *qibla* today for prayer is an unbeliever, an apostate, called upon to return to God. If he repents [then all is well], but if not he must be killed."⁶¹ This discussion culminates in a brief overview of Ibn Taymiyya's view of the history of Jerusalem's two most significant sites for Muslims, al-Aqṣā Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. For al-Aqṣā Mosque, Ibn Taymiyya offers the commonly encountered story of how the conqueror of Jerusalem, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, rebuked the Jewish convert to Islam Ka'b al-Aḥbār for suggesting that they build a mosque north of the rock on Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf, which would have resulted in Muslims praying there facing that rock as well as towards the Ka'ba in Mecca: "O son of a Jewess! Judaism has interfered with you[r senses]. I shall rather build it in front of [the rock], for to us belong the front parts of the mosques."⁶²

57 MF, 27:8–9/Matthews, 9–10.

58 MF, 27:9/Matthews, 10.

59 MF, 27:10–13/Matthews, 10–12.

60 MF, 27:10/Matthews, 10. A similar point is also made in separate work by Ibn Taymiyya on the *ḥajj* rites; see *Maḥmū'at al-rasā'il al-kubrā*, 2:371–372; Laoust, *Essai*, 344.

61 MF, 27:11/Matthews, 11.

62 MF, 27:12/Matthews, 11. There are plenty of other versions of this narrative in texts that touch upon the early Islamic conquest of Jerusalem; for example, see al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*

Turning to the Dome of the Rock, Ibn Taymiyya offers a narrative of its original construction by the Umayyad caliph ‘Abd al-Malik, which is designed to undermine any claim that the rock is a holy site that it is permissible to venerate.⁶³ The argument goes that during ‘Abd al-Malik’s war with his rival ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, who ruled in Mecca, the former wanted to divert Muslims from performing pilgrimage to the Ka’ba since it was controlled by his rival. To counteract this, he built the Dome of the Rock in an attempt to encourage Muslims to perform pilgrimage to Jerusalem instead. This is a narrative that can be found in several other sources, so Ibn Taymiyya has not invented it.⁶⁴ He does use it to make it clear, however, that this invalidates the site’s legitimacy as a place of worship: “As for the people of knowledge among the Companions and Successors who act correctly, they did not venerate the rock, because it is an abrogated *qibla*.”⁶⁵ He also makes it clear that he saw any efforts at venerating the rock to be suspiciously reminiscent of Judaism and Christianity: “It is not for Muslims to single out Saturday and Sunday for worship as the Jews and Christians do; likewise, only the Jews and some Christians venerate the rock.”⁶⁶ Ibn Taymiyya ends this section by arguing that any claims that the Prophet’s footprint, or, even worse, God’s footprint, can be seen on the rock is a lie of the ignorant and that efforts to venerate any other location on Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf is unlawful, again with reference to the supposed interference of Christian and Jewish practices: “The place of which it is recounted that it is the cradle of Jesus (upon whom be peace) is a lie; it is only the location of a Christian baptismal font.”⁶⁷ This is a significant section of the *fatwā* as it challenges a number of views about the veneration of the Dome of the Rock.

The third section is very brief and dedicated to reiterating the argument that any place in Jerusalem beyond al-Aqṣā Mosque cannot be taken as a lawful place of worship.⁶⁸ The fourth section then explains clearly that it

al-rusul wa ’l-mulūk, ed. Michael Jan de Goeje *et al.*, 3 parts in 13 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1879–1901), 1:2408–2409.

63 For a recent, interesting discussion of Ibn Taymiyya’s use of his understanding of history to support his arguments, see Talmon-Heller, “Historiography”; she refers to Ibn Taymiyya’s history of the Dome of the Rock’s construction at 249–250.

64 See, for example, al-Ya’qūbī, *Ta’rīkh*, ed. M.T. Houtsma, 2 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1883), 2:311; and also the further discussion in Amikam Elad, “Why Did ‘Abd al-Malik Build the Dome of the Rock? A Re-Examination of the Muslim Sources,” in *Bayt al-Maḳdis*, ed. Raby and Johns, 33–58.

65 *MF*, 27:12/Matthews, 12.

66 *MF*, 27:12–13/Matthews, 12.

67 *MF*, 27:13/Matthews, 12.

68 *MF*, 27:13/Matthews, 12–13.

is forbidden to visit non-Muslim places of worship in the area: "As for visiting the unbelievers' places of worship, such as the place called the rubbish dump (*al-qumāma*),⁶⁹ or Bethlehem or Zion or anywhere else, or such as the churches of the Christians, it is forbidden."⁷⁰

The fifth section is a particularly interesting one, since it involves the argument that there is nothing in Jerusalem that can be labelled as a *ḥaram*.⁷¹ A *ḥaram* is an originally western Arabian practice of sacred space. They could be quite extensive areas, several miles in diameter, within which there were prohibitions on hunting, carrying weapons and fighting, cutting down vegetation and more besides. In much Islamic thought, *ḥarams* are generally considered the most sacred form of space. Almost all Muslims would consider Mecca and its hinterland to be a *ḥaram* and generally understand the Qur'an's *ḥaram āmin*, "inviolable *ḥaram*," (Q28.57, 29.67) to refer to Mecca's. Most Muslims also came to accept that Medina and its hinterland was made a *ḥaram* by the Prophet Muḥammad after he emigrated there in 1/622 to establish the first Muslim community, although there has always been some debate over this.⁷² Over the centuries, many other sites have come to be labelled with the term *ḥaram*, including the shrines of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib at Najaf and al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī at Karbala as well as the tomb of Abraham at Hebron/al-Khalīl. By the sixth/twelfth century, Jerusalem's Temple Mount had come to be known in Arabic as *al-ḥaram al-sharīf*, "the noble *ḥaram*."⁷³ Ibn Taymiyya in this section expresses his clear disappointment with the emerging tendency during his lifetime to treat any space in Jerusalem as a *ḥaram* like Mecca's or Medina's. It is in this argument about Jerusalem's recognition as a *ḥaram*, together with his views on the veneration of the rock, that Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwā* offers the most serious challenge to many alternative views on Jerusalem's sanctity around by the eighth/fourteenth century.

The sixth section then makes the case against treating a pilgrimage to Jerusalem as a meritorious addition to a *ḥajj*, or as something that can be performed during the *ḥajj* season as an alternative to that festival.⁷⁴ As Ibn

69 Muslim authors regularly use this term to describe the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It is a play on words, if a fairly crude one, since the usual Arabic term for this church among Christians is "the Church of the Resurrection" (*biṭāt al-qiyāma*). Muslim authors simply substitute *qumāma*, "rubbish dump," for *qiyāma*, "resurrection."

70 *MF*, 27:14/Matthews, 13.

71 *MF*, 27:14–15/Matthews, 13–14.

72 On many issues surrounding *ḥarams*, see Harry Munt, *The Holy City of Medina: Sacred Space in Early Islamic Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 16–93.

73 *Ibid.*, 25.

74 *MF*, 27:15–16/Matthews, 14–15.

Taymiyya put it, "Journeying [to Jerusalem] as part of a *hajj* is not a pious act and the words of he who says, 'Go to Jerusalem as part of your *hajj* (*qaddis hijjataka*),' are false words with no basis."⁷⁵ Ibn Taymiyya also brought into this section his argument against performing the pilgrimage to the Prophet's grave in Medina.

The seventh and final section brings the *fatwā* to an end by criticising pilgrimage to sites such as Ascalon that used to be on the frontiers of the Islamic world, but are now well within its established territory, as well as to shrines dedicated to saints and figures such as al-Khiḍr.⁷⁶ The end of this section is a warning about how devils (*shayāṭīn*, sing. *shayṭān*) lead people astray through pilgrimage to such sites:

Many people seek the aid of a created being, either a Christian like [Saint] George or a non-Christian and they see him, having come to him, and perhaps talk to him. But he is only a devil appearing in the image of the one from whom aid is sought ... This is how the devils play games with many people, as has been explained extensively elsewhere. God knows best that which is right.⁷⁷

In Christianity and Judaism there have been, of course, somewhat similar debates about the value or even legitimacy of performing pilgrimage to

75 I have followed the reading here of Matthews, 14. *MF*, 27:16, offers instead as the offensive statement "*qaddasa Allāh hijjataka*," which in this context would have to mean something like, "May God bring you to Jerusalem as part of your *hajj*." The only manuscript I have been able to consult is Yale Landberg 295, which was the basis for Matthews' edition. There (at f. 28a), quite interestingly, the phrase was initially written out as "*qaddasa Allāh hijjataka*," but someone (it is unclear to me if this was the original scribe or a later reader) then crossed out the word "*Allāh*" and explicitly vocalised the first word as "*qaddis*."

76 *MF*, 27:17–19/Matthews, 15–17. On some of the ways in which al-Khiḍr could be venerated by Muslims, see Ethel Sara Wolper, "Khiḍr, Elwan Çelebi and the Conversion of Sacred Sanctuaries in Anatolia," *The Muslim World* 90 (2000): 309–322; Josef W. Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 177–183. For discussion of the veneration of Ascalon and in particular of the shrine there said to house the head of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, see now Daniella Talmon-Heller, Benjamin Z. Kedar and Yitzhak Reiter, "Vicissitudes of a Holy Place: Construction, Destruction and Commemoration of Mashhad Ḥusayn in Ascalon," *Der Islam* 93 (2016): 182–215; Daniella Talmon-Heller, *Sacred Place and Sacred Time in the Medieval Islamic Middle East: A Historical Perspective* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 27–123. For Ibn Taymiyya's views on the sanctity of Ascalon and its shrine, see Talmon-Heller, "Historiography," 237–249; *idem*, *Sacred Place*, 112–118.

77 *MF*, 27:18–19/Matthews, 16–17.

Jerusalem.⁷⁸ Within the Islamic context, Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwā* is nonetheless striking for at least four reasons. Firstly, this level of opposition to most Jerusalem pilgrimage practices is rarely seen laid out in this much detail and this stridently. Here, several practices are condemned explicitly as the equivalence of unbelief or apostasy and Ibn Taymiyya argues that if those who perform them do not repent then their lives are forfeit, albeit that this was probably a largely rhetorical threat. Secondly, the argument involves not only questioning pilgrimage practices that involved sites other than al-Aqṣā Mosque, but also undermining the validity of the doctrines behind those sites' veneration. Particularly notable are the suggestions that the Dome of the Rock is essentially an invalid structure that commemorates unacceptably the veneration of a mere piece of rock and the relegation of the entire area of Temple Mount – widely known by Ibn Taymiyya's time as *al-ḥaram al-sharīf* – outside of al-Aqṣā Mosque to the level of profane space not to be in any way venerated. This is clearly out of step with the ideas of many other Muslims; we saw earlier Nāṣir-i Khusraw's and al-Ghazālī's veneration of the rock. Thirdly, and linked to this second point, Ibn Taymiyya in this *fatwā* also undermined what were by his day long established efforts to place Jerusalem within a wider Syrian-Palestinian "holy land" (*al-arḍ al-muqaddasa*).⁷⁹ Daniella Talmon-Heller has referred to the "significant growth and expansion of the veneration of tombs and relics, both Shī'ī and Sunnī, in twelfth and thirteenth century Syria."⁸⁰ Ibn al-Murajjā, already in the fifth/eleventh century, had argued, on the basis of a tradition related on the authority of Thawr b. Yazīd (d. 153/770) and in clear dialogue with rabbinic notions of the land of Israel's ten degrees of holiness:

78 Giles Constable, "Opposition to Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages," *Studia Gratiana* 19 (1976): 123–146; Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); F. Thomas Noonan, *The Road to Jerusalem: Pilgrimage and Travel in the Age of Discovery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), esp. 84–100.

79 See, for example, Zayde Antrim, "Ibn 'Asakir's Representations of Syria and Damascus in the Introduction to the *Tarikh madinat Dimashq*," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38 (2006): 109–129; Stephennie Mulder, *The Shrines of the 'Alids in Medieval Syria: Sunnis, Shi'is and the Architecture of Coexistence* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014); Daniella Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria: Mosques, Cemeteries and Sermons under the Zangids and Ayyubids (1146–1260)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007); *idem*, "Graves, Relics and Sanctuaries: The Evolution of Syrian Sacred Topography," *ARAM* 19 (2007): 601–620.

80 Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria*, 205.

The holiest land is Syria; the holiest part of Syria is Palestine; the holiest part of Palestine is Jerusalem; the holiest part of Jerusalem is the mountain; and the holiest part of the mountain is the dome.⁸¹

Ibn Taymiyya, at least on the basis of the discussion in this *fatwā*, would have disagreed with almost everything said here. Fourthly, it is significant that Ibn Taymiyya does not limit his discussion to pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or even to Syria-Palestine more broadly. Instead, he uses the opportunity to present what is actually one of his more comprehensive arguments against all pilgrimage practices, other than the *hajj*, the *ʿumra*, and travelling for what he would call legitimate acts of worship in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina (but not specifically to visit the Prophet's grave) and al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem.

If Ibn Taymiyya's arguments were, as we will see, out of step with those held by many of his contemporaries, they do nonetheless reveal the existence of conflicting Islamic memories of sites in Jerusalem as late as the eighth/fourteenth century. Much is often made of the fluidity of ideas about sanctity and sacred spaces in the early Islamic centuries, but Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwās* on pilgrimage remind us that such fluidity had not been consigned to history by the Mamluk period.

3 Mamluk Jerusalem(s)

Several Mamluk sultans and governing officials, following Ayyubid precedents established from the moment Saladin reconquered Jerusalem in 583/1187, spent quite a bit of effort patronizing sites on and around the edge of Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf.⁸² One of the first Mamluk sultans, al-Zāhir Baybars

81 Ibn al-Murajjā, *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, 115 (§136). For the rabbinic ten degrees of holiness, see the Babylonian Talmud, *Mishna Kelim* 1.6–9; translated in Norman Solomon, *The Talmud: A Selection* (London: Penguin, 2009), 667–668.

82 For Ayyubid work in Jerusalem, see especially Mahmoud K. Hawari, *Ayyubid Jerusalem (1187–1250): An Architectural and Archaeological Study* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007). Useful overviews and discussions of building works in Jerusalem during the Mamluk period are Huda Lutfi, *al-Quds al-mamlūkiyya: A History of Mamlūk Jerusalem Based on the Ḥaram Documents* (Berlin: Klaus Schwartz, 1985), esp. 107–119; Michael Hamilton Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem: An Architectural Study* (Jerusalem: British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, 1987); Ellen V. Kenney, *Power and Patronage in Medieval Syria: The Architecture and Urban Works of Tankiz al-Nāṣirī* (Chicago: Middle East Documentation Center, 2009), 81–153; Nimrod Luz, *The Mamluk City in the Middle East: History, Culture, and the Urban Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 148–171. There is also much useful material in Donald P. Little, “Jerusalem under the Ayyūbids and Mamlūks,

(r. 658–676/1260–1277), spent a considerable amount of money restoring the Dome of the Rock in 660/1260–1261 and frequently referred to himself with titles publicizing his rule over Jerusalem, which he mentioned on an equal level with the holy cities of the Ḥijāz. In contrast to Ibn Taymiyya's firm arguments denying Jerusalem's significance as the earliest *qibla* for Muslims before Mecca, Baybars had himself referred to, in inscriptions put up on his behalf across Syria throughout his reign, as "the ruler/king of the two *qiblas*" (*ṣāhib/malik/mālik al-qiblatayn*), among a great many other titles.⁸³ Baybars also established a *waqf* in 662/1263–1264 to pay for the support of pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem on foot, and both Baybars and al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (r. 678–89/1279–1290) performed pilgrimages to Jerusalem and to Hebron/al-Khalīl.⁸⁴ Such strategies for using Jerusalem's sanctity to legitimize Mamluk rule were taken further under many of Baybars' successors.

For our purposes, it is particularly interesting to note that one of the high-points in Mamluk interest in Jerusalem came during Ibn Taymiyya's lifetime, during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. As Nimrod Luz has put it, "During his tenure (1310–1341), Jerusalem was awash in construction projects."⁸⁵ Such building projects were not only commanded by reigning sultans but were also overseen and funded by other members of the Mamluk elite. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's

1187–1516 AD," in *Jerusalem in History: 3000 B.C. to the Present Day*, ed. Kamil J. Asali, 2nd ed. (London: Kegan Paul, 1997), 177–199; Zayde Antrim, "Jerusalem in the Ayyubid and Mamluk Periods," in *Routledge Handbook on Jerusalem*, ed. Suleiman A. Mourad, Naomi Koltun-Fromm and Bedross Der Matossian (London: Routledge, 2019), 102–109; Carole Hillenbrand, "The Holy Land in the Crusader and Ayyubid Periods (1099–1250)," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Holy Land*, ed. Robert G. Hoyland and Hugh G.M. Williamson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 198–229; and Nimrod Luz, "The Holy Land from the Mamluk Sultanate to the Ottoman Empire (1260–1799)," in *Oxford Illustrated History*, ed. Hoyland and Williamson, 230–257.

83 Denise Aigle, "Les inscriptions de Baybars dans le Bilād al-Šām: une expression de la légitimité du pouvoir," *Studia Islamica* 97 (2003): 57–85, esp. 66; Anne Troadec, "Baybars and the Cultural Memory of Bilād al-Shām: The Construction of Legitimacy," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 18 (2014–2015): 113–147 at 132–133, 136. For the inscriptions, see *RCEA*, 12:56–57, 103–106, 128–130, 141–143, 193–194, 222–223 (nos. 4476, 4554, 4556–4557, 4593, 4612, 4690, 4733). Interestingly, in another inscription, from a different building at the same site as the last in this list, Baybars is referred to as *ṣāhib al-qibla*, i.e. in the singular rather than the dual; see *RCEA*, 12:223–224 (no. 4734).

84 Laoust, *Essai*, 31, 69.

85 Luz, *Mamluk City*, 155; see also Lutfi, *al-Quds al-mamlūkiyya*, 117–118; and Kenney, *Power and Patronage*, esp. 151, where the tenure of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's governor of Syria, Tankiz, is noted as "one of the high-water marks" in the history of Jerusalem's architecture. There is a brief overview of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's works in Jerusalem in Mujir al-Dīn al-Ulaymī, *Kitāb al-Uns al-jalīl bi-ta'rikh al-Quds wa 'l-Khalīl*, 2 vols. (Najaf: al-Maṭba'a al-Ḥaydariyya, 1388/1968), 2:91–93.

governor of Syria, Sayf al-Dīn Tankiz (in office 712–740/1312–1340), for example, founded the famous Tankiziyya *madrasa*, as well as several other buildings, probably completed in 729–730/1328–1330.⁸⁶ Nimrod Luz has demonstrated how this Mamluk-era building activity was centered around Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf, with the more senior figures building as close to that site as possible: “Accordingly, there appears to be a direct correlation between the builder’s status within the Mamluk pecking order and the compound’s proximity to the Noble Sanctuary [i.e. al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf]. Furthermore, building inside the Ḥaram itself was apparently the exclusive prerogative of sultans.”⁸⁷ Such patronage was extremely important to Jerusalem’s inhabitants, including its elites, since it was a city whose economy depended to a large degree on the regular flow of pilgrims and visitors coming to see such monuments.⁸⁸

If Ibn Taymiyya’s thoughts about Jerusalem were generally out of sync with the sentiments of the Mamluk political elites, they were not really that much closer to those of many of his fellow religious scholars. Other scholars of his day were still writing treatises extolling the *faḍā’il* of Jerusalem and the merits of visiting its many holy sites; apparently, about thirty such works survive from the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods.⁸⁹ The well-known pilgrimage guide to sites all across the Islamic world by ‘Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Harawī (d. 611/1215) includes a detailed discussion of many sites in Jerusalem.⁹⁰ One Shāfi‘ī contemporary of Ibn Taymiyya, Burhān al-Dīn b. al-Firkāh (d. 729/1329), wrote one such work whose title explicitly states that it was written to encourage pilgrimage: *Bā’ith al-nufūs ilā ziyārat al-Quds al-mahrūs* (“Spur for souls to visit inviolable Jerusalem”).⁹¹ Such scholarly encouragement for pilgrimage to Jerusalem

86 Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 223–239; Kenney, *Power and Patronage*, esp. 92–109 for the Tankiziyya.

87 Luz, *Mamluk City*, 161–171, quotation from 170; see also his discussion in Nimrod Luz, “Icons of Power and Religious Piety: The Politics of Mamlūk Patronage,” in *Material Evidence and Narrative Sources: Interdisciplinary Studies of the History of the Muslim Middle East*, ed. Daniella Talmon-Heller and Katia Cytryn-Silverman (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015), 239–266 at 250–251, 254–261. A similar point is made in Kenney, *Power and Patronage*, 152. For work on Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf during al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s reign, see Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 77; Kenney, *Power and Patronage*, 117–127.

88 See, for example, Lutfi, *al-Quds al-mamlūkiyya*, 112.

89 Yehoshua Frenkel, “Muslim Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Mamluk Period,” in *Pilgrims and Travellers to the Holy Land*, ed. Bryan F. Le Beau and Menachem Mor (Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1996), 63–87 at 65.

90 Josef W. Meri, *A Lonely Wayfarer’s Guide to Pilgrimage: ‘Alī ibn Abī Bakr al-Harawī’s Kitāb al-Ishārāt ilā ma’rifat al-ziyārāt* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 2004), 70–77.

91 Charles D. Matthews, “The ‘*Kitāb Bā’itu-n-nufūs*’ of Ibnu-l-Firkāh,” *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 14 (1934): 284–293 and 15 (1935): 51–87. For further examples, including a discussion of Ibn al-Firkāh’s text, see Frenkel, “Muslim pilgrimage.”

clearly worked and depictions of sites in Jerusalem alongside sites in Mecca and Medina (and occasionally also Hebron/al-Khalīl, Najaf and Karbalā') can be found in some extent *hajj* and *umra* certificates from the seventh to ninth/thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Sites whose memory was contested by Ibn Taymiyya, especially the Dome of the Rock, feature prominently in such works and depictions.⁹²

Nor was Ibn Taymiyya's thought on Jerusalem even in line with some other scholars of his own Ḥanbalī law school. In the Ḥanbalī Ḍiyā' al-Dīn al-Maqdisī's (d. 643/1245) *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, the very first chapter is about the "three mosques" *ḥadīth* and then there are also chapters with *ḥadīths* expressing approval of prayer in Jerusalem and of entering *iḥrām* there for either an *umra* or a *hajj*; there are also plenty of *ḥadīths* urging veneration of the rock.⁹³ The famous Baghdadi Ḥanbalī of the sixth/twelfth century, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200), also composed a work on Jerusalem's *faḍā'il* and played a key role in embellishing narratives of the crusaders' sack of Jerusalem in 492/1099 that played on ideas of that city's sanctity to Muslims.⁹⁴ Ibn al-Jawzī's grandson also gave an impassioned sermon in Damascus lamenting the surrender of Jerusalem to Frederick II in 626/1229, again playing on many of the usual tropes of Jerusalem's sanctity and specifically noting that this action prevented

92 For a collection of such certificates from Damascus, see especially Şule Aksoy and Rachel Milstein, "A Collection of Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Hajj Certificates," in *M. Uğur Derman Festschrift: Papers Presented on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. İrvin Cemil Schick (Istanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi, 2000), 101–134; Dominique Sourdel and Janine Sourdel-Thomine, *Certificats de pèlerinage d'époque ayyoubide: contribution à l'histoire de l'idéologie de l'Islam au temps de croisades* (Paris: L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 2006). A particularly fine example of such a certificate, probably produced in Iraq in two or three phases (the second in 837/1433), can be seen in Barbara Drake Boem and Melanie Holcomb, ed., *Jerusalem, 1000–1400: Every People under Heaven* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2016), 53–54; and with detailed discussion in Mounia Chekhab-Abudaya, Amélie Couvrat Desvergnès, and David J. Roxburgh, "Sayyid Yusuf's 1433 Pilgrimage Scroll (*Ziyārātnāma*) in the Collection of the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha," *Muqarnas* 33 (2016): 345–407.

93 Ḍiyā' al-Dīn al-Maqdisī, *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, ed. Muḥammad Muṭī' al-Ḥāfiẓ (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1405/1985), 39–43, 49–53, 56–59, 87–90; see also Frenkel, "Muslim pilgrimage," 70. Ḍiyā' al-Dīn's family were originally from the region around Nablus, but during the period of Latin rule there they emigrated to Damascus, and specifically to the district of al-Ṣālihiyya, an event for which Ḍiyā' al-Dīn is an important source; see Joseph Drory, "Ḥanbalis of the Nablus Region in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Asian and African Studies* 22 (1988): 93–112.

94 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Faḍā'il al-Quds*, ed. Jibrā'il Sulaymān Jabbūr, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1400/1980); Konrad Hirschler, "The Jerusalem Conquest of 492/1099 in the Medieval Arabic Historiography of the Crusades: From Regional Plurality to Islamic Narrative," *Crusades* 13 (2014): 37–76.

Muslim pilgrims (*al-zā'irīn*) from coming to Jerusalem, although he had probably “converted” from Hanbalism to Hanafism already by this time.⁹⁵

Two centuries after Ibn Taymiyya's lifetime, the Jerusalemite Ḥanbalī Mujīr al-Dīn al-ʿUlaymī (d. ca. 928/1521–1522) wrote the most comprehensive pre-modern history of Jerusalem.⁹⁶ This work combines discussion of Jerusalem's *faḍā'il* with a topographical and political history of the city as well as biographies of its many notable scholars. Within the work, it is perhaps noteworthy that the sections on Jerusalem's *faḍā'il* traditions – in which reports that could easily be seen to encourage pilgrimage play a crucial role – come immediately after two sections on the virtue of praying for Muḥammad and on how to perform the pilgrimage to his grave.⁹⁷ The sections of the work encouraging pilgrimage to Jerusalem include a chapter on the invocations that should be recited at different sites in Jerusalem along with the recommended order in which these sites should be visited.⁹⁸ Mujīr al-Dīn was also keen to promote the idea that good rulers went to extra effort to patronize Jerusalem, its sites and its inhabitants. He recounts in some detail the pilgrimage to Jerusalem of the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Qāytbāy (r. 872–901/1468–1496), who also endowed a *madrasa* known as the Ashrafiyya on the western edge of Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf, in 880/1475; as part of this pilgrimage, Qāytbāy prayed in the Dome of the Rock (something Ibn Taymiyya expressly disliked).⁹⁹ The political significance of Jerusalem as a holy city alongside Mecca and Medina is also emphasized by Mujīr al-Dīn's inclusion in his work of the aphorism, “No one can be considered among the caliphs unless they ruled over the two mosques: the Sacred Mosque [in Mecca] and the mosque of Jerusalem.”¹⁰⁰ An “addendum” (*dhayl*) to this history, seemingly added by Mujīr al-Dīn himself, does actually contain a poem by the Shāfiʿī ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Ayyūb (d. 748/1347–1348), which includes verses denouncing particular rituals practiced by some in Jerusalem, especially those that came too close to emulating

95 Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Juzʾ al-thāmin min Mirʾāt al-zamān*, ed. James Richard Jewett as *Mirʾāt az-zamān* (A.H. 495–654) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907), 432; see also Alex Mallett, “Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī,” in *Medieval Muslim Historians and the Franks in the Levant*, ed. Alex Mallett (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 84–108; at 89, 91–92.

96 For a useful discussion, see Donald P. Little, “Mujīr al-Dīn al-ʿUlaymī's Vision of Jerusalem in the Ninth/Fifteenth Century,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115 (1995): 237–247; also Luz, *Mamluk City*, 180–184.

97 Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-jalīl*, 1:223–285.

98 *Ibid.*, 1:242–244.

99 *Ibid.*, 2:314–316. For a discussion of the Ashrafiyya in Jerusalem within a broader context, see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, “Qāytbāy's *Madrasahs* in the Holy Cities and the Evolution of Ḥaram Architecture,” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 129–147.

100 Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-jalīl*, 1:241.

ḥajj rites.¹⁰¹ Another eighth-/fourteenth-century Shāfiʿī scholar, the Egyptian Jamāl al-Dīn al-Isnawī (d. 772/1370–1371), also argued in a *fatwā* against combining a *ḥajj* with a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, although he noted that such a pilgrimage to Jerusalem alone was meritorious (*ziyārat al-quḍs faḍīla*).¹⁰² Some other scholars clearly did, therefore, share Ibn Taymiyya's disquiet with some Jerusalem pilgrimage rituals, but few others went to anything approaching the same efforts as he did in denouncing them and arguing against such a wide range of practices and beliefs.

So, Ibn Taymiyya's thoughts about Jerusalem are not particularly representative of broader Islamic scholars' thinking about Syria-Palestine, even among Ḥanbalis.¹⁰³ They are probably also not necessarily the result of an intellectual effort to prescribe and proscribe solely on the basis of the reported actions of the Prophet and his Companions, the so-called "pious ancestors" (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*), although these figures certainly did play an important role in providing evidence for Ibn Taymiyya's arguments.¹⁰⁴ Adherence to the actions of the *salaf* comes across as a key point in Ibn Taymiyya's thought, including in the Jerusalem *fatwā*, but, as several modern studies have now demonstrated, appeal to tradition in Ibn Taymiyya's work – as in many other pre-modern Muslims' scholarship – was used as a means of justifying often radically new arguments.¹⁰⁵

101 Leo A. Mayer, "A Sequel to Mujīr ad-Dīn's Chronicle," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 11 (1931): 85–97 [also numbered as 1–13], esp. at 91–95 [= 7–11]; discussion in Frenkel, "Muslim pilgrimage," 82–83.

102 Joseph Sadan, "A Legal Opinion of a Muslim Jurist Regarding the Sanctity of Jerusalem," *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993): 231–245 at 243.

103 There were other episodes in which Ibn Taymiyya was famously accused of failing to follow accepted Ḥanbalī doctrine when issuing legal opinions, on which see especially Abdul Hakim I. Al-Matroudi, *The Ḥanbalī School of Law and Ibn Taymiyyah: Conflict or Conciliation* (London: Routledge, 2006); and for one particular case study, Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 89–110. Ibn Taymiyya's stance on the visitation of tombs was also in conflict with many other Ḥanbalī scholars; see, for example, Schöller, *Living and the Dead*, 74. Caterina Bori has emphasised in general ("Collection and Edition," 67) Ibn Taymiyya's "detachment from the authority of the four *madhāhib*"; as similarly has Mehdi Berriah, "Ibn Taymiyya's Methodology Regarding His Sources: Reading, Selection and Use. Preliminary Study and Perspectives," in *Authors as Readers in the Mamlūk Period and Beyond*, ed. Élise Franssen (Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2022), 45–81 at 63–64.

104 On Ibn Taymiyya's use of sources in general, see Berriah, "Ibn Taymiyya's Methodology," esp. 51–60 for his use of the sayings and actions of the Companions.

105 It has been suggested of Ibn Taymiyya, for example, that "the invocation of the *salaf* often occurred only at a secondary stage, as a way of legitimating and justifying a methodology that encountered opposition from the majority of his contemporaries"; see Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed, "Ibn Taymiyya and His Times," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His*

Ibn Taymiyya was actually not entirely consistent on the question of territorial *faḍā'il* throughout all of his works. His opinion of many of Jerusalem's *faḍā'il* in the *fatwā* under discussion here is perhaps generally consistent with his broader argument that it is not places that acquire *faḍā'il* or holiness but people through their meritorious and pious actions.¹⁰⁶ In making this argument, Ibn Taymiyya was hardly alone. One historical anecdote from the late third/ninth century had it remarked to the Umayyad caliph Mu'āwiya, "Surely the land does not make its people holy, but rather its people make it holy."¹⁰⁷ Nonetheless, it is significant that Ibn Taymiyya was not always consistent with this position himself. Zayde Antrim has demonstrated the political significance of what she terms the "discourse of place" in premodern Arabic-Islamic literature.¹⁰⁸ She has also clearly demonstrated that Ibn Taymiyya was far from unwilling to participate in this discourse. In some of his *fatwās*, unlike in the one under discussion here, he does seem perfectly happy to acknowledge many *faḍā'il* attached to Syria-Palestine more broadly as part of his efforts to encourage resistance to the Mongol invaders.¹⁰⁹ Antrim's argument is important for our discussion, since she concludes that Ibn Taymiyya "recognized the power of invoking the geographical imagination to promote a political agenda in the first half of the eighth/fourteenth century."¹¹⁰ As a learned scholar who was this aware of the value and political power of discussions about the distinctions

Times, ed. Rapoport and Ahmed, 3–20 at 13. See further discussion in Bori, "Collection and Edition," 62; Rapoport, "Ibn Taymiyya's Radical Legal Thought"; *idem*, *Marriage, Money and Divorce*, 98; and Saleh, "Ibn Taymiyya."

- 106 *MF*, 27:44–45; Yahya Michot, *Muslims under Non-Muslim Rule: Ibn Taymiyya on Fleeing from Sin*, trans. Jamil Qureshi (Oxford: Interface, 2006), 76–85; Olesen, *Culte des saints*, 199, 206.
- 107 Ibn al-Faḡīh, *Mukhtaṣar Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. Michael J. de Goeje (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1885), 115.
- 108 See esp. Zayde Antrim, *Routes and Realms: The Power of Place in the Early Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); also, *idem*, "Waṭan before Waṭaniyya: Loyalty to Land in Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Syria," *al-Masāq* 22 (2010): 173–190.
- 109 Zayde Antrim, "The Politics of Place in the Works of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Faḡl Allāh al-'Umari," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 18 (2014–15): 91–111. For Ibn Taymiyya's antagonism to the Mongols and how this influenced his thought on other matters, see further Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 97; Paul L. Heck, "Jihad Revisited," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32 (2004): 95–128 at 115–122; Michot, *Muslims under Non-Muslim Rule*; Denise Aigle, "The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymiyyah's Three 'Anti-Mongol' Fatwas," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11 (2007): 89–120.
- 110 Antrim, "Politics of Place," 111. Daniella Talmon-Heller has also noted how Ibn Taymiyya at times allowed for a temporal and relative sanctity of particular places; see her *Sacred Place*, 112–118.

and holiness of particular places, his opinions on Jerusalem and his challenge to the constructed memory of many of its holy sites, which were opposed to so many of his equally learned and more powerful contemporaries, are of considerable significance.

Ibn Taymiyya's opinion on Jerusalem may well have been a minority one in his day, but nonetheless what we are looking at here is a confrontation between alternative memories of Jerusalem. This cannot be reduced to a clash between "popular" and "elite" or "scholarly" religious beliefs:¹¹¹ we generally only know that Ibn Taymiyya's views were controversial because other religious elites railed against them. Nonetheless, a range of studies now lay out for us in considerable detail how processes of building social memory give rise to conflict and attempts by some groups to exercise their power and authority at the expense of others: "societies do not smoothly inherit but actively thrash out and negotiate forms of collective identity."¹¹² With Ibn Taymiyya's views on Jerusalem – and indeed on sacred spaces, pilgrimage rituals and concepts of sanctity more broadly – we have a clear window onto one battleground in the process of building a collective memory for the Mamluk realm's Muslim community.

Ibn Taymiyya's writings about Jerusalem and the permissibility of pilgrimage to many sites in that city clearly fit into other discourses as well. The obvious place to start is to think about conflicts over authority, both political and social. Religious scholars in the Mamluk period were, as might be expected, far from reticent in making their views known about who was and who was not exercising political authority in a legitimate way.¹¹³ Konrad Hirschler has even sug-

111 There are a large number of studies demonstrating the futility of drawing such distinctions when studying controversies surrounding pre-modern Islamic religious practices; see, for example, Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, esp. 67–69; Fazlur Rahman, "Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies," in *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. Richard C. Martin (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 189–202, esp. at 195–197; and from the same edited volume Marilyn R. Waldman, "Primitive Mind/Modern Mind: New Approaches to an Old Problem Applied to Islam," 91–105 at 102–103; and Earle H. Waugh, "The Popular Muḥammad: Models in the Interpretation of an Islamic Paradigm," 41–58. That such distinctions are especially unhelpful when thinking about pre-modern attitudes towards sacred spaces, see Konrad Hirschler, "Umstrittene heilige Orte im sunnitischen Islam: Syrien und Ägypten im späten Mittelalter," in *Heilige Orte in Asien und Afrika: Räume göttlicher Macht und menschlicher Verehrung*, ed. Angelika C. Messner and Konrad Hirschler (Schenefeld: EB-Verlag, 2006), 113–137 at 124; Beránek and Tupek, *Temptation of Graves*, 36–37.

112 For a useful synthesis, see Geoff Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), quotation from 231.

113 For examples concerning historiography, see Konrad Hirschler, "The 'Pharaoh' Anecdote in Pre-Modern Arabic Historiography," *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 10 (2010):

gested that the Damascene milieu in which Ibn Taymiyya spent a considerable portion of his career was one particularly given to debating intensely the question of just and legitimate authority in the Islamic world and that this interest is evident in the works available in at least one Damascus *madrasa*'s library in the 670s/1270s.¹¹⁴ That Ibn Taymiyya clashed with holders of political authority, whether he really wanted to or not, is clear from the accounts of his imprisonment on several occasions and of the decree denouncing his thought issued by the sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. We can, therefore, see in this Jerusalem *fatwā* Ibn Taymiyya's expression of a counter-memory of Jerusalem's Islamic significance suppressed by many of the ruling Mamluk elites and their realm's religious elites too. That counter-memory had significant political ramifications, especially concerning the status of the Dome of the Rock: ever since that monument was first built by 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān in the late first/seventh century it had often been closely intertwined with political ambitions.

Competition between religious scholars for positions in the Mamluk realm's educational institutions (*manāṣib*, sing. *manṣib* or *manṣab*), offering as they could quite considerable social authority and power, could be fierce. In this light, Ibn Taymiyya's frequent clashes with other religious scholars, including over pilgrimage to Jerusalem, fits up to a point with other scholarly debates in the period. Mamluk-era scholars were frequently fighting to get each other sacked, or sometimes even worse, over supposedly controversial teachings.¹¹⁵ Ibn Taymiyya's views on pilgrimage to Jerusalem might, therefore, be seen as part of a wider attempt to promote his own authority by questioning the orthodoxy of his rivals' faith, and even whether or not they could be considered Muslims. This strategy would have been unlikely to achieve him widespread recognition as a pre-eminent authority (as opposed to notoriety and opprobrium), but his persistence may well have helped to shore up his social

45–74; Anne F. Broadbridge, "Royal Authority, Justice, and Order in Society: The Influence of Ibn Khaldūn on the Writings of al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghribirdī," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 7, no. 2 (2003): 231–245; Tarif Khalidī, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 182–231.

114 Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Damascus: Plurality and Diversity in an Arabic Library. The Ashrafiya Library Catalogue* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 38.

115 Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Anne F. Broadbridge, "Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: al-'Aynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 85–107; Walid A. Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible: A Critical Edition and Introduction to al-Biqā'ī's Bible Treatise* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008), 7–33.

position among those who already inclined to his point of view.¹¹⁶ There is also something to be said about his use of the Jerusalem pilgrimage question to express his opposition to the vast majority of contemporary Islamic pilgrimage practices. Most other scholars, even if they did not uphold the validity of all of these practices, certainly saw nothing wrong with many of them. Ibn Taymiyya's argument in this *fatwā* is, therefore, one that would have challenged the authority of most of the Damascene (and probably Syrian-Palestinian at least as well) religious establishment of his day.

Finally, it is also important that Ibn Taymiyya's complaints about Jerusalem – and about many of the religious practices he opposed more broadly – are often interlinked with a clear concern about Muslims acting like Jews and Christians. As many modern scholars have emphasized, there was frequent dialogue between Muslim, Jewish and Christian ideas about Jerusalem and many of the sites within the city.¹¹⁷ But this, of course, is not really what Ibn Taymiyya had in mind. Muslims imitating the customs and practices of non-Muslims (often known in Arabic as *al-tashabbuh*, “imitation,” following a famous prophetic *ḥadīth*) was a worry that had long exercised many Muslim scholars;¹¹⁸ and Muslims seen to be sharing sacred sites with Christians and Jews was very much part of this preoccupation.¹¹⁹ The issue of *tashabbuh* seems to have been a particularly live one for Ibn Taymiyya: in the midst of a lengthy work dealing with the topic, he noted that, “It has become clear to you that the root cause of the extinguishing of God's religion and His laws, and of the appearance of unbelief and disobedience, is imitating the unbelievers (*al-tashabbuh*

116 That Ibn Taymiyya did himself participate at times in the struggle for *manāṣīb*, see Bori, “Collection and Edition,” 50.

117 Aspects of such dialogue are encountered frequently in many of the references throughout the footnotes in this article. As an example, we have already seen (above, n. 81) evidence from Ibn al-Murajjā's work for overlap between some Muslims' and Talmudic notions of Jerusalem's and Palestine's sanctity. It is also worth noting that at the end of his aforementioned guide to pilgrims (see above, n. 15), Ibn al-Murajjā claims to have found at least one of the recommended supplications in the Psalms (*al-zabūr*); see his *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis*, 81 (§69). That this prayer does not, however, appear to be a quotation from the Psalms as they are generally known, see Livne-Kafri, “*Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis*,” 69–70.

118 A classic discussion is M.J. Kister, “Do Not Assimilate Yourselves ...’: *Lā tashabbahū*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 12 (1989): 321–371; and also see more recently Youshaa Patel, *The Muslim Difference: Defining the Line between Believers and Unbelievers from Early Islam to the Present* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022).

119 See, for example, Hirschler, “Umstrittene heilige Orte,” 128–129; Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria*, 199–202.

bi 'l-kāfirīn).¹²⁰ Arguing against and refuting a range of Christian practices and doctrines also occupied Ibn Taymiyya's attention in several works, treatises and *fatwās*.¹²¹

That Ibn Taymiyya saw Muslim veneration of Jerusalem in this light was perhaps partly in reaction to the increasing recognition by Mamluk sultans over the first half of the eighth/fourteenth century of the rights of certain Christian groups to oversee Christian pilgrimage to the city. In Ṣafar 709/July 1309, for example, the Franciscans (here *ikhwat al-ḥabl*, "brothers of the cord") appear to have appealed to officials of the sultan Baybars al-Jāshnakīr (r. 708–709/1309–1310) claiming to hold documents ordering that no Latin Christians other than them could settle at a small number of specified sites in Jerusalem – a monastery on Mount Zion and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre – and Bethlehem. The recommendation to the sultan was that this state of affairs be accepted and this arrangement was then extended during the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.¹²² Plenty of Christian pilgrims, Franciscans or not, continued to undertake visits to sites across the city.¹²³ Yet, given the long-standing nature among Muslim scholars of concerns surrounding Muslims acting like non-Muslims, Ibn Taymiyya's thoughts in this regard need not

120 Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtidā' al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, 116; see also Memon, *Ibn Taimiyya's Struggle*, 164. For Ibn Taymiyya's thoughts on this issue more broadly, see especially now Patel, *Muslim Difference*, 117–143.

121 See the overview in Hoover, "Ibn Taymiyya."

122 For the text and an Italian translation of this document, see Leone Pourrière, "Firmani e documenti arabi inediti estratti dall'Archive della Procura di T.S. in Gerusalemme," in *Serie cronologica dei Reverendissimi Superiori di Terra Santa*, ed. Girolamo Golubovich (Jerusalem: Tipografia di Convento di S. Salvatore, 1898), 123–187 at 128–130; there is a photograph of this document in Boem and Holcomb, ed., *Jerusalem, 1000–1400*, 261. The date of the document confirms that the Mamluk sultan involved was Baybars al-Jāshnakīr and not al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, *pace* Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993–2009), 3:33. For broader discussions of the establishment of the Franciscans in Palestine from the eighth/fourteenth century, see Johannes Pahlitzsch, "Mediators Between East and West: Christians under Mamluk Rule," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2005): 31–47 at 35–36; Pierre Moukarzel, "Les franciscains dans le sultanat mamelouk des années 1330 jusqu'à 1516," *Le Moyen Âge: Revue d'histoire et de philologie* 120 (2014): 135–149; Michele Campopiano, *Writing the Holy Land: The Franciscans of Mount Zion and the Construction of a Cultural Memory, 1300–1550* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 36–53.

123 For Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Mamluk period, see for example Nicole Chareyron, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the Middle Ages*, trans. W. Donald Wilson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Colin Morris, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West: From the Beginning to 1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 295–327; and Dorothea R. French, "Pilgrimage, Ritual, and Power Strategies: Felix Fabri's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1483," in *Pilgrims and Travelers*, ed. Le Beau and Mor, 169–179.

have been directly linked to such moves by Mamluk authorities. The point to remember here is that Ibn Taymiyya's discussion in this *fatwā* on Jerusalem was not solely relevant to the question of pilgrimage practices, to sites in that holy city or elsewhere. He was also using this specific discussion of Jerusalem's status to contribute to a range of other debates that engaged his contemporary scholars.¹²⁴

4 Conclusions

That there was a controversy over the legitimacy of a variety of religious practices and social customs in Mamluk society is well-known and debates over the legitimacy of pilgrimage practices other than the *ḥajj* and *ʿumra* to Mecca and its hinterland, particularly to graves and the tombs of "saints," have been well highlighted in modern scholarship.¹²⁵ Within many of these modern studies, however, that this conflict extended to the very status of Jerusalem as a holy city is often left out of the discussion and suggestions that Jerusalem's Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf was almost universally regarded (at least among Sunnis) as Islam's third most sacred site as well as a *ḥaram* during the Mamluk period are commonly encountered.¹²⁶ Where attention has been drawn to this Jerusalem *fatwā* by Ibn Taymiyya, it has usually been very brief and quickly passed over in favor of material highlighting Jerusalem's more widely regarded status as a holy city;¹²⁷ alternatively, it has been seen – particularly in older scholarship – as being largely interesting as evidence of "popular" Islamic practices.¹²⁸ Of course, Ibn Taymiyya's views on pilgrimage to Jerusalem have to be seen in context together with his opposition to a range of other pilgrimage

124 The same point can, of course, be made for many other controversies into which Ibn Taymiyya waded; see, for example, Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabi*, 87–111.

125 There is a long history of modern scholarship on this issue going back to Ignaz Goldziher, "Veneration of Saints in Islam," in his *Muslim Studies*, ed. and trans. Christa R. Barber and Samuel M. Stern, 2 vols. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1967–1971), 2:255–341. (The German original of this chapter was published in 1890.) For more recent studies, see, for example, Olesen, *Culte des saints*; Christopher S. Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999); Meri, *Cult of Saints*; Schöller, *Living and the Dead*; Hirschler, "Umstrittene heilige Orte"; Beránek and Tupek, *Temptation of Graves*, esp. 18–69 on the pre-modern period.

126 For example, in Hirschler, "Umstrittene heilige Orte," 114: "Im sunnitischen Islam besteht lediglich ein breiter Konsens darüber, dass die drei Moscheen in Mekka, Medina und Jerusalem als „ḥaram“ (Heiligtum, heilige Stätte) zu bezeichnen sind."

127 This is even largely true of Frenkel, "Muslim pilgrimage."

128 Laoust, *Essai*, 30, n. 2.

practices that he critiqued far more widely: the text of the *fatwā* under discussion here – which links pilgrimage practices to/in Jerusalem with a range of others across Syria and the Mamluk realm more broadly – makes this clear. Yet the fact that the status of Jerusalem as a holy city was an important battleground in many of his other fights needs to be emphasized. There has even been a suggestion that it was the challenge provided by those like Ibn Taymiyya to Jerusalem's and Hebron's/al-Khalīl's sanctity that encouraged the great architectural patronage of Tankiz in those two cities as an "architectural rebuttal."¹²⁹ Historians of the early Islamic centuries are used to the fluid nature of ideas in that period about which sites were to be considered sacred and which could not be. The argument here has been that there is good evidence that such fluidity remained as late as the eighth/fourteenth century, even where the status of Jerusalem's Temple Mount/al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf – including sites as famous and prominent as the Dome of the Rock – was concerned.¹³⁰ Jerusalem was not unquestionably regarded as a holy city in this period, at least not beyond al-Aqṣā Mosque, even if Ibn Taymiyya's more stringent objections were perhaps not widely shared.

Debates over pilgrimage practices and holy places remained important throughout pre-modern Islamic history. Even the value of the *ḥajj* could be questioned, as Jocelyn Hendrickson's study of Andalusī and African Mālikī *fatwās* has clearly demonstrated.¹³¹ Ibn Taymiyya certainly placed great significance on the importance of the *ḥajj*, and, to a lesser extent, the *ʿumra*, as Muslim communal pilgrimage practices as well as in arguments for the necessity of proper Islamic government. As he wrote in a treatise on political theory, *al-Siyāsa al-sharʿiyya*:

It must be known that governance over the people (*wilāyat amr al-nās*) is among the greatest religious obligations: in fact, there is without it no foundation for either religion or [the affairs of] this world ... And because God the Sublime has required commanding right and forbidding wrong, which cannot be accomplished without power and rulership (*imāra*), just as other obligations such as jihad, justice, leadership of the *ḥajj*, congregational prayers and festivals, standing up for the oppressed,

¹²⁹ Kenney, *Power and Patronage*, 153.

¹³⁰ For another study that highlights such fluidity in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods in understandings of the shrines associated with the head of al-Ḥusayn in Ascalon and Cairo, see Talmon-Heller, *Sacred Place*, 87–118.

¹³¹ Jocelyn Hendrickson, "Prohibiting the Pilgrimage: Politics and Fiction in Mālikī *Fatwās*," *Islamic Law and Society* 23 (2016): 161–238.

and maintaining the *ḥudūd* cannot be accomplished without power and rulership.¹³²

Ibn Taymiyya's thoughts on pilgrimage practices to other sites, including Jerusalem, were not therefore devoid of far wider significance. Pilgrimage and sacred sites played an important role in the creation of an Islamic communal identity for many in the Mamluk period and this meant that conflicting ideas about the communal identity could be reflected in conflicting ideas about the memories attached to sacred sites. Memories attached to Jerusalem and its sacred sites were no exception.

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¹³² *MF*, 28:390. This passage is also cited in Anjum, *Politics, Law, and Community*, 261, but I have adapted the translation.