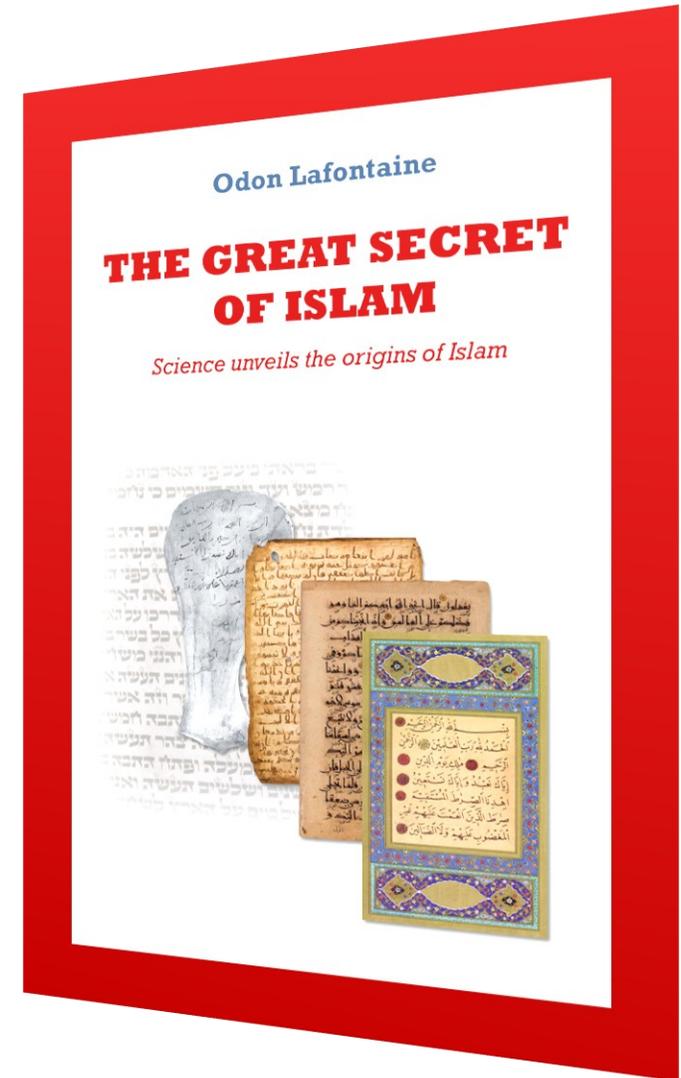


The Mecca question

Odon Lafontaine



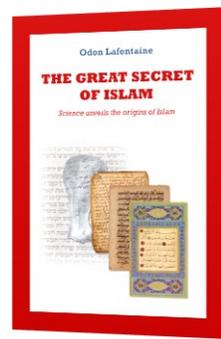
A series of 6 presentations on Lloyd De Jongh's channel
January-March 2026



Jerusalem Or Mecca

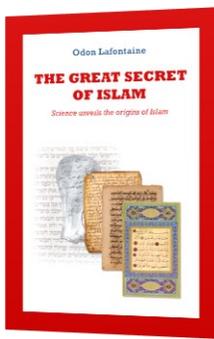
Part 1





HOW THE ISLAMIC NARRATIVE IMPOSES A "MECCAN READING" OF THE QURAN

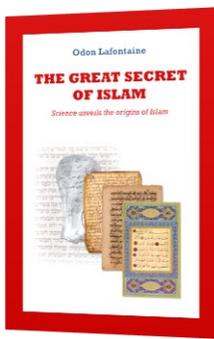
Mecca in Islam



Mecca occupies a foundational role in Islamic sacred history and in Islam

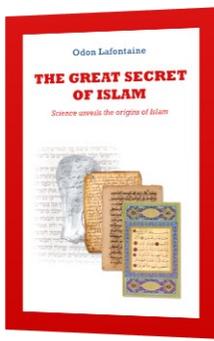
- A religious, commercial, and demographic hub:
 - **Abrahamic centrality**
 - **Pre-Islamic pilgrimage** – Mecca is described as the center of Arabian pagan pilgrimage.
 - **Commercial importance** – The Quraysh are portrayed as long-distance caravan traders connecting Yemen, Levant, Iraq, and beyond.
 - **Urban scale** – The city is implied to have housed a substantial sedentary population.
- The background of the Islamic revelation:
 - The city where Muhammad was born
 - The place where he received the revelation (along with Medina)
 - The objective of his mission as a political and religious leader: to reconquer the city from its polytheistic authorities, restore the true religion there, purify the Kaaba, and establish the Islamic hajj. **Islamic Mecca is part of Muhammad's legacy.**
- The beating heart of Islam: ritual center of the *hajj* (one of Islam's five pillars), drawing millions of pilgrims each year; the rulers of Mecca therefore wield considerable **symbolic and practical influence over Muslims** and Islam.

The pre-Muhammad Islamic narrative about Mecca



- **The first monotheistic sanctuary, built by Adam**
 - Inferred from 2,127: "when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House" ; the existence of foundations presupposes an earlier construction, interpreted in Islam as the first sanctuary built by Adam.
- **The "standing place of Abraham":** The site of Abraham's near-sacrifice of his son (*maqam ibrahim*)
 - Q 37:101–106: "So We gave him good tidings of a forbearing boy. And when he reached with him [the age of] exertion, he said, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think." He said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if God wills, of the steadfast.« And when they had both submitted and he put him down upon his forehead, We called to him, "O Abraham, You have fulfilled the vision." Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good. Indeed, this was the clear **trial**."
- **Abraham and Ishmael (re) built the Kaaba**
 - Q 2:127: "And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed You are the Hearing, the Knowing".
 - Q 22:26: "And [mention, O Muhammad], when We designated for Abraham the site of the House, [saying], "Do not associate anything with Me and purify My House for those who perform Tawaf and those who stand [in prayer] and those who bow and prostrate."
 - Q 14:35: "And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols."
- The Kaaba as the **God's place of worship**
 - Q 2:125: And [mention] when We made the House a place of return for the people and [a place of] security. And take, [O believers], from **the standing place of Abraham** a place of prayer. And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House for those who perform Tawaf and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer]."
 - Q 3:96–97: "Indeed, **the first House** [of worship] established for mankind was that at Beka [Makkah] - blessed and a guidance for the worlds. (97) In it are clear signs [such as] **the standing place of Abraham**. And whoever enters it shall be safe. And [due] to God from the people is a pilgrimage to the House - for whoever is able to find thereto a way
 - Q5,97: "God has made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, standing for the people and [has sanctified] the sacred months and the sacrificial animals and the garlands [by which they are identified]."
- **God's religion fell into oblivion, and Mecca became the holy city of Arabian polytheism**

Muhammad and the islamization of Mecca



- Mecca as **the new prayer direction**

- Q2:144: "We have certainly seen the turning of your face, [O Muhammad], toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qiblah with which you will be pleased. So **turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram**. And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces toward it [in prayer]."

- **A city to be reconquered** by Muhammad and his disciples

- Q48,20: "And God has promised you many (more) spoils to take"
- Q48,24-25: "He (it is) who restrained their hands from you, and your hands from them, in the heart of Mecca ["bi-batni makka"], after he gave you victory over them—God sees what you do. (25) They are those who disbelieved [root KFR], and kept you from the sacred mosque ["masjid al haram"], and (also) the offering, (which was) prevented from reaching its lawful place."
- Q48,27: "27) Certainly God has spoken the truth in the vision to his messenger: "You will indeed enter the sacred mosque, if God pleases, in security, your heads shaved, your hair cut short, not fearing,""

- **A city eventually conquered** by Muhammad and his disciples

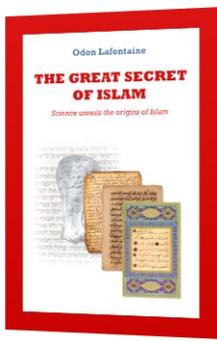
- Q9,7: "How can there be for the polytheists a treaty in the sight of God and with His Messenger, except for those with whom you made a treaty at al-Masjid al-Haram?"

Jerusalem

Part 2

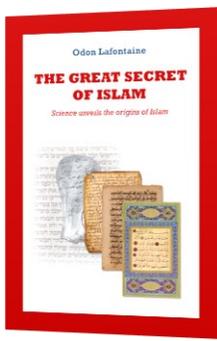
Or Mecca





SOME MAJOR ISSUES WITH MECCA

Environmental constraints: water



- Harsh climate and **water scarcity**
 - Subtropical desert climate; extremely low and irregular rainfall; sparse vegetation; no substantial agricultural hinterland
 - Conditions so severe that they persist even today: for example, 1,300 pilgrims reportedly died from heat, dehydration, and exhaustion during the 2024 *hajj*, despite Saudi Arabia's extensive water-production and cooling infrastructure.
- There is **not enough water** in Mecca to support the population described in the Islamic narrative
 - Limited historical water sources
 - Zam-zam well, fed by a **regional aquifer system** that would be itself fed by rains (supposedly unearthed by Muhammad's grandfather)
 - Other wells and cisterns: Al Arzaqi (*Akhbar Makka*) mentions 4 other wells (Bi`r Maymūn ibn al-Ḥaḍramī, Bi`r al-Ghamr, Bi`r al-`Ajūl, Bi`r Ṭuwā), plus minor wells, cisterns and basins
 - Mentions to water sources are vague in the sira and tradition (see Saljah & al Bethr mentioned in @binimad / sirahmaps.com video)
 - Insufficient water for human and animal needs
 - Approximate minimum daily needs for a population of 500:
 - Human consumption: **1 m³/day minimum** (2L/day per person)
 - Livestock required to support 500 people (including a bit of caravan trading): 150 camels (40L /day) & 500 goats (5L/day each), plus 10 horses (30L/day each) to somehow match the Islamic narrative: **9 m³/day** (excluding irrigation for pastures)
 - Minimal crop irrigation for basic self-sufficiency : **250 to ~550 m³/day**
 - Typical output of a single traditional hand-drawn well: **2 to 3 m³/day maximum** (120L/ hour)

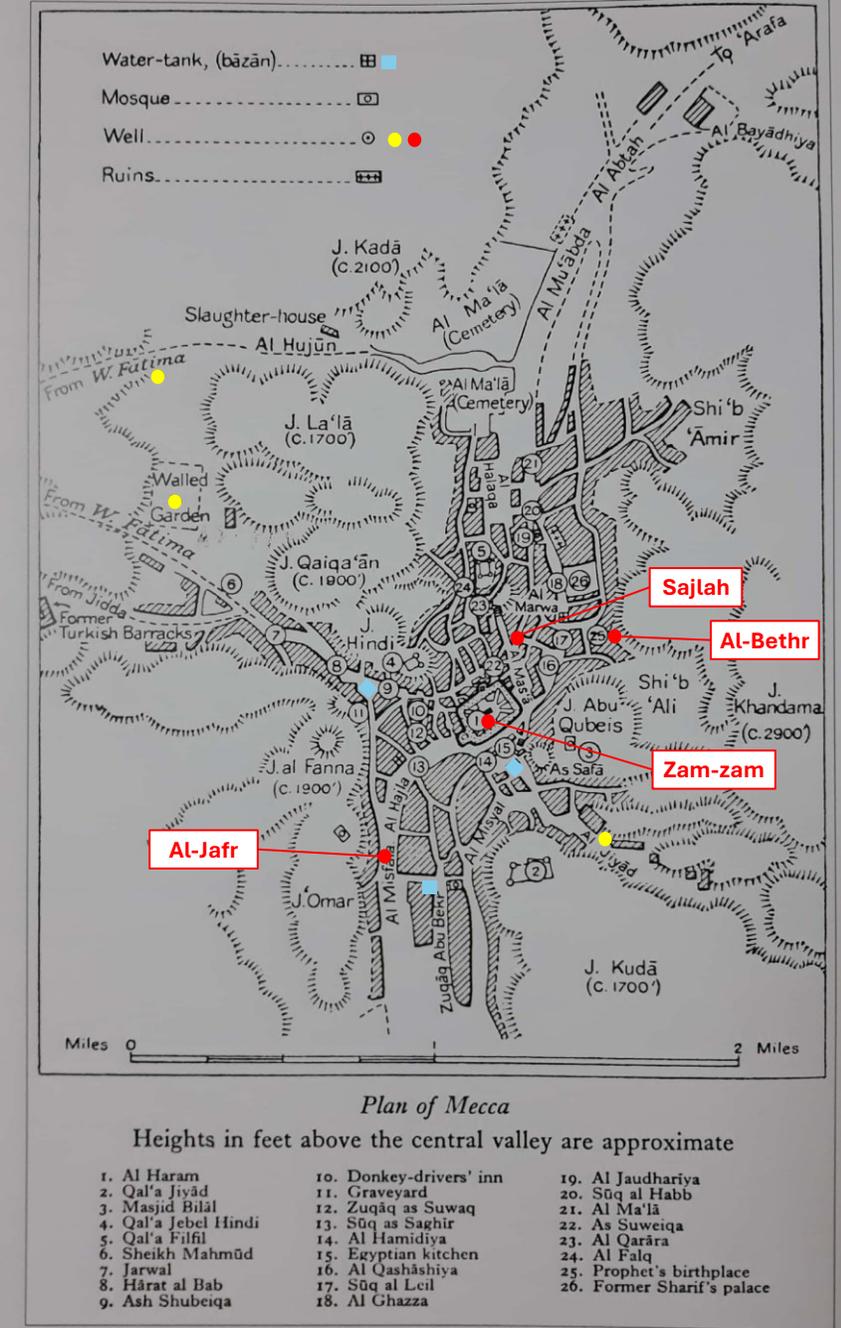
Hydrological reality suggests that available water would have supported only a small, possibly seasonal population—not a city of several thousand inhabitants

Wells in Mecca

Environmental constraints: water

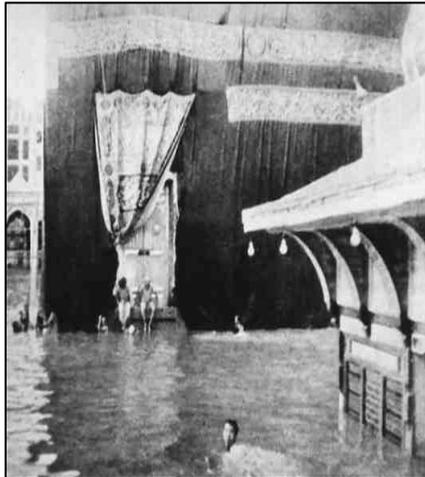
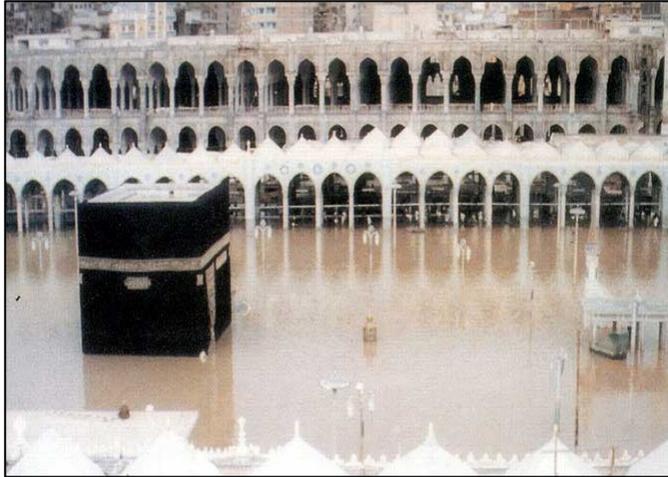
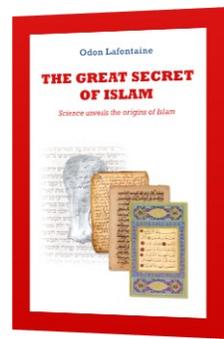


@binimad / sirahmaps.com video



(Fig. 49) Great Britain's Naval Intelligence Division
 Makkah-Arafat Road Map. 1946 (1366 H).
 (شكل 49) خريطة مكة في كتاب الاستخبارات البحرية البريطانية
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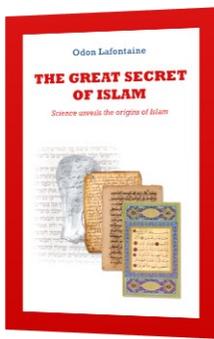
Environmental constraints: violent floods



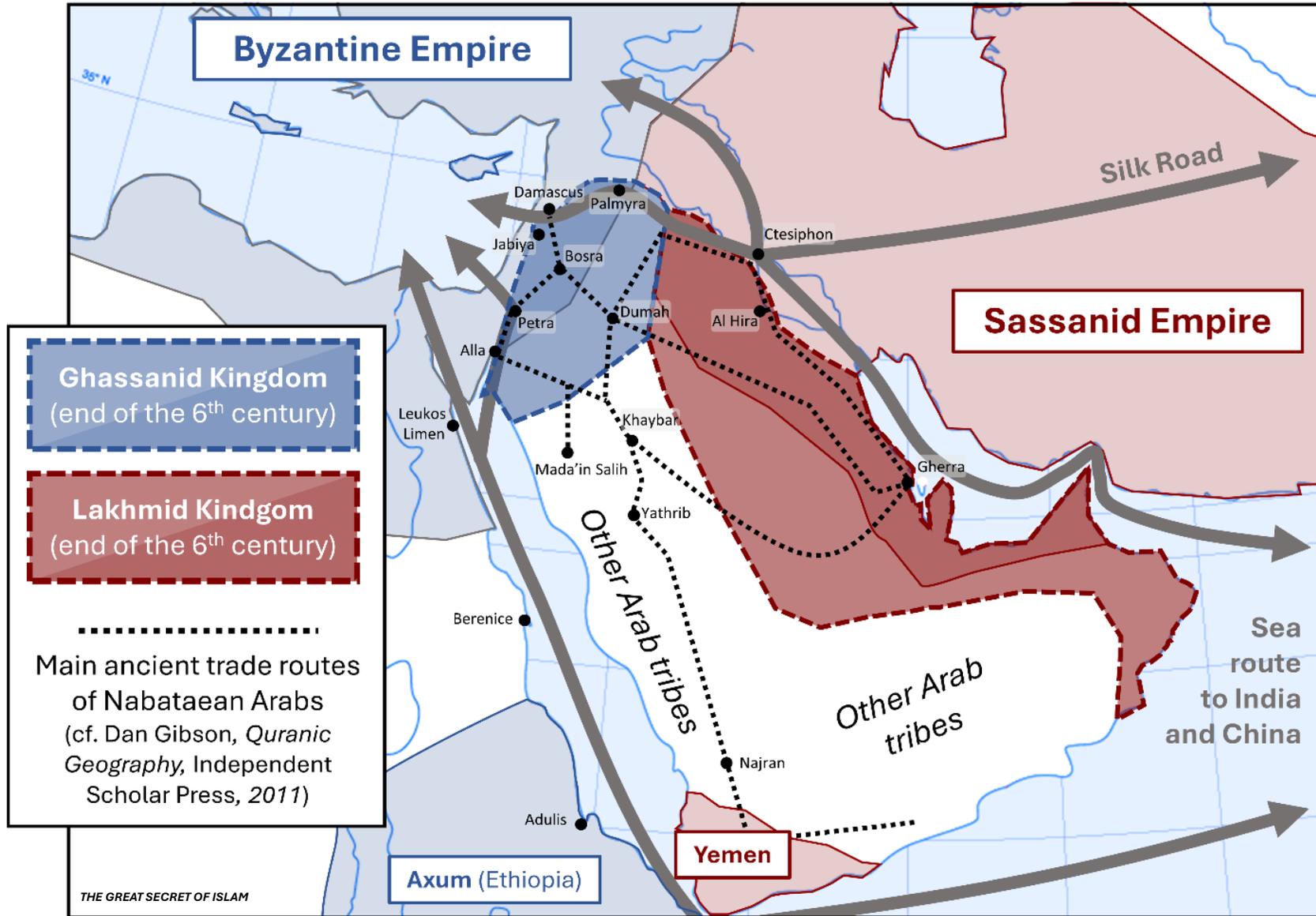
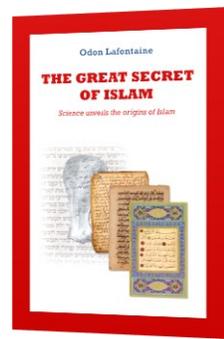
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2y1CP0oXBE>

The 1941 Mecca flood (plus a more recent one)
(Fair use for educational and non-commercial purposes)

The water issue exemplified by *ayn zubaydah*

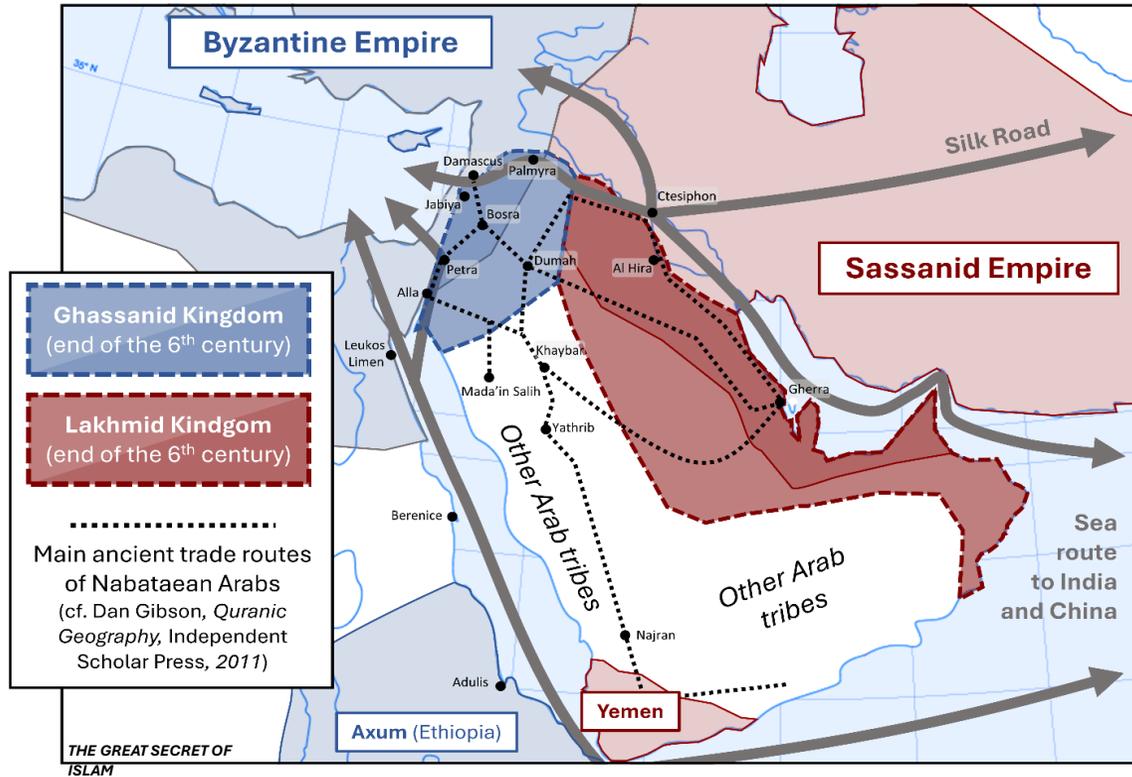


Environmental constraints: isolation



**The Arabs in between
the two great Empires**
(beginning of the 7th century)

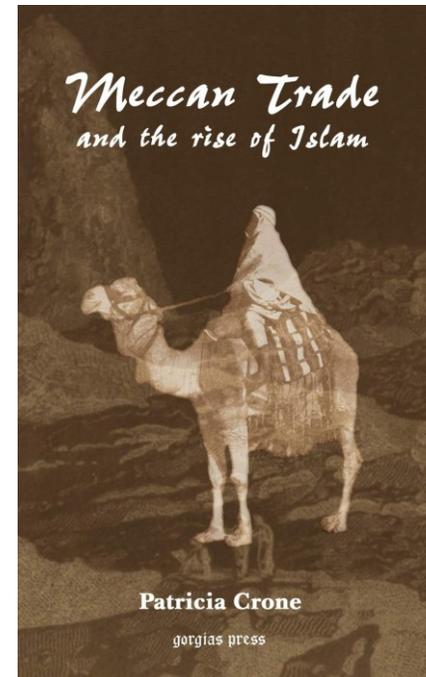
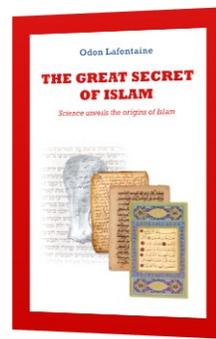
Isolation means no trade



The Arabs in between the two great Empires
(beginning of the 7th century)



Patricia Crone (1945-2015)



Bulletin of SOAS, 70, 1 (2007), 63–88. © School of Oriental and African Studies. Printed in the United Kingdom.

**Quraysh and the Roman army:
Making sense of the Meccan leather trade***

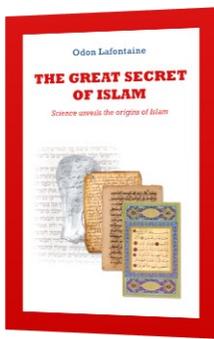
Patricia Crone
Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton
pcrone@ias.edu

Abstract
This paper argues that the trade in leather and other pastoralist products, which the tradition ascribes to the Meccans, could make sense on the assumption that the goods were destined for the Roman army, which is known to have required colossal quantities of leather and hides for its equipment. The hypothesis that the Meccans were servicing the Roman military is examined and found to be impossible to prove in our current state of knowledge; it is at least compatible with the evidence, however, and also highly promising in terms the light it could throw on the political aspects of the rise of Islam.

According to the Islamic tradition, Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe, made their living in pre-Islamic times as traders who frequented a number of places, above all southern Syria, where they sold a variety of goods, above all leather goods and other pastoralist products such as woollen clothing and clarified butter, perhaps live animals as well. That they made (or had once made) a living selling goods of this kind in Syria is the one of the few claims regarding the rise of Islam on which there is complete agreement in the tradition.¹ One is thus inclined to think that there is some truth to it. It raises two problems, however. The first is that the tradition also identifies Quraysh as the pagans (*mushrikān*) who are addressed in the Quran. This is a problem because the Quran itself describes these pagans as agriculturalists rather than traders,² but I shall leave that problem aside here. What follows is based on the assumption that the rise of Islam had something to do with an Arabian community dominated by traders who sold leather goods and other pastoralist products in southern Syria. How this society relates to that reflected in the Quran is problematic, but we may take it that it existed, whether in Mecca, Medina or elsewhere. The purpose of this article is to suggest how the trade could have been viable.

The argument of silence

There is no trace of Mecca in ancient history



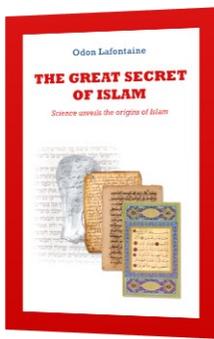
- Silence of ancient sources
 - Crone, *Meccan Trade*
- Absence of ancient remains at Mecca
 - Cf. Sami Angawi, in Basma Atassi's "The man who dreams of old Mecca", *Al Jazeera English*
- No trace of Meccan polytheism
 - C.-J. Robin, "L'Arabie préislamique [pre-Islamic Arabia]", *Le Coran des Historiens*
- Trade had shifted from caravan to maritime routes
 - Crone, *Meccan Trade*
- Quraysh were settled in Syria
 - Gallez, *Le Messie et son prophète*

Jerusalem *Or* Mecca

farmers and fishermen



Part 3

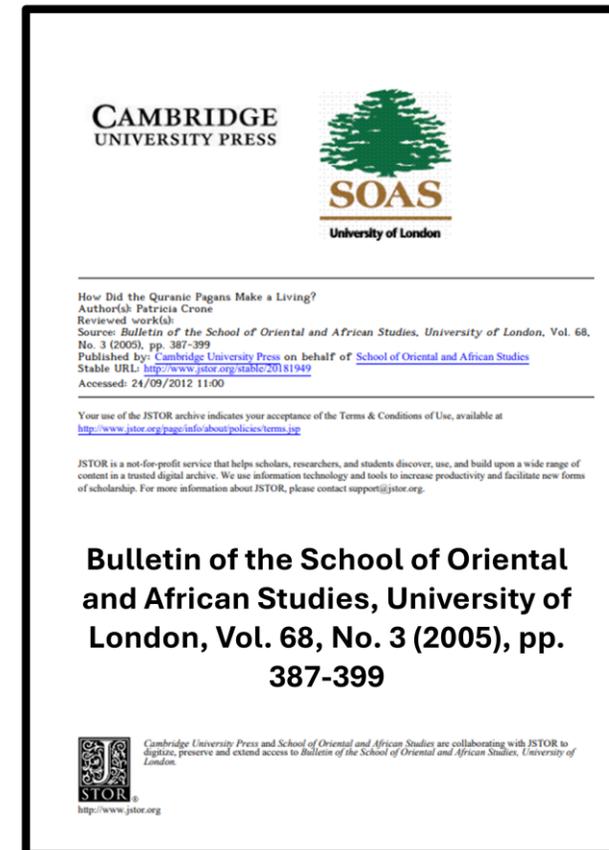
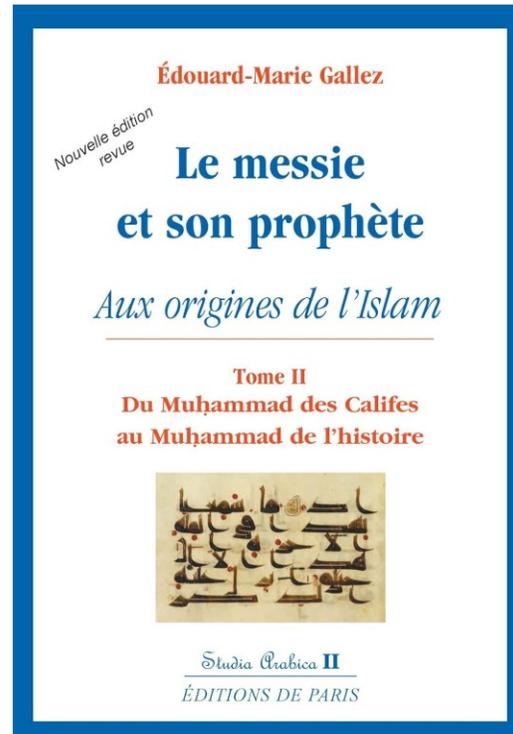
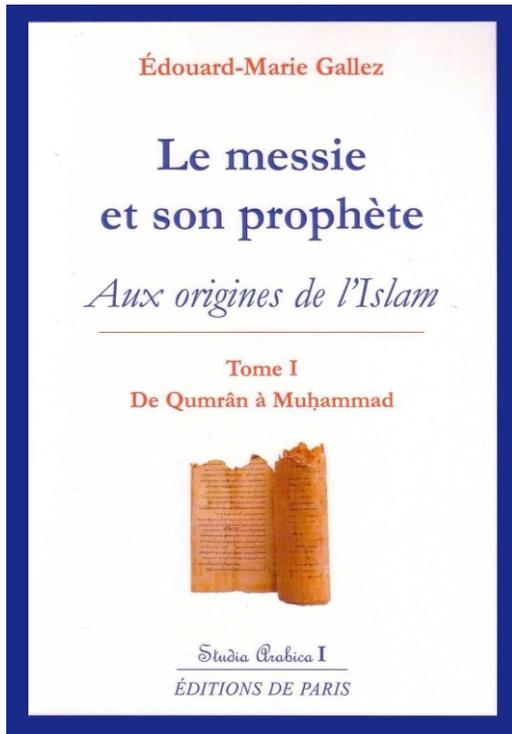
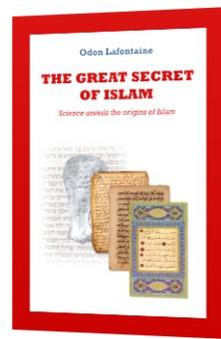


WHAT DOES THE QURAN SAY?

1. "Meccans" are farmers
2. "Meccans" are fishermen
3. "Meccans" dwell around the Dead Sea
4. God's temple
5. The "standing place" of Abraham
6. The prayer direction
7. *hajj & umra*
8. Sacred geography in Mecca and Jerusalem
9. The night journey

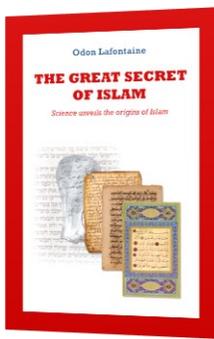
"Meccans" are farmers and fishermen

- É.-M. Gallez, *Le Messie et son prophète*, 2005
- Patricia Crone, "How Did The Quranic Pagans Make A Living?", 2005

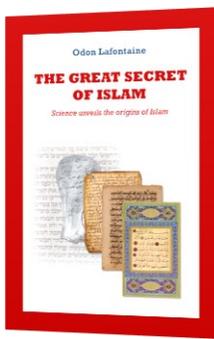


Quran's proclamations to the Meccans depict them as farmers (1/3)

- Q36:33-35 – "And a sign for them [a people whose forefathers were not warned, the Arabs according to the SIN] is the dead earth. We have brought it to life and brought forth from it **grain**, and from it they eat.
 - (34) And We placed therein gardens of **palm trees** and **grapevines** and caused to burst forth therefrom some springs
 - (35) That they may eat of His fruit. And their hands have not produced it, so will they not be grateful"?
- Q56:63-64 – "And have you seen that [seed] which you **sow**?
 - (64) Is it you who makes it grow, or are We the grower"?
- Q80:24 – "Then let mankind look at his food
 - (25) How We poured down water in torrents, (26) Then We broke open the earth, splitting [it with sprouts], (27) And caused to grow within it **grain** (28) And **grapes** and herbage (29) And **olive** and **palm trees** (30) And gardens of dense shrubbery (31) And **fruit** and **grass** (32) [as] enjoyment for you and your **grazing livestock**".

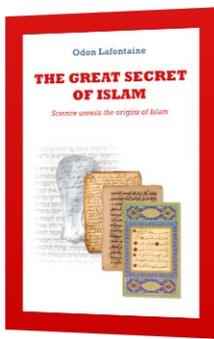


Quran's proclamations to the Meccans depict them as farmers (2/3)



- Q6:136-144 – "And the polytheists assign to God from that which He created of **crops** and **livestock** a share and say, "This is for God," by their claim, "and this is for our partners [associated with Him]." (...)
 - (138) And they say, "These **animals** and **crops** are forbidden (...)
 - (141) And He it is who causes **gardens** to grow, [both] trellised and untrellised, and **palm trees** and **crops** of different [kinds of] food and **olives** and **pomegranates**, similar and dissimilar. Eat of [each of] its fruit when it yields and give its due [zakah] on the day of its harvest. And be not excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess.
 - (142) And of the **grazing livestock** are carriers [of burdens] and those [too] small. Eat of what God has provided for you and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.
 - (143) [They are] eight mates - of the **sheep**, two and of the **goats**, two (...) (144) And of the **camels**, two and of the **cattle**, two (...)"
- Q16:5 – "And the **grazing livestock** He has created for you; in them is warmth and [numerous] benefits, and from them you eat.
 - And for you in them is [the enjoyment of] beauty when you bring them in [for the evening] and when you send them out [to pasture]. (...)
 - (8) And [He created] the **horses**, **mules** and **donkeys** for you to ride and [as] adornment.
 - (80) (...) the hides of the animals tents which you find light on your day of travel and your day of encampment; and from their **wool**, **fur** and **hair** is furnishing and enjoyment for a time".

Quran's proclamations to the Meccans depict them as farmers (3/3)



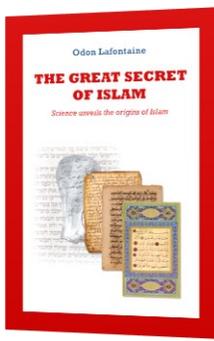
- The preacher speaks to the (Meccan ?) *mushrikūn* and the *mu'minūn* about what they are familiar with.
 - Q13:4 – "And within the land are neighboring plots and gardens of **grapevines** and crops and **palm trees**, [growing] several from a root or otherwise, **watered with one water**; but We make some of them exceed others in [quality of] fruit. Indeed in that are signs for a people who reason".
 - Agricultural Parables:
 - 68:17–33 – The parable of the garden and its two owners.
 - 18:32 – "Set forth for them the example of two men: to one of them We gave two gardens of grapevines, which We surrounded with **date palms**, and between the two We placed **cultivated fields**."
 - 18:33 – Both gardens produced their **crops** without failing in the least, and We caused a stream to flow between them.
 - 18:34 – And he had **fruit**..."
 - How could there have been cultures of grain, dates, olives, vines, pomegranates, palm trees in Mecca?
- Patricia Crone's conclusion:
 - The answer one would have expected the exegetes to come up with is that the passages concerning agriculture refer to places outside Mecca, and above all to Ta'if, where the Meccans owned gardens. What other solution could there be?

It works up to a point, too; for date palms, pomegranates and grapes all fit in effortlessly at Ta'if. **Grain and olives are more of a problem**, however. After the conquests, when Muawiya and other wealthy Qurayshis began a massive agricultural development of the Hijaz, grain came to be harvested there on a major scale, and it could perhaps be argued that some was grown there before the rise of Islam as well. But the tradition invariably associates grain with Syria.

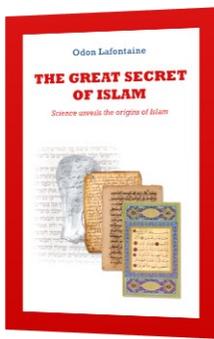
After the conquests there may, for all we know, have been attempts at olive cultivation in the Hijaz, too; but if there were, they did not succeed, for obvious reasons: in its cultivated form, the olive (*Olea europaeana*) is a tree adapted to **Mediterranean conditions**.

Quran's proclamations to the Meccans also depict them as fishermen

- References to sailing and the sea are both numerous and vivid. The people addressed rode not just on cattle, but also on ships (Q23:22; 40:80; 43:12), and they were guided by the stars in darkness on both land and sea (Q6:97; cf. also Q10:22).
 - Q30:46 - God sent the winds "so that the ship may sail at His command and so that you may seek of His bounty"
 - Q16:14 - "You see the ships going through it so that you may seek of His bounty" (cf. also 35:12)
 - Q17:66 - "It is He who makes the ship sail on the sea so that you may seek of His bounty" (variant versions in 22:65; 31:31).
 - When the people addressed were caught in storms at sea they would call upon God alone, but they would ascribe partners to Him when they reached dry land (10:22f.; 29:65; 31:32); and the infidels are compared to men on journeys by land and sea alike in a sura classified as Medinese: their deeds are like the mirage in the desert that a man parched with thirst mistakes for water, or like shadows on a dark ocean with waves piling on top of waves and clouds like shadows piling on top of each other so that one can scarcely see a hand in front of one's eyes (24:39).
 - Q16:14 - "And it is He who subjected the sea for you to eat from it **tender meat** and to extract from it **ornaments** which you wear".

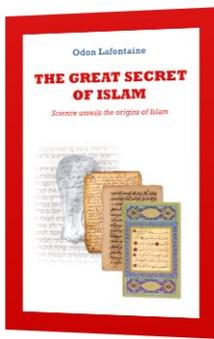


Quran's proclamations to the Meccans depict them as fishing in "two seas"



- The community is described as making use of resources from both freshwater and saltwater.
 - Q35:12 And not alike are the **two bodies of water** [al-baḥrāni, the "two seas"]. One is **fresh and sweet**, palatable for drinking, and one is **salty and bitter**. And from each you eat tender meat and extract ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships plowing through [them] that you might seek of His bounty; and perhaps you will be grateful.
 - 25:53 - And it is He who has released [simultaneously] the **two seas**, one **fresh and sweet** and one **salty and bitter**, and He placed between them a barrier and prohibiting partition.
 - Q55:19-22 – "He released the **two seas**, meeting [side by side] (20) Between them is a barrier [so] neither of them transgresses. (21) So which of the favors of your Lord would you deny? (22) From both of them emerge pearl and coral".

What are the "two seas"?



A "BARRIER" BETWEEN THE "TWO SEAS"

Odon LAFONTAINE - 10/31/2024 (rev. 06/18/2025)
odon.lafontaine@gmail.com - www.thegreatsecretofislam.org

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Claiming a "Quranic miracle", Islamic apologetics has highlighted a curious theme in the Quran: the existence of a "barrier" between two seas, one saltwater and the other freshwater. However, a closer examination of the verses that mention this "barrier" suggests new understandings of the probable location they describe, with indications pointing to regions far removed from Mecca.

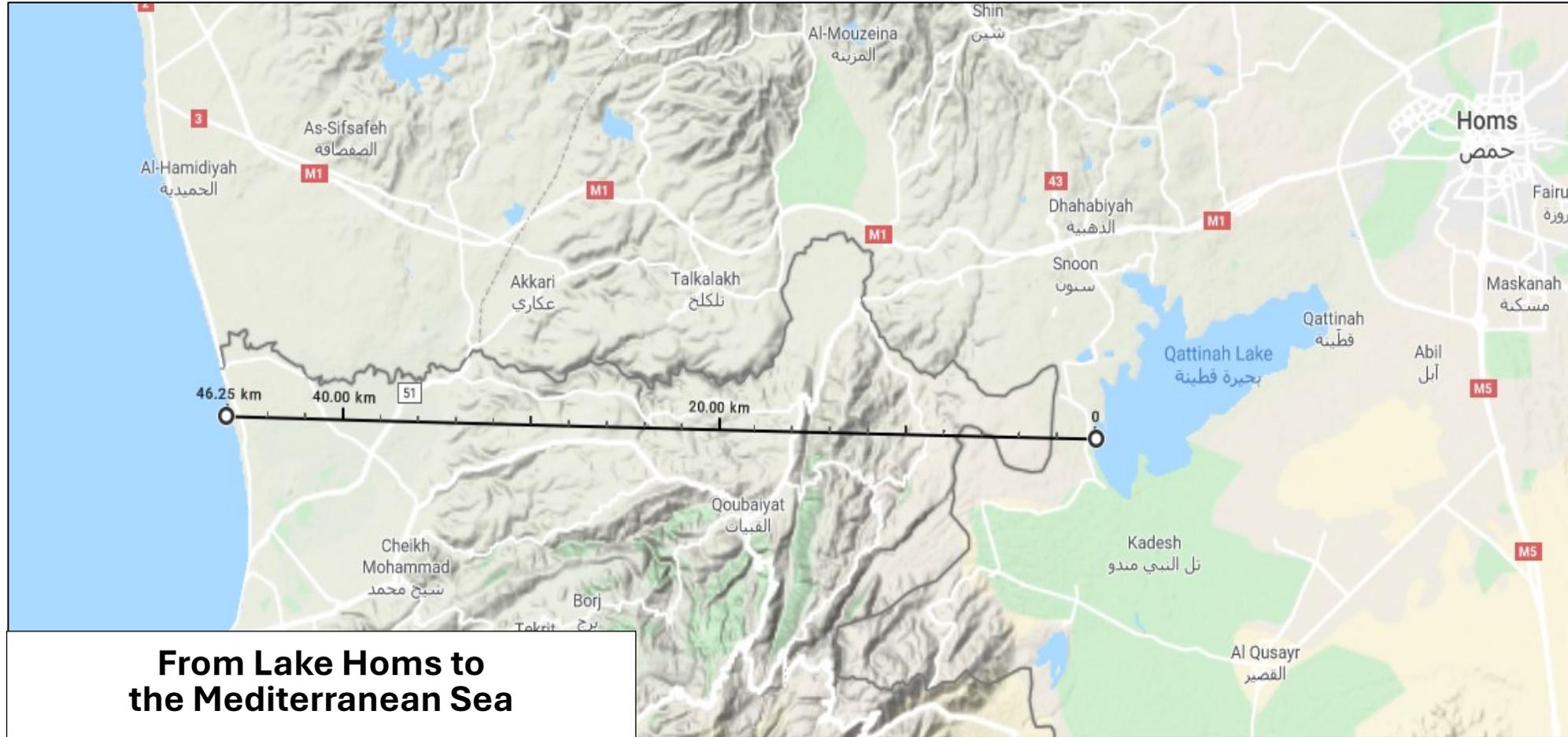
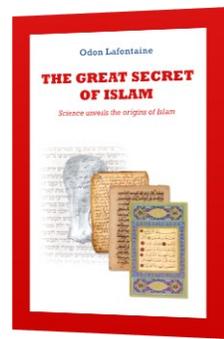


The Jordan river flowing from the Sea of Galilee

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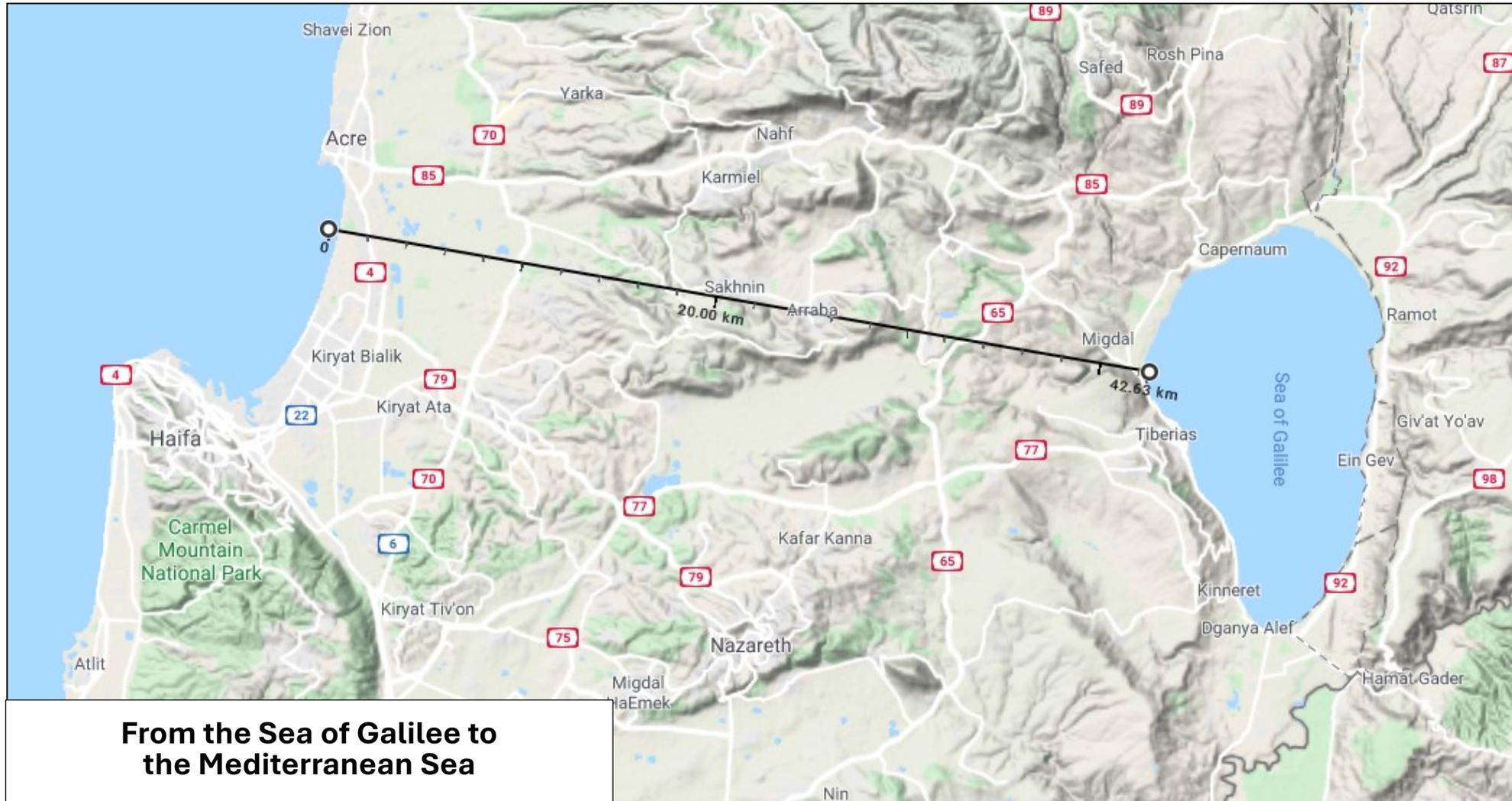
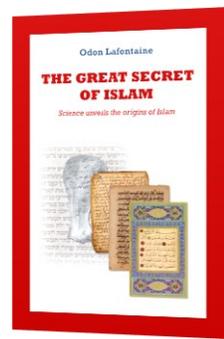
- A freshwater sea meeting a saltwater sea, separated by a "forbidden partition"
 - A Quranic miracle?
 - ...or the description of a saltwater sea located near a freshwater sea, separated by dry land (the "barrier") yet connected by rivers, allowing the saltwater and freshwater seas to meet...
 - ...or the description of Bahrain's freshwater springs emerging on beaches or on the sea floor?

Where are the "two seas"? (1/5)



From Lake Homs to the Mediterranean Sea

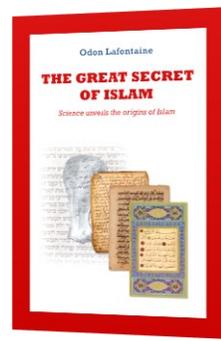
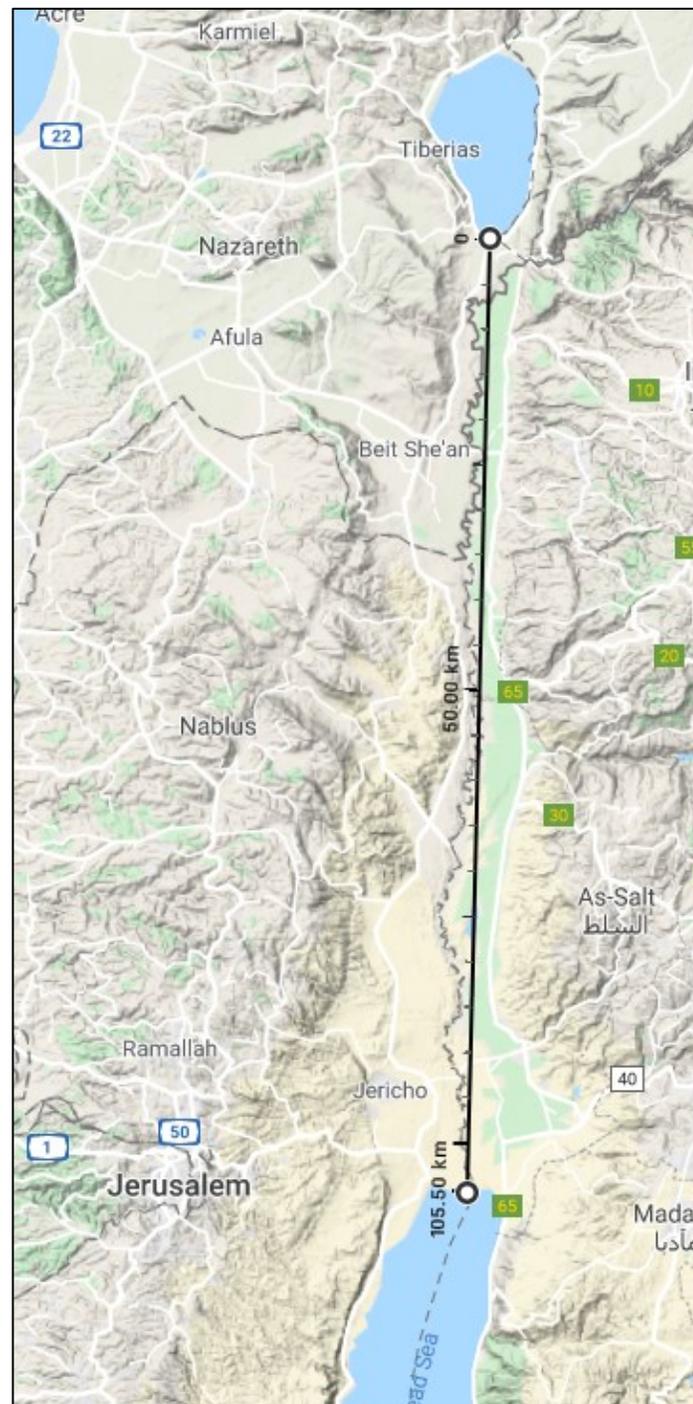
Where are the "two seas"? (2/5)



From the Sea of Galilee to the Mediterranean Sea

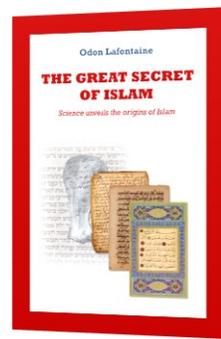
Where are the "two seas"? (3/5)

From the See of Galilee to the Dead Sea through the Jordan river

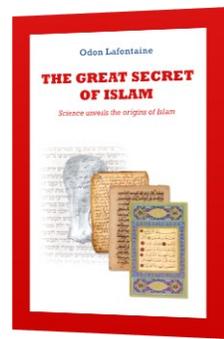


Where are the "two seas"? (4/5)

From Lake Homs to the Mediterranean Sea through the Orontes river



Where are the "two seas"? (5/5)



Location of submarine springs in Bahrain (Messer, Sandberg 1975)

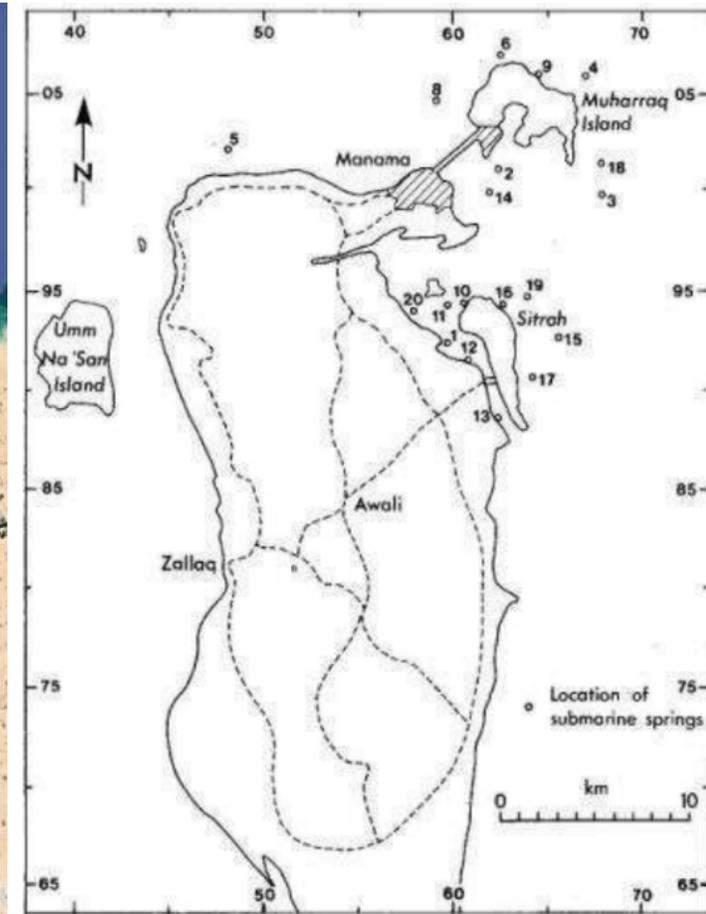
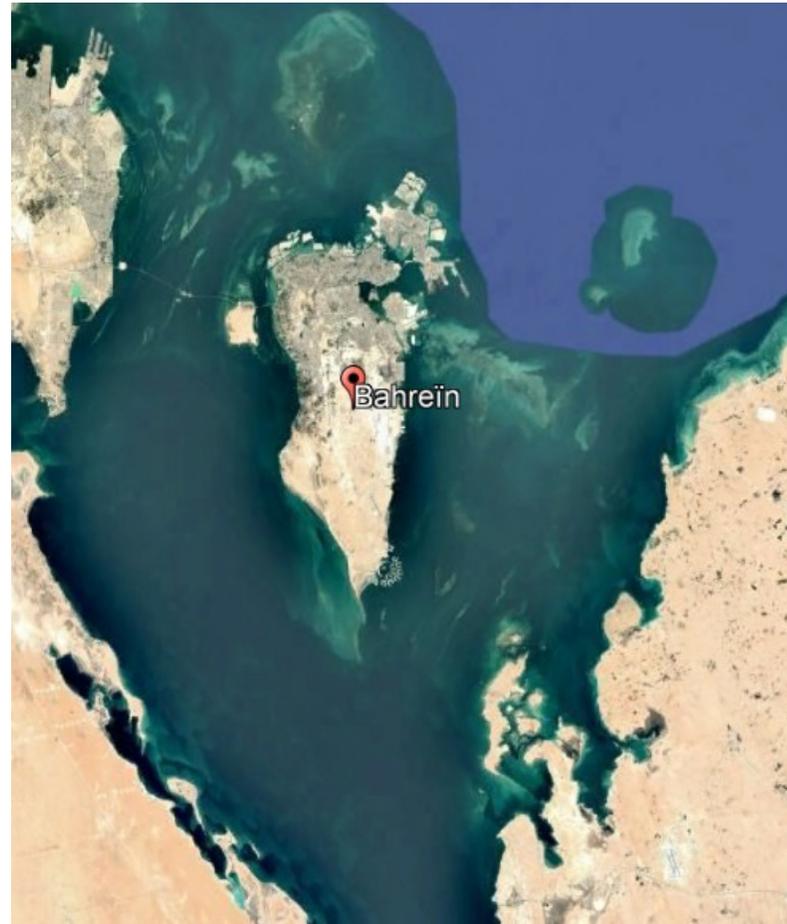
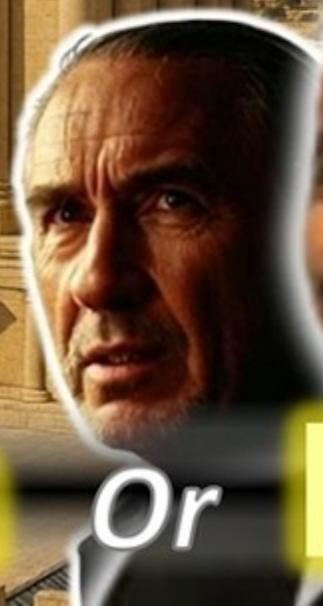
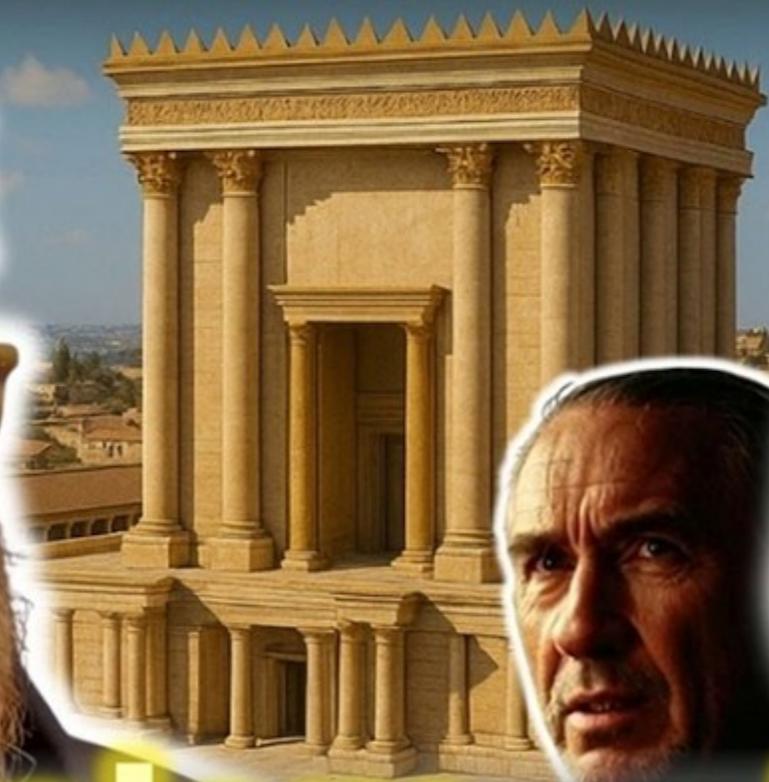


Figure 13.2. Location of submarine springs listed in Table 13.2 (Source: Messrs. Sandberg, 1975).

Jerusalem

All Along



Jerusalem

Or

Mecca

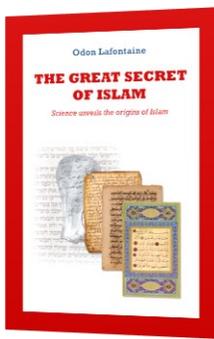
Part 4

"Meccans" dwelling around the Dead Sea

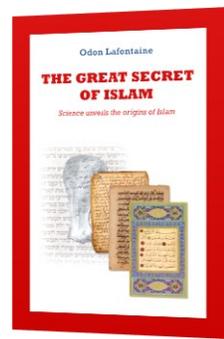
(1/2)

- The "pillars" of Lot

- Q37:133-137 – "And indeed, **Lot** was among the messengers. (134) [So mention] when We saved him and his family, all, (135) Except his wife among those who remained [with the evildoers]. (136) Then We destroyed the others. (137) And indeed, **you pass by them in the morning (138) and at night.** Then will you not use reason?"



"Meccans" dwelling around the Dead Sea (2/2)



Monastery of St Lot' pillar

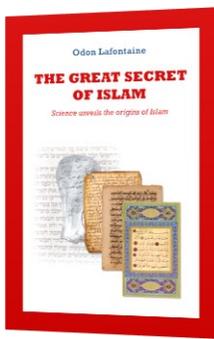


Mount Sodom's pillar

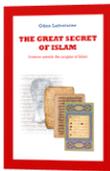
The **Dead Sea** also commonly called:

- *Baḥr Lūṭ* - “Sea of Lot”
- *Buḥayrat Lūṭ* - “Lake of Lot”

God's temple: *bayt* & *masjid al haram*



- ***bayt*** (Arabic): 65 occurrences in the Quranic text
 - "The" temple (as the "unique" house of God) : 16 occurrences (at least)
 - *al bayt, bayt al haram, baytiya, bayt al atiq...*
 - As "house" (as a building) & other temples: 48 (more or less)
 - *beit* (Heb. & Aramaic): house → temple → the Temple of Jerusalem
 - Derived: "house of something" → Beit Rome (Rome); Beit Iounai (Greece); Beit Din (house of judgement – nowadays: rabbinical court) ; Arabic equivalent: *ahl al X*
- ***masjid***: 28 occurrences (including 13 as *masjid al haram*)
 - Any place of prostration, of adoration, of worship
 - From the Arabic verb *sajada* (Aramaic : *sejid*) : to prostrate, to bow down
 - Derived: mosque
- ***haram***:
 - Forbidden, unlawfull (\neq *halal*); derived: sacred (because it is forbidden) in the ancient sense, as in taboo
- ***masjid al-haram***: 13 occurrences
 - "Forbidden place of worship"
 - Derived: "the sacred place of worship" → place surrounding the Kaaba according to the SIN



The *bayt* in the Quran (16 occurrences as a "unique" place of worship)

Q2,125. And when we made **the Temple** a place of return for mankind and (a place) of security and (said) : "Take **the standing place of Abraham** (as) a place of prayer" and we made a covenant with Abraham and Ishmael that "You both purify **my Temple** for the ones who go around (it), and those who are devoted and those who bow down, and those who prostrate."(...)

Q2,127. And when [then] Abraham and Ishmael were raising [will raise] the foundations of **the Temple**: "O our Lord, accept this from us! For Thou art the Hearer, the All-Knowing".

Q2,158. As Safa and Al Marwah are indeed among the sacred places of God. Therefore, whoever makes **the pilgrimage to the Temple** or makes **Umrah** does not commit a sin by going back and forth between these two mounts.

Q3,96. Indeed, **the first Temple** set up for the people is the one of Bakka, blessed and a guidance for the worlds.

Q3,97. (...) And it is a duty to God to go on **the Pilgrimage to the Temple**. Who is able able to finds a way,

Q5,2. (...) Do not violate the rites of God and not the sacred month and not the sacrificial animals and not the garlanded and not those coming to **the Sacred Temple** seeking bounty of their Lord. (...)

Q5,97. God instituted the Kaaba, **the Sacred Temple**, as a place of gathering [standing] for people. (He instituted) the holy month, the offering (of animals,) and the garlands, so that you may know that truly God knows all that is in the heavens and on earth.

Q835. And their prayer [of those who cover-KFR, cf. Q8:30], near **the Temple**, is only hissing and clapping of hands: "Taste ye then the chastisement, because of your disbelief [KFR]"

Q14,37. O our Lord! I [Abraham] have settled some of my descendants in a valley without agriculture, near **Your Sacred Temple**, that they may perform prayer.

Q22,26. When we settled **the place** [*makān* : the place [as the place of what has been, ≠ *maqām*]of the **Temple** for Abraham: "Do not associate anything with me but purify my **Temple** for the ones **who go around** (it), and **the ones who stand**, and the ones who bow, (and) the ones who prostrate themselves."

Q22,29. then let them end their prescribed duties and fulfil their vows and **circumambulate the Ancient Temple**.

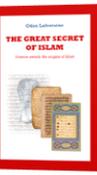
Q22,33. (...) then their place of sacrifice is at **the Ancient Temple**.

Q52,4. And by **the Temple** frequented!

Q106,3. So let them worship the Lord of **this Temple**

Other **bayt** occurrences that might point to "the" **bayt** :

11:73 & 33:33 - *ahl al-bayt* (Abraham & wife, "wives of the prophet")



The *masjid al-haram* in the Quran (13 occurrences)

Q2,144. (...) So turn your face **towards the forbidden place of worship** (...)

149. And from wherever you start forth, turn your face towards **the forbidden place of worship** ...

150. And from wherever you start forth, turn your face towards **the forbidden place of worship** ...

Q3,191. (...) But do not fight them near **the forbidden place of worship** until they fight you there.

Q2,196. And perform for God **the Pilgrimage** and **the Umrah** (...) This is prescribed for him whose family does not live near **the forbidden place of worship** .

Q2,217. They ask you about fighting in the holy months. - Say: "Fighting therein is a great sin, but more grievous in the sight of God is to obstruct the path of God, **the forbidden place of worship** and to be ungodly [KFR] to Him and, and to expel there from His people. Oppression [*fitna*] is worse than murder."

Q5,2. (...) And let not incite you the hatred for a people as they stopped you from **the forbidden place of worship** that you commit transgression (...)

Q8,34. What is it that they have that God does not punish them, while they hinder (the believers) from **the forbidden place of worship**, though they are not its guardians, for its guardians are only the pious.

Q9,7. How can there be for the associationists a **covenant** that is accepted by God and His Messenger? Except for those with whom you have made a **covenant** near **the forbidden place of worship** . As long as they are upright to you, then you be upright to them.

Q9,19. Do you make the providing of water to **the pilgrims** and the **maintenance** of **the forbidden place of worship** comparable to that of one who believes in God and the Last Day and fights in the way of God ? They are not equal in the sight of God, nor does God guide the unjust.

Q9,28. The associationists are unclean: let them not approach **the forbidden place of worship** after this final year,

Q17,1. Glory and Purity to Him who by night made His servant [Moses?] travel from **the forbidden place of worship** to the Far Mosque (...)

Q22,25. Indeed those who disbelieve [KFR] and obstruct the way of God and of **the forbidden place of worship**, which We have established for the people: both those who reside therein and those who pass through... Whoever seeks to commit sacrilege therein unjustly, We shall make him taste a painful punishment

Q48,25. They are the ones who disbelieved [KFR] and hindered you from **the forbidden place of worship** and prevented the offerings from reaching their place of immolation.

Q48,27. Surely, you will enter **the forbidden place of worship**, God willing, in safety, having shaved your heads or cut your hair, without any fear

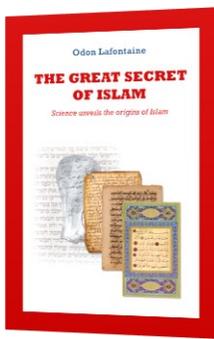
2 other *masjid* occurrences that might point to the *masjid al haram*:

Q17:7 as Jerusalem's Temple (and its 70 destruction of the second Temple by Titus)

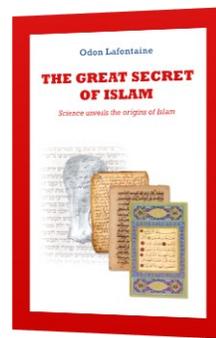
Q9:107 as the third Temple built around 638?

The "standing place" of Abraham

- **maqām ibrahim**: the place where Abraham "stood"
 - **QWM root** [qāf wāw mīm - ق و م]: to stand – 660 occurrences in the Quranic text, many derived forms
 - *qāma*: to stand; to stand for (to defend); to stand before God; to stand firm; to stand in prayer
 - 4th form *aqāma*: to stand and "having stood" as in performing the standing prayer; to rely on
 - Q2,238. "Guard strictly on the prayers and the middle prayer and **stand up** [*qūmū*] for God devoutly obedient."
 - Q2,43. "And **establish** [*aqīmū*] the prayer [perform the *salat*] and give alms [*zakat*] and bow down with those who bow down."
 - Q5:97. " God has made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, standing (*qiyāman*, an establishment, a gathering place) for the people
 - *maqām*: the place, the location (as the place where one stood)
 - 2 occurrences of **maqām ibrahim**
 - Q2,125. And when we made **the temple** a place of return for mankind and (a place) of security and (said) : "Take the **standing place of Abraham** (as) a place of prayer"
 - Q3,96-97. Surely **the first Temple** laid down for the people was indeed that at Becca, as a blessed (house) and a guidance for the worlds. In it are clear signs : **the standing place of Abraham**.
 - Some other occurrences of the QWM root (qāf wāw mīm - ق و م) pointing to the "place of Abraham" according to the context:
 - Q5,97; Q14,14; Q17,79; Q22,26; Q44,51 (and maybe others)



The *maqam ibrahim* in the Quran



Q2,125 And when we made **the Temple** a place of meeting and security for the people, and (said), 'Take **the standing place of Abraham** as a place of prayer.

Q3,96 Surely **the first Temple** laid down for the people was indeed that at **Becca**, as a blessed (house) and a guidance for the worlds.

Q3,97 In it are **clear signs** : **the standing place of Abraham**. and whoever enters it is safe.

Q5,97 God instituted the Kaaba, **the Sacred Temple**, as **a place of gathering** [*qiyāman* – "a standing"] for people. (He instituted) the holy month, the offering (of animals,) and the garlands, so that you may know that truly God knows all that is in the heavens and on earth.

Q17,79 And from the night so wake up and pray with it, as additional for you, maybe that your Lord [*rabb*] will raise you to a **desired standing place** [*maqam mahmud* – "praiseworthy" according to the SIN].

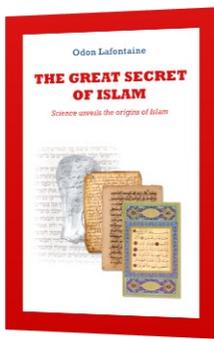
Q22,26 When we settled **the place** [*makān* : the place (as the place of what has been, ≠ *maqām*]of the **Temple (bayt)** for Abraham: "Do not associate anything with me but purify my **Temple (bayt)** for the ones who go around (it), and **the ones who stand**, and the ones who bow, (and) the ones who prostrate themselves."

The *maqam ibrahim* in Mecca

The "clear signs" of the "standing place of Abraham"?



bayt & *masjid al-haram* & *maqam ibrahim* are in Jerusalem



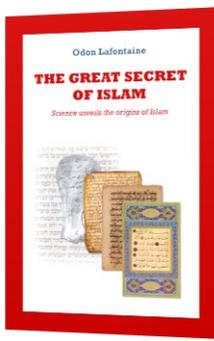
- According to the Quran, *bayt*, *masjid al-haram* & *maqam Ibrahim* are in the same place
- Some "clear verses" mention the "standing place" of Abraham (Q3,97 : *ayatun bayyinatun*, meaning "clear verses" and not "clear signs", as in Q24,34 ; 26,2 ; 27,1; 28,2) and of the first temple (*bayt*)

Gn 22 2. "Take your son," God said, "your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to **the land of Moriah**. Offer him there as a burnt offering on **one of the mountains**, which I will show you." (...) **9.** When they arrived at the place God had designated, Abraham **built the altar** there and arranged the wood. He bound his son Isaac and placed him on the altar, atop the wood. [cf. Q37,101]

2 Chr3 1. Then Solomon began to build the Temple [Heb.: *beit*] of YHWH in **Jerusalem** on **Mount Moriah**, where (YHWH) had appeared to his father David. This was **the place** [Heb.: *maqom*, "the standing place"] that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

[see also Sunan an-Nasa'i 693, Book 8, Hadith 6: ""When Sulayman bin Dawud finished building **Bayt Al-Maqdis...**"]

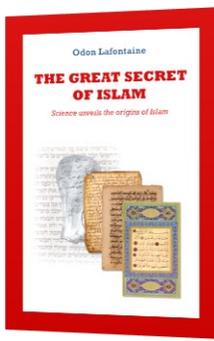
The Quran seems to acknowledge Jerusalem as "the place of Abraham"



- The Quran legitimates the **Temple of Jerusalem** (referring to its **sanctuary**, the "Holy Place")
 - **Q3,37-39** : (...) Whenever Zachariah visited her (Maryam) in the **sanctuary** [*mirhab*] (...) Then called him the angels when he was **standing** (in prayer) [*qāimun*] in the **sanctuary** [*mirhab*] (...)
 - **Q19,11** : So he (Zachariah) came out to his people from the **sanctuary** [*mirhab*] (...)
 - **Q38,21** : And has (there) come to you (the) news (of) the litigants when they climbed over the wall of the **sanctuary** [*mirhab*] (...)

What is the *qibla* (prayer direction) ?

- ***qbl*** [*qāf bā lām* - ق ب ل]: before
- ***qibla***: what is before
 - the tradition
 - the tradition concerning the prayer
 - the direction of the prayer
 - Heb. *qabalah* [קַבָּלָה]: the tradition from the ancestors
 - the Qabalah/Kabbalah/Cabala
 - ***qib'lat*** : the tradition, as in the tradition of a direction of prayer
- **The turning** (of oneself, of the face) : *tuwallū wajhu & taqalluba wajhika*



The *qibla* in the Quran (and the "turning")

Q2,115. The East [sunrise] and the West [sunset] (belong) to God, so wherever **you turn**, there is **the face** of God. Surely God is embracing, knowing.

Q2,142. The fools among the people will say, "What has **turned** them from **the tradition** [of the prayer direction] which they were used to?" Say: "The East [sunrise] and the West [sunset] (belong) to God. He guides whomever He pleases to a straight path."

Q2,143. And this we made you a community (of the) middle way so that you will be witnesses over the mankind and the apostle will be a witness on you. And not we made **the tradition** which you were used to except that we made evident who follows the apostle from who turns back on his heels. And indeed, it was certainly a great (test) except for those who (are) guided by God. And not will God let go waste your faith. Indeed, God is full of kindness, most merciful.

Q2,144. Indeed we see the **turning of your face** towards the heaven so we will surely **turn you** (according to) **a tradition** you will be pleased with. So **turn your face** towards the direction of **the forbidden place of worship** and wherever that you are, **turn your faces** in its

direction. And indeed those who were given the Book [Jews] surely know that it is the truth from their Lord [*rabbi*] and God is not unaware of what they do.

Q2,145. And even if you come to those who were given the Book with all the signs [*ayatin*, verses], not they would follow **your tradition**, and not (will) you (be) a follower (of) **their tradition**. And not some of them (are) followers (of the) **tradition** (of) others. And if you followed their desires after what came to you of the knowledge, indeed you (would) then (be) surely among the wrongdoers.

Q2,146. Those who were given the Book [Jews], they recognize it like they recognize their sons. And indeed, a group of them, surely they conceal the truth while they know.

Q2,147. The truth is from your Lord [rabbi], so (do) not be among the doubters.

Q2,148. And for everyone (is) a **turning of his face** so race to the good (...)

Q2,149. And from wherever you start forth, **turn your face** in the direction of **the forbidden place of worship** and indeed, it (is) surely the truth from your Lord [*rabbi*]. And not (is) God

unaware of what you do.

Q2,150. And from wherever you start forth, **turn your face** in the direction of **the forbidden place of worship** and wherever that you are **turn your faces** in its direction so that not will be for the people against you any argument except those who wronged among them; so (do) not fear them but fear me, and that I complete my favor upon you and so that you may (be) guided.

Q2,151. as we sent among you an apostle from you (who) recites to you our verses and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you what not you were knowing.

Q2,177. It is not [the] righteousness that you **turn your faces** toward the East [sunrise] and the West [sunset]

Q10, 87. (...) And we inspired to Moses and his brother that: "Settle your people in Egypt (in) **Temples** [*buyūtan*, houses] and make your Temples according to **the tradition** and perform the prayer and give glad tidings to the believers.

What does the Quran actually say of the prayer direction?



The former *qibla*

Q2,115. The East [sunrise] and the West [sunset] (belong) to God, so wherever **you turn**, there is **the face** of God. Surely God is embracing, knowing.

Q2,142. The fools among the people will say, "What has **turned** them from **the tradition** [of the prayer direction] which they were used to?" Say: "The East [sunrise] and the West [sunset] (belong) to God. He guides whomever He pleases to a straight path."

Q2,144. Indeed, we see the **turning of your face** towards the heaven

Q2,177. It is not [the] righteousness that you **turn your faces** toward the East [sunrise] and the West [sunset]

Is this a direction of prayer toward Jerusalem? Who prayed according to a direction determined by the sunrise and the sunset?

The new *qibla*

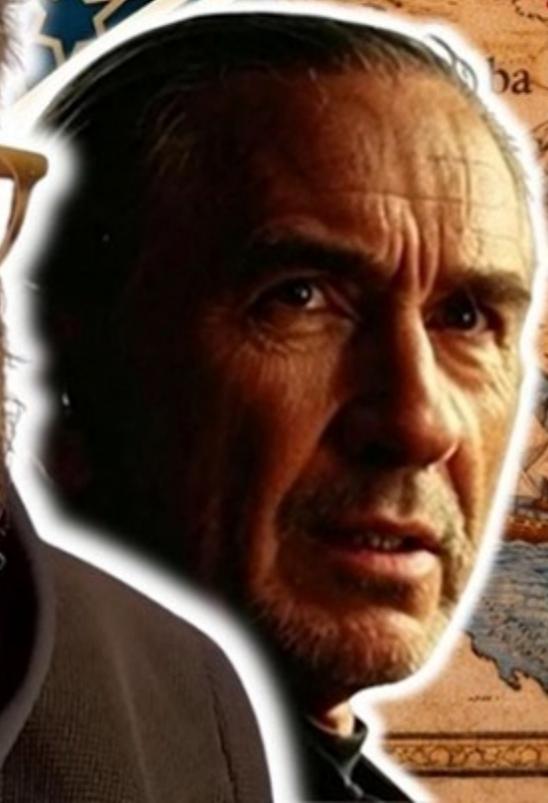
Q2,144. (...) So **turn your face** towards the direction of **the forbidden place of worship** and wherever that you are, **turn your faces** in its direction. And indeed, those who were given the Book [Jews] surely know that it is the truth from their Lord [*rabbi*] and God is not unaware of what they do.

Q2,145. And even if you come to those who were given the Book [Jews] with all the signs [*ayatin*, verses], not they would follow **your tradition** [praying towards the place where Jesus will return], and not (will) you (be) a follower (of) **their tradition**. And not some of them (are) followers (of the) **tradition** (of) others. And if you followed their desires after what came to you of the knowledge [the return of Jesus], indeed you (would) then (be) surely among the wrongdoers.

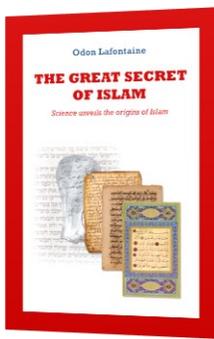
This refers to a direction of prayer toward Jerusalem, which the Jews were already observing; however, the believers did not adopt this new direction in order to become like them.

Jerusalem *to* Mecca

Part 5



The *hajj* & *umra*



- **hajj** [ḥā jīm jīm - ح ج ج]: the great pilgrimage to Mecca, during the sacred month
 - No logical connection to the Arabic etymology HJJ – "to argue" (19 occurrences)
 - 1 occurrence of the verb *ḥajja*: to perform the *hajj*
 - 9 occurrences of the noun *ḥajj* + 1 occurrence of *ḥijj*
 - 1 occurrence of *ḥāji*: pilgrim
- **umrah** [ʿ ayn mīm rā - ع م ر]: "to visit a populated place"; the small pilgrimage to Mecca
 - No logical connection to the Arabic etymology aMR – "to maintain", "to build"
 - 2 occurrences of the noun *um'rat* (عُمْرَة): Umrah
 - 1 occurrence of the verb *is'ta 'mara* (أَسْتَعْمَرَ): to perform Umrah
 - 4 other occurrences of the 'MR root linked to the *masjid al haram* or the *bayt*: Q9,17,18,19 (the "maintaining" of the "Sacred Mosque"); Q52,4 (the "frequentation" of the *bayt*)
 - + Q30,9 (2 occurrences pertaining to a "building")?

hajj & umrah in the Quran

The circumambulation



2,158. Indeed, the **Safa** and the **Marwah** (are) from (the) symbols (of) God. So whoever **performs the hajj** (of) **the Temple** or **performs umrah** so no blame on him that **he walks between** (both of them).

2,189. They ask you about the new moons [sacred months]. Say "They (are) indicators of periods for the people, and (for) **the hajj**."

2,196. (...) And complete **the hajj** and **the umrah** for God. And if you are held back then (offer) whatever (can be) obtained with ease of the sacrificial animals. And (do) not shave your heads until reaches the sacrificial animals (to) its destination. Then whoever is among you ill or he (has) an ailment of his head then a ransom of fasting or charity or sacrifice. Then when you are secure then whoever took advantage of **the umrah** followed (by) **the hajj**, then (offer) whatever (can be) obtained with

ease of the sacrificial animal. But whoever (can) not than a fast (of) three days during **the hajj** and seven (days) when you return. That (is) for (the one) whose not is his family present (near) **the forbidden place of worship**.

2,197. (For) **the hajj** (are) months well known, then whoever undertakes therein **the hajj** then no sexual relations and no wickedness and no quarrelling during **the hajj** (...)

3,97. In it are clear signs: the **standing place of Abraham**. Whoever enters it is secure. **hajj** to **the Temple** is (an obligation) on the people to God – (for) anyone who is able (to make) a way to it

9,3. (...) And an announcement from God and his apostle to the people (on the) day of **the hajj** that God (is) free from obligations (of) (to) the associationists and so is his apostle.

9,17. It is not for the polytheists to **maintain** [*ya'murū*] the mosques of God [while] witnessing against themselves with disbelief.

9,19. Do you make the providing of water to **the pilgrims** [*hajj*] and the **maintenance** [*'imārata*] of **the forbidden place of worship** comparable to that of one who believes in God and the Last Day and fights in the way of God ? They are not equal in the sight of God, nor does God guide the unjust.

22,27. And proclaim **the hajj** among the people. Let them come to you on foot and on every lean animal. They will come from every remote mountain pass

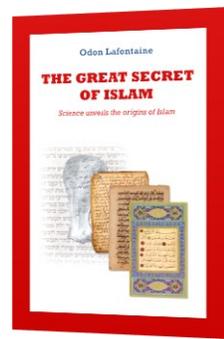
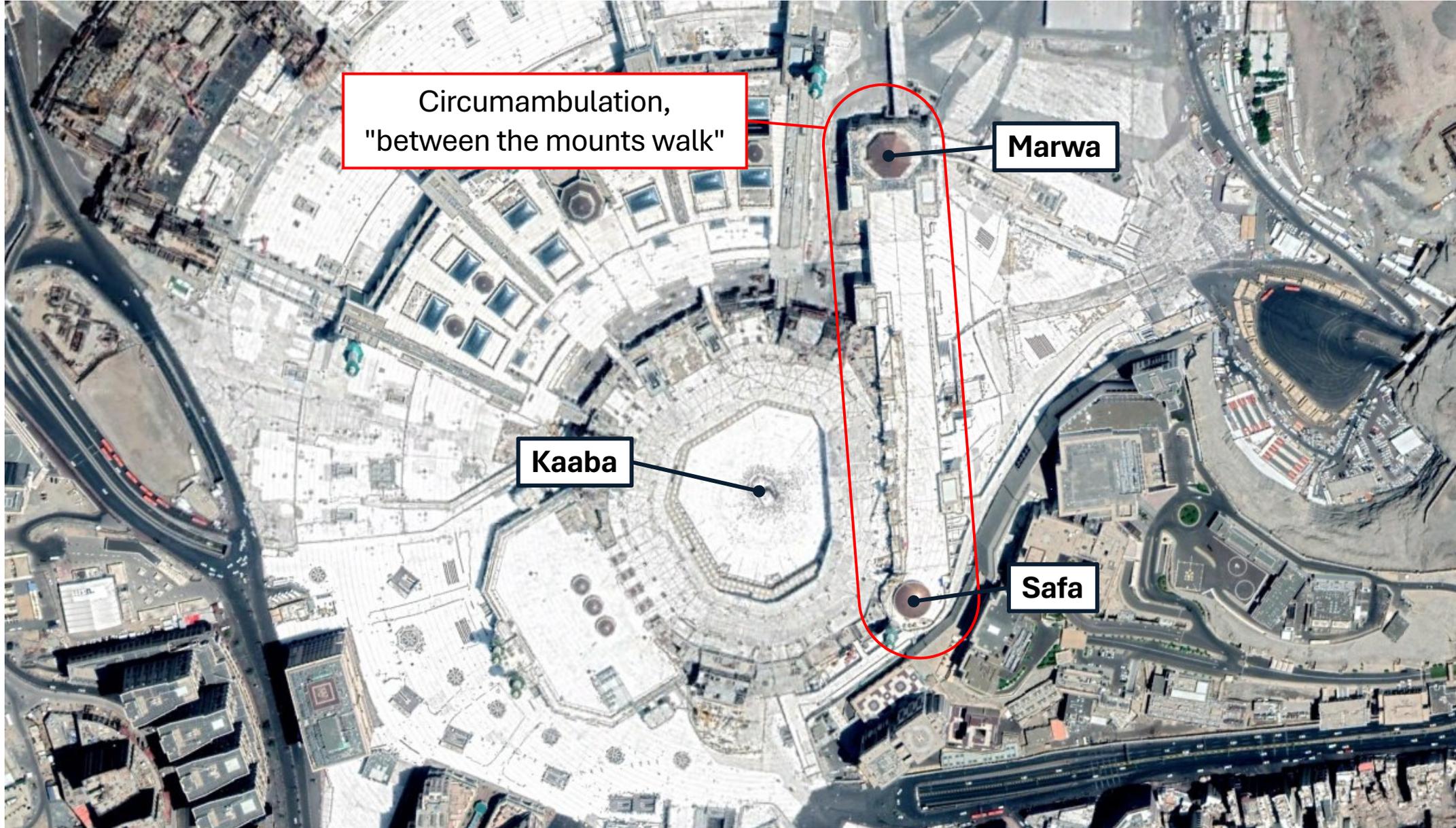
52,4. By the **inhabited/ frequented/ maintained/ serviced Temple** [*bayt al-mamuri*]

2,125. And when we made **the Temple** a place of return for mankind and (a place) of security and (said) : "Take **the standing place of Abraham** (as) a place of prayer" and we made a covenant with Abraham and Ishmael that "You both purify my **Temple** for the ones **who go around** (it), and those who are devoted and those who bow down, and those who prostrate."

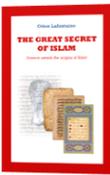
2,26. When we settled **the place** [*makān* : the place (as the place of what has been, ≠ *maqām*)] of the **Temple** for Abraham: "Do not associate anything with me but purify my **Temple** for the ones **who go around** (it), and **the ones who stand**, and the ones who bow, (and) the ones who prostrate themselves."

22,29. then let them end their prescribed duties and fulfil their vows and **circumambulate the Ancient Temple**.

Safa and Marwa in Mecca



Safa and Marwa in Mecca



Safa

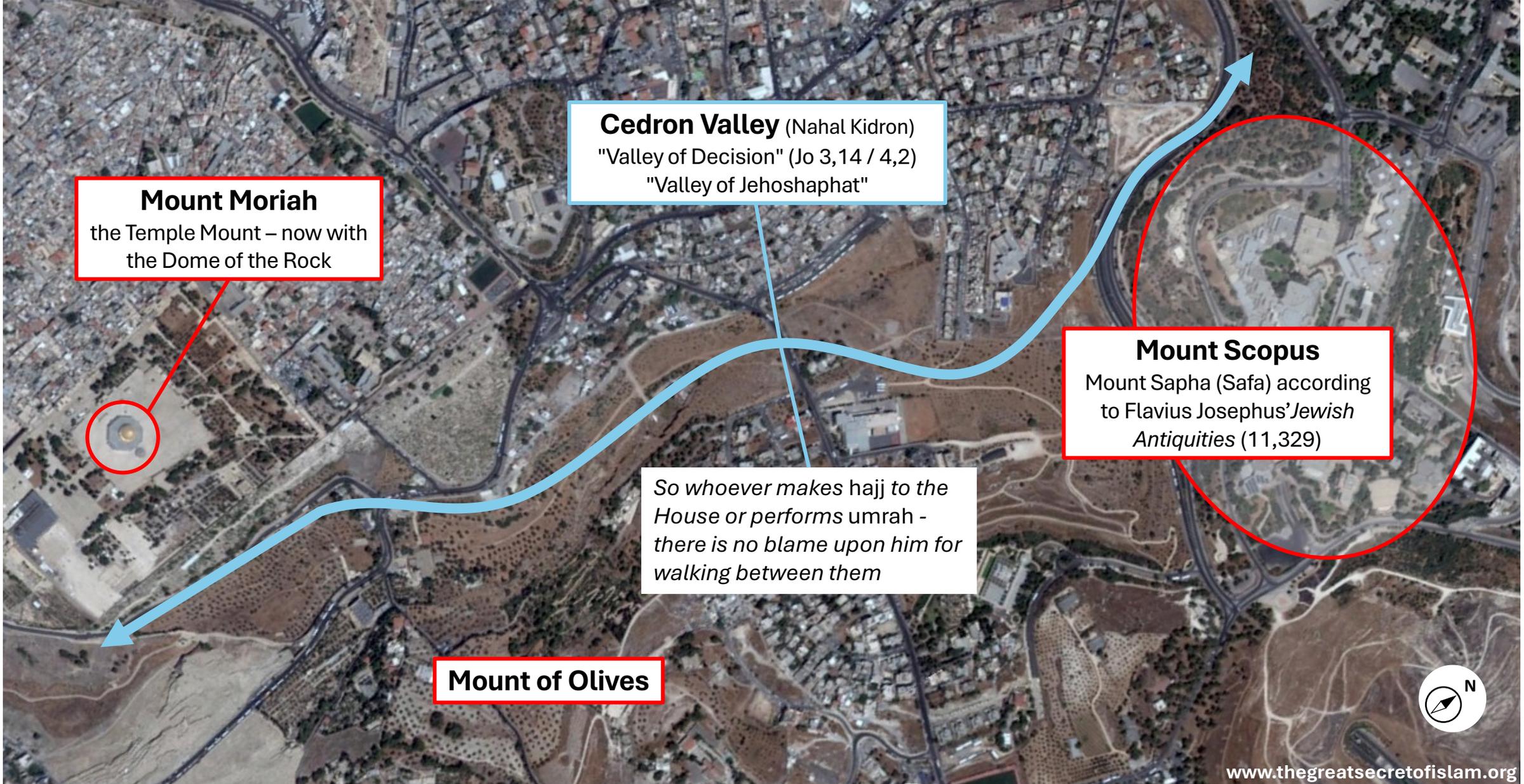


Marwa



Circumambulation
(*al masaa*)

Mount Scopus and Mount Moriah in Jerusalem



Mount Moriah
the Temple Mount – now with
the Dome of the Rock

Cedron Valley (Nahal Kidron)
"Valley of Decision" (Jo 3,14 / 4,2)
"Valley of Jehoshaphat"

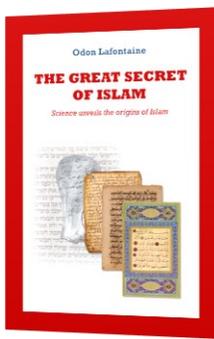
Mount Scopus
Mount Sapha (Safa) according
to Flavius Josephus' *Jewish
Antiquities* (11,329)

*So whoever makes hajj to the
House or performs umrah -
there is no blame upon him for
walking between them*

Mount of Olives

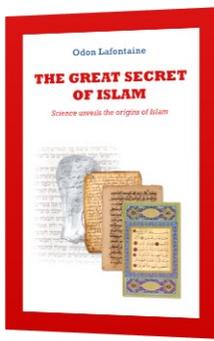


What are the *hajj* & *umrah*?



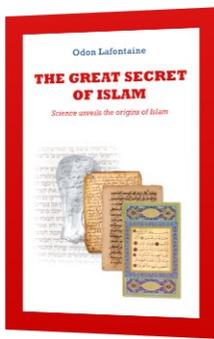
- ***hajj* & *umrah*** “constitute borrowing from Aramaic” (Robert Kerr, “Aramaisms in the Qur’ān and their Significance”, *Christmas in the Koran*, Edited by Ibn Warraq, 2014)
 - *hajj* (Heb אָן / *hagg*: **to circle, to go around**): feast, festivity, religious festival at the Jerusalem Temple (circumambulation)
 - *umrah* (Aramaic ʿmr): to dwell, to lead a monastic life → devotion, consecration (similar in a sense to *ihram*, which is also a borrowing from Aramaic)
- **The Jewish *hajj* of *Shavuot*** ("weeks")
 - 7 x 7 days + 1 (≈ jubilee of weeks) after Passover (*pessah*)
 - Feast of the "first fruits" ; the giving of the Torah (also the Christian Pentecost)
 - Jubilees 16,31 : "And Abraham took branches of palm trees, and the fruit of goodly trees, and every day going round the altar with the branches seven times [a day] in the morning, he praised and gave thanks to YAHWEH his Sovereign Ruler for all things in joy."
- “*The pilgrimage to Mecca is not so much the Islamic reinterpretation of an indigenous Hijazi rite, but rather the late transposition of a Syro-Palestinian Judeo-Christian one to the Hijaz*” (R. Kerr, op.cit.).
- How can a Jew or a believer perform the *hajj* with a Christian rule over Jerusalem?

Jerusalem was the place of the Apocalypse



- **Ibn al-Murajjā (10th cent.), *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis wa-al-Khalīl wa-Faḍā'il al-Shām***
 - **105.** "The rock of Jerusalem is one of the rocks of paradise"
 - **113.** "We find in the Torah that [God] said to the Rock of Jerusalem: *'You are my lowest throne, and from you I ascended into heaven, and below you the earth is extended, and all the water that flows from the tops of the mountains comes from below you'*"
 - **117.** "The fresh water and the winds that bring rain come from a source [located] below the rock of Jerusalem"
- **Ibn al-Faqīh (10th cent.), *Mukhtasar Kitāb al-Buldān***
 - "Jerusalem is the land which God has chosen from among the other lands"
 - "Whoever chooses to die in Jerusalem dies as if he died in heaven"
 - "All fresh waters have their origin under the rock (of Jerusalem)"
 - "The rock is the navel of the world"
 - "God will destroy Gog and Magog in Jerusalem"
 - **"The gathering and resurrection of the dead will take place in Jerusalem"**

The "night journey" according the Islamic narrative



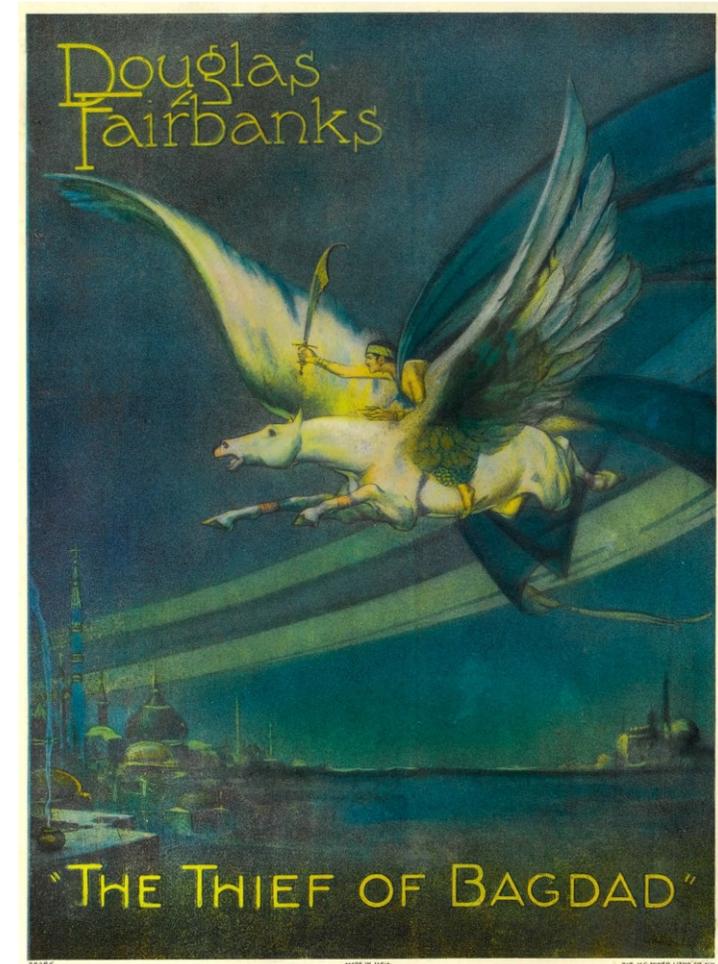
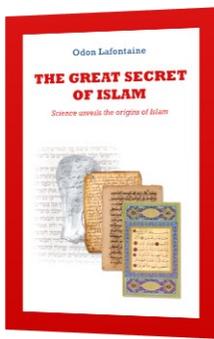
Q17,1: "Glory to the one who sent his servant on a journey by night from the sacred mosque [*masjid al haram*] to the distant mosque [*masjid al aqsa*], whose surroundings we have blessed, so that we might show him some of our signs [verses]. Surely he, he is the hearing, the seeing".

- According the Islamic narrative, this verse refers to the "night journey" of Muhammad, how he flew by night on a winged horse (*al buraq*) from Mecca to Jerusalem, landing on the Temple Mount, and from there to the Heavens where God showed him "some of his signs", meaning a "celestial Quran"; and then back to Mecca.

A critical look at the "night journey" narrative

Q17,1: "Glory to the one who sent his servant on a journey by night from the sacred mosque [*masjid al haram*] to the distant mosque [*masjid al aqsa*], whose surroundings we have blessed, so that we might show him some of our signs [verses]. Surely he, he is the hearing, the seeing".

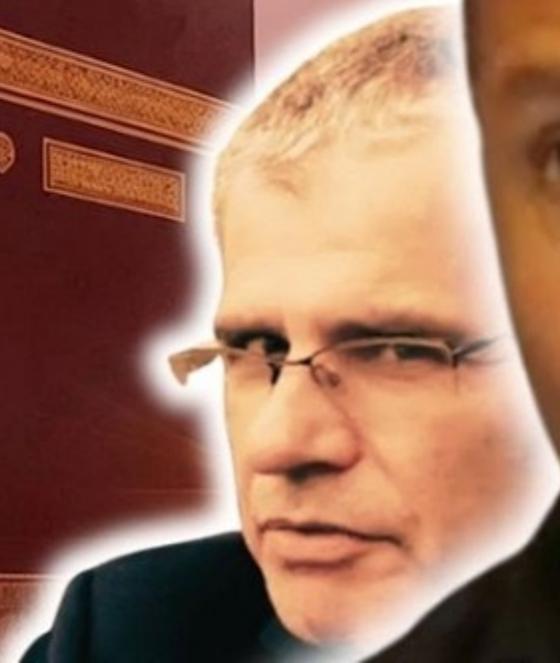
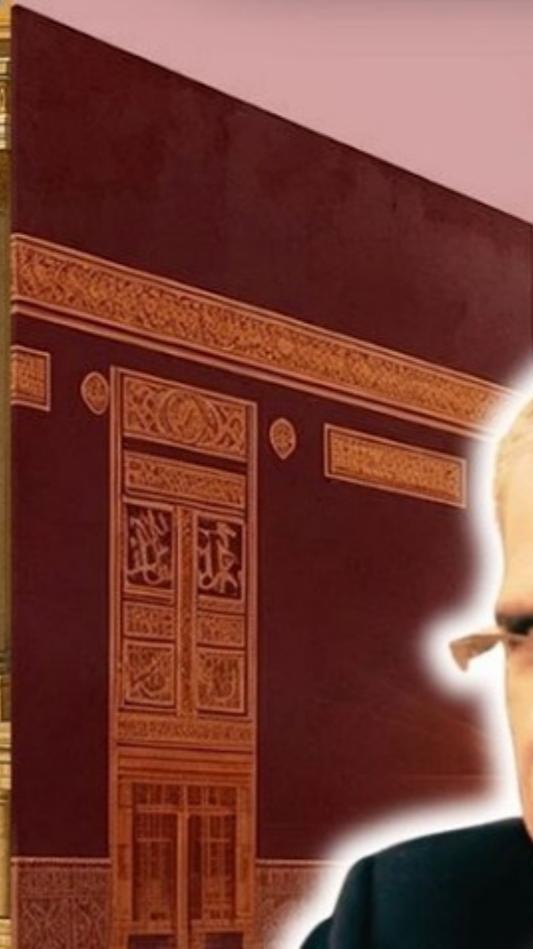
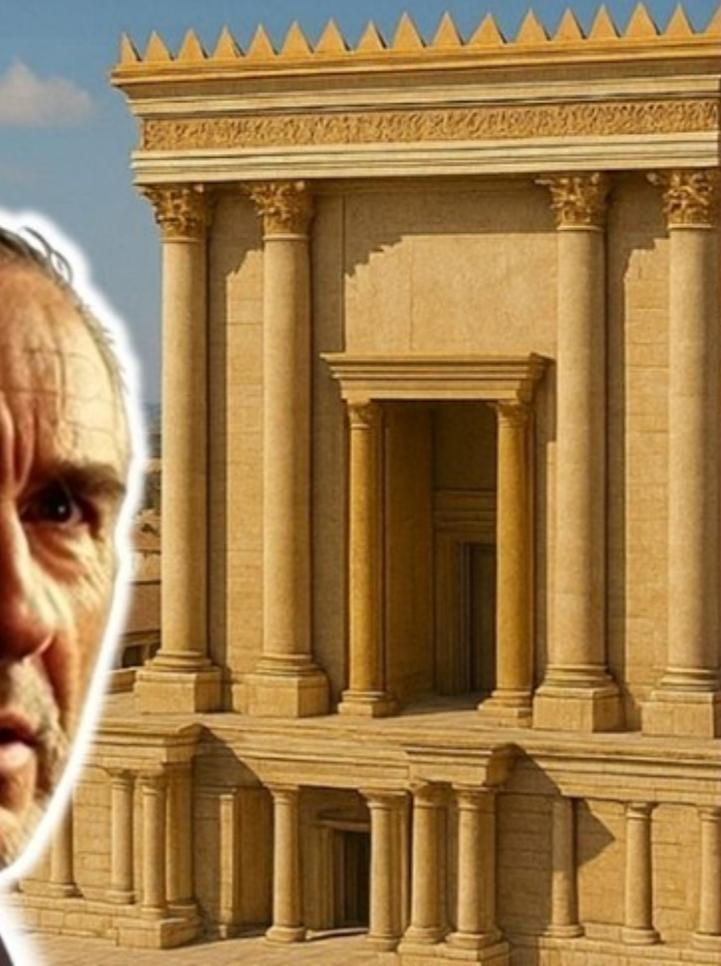
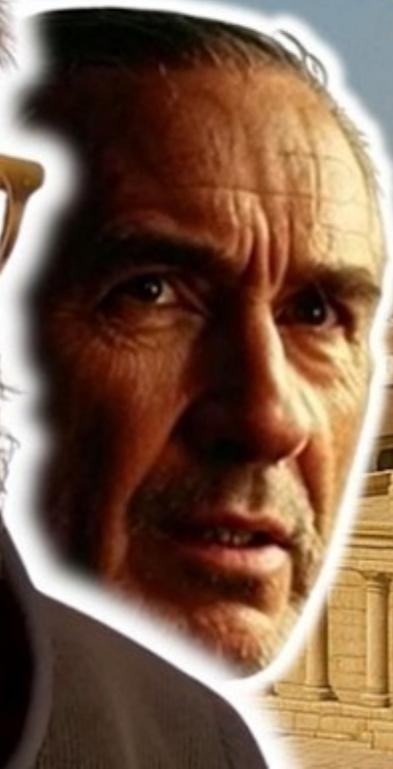
- Who speaks? Who is the servant?
- Parallels between Muhammad's "night journey" and narratives found in Jewish and Christian apocryphal texts, which describe various prophets ascending to heaven.
- Parallels with the Persian cultural backdrop, known for its flying horses (cf. The Ebony Horse from *The Arabian Nights*), including the "journey to the heavens" undertaken by Kartir, a highly influential 3rd c. Zoroastrian priest.
- A close parallel to the Jewish tradition of Moses' night journey ascending to heaven where God showed him a "celestial Torah"
 - "Ye have seen what I did to the Mizraee; and how **I bare you upon the clouds as upon eagles' wings** from Pelusin, to take you to the place of **the sanctuary**, there to solemnize the Pascha; and in the same night brought you back to Pelusin, and from thence have brought you nigh, to (receive) the doctrine of My law". (Targum Jonathan, Ex 19,14)
 - "sanctuary": Aramaic "*beit muqdash*a" identical to the Arabic "*bayt al maqdis*" (sacred house), used in Islamic tradition to refer to Jerusalem



Jerusalem Thesis

Part 6

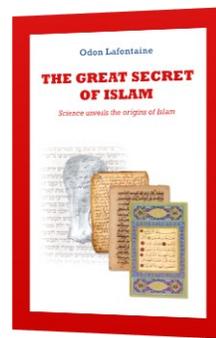
Conclusion



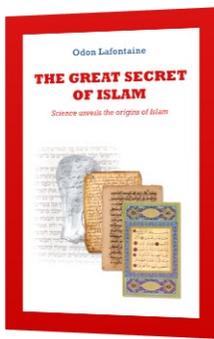
Is the 614 Jerusalem conquest referred to in the Quran?

- A narrative relating an expulsion from **masjid al haram** in Q48

- (20) God has promised you much booty that you will take [in the future] and has hastened for you this [victory] and withheld the hands of people from you - that it may be a sign for the believers and [that] He may guide you to a straight path.
- (21) And [He promises] other [victories] that you were [so far] unable to [realize] which God has already encompassed. And ever is God, over all things, competent.
- (22) And if those who disbelieve [Jews] had fought you, they would have turned their backs [in flight]. Then they would not find a protector or a helper.
- (23) [This is] the established way of God which has occurred before. And never will you find in the way of God any change.
- (24) And it is He who withheld their hands from you and your hands from them “in the belly [hollow? low point?] of mecca” [**ibatni makkata**] after He caused you to overcome them. And ever is God of what you do, Seeing.
- (25) They are the ones who disbelieved and obstructed you from **al masjid al haram** while the offering was prevented from reaching its place of sacrifice. And if not for believing men and believing women whom you did not know - that you might trample them and there would befall you because of them dishonor without [your] knowledge, We would have punished those who disbelieved among them with painful punishment
- (26) When those who disbelieved had put into their hearts chauvinism [pride] - the chauvinism of the time of ignorance. But God sent down His tranquillity [**sakina**] upon His Messenger and upon the believers and imposed upon them the word of righteousness, and they were more deserving of it and worthy of it. And ever is God, of all things, Knowing.
- (27) Certainly has God fulfilled His apostle’s vision in truth. You will surely enter **al masjid al haram** , if God wills, in safety, with your heads shaved and [hair] shortened, not fearing. He knew what you did not know and has arranged before that a conquest near [at hand].
- (28) It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion. And sufficient is God as Witness.



The rebuilding of Jerusalem's temple



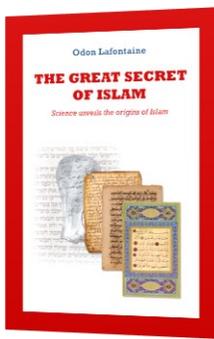
A alliance of Arabs and “Jews” rebuilt the Temple around 638

- “When they (the Arabs) came to Jerusalem, they were with them men from among the sons of Israel who showed them the place of **the Temple**” (Letter from the academy of Jerusalem to the diaspora communities in Egypt)
- “Running quickly they [the godless Saracens] reached the place that is called **the Capitolium** [the Temple Mount]. They took some men, some by force and some willingly, to clean the place and to build that accursed thing, which is for prayer and which is called by them a ‘mizgita’ [a *masjid*]” (Pratum spirituale’s Georgien version of John Moschius)
- “I will also speak about the the plots of the seditious Jews, who when they secured an alliance with the Hagarenes for a little while, devised a plan to rebuild **the Temple of Solomon**. And when they found **the spot that is called the Holy of Holies**, they rebuilt it with a fixed edifice, a place for prayers. And when the Ishmaelites became envious of them, they drove them out from that place and called the same house of prayer their own. The former then built there a place for their prayers in another spot at the base of the Temple” (Armenian Chronicle of 661 attributed to Sebeos)
- “In that famous place where once stood the magnificently constructed **Temple**, near the eastern wall, the Saracens [Arabs] now frequent a rectangular house of prayer which they have built” (Arculphus)

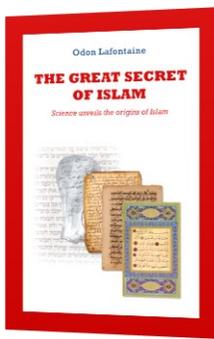
Also in Anastasius of Sinai, Islamic tradition, Jewish tradition

Is the rebuilding of Jerusalem's temple referred to in the Quran?

- 2,125: “Take **the standing place of Abraham** as a place of prayer”, and we made a covenant with Abraham and Ishmael: “Both of you purify **my House** for the ones who go around and the ones who are devoted to it, and the ones who bow, (and) the ones who prostrate themselves”
- 2,127: “Then Abraham will raise the foundations of **the House** with Ishmael”
- 52,4: “And [by] the frequented/serviced House”
- 9,3: “And a proclamation from God and his messenger to the people on the day of the great pilgrimage [*hajj*] (...) (7) How can the associationists have a treaty with God and with his messenger, except those with whom you have made a treaty at **masjid al haram?**”
- 9,107: “Those who have taken a mosque [*masjid*] (to cause) harm and disbelief and division among the believers (...) (108) Never stand in it! A mosque founded from the first day on the (obligation of) guarding (oneself) is indeed (more) worthy for you to stand in (...) (110) Their building which they have built will continue (to be a cause of) doubt in their hearts”.



Jerusalem is the sacred city of the Quran



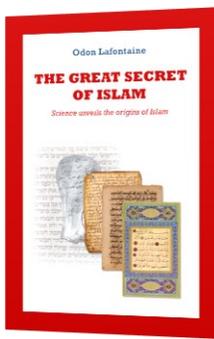
Mecca

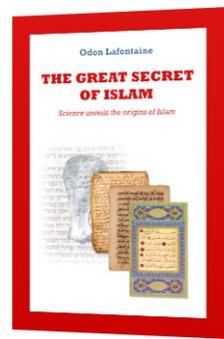
Jerusalem

<i>bayt</i>	←	The temple in Jerusalem
<i>masjid al haram</i>	←	The Temple Mount (Mount Moriah)
The place of Abraham	←	The place of Abraham
Kaaba	←	The temple in Jerusalem (Holy of holy?)
Safa & Marwa	←	Mount Sapha & Mount Moriah
The place of the <i>hajj</i> and <i>umra</i>	←	<i>hagg</i> (to the Temple) and <i>umra</i> (service, sacrifices)
Gathering place / standing place (5,97)	←	Jerusalem as the place where the Nations will be judged
Mother of cities	←	Mother of cities
Bekka as another name for Mecca	←	A place near Bekka, the valley of tears mentioned in Ps.84
The direction of prayer towards Mecca	←	The direction of prayer towards Jerusalem
The place the believers were expelled from	←	The place the believers were expelled from
The objective of the Islamic conquest	←	The objective of the Jewish (Nazarene)- Arab conquest

Two hypotheses

- Either there were two cities in the 7th century with identical characteristics — Jerusalem and Mecca — and the Qur'an happens to refer to Mecca while ignoring Jerusalem;
- Or the Qur'an is in fact referring to Jerusalem rather than Mecca.
 - This implies that what has been regarded as the earliest textual evidence for Mecca — namely the Qur'an — can no longer serve as such.
 - It further calls into question the overall historical reliability of the whole Islamic narrative.





CONCLUSION

A revised perspective on early Islam

- No unique place of origins for Islam
 - The concept of a unique place of origins derives from the Islamic narrative, who needed it in order to legitimize the prophethood of Muhammad
 - No sense in trying to replace Mecca with Petra or Jerusalem
- Proclamations in multiple places
 - Syria
 - Arabia : around the Dead Sea ; probably in Petra ; Bahrain?
 - Jerusalem
- Jerusalem as the “holy city” described in the Quran
 - Objective of rebuilding its temple
- Most probably, nothing in Mecca
 - How was Mecca’s site chosen?

