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Aspects of Islamization of Space and Society in Mamluk Jerusalem and its Hinterland*

I

On the eve of the Arab conquest the majority of the population of southern Bilād al-Shām was Christian.[1] The conquest set in motion forces that eventually transformed the area into a predominantly Muslim one. Nevertheless, even as late as the end of the fourth *hijrī* century (tenth century C. E.) the noted chronicler and former Jerusalem citizen al-Muqaddasī lamented that the city was still dominated by Christians.[2] Throughout the Crusader period one may still find significant regions of Christian communities and settlements in Palestine.[3] This demographic state of affairs changed by the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that point the majority of the population was mostly Muslim, as the Ottoman records clearly show.[4] One may thus conclude that the Islamization of Syria was a slow process. It took no less than seven to nine centuries before Islamic communities established themselves as the dominant demographic element in southern Bilād al-Shām. It is

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[1]See for example Robert Schick, *The Christian Communities of Palestine From Byzantine to Islamic Rule* (Princeton, 1995), 9–19. See also the map section in Yoram Tsafrir, Leah di Segni, and Judith Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani Iudaea-Palestina* (Jerusalem, 1994), where the dominance of the Christian communities is clearly demonstrated.

[2]Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1906), 168.

[3]Roni Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge. 1998), 222 ff.

[4]Amnon Cohen and Bernard Lewis, *Population and Revenue in the Towns of Palestine in the Sixteenth Century* (Princeton, 1978). See also Nehemia Levtzion, "Conversion to Islam in Syria and Palestine and the Survival of Christian Communities" in Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi, eds., *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), 289–311.

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also implied that the post-Crusader periods (namely Ayyubid and Mamluk) were critical times as far as Islamization and conversion are concerned.

Conversion to Islam, whether of a single person or a community, is characterized by both social and spatial-morphological transformations. Embracing Islam leads to changes in personal habits and daily routine and is followed by changes of the physical surroundings. Conversion of entire communities further enhances and enlarges the magnitude of the changes. Institutions, social structures, public norms, and other characteristics are gradually altered and become modified. That said, the actual process of conversion usually remains obscure, mainly due to lack of precise documentation.[5]

How did this process materialize? Was it a conversion of *dhimmī* communities (mainly Christians) to Islam? Could it be that Muslims became the majority due to the immigration and dwindling of the former population? Was it a conversion of individuals or of entire communities? So far few explanations have been suggested regarding the process. Levtzion is of the opinion that conversion to Islam in Syria was both a short- and a long-term process.[6] The distinction lies between the conversion of individuals and that of entire communities. The long-term process takes place when individual conversion is concerned. Rapid conversion, as Vryonis demonstrated with regard to Asia Minor, should be attributed more then anything else to the sedenterization of new Muslim communities in areas deserted by earlier Christian ones.[7] In the Byzantine-Ottoman case, the Christian communities collapsed prior to the Turkish invasion of the twelfth century and onward, as they were destabilized and deprived of genuine leadership and stability due to the gradual deterioration of the Byzantine empire. The various Turkish tribes thus settled in a region that lacked political, administrative, and religious continuity. The Vryonis model suggests that rapid conversion of an area should be ascribed to sedenterization of nomads and not to mass conversion of an existing population. Levtzion stressed in his work the role of various agents of Islamization in pushing forward the process of conversion, such as sufi saints and merchants, to name only two.[8] Recently, Ellenblum has published the results of a study in which he links together the Vryonis and Levtzion models. He strongly supports the position

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[5]For further clarification of some of the difficulties, see for example Richard W. Bulliet, ″Conversion to Islam and the Emergence of a Muslim Society″ in Nehemia Levtzion, ed., *Conversion to Islam* (New York, 1979), 30.

[6]Levtzion, ″Conversion to Islam in Syria,″ 289.

[7]Speros Vryonis, Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh Century through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1971).

[8]Levtzion, *Conversion to Islam,* 1–23.

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that the two processes, i. e., rapid regional and slower personal Islamization, do not necessarily contradict but rather complement each other.[9]

In this article I argue that Islamization is not only the conversion of people to the Islamic faith. It is also the process through which the cultural landscape is transformed and is filled with Islamic objects and landmarks.[10] The growing dominance of the Muslim population within the Mamluk state led inevitably to transformations of the landscape by creating what might be termed an Islamic ambience. This will be demonstrated by studying the case of the Abū al-Wafā', a family of scholars and sufis that struck roots in the Jerusalem region. The literary and morphological data concerning the family´s activity and influence reveals some of the implications of Islamization. It furnishes us with the opportunity to examine up close some of the changes in the built environment stemming from the hitherto somewhat vague process of Islamization. Members of the family acted as agents of Islamization and through their work a new and transformed cultural landscape was created. The data concerning the family may also draw our attention to the social aspects of the growing dominance of Islamic culture and its spatial outcomes. Methodologically, it offers an opportunity to fill the usual lacunae in the complicated picture of the Islamization of society and space alike. However, the reader may find that even in this case sufficient detail concerning these and other issues is still lacking. Our knowledge concerning the former Christian communities is scarce, as is our understanding of the morphological features of the settlements in question before their takeover by a Muslim population. The source material is lacking if we compare it to what we are accustomed to for Mamluk Egypt. The archeological evidence is not always satisfying, even though the area has been surveyed thoroughly since the last decades of the nineteenth century.

I would also like to draw the reader's attention to the methodology that may allow us to fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge. It is the landscape that

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[9]Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*, 255–56.

[10]For the notion of landscape, or, as I put it here, cultural landscape, the reader is advised to consult Dominique Chevallier, ed., *L´Espace social de la ville arabe* (Paris, 1979). The theme of cultural landscape is a central theme of geographical studies. See, for example, Denis E. Cosgrove, ″Place, Landscape, and the Dialectics of Cultural Geography,″ *Canadian Geographer* 22 (1978): 66–72; idem, ″Problems of Interpreting the Symbolism of Past Landscape″ in Alan R. H. Baker and Mark Billinge, eds., *Period and Place* (Cambridge, 1982), 220–43; idem, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London, 1984); Yi-fu Tuan, ″Geography, Phenomenology and the Study of Human Nature,″ *Canadian Geographer* 15 (1971): 181–92; idem, ″Thought and the Landscape, the Eye and the Mind´s Eye″ in D. W. Meinig, ed., *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (New York, 1979), 89–102.

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comprises the primary source of reference. When combined with information from the literary sources, an awareness of landscape leads us towards a better understanding of the issues of Islamization, conversion, and the transformation of the built environment.

II

In an article that has received less attention than it deserves, Ashtor drew a comprehensive picture of Mamluk Jerusalem.[11] While depicting the scholarly atmosphere of the city he mentions a family of notables by the name of Abū al-Wafā'.[12] The origins of the family are to be found in Iraq. There, in the twelfth century, a member of the family, a certain Tāj al-'Ārifīn Abū al-Wafā' Muḥammad, was considered by fellow-scholars and laymen alike an admired alim.[13] Masterman and Macalister (who collected local tales on Muslim saints) were of the opinion that the family came to Palestine from the Ḥijāz via Persia.[14] Canaan relied on a story related to him by the *khaṭīb* of a village in the Judean Hills (Bayt Ṣafāfah) who located the family's roots in Khurāsān.[15] Neither of them substantiated his speculation with any form of concrete data. Be that as it may, once members of the family are to be found in the area, their role in the events described below was crucial. The various activities ascribed to members of the family had a direct bearing on the process of Islamization and on cultural changes in the region.

As in many cases dealing with the area of Jerusalem during the Mamluk period, most of our information is to be found in Mujīr al-Dīn˝s late fifteenth century chronicle. According to him, a member of the Abū al-Wafā' family, whose father was a brother of the aforementioned Tāj al-'Arifīn, settled in Palestine during the Ayyubid period.[16] His name was Badr al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad Abū al-Wafā', and he is depicted as a *quṭb,* that is, a sufi leader of the highest level.

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[11]Eliyahu Ashtor, ˝Jerusalem in the late Middle Ages˝ (in Hebrew), *Yerushalayim: Review for Eretz-Israel Research* 2 (1955): 71–116.

[12]Ibid., 109. The reader is advised to consult the genealogy table (Fig. 1) whenever a family member is mentioned.

[13]'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad al-Sha'rānī, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrá* (Cairo, n.d.), 116.

[14]Ernest W. Gurney Masterman and Robert Alexander Stewart Macalister, ˝Occasional Papers on the Modern Inhabitants of Palestine,˝ *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* (1916): 11ff.

[15]Taufik Canaan, ˝Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine,˝ *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* (1927): 308.

[16]The story as narrated below is based mainly on Mujīr al-Dīn al-Ḥanbalī al-'Ulaymī, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl bi-Tārīkh al-Quds wa-al-Khalīl* (Amman, 1973), 146–49.

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Badr al-Dīn was highly regarded by the notables of his time and won the approbation of all levels of society. His reputation for holiness and virtue attracted many disciples who came to live with him and his family in a place called Dayr al-Shaykh. He died in 650/1252 and his burial place became a site for *ziyārah* (visitation of a shrine for ritual purposes). Saints and common people, as well as animals, we are told, used to come to pay him tribute. A *zāwiyah* was probably built on the premises while Badr al-Dīn was still alive. Mujīr al-Dīn reports that he often went on a visit *(taraddadtu)* to the place, though true to his usual indifference to topography he is not very specific about its location. He only specifies that it was a third of a *barīd* due west of Jerusalem in a place called Wādī al-Nusur.[17] The location of the *maqām* is of the utmost importance for understanding the family's mobility within the local society and space, and is also an instance in which local myths and legends may be compared with contemporary literary sources. In view of the crucial importance of Badr al-Dīn's tomb and *zāwiyah,* I shall deal at length below with its exact location. Another issue that needs to be clarified is what might be termed the time-space channels of Badr al-Dīn in the vicinity of Jerusalem. This will have tremendous bearing on the way we understand the family's past, its progress toward Jerusalem, and its upward social mobility.

Wādī al-Nusur is a tributary of the central stream of the Judean hills, Wādī Ṣurār (today Naḥal Soreq). On a spur rising on the southern shoulder of the Ṣurār one may still find ruins of a small village named Dayr al-Shaykh.[18] Amidst the deserted terraces and dilapidated houses of the village lies a very conspicuous complex, the *maqām* of Sultan Shaykh Badr, as the local people used to call it.[19]

The attachment of the title sultan to Badr al-Dīn's name need not bother us nor be considered an official one. It is commonly understood as an honorary title often bestowed upon esteemed scholars.[20] Scholars agree that Sultan Badr and

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[17]*Barīd* as referred to here means the distance between two stations of the *barīd* line. It is in no way an indication of the existence of a *barīd* line to Jerusalem. Consulting the maps of Sauvaget leads to the rough estimate of 30–40 km. as the standard distance between two stations. See Jean Sauvaget, *La Poste aux Chevaux dans l'Empire des Mamlouks* (Paris, 1941), esp. 70. A third of a *barīd* then would be 12–15 km., which is inaccurate in the case of Dayr al-Shaykh, found some 20 km. west of the city.

[18]Information about the village may be found in various surveys: C. R. Conder and H. H. Kitchener, *The Survey of Western Palestine,* vol. 3, *Judæa* (London, 1881), 23–24; Wolf Dieter Hütteroth and Kamal Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan and Southern Syria in the Late Sixteenth Century* (Erlangen, 1977), 113; Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington, D.C., 1992), 288.

[19]This is also the name assigned to the place in Conder and Kitchener, *Survey of Western Palestine*, 24–25.

[20]Nevertheless, the local legends ascribe this title to Badr al-Dīn's past as a king or a ruler in one of several locations.

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Badr al-Dīn are the same person.[21] However, I would like to make a distinction between fact and fiction in the history of this distinguished forefather of the Abū al-Wafā' family. Let us begin by quoting Petersen´s description of Badr al-Dīn:

> He originated either from Khurassan or the Hejaz and came to Jerusalem as a Dervish. . . . Badr first lived in Shu'fat[22] in Jerusalem but after his daughter´s death he moved westward to Wadi al-Nusur where he lived in a cave. . . . The exact dates of Badr´s life are not known although it is known that his son Muhammed died in 663 A. H. and that Badr lived at the same time as king Zahir (Baybars) which indicates a date sometime in the thirteenth century.[23]

Petersen relied mostly on local folk tales collected by Masterman and Canaan. These are based on the collective memory of people in the Jerusalem area in the early twentieth century. The common outline of the different narratives is as follows: a most revered man named Sultan Badr, who is descended from a royal family (either in Hijāz or Khurāsān), came to participate in Baybars' alleged siege of Jerusalem, at the time in the hands of the infidels. He stayed in a place called Karafāt, later to be called Sharafāt. After the city was won over into Muslim hands, he went to Hebron and on the way met with a hostile girl, who threw a stone at his head. After performing a miraculous act at that spot, he kept walking until he reached a cave in a place called Dayr al-Shaykh, where he settled. There, the girl´s father caught up with him and begged his forgiveness. Badr al-Dīn accepted his apologies and agreed to marry the girl. The family settled in Dayr al-Shaykh, where the order was established, the *zāwiyah* was built, and eight children were born.

The story has myriad versions and subsumes many anecdotes, which makes it impossible to discern between hypothetical historical truth and total fiction. I will deal briefly with only a few of these. In the popular story, Badr al-Dīn begins his voyage in Palestine at Jerusalem and moves in a westerly direction until he reaches Dayr al-Shaykh. According to this version, Badr al-Dīn arrived in Palestine when Jerusalem was in Christian hands, thus supplying us with a terminus ante quem of

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[21]See Conder and Kitchener, *Survey of Western Palestine,* 24–25; Masterman and Macalister, ″Occasional Papers,″ 11 ff; Canaan, ″Mohammedan Saints,″ 305–10; Muṣṭafá Murād al-Dabbāgh, *Bilādunā Filasṭīn*, vol. 8 pt. 2/1 (Beirut, n.d.), 175–78; and recently, Andrew Petersen, ″A Preliminary Report on Three Muslim Shrines in Palestine,″ *Levant* 28 (1996): 97–113, especially 99–103.

[22]The proper name of the village is of course Sharafāt, as will be discussed later.

[23]Petersen, ″Shrines,″ 99.

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1244.[24] Badr al-Dīn had eight children in Dayr al-Shaykh. The eldest, Muḥammad, died in 675/1263, having already established a family of his own. This makes it practically impossible that he could have been no more than nineteen years old when he died, which would have to be the case if he was born at Dayr al-Shaykh in 1244 or later. Moreover, one should bear in mind that there is no data concerning a siege of Jerusalem by Baybars, nor for that matter that he was anywhere in its vicinity prior to the 1250s. Hence it seems improbable that Baybars and Badr al-Dīn ever met, according to the data at hand. The only possible pertinent Muslim siege of Jerusalem is the famous one of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in 1187, which seems to be too early for Badr al-Dīn—that is, of course, if we accept his death date of 650/1253 as recorded by Mujīr al-Dīn. Thus it is safe to assume that Badr al-Dīn's arrival on the scene in Palestine took place during the short period of renewed Crusader dominance of Jerusalem during 1229–44. This is the only feasible setting that gives credibility to his participation in an attempt to win the city back to Muslim hands. That said, Badr al-Dīn could not have settled first in Jerusalem and only later gone out to its hinterland. The first station of the family was, as reported by Mujīr al-Dīn, the site at Dayr al-Shaykh in Wādī al-Nusur. At the time of Badr al-Dīn's son's death in 675/1263, Dayr al-Shaykh was densely crowded with people and houses, the outcome of the activity of Badr al-Dīn and presumably of the people of the order *(ṭarīqah)* following him. This was one of the factors responsible for the second move taken by the grandson of Badr al-Dīn, 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ, in the direction of Jerusalem.

'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ was also an esteemed scholar and an acknowledged religious figure.[25] He headed the order that had been established by his grandfather in Wādī al-Nusur. The first decision on his part was to relocate the *zāwiyah*. The new location was a village named Shafrāt at the outskirts of Jerusalem. By the fifteenth century the place was known as Sharafāt due to the honor *(sharaf)* bestowed on it on account of the family taking up residence there.[26] The change of a place name is one of the most common indications of the settlement of a new cultural or ethnic group and its growing dominance.[27] In the case of Shafrāt/Sharafāt, it marked the transformation of a Christian village into a Muslim one.

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[24]Regarding the second Crusader occupation of Jerusalem see, e.g., P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London and New York, 1986), 60 ff.

[25]Mujīr al-Dīn, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl,* 2:147.

[26]Ibid.

[27]The demographic, ethnic, and religious changes in a certain area lead eventually to alterations of the toponymic map. In fact, sometimes this will be the only textual evidence of the change. See Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*, 179–256, for an exhaustive discussion of cultural and social boundaries based on toponymy as a primary source. This issue will be further elaborated below.

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'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ died in 696/1293, to be followed by his son Dā'ūd as head of the order. Dā'ūd was considered a worker of miracles *(min aṣḥāb al-karāmāt).* One of his miraculous deeds will be dealt with later on, as it contains important information concerning the process of Islamization. While he acted as head of the order, a sufi lodge *(zāwiyah)* and a tomb were built in the village of Shafrāt. Dā'ūd died in 701/1301 and was succeeded by his son Aḥmad, who died in the year 723/1323.[28] He also had eight children, two of whom, 'Alī and Muḥammad al-Bahā', were considered among the religious leaders *('umdah)* of Palestine and its environs (″. . .wa kānā 'umdat al-arḍ al-muqaddasah wa mā ḥawlahā″).[29] When Muḥammad died, 'Alī assumed responsibility for the upbringing of his children. While Muḥammad was still alive he and 'Alī received an endowment from the amir Manjak al-Sayfī in the form of the entire village of Sharafāt.[30] The date of the endowment is obscure and uncertain. According to Mujīr al-Dīn, Manjak was at the time of the endowment the governor of al-Shām. If that was the case, there are two plausible dates, the first being 762/1361 and the second between 769/1368 and 775/1374.[31] The fact that 'Alī had already died in 757/1356 rules out either of these possibilities. The problem is worsened when we consult the *waqfīyah* (endowment deed) as registered in the Ottoman *taḥrīr*. The date of the endowment deed is indicated as 894/1488, which totally disrupts our previous calculation.[32] Manjak had a very colorful and change-filled career. His first position in Syria was as *ḥājib* in Damascus in 748/1347. After a short period in Syria he was summoned again to Cairo, where he played a major part in the complicated internal political turmoil of the early 1350s. Another interlude in Syria took place in 755/1354 during which he was sent in exile *(baṭṭāl)* to Ṣafad. By 760/1358 he was appointed as governor of Tripoli, Aleppo, and finally Damascus, where he served as governor until 762/1361. Either Mujīr al-Dīn was wrong and the endowment was made while Manjak acted as a *ḥājīb* and not as the governor of Damascus, or Manjak could have endowed the village at any date prior to 'Alī's death in 757/1356 and was only titled governor by Mujīr al-Dīn, without any

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[28]Mujīr al-Dīn, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl,* 2:148.

[29]Ibid., 149.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Abū al-Maḥāsin Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī, ″Al-Manhal al-Ṣāfī wa-al-Mustawfá ba'd al-Wāfī,″ Paris Ms. Arabe 752, fols. 367a–368a (cited in Michael Hamilton Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem: an Architectural Study* [London, 1987], 385.) But see Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah*, ed. Muḥammad Sayyid Jād al-Ḥaqq (Cairo, n.d.), 5:131, where he depicts Manjak as governor of Aleppo at that period.

[32]Mehmed İpşirli and Muḥammad Dāwūd al-Tamīmī, eds., *Awqāf wa-Amlāk al-Muslimīn fī Filasṭīn* (Istanbul, 1402/1982), 35. See also Kāmil Jamīl al-'Asalī, *Ma'āhid al-'Ilm fī Bayt al-Maqdis* (Amman, 1981), 345.

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connection to his actual position at the time. Leaving that aside, the fact remains that a leading figure of the Mamluk elite was acting as patron of the family. It is another indication of their growing importance within local society.

The final move into Jerusalem was taken by Tāj al-Dīn Abū al-Wafā' Muḥammad (the son of that 'Alī who was endowed with the village of Sharafāt). Mujīr al-Dīn relates that Tāj al-Dīn used to visit the city much more than his father and grandfather ever did.[33] After the death of his father he bought a house in Jerusalem and was the first of the family to reside there *(istawṭana)* in 782/1380. He established another branch of the Wafā'īyah order in a compound bordering the Ḥaram al-Sharīf wall.[34] Tāj al-Dīn died in Jerusalem in 803/1401 and was buried in Māmillā cemetery. Two of his sons, Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr and 'Alī, are mentioned in Mujīr al-Dīn´s description. Soon after the move to Jerusalem, members of the family are to be found in senior positions in the religious and administrative circles of Jerusalem.[35]

Drawing a comprehensive picture of the Abū al-Wafā' activities in Jerusalem is beyond the scope of this article and I shall highlight here only a few examples. Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr, the son of Tāj al-Dīn, was born in Jerusalem in 799/1396. At the death of his father he was nominated to succeed him as head of the al-Wafā'īyah order. He was the first member of the family given the *nisbah* al-Ḥusaynī, after al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī, by Mujīr al-Dīn. Gradually it became the common name by which the family was known. The al-Ḥusaynīs grew to become one of the leading families of the city, from the Mamluk period until today. For example, the family played a crucial part in the events of the revolt of the *naqīb al-ashrāf* in the early 1700s in Jerusalem.[36] Taqī al-Dīn gained recognition as a leading figure in Jerusalem and his death in 859/1454 was commemorated with a special prayer *(ṣalāt al-mayt)* that was conducted in the al-Aqṣá mosque after the Friday prayers. His funeral became a procession of sufis and others from the city to his burial place in the Māmillā graveyard. He was buried in the compound of

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[33]Mujīr al-Dīn, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl*, 2:149.

[34]The beginning of the al-Wafā'īyah *zāwiyah* in Jerusalem is not altogether clear. The issue will be dealt with in the section concerned with the Abū al-Wafā' as agents of Islamization.

[35]Mujīr al-Dīn, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl,* vol. 2 passim mentions members of the family as scholars and sufis alike. See also genealogical table (Fig. 1).

[36]'Ādil Mannā', ″The Rebellion of the Naqīb al-Ashrāf in Jerusalem, 1703–1705″ (in Hebrew), *Cathedra* 53 (1989): 49–74. The supposed lineage of the Ḥusaynīs back to Badr al-Dīn, although often stated by members of the family and scholars, cannot be corroborated. In fact, the family lineage which suggests kinship between the famous al-Ḥusaynīs to al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī has recently been refuted. 'Ādil Mannā', ″Myth and Anti-Myth of the Ḥusaynī Family,″ (lecture held at the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, 2 April 1999).

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the amir Ṭūghān al-'Alā'ī, adjacent to the al-Qalandarīyah *zāwiyah*.[37] Again this should be regarded as an indication of the family's status and its involvement with prominent figures of the Mamluk elite. Taqī al-Dīn's son, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad, headed the order after him.[38] He was also considered an outstanding scholar, but unlike the rest of his family was an adherent of the Hanafi school. This is probably why he left Jerusalem in 880/1475 and went to Istanbul seeking answers to religious problems among the predominantly Hanafi Ottoman religious authorities.[39] He even had an audience with the sultan, who offered him a position in his administration. Shihāb al-Dīn died in Istanbul two years after his arrival.

The manner and extent to which the family struck roots in the social elite of Jerusalem is remarkable. Like other families of ulama who immigrated to the city during the Mamluk period, religious and scholarly virtues were the catalyst for a rapidly upward social mobility.[40] The recognition and status won by the family had, among other outcomes, morphological and visible expressions in the rural and urban landscape. Those will be discussed below to demonstrate the connections between the family's activities and the themes of conversion and Islamization.

III

Conversion, like other cultural changes in human societies, effects change in the built environment. As already mentioned above, in most cases the actual process of conversion is somewhat vague and unsatisfactorily documented. Therefore, a study which examines the morphological outcome of the process may promise to bridge some of the gaps in our knowledge. Changes in the man-made environment in the form of shrines, houses, layout of fields, crops, irrigation systems, etc., are, and should be considered, the physical manifestations of the new cultural process. The method adopted and applied throughout this article is to consider the new morphological icons and transformations in the physical milieu as one considers textual data. Therefore the building activity initiated by family members will be dealt with at length below. The different construction projects of the Abū al-Wafā' will be traced along the chronological sequence of moves already described, from the hinterland of Jerusalem to the core of the city.

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[37]The compound no longer exists, therefore only a plausible location can be suggested.

[38]Mujīr al-Dīn, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl,* 2:232.

[39]Ibid, 233.

[40]See, for example, Kamal S. Salibi, "The Bānū Jamā'a: A Dynasty of Shāfi'ite Jurists," *Studia Islamica* 9 (1958): 97–110.

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The *zāwiyah* in Dayr al-Shaykh: The village of Dayr al-Shaykh lies some 20 km. west-south-west of the old city of Jerusalem. It is located on a hill rising on the southern shoulder of Wādī al-Ṣurār. The *zāwiyah* complex is the best preserved and most conspicuous building in what is today the ruined village of Dayr al-Shaykh. The place is served by a number of roads of both regional and local importance. Coming from Jerusalem, one could follow two possible roads. The first one follows the main ridge southwest of the city until the village of Malḥah (see map no. 1). From Malḥah the road carries on in a westerly direction until it intersects with Wādī al-Sikkah (today Naḥal Refa'im). From the intersection, the road follows the course of the wadi up until the bottom of the spur at the top of which lies Dayr al-Shaykh, some 7 km. due west. The second possible way would be to begin from near Wādī al-Sikka, which starts some 1.5 km. south of the city wall, and to follow it in the manner already described above. In both cases one reaches a paved road (2 m. in width), today in a state of ruin, that leads from the bottom of the ravine to the summit of the hill, some 800 m. long.[41] Not far from Dayr al-Shaykh, Wādī al-Sikkah joins the central stream of the Judean hills, Wādī al-Ṣurār (today Naḥal Soreq), which flows all the way to the Mediterranean, some 35 km. in a westerly direction. The route of the Ṣurār served as one of the main roads one could take from the coastal plain of Palestine to the central mountain ridge, where cities such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Hebron are located. Numerous local roads linked Dayr al-Shaykh with other settlements in the Judean hills. Thus the *zāwiyah,* although built in a rural and remote environment, was highly accessible both to its immediate and distant surroundings. The accessibility of the site and its proximity to a major route in the area is echoed in a local tale. According to this tale, the first encounter between Badr al-Dīn and Baybars took place as the latter was advancing on the main road to Jerusalem and Badr al-Dīn was waiting for him en route.[42]

The *zāwiyah* complex was surveyed by Andrew Petersen of the British School of Archeology in Jerusalem in 1995.[43] It is a 30 by 20 m. compound, surrounded by a wall of variable height due to the change in the local terrain. Petersen´s survey found the complex to comprise four main parts: a courtyard, a prayer hall, a *maqām* (the grave itself), and a crypt. It bears the common characteristics of other local shrines and sanctuaries abundant in the landscape of Palestine: the dome (or several domes) that symbolizes the holy character of the compound, the source of water usually found within the precinct itself or in its immediate

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[41]Parts of the paved road are still visible along the marked hiking trail leading from Wādī al-Ṣurār to Dayr al-Shaykh.

[42]Masterman and Macalister, ″Occasional Papers,″ 13–14.

[43]Petersen, ″Shrines,″ 99.

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surroundings, a few functional rooms, a prayer hall, and a peripheral wall.[44] In establishing the construction date and building sequence, Petersen relates that the date of the *zāwiyah* corresponds to Badr al-Dīn´s period. Interestingly enough, it looks as if the Muslim building was built on a former Crusader one. This might explain, as Petersen suggests, the name Dayr as preserving the memory of a monastery that was here prior to the *zāwiyah*. I will return to this characteristic while discussing the process of Islamization later on.

Not far from Badr al-Dīn´s *zāwiyah,* about 1 km. east of it, on a mountain called Shaykh Marzūq (today Mt. Giora), one may still find a *maqām* named Burj al-Shaykh Marzūq, that is, the tower of Shaykh Marzūq. Who was this Marzūq and how is he connected to the story of the Abū al-Wafā'? As the local story has it, Marzūq was a servant of Badr al-Dīn. His primary task was to watch over the *zāwiyah* from one of the summits near Dayr al-Shaykh. This was considered part of the holy war (jihad) against the enemies of Islam. When Marzūq was on his deathbed, Badr al-Dīn came to look after him and to assure him that he would come to no harm. Following his death a *maqām* was constructed on the mountain connected with him, known ever since as Burj al-Shaykh Marzūq.

The *zāwiyah* in Sharafāt: The village of Sharafāt stands on a ridge rising above the Wādī al-Sikkah some 8 km. south of Jerusalem. It is to be found in close proximity to the villages of Bayt Ṣafāfah and Malḥah. The village is less than 1 km. away from the central road using Wadī al-Sikkah, and some 4 km. away from the main road that stretches along the central ridge of Palestine. At the highest point of the village lies the complex attributed to the family of Abū al-Wafā'. The complex contains four parts: a prayer hall (today the mosque of Sitt Badrīyah), a courtyard, a *maqām,* and a number of rooms that might have served as cells for sufis.[45] The complex is surrounded by a wall and has only one entrance on its eastern side. The site has undergone several reconstructions over the years, which were responsible for the alteration in its original form. From the first building phase one may discern both the domed cell believed to be the tomb of ʻAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ and the prayer hall, converted today to a mosque. The cells in the courtyard were probably used by the people of the *zāwiyah* but lost all their former characteristics due to constant renovations. Adjacent to the complex on its southern side one may find two rows of buildings, mostly warehouses and pens in

[44]The most comprehensive survey of holy sites in Palestine is still Canaan, ″Mohammedan Saints,″ in which Canaan brings textual as well as pictorial descriptions of dozens of such sites. For comparison see, for example, the tomb of Phinehas, the shrine of Shaykh al-Ṣamit, and the shrine of Nabī Yūnus at al-Mashhad. Although one may find variations in each of the sites, a basic functional and symbolic plan is repeated in all of them.

[45]While surveying the site I encountered the local muezzin, who is of the opinion that those rooms were part of the *zāwiyah*.

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a dilapidated state. I cannot be certain whether they should also be attributed to the *zāwiyah* complex or to a former, i. e. Crusader, phase of the site. North of the *zāwiyah* stands an enormous oak tree that, according to the local legend, guards the grave of Sitt Badrīyah, the daughter of Badr al-Dīn.

Trees are one of the common features usually found in the vicinity of shrines and sanctuaries in Palestine.[46] The reason for this lies in the popular belief that they are protected by the holiness of the saint buried next to them. Any harm inflicted on such a tree will cause grave repercussions for the person involved. Since they were never harmed or exposed to grazing, such holy trees gained an unusual height by local standards. An oddity for which I can offer no explanation is the attribution of the *maqām* (as well as the tree) to Sitt Badrīyah, a daughter of Badr al-Dīn, and not to ʻAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ as one would assume. It seems that the holiness attributed to the male section of the family in the written sources shifted to the female section of the family in the local oral tradition.[47]

The al-Wafā'īyah *zāwiyah* in Jerusalem: The al-Wafā'īyah was thoroughly investigated by Burgoyne in his survey of Mamluk architecture in Jerusalem.[48] The building is to be found on the south side of Ṭarīq Bāb al-Nāẓir, adjacent to the gate itself. This is one of the most prestigious sites possible for a Muslim building in Jerusalem. It is bounded by the wall of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf to the east and surrounded by sumptuous and important sites such as Ribāṭ al-Manṣūrī, Ribāṭ al-Kurt and the al-Manjakīyah madrasah. The building is not homogenous and includes several periods of construction, as one may infer from the description related by Mujīr al-Dīn:

> Al-Zāwiyah al-Wafā'īyah—next to Bāb al-Nāẓir, and above it is a house which is considered part of the complex, which was known as the house of the shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn ibn al-Hā'im, later known as the house of the family of Abū al-Wafā' because they took up residence there. Formerly it was known as the house of Muʻāwiyah.[49]

The various building periods as reported by Mujīr al-Dīn are corroborated by the findings of Burgoyne. He finds that the early stages of construction predate the Mamluk period, probably being Ayyubid. During the Mamluk period the *zāwiyah* included two stories and a house above them. Later on, during the Ottoman period, a third story was built, as can be seen on the street frontage of the building.

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[46]See Canaan, ″Mohammedan Shrines,″ 30–31. Regarding the tree in Sharafāt, see ibid., 69.

[47]Ibid., 305 ff.

[48]Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem,* 456–59.

[49]Mujīr al-Dīn, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl,* 2:37.

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It is a structure of fairly large size by local standards (30 by 10 m.). It comprises a hall, a courtyard, and a set of rooms of medium size, on both the first and second floors.

The location of the al-Wafā'īyah, in such close proximity to the al-Manjakīyah madrasah, can be interpreted as another indication of the relations between the family and this important figure in the Mamluk elite, in the same fashion as the endowment of Sharafāt, referred to above. This may very well explain how a newcomer to the city managed to purchase a parcel of land in one of the most prestigious areas of the city. Could it be that the amir Manjak provided for the Abū al-Wafā' family within the city, as well as in its hinterland? The fact that the two compounds stand opposite each other may not be a coincidence. Another *zāwiyah* which is connected to the Wafā'īyah order within the city is al-Ḥamrah, near the Khānqāh al-Ṣalaḥīyah. Mujīr al-Dīn is silent about its founder as well as the date of its foundation. This explains why the information concerning this building, and its relation with the one next to Bāb al-Nāẓir, is scanty.[50]

IV

The various activities initiated by members of the Abū al-Wafā' engendered a visible outcome in the landscape of the region both in and out of Jerusalem. Our attention has been primarily focused on the *zāwiyah* compounds, but it should not be forgotten that those were not isolated or solitary constructions. The *zāwiyah* in Dayr al-Shaykh acted as a focal point and catalyst for other buildings and residences, later to form the entire village. Remember that the reason given by Mujīr al-Dīn for the relocation of Badr al-Dīn´s grandson to Sharafāt was the overpopulation and density of the former place. The arrival of Badr al-Dīn, a sufi leader of the highest rank, in the Judean hills was the catalyst for a chain of events that can not in any way be considered marginal. The activities instigated by him and other members of his family led to visible results, to be followed by demographic and cultural changes. At the time of Badr al-Dīn's arrival, southern Bilād al-Shām was still heavily populated with non-Muslim communities, although it had been within the realm of Dār al-Islām for more then six hundred years. In other words, the process of Islamization was far from being completed when he arrived at Palestine. Followed by his family and adherents, Badr al-Dīn settled in the hinterland of Jerusalem, some 20 km. due southwest of the city. There a center for the order was constructed in a secluded, albeit highly visible and accessible, site, soon to become the heart of a thriving settlement. The village that sprang up from and

[50]Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem,* 456.

around the *zāwiyah* survived until the Israeli occupation of 1948. The formation of this village should not be regarded as just another settlement but rather as a new post won for Islam in the ongoing struggle against Christianity. This is vividly described in the local tales ascribing the role of *mujāhid* to Badr al-Dīn and his servant Marzūq:[51]

> Shaykh Marzūq was a slave whom Sultan Badr used to station upon the summit of a high mountain to the east of Dayr al-Shaykh to keep a lookout for the enemy in the time of war and jihad.[52]

As far as Islamization is concerned, the narration of Mujīr al-Dīn, our prime informant, is unfortunately insufficient. Did an already established Christian settlement exist when Badr al-Dīn arrived on the scene? And if so, what eventually happened to the original community? The existence of a former Christian settlement may be deduced from a construction level in the *zāwiyah* that pre-dates the thirteenth century. It is also implied by the appearance of the word *dayr* (monastery in Arabic) in the village name. This word may be interpreted as indicating the former existence of a Byzantine monastery, later to become a Frankish or Christian Arab settlement.[53] Ellenblum created a sociological and spatial model according to which the Frankish population settled primarily in areas already dominated by indigenous Christian communities. In other words, the rural settlements of the Frankish immigrants followed those of their fellow Christians.[54] He demonstrates this phenomenon by drawing the cultural border of southern Samaria between Muslim and Christian villages. This is aptly depicted in the toponymic map of the area by the abundant use of the word *dayr,* indicating a formerly Christian area. Following the same logic and exploiting Ellenblum´s maps of Byzantine churches and Frankish rural settlements in Palestine, one may find a densely populated Christian area in the environs of Dayr al-Shaykh.[55] Map 2 includes all rural Frankish settlements as found and described by Ellenblum, followed by sites that have the word *dayr* in their name.[56] The map depicts an area dominated by Christian

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[51]See Masterman and Macalister, ″Occasional Papers,″ 127

[52]Ibid.

[53]See Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*, 228–29, where he draws a map depicting the cultural lines between Muslim and Christian communities, based on a toponymic survey of sites which have the word *dayr* in their names.

[54]Ibid, 233.

[55]The map is based on the Frankish rural sites as depicted in ibid., xviii, and Conder and Kitchener, *Survey of Western Palestine,* sheet XVII.

[56]As yet I cannot fully demonstrate the existence of a Frankish layer in all settlements with *dayr* in their name.

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settlements, starting from the Jerusalem-Bethlehem line on the east and stretching westward as far as the Dayr Aban-Bayt Jimāl line. In regard to Dayr al-Shaykh, the two sets of indicators exist, in the form of the toponymic sign *dayr* and the existence of a layer that pre-dates Badr al-Dīn's complex.[57] The conclusion is that Badr al-Dīn's arrival on the scene was not to a region devoid of population, but rather to a Christian-dominated area.

The role of sufis and saints as agents of Islamization in different parts of the Muslim world has been established already by various scholars.[58] Vryonis highlights the critical role of the mystic and sufi orders in the Islamization of Anatolia.[59] The simple, sometimes even crude and earthly Islam of the holy man *(baba)* and his followers was far more appealing to the Christian community of Anatolia than the orthodox, rigid one of the ulama. The beginning of the process was humble and incidental. Hand in hand with the expansion of the Seljuks went the arrival of the lonely saint, dwelling in as yet un-Islamized regions of Anatolia and slowly gaining respect and influence over the gradually waning local Christian communities. The role played by Badr al-Dīn was in many ways identical. He arrived at an area that was under Islamic rule, though apparently Muslims were not the majority. Badr al-Dīn's taking up residence in Dayr al-Shaykh led to the Islamization of the place. The fate of the former population and the precise phases of Islamization cannot be fully established. The events that took place at Sharafāt bring to light a much more detailed picture.

In order better to understand what transpired in Sharafāt one needs to consult Mujīr al-Dīn′s description again.[60] The *zāwiyah* in Sharafāt was built during the period when Dā'ūd (d. 701/1301) was head of the order. At that time, we are told, the village was Christian, except for Dā'ūd′s family and adherents. Some of the Christians, who owned vineyards, were also involved in the production of wine. The wine was sold to, among others, sinful Muslims *(lil-fassāq min al-muslimīn).* This state of affairs vexed Dā'ūd and he called upon God to stop this from occurring. Indeed, we are told by Mujīr al-Dīn, the Christians stopped the wine

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[57]See again Petersen, ″Shrines,″ 103.

[58]See Levtzion, *Conversion to Islam*, 16–20, where he summarizes research on various locations and periods demonstrating the role of sufis in the process of Islamization. But see recently Reuven Amitai, ″Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate,″ *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42 (1999): 27–45. In this article, Amitai claims that Islamization via sufi agents in the Mongol region was primarily of institutional sufis close to Mongol ruling circles. The connection between members of the Abū al-Wafā' family and Manjak al-Sayfī may indicate the same closeness between sufis as agents of Islamization and ruling circles of the Mamluk elite.

[59]Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism,* esp. 351–402.

[60]Mujīr al-Dīn, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl,* 2:147–48.

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production because each time the grapes were pressed, they would turn out to be vinegar. As the story has it, this was the wrath of God inflicted on the infidels. Once the Christian inhabitants were deprived of their livelihood, they had no alternative but to leave the village. As Mujīr al-Dīn puts it, they realized that they were facing a man of enormous power (namely Dā'ūd), a wizard *(sākhir),* so they abandoned their fields and left the village altogether. The expulsion of the Christian farmers caused the *iqṭā'* owner *(muqṭa')* grave losses. Thereupon Dā'ūd leased the lands of the village from him and built a *zāwiyah* and a tomb where he and his descendants were to be buried later. The construction of Muslim institutions and landmarks was the morphological materialization of the demographic and cultural changes that took place in the village of Sharafāt. The changing of the village name from Shafrāt to Sharafāt is yet another sign of this dramatic change.

The crucial role of the Abū al-Wafā' family as agents of Islamization is fully attested in the village of Sharafāt. It appears that they acted as a Muslim vanguard which eventually transformed a Christian settlement into a Muslim one. A similar case is to be found during the early Ottoman period in the north of Palestine. The person concerned, Shaykh al-Asadī, settled in the heart of what was then a Christian village.[61] Later on a *zāwiyah* was constructed and eventually the total Islamization of the village took place. The former Christian population emigrated (or rather was forced to emigrate) to an alternative site. Layish investigated the case of Dayr al-Asad (the village of Shaykh al-Asadī) fully and found it to be a typical case of the Islamization policy of the Ottoman empire as implemented throughout its territories.[62] As it happens, the shaykh was endowed with the village lands by none other then the Ottoman sultan Selim I.

The events that led to the Islamization of Sharafāt have a lot in common with those that led to that of Dayr al-Asad. To begin with, it was the settlement of a sufi order or person in the heart of a Christian village that started the process. Gradually the sufis strengthened their hold on the place, as can be seen in the shape of visible Islamic symbols and institutions. At some point in the process governmental help was granted. As Layish depicts it, the initiative for the penetration of the sufi shaykh into Dayr al-Asad was taken by the sultan. This was started by the granting of an endowment, comprising the entire village lands, to the shaykh. As reported by Mujīr al-Dīn, Sharafāt was also given as an endowment to the head of the Wafā'īyah order. The endower was a prominent figure in the Mamluk

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[61]Aharon Layish, ″Waqf and Sūfi Monasteries in the Ottoman Policy of Colonization: Sulṭān Selīm I′s Waqf of 1516 in Favour of Dayr al-Asad,″ *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 50 (1987): 61–89.

[62]Ibid., 75, n. 57, where he relies primarily on Ömer Lûtfi Barkan, ″Les fondation pieuses comme méthode de peuplement et de colonisation: Les derviches colonisateurs de l′époque des invasions et les couvents (saviyé),″ *Vakıflar Dergisi* 2 (1942) (partie française).

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elite, i. e., the amir Manjak al-Sayfī. The act of endowment took place sometime during the middle of the fourteenth century, some fifty odd years after the Abū al-Wafā' were already well rooted in the new location.[63] Nevertheless, the patron-sufi relation was one of the conditions that helped the process materialize.

The cases of Dayr al-Shaykh and Sharafāt bring to light the role of the Abū al-Wafā' as agents of Islamization in the Judean hills. It appears that the area was still dominated by Christian-Frankish settlements in the thirteenth century. This situation gradually altered after the arrival of Badr al-Dīn´s family and order on the scene. The process was not of Islamization of the indigenous communities but rather Islamization brought about by creating such conditions as would force those communities to leave. The growing movement of immigrants from the Bayt Jālah-Bethlehem region (i. e., the region where the Abū al-Wafā' settled) to the Galilee during the late Mamluk and early Ottoman periods was described by Cohen and Lewis.[64] Apparently Ottoman documents show a substantial migration of Christians from the area lying south of Jerusalem. It is my suggestion here that this process started already in the thirteenth century and continued at least until the sixteenth century. One should realize that unlike the rural settlements of the area in question, the urban part of it (i.e., Bayt Jālah and Bethlehem) is still heavily populated with Christian communities.

V

The case of the Abū al-Wafā' has enabled us to take a closer look at what usually remains obscure and unreachable in the sources regarding the stages of Islamization in a region prior to the relatively richly documented Ottoman period. The story of Badr al-Dīn and his followers contains many of the characteristics of other sufi leaders, as described by Trimingham:

> In the development of organized Sufism *zāwiyas* were more important than most of those just described [i. e., *ribāṭ* and *khānqāh*], but here the institution was a man. They were small modest establishments, centred around one shaikh; at first impermanent, especially since such men were frequently migrants themselves. It was through these men, migrant or settled, that self-perpetuating *ṭarīqas* came into being. They were not endowed like *khānaqāhs*

[63]See again the discussion regarding the problem of establishing the accurate date of the endowment, above.

[64]Cohen and Lewis, *Population and Revenue,* 32–33.

> and *ribāṭs,* though in time when they became family residences they tended to accumulate *awqāf*.[65]

Badr al-Dīn was indeed a stranger when he immigrated and settled in Dayr al-Shaykh. Trimingham asserts that this was in itself a quality that helped sufis to win over the hearts of the local population.[66] Whether this was part of a Mamluk plan or policy one can only surmise, and hopefully future research will establish this. Be that as it may, the fact remains that along the way the family received crucial help from the Mamluk authorities. This occurred in the form of the patronage granted by Amir Manjak al-Sayfī on several occasions.

Members of the Abū al-Wafā' acted as agents of Islamization. Through their various activities they were responsible for changes in the cultural landscape of the region. It seems that changing social and religious forces were met by a change in economic demands, as in the case of the wine at Sharafāt. The pendulum was working in favor of the growing Islamic communities and against the former Christian settlers. But still we are left with many parts missing from the puzzle. Where did the displaced Christian communities go? Did they migrate elsewhere or did some of them embrace Islam? Why was no trace to be found of the former religious buildings, namely churches? The crucial issues of migration, demographic changes, and the changing of the cultural landscape following them await further research. Nevertheless, the methodology established here and the detailed case study break new ground in the complicated research into the Islamization of the region.

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[65]J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford, 1971), 168–69.

[66]Layish, ″Waqf and Sūfi Monasteries,″ 76–78.

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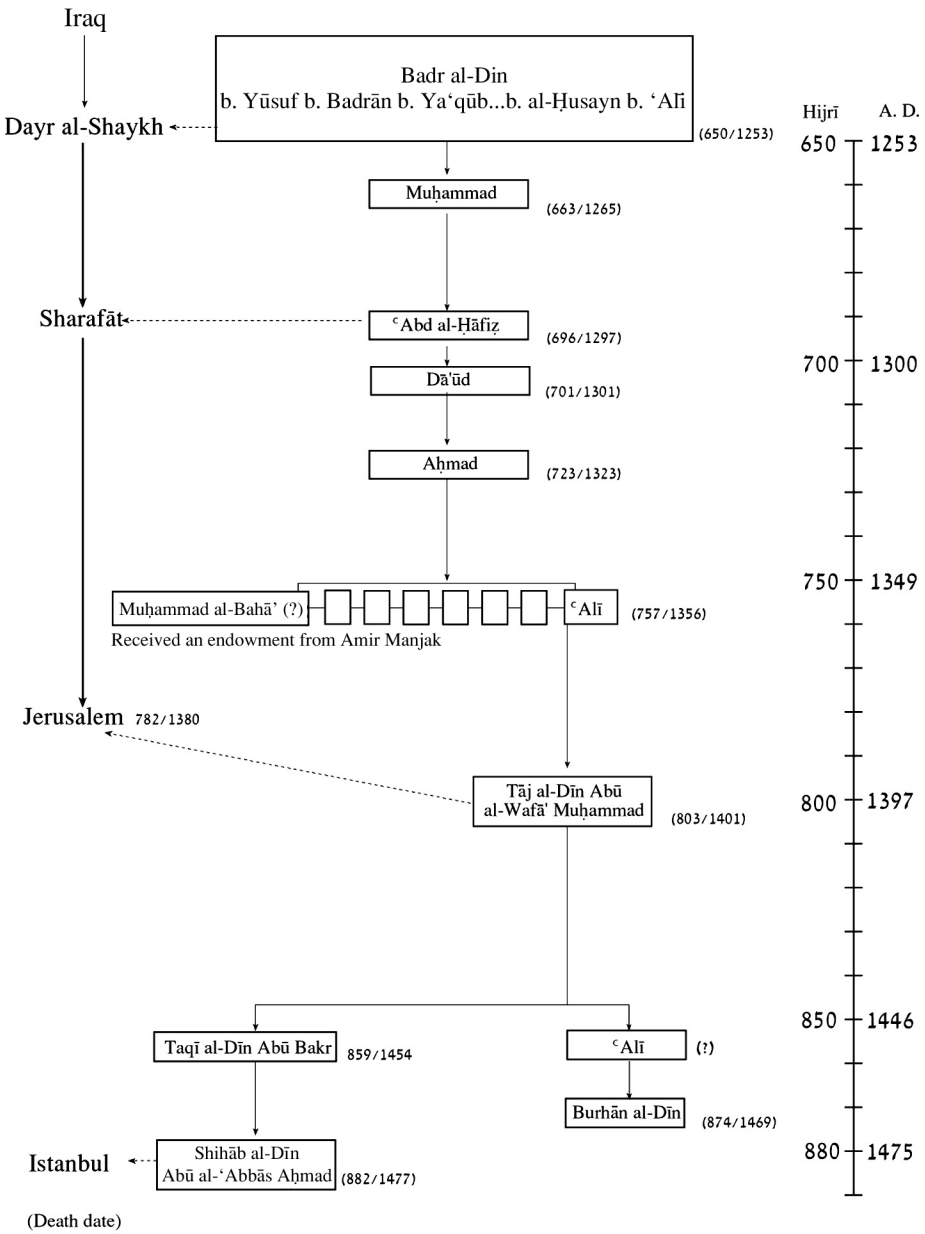

Figure 1. Abū al-Wafā' Genealogy Table

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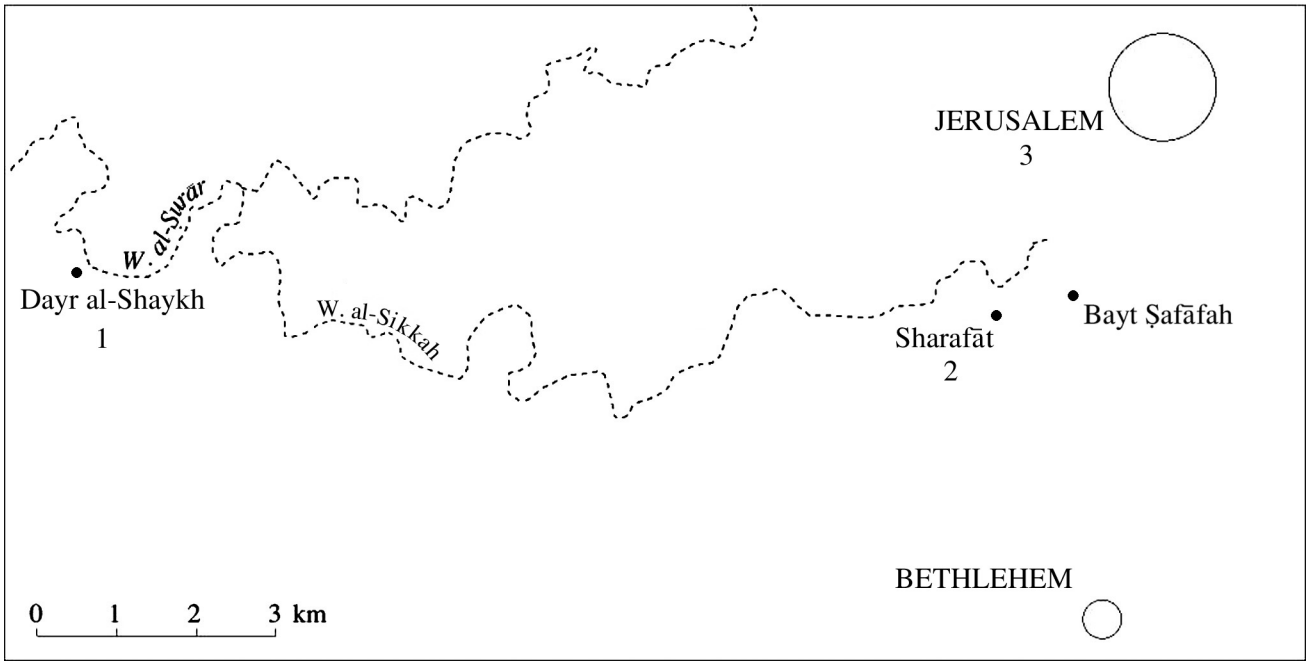

Figure 2. The Abū al-Wafā' Locations in the Vicinity of Jerusalem

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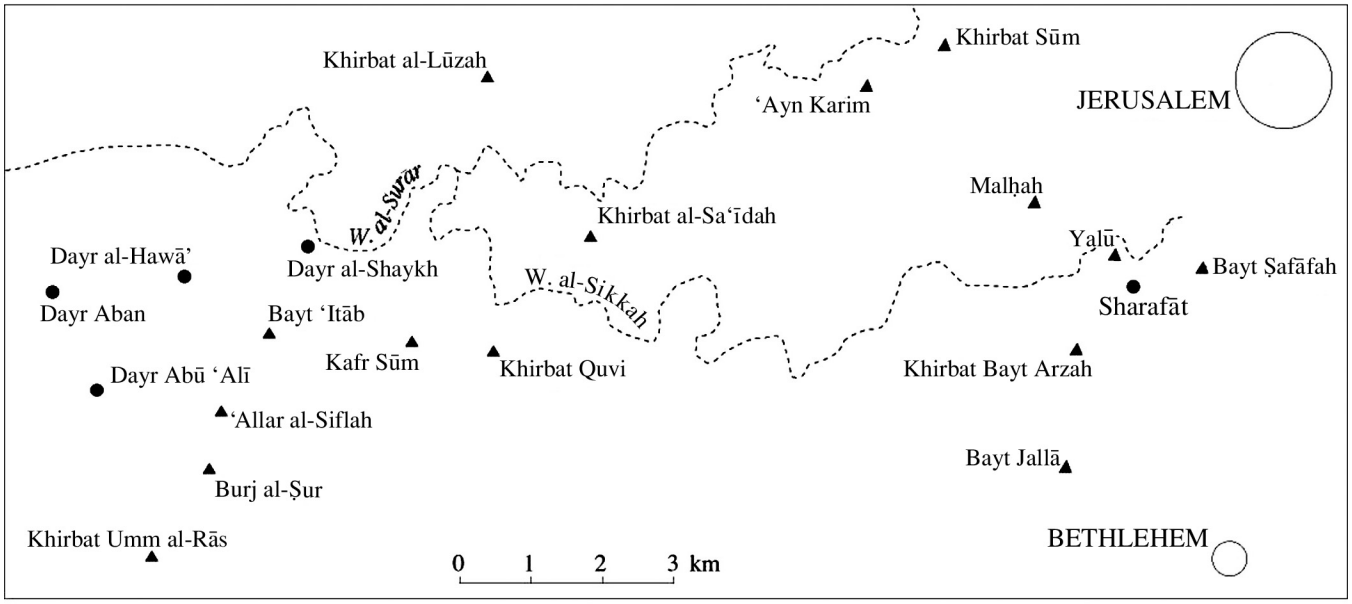

● Sites with the word Dayr in their names

▲ Frankish sites (following Ellenblum)

Figure 3. Frankish and Christian Settlements in the Judean Hills

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