

## Mapping the Sacred: The Haram Region of Makkah

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**Abstract:** Islam in the seventh century advanced the idea of sacred space and boundaries right from its outset. Identifying from the beginning two regions of divine archetype, namely around the Ka`bah and al-Aqsa Mosque. A third centre was latter incorporated after the migration to Madinah, namely the Prophet's Mosque, as the last space to be enshrined within the Islamic creed. Sacred regions or sanctuaries were endorsed or established, with mosques at its centre, as part of divine sanctification to the site and region. The Haram region of Makkah will be investigated in this paper, in addition to another broader region; the stations of *mawaqit*, in order to map out the extent of the sacred and its boundaries.

**Key Words:** Makkah, haram, sanctuary, sacred space, boundaries.



## Introduction

The idea of sanctuaries preceded the seventh century Islam, and were well established in earlier religions. When Muhammad was born, Arabia and the rest of the world were full of perceived sacred spaces, ranging from beings, places, objects, practices and human personnel (Hoyland 2002: 139). These had clear boundaries connecting them with a supernatural authority. In Arabia and the surrounding areas, these were mainly centred around idols and shrines being dedicated to different deities. Nearly every town owned its own sacred space, and in polytheist societies one would swear by the village's god upon entering it (Hoyland 2002: 139). The development of interregional holy cities, whose sanctity was recognised over large geographic areas and became centres of pilgrimages, also in other religions such as Christianity (Munt 2014: 16-17).

Makkah and its sanctuary were a vital part of earlier religions in the whole of Arabia. Islam confirmed and re-established this sacredness only for Makkah and not any previous regions, with the exception of the Holy Land. For Makkah, Islam associated its inviolability to times preceding the practices of the pagan Arabs and saw their consecration of it as the remnant of the monotheistic practices of Prophet Abraham. In addition, Islam established a new sacred region around the city of Madinah, which had no religious significance before the arrival of Islam in 622CE. This status was developed with the building of the Prophet's Mosque and later housing his grave. This paper would focus on the sacred regions around Makkah and discuss their geographical extents and development in Islam's formative years, drawing comparisons with the regions around Bayt al-Maqdis and Madinah.

## The Makkan Sanctuary

The idea of sanctuaries was well established in Arabia before the advent of Islam. In ancient Arabia, the idea of the *Haram* in its pre-Islamic form, was a sacred space closely associated with a holy house or a shrine for a god who would protect it (Serjeant 2017:

169)<sup>1</sup>. This is somewhat similar to a *hima* or an interdicted/ consecrated tribal precinct normally used as pastures for cattle. The Makkah sanctuary was a large region with the Ka'bah in its centre, delineated by boundary markers or cairns. The sacred region was a haven and place of safety, given the name *al-Haram*. The name comes from the Arabic word, حرم *haram* (not حرâm *harâm*), derived from the trilateral root H-R-M.

It has been understood and translated in English as conveying the meaning of "sacred". The root carries stronger connotations and implies something forbidden by ritual or religious custom (Munt 2014: 25). Antonym with the word حل *hil*, from the root H-L-L, meaning to be absolved, declared permissible, or released from restriction. Both words have been used in adjectival phrases. In the Quran, the terms *al-Shahr al-Haram* (the forbidden months), *al-Mash'ar al-Haram* (the sacred hill) and *al-Masjid al-Haram* were used for the sacred or restricted: months, monument and mosque. In contrast to the term *al-Haram*, as an inviolable sanctuary, we have the term *al-Hill* as the place free from such restriction. The same is applied to the months, where we have *al-shahr al-Haram* or *al-Ashur al-Hurum* (in plural) and *al-Ashur al-Hill*. This is taken further with another word derived from the same root *ihram*, also associated with this inviolable zone, which one should not enter for pilgrimage except in this state, performing a cleansing ritual and wearing prescribed attire. Only after the completion of the pilgrimage would they be able to return to the normal state of *al-hill*, i.e. having no restrictions.

The seventh century Quran seems to accept only the institution of the haram around Makkah centred around the Ka'bah. It became also part of the Muslim faith and rituals especially surrounding the fifth pillar of Islam, Hajj, and thus it has not perished as other Arabian harams have. Other harams that may have existed before Islam,<sup>2</sup> such as *Wadi Wajj*, for the tribe of Thaqif have not continued

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<sup>1</sup> Serjeant argues that in Southern Arabia similar sacred regions existed before Islam with the name "hawtah". These were established by a member of a holy family or a man of piety. The founder would then demarcate the boundaries by white-washed cairns (Serjeant 2017: 169).

<sup>2</sup> Munt argues that some Arab tribes established sanctuaries or haram when they were strong enough to do so and not around a holy place or by a holy person.

to keep the same status.<sup>3</sup> The Prophet Muhammad established his own haram in Madinah after migrating there, with the rise of Islam it has been well recognised as a haram in Islam's formative period.<sup>4</sup>

### *The origin of the Makkan Haram*

The establishment of the Haram of Makkah was not related to Muhammad or his prophethood, but rather to earlier prophets. Some prophetic traditions attribute that the establishment of the boundaries of the Haram to Prophet Abraham. While some accounts associate it when the creation of the heavens and earth, prior to the time of Prophet Adam. The Quran attributes it being made a Haram by God; *"I have been ordered only to worship the Lord of this territory al-Lati Haramaha (which He has made inviolable)"* (Quran 27: 91). An authentic hadith associates this territory being made a Haram on the day God created the heavens and earth; *"God had made this town a sanctuary since the day He created the heavens and the earth and will remain sanctified by the decree of God till the Day of Resurrection"* (Bukhari 1998:814 ; Muslim 1954, v.3:986). This is apparently contradicted by another authentic hadith in which Prophet Muhammad associates Makkah being established as a Haram from the time of Prophet Abraham and not prior to that; *"Abraham made Makkah a Haram and I declare Madinah a Haram in the same manner as Abraham declared Makkah a Haram.."* (Bukhari 1998:645; Muslim 1954, v.3:991). Muslim scholars have provided different explanations for this, but the majority take the opinion that the sanctification was from the creation of the heavens and earths (Ibn Kathir 1999, vol.2: 424-425; Al-Nawawi 2009:1738). Others have noted that it was sanctified before Prophet Abraham and he only disclosed this to the people (Al-Nawawi 2009:1738; al-Fasi 1985, vol1: 115). Al-Tabari clarifies this issue and links it to another verse associated to the first visit of Prophet Abraham to Makkah and leaving his son Ishmael and his

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He cites an example at Buss, where Banu Baghid of Ghatafan established it (Munt 2014:38-40).

- <sup>3</sup> This haram was a place of contest between the tribes of Quraysh and Tha'qif before Islam, where Quraysh wanted a share in this haram and Tha'qif refused (al-Bagdadi 1985:232-234). Al-Shafi, acknowledges the existence of this haram and counts it as one of the sacred sanctuaries in Islam (al-Ghazali 1997, vol.1: 272; al-Mawardi 1999, vol.4:328; al-Karamani 2003:868)
- <sup>4</sup> Musaylmah b. Habib [the liar] established a haram in Yamamah for his tribe Banu Hanif (al-Tabari 1967, vol.3: 283).

wife Hajar there and before the rebuilding of the Ka'bah. Prophet Abraham supplicates to God saying; "*Our Lord, indeed I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a uncultivated valley, by Your Sacred House ('inda Baytika al-Muharam)*" (Quran 14:37). This clearly attributes the sanctification or *tahrim* before the time of Abraham otherwise how can he say it is a Haram and then he declares it a Haram! (al-Tabari 2000, vol.2:47). This is deliberated further with the two narrations of the Hadith, it is added that Makkah has always been a Haram from the day this world was created by God and not by any messenger, this relates to it being protected from tyrants, earthquakes and other natural disaster. This continued until the time of Prophet Abraham who supplicated to God to make it a place of safety, thus regulations were added from his time, and its sanctification became an act of worship by humans, besides the protection of God to it (al-Tabari 2000, vol.2:47-51). Al-Qurtubi adds that Prophet Abraham renewed its sanctification after their extinction (al-Qurtubi 1964, vol.3:118). While Ibn Kathir adds that there is no contradiction as Prophet Abraham conveyed God's decree that Makkah is a Haram even before building the Ka'bah (Ibn Kathir 1999, vol.2: 422-425).

Historians of Makkah detail this further, they note that when Adam left the Garden of Eden, he yearned for the heavenly Ka'bah and its Haram. They state that in heaven there was a place where the angels worshiped called *al-Bayt al-Ma'mur* or *al-Durrah*, that Adam had seen. Thus the Ka'bah having a Sacred Prototype; a *replica* of the heavenly house, which it is reported to have been delineated under the projection of al-Bayt al-Ma'mur's layout, acquiring its divine proportion and shape (al-Ratrout 2008:56). On coming to earth, Adam grieved for the prayers of the angels and asked God for something similar on earth, thus he was directed to Makkah. Some accounts mention there was already a symbolic form of a heavenly tent or a heavenly ruby in place of the Ka'bah, while others mention it was Adam that built it (al-Azraqi 2003: 72-90). They connect this to the idea of the Haram, that the angels then would protect Adam from the Jinn and Satan within this area (al-Azraqi 2003: 81, 680). The rays from this heavenly ruby reached quite a large area and that it where the angels stood in a line encircling the area in order to protect Adam and keep the Jinn out, and thus these became the boundaries of the Haram (al-Azraqi 2003: 680-681; al-Fakihi

1994, vol.2: 274, 275-276). This they argue continued until the time of the flood of Noah, when this heavenly tent was raised up by God (al-Azraqi 2003: 82, 93-94). They do not mention much from the time of Prophet Noah until the time of Prophet Abraham who was sent to Makkah and ordered to reconstruct the Ka'bah, after which he first established cairns around this sanctuary. In the exegesis of the Quranic verse (Quran 2:128) during the establishment of the Ka'bah, Prophet Abraham invokes to his Lord saying; "*show us our rites*", this is taken to refer to the boundaries of the Haram by the narrations recounted in the histories of Makkah. They add that it was the Archangel Gabriel who disclosed their location to Prophet Abraham (al-Fakihi 1994, vol.2: 273, 275). Prophet Abraham would pile stones over each other, creating landmarks and placing soil over them, while Gabriel is standing on the boundary line (al-Azraqi 2003: 682-684).

These narrations are generally weak in their *isnad* (chain or narrators), and are not generally accepted by Hadith scholars, but within the genre of the History of Makkah, they are well established. It may be said that there is a sense of exaggeration in these narrations as it is impossible to backdate these archeologically to the time of Prophet Abraham nor to the time of Prophet Adam. But it is safe to say that these boundaries did actually exist before the time of Prophet Muhammad and established within Islam to have existed from the time of Abraham or prior to him. We have numerous accounts that establish the reverence of the Arabs before Islam to the boundaries of this sanctuary and the existence of this Haram did elevate the status of the Makkan tribe, Quraysh, in the rest of Arabia. Indeed, the events that took place in the sixth century when King Abraha and his elephants perished on the border line of the Haram gave prominence to this particular Haram amongst other Arabian Harams. The protection of God to this sanctuary from an overwhelming army is reiterated in the Quran in order to win the Makkans to Islam. An early Makkan chapter was giving the name, *the elephant*, retells how God destroyed this army with birds in flocks striking with stones of hard clay (Quran 105:1-5). This event would have given the Makkan Haram superiority over other human declared Harams, as it was protected by God. Prophet Muhammad declares, that this region was made a Haram by God and not hu-

mans during his conquest of Makkah (Muslim 1954, v.3:987). Indeed, the Quran reiterates the idea of the Divinely protected Haram in many Makkan chapters, in one of the earliest Makkan chapters, God swears by three holy places, the last being Makkah; “*and [by] this secure land*” (Quran 95:3), emphasising the idea of security and peace within this God protected sanctuary. This is repeated in a chapter named *Quraysh*, relating their established security to God and asking them explicitly to: “*..worship the Lord of this House, Who has fed them against hunger and made them secure from fear.* (Quran 106:3-4). The people of Makkah argued with Prophet Muhammad that if they were to believe in the one God, then they would lose their status amongst the Arabs, who would in return fight them for abandoning the hundreds of gods housed in Makkah; thus, losing the aura established by people for this Haram. The Quran presents their argument with a clear response to it; “*And they say, ‘If we were to follow the Guidance with you, we will be torn out of our land’. Have We not established for them a secure Haram [Sanctuary] to which are brought fruits of all kinds as a provision from Us? But most of them do not know*” (Quran 28:57). This is again repeated in the last Makkan chapters, *al-‘Ankaboot*; “*Or is it that they have not seen that We have appointed a Haram [secure Sanctuary] a safe haven, while people are snatched away all around them? Do they (still) believe in falsehood, and will they continue disregarding the favour of God?*” (Quran 29:67). The Quran puts the emphasises that had it not been protected by God, they would have faced the same fate as people in the rest of Arabia, leaving under continuous threats of attacks and having no security. Yet arguing that while the Makkans witnessing this great sign, they still disbelieve and refuse to acknowledge God’s favours upon them. This utter rejection of the message of Islam came together with the plot to kill Prophet Muhammad, making him flee his hometown to Yathrib, later known as Madinah.

While in Madinah the Prophet made many references to the Makkan Haram and it continues to be mentioned in the Quran especially around the time Muhammad heads back to Makkah, initially to perform *Umrah* (lesser pilgrimage). In one verse it states; “*And [remember] We made the House a place of visitation for the people, and a sanctuary*” (Quran 2:125). The following verse explains that Prophet Abraham supplicated to God to make this town safe and secure; “*And when Abraham prayed: My Lord! Make this a region of*

*security...*" (Quran 2:126). Another verse states; "*The first house established for the people was that at Bakka, a blessed place, and a guidance to all worlds... and whoever enters it is secure*" (Quran 3:96). As Prophet Muhammad and his companions were turned away from entering Makkah and signed the treaty of Hudaibiyah, verses were revealed warning of great punishments for injustices within the Haram; "*Truly those who disbelieve, and who bar from the way of God and Al-Masjid al-Harâm [the Sacred Mosque], which We have assigned for humankind, equally for the dweller therein and the visitor; and whosoever purposes to violate it with injustice, We shall make him taste a painful chastisement.*" (Quran 22:25). The Quran questions why should they not be punished for their actions in another chapter; "*And what privilege do they have that God should not chastise them, while they prevent [people] from Al-Masjid al-Harâm [the Sacred Mosque]..*" (Quran 8:34). The Quran here acknowledges the inviolability of this region, but because of the injustices of its inhabitant is willing to violate the long-established sanctity to restore order and to remove injustice. This was partially violated for one day as the Prophet Muhammad mentions during the conquest of Makkah; "*fighting therein was never permitted to anyone before me, it was only permitted to me for a brief part of one day, and it will never be permitted for anyone after me*" (Bukhari 1998:394; Muslim 1954, v.3:986). Although no major incidents took place during the conquest of Makkah, and the Prophet gave pardon to its people, he reports that it was allowed for him to fight to take the city and bring it to the realm of monotheism.

### *Canons of the Haram*

Well before the seventh century, the people of Makkah would not fight within the boundaries of the Haram, this was one of the uniqueness of this area. As any breach of the laws of the Haram would bring divine chastisement, since God would protect His Haram. This is best reflected in the celebrated story of the elephant and was perceived as testimony to it. The accounts retell that the elephant, *Mahmoud*, in the forefront of the army, would not enter the area of the Haram and stopped at *wadi Muhsir*, close to Arafah, at the border line of the Haram from the south east and then the whole army was utterly destroyed by a supernatural force. This event reinforced in the minds of the Arab tribes the inviolability of the Makkan Haram. The Makkan tribe of Quraysh would take advantage of



this and would raid surrounding areas and tribes retreating to the safety of their Haram, where no tribe would attack them fearing the wrath of God. Many battles took place between the Makkans and other Arab tribes prior to Islam such as, *the Fijar (sacrilegious) Wars*, which took place in the sacred months and thus named so. However, the Makkans on reaching and entering the boundaries of the Haram, other tribes would not peruse them and cease fighting as a respect for the sanctuary, particularly with the memory of the army of Abruha still fresh in their minds. This was also a practice extended to anyone who enters the Haram, it was said even if a man found the murderer of his father within the Haram, he would not take revenge within its precincts. It is reported that, "*from its virtues whosoever enters it [i.e. the Haram] is secure, and whosoever commits an offensive in another land and then takes refuge in it, is safe if he enters it and only when he leaves it may the sentence be applied*" (al-Hamawi 1995, vol.6:183).

After the Muslim conquest of Makkah, these rules were endorsed, and fighting was forbidden within its boundaries. The Quran explicitly mentions that there should be no fighting in this area, unless the disbelievers start the fight; "*do not fight them near Al-Masjid al-Harâm [the Sacred Mosque] unless they fight you there*" (Quran 2:191). This is again mentioned numerous times by the Prophet Muhammad, with the exception God made to him during the conquest of Makkah; that all fighting is disallowed within the boundaries of this Haram. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, that killing someone within this area is one of the gravest sins; "*Verily God's greatest enemy is the person who kills in the Haram..*" (Ibn Hanbal, 2001, vol.12 :265).

The Makkan sanctuary was not only a human sanctuary but also a sanctuary for animals and trees, as hunting and cutting trees within this area was forbidden. The Quran extends this to anyone within the state of *ihram*, even if they were outside this area (Quran 5:1-2), and prescribes a penalty in order to compensate for the action of hunting if it is to happen by mistake, adding if one persist intentionally then God would take vengeance (Quran 5:95). The Quran does not discuss any compensations for those who hunt within the sanctuary outside the state of *ihram*. Within the Prophetic tradition, animals within the Makkan Haram cannot be hunted nor even be

startled. The same is applicable within the Haram, for trees and plants including thorns, except a plant called *Idhkhir* (Bukhari 1998:394; Muslim 1954, v.3:986).<sup>5</sup> This plant was singled out as it was essential in the Makkan life for its good smell and was used in houses, graves and by goldsmiths. Muslim jurists have also discussed the punishment of hunting and cutting trees or plants within this area. In the Makkan local histories, it is mentioned that even if a pigeon is killed or its egg is smashed then there is a penalty for such action (al-Azraqi 2003:712). The idea of protecting the sanctity of the Haram was taken further to even the stones or soil, that they should not be transported out of nor into the Haram (Al-Azraqi 2003:725), as before Islam polytheist pilgrims would take stones from the Haram and carve it in the shape of the Makkan idols, circumambulating and pray to them (al-Hamawi 1995, vol.6:185). On another note, the Prophet mentions that even lost property cannot be picked up and should be left where it is unless with the intention of finding its owner and returning it or for the purpose of making public announcements again to locate its owner (Bukhari 1998:394; Muslim 1954, v.3:986).

Islam adds a further rule in the year following the conquest of Makkah (630CE), that idolaters or *al-mushrikin* should not be allowed to enter this area as they are *najis* (impure); “*O you who believe, the polytheists are indeed impure, so do not let them come near Al-Masjid-ul-Haram [the Sacred Mosque] after this year of theirs*” (Quran 9:28). Munt argues that this has had its roots in the pre-Islamic period, where the ritually impure would be banned from sanctuaries as is clear from a number of pre-Islamic inscriptions (Munt :35). Following the destruction of the idols, the idolaters would not have anything to come for in an exclusively monotheistic sanctuary.

These stiff regulations merged with divine protection, are what have made this sanctuary unique and inviolable. Prior to Islam, many of these regulations were set in place and it is argued that these were the remnants of what Prophet Abraham had established millenniums earlier. Islam obliterated all the gods of paganism except for the one true God, leaving the precincts of the Haram intact.

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<sup>5</sup> The reason this plant was excluded, was based on a request from the uncle of the prophet, al-Abass.

The contamination of the sanctuary with idols was an act that necessitated the coming of a prophet to cleanse this monotheistic sanctuary and restore its original status.

### *The establishment of the Haram Boundaries*

The border line of the sanctuary was also something well established before the seventh century. These boundaries were demarcated with cairns and people would know where they start and thus not transgress or indulge in violence within its boundaries, as noted earlier. In the Makkan local histories, the idea of the initial boundary line of the Haram, is associated with the row of angels lining-up to protect Adam from the Jinn thus creating this this frontier (al-Azraqi 2003: 81, 680). It is also argued that in the place of the Ka'bah, an enormous ruby descended with Adam from heaven. The extent of the rays of this ruby was where the angels would stand in a row protecting both Adam from the Jinn but also keeping the Jinn out from seeing a heavenly object. Thus, the boundaries of the Haram came into existence from the perimeter where the angels stood and the extent of the rays (al-Azraqi 2003: 680-681; al-Fakihi 1994, vol.2: 274, 275-276). Prophet Abraham the Archangel Gabriel would later showed the borderline of the Haram and his son Ishmael would renovate them (al-Fakihi 1994, vol.2: 273, 275). With the assistance of Gabriel, Abraham would construct the first manmade cairns, by piling stones over each other and placing soil over these new boundary markers (al-Azraqi 2003: 682-684). The statement of Prophet Muhammad, that Abraham declared Makkah a Haram, maybe referring to this action of clearly setting out its boundaries, as he continues to say, *and I declare Madinah a Haram* together with the delineation of its boundaries.

The Haram's boundaries clearly revered by the pagans of Makkah before Islam (Dhaish nd:38-49, 59-62), perhaps the remnant of Prophet Abraham's demarcation. It is said that since the time of Abraham the locations of the cairns were not moved and in the fifth century CE, Kusay ibn Kilab renovated them (al-Azraqi 2003: 684; al-Fakihi 1994, vol.2: 273). Al-Fakihi presents another argument that Adnan ibn Udad, the progenitor of Arabs (6<sup>th</sup> century BC) feared the vanishing of the Haram, so he established its cairns (al-Fakihi 1994, vol.2:276). Al-Azraqi narrates that the Makkans, in the seventh century, decided to remove the cairns, without given a clear reason, this

incident distressed Prophet Muhammad, whom the angel Gabriel informed that they will restore them. The Makkans after deliberations decided to reconstruct them, as removing them would mean losing their established status amongst the Arabs. The Prophet is said to have questioned Gabriel if they returned them to the right locations, and was told that each cairn was guided into place by an angel (al-Azraqi 2003: 683-684). The authenticity of these narrations may be highly contested, but they do show how important it was to predate the idea of the Haram even to the father of the Arabs, Adnan, and to associate divine protection to the area. Moreover, it is safe to say that prior to Islam, these markers at the boundary line did exist, and were revered by the Arab tribes.

Following the conquest of Makkah, in 628CE, many accounts tell of the renovating of the cairns on the command of the Prophet Muhammad. Accounts give the names of those commissioned to renovate them, which may give credibility to such accounts. The same is said at the time of the second and third Muslim Caliphs, Umar ibn al-Khattab and Uthman ibn Affan, who also commissioned the restoration of the cairns and the names of those commissioned are also detailed in the local histories of Makkah. It then became a yearly endeavour to recondition the cairn and during the reigns of both Mu'awiyah and Abd al-Malik (al-Azraqi 2003: 684-685). This continued until the Abbasid period, when the renovation was limited to those on the main routes leading into Makkah. Yet throughout Muslim history records of these renovations are found in inscriptions and in various Muslim sources. In the modern period these restorations and renewals have continued and the current rulers over Arabia, the family of Suud, have undertaken the construction of new landmarks besides the old ones (Dhaish nd).

### *Extent of the Haram*

This large region, spans over forty kilometres in width and thirty kilometres in length at its maximum limit, must have had clear markers to distinguish it from the non-Haram areas or *al-Hil*. The area is calculated to be 550 km<sup>2</sup> with a perimeter of around 127 km (Dhaish nd:166). Both local histories of Makkah and Muslim geographers have detailed the extent of the Haram in all directions, especially on known routes. Also, Muslim jurists and scholars have

paid much attention to these boundaries and have detailed their extent, as they are directly related to juristic rulings and problems. In these sources the *ansab* or *ansab al-Haram*, i.e. the cairns of the Haram are mentioned frequently within early and later Muslim sources. They refer to the boundary stones which were constructed to delineate the extent of the Haram. Also reference to all of Makkah being a Haram comes frequently in these sources.

Both early Makkan historians, al-Azraqi and al-Fakhi delineated the extent or boundaries of the Haram in all four directions. On the route to Madinah (i.e. north) it is before the area of *Tan'im*, three [Arab] miles from Makkah, both naming the houses of *Nifar*<sup>6</sup> as the limit in this direction (al-Azraqi 2003: 686; al-Fakihi 1994, vol.5: 89-90). This is the closest area of the *Hil* to the Haram at just over six kilometres away from the centre, i.e. the Ka'bah (Dhaish nd:166). On the route to Yemen (i.e. south), it is at *Ida'at Libn* by the *Valley of Libn*, seven [Arab] miles away, known today as *al-'Ukayshiyah*. On the route to Jeddah (i.e. west), it is at the intersection of *al-A'shash*, ten [Arab] miles away, approximately 21 km, known today as al-Shumaysi (or al-Hudaiybiyah). On the old route to Taif (i.e. southeast), it passes by the mount of *Arafat* passing through the valley of *Namirah*, at eleven [Arab] mile. On the route to Iraq (i.e. northwest), by the valley of *Khall*, seven [Arab] miles away, about 15 km away close to the village of *al-Sharaa'i'*. On the route to al-Ji'ranah (i.e. north-northwest), by the neighbourhood (*shi'b*) of *Aal Abdullah ibn Khalid ibn Usayd*, nine [Arab] miles away, approximately 19 km (al-Azraqi 2003: 686; al-Fakihi 1994, vol.5: 89-90). Both historians detail other boundary lines within their histories, when discussing for example the extent and boundaries of adjacent places such as mount Arafat (al-Fakihi 1994, vol.4: 328).

Many other scholars have also detailed the limits of the Haram from these six directions, such as Muhib al-Din al-Tabari (d. 694AH/1249CE) and Taqi al-Din al-Fasi (d.832AH/1428CE). They both were Makkans and took the effort to document the limits during their time, but also quote scholars that have preceded them, such as Imam Malik, Ibn Abi-Zayd, Abu al-Walid al-Baji, Ibn

<sup>6</sup> The houses of *Nifar* no longer exist, but both old and new cairns still remain there to this very day and are visible to those who enter the area from its northern side.

Khardhabah, Ibn Khalil, Abu Zayd al-Qayrawani, al-Mawardi, al-Shirazi and al-Nawawi. This is besides quoting both al-Azraqi and al-Fakihi, which many refer to as an authority in this field. Moreover, many mention the same boundary marker but give different opinions to the distances between the Ka'bah and the boundary limit; ranging from six, seven, eight and ten miles to the limit of the Haram on the route to Iraq, for example. The same can be said for all other boundary limits, there are inconsistencies in the information provided. One probable reason for this is not having a standard mile, and each would measure the distance based on their own mile which vary from 1.8 km to 2.4 km (El-Awaisi 2007: 297-306). This error margin is quite substantial and thus leads to substantial differences on the measurements of distances. Another reason, they would use simple tools such as ropes to measure distances and also taking different routes to the centre of the Haram. Both al-Tabari and al-Fasi were aware of this problem. Al-Fasi mentions the difference is due to the different equivalences of a mile and also the ropes maybe stretched or due to the uneven topography of the area. Thus, they both detailed exactly what the mile is in cubits, digits (a finger breadth) and in barleycorns. Al-Fasi give his own measurement of the distance of the extent of Haram on the Taif route, for example, saying it is 37,017 cubits, and giving the equivalence in miles as being 10.576 mile. He is very precise in his measurement stating both the starting and ending points for all his measured distances (al-Fasi 2000, vol1: 75-89).

There seems to have been a concentration on the distances to the entrances of Makkah from the different routes and little is done on locating the other boundary marks on mountain tops, due to the difficulty of this. However, it is said that Ibn Khardhabah gives the perimeter of the Haram area as being thirty-seven [Arab] mile (al-Fasi 2000, vol1: 89). This is a bit off from the current estimation of the perimeter which is around 127Km (Dhaish nd). This would depend on the mile of Ibn Khardhabah, and would have been indeed a very tedious task to undertake. Al-Fasi cites this account and states, if this is accurate then it is of valuable benefit (al-Fasi 2000, vol1: 89). In the Ottoman period, some maps were drawn depicting the region of the Haram and the milestones around it (Map 2).

Modern examination of this topic has researched over one thousand cairns surrounding the Haram from all directions, and have documented them, their locations and nature. Some of these are located on mountain tops, while others in valleys or on roads leading to Makkah. The most extensive study of these landmarks was that of Abd al-Malik Dhaish, who studied these based on the historical accounts together with a field study across the area of the Haram and giving the measurement in the modern metric system (map 3). On the old routes to Makkah, he find the closest being al-Tan'im at a distance of 6.15 km from the wall of the al-Haram Mosque. The distance to al-Ji'ranah route is 18 km, to the Iraq route is 12.85 km, to the Taif route 15.4 km, to the Yemen route it is 17 km and the Jeddah route is 20 km. He also documents the new routes that have been added in the modern period, the New Jeddah highway at 22 km, the new Yemen road at 17 km and the new Taif route at 15.5 km, from the mosque (Dhaish nd:166-167).

He documents 113 cairns into the eastern side of the Haram (Dhaish nd: 179-218). On the northern side he counts 577 cairns, and notes these have been the most restored cairns in the boundaries of the Haram, and many still stand to this day as they have been made from carved stones and *near* or lime mortar (Dhaish nd:219-327). The western boundaries he counts 98 cairns (Dhaish nd: 331-362) and the southern boundaries he documents 152 cairns (Dhaish nd: 365-434). A total of 934 cairns still standing to this day. He also notes that most of the cairn on the mountain tops have not been renovated since the reign of the Abbasid Caliph, al-Mansour (d. 158AH/ 775 CE). Most of the restorations of the cairns has taken place on the main routes and not on the mountain tops (Dhaish nd: 437-440).

In short, the idea of the Makkan Haram or sanctuary has been of great importance to have been documented to these minute details. The linking of rituals and restrictions within the sanctuary has established its veneration before and after Islam. Indeed, the attention jurist and Muslim scholars paid to the importance of this sacred region made rulers restore and renovate its cairns, mainly those on the main routes coming into Makkah.

### *The region of Mawaqit*

Another wider region exists around the area of the Haram, known as *al-Mawaqit* (plural of *miqat*) *al-Makaniyah*, which are fixed stations where a pilgrim should not pass without going into the state of *ihram*. There are two forms of *mawaqit*, one is temporal and the second is spatial. The first relates to the restricted months in which one can commence Hajj; i.e. the months of Shawwal, Dhul-Qi'dah and Dhul-Hijjah. As for the spatial, it refers to the stations which one commences Hajj from. The Prophet designated four of these stations, the furthest from Makkah being 450Km away to the north. Ibn Abbas narrates, that the Messenger of God had "fixed *Dhul Hulayfah* as the *Miqat* for the people of Madinah; *al-Juhfah* for the people of *al-Sham*; and *Qarn al-Manazil* for the people of Najd; and *Yalamlam* for the people of Yemen." (Bukhari 1998:296-297). It is said a fifth *miqat* is said to have been added for the people of Iraq at *Dhat 'Iraq*. These were designated for people based on the course of their journey on route to Makkah for Hajj. Today even those entering the *Miqat* by air, would generally hear an announcement from the pilots before and on entering this zone. The lines of these boundaries have been extended to include non-traditional routes. However, as can be seen on the map side (map 4), straight lines have been generally drawn between the stations, giving a rough approximation of the extend of this large region; the perimeter of which is around 950km and a total encompassing area of 37,600km<sup>2</sup>.

Much interest was paid to this subject by jurists, who state that those coming to Makkah, from outside the *mawaqit* region, must enter into *ihram* before one of the named stations. There are differences on whether a person coming for other purposes than Hajj or Umrah, should not enter the area without *ihram*. They discuss the penalty for someone who does cross these boundaries without *ihram*. It is noted that they would incur a penalty and would have to pay an expiation consisting of a sacrifice (Al-Falih 2003). The declaration of the limits of the *mawaqit* is not arbitrary, they are linked with the routes of pilgrims. Since they were set by Prophet Muhammad, they became part of the Islamic creed, thus not changeable. However, the Prophet did leave room for new routes and the possibility of adding stations, as did Umar on the same delineation of the



closest station named by the Prophet. Modern scholars have engaged with this issue, due to the development of new method of travelling, i.e. airplanes. Some have discussed whether Jeddah, which is the airport most pilgrims travel to, can be considered a station of the *mawaqit*, yet this is generally not accepted as it does not align with the closest station or miqat (Al-'Awaji 2014).

### Conclusion

Islam from its outset has established connections with sacred sites and spaces, advancing the concept of sacred regions and boundaries. From the early Makkan period of Islam, the idea of sacred region around Islam's two holy sites, the Ka'bah and al-Aqsa mosques, were introduced in general terms. These were advanced and detailed in the formative period in Madinah, where verses talked explicitly of the Makkan Haram. The origin of such region however preceded Prophet Muhammad as is established in Islamic sources, they are somewhat linked to Prophet Abraham, but it is accepted that they also preceded him too. This region was linked with the first establishment of the first mosque on earth, the Ka'bah. The Quran recounts the reconstruction or the raising of the foundations of the Ka'bah at the time of Abraham (Quran 2:127). This is associated to the time of Adam by countless Muslim scholars. (Ibn Hajar 1997, v.6: 494).

Prophet Muhammad following the conquest of Makkah, in January 630, endorsed the canons and restrictions associated with the Makkan Haram and even new restrictions were added, such as the prohibition of the entry of non-Muslims to the Makkan sanctuary making it exclusively Muslim, unlike the Holy Land. The Prophet Muhammad established a second Haram in Madinah, and it became well established in Islam. Early Muslims did not attempt to make any other site or region into a Haram, particularly Jerusalem and the Holy Land which possess as the Quran mentions both holiness and barakah, but not the restrictions (El-Awaisi 2007).

It can be observed that there were two regions around both the Ka'bah and two regions around al-Aqsa. The closer region to the centre has been detailed in great detail. The boundaries of the Haram, have been delineated in great details, and although some minor disagreement on the extent in some directions exist; the extent

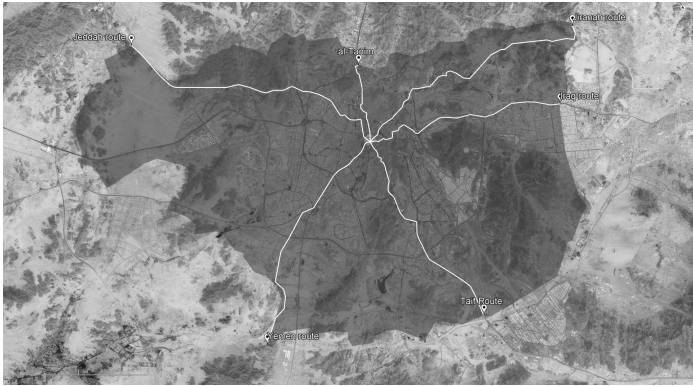
and boundaries are well established and continue to be used to this very day. The existence of over a thousand boundary markers have helped preserve the exact extent of the sanctuary even on mountain tops, valley as well as travel routes. This is together with the enormous effort of Muslim scholars, who have documented this, as it is related to rituals and restrictions within Islam. However, the second region around the Ka'bah, the Hajj stations or *Mawaqit*, did not receive the same attention as it spans to cover a huge area of around 37,600km<sup>2</sup>, difficult to sustain in terms of boundary markers and was set in a more lenient, vague terms. The Prophet designated four of these stations, the furthest from Makkah being 450 km away to the north. This again being connected with a ritual, Muslim are extremely careful not to pass by these station, except in the state of *Ihram* and commence their pilgrimage from there. The only other place mentioned by Prophet Muhammad where one may commence pilgrimage (*Hajj* or *'Umrah*) is from al-Aqsa Mosque or Bayt al-Maqdis in general,<sup>7</sup> a practice performed by a number of the prophet's companions.

It is important to note that these boundaries of the Haram and *al-Mawaqit*, are entirely different from its administrative extent of Makkah, which changed over time. The same can also be said for Madinah where before Islam it had no religious connotation at all and after the arrival of Prophet Muhammad, he specified a religious extent for Madinah, which became known as the Haram of Madinah (al-Qâri' 2001), again different from its administrative boundaries.

A prototype seems to have developed in early Islam, with the spatial and religious concept of the Ka'bah and its regions being centralised; the Ka'bah being the centre of the sacred mosque, the mosque is the centre of the Haram (al-Ratrout 2008:59,61), the Haram being the centre of the *mawaqit* region. Al-Zuylâ'i (d. 743AH/1343CE), refers to this remarkable link between the centrality of the Ka'bah to the two regions around it, starting from the core and moving outwards. He states; "*God Almighty has venerated the Ka'bah, and made al-Haram Mosque its precinct (or courtyard), and made Makkah[*'s* Haram] the precinct of the Mosque, and made the miqat the precinct of the Haram*" (Al-Zuylâ'i 1896, vol.2:7). This sacred prototype seems to

<sup>7</sup> Abū Dawūd 2000, v.1:298; al-Daraqutnî 1998, v.1:221; Ibn Mâjah 2000, v.1:161; al-Daraqutnî 1998, v.1:161.

have only been replicated in Bayt al-Maqdis (Islamic Jerusalem), with the regions acquiring their significance from the centre and is subordinate to it (al-Ratrout 2008:60). Makkah and Islamic Jerusalem seem to be intrinsically connected, sharing similar concepts believed by early Muslim scholars to reflect a divine prototype. Indeed, a physical relationship is evident when contrasting the prototype of the original Ka'bah to the foundations of the enclave of al-Aqsa Mosque before the advent of Islam. Both carry the same form and outline, even having identical proportions and angles (al-Ratrout 2008:62-63). The sacred twining of Makkah and Islamic Jerusalem has been reflected in the architecture of both building and the development of regions around their centres. Another element is added to this in early Muslim accounts where the divine origins are defined and the divine sacredness of the Haram is amplified in a more pictorial way in the vertical dimension, extending to the seven heavens and seven earths (al-Fakihi 1998, v.2:271 & Ibn Tamîm al-Maqdisî 1994:221).



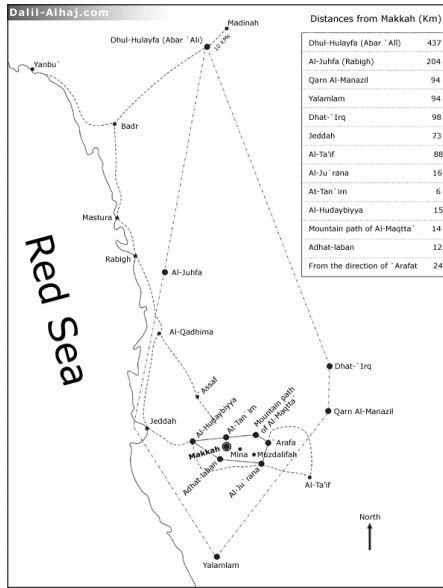
**Map 1:** location of boundaries as detailed by al-Azraqi and al-Fakihi, **Source:** researcher based on Dhaish, nd. using google earth



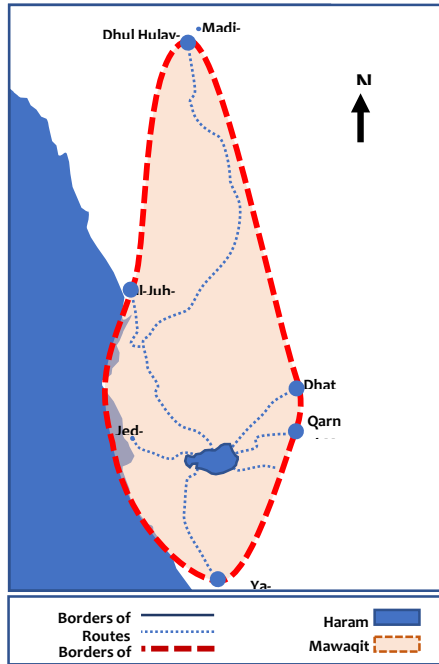
**Map 2:** Katip Çelebi's (1648-1657) map of Arabia with depicting Makkah and Madinah and their Harams [left]. Ottoman underglaze tile by Muhammad al Shami in 1727 showing the milestone of the Haram marked (میلر) miller [middle]. Muhyi al-Din Lari's Futuh al-Haramayn illustrating cairns or milestones, marking the borderline between the Haram and Mount Arafat [right].



**Map 3:** The extent of the Haram region of Makkah, Source: Dhaish rd: 409



Map 4: the wider region of al-Mawaqit, Hajj stations



Map 5: The extents of the Haram region and the Mawaqit region

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## Kutsal Konuclamak: Harem Bölgesi-Mekke

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Öz: İslam, kutsal mekân ve sınır düşüncesini yedinci yüzyılın başından itibaren geliştirmiştir. Başlangıcından beri Kâbe ve Mescidi Aksa, iki kutsal model olarak tanımlanır. Üçüncü kutsal merkez, Medine'ye göç sonrası İslam inancı içerisinde kutsal olarak kabul edilen son mekân, Mescidi Nebevi'dir.

Kutsal bölgeler ya da kutsal alanlar, ilahi takdisin bir yansıması olarak, merkezinde caminin olduğu mekânsallıklar üretmiştir. Bölgelerarası kutsal şehirler denebilecek, diğer coğrafyalarca bilinen ve kutsal seyahat merkezleri olan mekânlar, Hıristiyanlık gibi diğer dinlerde de mevcuttur. Mekke ve çevresi, tüm Arabistan'ın ilk dönem dinleri için hayati önemi haizdi. İslam, Arz-ı Mukaddes dışında, kutsallığı daha önceki hiçbir bölge için değil yalnızca Mekke için tasdik etti ve yeniden kurdu. İslam dinine göre Mekke'nin kutsallığı, Hz. İbrahim'in monoteist inanç pratiklerine dayanan bakiyeyi devralan pagan Araplarda da görülebilir.

Kâbe ve çevresinde iki bölge olduğundan bahsedilebilir. Merkeze yakın olan bölge çok detaylı tarif edilmiştir. Haram bölgesinin sınırları, ayrıntılı bir şekilde tasvir edilmiştir; kapsamı ve sınırları belirlenmiş, bugüne kadar da kullanılmaya devam etmektedir. Binin üzerinde sınır işareti -dağ tepeleri, vadiler ve bunların yanı sıra seyahat güzergâhları da- mabedin gerçek boyutlarını korumaya yardımcı olmuştur. Müslüman âlimler İslam inancındaki ibadetler ve kısıtlamalarla ilişkili oldukları için, sınırları belgelemekte ciddi çabalar sarf etmişlerdir. Ancak, Kâbe'nin ikinci bölgesi olan Hac duraklarına (Mawaqit<sup>8</sup>) benzer bir ilgi gösterilememiştir. Bölge 450 km'lik geniş bir alanı kapladığı için sınırları kesin bir şekilde tayin etmek zorlaşmış ve daha muğlâk sınırlar oluşturulmuştur. Müslümanlar, ihramlı haller dışında bu durakları geçmemeye son derece dikkat gösterirler ve haclarına başlarlar. Haram ve Mawaqit bölgesinin bu sınırlarının, Mekke'nin zamanla değişen idari kapsamından tamamen farklı olduğunu dikkate almak gerekmektedir.

Kâbe'nin mekânsal ve dinsel konumuna bakarak, İslam'ın erken dönemlerinde bir yapı modelinin geliştiği söylenebilir. Kâbe kutsal mescidin merkezi olarak, mescit Haram bölgesinin merkezi olarak, Haram bölgesi ise Mawaqit bölgesinin merkezi olarak belirlenmiştir. Bu kutsal modelleme, önemini merkezden ve mütedahil birimlerinden alan bölümleriyle Beytülmağdis'te aynı şekilde uygulanmış görünmektedir.

Mekke ve Beytülmağdis arasında tabii bir bağ var gibi görünmektedir. Nitekim bir fiziksel ilişki, İslam'dan önce Aksa Camii'nin yerleşim temelleri ile Kâbe'nin özgün sınırlarının ilk örnekleri karşılaştırıldığında ortaya çıkmaktadır: Her iki mekân da benzer form ve sınıra, hatta birebir aynı oran ve açılara sahiptir. Mekke ve Beytülmağdis'in bu kutsal birlikteliği, her iki yapının mimarisine ve merkezlerini çevreleyen alanların gelişimine yansımaktadır.

Bu makale, Mekke civarındaki kutsal bölgelere odaklanmakta ve bu bölgelerin coğrafi uzantıları ile İslam'ın ilk yıllarındaki gelişimini tartışmaktadır. Tartışma, kutsal mekânın uzamını ve sınırlarını belirlemek amacıyla, Beytülmağdis ve Medine çevresindeki bölgelerle kıyaslamalara dikkat çekmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mekke, harem, mabed, kutsal mekan, sınırlar.

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<sup>8</sup> Mikat'ın çoğulu.