



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

The Saljuq Citadel of Jerusalem: New Historical, Archaeological and Architectural evidence

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Abstract

The Citadel of Jerusalem is a remarkable example to Islamic military architecture. It is essentially Mamluk, incorporating earlier remains from the Hellenistic, Roman, Saljuq, Crusader, Ayyubid periods, and later Ottoman additions. This paper focuses on the identification of the first phase of the Citadel built by Saljuqs during their short rule of Jerusalem from 1072 until 1098. Historical sources, as well as new archaeological and architectural evidence contradict previous assumptions by various scholars that the first citadel was built by the Umayyads in the early 8th century. The architectural evidence includes the remains of a round corner-tower in the courtyard of the Citadel, and portions of walls in the foundations underlying the typical Crusader construction. The re-examination of the associated ceramic material that was thought to date to the 8th – 9th century, appear to resemble comparable 11th century pottery. Historical literary sources, namely Ibn al-Arabi, who resided in Jerusalem from 1093-1096, described a “formidable structure built with hard finely-cut stones ... it was seen to have three walls”. Such unique description supports the hypothetical layout and the architectural components of the citadel built by the Saljuqs, similar to those in their strongholds in Bilad al-Sham, such as Damascus and Aleppo.

Keywords

Jerusalem, Citadel, Islamic, Saljuq, Archaeology

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