

The Early Development Of The Relationship Between The Prophet's Mosque And Its Surrounding Physical Environment

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Abstract

After the arrival of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to Al-Medina, the city urban structure started to change from scattered tribal independent settlements, to properly speaking, a town. With the building of the Prophet's Mosque, it became the religious, social and political centre of the new community. An intimate relationship then developed between the Mosque and its surrounding physical environment, and the city in general evolved as a natural continuation of the building.

This paper examines the development of the relationship between the Prophet's Mosque and its surrounding physical environment during the times of the Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs. In the meantime, it clarifies some of the misconceptions regarding the function and nature of the Mosque. The political, economic and social factors are dealt with as they relate to the study.

KEY WORDS:AL-Medina, holy cities, Islamic Cities, urban morphology, urban development, the Prophet's Mosque, mosques, Islamic architecture.

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the abundant literature on the Mosque and the City of the Prophet, they seem to have been dealt with independently. Many studies have been focused on the historical development of the Mosque while some others have attempted to deal with the urban evolution of the City. However, not much effort has yet been made to relate these together. Even in modern works the Mosque and the City are studied separately.

The prime aim of this paper is to examine the development of the relationship between the Prophet's Mosque and its surrounding physical environment, and the urban structure of the Prophet's City in general, during the times of the Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs. It is hoped that this will furnish the basis for a better understanding of the role of the Prophet's Mosque in shaping the urban form of Al-Medina, and the development of the physical forms of the Islamic cities in general.

The paper will include three main sections. The first section will deal with the origin of the town and its early development, before the arrival of the Prophet. This will provide the basis for a better understanding of the changes that took place in the city after the arrival of the Prophet and the building of his Mosque. The second section will concentrate on the development of the relationship between the Prophet's Mosque and its surrounding during the time of the Prophet. While, the third section will examine the developments during the times of the Orthodox Caliphs.

1. PRE-HIJRAH TIMES

Before *Hijrah* (the emigration of the Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Al-Medina, in A.D. 622) Al-Medina was known as Yathrib, and the original oasis was situated to the north-west of the medieval walled town¹. It was mentioned in the inscriptions of Ptolemy Stephan Byzantinus under Jathrippa, and referred to as Jthrib by the Mianeans². In the holy Qur'an it was referred to, among other names, once as Yathrib (XXXIII, 13) and in four verses as Al-Medina (IX, 101, 120, XXXIII, 60, LXIII, 8)³. *Al-Medina* is a descriptive word signifying "the town" or "the place of jurisdiction" corresponding to the Aramaic *medinta*. In this sense the word in the singular form occurs ten times in the Qur'an and in the plural, *mada'in*, three times⁴.

There is an obscurity about the dating of the first settlement. However, many sources indicate that the area was inhabited by Arabs from the *Amalik* (Amelek) before the arrival of the Jews from the north in A.D. 70, and the Arabic tribes of the al-Aws and the al-Khazradj who emigrated from South Arabia after the great flood and the bursting of the dam of Ma'rib in A.D. 450⁵.

Before the *Hijrah*, or what might be called in Arabic the era of *jahiliya*

(ignorance), Al-Medina was not a compact town but a group of *manazil* (independent settlements) surrounded by groves of date-palms and cultivated fields. This formation might have been due, among other factors, to the distribution of wells and springs around which tribes and clans settled. In spite of the physical separation, contact did exist between the various settlements sometimes in the form of alliances, whilst at other times, in warlike confrontations⁶. The economic life of the town was based mainly on agriculture, and dates were the first crop. The town gained some commercial importance as a trade centre from its location on the ancient trans-Arabia caravan route that connected Syria with Southern Arabia. Along this route products of southern Asia were transported to Egypt and the Mediterranean⁷. There were four *aswak* (singular *suk*, market place) in Al-Medina. Probably for security reasons, these were separated from the residential areas and located on the fringes of the settlements⁸.

For defense the inhabitants relied on *atam* (singular *utum*, fort or stronghold) to which they could retire in times of danger. These *atam* probably totalled about 200 in all. It is reported that there were 72 in Al-Medina before the arrival of the tribes of the al-Aws and the al-Khazraj⁹, who are said to have built 127 after their arrival¹⁰. The *atam* formed a substitute for walls or moats, which probably could not be used, because the tribes were sometimes divided amongst themselves, as already mentioned.

2. THE TIME OF THE PROPHET (1-11 / 622-632)

After the thirteen years of resistance and hostility that Prophet Muhammad and his early companions encountered in Makkah, he emigrated to Al-Medina, following the arrangements for him to live there. These had been made with the tribes of the al-Aws and the al-Khazraj (later on were called the *Ansar*, "supporters" of the Prophet). He arrived at the then flourishing town of Quba', about three kilometres south of the present centre of Al-Medina¹¹, on Monday Rabi' 1 8th, 1/September 20th, 622¹². He stayed there for four days and laid the foundation of the Mosque of Quba'¹³.

On Friday Rabi' I 12th, 1/September 24th, 622, the Prophet, accompanied by some of his followers, rode toward the centre of Al-Medina. Every clan of the *Ansar* wanted to have the honor of being his host and as he entered the town. The people pressed forward to offer him hospitality. However, he blessed the crowd, and asked them to stand out of his way, declaring that his camel would halt of her own accord at the predestined spot. Eventually, the camel knelt down in a *mirbad*, (place where dates are dried) where it is reported that some people were praying at that moment and in part of it a mosque was built. This *mirbad* turned out to belong to two orphans from the Banu al-Najjar tribe, Sahal and Suhayl, who presented it to the Prophet. The Prophet however, did not

accept it as a present and insisted on paying them for it¹⁴.

Soon after the arrival of the Prophet, the construction of his mosque as the centre of the new community started. It was built in the shape of a quadrangle; its length was 70 cubits (34.9 m.) from north to south, and 60 cubits (29.9 m.) in breadth¹⁵ (Fig. 1). The walls were the height of a man (about 3.5 cubits, 1.74 m.), built of mud bricks on a stone foundation¹⁶. In the beginning, it was open to the sky, but at the request of the companions who complained about the burning rays of the sun when the summer season started, a portico for prayer was built towards the north. This consisted of three rows of palm tree trunks supporting a roof, 7 cubits (3.4 m.) high, of palm leaves, which were later on covered with mud¹⁷. Another smaller portico, *suffa*, was built in the south side for the *Muhajirun* (Makkan immigrants), who did not have anywhere to stay¹⁸. Public access to the building was given through three doorways into the south, east, and west walls¹⁹.

Attached to the Mosque was built a private residence for the Prophet. Initially it consisted of two *hujuraat* (singular *hujrah*, chamber), one for Sawda and the other for 'Aisha, the two wives of the Prophet at that time. They were built against the outer wall of the Mosque, at the east side. During their construction, the Prophet was the guest of Abu Ayub al-Ansari whose two-storey house happened to be the nearest to the spot where the Prophet's camel knelt on his arrival²⁰.

It is reported, that later on, every time the Prophet married a new wife, al-Haritha b. al-Nu'man, who was the owner of the land located to the east of the Mosque, would give him a piece of land to construct a *hujrah* for her²¹. Eventually, the number of *hujuraat* rose to nine; each attached to the outer wall of the eastern side of the Mosque. The first four *hujuraat* were built of mud bricks and roofed with palm branches and mud, whilst the rest were built of reeds and mud, roofed with palm branches and mud. All of them opened into the Mosque and before each doorway hung curtains made of black hair²².

After the *Qibla* (direction of prayer) was changed from Jerusalem to Makkah on Sha'baan 15th, 2/January 11th, 624, the Mosque was subjected to some alterations. The entrance in the south wall was blocked up and a new one was made in the north wall, whilst the other two doors in the east and west walls were left as they were. The main portico, used for prayer, was transferred from the north to the south side and the *suffa* was moved from the south to the north²³ (Fig. 2).

After the expedition to Khaybar in Muharram, 7/June, 628, the Prophet enlarged his Mosque, as it was no longer big enough to accommodate the increasing numbers of his followers. The measurements increased to 100 cubits (49.8 m.) from north to south and 90 cubits (44.8 m.) from east to west (Fig. 3). The extension was towards the north and the west²⁴. The *minbar* (pulpit) was introduced to the mosque in 8/630 or 9/631. It was merely a

functional element for delivering the **khutba** (sermon); to enable the Prophet to see the congregation and to be seen by them²⁵. The **maqsurah** (chamber for the **imam**, the one who leads the prayer, in the early centuries of Islam the Caliph himself or the governor) and the **mihraab** (niche) were added to the Prophet's Mosque at later times, after his death.

Minarets, in the modern sense, were added to the Mosque during the enlargement in 88/707 - 91/710, in the reign of al-Walid b. 'Abdulmalik²⁶. However, the custom of pronouncing the **adhaan**, (the call to prayer) from an elevated place was already in practice during the Prophet's time. Ibn Zabala (d. 214/829-30) reported that, Bilal used to call the **adhaan** from a square pillar [**astwan**], called the **mitmar** (meaning high or tall object) which he used to mount by means of a stair [**ktab**]. It was still to be seen, during the time of Ibn Zabala, in the house of 'Ubidullah b. 'Abdulla b. 'Umar, to the south of the Mosque²⁷.

Once the site of the Mosque was determined, it became the centre of the city. The area around it, which seems to have been then open or very rarely used, was distributed by the Prophet among the **Muhajirun**. Yaqut (d. 626/1229) reported:

*"When the prophet arrived at Al-Medina he granted land for houses [**dur**] and quarters [**riba'**] to the people. He marked land for the sons of Bani Zahrah in the area behind the mosque, and for 'Abdurhman b. 'Awaf his well-known derelict land [**hush**]. He granted 'Abdullah and 'Utba the sons of Mas'ud al-Hudhli their well-known land [**khitat**] next to the Mosque, al-Zubayar b. al-'Awam a large piece of land [**baqee'**]; Talha b. 'Ubaydullah the site of his houses [**dur**]; and Abu Bakr al-Seddeeq the site of his house [**dar**] next to the Mosque. He also granted to 'Uthman b. 'Afan; Khalid b. al-Walid; al-Miqdad and others the site of their houses [**dur**]. When the Prophet was distributing these sites among his companions he granted, directly, those located in the uninhabited areas. While those located in areas which had already been developed were given to the Prophet by the **Ansar**, and he then granted some of them as he wished ..."²⁸*

It should be mentioned here that the relationship between the Mosque of the Prophet, his own residence and the rest of the city became a model prototype for later Islamic towns. The main mosque was placed in the centre of the city, and the **Dar al-Imarah** (the dwelling of the commander-in-chief, or the governor) was built immediately adjacent to it as for example in al-Basra, al-Kufa, Damascus and al-Fustat.²⁹

The companions of the Prophet not only built their houses adjacent to the Mosque, but like the Prophet himself, had gates opening directly into it. This

can be inferred from the *ahadith*, (singular *hadith*, saying of the Prophet) regarding closing some of the doors of the companions' houses that were open into the Mosque. It is reported that a few days before the death of the Prophet, he ordered all the *abwaab* (singular, *bab*, gate), some *ahadith* say, *khawkhat* (singular *khawkha*, a window-like opening through a wall not high from the ground through which people can go as an access or a short cut³⁰) to be closed except that of Abu Bakr³¹. Some sources mention the gate of 'Ali b. Abi Talib as the one that was supposed to have been left open as it is reported that the only access to his house was through the Mosque³². Thus al-Samhudi suggested that both gates of Abu Bakr and 'Ali were left open, but the one which was actually exempted by the Prophet was that of Abu Bakr, as he had another access to his house from outside the Mosque³³.

The fact that gates of private houses, other than those of the Prophet were allowed to be opened to the Mosque whilst he was alive, and one or two were exempted from closure, after his death, is an obvious sign that from the very beginning the building was of a public nature. If it had been constructed primarily as a residential building, as Caetani and Creswell maintain³⁴, and which has become a common assumption in some recent studies³⁵, it would have been unreasonable for other people to have direct access from their houses to it. Creswell, referring to Caetani, indicated that the Prophet initially built the Mosque as the courtyard of his house for his own private use. They both claim that the courtyard assumed a more and more public character through adventitious circumstances. According to them, this evolution continued after the death of the Prophet, and it was not until half a century later that it became a place of worship properly speaking³⁶.

This claim was based on three aspects of the building. Firstly, the resemblance of the layout of the Mosque together with the residence of the Prophet, the *hujuraat*, to the Arabic *dar* (house) which were then thought to have consisted of a series of small rooms grouped together around an open courtyard. In this respect, Creswell, referring also to Caetani, wrote:

*"If the family was small, the rooms were all grouped together on one side, for an Arab's private life required a private courtyard, closed all round, for the various domestic occupations of the women folk As the family increased ..., other rooms were built against the wall This system ... was adopted by Muhammed (the Prophet), who at that time was anticipating a considerable increase in his family and therefore required a dar of ample dimensions"*³⁷.

Since the private gates of the companions opened into the building, it could not be used, as far as domestic work was concerned, by the Prophet's

household to any greater degree than those neighbors who had direct access to it. Thus the building could not be private in the sense described by Creswell. The Prophet also did not utilize the courtyard of the Mosque in building chambers for his new wives. If he had considered it as his own private courtyard, he would have done so instead of building them outside and accepting a piece of land from al-Haritha b. al-Nu'man each time he needed to build an additional *hujrah*³⁸.

Secondly, non-religious activities took place in the building. Caetani, in attempting to emphasize this aspect of the building gave a number of instances based on the *Hadith* and *Sirah* (the biography of the Prophet). For example: people sat as they pleased in the Mosque or lay down and relaxed; Non-Muslim tribal envoys were received by the Prophet in the Mosque, and tents for the sick and wounded were erected there after the battle of Uhud³⁹.

However, such activities together with divine services that were held in the building, emphasize the manifold nature of the Mosque as a physical embodiment of the new religion that embraces all aspects of life: social, political and religious. These activities cannot be separated in Islam. In the Mosque the believers observed the congregational prayer with the Prophet, where he delivered the Friday sermon, and other addresses that dealt not only with religious teaching but also with all the aspects concerning the life of the community.

Thirdly, much emphasis has been laid on some isolated events that took place in the Mosque. For example, a stranger, converted to Islam after an interview with the Prophet, came straight into the courtyard of the Mosque with his camel and left it kneeling there; on one of the festivals a band of Abyssinians danced with their lances in the courtyard; disputes took place there over business, and dogs entered the building⁴⁰.

Apart from the evidences included in the *Hadith* and *Sirah*, in which according to Creswell, biographers of the Prophet have failed to grasp the real aspect of his Mosque⁴¹, Bisheh suggests, in addition, two early alterations in the building: the re-orientation of the *Qibla* from Jerusalem to Makkah, and its enlargement with the introduction of a *minbar*, would have been inappropriate for a strictly residential building⁴².

Regarding the urban morphology, Al-Medina seems to have started to take a more compact urban form during the time of the Prophet (Fig. 4). The scattered old settlements began to join together and to develop as quarters within the expanding city. However, they preserved their names as *manazil* of the different tribes⁴³. The *Muhajirun* too clustered together and built their houses forming their own quarters⁴⁴. Sites for these new quarters were granted by the Prophet and subdivided according to the needs of the individual members of the tribes or clans⁴⁵.

As indicated earlier, there were four **aswak** in Al-Medina before the **Hijrah**. However, following his arrival in Al-Medina, the Prophet is reported to have made a new **suk**, for the city⁴⁶. He initially chose the site of the **baqee'** of al-Zubayar, which was at less than 150 m. distance from the Mosque as the location⁴⁷. Because of the disapproval of the Non-Muslim owner of the land at that time, Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, he moved it to the area situated between the **Muṣalla** (the place where the 'yid feast, prayer is performed) of the Prophet and Thanyat al-Wada'. The **Muṣalla**, which is the southern edge of the **suk** was 1,000 cubits (498 m.) from the Mosque of the Prophet⁴⁸. The **suk** was an open space with no buildings during the Prophet's time and seems to have continued so until the reign of Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan (41/661 - 60/680) who is said to have built two houses in it⁴⁹. The fact that the site of the **baqee'** of al-Zubayar was chosen first may suggest that the Prophet preferred the **suk** to be near the Mosque.

The forms of defence, on which the city depended for centuries were its fortresses and topography which were very difficult for invaders to penetrate. The northern side of the city was the least protected as here the valleys of Al-Medina joined together. Following the advice of Salman al-Farsi to the Prophet, a **khandaq** (ditch) was dug around the northern side in order to defend the city against the attack of the Makkan Quraysh and their allies in the battle of the Khandaq, in 5/627. During this battle, it is reported that the Prophet also used some of the **pre-Hijrah** fortresses for the women and children to stay in. The city, however, continued un-walled until 263 / 876⁵⁰.

The Prophet died on Rabi' 1 13th, II/June 8th, 632 having spent the last ten years of his life at Al-Medina. He was buried in the same spot where he died, in the **hujrah** of 'Aisha⁵¹.

3. THE TIMES OF THE ORTHODOX CALIPHS (11-36 / 632-657)

After the death of the Prophet, Abu Bakr was elected as his caliph. The first Calip and his two successors continued to reside in Al-Medina. Thus it continued as the capital of the rapidly growing Islamic state. During the first year of Abu Bakr's brief reign, which lasted for about two years, he was engaged in subduing revolts among some tribes, the wars of the Riddah, while in the second year he started the foreign campaigns in the north. Thus, as far as the Mosque was concerned, he contented himself with merely restoring some of the palm pillars that had deteriorated⁵². Abu Bakr died in 13/634 and was buried next to the Prophet in the **hujrah** of 'Aisha⁵³.

'Umar b. al-Khattab was appointed by Abu Bakr as his successor after he had consulted some of the Prophet's companions⁵⁴. During his reign the area of the Islamic State expanded and the population of Al-Medina increased. In 17/ 638, at the request of the people of Al-Medina, he enlarged the Mosque⁵⁵. He is

reported to have said on this occasion, "Had I not heard the Prophet say we should increase the size of our Mosque, I would not have enlarged it"⁵⁶. He also gave the instruction "Protect the people from rain. Beware of red and yellow decoration for they put the people to trial"⁵⁷. ("Put the people to trial", meant distract them from prayer)⁵⁸. Thus the new structure conformed to the example set by the Prophet in its simplicity, as opposed to the later constructions.

After this enlargement, the measurements of the Mosque increased to 140 cubits (69.70 m.) from north to south and 109 cubits (54.30 m.) from east to west (Fig. 5). The extension was in all directions except the east where the chambers of the Prophet's wives stood. Two new colonnades were added to the west side and one to the south, whilst the extension to the north was 31 cubits (15.43 m.)⁵⁹. The enclosure walls were built of sun-dried bricks set on stone foundations dug to the depth of man's height. According to al-Samhudi, palm trunks continued to be used as columns⁶⁰, but other accounts say that 'Umar made the columns of mud brick and took away the wooden ones⁶¹. The roof, which was of thatched palm-leaves and mud as in the earlier Mosque, was raised to 11.00 cubits (5.48 m.) in height. Over the roof a *sutrah* (parapet), 2-3 cubits (about 1-1.5 m.) high, was built. Six doors were made to the Mosque instead of three: two in the north wall, two in the east and two in the west^[62]. Finally, 'Umar is reported to have said, after the enlargement of the Mosque had been completed, "If we had extended it as far as the Djhana, it would still be the Prophet's Mosque"⁶³. In this respect Abu Huryrah also reported that the Prophet said, "If this Mosque was extended as far as San'a it verily would still be my Mosque"⁶⁴.

Outside the Mosque, to the north end of the east side 'Umar built a raised platform, *ruhba*, called *al-Butayha*, upon which the people might recite poetry or sit and talk⁶⁵. He was murdered in 23/644 and was buried in the room of 'Aisha, at the side of the Prophet and Abu Bakr. Four days later 'Uthman b. 'Afan was elected as the Third Caliph of the Prophet⁶⁶.

The population of Al-Medina continued to grow during the rule of 'Uthman. Thus the people complained that the Mosque was too small to accommodate them to the extent that some observed the Friday Prayer outside, in the *rihab*. In this regard 'Uthman consulted the notables of the city who unanimously agreed that the Mosque should be demolished and a larger one should be built⁶⁷. So in Rabi' 1, 29/ December, 649, the demolition of the old Mosque and rebuilding of the new one with more durable building material started. The construction work lasted for about ten months and was completed on Muharram 1st, 30/September 4th, 650⁶⁸.

In this enlargement the Mosque extended nine cubits (4.48 m.) in each direction except the eastern side, again on account of the chambers of the Prophet's wives. Thus, the building measured 160 cubits (79.68 m.) from north to south and 120 cubits (59.76 m.) from east to west (Fig. 6). The walls, unlike

the old ones, were built of hewn and carved stones and joined with lime mortar (*kisa*). The columns were also of cut stone, joined by iron cramps bedded in lead and the roof was of teak. The same six entrances were left as those in the reign of 'Umar⁶⁹.

According to Ibn Shaba (d. 262/876), the *maqsurah* (chamber for the *imam*) was introduced to the Mosque by 'Uthman for his personal safety, after the murder of 'Umar, while he was leading the prayer in the Mosque⁷⁰. Ibn Khaldun (d. A.D. 1406) however, indicated that it was first constructed by Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan (at Damascus), either in 40/660 or 44/664 after an assassination attempt by a Kharidjiat. He added also, that it had been said that this innovation was attributed to Marwan b. al-Hakam, governor of Al-Medina, after he was stabbed by a Yemenite in the year 44/664⁷¹.

As far as the layout was concerned, the new Mosque, as is clear from the plans (Figs. 3, 5 and 6), preserved its basic characteristics as it was at the time of the Prophet and his first two successors. In addition, it is reported that during the construction Zayd b. Thabit, who was apparently in charge of the project, put the new stone columns in the same places as those occupied by the old palm trunks⁷². These demonstrate that conscious efforts were made to preserve the original layout of the building.

The major change, however, was in the building materials and construction techniques. Thus it is important to examine the reaction of the people to the transformation that 'Uthman's enlargement had brought about. In this respect Mahmud b. Labid reported:

*"When 'Uthman b. 'Afan intended to build the Mosque ... the people did not approve it. They wanted it to be kept in the same state. Thereupon he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon Him) say: "He who built a Mosque for Allah, Allah would build a house for him like it in Paradise"*⁷³.

'Uthman is also said to have quoted this saying of the Prophet on different occasions during and after the reconstruction of the mosque to allay criticism of his initiative⁷⁴. With respect to the statement, "they wanted it to be kept in the same state", al-Samhudi remarked that:

*"... by rebuilding the Mosque of mud-bricks and palm trunks as 'Umar did, because it was in accordance with the work of the Prophet. Thus al-Baghawi said in Sharh al-Sunna: Probably what the companions of the Prophet disliked in 'Uthman's reconstruction of the Mosque was its building of carved stones, but not merely the enlargement..."*⁷⁵.

This attitude towards change together with what 'Umar said regarding the enlargement of the Mosque, cited earlier, are obvious examples of the desire of the early Muslims to preserve whatever was related to the Prophet.

Nevertheless, the new development by 'Uthman might be justified if it is considered in the context of the changes that took place in the city in general at that time. In this connection, Bisheh writes:

*'... by 'Uthman's caliphate ... the Arabs had been exposed to the cultural influences of the conquered territories for a long enough period to transform their outlook and taste. This new outlook is reflected in the upsurge of building activity and remarkable expansion of Madinah (Al-Medina). ... The Prophet's Mosque, which had so far preserved its unprepossessing simplicity, was no longer compatible with the new conditions. It was virtually inevitable that a new Mosque, corresponding in luxury and sumptuousness to the private residences, should be erected'*⁷⁶.

'Uthman is said to have had the **pre-Hijrah** forts of Al-Medina taken down, but remains of them could be seen as late as the 4th/10th century⁷⁷. He was killed in 35/656 and 'Ali b. Abi Talib became his caliph⁷⁸. 'Ali was opposed by Talha and al-Zubayar, first from Makkah and then from Basra as well as by the then governor of Syria, Mu'awiya. To counter these moves, 'Ali left Al-Medina for Iraq in October 656. He made Kufa his capital and after his death in 40/661 and the acknowledgment of Mu'awiya as caliph, Damascus became the capital⁷⁹.

With the transfer of the capital of the Islamic state from Al-Medina, the city descended, politically, to the rank of a provincial town that was ruled by governors appointed by the Caliphs. The city could not of course become totally unimportant because of its venerable associations and the Mosque of the Prophet. At the same time, it became a momentous centre of Islamic intellectual life. In the Mosque of the Prophet scholars devoted themselves to the collection and study of legal and ritual enactments. However, as far as the urban morphology is concerned, it seems that no significant development took place in the city during the reign of 'Ali b. Abi Talib, because of wars and the political unrest⁸⁰.

CONCLUSION

Before the arrival of Prophet Muhammad to Al-Medina, known then as Yathrib, it constituted of a group of independent tribal settlements. The town was not only fragmented in the physical sense but the community living there were also divided among themselves. They hardly had any thing to share together as a community. The different tribes had their own **aswak**, which for security reasons were separated from the residential areas and located in the fringes of the settlements. Moreover, each clan built its own **utum** (forts) for its defence. It is reported that they totalled about 200. Walls or moats for defending

the town as a whole were not in use due to the internal social and political unrest.

With the arrival of the Prophet the process of conciliation among the tribes started. Disputes and animosity were replaced by the Islamic brotherhood. The first physical development that was carried out by the Prophet was the construction of the Mosque. It became the religious, social, and political centre of the new community, as well as the physical centre and the landmark of the town.

An intimate relationship then developed between the Mosque and its surrounding physical environment, and the city in general evolved as a natural continuation of the building. Against the outer wall of the Mosque, at the east side, a private residence for the Prophet was built. It consisted of small rooms opening directly into the Mosque. The companions of the Prophet built their houses adjacent to the Mosque and like the Prophet himself had gates opening directly into it. These suggest that from the very beginning the Mosque was of a public nature, and was not constructed primarily as the residence of the Prophet as some Western studies maintain.

The town started to take a more compact urban form during the time of the Prophet. The scattered old settlements developed as quarters within the expanding town. However, they preserved their names as the *manazil* of the different tribes. The *Muhajirun* clustered together and built their houses forming their own quarters around the Mosque.

A new *suk* for the town replacing the old four tribal market places was founded. The Prophet preferred the *suk* to be near to the Mosque. He initially chose the site of *Baqee'* al-Zubayar, which was at less than 150 m. from the Mosque, as the location. Because of the disapproval of the Non-Muslim owner of the land, he moved the *suk* to the area situated between the Musalla and Thanyat al-Wada', which was 1000 cubits (498 m.) away from the mosque. In addition, common defence measures were adopted for defending the city against external aggression. A ditch was dug around the northern side of the town to protect the city from the attack of the Makkan Quraysh and their allies in the battle of the Khandaq.

The Mosque of the Prophet as the main physical component that influenced the urban development of the city, responded in a positive manner to the different developments that took place in the city. It expanded as the city grew and the population increased. It was enlarged by the Prophet after the expedition to Khaybar, in 7/628, as it was no longer big enough to accommodate the increasing number of Muslims. Ten years later, it was enlarged by the Caliph 'Umar b. al-Khatib, at the request of the people for more space for prayer. During the reign of the Caliph 'Uthman b. 'Afan, in 29/ 649, the Mosque was not only enlarged but new materials were used in its reconstruction. In this enlargement the walls and columns were built of hewn and carved stones and the roof of teak, instead of the mud bricks and palm tree

trunks and leaves that were in use in the previous enlargements. This transformation was criticized by some people of Al-Medina, as it was not according to the work of the Prophet and that of 'Umar. However, ' Uthman's insistence on the introduction of these new materials demonstrates that he wanted the new Mosque to be compatible to the quality of the private developments that were in the town then.

NOTES

1. al-Samhudi, *Wafa al-Wafa*, Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Araby, 1981, pp. 8-9.
2. Buhl, Fr, "Al-Madina". **Encyclopaedia of Islam**, V. III, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1936, p. 83.
3. al-Samhudi (d.911/1505) cited 94 names for Al-Medina. Some of them were mentioned in the Qur'an, others in the Hadith (the Prophet's Traditions) and in Arabic Literature. See al-Samhudi, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-27.
4. Winder, R. B., "Al-Madina", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, V. V, leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986, p. 994.
5. Mostafa, S.L., **al-Madina al-Munawwara, Tatwraha al-'Umriani Wa Turathaha al-Mi'mari**, Beirut: Dar Al Nahda Al Arabiya, 1981, p. 10.
6. al-Samhudi, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-220.
7. Iham, H.M., **Aspects of the Urban Geography of Mekkah and Al-Medina**, Saudi Arabia, Ph.D. thesis, Durham: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Durham, 1979, pp. 16-21.
8. Ibn Shaba (annotated and edited by Shaltut, F. M.), **Tarikh al-Madina al-Munwara**, Al-Medina: al-Sayed Habib Mahmud Ahmad, 1979, V. 1, pp. 304-6.
9. al-Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
10. Hafiz, 'Ali, **Fusul Min Tarikh al-Madina**, Jeddah: Sharikat al-Medina al-Munwara litiba'a Wa al-Nashr, 1984, p. 19.
11. al-Samhudi, *op. cit.*, pp. 220-254.
12. Mostafa, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
13. It should be mentioned that the mosque of Quba' was not the first mosque built in Al-Medina. The early **Muhajirun** (immigrants, those Makkans who embraced Islam and emigrated to Al-Medina) and the **Ansar** built mosques in the city before the arrival of the Prophet. *Djabir said: "We stayed in Al-Medina for two years before the arrival of God's Messenger, may peace be upon Him, in which we built mosques and observed prayers". See al-Samhudi, op. cit., p. 250.*
14. al-Samhudi, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-270, and 322-7.
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15. al-Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 341.
 - Mostafa, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
16. al-Samhudi, *op. cit.*, p. 336.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 335-6.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 453-4.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 326-7.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 260-7.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 462.

22. **Ibid.**, p. 458-65.
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23. al-Samhudi, **op. cit.**, pp. 395-69.
24. **Ibid.**, pp. 338-59.
- Mostafa, **op. cit.**, p. 58.
25. al-Samhudi, **op. cit.**, 1, pp. 395-8.
26. **Ibid.**, pp. 526-30.
27. **Ibid.**, p. 530.
28. **Ibid.**, p. 718.
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33. **Ibid.**, p. 477.
34. Creswell, **op. cit.**, V.I, pp. 6-10.
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37. **Ibid.**, V.I, p. 7.
38. al-Samhudi, **op. cit.**, p. 462.
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41. Creswell, **op. cit.**, V.I, p. 7.
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46. Ibn Shaba, **op. cit.**, V.I, pp. 304-6.
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48. al-Samhudi, **op. cit.**, p. 740.
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80. **Ibid.**, p. 997.
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