

Introduction

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*Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial.*¹

–Victor Turner

The *Friday Mosque in the City: Liminality, Ritual, and Politics* explores the relationship between two important entities in the Islamic context: the Friday mosque and the city. Earlier scholarship has examined these concepts separately and, to some degree, in relation to each other.² This volume seeks to understand the relationship between them. In order to begin this discussion, defining the terminology is necessary. The English term ‘mosque’ derives from the Arabic *masjid*, a term designating a place of prostration, whereas the term *jami*, which is translated variously as Friday mosque, great mosque or congregational mosque, originates from the Arabic term *jama*, meaning to gather. The religious obligation for Muslims to congregate on Fridays eventually created an Islamic social code.³ Similarly, the migration from Mecca to Medina was instrumental in transforming a society based on tribal kinship into a community (*umma*).⁴ The Prophet himself played a vital role in establishing the first congregational space in Medina. Whatever the original terminology that defined it, this space is usually accepted as the prototype of the ‘mosque’ by architectural historians.⁵ The distinctions in terminology are important because, according to Islamic legal tradition, the presence of a Friday mosque was an important parameter in defining a city (*madina*).⁶

As the dominion of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) spread across continents, it gradually embraced both local sociocultural traditions and the architectural heritage of earlier cultures of the lands it inhabited. The problems of succession after the death of the Prophet would ultimately lead to a major rift in Islam, the Sunni–Shi‘i division. By the tenth century, contestation of power and rival claims to the universal Islamic caliphate created new bases within and between these branches. As embodiments of political rivalry, Friday mosques were instrumental in the urban development and the identity of new Islamic caliphal capital cities. When we consider their impact diachronically and synchronically, the Friday Mosques of Umayyad Damascus, Abbasid Baghdad, Spanish Umayyad Cordoba, and Fatimid Cairo played a crucial role as prototypes whose designs were disseminated across the Islamic geography and over the course of centuries.⁷ The weakening and demise of the caliphates eventually led to the rise of new states that established their own power centres – and, hence, to a proliferation of Friday mosques.

Thanks to the symbolic importance of the Friday sermon (*khutba*), these mosques also became loci for the displays of power and declarations of independence that became increasingly important with the proliferation of Islamic states. Being closely associated with political authority – especially with the name of the ruler declared in the *khutba* delivered from the pulpit (*minbar*) – Hanafite jurists favoured a single political and religious centre: a single Friday mosque in a city, as Baber Johansen has discussed.⁸ In the medieval period, Hanafite legal opinion supported the hierarchical classification of places of worship as an important feature of the city that distinguished it from the countryside. Extant medieval Anatolian mosques of the Hanafite Seljuks indeed demonstrate a preference for a centralized and hierarchical system, with one Friday mosque (*jami'*) and numerous neighbourhood mosques (*masjid*) per city.⁹

While legal opinion preferred one Friday mosque, need dictated more: the medieval traveller Ibn Jubayr (*d.*1217) reported that 'the full number of congregational mosques in Baghdad, where Friday prayers are said, is eleven.'¹⁰ Thus, although Baghdad was established with the idealized round plan that featured a single Friday mosque, over the course of centuries the number of mosques in the city multiplied.¹¹ The successive establishment of Friday mosques in Fatimid Cairo demonstrates that similar developments occurred in a Shi'i context.¹² Later on, in Safavid Isfahan, debates concerning 'permissibility of Friday prayer in the absence of the awaited Twelfth Imam' initially impacted the patronage of Friday mosques; however, once these issues were resolved at the turn of the sixteenth century, the number immediately multiplied.¹³ Following the conquest of Constantinople, the Hanefite Ottomans also studded their capital in Istanbul with numerous monumental Friday mosques, departing from the earlier tradition that preferred one Friday mosque per city.¹⁴

As the chief signifier of the religion, the Friday mosque was given an important role in urban development throughout Islamic history. This fact placed Friday mosques in the centre of 'Islamic City' debates, the problematic nature of which has been addressed at length in scholarship and is not the focus here.¹⁵ Instead, this volume is particularly interested in the ambiguous and dynamic relationship between the Friday mosque and its surrounding urban context.

In the sixteenth century, the renowned traveller/explorer André Thévet (*d.*1590), who accompanied the French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in 1546, described how the Ottoman sultan, Süleyman the Magnificent (*r.*1520–66), ceremoniously rode on horseback, with great pomp and circumstance, to the Friday mosque that he patronized; 7000 janissary soldiers accompanied him. This procession, with its visual grandeur and awe-inspiring silence, made a great impact on the viewer.¹⁶ The approach to the mosque was likely through the neighbourhoods leading to the rationally planned paths that passed between the geometrically organized dependencies of the complex. Eventually, one would reach the walls of the outer courtyard. This expansive green space surrounded the mosque as well as the royal mausolea, which were also closed-off behind the qibla wall of the mosque. This kind of 'complex' (which had at its heart a mosque with an arcaded forecourt), enclosed in an outer courtyard and then surrounded by various socio-religious dependencies, was a particular Ottoman phenomenon.

Let us return to Süleyman's Friday procession. These ceremonials acted as an interface between the state/office of the sultan and the public; therefore, an extraordinary crowd attended these important weekly events. In addition to pious Muslim citizens, subjects and travellers curious to see the sultan and the magnificent procession, people from disparate parts of the empire hoping to submit their petitions, opportunity seekers, and beggars would fill those spaces. While Süleyman, his retinue, and some of the above-mentioned people performed their Friday prayers, the remaining crowd would have waited for the sultan to emerge from the mosque. Where did these functions take place? Where did people perform their prayers: in the mosque proper or spread out to the inner and maybe even the outer courtyards? If the latter, where did those who were not performing the Friday prayer – for instance, the 7000 janissaries and the non-Muslims – wait?

Without further textual evidence, these questions are difficult to answer. What can be said, however, is that, similar to the sixteenth-century example, religious holiday (*eid*) prayers today spill beyond the walls of the outer courtyard, toward the dependencies. The delineation of space aside, actual usage points to the porous nature and frequent transgression of physical boundaries. Most notably, for instance, historical sources demonstrate that the interior of the mosque was used for non-religious activities. Many nineteenth-century sources describe how the Süleymaniye Mosque was used for safekeeping: the 'galleries are full of boxes, bags, bales of merchandise, and all sorts of valuables which have been left there for security, and no man can guess to what extent'.¹⁷ As these instances reveal, not only the 'in between' spaces, such as the inner and outer courtyards, but even the most straightforward and well-defined spaces, such as the mosque proper, could be transformed in function from time to time. The articles in this volume provide further evidence that there was (and continues to be) a tremendous variety in the way architectural borders became more fluid in and around Friday mosques across the Islamic geography, from Cordoba to Jerusalem and from London to Lahore.

The 'Great Mosque' of Cordoba and the Badshahi Masjid in Lahore present two distinct examples of the relationship between the Friday mosque and the urban context. While in the former case the doors on the eastern and western facades act as the primary interface between the city and the mosque, in the latter this relationship is established through an architecturally demarcated liminal space. In her chapter 'Liminal Spaces in the Great Mosque of Cordoba: Urban Meaning and Politico-Liturgical Practices', Susana Calvo Capilla examines how the mosque interacted with urban life. While it was situated in the heart of a dense urban setting, near the administrative centre, the mosque was surrounded by an empty zone that affected visitors' spatial perception and allowed for both daily and religious practices to take place. Along with these areas, the entrances that were employed for various religious practices were visually emphasized through ornamental and epigraphic programmes. Their political, ideological, and religious significance transformed these architectural thresholds into liminal spaces and 'ultimately made them suitable urban public spaces for displaying official propaganda'. Lahore presents a different case study. In her chapter 'Lahore's Badshahi Masjid: Spatial Interactions of the Sacred and the Secular', Mehreen Chida-Razvi examines

the relationship between Lahore Fort (Shahi Qila) and the Mughal-era Friday mosque built across from it, known as the Badshahi Masjid (completed 1674), through the lens of the enclosed space that separated the two. This transitional zone, initially a walled-in courtyard but later turned into a garden, the 'Garden of Reception' (Hazuri Bagh), mediated between the political and religious centres of the Mughal city. Apart from how these areas were initially conceptualized and utilized under the Mughals, the capture of the city by the Afghans (1748), Sikhs (1758), and British (1848) meant that they were variously employed (or abandoned) and interpreted by their new rulers.

In the range of case studies discussed in this volume, what contributed to the penetration of spatial zones – whether they were tangible or intangible – was the human factor. Individual and collective human experiences, activities, memories, and perceptions made physical boundaries more porous, and the 'in between' or 'liminal' spaces more dynamic. The concept of 'liminality' was introduced at the turn of the twentieth century by the ethnographer Arnold van Gennep (1873–1975) through his tripartite *les rites de passage*, which describe the changeover from one state to another (separation, margin or *limen*, and aggregation).¹⁸ In the 1960s, the cultural anthropologist Victor Turner (1920–83) further developed van Gennep's framework and discussed the intervening 'liminal' period as necessarily ambiguous.¹⁹ Turner's elaboration and reconceptualization of the 'liminal' has provided a useful theoretical model across different disciplines. For the Islamic world, recent publications by anthropologists address social factors through this lens.²⁰ For architectural and urban history, however, the scholarly conversation continues.

The anthropological definition of 'liminal' brings the social force to a spatial conceptualization of 'liminal' and broadens our understanding and perception of the transitional zones between a Friday mosque and a city. As cited at the beginning of this introduction, in *The Ritual Process*, Turner situates the liminal entity as 'neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial'.²¹ These four factors also play a vital role in the formation of cities in the Islamic context. While Islamic law arranges the daily life of a Muslim society, enforcing the need for a gathering space for Friday prayers, customs, and conventions across different time periods and geographies not only impacted the architectural preferences determined for mosques, but also were decisive in determining the number of Friday mosques that were built within a city. The presence of inhabitants transforms the city from architectural masses and voids into a living urban landscape. As noted in the case of Süleyman the Magnificent's Friday procession in Istanbul, ceremonials and rituals help establish networks among these individuals and create urban nodes.

In the Islamic context, the obligatory pilgrimage (hajj), one of the five pillars of Islam, is the embodiment of the Turner-esque liminal mode of state. This ultimate experience consists of visiting sacred destinations – buildings, places, landscapes – within the city, Ka'ba being primary.²² The rituals intertwined with these sacred destinations created a network that spread the sacredness throughout the whole city. Medina and Jerusalem shared a similar status. Both the former, housing the burial place of the Prophet Muhammad (d.632), and the

latter, being the first qibla (from 610–23) and the locus of the Prophet's Ascension (*al-mi'raj*), were considered holy cities alongside Mecca. In his chapter 'City as Liminal Space: Islamic Pilgrimage and Muslim Holy Sites in Jerusalem During the Mamluk Period', Fadi Ragheb demonstrates how Jerusalem lived up to its 'holy' name (*al-Quds*). This perception of the city was shared by all three Abrahamic religions, creating a multi-layered understanding and practice of sanctity. This was a reason for contested claims over the city, which led to 'holy' wars and crusades in the medieval period. As Ragheb discusses, following the Crusades, during the time of the Mamluk Sultanate, pilgrimage guides to Jerusalem, known as *Fada'il al-Quds*, promoted 'the great reward of stopping in Jerusalem en route to the hajj' and thereby revived pilgrimage to the city. As the *fada'il* demonstrate, a network of holy sites around the Haram were incorporated into the pilgrimage route; thus, individual pious acts and collective rituals multiplied, spreading all over the city. Moreover, these guide books encouraged pilgrims to enter the ritual 'state of *ihram* at the gates of the city'. The reference to '*ihram*' – understood both as a spiritual state and as the ritual donning of the white garment – was and still is closely associated with the hajj, which puts Jerusalem on par with Mecca, further enhancing the sanctity of the city and extending it beyond the city gates. Ragheb also compares the nature of liminality in Jerusalem with that in medieval Mecca, similarly demonstrating how the sacred in Mecca was not limited to the boundaries of the Ka'ba and al-Masjid al-Haram, but, rather, it permeated the entire city of Mecca and its neighbouring regions through holy sites connected with the hajj along with the multiplication of many secondary sacred sites in and outside the city during the medieval period.

Not every city contained palimpsestous accumulations of sacredness as the holy cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem did. Nevertheless, after the Prophet Muhammad's death, his successors, first the caliphs and later the sultans, attempted to create their own 'sacred' capitals by creating and recreating urban nuclei and establishing novel rituals connected to them. Jonathan Z. Smith defines 'ritual' as a 'mode of paying attention'.²³ Considering this definition, the construction of these 'built ritual environments' helped construct new 'sacred' places and provided grounds for rulers seeking legitimacy and public attention, both locally and in the broader Islamic lands.²⁴

The reestablishment of a capital city with 'sacred' pretensions is a subject examined by Suzan Yalman in her chapter 'Sanctifying Konya: The Thirteenth-Century Transformation of the Seljuk Friday Mosque into a "House of God"'. The Anatolian city of Konya (ancient Iconium) became the capital of the Seljuk Sultanate in the twelfth century and had a Friday mosque in the citadel near the Seljuk palace. The building was expanded considerably by sultans Kayka'us (r.1211–19) and Kayqubad (r.1220–37) in the thirteenth century, when the enclosure of a large courtyard that housed two dynastic tomb towers created a liminal space and provided the first recognizable case of a multifunctional 'mosque complex' in Anatolia. Regarding the death of the two sultans' father, Yalman argues that 'the saintly status given to Kaykhusraw with his martyrdom, the return of his body in the manner of a saint's relic, the celebration of his burial, and the rituals developed around his commemoration, such as weekly Friday visitations, seem to indicate a desire to create a dynastic cult'. Alexei Lidov

refers to such conscious efforts to create a new sacred space through relics and rituals as 'hierotopy',²⁵ a term composed of two Greek roots – *hieros* (sacred) and *topos* (place, space, notion) – that refers to a special form of creativity.²⁶

In the case of Konya, the name of the 'hierotopic project' is evident by the unprecedented term that was employed in Kayqubad's completion of the rebuilt ritual space: 'house of God' (*bayt Allah*). This term, also found in the Qur'an, is usually associated with the Ka'ba in Mecca but may possibly refer to Jerusalem as well. Concurrent with the Friday mosque project, Kayqubad was also busy refortifying Konya with additional city walls. Yalman argues that this event was part of a greater transformation and amplification of the status of the city in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade of 1204,²⁷ when the Seljuks began to have greater 'geostrategic' aspirations. The refashioning of the city as a 'house of God' created a pilgrimage destination and served to transform Konya into a 'city of God'.

Seventeenth-century Isfahan presents another case of a capital city being refashioned, in this case reflecting the Shi'i ideology of the Safavid Empire (1501–1722). While the Friday mosque in Konya was expanded for new imperial claims, in Isfahan the Old Mosque, which had long been associated with Sunni Islam, was left and two new mosques were commissioned. In his chapter 'Inviolable Thresholds, Blessed Palaces, and Holy Friday Mosques: The Sacred Topography of Safavid Isfahan', Farshid Emami examines how a new religious – particularly Shi'i – core was created as part of the urban transformation, rivalling the old centre of the city. Consecutively, Shah Abbas built two mosques, the Shaykh Lutfallah Mosque (c.1595–1618) and the Shah Mosque (c.1611–38), which were significant components of this core. This was a time when performing the Friday prayer in the absence of the awaited Twelfth Imam was a controversial and debated subject among Shi'i jurists – one that had prevented earlier Safavid shahs from commissioning Friday mosques. However, the fact that this dispute was settled in favour of Friday mosques is evident from the fact that the first – and relatively smaller – Friday mosque was built in the name of Shaykh Lutfallah, a jurist who believed in the obligatory nature of the Friday prayer. As for the second mosque, Emami discusses the conceptualization of its design within the new royal urban plaza and highlights the significance of the adoption of the Old Mosque's name (*al-masjid al-jami*), demonstrating the competitive nature of the project. As he underscores, 'what differentiated the new congregational mosque perhaps was its sectarian ethos'. Ultimately, he demonstrates how Shah Abbas justified his patronage of not only one but two Friday mosques and argues that these projects 'provided a stage for royal ceremonies and projected a state-sanctioned orthodox narrative of Shi'ism'.

As these examples demonstrate, Konya and Isfahan were not among the 'holy' cities of Islam. In order to live up to their status as imperial capitals, they required more grandeur. In the absence of long-established Islamic 'holy' sites, they attempted to reconceptualise and sanctify spaces – whether Sunni or Shi'i – through their Friday mosques. However, unlike the Christian tradition, in which the church is perceived as an embodiment of Christ, the Friday mosque does not have sanctity in and of itself but requires further layers of religious associations, such as the placement of relics, the declaration of an epigraphic programme,

the creation of a soundscape or the incorporation of incense.²⁸ In Konya, the body of Kaykhusraw was brought back to the city and interred in the tomb in the Friday mosque like a relic, and a new inscription declared the building as *bayt Allah* in reference to Mecca or Jerusalem. In Isfahan, as Emami states, the epigraphic programme was utilized both for ‘proclaiming specifically Shi‘i tenets of faith’ and ‘to convince the Sunnis of the validity of the Safavids’ Shi‘i creed through the former’s own canonical sources’. The ‘hierotopic projects’ that attempted to create a ‘sacred’ mosque also made use of rituals in the form of state-sponsored religious ceremonies. In the same way that the *ihram* ritual extends sanctity beyond the boundaries of the Haram for Jerusalem, rituals for other cities too bring an aura of sanctity to the greater built environment. Even in cases where there are physical boundaries or barriers, ritual temporarily redefines them.

Chapters by Abbey Stockstill and A. Hilâl Uğurlu in this volume provide different case studies of rituals, such as court ceremonials, that blended religious rites with political aspirations – and breathed life into the architectural spaces of the urban landscape. In her chapter ‘From the Kutubiyya to Tinmal: The Sacred Direction in Mu‘minid Performance’, Stockstill examines patronage under the first Almohad caliph, ‘Abd al-Mu‘min (r.1147–63), in Marrakesh and its vicinity, with a particular emphasis on the Kutubiyya Mosque, the pilgrimage site at Tinmal, and the public garden complex known as the Agdal. This period marked a key transition from the early Almohad religious movement (*al-muwahhidun*), led by Ibn Tumart (d.1130), to a political establishment based on dynastic succession (the Mu‘minids, r.1147–1269). In seeking to legitimize his political power, ‘Abd al-Mu‘min was keenly aware that ‘Almohadism revolved around the character of the Mahdi [Ibn Tumart]’, and he literally built his claims around him. He reinforced his connection to the *mahdi* by building a mosque in his memory that eventually became a dynastic necropolis. Moreover, in his reestablishment of Marrakesh, he emphasized the directionality toward the Atlas Mountains and Tinmal, especially the site where Ibn Tumart was buried. By focusing on their ‘ethnic, geographic and spiritual origins’ in the manipulation of the local landscape, the mentioned sites were connected through processional routes. Ultimately, as Stockstill underscores, the ‘space was then activated through the regular and repeated acts of ceremonial performance.’

In her chapter entitled ‘*Perform Your Prayers in Mosques!:* Changing Spatial and Political Relations in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Istanbul’, A. Hilâl Uğurlu offers another case study of ceremonies that utilized the urban landscape of the city as their background and a Friday mosque as their centre. The modern imperial mosques of Ottoman Istanbul underwent spatial, semantic, and social transformations in the nineteenth century. Moreover, in the second half of the Hamidian era (1876–1909), Friday processions were significantly altered. As soon as the Hamidiye Mosque was completed in 1885, it became the primary choice for all stately and religious processions. Furthermore, the number of participants increased dramatically. High officials were obliged to be present at these weekly events, as were an immense number of soldiers. Various mounted troops and foot soldiers marched through the narrow streets from their barracks – situated in different, and mostly distant, parts of

the city – to the Hamidiye Mosque and back. These Friday processions created a weekly opportunity for the sultan to superintend administrative and military institutions in the presence of many other audiences, such as Istanbulites, visitors from other parts of the empire, and international guests. Furthermore, by making the mosque – and its environs – the ultimate destination for thousands of people every week, these ceremonies temporarily recast the mosque's physical boundaries. These repeated visual spectacles not only introduced novel sensual experiences and made the spectators active participants in the ceremony, but they also reinforced the sultan's message of the vigorous state of the empire, as well as his own claims to the universal caliphate.

For 'Abd al-Mu'min and Abdülhamid II, both of whom had caliphal claims, political legitimacy and a concern with permanence were intertwined with religious authority. Thus, the way they planned their state-staged rituals, utilizing the relationship between Friday mosques and the nearby landscape (rural and urban topography), present similarities. In both cases, the apparently political nature of the ceremony was infused with religious/caliphal overtones. However, once the Almohads and Ottomans ceased to exist, and, thus, the caliphal claims and rituals vanished, the hierotopic projects of Mu'minid Marrakesh and Ottoman Istanbul fell apart.

Unlike these politically constructed 'sacred' cities, Islamic 'holy' cities – from Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem to Najaf, Karbala, and Mashhad – present a contrasting case. No matter who controls these cities, and whatever conflicts take place, throughout history and even up to the present day, they always remain 'sacred'. In her chapter entitled 'Urban Morphology and Sacred Space: The Mashhad Shrine during the Late Qajar and Pahlavi Periods,' May Farhat examines how politically-motivated systematic physical interventions that aimed to deconstruct the 'sacredness' of Mashhad in the mid-twentieth century ultimately failed. With the shrine of the eighth Shi'i imam, Ali al-Rida (Imam Reza, *d.*818), at its heart, Mashhad, was, and still is, considered a 'sacred city,' one which grew organically around the saint's tomb over the course of centuries, creating a dense urban landscape. As early as the tenth century, this nucleus transformed the entire city into a pilgrimage destination like Jerusalem. The shrine, being a protected territory, had its own administration and rules that no governmental forces could control; thus, it spread its sacredness to its dependencies, including the Timurid-era Gawharshad Mosque (1418).

When the Pahlavi dynasty (1925–79), in parallel with its modernization project, aspired to diminish the political power of the clergy, and thus establish a certain authority in the sacred quarter of the city (which had been beyond reach earlier), abolishing the system that had been shaped over centuries or demolishing the sacred shrine were out of question. However, redefining the borders of the sacred precinct, thereby physically preventing its connection with the city, was possible. First by isolating the shrine complex, by encircling it with a '30 m wide peripheral avenue,' and then by demolishing and reconstructing (what in a modern sense were considered) 'secular' buildings, the socio-religious life around the shrine, which had been an integral part of the sacred precinct, was eliminated. Farhat argues that these interventions demonstrated the Pahlavi rulers' 'decision to refashion the shrine

into a cultural institution and to minimize the religious visitation ritual centred on the imam's tomb.

The case of Mashhad is particularly reflective of how the post-Enlightenment Western binary of 'sacred' and 'secular' was adopted and utilized in the name of 'modernization' by non-Western cultures (in this case a Muslim-dominant country), without any questioning of these concepts in the context of their cultural, social, and religious backgrounds. As Shahab Ahmed states in *What Is Islam?*, 'to conceptualize Islam in terms of the religious/sacred versus secular binary is both an anachronism and an epistemological error the effect of which is to *remake* the historical object-phenomenon in the terms of Western modernity'.²⁹ Ahmed's problematization of this 'error' comes to life with Farhat's case study of the Western-styled 'modern' Pahlavi interventions in Mashhad. In particular, the Gawharshad Mosque incident (1935) is a striking example of the transgression of boundaries. Unlike the hierotopic projects discussed above, the Gawharshad Mosque gained sanctity by its proximity to the 'holy' Imam Reza Shrine. When the troops of Reza Shah were ordered to confront the demonstrators seeking refuge in the sanctuary, killing a massive number of people, the lines between the mosque and the shrine were blurred. Thus, despite the severely invasive nature of the 'secular' intervention against the mosque and the shrine, neither the shrine complex nor the city of Mashhad lost any of its 'sacred' identity.

The violent nature of the clash in Mashhad had its roots in the tangible tension created with the assertion of Western secular ideas within a traditional Muslim society. When Reza Shah imposed new social codes and intervened in 'sacred' places, using Western concepts of 'sacred' and 'secular', he created an inevitable conflict with the people. While in Iran the implementation of imported concepts led to the abovementioned clashes, in Europe, where these notions were homebred, the situation was different. Nebahat Avcıoğlu explores the various motives behind the construction of mosques in the colonial empires of Europe as well as in modern states such as Turkey in her chapter 'Towards a New Typology of Modern and Contemporary Mosque in Europe, Including Russia and Turkey'. Her survey classifies these mosques into four categories – 'orientalist', 'nationalist', 'diasporic', and 'emancipated' – and dwells on the concept of 'otherness' as a form of liminality. The newly built mosques tended to stand out in the urban context of modern European cities; similarly, Muslims were perceived to be 'others'. Avcıoğlu identifies 'orientalist' mosques built by the French, British, and Russian Empires in their capital cities as a manifestation of 'imperialist tolerance' as well as their colonial aspirations over the East. While she identifies 'nationalist' mosques as a 'secularist doctrine of modernism', in which the architecture is modern and includes no references to religious symbolism, the 'diasporic' mosque embodies a postmodern reaction to the 'homogenizing tendencies of the modern movement'. In this case, the 'otherness' of Muslim immigrants to Europe in the last decades of the twentieth century played a significant role in shaping the spatial organization of mosques. Additionally, the postmodern 'partial return to traditional forms' helped to create new memory spaces for these 'others'. Avcıoğlu concludes by

discussing 'emancipated' mosques as a 'discourse of multiculturalism and globalization,' in which aesthetic concerns and a search for novel designs become ways of expressing creativity for secularist or ecumenical patrons.

In an age where nation-states began to proliferate around the world, replacing empires, the way in which modernity presented 'sacred and profane' or 'religion and state' as binary opposites affected how newly shaped political systems adopted, interpreted, and negotiated these concepts. It also triggered a scholarly debate that continues to this day. While scholars such as Mircea Eliade and Jonathan Z. Smith discussed these concepts in a Western Christian framework,³⁰ Talal Asad and Shahab Ahmad have questioned their suitability for an Islamic context.³¹ As Asad states, the 'supposedly universal opposition between "sacred" and "profane" finds no place in premodern writing.'³² However, in the modern world these concepts started to permeate beyond the realm of their origin. Roughly 50 Muslim states – with different sects or legal doctrines – encountered these concepts and responded in numerous ways. How each dealt with 'modernity' affected a wide range of issues, from the regimes they adopted to the ways they regarded Friday mosques and conceptualized their relationship to the urban landscape. Yet, regardless of the nature of these individual dynamics, Friday mosques appear to remain among the key signifiers of local and political intentions in the modern world for both monarchic and democratic countries. Aside from building new mosques, the acts of rebuilding, restoring, or even demolishing existing mosques are utilized as tools for claiming authority and, more importantly, for reshaping an existing community by impacting its cultural memory.

As an example, in post-1995 Bosnia,³³ mosques were restored by various states that claimed to be the new protectors of the war-torn country.³⁴ While Turkish governmental and civil institutions attempted to revive Ottoman architectural and cultural heritage through their funding of rebuilding activities, in reaction, various Gulf countries, notably Saudi Arabia, endeavoured to spread their own interpretation of Islam, namely Wahhabism, by literally whitewashing walls and thereby symbolically obliterating the memory of their historical Ottoman rivals.³⁵ The consequence of this rivalry manifested itself in the daily lives of modern-day Bosniaks, who are polarized between the Wahhabi and Ottoman versions of Islam.³⁶

Another example in Bosnia reveals a different facet of financially supporting social, educational, and religious institutions. The King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud Mosque was built in 2000 with the claim of being the biggest mosque in Sarajevo, following the trend of building mega mosques. The attempt to build the 'largest' mosques in the world particularly attests to a competitive political discourse.³⁷ Although such mega mosques were built for various purposes and claimed to address social 'needs,' their proportions and capacities are so vast (from tens of thousands to up to 4 million in the case of Mecca during the hajj) that they no longer provide an intimate space or sense of community. However, creating a community is at the heart of the conceptualization of Islam and is inherent in the idea of gathering for the Friday prayer.

As in the case of Bosnia, where war tore the country and its communities apart, the current ongoing wars in the Middle East present similar tragic consequences.³⁸ The destruction of symbolic mosques, whether deliberate or accidental, instantly becomes a political statement in multiple ways. For example, various actors such as governmental forces, rebels, or militants of terrorist groups blame each other for destroying such symbolic mosques as the eleventh-century Seljuk minaret of Aleppo's Umayyad Mosque (2013)³⁹ and Mosul's Great Mosque of al-Nuri (2017).⁴⁰ These mosques, which constitute the ancient cores of modern cities, stood as memory spaces, protecting the cultural heritage of these societies. With the destruction of these edifices, the shared memories of these communities were also targeted, which caused an emotional reaction and an international outcry. Local residents and scholars state that during the rebuilding processes for both cities and their symbolic mosques, public engagement is essential and a top-down approach in reconstruction should be avoided.⁴¹

All of this brings us back to the people who populate and bring meaning to the Friday mosques and their vicinities, and to the term 'liminality', which assumes at least two defined states. This volume examines these defined entities as the Friday mosque and the city. Furthermore, it explores 'liminality' in spatial terms, according to which walls and boundaries define and delineate the mosque, separating it from the city. However, as may be seen in many of the papers, form does not always provide the full picture for understanding function. Spatial demarcations are porous, and with the human factor infusing life through ritual and ceremony, they may be transgressed.

Notes

- 1 Victor Turner, 'Liminality and Communitas', in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969), 95.
- 2 For a collection of papers concerning the city, see, for example, Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Renata Holod, Attilio Petruccioli, et al., eds, *The City in the Islamic World*, 2 vols. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008). As for the mosque, see Martin Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan, eds, *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development and Regional Diversity* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994). For a discussion of the mosque in the urban context, see Oleg Grabar, 'The Architecture of the Middle Eastern City from Past to Present: The Case of the Mosque', in *Middle Eastern Cities*, ed. Ira M. Lapidus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 26–46.
- 3 See 'Djuma', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., by Theodor Willem Juynboll; 'Djuma', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (hereafter, 'EI2'), by Shelomo Dov Goitein; and 'Masjid', *EI2* by Johannes Pedersen; Robert Hillenbrand; John Burton-Page et al.
- 4 John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). See also 'Community and Society in the Qur'an', *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, by Frederick M. Denny.
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- Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 59–112; Nasser Rabbat, ‘In The Beginning was the House: On the Image of the Two Noble Sanctuaries of Islam’, *Thresholds* 25 (2002): 56–59; Essam S. Ayyad, ‘The “House of the Prophet” or the “Mosque of the Prophet”?’; *Journal of Islamic Studies* 24 (2013): 273–34; and Aila Santi, ‘Masjidu-hu wa masākinu-hu: “His Mosque and His Dwellings”: New Perspectives on the Study of “the House of the Prophet” in Madīna’, in *Mantua Humanistic Studies*, ed. Riccardo Roni, vol. 2 (Mantova: Universitas Studiorum, 2018), 97–116.
- 6 Hugh Kennedy, ‘From *Polis* to *Madina*: Urban Change in Late Antique and Early Islamic Syria’, *Past & Present* 106 (1985): 3–27.
 - 7 See Nezar al-Sayyad, *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism* (New York and London: Greenwood Press, 1991).
 - 8 See Baber Johansen, ‘The All-Embracing Town and Its Mosques: *al-miṣr al-ḡāmi*’, *Revue de l’Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 32 (1981–82): 99–100.
 - 9 Medieval Anatolian Friday mosques were (and still are) known as ‘Great Mosques’ (Tur. *Ulu Cami*). See Suzan Yalman, ‘Building the Sultanate of Rum: Memory, Urbanism and Mysticism in the Architectural Patronage of Sultan ‘Ala al-Din Kayqubad (r. 1220–1237)’ (PhD diss.: Harvard University, 2011), 244.
 - 10 *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. R. J. C. Broadhurst (London: Camelot Press, 1952), 238.
 - 11 For the idealized round plan of Baghdad, see Jacob Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 95–99; al-Sayyad, ‘Planned Capital Cities’, in *Cities and Caliphs*, 117–39; and Françoise Micheau, ‘Baghdad in the Abbasid Era: A Cosmopolitan and Multi-Confessional Capital’, in *The City in the Islamic World*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Renata Holod, Attilio Petruccioli, et al., 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 1:221–46.
 - 12 Doris Behrens Abouseif, *Islamic Architecture in Cairo: An Introduction* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 58–62, 63–65; and al-Sayyad, ‘Planned Capital Cities’, in *Cities and Caliphs*, 141–44.
 - 13 See Farshid Emami’s chapter in the present volume.
 - 14 Although they were also Hanafite, Ottoman practice in sixteenth-century Istanbul reveals that they did not adhere to this stipulation. See Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 55–57; and Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).
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 - 17 Henry Christmas, *The Sultan of Turkey: Abdul Medjid Khan* (London: John Farquhr Shaw, 1854), 42; Georgina Adelaide Müller, *Ondokuzuncu Asır Biterken İstanbul’un Saltanatı*

- Günleri* (Istanbul: Dergâh, 2010), 62–63; Charles Pertusier, *Picturesque Promenades in and Near Constantinople, and on the Waters of the Bosphorus* (London: Sir Richard Phillips and Co., 1820), 68; and Miss Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan and Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (London: Henry Colburn Publisher, 1838), 2:64.
- 18 Arnold van Gennep, *Les rites de passage: étude systématique des rites* (Paris: Éditions A. & J. Picard, 1909).
 - 19 Turner, 'Liminality and Communitas', 95.
 - 20 Patrick A. Desplat and Dorothea E. Schulz, eds, *Prayer in the City: The Making of Muslim Sacred Places and Urban Life* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2012).
 - 21 Turner, 'Liminality and Communitas', 95.
 - 22 Uri Rubin, 'The Ka'ba: Aspects of Its Ritual Functions and Position in Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Times', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 8 (1986): 97–131; Oleg Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Amikam Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); and David Roxburgh, 'Pilgrimage City', in *The City in the Islamic World*, eds Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Renata Holod, Attilio Petruccioli, et al., 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 2:753–74.
 - 23 Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 103.
 - 24 Smith, *To Take Place*, 104.
 - 25 For 'hierotopy', see Alexei Lidov, 'Hierotopy: The Creation of Sacred Spaces as a Form of Creativity and Subject of Cultural History', in *Hierotopy: Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, ed. Alexei Lidov (Moscow: Progress-tradition, 2006), 32–58; and Alexei Lidov, 'Creating the Sacred Space: Hierotopy as a New Field of Cultural History', in *Spazi e Percorsi Sacri*, eds Laura Carnevale and Chiara Cremonesi (Padua: Libreriauniversitaria.it, 2015), 61–90.
 - 26 Lidov, 'Hierotopy', 32.
 - 27 In the Byzantine context, references to 'Heavenly Jerusalem' in Constantinople are well known. See, for instance, Robert Ousterhout, 'Sacred Geographies and Holy Cities: Constantinople as Jerusalem', in *Hierotopy: The Creation of Sacred Space in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, ed. Alexei Lidov (Moscow: Progress-tradition, 2006), 98–116.
 - 28 For the Christian context, see Setha M. Low, 'Embodied Space(s): Anthropological Theories of Body, Space, and Culture', *Space and Culture* 6/1 (2003): 9–18; and Jelena Bogdanović, ed., *Perceptions of the Body and Sacred Space in Late Antiquity and Byzantium* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2018). For studies on sensory layers that added sacredness to Friday mosques, see Nina Ergin, 'A Multi-Sensorial Message of the Divine and the Personal: Qur'anic Inscriptions and Recitation in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Mosques', in *Calligraphy in Islamic Architecture: Space, Form, and Function*, eds Mohammad Gharipour and Irvin C. Schick (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 105–18; Nina Ergin, 'The Fragrance of the Divine: Ottoman Incense Burners and Their Context', *Art Bulletin* 96.1 (2014): 70–97; and Michael Frishkopf and Federico Spinetti, eds, *Music, Sound, and Architecture in Islam* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018).
 - 29 Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 210.

- 30 See Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959); and Smith, *To Take Place*.
- 31 See Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); and Ahmed, *What Is Islam?*
- 32 Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 31–32.
- 33 Helen Walasek, ed., *Bosnia and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2015); and Tina Wik, ‘Restoring war damaged built cultural heritage in Bosnia-Herzegovina’ in *Bhopal 2011: Landscapes of Memory*, eds Amritha Balla and Jan af Geijerstam (New Delhi, India: Space Matters with Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2011), 150–54.
- 34 Andrés Riedlmayer, ‘Erasing the Past: The Destruction of Libraries and Archives in Bosnia-Herzegovina’, *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 29.1 (1995): 7–11; and James Noyes, *The Politics of Iconoclasm: Religion, Violence and the Culture of Image-Breaking in Christianity and Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 160.
- 35 ‘From 1992 to 1995, 614 of the 1144 mosques were destroyed and 307 were damaged; 218 of the 557 *masjids* were destroyed and 41 were damaged; out of the 1425 *waqf* holdings, 405 were destroyed and 149 were damaged. However according to the Islamic Community’s Center for Islamic Architecture, by 2010 an estimated 95 per cent of all mosques destroyed during the war have been reconstructed (Karčić, 2011). Many of them were rebuilt following the Wahhabi criteria.’ See European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies, Policy Department, ‘Salafist/Wahhabite Financial Support to Educational, Social and Religious Institutions’ (Belgium: AFET, 2013), [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/2013/457136/EXPO-AFET_ET\(2013\)_457136_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/2013/457136/EXPO-AFET_ET(2013)_457136_EN.pdf).
- 36 Daria Sito-Sucic, ‘Bosnia’s Muslims divided over inroads of Wahhabism’, accessed December 1, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bosnia-wahhabi/bosnias-muslims-divided-over-inroads-of-wahhabism-idUSL2972174820061229>. See also Christopher Deliso, *The Coming Balkan Caliphate: The Threat of Radical Islam to Europe and the West* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007).
- 37 Some notable examples include the continuous expansion of the Great Mosque of Mecca in the twentieth century by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; the establishment of the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta, Indonesia, in 1978 to commemorate 33 years of independence; the Hasan II Mosque in Casablanca, commissioned by the king of Morocco in 1993; and, most recently, the Çamlıca Mosque in Istanbul, personally supervised by the Turkish president and completed in 2019.
- 38 See Ömür Harmanşah, ‘ISIS, Heritage, and the Spectacles of Destruction in the Global Media’, in ‘The Cultural Heritage Crisis in the Middle East’, special issue, *Near Eastern Archaeology* 78.3 (2015): 170–77; and Stephanie Mulder, ‘Evliaların ve Sultanların Türbeleri’, *Aktüel Arkeoloji* (June 2016): 94–99. For an English version, entitled ‘Shrines for Saints and Sultans: On the Destruction of Local Heritage Sites by ISIS’, accessed December 1, 2018, see https://www.academia.edu/34200898/Shrines_for_Saints_and_Sultans_On_the_destruction_of_local_heritage_sites_by_ISIS_English. See also the special issue ‘Imagining Localities of Antiquity in Islamic Societies’, *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 6, no. 2 (2017).

- 39 The Great Mosque of Aleppo had survived many tumultuous eras, including the Mongol invasions, and included a shrine dedicated to Zechariah. Thus, in addition to the historical nature of the mosque, the fact that the building also imbued sanctity contributed to the reactions. For the symbolic importance of the minaret, see also Johnathan Bloom, *Minaret: Symbol of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
- 40 As for Mosul, the Great Mosque of al-Nuri had been the locus of self-fashioning for the militant group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), whose leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared a ‘caliphate’ from its minbar in 2014. Although ISIS never claimed the mosque’s destruction three years later, others perceived it as a final performative act by a waning terrorist organization. See Karel Nováček, Miroslav Melčák, Lenka Starková, et al., *Monuments of Mosul in Danger* (Prague: Czech Academy of Sciences, 2017); and ‘Destroying Great Mosque of al-Nuri “is Isis declaring defeat”’, accessed December 1, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/21/mosuls-grand-al-nouri-mosque-blown-up-by-isis-fighters>.
- 41 Robert Fisk, ‘Syrians aren’t just rebuilding an ancient mosque in Aleppo—they are rebuilding their community’, *Independent*, accessed December 1, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/syria-great-mosque-of-aleppo-ummayad-rebuild-the-city-a7858846.html>; Jenny Morber, ‘Expert Views: Beyond a Top-down Approach to Aleppo’s Reconstruction’, April 11, 2018, <https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/community/2018/04/11/expert-views-beyond-a-top-down-approach-to-aleppos-reconstruction>; and Nour A. Munawar, ‘Rebuilding Aleppo: Public Engagement in Post-Conflict Reconstruction’, *ICOMOS University Forum* (ICOMOS International, 2018), 1–18.