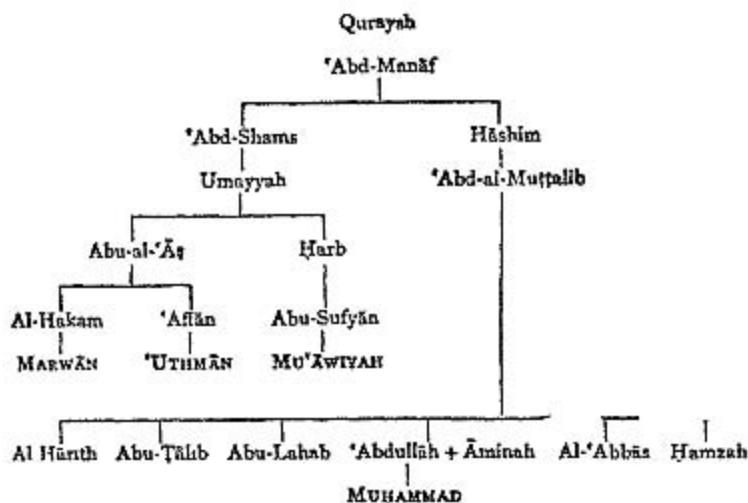


PART III

THE UMAYYAD AND 'ABBĀSID EMPIRES

CHAPTER XVII

THE Umayyad CALIPHATE: MU'ĀWIYAH ESTABLISHES A DYNASTY



MU'ĀWIYAH was proclaimed caliph at Iliyā' (Jerusalem) in A.H. 40 (660).¹ With his accession the seat of the provincial government, Damascus, became the capital of the Moslem empire, though that empire was somewhat circumscribed. During the arbitration 'Amr ibn-al-Āṣ, Mu'āwiyah's right-hand man, had wrested Egypt from 'Alids, but al-'Irāq now declared al-Ḥasan, eldest son of 'Ali and Fāṭimah, the legitimate successor of 'Ali, and Makkah and al-Madīnah were lukewarm in their loyalty to the representations of the Sufyānids, who had failed to acknowledge Muḥammad until the fall of Makkah and whose Islam was therefore considered of convenience rather than

¹ Tabari, vol. II, p. 4, cf. Mas'ūdi, vol. V, p. 14.

conviction. The interests of al-Ḥasan, who was more at home in the harem than on the throne, lay in fields other than those of imperial administration. It was not long before he abdicated in favour of his more able rival and retired to al-Madīnah to a life of ease and pleasure, a step which he was induced to take by Mu'āwiyah's guarantee of a magnificent subsidy and pension¹ which he himself had fixed and which included five million dirhams from the Kūfah treasury² plus the revenue of a district in Persia for the duration of his lifetime. Though he died at the age of forty-five (*ca.* 669), possibly poisoned³ because of some harem intrigue, al-Ḥasan is said to have made and unmade no less than a hundred marriages, which earned him the title of *mītlāq*⁴ (great divorcer). The Shī'ah laid the fatal act at Mu'āwiyah's door and thus made al-Ḥasan a *shahīd* (martyr), in fact the "*sayyid* [lord] of all martyrs".

His younger brother al-Ḥusayn, who had also lived in retirement at al-Madīnah throughout the rule of Mu'āwiyah, in 680 refused to acknowledge Mu'āwiyah's son and successor Yazīd, and in response to the urgent and reiterated appeals of the 'Irāqīs, who had declared him the legitimate caliph after al-Ḥasan and 'Alī, started at the head of a weak escort of relatives (including his harem and devoted followers) for al-Kūfah. 'Ubaydullāh, whose father Ziyād had been conveniently acknowledged by Mu'āwiyah as his brother, was now the Umayyad governor of al-'Irāq and had established outposts on all the roads leading from al-Hijāz to al-'Irāq. On the tenth of Muḥarram, A.H. 61 (October 10, 680), 'Umar, son of the distinguished general Sa'd ibn-abī-Waqqās, in command of 4000 troops surrounded al-Ḥusayn with his insignificant band of some two hundred souls at Karbalā', about twenty-five miles north-west of al-Kūfah, and upon their refusal to surrender cut them down. The grandson of the Prophet fell dead with many wounds and his head was sent to Yazīd in Damascus. The head was given back to al-Ḥusayn's sister and son, who had gone with it to Damascus,⁵ and was buried with the body in Karbalā'. In commemoration of al-Ḥusayn's "martyrdom" the Shī'ah Moslems have established the practice of annually observing the

¹ See Ibn-Ḥajar, vol. ii, p. 13; Dīnawarī, p. 231.

² Tabarī, vol. ii, p. 3.

³ Ya'qūbī, vol. ii, p. 266.

⁴ Ibn-'Asākir, vol. iv, p. 216, l. 21.

⁵ Ibn-Ḥajar, vol. ii, p. 17.

first ten days of Muḥarram as days of lamentation, and have developed a passion play stressing his "heroic" struggle and suffering. This annual passion play is enacted in two parts, one called '*Ashūrā*' (the tenth day) in al-Kāzimayn (close by Baghdād) in memory of the battle, and the other forty days after the tenth of Muḥarram in Karbalā' entitled "the Return of the Head".

The blood of al-Ḥusayn, even more than that of his father, proved to be the seed of the Shi'ite "church". Shi'ism was born on the tenth of Muḥarram. From now on the imāmship in 'Ali's progeny became as much of a dogma in the Shi'ite creed as that of the prophethood of Muḥammad in Islam. *Yawm* (the day of) *Karbalā'* gave the Shi'ah a battle-cry summed up in the formula "vengeance for al-Ḥusayn", which ultimately proved one of the factors that undermined the Umayyad dynasty. In the other camp the Sunnites argued that Yazīd was *de facto* ruler and that to question his authority constituted a treason punishable with death. They insisted that the Shi'ites should not view the facts otherwise. But how a people actually do view an event is usually more important as a moving force in history than how they should view it. The great schism was made in Islam and the breach has never since been filled.

Although the Umayyads were for some time secure in the caliphate in so far as the 'Alids were concerned, the struggle was in reality three-cornered, for the third party was not yet eliminated. As long as the powerful Mu'āwiyah lived 'Abdullāh, a nephew of 'Ā'ishah and son of al-Zubayr who had fruitlessly disputed the caliphate with 'Ali, kept his peace in al-Madīnah. When Yazīd, well known for his frivolity and dissipation, succeeded to the throne 'Abdullāh declared openly against the new caliph and encouraged al-Ḥusayn to undertake the perilous step which cost him his life and left 'Abdullāh the sole claimant. All al-Ḥijāz proclaimed 'Abdullāh. Yazīd was quick to dispatch against the malcontents of al-Madīnah a disciplinary force which included many Christian Syrians, and was headed by the one-eyed Muslim ibn-'Uqbah, whose old age and infirmity necessitated his carriage all the way in a litter. The punitive expedition encamped on the volcanic plain of al-Ḥarrah east of al-Madīnah, gave battle on August 26, 683, and was victorious. The story of the three days in which the unchecked Damascene soldiery

sacked the city of the Prophet is apocryphal. The army then proceeded to Makkah. On the way Muslim died and was succeeded in the chief command by al-Ḥuṣayn ibn-Numayr al-Sakūni,¹ who had his catapults rain stones upon the Ḥaram (holy mosque) of Makkah on whose inviolable soil ibn-al-Zubayr had taken refuge. In the course of the siege the Ka'bah itself caught fire and was burned to the ground. The Black Stone was split in three pieces and the house of Allah looked "like the torn bosoms of mourning women".² While these operations were proceeding Yazīd had died and ibn-Numayr, fearing consequent disorders in Syria, suspended on November 27, 683, the operations which had begun on September 24. The second civil war of Islam, which like the first between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah was also a dynastic war, came to a temporary halt.

Subsequent to the death of his rival and the consequent withdrawal of enemy troops from Arabian soil ibn-al-Zubayr was proclaimed caliph not only in al-Ḥijāz, where he had his seat, and in al-'Irāq, where his brother Muṣ'ab was made his representative, but in South Arabia, Egypt and parts of Syria. Over Damascus, however, al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn-Qays al-Fihri, leader of the Qaysite (North Arabian) party which had favoured ibn-al-Zubayr, had been appointed by this caliph provisional regent. Al-Ḍaḥḥāk was finally crushed in July 684, at Marj Rāhiṭ³—a second Šiffin for the Umayyads—by his Kalbite (including the Yamanite or South Arabian) opponents, who supported the aged⁴ Umayyad Marwān ibn-al-Ḥakam. The Kalbites were Syro-Arabs domiciled in Syria before the Hijrah and mostly Christianized. Marwān (684-5), the cousin of 'Uthmān and formerly his secretary of state, then became the founder of the Marwānid branch of the Umayyad dynasty. He followed Mu'āwiyah II (683-4), Yazīd's weak and sickly son, who had ruled

¹ Tabari, vol. i, p. 2220; Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 299.

² Tabari, vol. ii, p. 427; al-Fakihī, *al-Muntaqa fi Akhbār umri al-Qura*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig, 1859), pp. 18 seq.; Axaṣī, *Akhbār Makkah*, p. 32. The Ka'bah was rebuilt by ibn-al-Zubayr on the withdrawal of the Umayyad army.

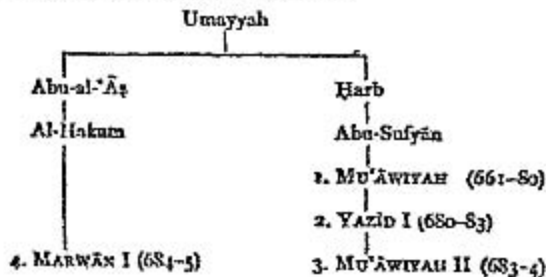
³ A plain east of the village Marj 'Adhrā' not far from Damascus. See *Iqd*, vol. ii, pp. 320-21; Mas'ūdi, vol. v, p. 201. These internal feuds between the Qays, representing the new emigrants from North Arabia, and the Kalb, who were ever the staunch supporters of the Umayyad cause, were among the events which precipitated the fall of the Umayyad dynasty. The Qaysi and Yamani parties figured even in the modern politics of Lebanon and Syria. See below, p. 281.

⁴ Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 304, l. 19.

only three months and left no successor.¹ But the defection of al-Ḥijāz under the rival caliph continued until Marwān's son and successor, 'Abd-al-Malik, sent his iron-handed general al-Ḥajjāj, formerly a schoolmaster in al-Ṭā'if, at the head of a Syrian army which gave the *coup de grâce* to the anti-caliphate. Beginning March 25, 692, al-Ḥajjāj pressed the siege against Makkah for six and a half months and used his catapults effectively.² Inspired by the heroic exhortation of his mother, Asmā',³ daughter of abu-Bakr and sister of 'Ā'ishah, ibn-al-Zubayr fought valiantly but hopelessly until he was slain. His head was sent to Damascus⁴ and his body, after hanging for some time on the gibbet, was delivered to his aged mother. With the death of ibn-al-Zubayr the last champion of the old faith passed away. 'Uthmān was fully avenged, if not by Muslim certainly by al-Ḥajjāj. The Anṣār's (Supporters') power was for ever broken. After this debacle a number of them began to leave Makkah and al-Madīnah to join the armies operating in North Africa, Spain and other theatres of war. Henceforth the history of Arabia begins to deal more with the effect of the outer world on the peninsula and less with the effect of the peninsula on the outer world. The vigour of the mother "island" had spent itself.

After gaining supremacy over the opposing parties Mu'āwiyah (661-80) was free to direct his efforts against the great enemy of Islam to the north-west, the Byzantines. In 'Akka (Acre) he found soon after the conquest of Syria well-equipped Byzantine shipyards (sing. *dār al-sinā'ah*, whence Eng. arsenal) which he utilized for building the Moslem navy. These dockyards were

¹ The subjoined tree shows the Sufyānid branch of the Umayyad dynasty in its relation to the founder of the Marwānid branch:



² Dīnawarī, p. 320, ibn-'Asākir, vol. iv, p. 50.

³ Ṭabarī, vol. ii, p. 852.

⁴ Ṭabarī, vol. ii, pp. 845-8.

probably the second after those of Egypt in Islamic maritime history. The Syrian yards, according to al-Balādhuri,¹ were transferred by later Umayyads to Şūr (Tyre),² where they remained until the 'Abbāsid period. This fleet must undoubtedly have been manned by Greco-Syrians accustomed to seafaring. The Arabians of al-Ḥijāz, the mainstay of Islam, had only little acquaintance with the sea, for it was a principle of 'Umar's policy to let no body of water intervene between him and his lieutenants. Such a policy explains, for instance, why 'Umar would not authorize the proposed invasion of Cyprus (Qubrus) by Mu'āwiyah. It was 'Umar's successor, 'Uthmān, who was finally persuaded to yield a half-hearted assent to the invasion of the island; and it was in compliance with the caliph's order that Mu'āwiyah had his wife accompany him (649).³ Her presence was proof positive of the proximity of Cyprus and of the contemplated ease with which it could be subdued.

Mu'āwiyah's reign witnessed not only the consolidation but the extension of the territories of the caliphate. To this period belongs the expansion in North Africa for which 'Uqbah ibn-Nāfi' was in the main responsible. In the east the complete conquest of Khurāsān was undertaken (663-71) from al-Baṣrah,⁴ the Oxus was crossed and Bukhāra in far-away Turkestan raided (674). Thus Mu'āwiyah became not only the father of a dynasty but the second founder of the caliphate after 'Umar.

In securing his throne and extending the limits of Islamic dominion, Mu'āwiyah relied mainly upon Syrians, who were still chiefly Christian, and upon the Syro-Arabs, who were mainly Yamanites, to the exclusion of the new Moslem immigrants from al-Ḥijāz. Arabic chronicles dwell upon the sense of loyalty which the people of Syria cherished towards their new chief.⁵ Though as a soldier he was certainly inferior to 'Ali, as a military organizer Mu'āwiyah was second to none of his contemporaries. He whipped the raw material which constituted his Syrian army into the first ordered and disciplined force known in Islamic warfare. He rid the military machine of its archaic tribal organization, a relic of the ancient patriarchal days. He abolished many

¹ P. 118 = Hitti, p. 181.

² Consult Guy Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems* (Boston, 1890), p. 342; cf. ibn-Jubayr, *Riḥlah* (Leyden, 1907), p. 305.

³ Above, p. 168.

⁴ Ya'qūbī, vol. ii, p. 258; Balādhuri, p. 410; Tabarī, vol. ii, pp. 166 seq.

⁵ Tabarī, vol. i, pp. 3409-10; Mas'ūdi, vol. v, pp. 80, 102; cf. *Iqd*, vol. i, p. 207, l. 31.

traditional features of the government and on the earlier Byzantine framework built a stable, well-organized state. Out of seeming chaos he developed an orderly Moslem society. Historians credit him with being the first in Islam to institute the bureau of registry and the first to interest himself in postal service, *al-barīd*,¹ which developed under 'Abd-al-Malik into a well-organized system knitting together the various parts of the far-flung empire. From among many other wives he chose as his favourite a Syro-Arab Kalbite of the banu-Baḥdal, Maysūn by name, who scorned court life at Damascus and yearned for the freedom of the desert. The verses attributed to her, though she may never have composed them, express the feeling of homesickness which many Bedouins who were now passing into an urban state must have experienced.²

Maysūn was a Jacobite Christian like her predecessor Nā'ilah, 'Uthmān's wife, who also belonged to the Kalb tribe. She often took her son Yazīd, subsequently the successor of Mu'āwiyah, to the *bādiyah* (Syrian desert), particularly to Palmyrena, in which her Bedouin tribe roamed and where the youthful crown prince became habituated to the chase, hard-riding, wine-bibbing and verse-making. Al-Bādiyah from this time on became the school of the Umayyad princes, where they acquired the pure Arabic³ unadulterated with Aramaicisms and where they also escaped the recurrent city plagues. Later Umayyad caliphs, including 'Abd-al-Malik and al-Walid II, continuing the tradition, built country residences on the border of the Syrian desert and called them "al-Bādiyahs".

Maṣṣūr ibn-Sarjūn (Gr. Sergius),⁴ who figured in the treacherous surrender of Damascus at the time of the Arab invasion, was the scion of a prominent Christian family some of whose members had occupied the position of financial controller of the state in the last Byzantine period. Next to the supreme command of the army this office became the most important in the Arab government. The grandson of this Maṣṣūr was the illustrious St. John (Yūḥanna) the Damascene, who in his

¹ *Faḥrī*, p. 148. See below, p. 322.

² Abu-ḥ-Fidā', vol. i, p. 203; Nicholson, *Literary History*, p. 195.

³ *Iqd*, vol. i, p. 293, l. 30.

⁴ For the confusion in the Arabic chronicles between the name of this man and his son Sarjūn ibn-Maṣṣūr, consult Tabari, vol. ii, pp. 205, 228, 239, Mas'ūdi, *Tarīkh*, pp. 302, 306, 307, 312; cf. Theophanes, p. 365.

youth was a boon companion of Yazīd. The caliph's physician, ibn-Uthāl, was likewise a Christian, whom Mu'āwiyah made financial administrator of the province of Ḥimṣ¹—an unprecedented appointment for a Christian in Moslem annals.² The Umayyad poet laureate, al-Akḥṭal, another boon companion of Yazīd, belonged to the Taghlib Christian Arabs of al-Ḥīrah and was a friend of St. John. This poet of the court would enter the caliphal palace with a cross dangling from his neck and recite his poems to the delight of the Moslem caliph and his entourage. Jacobites and Maronites brought their religious disputes before the caliph,³ who is reported by Theophanis⁴ to have even rebuilt a Christian church in Edessa which had been demolished by an earthquake.

When in 679 Mu'āwiyah nominated his son Yazīd as his successor⁵ and caused deputations to come from the provinces and take the oath of allegiance, he introduced into the caliphate the hereditary principle followed thereafter by the leading Moslem dynasties, including the 'Abbāsids. Following this precedent the reigning caliph would proclaim as his successor the one among his sons or kinsmen whom he considered most competent and would exact for him an anticipatory oath of fealty, first from the capital and then from the other principal towns of the empire.

No small measure of the success of the Caliph Mu'āwiyah should be attributed to the circle of collaborators with whom he surrounded himself, particularly 'Amr ibn-al-'Āṣ, the vicegerent over fertile Egypt, al-Mughīrah ibn-Shu'bah, the governor of turbulent al-Kūfah, and Ziyād ibn-Abīh, the ruler of malcontent al-Basrah. These three with their chief, Mu'āwiyah, constituted the four political geniuses (*duḥāt*) of the Arab Moslems. Ziyād was at first styled ibn-Abīh because of the doubt which clouded the identity of his father. His mother was a slave and prostitute in al-Ṭā'if whom abu-Sufyān, Mu'āwiyah's father, had known. Ziyād was pro-'Alid. In a critical moment Mu'āwiyah acknowledged Ziyād as his legitimate brother.⁶ Ziyād proved a great

¹ Ibn-'Asākir, vol. v, p. 80.

² Yu'qūṭi, vol. ii, p. 265. Wellhausen, *Reich*, p. 85, considers the report of this appointment fictitious.

³ Wellhausen, *Reich*, p. 84.

⁴ P. 356.

⁵ Mas'ūdī, vol. v, pp. 69-73; cf. Tabari, vol. ii, pp. 174-7.

⁶ Dīnawari, pp. 232-3; Tabari, vol. ii, pp. 69-70; Ibn-'Asākir, vol. v, p. 397.

asset to his caliph brother. His unrelenting hand weighed heavily over al-Basrah, a centre of Shī'ism. After the death of al-Mughīrah he was elevated to the governorship of al-Kūfah, a position which made him the absolute ruler of the eastern part of the empire, including Arabia and Persia. With a trained body-guard 4000 strong who acted also as spies and police, he ruled tyrannically and tracked down mercilessly anyone who dared show favour to 'Ali's descendants or revile Mu'āwiyah.

In Mu'āwiyah the sense of *finesse politique* was developed to a degree probably higher than in any other caliph. To his Arab biographers his supreme virtue was his *ḥilm*,¹ that unusual ability to resort to force only when force was absolutely necessary and to use peaceful measures in all other instances. His prudent mildness by which he tried to disarm the enemy and shame the opposition, his slowness to anger and his absolute self-control left him under all circumstances master of the situation. "I apply not my sword", he is reported to have declared, "where my lash suffices, nor my lash where my tongue is enough. And even if there be one hair binding me to my fellowmen, I do not let it break: when they pull I loosen, and if they loosen I pull."² The following is a copy of a letter he is supposed to have forwarded to al-Ḥasan on the occasion of the latter's abdication: "I admit that because of thy blood relationship thou art more entitled to this high office than I. And if I were sure of thy greater ability to fulfil the duties involved I would unhesitatingly swear allegiance to thee. Now then, ask what thou wilt." Enclosed was a blank for al-Ḥasan to fill in, already signed by Mu'āwiyah.³

Despite many excellences Mu'āwiyah was no favourite with several of the historians whose works have come down to us. They regarded him as the first *malik* (king) in Islam; and to the true Arab the title was so abhorrent that it was applied almost exclusively to non-Arab potentates. The historians' attitude was a reflection of that of the puritans, who accused him of having secularized Islam and changed the *khilāfat al-nubū'ah* (the prophetic, i.e. theocratic, caliphate) to a *mulk*⁴—a temporal sovereignty. Among his profane creations, they point out, was

¹ *Fakhrī*, p. 145; *Iqd*, vol. II, p. 304; *Mas'ūdi*, vol. V, p. 410.

² *Ya'qūbī*, vol. II, p. 283; *Iqd*, vol. I, p. 10.

³ *Tabarī*, vol. II, p. 5.

⁴ *Ibn-Khaldūn, Muqaddimah*, pp. 169 seq. *Ya'qūbī*, vol. II, p. 257.

the *maqṣūrah*,¹ a sort of bower inside the mosque reserved for the exclusive use of the caliph. The Friday noon sermon (*khutbah*) he read while seated.² He was the first to institute a royal throne (*ṣarīr al-mulk*).³ The Arabic annals, mostly composed in the 'Abbāsid period or under Shī'ite influence, impugn his piety. The Syrian tradition, however, preserved in ibn-'Asākir, reveals him as a good Moslem. To his Umayyad successors he bequeathed a precedent of clemency, energy, astuteness and statesmanship which many tried to emulate,⁴ though few succeeded. He was not only the first but also one of the best of Arab kings.

¹ Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 265; Dīnawarī, p. 229; Ṭabari, vol. ii, p. 70, l. 20.

² Ibn-al-'Iṭrī, p. 188.

³ Ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, p. 217; al-Qalqashandī, *Subḥ al-'Ashā*, vol. iv (Cairo, 1914), p. 6.

⁴ Mas'ūdī, vol. v, p. 78. Mu'āwiyah's tomb in the cemetery of [al-]Bāb al-Ṣaghīr at Damascus is still visited.

CHAPTER XVIII

HOSTILE RELATIONS WITH THE BYZANTINES

WHILE Mu'āwiyah was still insecure in his new position and had his hands full with domestic affairs he found it expedient to purchase (658 or 659) a truce from the Emperor Constans II (641-68) at the price of a yearly tribute mentioned by Theophanus¹ and referred to in passing by al-Balādhuri.² But soon afterward the tribute was repudiated and hostilities against the Byzantine possessions both by land and sea were pressed more zealously and persistently than by any of Mu'āwiyah's immediate successors. Twice did Mu'āwiyah stretch out his mighty arm against the enemy capital itself. The main object of these raids into *Bilād al-Rūm* (the territory of the Romans, Asia Minor) was of course the acquisition of booty, though the dim spectacle of Constantinople may have beckoned beyond in the distant background. Gradually the razzias became annual summer affairs and served the purpose of keeping the army physically fit and well trained. Yet the Arabs never succeeded in establishing a permanent foothold in Asia Minor. Their main energy was directed eastward and westward along the lines of least resistance. Otherwise the story of Arab-Byzantine relations in Asia Minor and even across the Hellespont might have been different. On the north the lofty ranges of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus seem to have been eternally fixed by nature as the boundary line, and the Arabic language appears to have frozen upon their southern slopes. Though brought later by Saljūq and by Ottoman Turks within the political orbit of Islam, no part of Asia Minor ever became Arabic speaking. Its basic population from earliest antiquity, beginning with Hittite days, has always been non-Semitic, and its climate has proved too rigorous for Arab civilization to strike deep root in its soil.

The long cordon of Moslem fortifications stretching from Malaṭyah (or Malaṭiyah, Melitene) by the upper Euphrates to

¹ P. 347

² P. 159, l. 1 = Hitti, p. 245.

Ṭarsūs near the Mediterranean coast and including Adhanah, al-Maṣṣisah (Mopsuestia) and Mar'ash (Germanicia) had its units all strategically situated at the intersections of military roads or at the entrances of narrow mountain passes. These strongholds with their environs were called 'awāṣim. But 'awāṣim in the narrower sense meant the inner, the southern, line of fortresses within the military marches in contradistinction to the outer, northern, strip of land called *thughūr*,¹ which shrank under the 'Abbāsids, reaching only from Awlās on the Mediterranean past Ṭarsūs to Sumaysāṭ (Samosata) on the Euphrates.² The line guarding Mesopotamia to the north-east was styled *al-thughūr al-Janariyah*; that guarding Syria, *al-thughūr al-Sha'miyah*.³ Ṭarsūs, which commanded the southern entrance of the celebrated pass across the Taurus known as the Cilician Gates and served as a military base for Arab attacks on the land of the Greeks, was no less than four hundred and fifty miles in a direct line from the Bosphorus. The other pass by which the mountain range of the Taurus could be traversed lay to the north-east and was called Darb al-Ḥadath. It led from Mar'ash north to Abulustayn⁴ and was less frequented. These Arab marches formed a "no man's land" and their strongholds changed hands again and again as the tide of war ebbed or flowed. Under the Umayyads and 'Abbāsids almost every foot was fought over repeatedly and bitterly; scarcely any land in Asia is more soaked in blood.

As early as A.H. 34 (655), while Mu'āwiyah was still governor of Syria under 'Uthmān, his fleet under Busr ibn-abi-Artāh⁵ in co-operation with the Egyptian fleet under 'Abdullāh ibn-abi-Sarḥ met the Greek navy led by the Emperor Constans II, son of Heraclius, at Phoenix (modern Finike) on the Lycian coast and scored the first great naval victory of Islam. This maritime engagement is referred to in Arabic chronicles as *dhu* (or *dhāt*) -al-Ṣawāri (that of the masts).⁶ The Arabs transformed

¹ Cf. Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1905), p. 123.

² Isfakhri, pp. 67-8.

³ Balādhuri, pp. 183 *seq.*, 163 *seq.*

⁴ Yāqūt, vol. i, pp. 93-4; cf. Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, p. 133. The Byzantine name was Ablastia, the Greek Arabissus, late Arabic al-Bustān.

⁵ Ibn-'Abd-al-Hakam, pp. 189-90; Ibn-Ḥajar, vol. i, 153.

⁶ Either after the name of the place itself, which is said to have been rich in cypress trees from which masts (*sawāri*) could be fashioned, or because of the number of masts of the many ships engaged.

the sea-fight into a hand-to-hand encounter by tying each Arab ship to a Byzantine vessel.¹ The battle proved a second Yarmūk; the Byzantine forces were completely destroyed.² Al-Tabari³ describes the water of the sea as saturated with blood. The Arabs, however, did not take advantage of the victory and push on to Constantinople, probably because of the murder of 'Uthmān, which occurred about this time, and other concomitant civil disturbances.

Three times was Constantinople attacked by Umayyad forces, the only occasions on which Syro-Arabs ever succeeded in reaching the high triple wall of the mighty capital. The first was in A.H. 49 (669) under the leadership of the crown prince Yazīd, whose warriors were the first ever to set eyes on Byzantium.⁴ Yazīd was sent by his father to support the land campaign of Faḍālah ibn-'Ubayd al-Anṣārī, who had wintered (668-9) in Chalcedon (the Asiatic suburb of Byzantium), and as a response to those puritans who might look askance at Yazīd's intended nomination as successor to the reigning caliph. The siege laid by Yazīd and Faḍālah in the spring of 669 was raised in the summer of the same year; Byzantium had a new and energetic emperor, Constantine IV (668-85).

In legend Yazīd distinguished himself for bravery and fortitude below the walls of Constantinople and earned the title *ḡata al-'Arab* (the young champion or hero of the Arabs). The *Aghāni*⁵ relates that alternate shouts of jubilation were heard from two separate tents as the Arabs or the Byzantines made headway in the battle. On learning that one tent was occupied by the daughter of the king of the Rūm and the other by the daughter of Jabālah ibn-al-Ayham, Yazīd was spurred to extraordinary activity in order to seize the Ghassānid king's daughter. But the real legendary hero of the campaign was the aged abu-Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, the standard-bearer of the Prophet, who had harboured Muḥammad in al-Madīnah on the occasion of the Hijrah⁶ and whose presence in Yazīd's contingent was desired more for the blessing it might bring. Tradition asserts that in the course of the siege abu-Ayyūb died of dysentery and was buried before the walls of Constantinople. His legendary tomb soon

¹ Ibn 'Abd-al-Hakam, p. 190, ll. 18-19.

² Vol. i, p. 2868.

³ Vol. xvi, p. 33.

⁴ Theophanes, pp. 332, 345-6.

⁵ Tabari, vol. ii, p. 86; cf. p. 27.

⁶ Balādhuri, p. 5 = Hitti, p. 19.

became a shrine even for the Christian Greeks, who made pilgrimages to it in time of drought to pray for rain.¹ During the siege of Constantinople in 1453 by the Turks, the tomb was miraculously discovered by rays of light—an episode comparable to the discovery of the holy lance at Antioch by the early Crusaders—and a mosque was built on the site. Thus did the Madīnese gentleman become a saint for three nations.

The second attack on Constantinople was made in the so-called seven years' war² (54–60/674–80), which was waged mainly between the two fleets before Constantinople. The Arabs had secured a naval base in the Sea of Marmara on the peninsula of Cyzicus,³ mistaken for "the isle of Arwād"⁴ in the Arab chronicles. This served as winter headquarters for the invading army, whence hostilities were resumed every spring. The Arab accounts of these campaigns are badly confused. The use of Greek fire is supposed to have saved the city. This highly combustible compound, which would burn even on water, was invented by a Syrian refugee from Damascus named Callinicus. The Greek accounts dilate on the disastrous effect of this fire on the enemy ships. Agapius of Manbij,⁵ who follows Theophanes, emphasizes the habitual use of Greek fire by the Byzantines, who were the first to employ it in warfare.

To this period also belongs the temporary occupation of Rhodes (Rūdis,⁶ 672) and Crete (Iqrīsh, 674). Rhodes was again temporarily occupied in 717–18. On a previous occasion (654) it had been pillaged by the Arabs, and two years later the remains of its once famous colossus were sold for old metal to a dealer who is said to have employed nine hundred camels to carry them away. Later it was again conquered by Arab adventurers from Spain.

On the death of Mu'āwiyah (680) the Arab fleet withdrew from the Bosphorus and Aegean waters, but attacks against "the territory of the Romans" were by no means relinquished.

¹ Ibn-Sa'd, vol. iii, pt. 2, p. 50; followed by Tabari, vol. iii, p. 2324. Both authorities fix A.H. 52 as the year of his death.

² See J. B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire* (London, 1899), vol. ii, p. 310, n. 4.

³ Theophanes, pp. 353–4.

⁴ Tabari, vol. ii, p. 163; Balādhuri, p. 236 = Hitti, p. 376.

⁵ "Kitāb al-'Unwān," pt. 2, ed. A. Vasshev, in *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris, 1912), vol. viii, p. 492.

⁶ Balādhuri, p. 236 = Hitti, p. 375.

We read of almost yearly summer incursions (*ṣā'ifah*), though none assumed importance until the caliphate of Sulaymān (715-17). Sulaymān considered himself the person referred to by the current *ḥadīth* that a caliph bearing a prophet's name was to conquer Constantinople. The second and last great siege of Constantinople was conducted (August 716-September 717¹) under his reign by the stubborn Maslamah, the caliph's brother. This remarkable siege, the most threatening of the Arab attacks, is the one best known because of the many descriptions extant. The besiegers were reinforced both by sea and by land and received aid from Egyptian ships. They were provided with naphtha and special siege artillery.² The chief of Maslamah's guard, 'Abdullāh al-Baṭṭāl, particularly distinguished himself and won the title of champion of Islam. In the course of a later campaign (740³) he was killed. In later tradition, as Sayyid Ghāzi, al-Baṭṭāl became one of the Turkish national heroes. His grave, at which a Baktāshi *takīyah* (monastery) with a mosque has risen, is still shown near Eski-Shahr (medieval Dorylæum). His was another instance of "an illustrious Moslem for whom Christians have raised a statue in one of their churches".⁴

At last Emperor Leo the Isaurian (717-41), a soldier of humble Syrian origin from Mar'ash who knew Arabic as perfectly as Greek,⁵ outwitted Maslamah and saved the capital. In connection with this siege we have the first historical reference to the chain which barred the way of the attacking fleet into the Golden Horn. The famous Greek fire and the attacks of the Bulgars wrought havoc in the ranks of the invaders. Famine, pestilence and the rigours of an unusually severe winter also did their share. But Maslamah persisted. The death of the caliph in Syria did not deter him from pushing the siege. But the order of the new caliph, 'Umar ibn-'Abd-al-'Azīz (717-20), he had to heed. On the way back a tempest finished the work begun by the Byzantines; out of the 1800 vessels, if we are to believe Theophanis,⁶ only five were spared to reach port in Syria. The Arab armada was gone. The Syrian founder of the Isaurian dynasty was hailed the saviour of Europe from the Arab Moslems as Heraclius, the Armenian founder of the Heracleian dynasty, had

¹ Tabari, vol. ii, p. 1346; cf. Bury, vol. ii, p. 401, n. 2.

² *K'tāb al-'Uyūn w-al-Ḥadā'iq*, ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1871), pt. 3, p. 24.

³ Tabari, vol. ii, p. 1716.

⁴ Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, p. 74.

⁵ *K'tāb al-'Uyūn*, pt. 3, p. 25.

⁶ Pp. 395, 399.

before him been declared the deliverer of Christendom from heathen Persia. Only on one other occasion after this did an Arab host venture to make its appearance within sight of Constantinople, and that when Hārūn, son of the Caliph al-Mahdi, encamped at Scutari (Chrysopolis) in 782 and the Empress Irene hastened to make peace by agreeing to pay tribute. The "city of Constantine" was not again to see a Moslem army beneath its walls until some seven centuries had passed and a new racial element, the Mongoloid Turks, had become the standard-bearers of the religion of Muḥammad.

Though ending in failure, this determined and energetic expedition by Maslamah, like the one preceding it, has left many a legendary souvenir, including tales of the building of a mosque by the caliph's brother in Constantinople,¹ of the erection by him of a fountain² and a mosque³ at Abydos (Abdus) and of his entrance on horseback into St. Sophia. Writing in 985, al-Maḡdīsī⁴ has this to say: "When Maslamah ibn-'Abd-al-Malik invaded the country of the Romans and penetrated into their territory he stipulated that the Byzantine dog should erect by his own palace in the Hippodrome (*maydān*) a special building to be occupied by the [Moslem] notables and noblemen when taken captive".⁵

One factor in the check of the Arab policy of northward penetration was the activity of the Christian Mardaites (rebels) in the service of the Byzantine cause. A people of undetermined origin leading a semi-independent national life in the fastnesses of al-Lukkām (Amanus), these Jarājimah (less correctly Jurājimah), as they were also styled by the Arabs, furnished irregular troops and proved a thorn in the side of the Arab caliphate in Syria. On the Arab-Byzantine border they formed "a brass wall"⁶ in

¹ Ibn-Taghri-Birdi, *al-Nujūm al-Zākirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāḥirah*, ed. W. Popper (Berkeley, 1909-12), vol. II, pt. 2, p. 40, ll. 12-13, refers to a Fāḡimīd *khutbah* pronounced in this mosque. See Ibn-al-Qalānisi, *Dhawl Ta'rikh Dimashq*, ed. H. F. Amedroz (Beirut, 1908), p. 68, ll. 27-8. The mosque survived in tradition in the Mamlūk period.

² Ibn-Khurdādhbih, *al-Masālik wa-al-Mamālik*, ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1889), p. 104, l. 1; Mas'ūdi, vol. II, p. 317, calls the place *Andalus*.

³ Ibn al-Faḡīh (al-Hamadhāni), *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1885), p. 145, l. 15; Yāqūt, vol. I, p. 374, refers to the town under the name *Andus*, a mistake for Abdus.

⁴ P. 147.

⁵ This building, al-Balūt, is referred to in Yāqūt, vol. I, p. 709, as being in use at the time of Sayf-al-Dawlah al-Hamdāni (944-67). For etymology of *balūt* see below, p. 501, n. 1

⁶ Theophanes, p. 364.

defence of Asia Minor. About 666 their bands penetrated into the heart of Lebanon and became the nucleus around which many fugitives and malcontents, among whom were the Maronites, grouped themselves. Mu'āwiyah agreed to the payment of a heavy annual tribute to the Byzantine emperor in consideration of his withdrawal of support from this internal enemy, to whom he also agreed to pay a tribute. About 689 Justinian II once more loosed the Mardaite highlanders on Syria, and 'Abd-al-Malik, following "the precedent of Mu'āwiyah",¹ accepted the new conditions laid down by the emperor and agreed to pay a thousand dinars weekly to the Jarājimah. Finally the majority of the invaders evacuated Syria and settled in the inner provinces or on the coast of Asia Minor, where they became seafarers; others remained and constituted one of the elements that entered into the composition of the Maronite community that still flourishes in the northern Lebanon.

¹ Balādhurī, p. 160, l. 8 = Hitti, p. 247, l. 28.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ZENITH OF UMAYYAD POWER

MARWĀN (683-5), the founder of the Marwānid branch of the Umayyad dynasty, was succeeded by his son 'Abd-al-Malik (685-705), the "father of kings". Under 'Abd-al-Malik's rule and that of the four sons who succeeded him¹ the dynasty at Damascus reached the meridian of its power and glory. During the reigns of al-Walīd and Hishām the Islamic empire reached its greatest expansion, stretching from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and the Pyrenees to the Indus and the confines of China—an extent hardly rivalled in ancient times and surpassed in modern times only by the British and Russian empires. To this glorious period belong the subjugation of Transoxiana, the reconquest and pacification of North Africa and the acquisition of the largest European country ever held by Arabs—Spain.

This era witnessed the nationalizing, or Arabicizing, of the administration, the introduction of the first purely Arab coinage, the development of the postal service and the erection of such monuments as the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem—the third holiest sanctuary in Islam.

At his accession and during his first decade as caliph 'Abd-al-Malik was hemmed in by many foes, and like his great predecessor, Mu'āwiyah, whose counterpart he was, had to face enemies on various fronts. Yet when he died at the close of a second decade he passed on to his son al-Walīd a consolidated and pacified empire that included not only the whole world of Islam but also new conquests of his own. Al-Walīd proved a worthy successor of a capable father.

The acquisition of Syria, al-'Irāq, Persia and Egypt under 'Umar and 'Uthmān having brought to an end the first stage in the history of Moslem conquest, the second now begins under 'Abd-al-Malik and al-Walīd.

¹ Al-Walīd (705-15), Sulaymān (715-17), Yazīd II (720-24) and Hishām (724-743) 'Umar (717-20), who interrupted the filial succession, was a son of 'Abd-al-Malik's brother 'Abd-al-'Azīz.

The brilliant military achievements of these two reigns centre on the names of al-Ḥajjāj ibn-Yūsuf al-Thaqafī in the east and Mūsa ibn-Nuṣayr in the west.

Al-Ḥajjāj, the young schoolmaster of al-Ṭā'if¹ in al-Ḥijāz who had laid down the pen and taken up the sword in support of the tottering Umayyad throne, was appointed governor of Arabia after having crushed (692) at the age of thirty-one the formidable pretender 'Abdullāh ibn-al-Zubayr, who for nine years had held the title and power of caliph. In two years al-Ḥajjāj pacified al-Ḥijāz and with it al-Yaman and even al-Yamāmah to the east, and was in December 694 summoned by 'Abd-al-Malik to perform a similar task in turbulent and dissatisfied al-'Irāq, whose people were "men of schism and hypocrisy".² Here the 'Alids and the Khārijites had continually made trouble for the Umayyads. The unexpected arrival of al-Ḥajjāj at the famous mosque of al-Kūfah, in disguise and accompanied only by twelve cameleers, his brusque mounting of the pulpit and removal of the heavy turban which veiled his face, and his fiery oration, are among the most dramatic and popular episodes recounted in Arabic literature. The proclamation of his policy in unequivocal terms showed the 'Irāqīs from the very start that his would be no kid-glove methods of dealing with a disloyal populace. Introducing his oration with a verse quoted from an ancient poet:

"I am he who scattereth darkness and climbeth lofty summits.
As I lift the turban from my face ye will know me",

the speaker continued, "O people of al-Kūfah! Certain am I that I see heads ripe for cutting, and verily I am the man to do it. Methinks I see blood between the turbans and the beards. . . ."³

In fact no head proved too mighty for the relentless Umayyad viceroy to crush, no neck too high for him to reach. Even Anas ibn-Mālik, the prolific traditionist and highly respected Companion of the Prophet, accused of sympathy with the opposition, had to wear around his neck a collar bearing the viceroy's seal.⁴ Human lives to the number of 120,000⁵ are said to have been

¹ Ibn-Rustah, p. 216, ibn-Durayd, *Ishṭiqāṭ*, p. 187.

² Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 326; Mas'ūdi, vol. v, p. 295.

³ Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, pp. 215-16; cf. Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 326; Mas'ūdi, vol. v, p. 294.

⁴ Ṭabari, vol. ii, pp. 854-5.

⁵ Ibn-al-'Ibri, p. 195; cf. Mas'ūdi, vol. v, p. 382; *Tandīh*, p. 318; Ṭabari, vol. ii, p. 1123.

sacrificed by this governor of al-'Irāq, who is represented by the Arab historians, most of whom, it should be noted, were Shi'ites or Sunnites writing during the 'Abbāsīd régime, as a blood-thirsty tyrant, a veritable Nero. In addition to his blood-thirstiness, his gluttony and impiety are favourite themes with the historians.¹

Justifiable or not, the drastic measures of al-Ḥajjāj did not fail to restore order both among the rebellious Baṣrans and Kūfans and throughout his vast viceroyalty, which included al-'Irāq and Persia. His lieutenants, led by al-Muhallab ibn-abi-Ṣufrah, practically exterminated (698 or 699) the Azraqis,² the most dangerous to Moslem unity of all the Khārijites, who under the leadership of Qaṭari ibn-al-Fujā'ah had acquired control of Karmān,³ Fāris and other eastern provinces. On the opposite coast of the Persian Gulf, 'Umān, which in the days of the Prophet and 'Amr ibn-al-'Āṣ had been nominally brought under Islam, was now fully incorporated with the Umayyad realm. From his newly built capital on the west bank of the Tigris, Wāsiṭ (medial), so called from its half-way position between the two key cities of al-'Irāq—al-Baṣrah and al-Kūfah⁴—the Syrian garrison of al-Ḥajjāj held all these territories in submission. His blind faith in his Syrian troops, like his untainted loyalty to the Umayyad cause, knew no bounds.

With his domain pacified and well rounded out, the energetic viceroy now felt free to authorize his lieutenants to penetrate further east. One of them, 'Abd-al-Raḥmān ibn-Muḥammad ibn-al-Ash'ath, a scion of the ancient royal line of Kindah and governor of Sijistān, who later led a frightful revolt against the authority of al-Ḥajjāj, was sent (699-700) against the Zunbil (less correctly Rutbil),⁵ Turkish king of Kābul (in modern Afghanistan), who had refused to pay the customary tribute.⁶

¹ Dinawari, *Akhḍār*, pp. 320-22; Mas'ūdi, vol. vii, p. 218; Ṭabari, vol. ii, pp. 1122-3; ibn-'Asākir, vol. iv, p. 81.

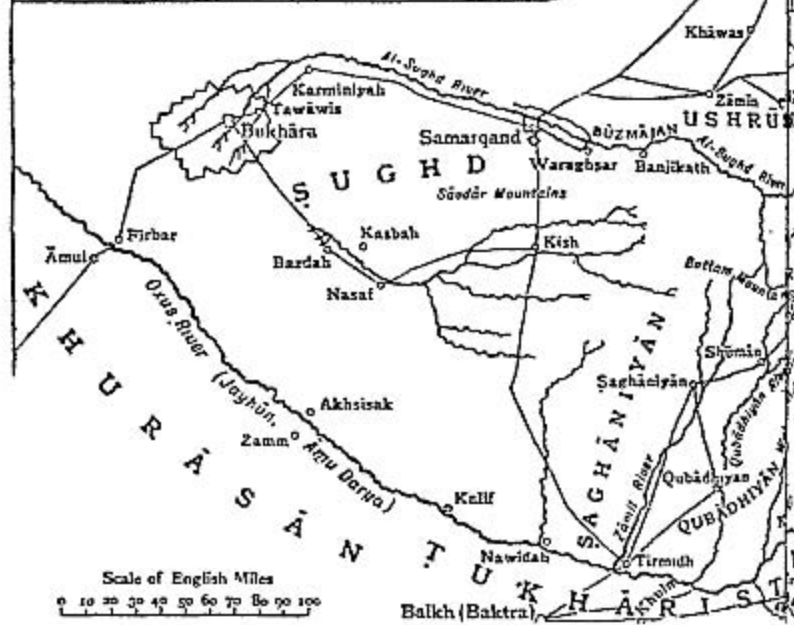
² So called from their first leader, Nāṣī' ibn-al-Azraq, who taught that all followers of other than Khārijite doctrine were without exception infidels and doomed to death with their wives and children; Shahrastāni, pp. 89-90.

³ Or Kirmān; Yāqūt, vol. iv, p. 263.

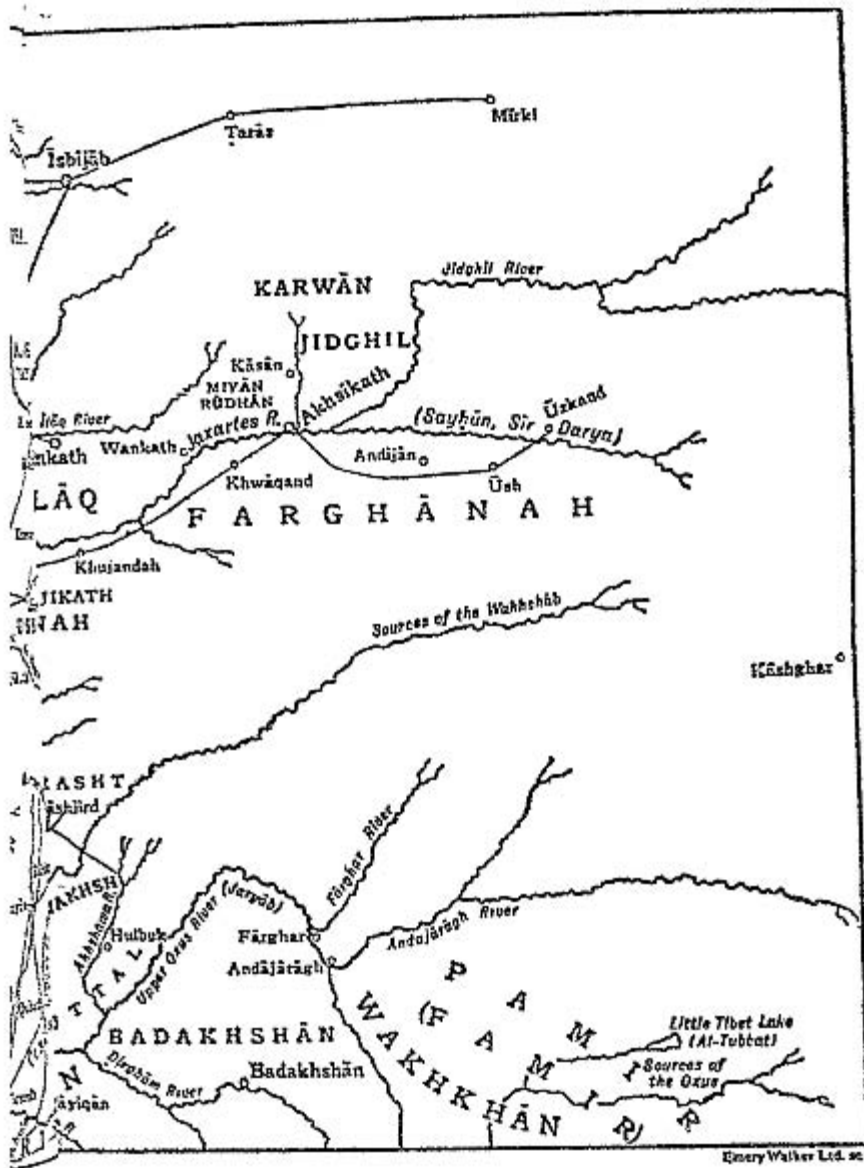
⁴ Yāqūt, vol. iv, pp. 881-2; cf. Ṭabari, vol. ii, pp. 1125-6. The town is but a mound of ruins.

⁵ Wellhausen, *Reich*, p. 144, n. 3. "Zunbil" was a title. These kings may have been Persian.

⁶ Almost all the subjects of this and other kings in Central Asia were Iranian; the dynasties and armies were mostly Turkish.



PROVINCES OF THE



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'Abd-al-Rahmān's campaign at the head of such a magnificently equipped army that it was styled "the army of peacocks"¹ was entirely successful, but his exploits paled before those of Qutaybah ibn-Muslim and Muḥammad ibn-al-Qāsim al-Thaqafī, a son-in-law of al-Ḥajjāj. On the recommendation of al-Ḥajjāj, Qutaybah was in 704 appointed governor over Khurāsān with his capital at Marw; according to al-Balādhuri² and al-Ṭabari³ he had under his command in Khurāsān, which he held as a subordinate of al-Ḥajjāj, 40,000 Arab troops from al-Baṣrah, 7000 from al-Kūfah and 7000 clients.

The Oxus,⁴ which until now had formed the traditional, though not historical, boundary-line between "Īrān and Tūrān", i.e. between the Persian-speaking and the Turkish-speaking peoples, was now under al-Walīd crossed and a permanent Moslem foothold established beyond it. In a series of brilliant campaigns Qutaybah recovered (705) lower Ṭukhāristān with its capital, Balkh (the Baktra of the Greeks), conquered (706-9) Bukhāra in al-Ṣughd (Sogdiana) and the territory around it and reduced (710-12) Samarqand (also in al-Ṣughd) and Khwārizm (modern Khīwa) to the west. In 713-15 he led an expedition into the Jaxartes provinces, particularly Farghānah, thus establishing nominal Moslem rule in what were until recent times known as the Central Asian khānates. The Jaxartes rather than the Oxus formed the natural political and racial frontier between Iranians and Turks, and its crossing constituted the first direct challenge by Islam to the Mongoloid peoples and the Buddhist religion. Bukhāra, Balkh and Samarqand had Buddhist monasteries. In Samarqand Qutaybah fell upon a number of idols whose devotees expected instant destruction to overtake him who dared outrage them. Undeterred, the Moslem general set fire to the images with his own hand, an act which resulted in a number of conversions to Islam.⁵ But no large numbers accepted the new faith until the pious caliphate of 'Umar II (717-20), when they were accorded the concession as Moslems of paying no tribute. Likewise the fire-temple of Bukhāra with its sanctuary was demolished. Thus Bukhāra with Samarqand and the province of Khwārizm were soon to become centres of Arabic

¹ *Mas'ūdi, Tanbih*, p. 314.

² P. 423.

³ Vol. ii, pp. 1290-91.

⁴ Modern *Āmu Darya*, *Ar.* and *Pers.* *Jayhūd*. *Jayhūn* for the Oxus and *Sayhūn* for its sister river, the Jaxartes (*Sir Darya*), are adaptations of *Gihon* and *Pison* of *Gen.* 2: 17, 11.

⁵ *Balādhuri*, p. 421.

culture, nurseries of Islam in Central Asia, corresponding to Marw and Naysābūr (Pers. Nīshāpūr) in Khurāsān. Qutaybah is said by al-Ṭabari¹ and others to have conquered (715) Kāshghar in Chinese Turkestan and even to have reached China proper, but this tradition is evidently an anticipation of the later conquest by Nasr ibn-Sayyār and his successors.² This Nasr was appointed by the Caliph Hishām (724-43) as the first governor of Transoxiana and had to reconquer, between 738 and 740, most of the territory overrun earlier by Qutaybah. The Arab agents established by Qutaybah were merely military overseers and tax-collectors functioning side by side with the native rulers, who retained the civil administration. An attempt in 737 on al-Khazar, Huns beyond the Caucasus who were later Judaized, failed. In 751 the Arabs occupied al-Shāsh (Tāshkand), thus definitely establishing the supremacy of Islam in Central Asia so firmly that it was not further disputed by Chinese.³

Thus was Transoxiana (*ma wa a' al-nahr*, what lies beyond the river) at last incorporated with the rising empire of the caliphs. The world of Islam was thereby brought into vital contact with a new racial element and a new culture in itself old—the Mongolian. We shall later deal at length with the significant part played by these fresh recruits to Islam.

The other column in the eastern theatre of war was in the meantime moving southward under Muhammad ibn-al-Qāsim. Advancing in 710 at the head of a considerable army, of which 6000 were Syrians, this son-in-law of al-Ḥajjāj subdued Mukrān, pushed on through what is now termed Baluchistan and in 711-12 reduced Sind, the lower valley and delta of the Indus (Sindhu). Among the cities captured here were the seaport al-Daybul, which had a statue of the Buddha (Ar. Budd) "rising to a height of forty cubits",⁴ and al-Nīrūn (modern Ḥaydarābād). The conquest was extended (713) as far north as Multān in

¹ Vol. ii, p. 1275.

² H. A. R. Gibb in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London Institution*, vol. II (1921), pp. 467-74.

³ The native rulers of Samarqand, Khwārizm and Shāsh were perhaps related by marriage to the khān, or khāqān, of the Western Turks, though they appear in Arab histories with such Persian titles as *khudāk*, *shāh* and *dīkqān*. The ruler of Sogdiana residing at Samarqand, also bore the Persian title *shāhshāh*, as did the king of Fārgānah. See ibn-Khurdādbeh, pp. 39-40; Ya'qūbi, vol. II, p. 479. The Arabs applied the term "Turk" to any non-Persian people north-east of the Oxus

⁴ Ya'qūbi, vol. II, p. 346.

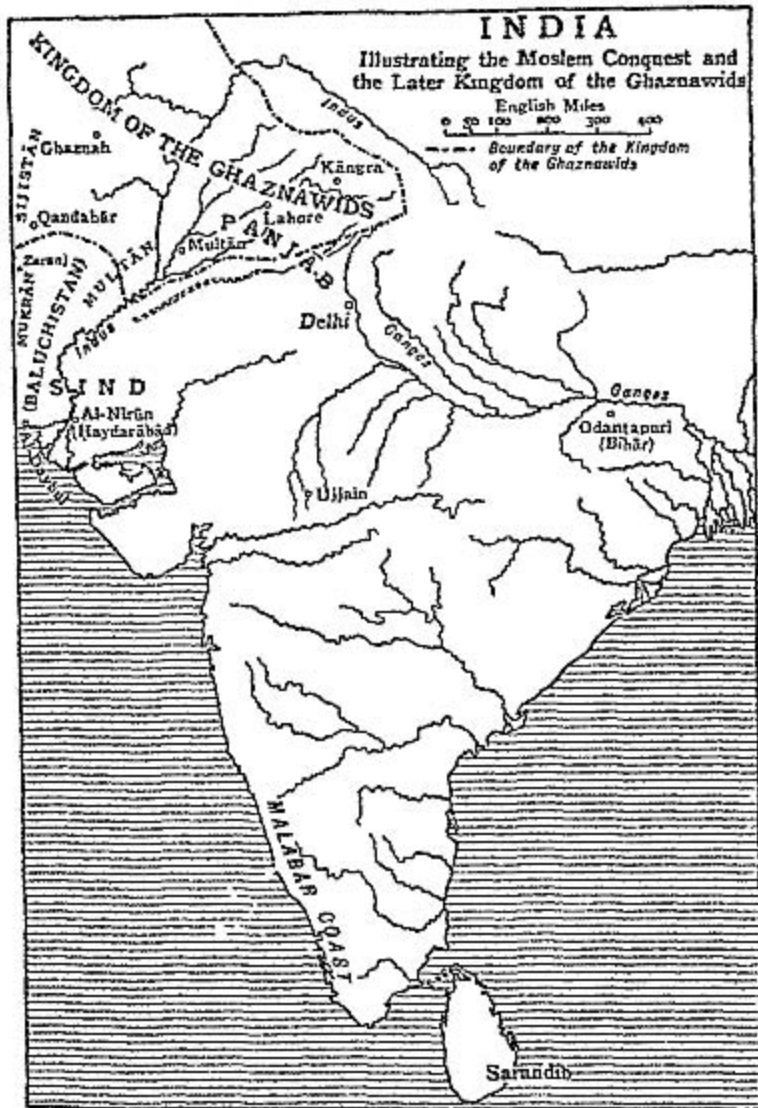
INDIA

Illustrating the Moslem Conquest and
the Later Kingdom of the Ghaznawids

English Miles

0 50 100 200 300 400

--- Boundary of the Kingdom
of the Ghaznawids



southern Panjāb, the seat of a renowned shrine of the Buddha where the invaders found a large crowd of pilgrims, whom they took captive. This led to a permanent occupation of Sind and southern Panjāb, but the rest of India was unaffected until the close of the tenth century, when a fresh invasion began under Maḥmūd of Ghaznah. Thus were the Indian border provinces for ever Islamized. As late as 1947 the new Moslem state of Pakistan was born. Contact between Semitic Islam and Indian Buddhism was permanently established, just as farther north contact was made with Turkish culture. Al-Ḥajjāj had promised the governorship of China to whichever of his two great generals, al-Thaqafi or Qutaybah, should first set foot on its soil. But neither of them ever crossed the frontier. China proper, exclusive of Turkestan, with its present-day fifteen or more million Moslems, was never brought within the orbit of Islam. Sind in the south, like Kāshghar and Tāshkand in the north, became and remained the easternmost limit of the caliphate.

While these major operations were going on in the east the Byzantine front was not entirely neglected. In the early part of his reign, and while ibn-al-Zubayr was contesting the caliphate, 'Abd-al-Malik followed "the precedent of Mu'āwiyah"¹ in paying tribute (A.H. 70/689-90) to the "tyrant of the Romans", whose agents, the Christian Jarājimah of al-Lukkām, had then penetrated the Lebanon. But when the internal political horizon cleared hostilities were resumed with the eternal enemy. In 692 Justinian II was defeated near the Cilician Sebastopolis, and about 707 Tyana (al-Ṭuwānah), the most important fortress of Cappadocia, was taken. After capturing Sardis and Pergamum, Maslamah, as we learned before, undertook his memorable siege of Constantinople (August 716-September 717). The Moslem army which crossed the Dardanelles at Abydos was equipped with siege artillery, but the armada had to anchor near the walls of the city in the Sea of Marmora and in the Bosphorus, as passage into the Golden Horn was barred by a chain. This was the second time the Byzantine capital had been besieged by an Arab army (above, p. 203). Scarcity of provisions and attacks by the Bulgars forced the Arabs to retire after a whole year of beleaguering.² Armenia, which had been conquered for Mu'āwi-

¹ See above, p. 203. Balādhuri, p. 160.

² Consult Theophanes, pp. 386-99; Tabari, vol. ii, pp. 1314-17; ibn-al-Athīr, vol. v, pp. 17-19.

yah by Ḥabīb ibn-Maslamah al-Fihri as early as 644-5, had later taken advantage of the ibn-al-Zubayr debacle to revolt, but was now again reduced.¹

The conquests on the western front under Mūsa ibn-Nuṣayr and his lieutenants were no less brilliant and spectacular than those on the east by al-Ḥajjāj and his generals. Soon after the subjugation of Egypt (640-43) raids were carried westward into Ifrīqiyah,² but a thorough conquest of that territory was not undertaken until the foundation of al-Qayrawān³ in 670 by 'Uqbah ibn-Nāfi', an agent of Mu'āwiyah, who used it as a base for operations against the Berber tribes. 'Uqbah, who is said by tradition to have advanced until the waves of the Atlantic stopped his horse, suffered a martyr's death (683) near Biskra in modern Algeria, where his tomb has become a national shrine. Even then the Arab hold on Ifrīqiyah was so precarious that soon after 'Uqbah's death his successor had to evacuate the territory. Not until the governorship of Ḥassān ibn-al-Nu'mān al-Ghassāni (ca. 693-700) was an end put to Byzantine authority and Berber resistance. With the co-operation of a Moslem fleet, Ḥassān drove the Byzantines from Carthage (698) and other coast towns. He was then free to take the field against the Berbers, now led by a prophetess (Ar. *kāhinah*)⁴ who exercised a mysterious influence over her followers. The heroine was at last defeated by treachery and killed near a well that still bears her name, Bīr al-Kāhinah.

Ḥassān, the reconqueror and pacifier of Ifrīqiyah, was followed by the famous Mūsa ibn-Nuṣayr, under whom the government of the region, administered from al-Qayrawān, was made independent of Egypt and held directly from the caliph in Damascus. Mūsa, whose father (together with the grandfather of ibn-Ishāq, the Prophet's biographer) was one of the Christian captives who fell into the hands of Khālid ibn-al-Walīd while they were studying the Gospels in the church at 'Ayn al-Tamr,⁵ extended

¹ Balādhuri, pp. 205 *seq.* = Hitti, pp. 372 *seq.*

² More exact than "Ifrīqiyah"; name borrowed by Arabs from Romans and given to the eastern part of Barbary, the word Maghrib being reserved for the western part. Today the term Ifrīqiyah includes the whole continent of Africa.

³ From *Pers. kārū ār*, whence Eng. caravan.

⁴ Balādhuri, p. 229; ibn-Khaldūn, vol. vii, pp. 8-9; ibn-'Idhāri, *al-Bayān al-Maghrib fī Akhbār al-Maghrib*, ed. R. Dozy (Leyden, 1848), vol. i, pp. 20-24. That she belonged to a Jewish tribe is doubtful.

⁵ Others claim he was a Lakhmid or Yamanite. Cf. Balādhuri, p. 230; ibn-'Idhāri, vol. i, p. 24.

the boundaries of his province as far as Tangier. This brought Islam definitely and permanently into contact with another racial group, the Berbers. The latter belonged to the Hamitic branch of the white family, and in prehistoric times probably formed one stock with the Semites.¹ At the time of the Moslem conquest most of the Berbers on the strip of fertile land bordering on the sea had become Christians. In this region Tertullian, St. Cyprian and above all St. Augustine became princes among early Christian fathers. Otherwise the population was not deeply touched by Roman civilization, for the Romans and Byzantines lived mainly in towns on the coast and represented a culture that was quite alien to the mentality of these nomadic and semi-nomadic North Africans. On the other hand Islam had a special attraction for people in such a cultural stage as that of the Berbers; moreover, the Semitic Arabs, akin to the early Phoenicians who had colonized parts of northern Africa and developed in Carthage a formidable rival to Rome, readily established intimate relations with their Hamitic cousins. Punic survived in country places until shortly before the Moslem conquest. This explains the seemingly inexplicable miracle of Islam in Arabicizing the language and Islamizing the religion of these semi-barbarous hordes and using them as fresh relays in the race toward further conquests. Thus did the blood of the conquerors find fresh ethnic strains for its enrichment, the Arabic tongue a vast field for conquest and rising Islam a new foothold in its climb toward world supremacy.

After the subjugation of the North African coast as far as the Atlantic by Mūsa,² the way was open for the conquest of the neighbouring south-western part of Europe. In 711 Ṭāriq, a Berber freedman and lieutenant of Mūsa, took the momentous step of crossing into Spain on a marauding expedition. The raid developed into a conquest of the Iberian Peninsula (al-Andalus) (below, pp. 493 *seq.*). This constituted the last and most sensational of the major campaigns of the Arabs and resulted in the addition to the Moslem world of the largest European territory ever held by them. After the capture of several towns in southern Gaul the advance of the Arab-Berber army was checked in 732 between

¹ Eng. "Berber", generally considered as coming ultimately from Av. *Barbar*, may have come, together with the Arabic form, from L. *barbari* (originally Gr.), barbarians, applied in current usage by the Latinized cities of Roman Africa to all natives who did not adopt the Latin tongue.

² Ibn-'Abd-al-Ḥakam, pp. 203-5

Tours and Poitiers by Charles Martel. This point marks the north-western limit of Arab penetration.

The year 732 marked the first centennial of the Prophet's death. From this vantage point in history and geography let us pause to view the general situation. One hundred years after the death of the founder of Islam his followers were the masters of an empire greater than that of Rome at its zenith, an empire extending from the Bay of Biscay to the Indus and the confines of China and from the Aral Sea to the lower cataracts of the Nile, and the name of the prophet-son of Arabia, joined with the name of almighty Allah, was being called five times a day from thousands of minarets scattered over south-western Europe, northern Africa and western and central Asia. Damascus, which young Muḥammad according to tradition hesitated to enter because he wished to enter paradise only once, had become the capital of this huge empire.¹ In the heart of the city, set like a pearl in the emerald girdle of its gardens, stood the glittering palace of the Umayyads, commanding a view of flourishing plain which extended south-westward to Mount Hermon² with its turban of perpetual snow. Al-Khaḍrā'³ (the green one) was its name. Its builder was none other than Mu'āwiyah, founder of the dynasty, and it stood beside the Umayyad Mosque which al-Walīd had newly adorned and made into that jewel of architecture which still attracts lovers of beauty. In the audience chamber a square seat covered with richly embroidered cushions formed the caliphal throne, on which during formal audiences the caliph, in gorgeous flowing robes, sat cross-legged. On the right stood his paternal relatives in a row according to seniority, on the left his maternal relatives.⁴ Courtiers, poets and petitioners stood behind. The more formal audiences were held in the glorious Umayyad Mosque, even today one of the most magnificent places of worship in the world. In some such setting must al-Walīd (others say Sulaymān, who had just ascended the throne) have received Mūsa ibn-Nuṣayr and Ṭāriq, the conquerors of Spain, with their vast train of prisoners⁵ including members of

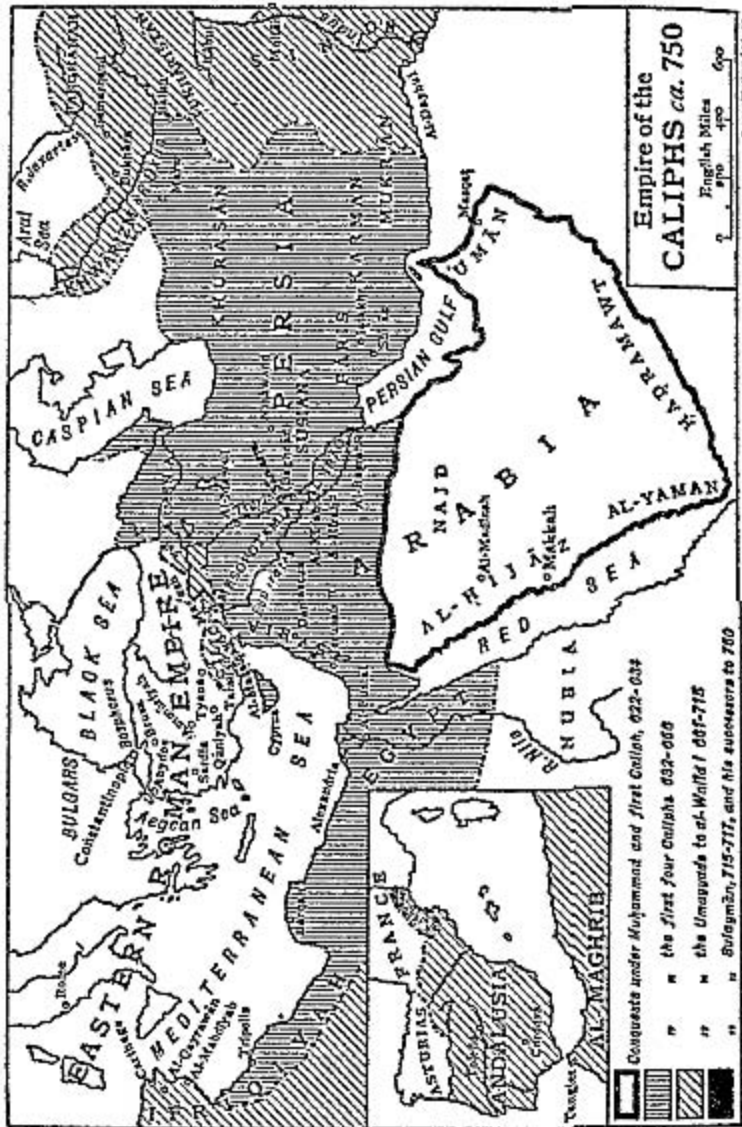
¹ For other traditions extolling Damascus see ibn-'Azākir, vol. i, pp. 46 seq.

² *Al-Jabal al-Shaykh*, the grey-headed mountain.

³ Ibn-Jubayr, p. 269, l. 3; "al-Qubbah al-Khaḍrā'", the green dome, in *Aghāni* vol. vi, p. 159.

⁴ *Aghāni*, vol. iv, p. 80.

⁵ 30,000 according to al-Maqqarī, *Nuṣṣ al-Ṭīb min Ghayb al-Andalus al-Rafīf*, ed. Dozy, Wright et al. (Leyden, 1855), vol. i, p. 144; cf. ibn-al-Athīr, vol. iv, p. 448.



the fair-haired Gothic royalty and undreamt-of treasures. If any single episode can exemplify the zenith of Umayyad glory it is this.

The Arabicization of the state under 'Abd-al-Malik and al-Walid consisted in changing the language of the public registers (*dīwān*) from Greek to Arabic in Damascus and from Pahlawi to Arabic in al-'Irāq and the eastern provinces and in the creation of an Arabic coinage. With the change of language a change in personnel naturally took place. The early conquerors, fresh from the desert and ignorant of book-keeping and finance, had to retain in the exchequer the Greek-writing officials in Syria and the Persian-writing officials in al-'Irāq and Persia who were familiar with the work. But now the situation had changed. Undoubtedly certain non-Arab officials who by this time had mastered the Arabic language were retained, as was the old system itself. The transition must have been slow, beginning under 'Abd-al-Malik and continuing during the reign of his successor. This is probably the reason why some authorities ascribe the change to the father and others to the son.¹ The step was part of a well-planned policy and not due to any such trivial cause as that put forth by al-Balādhuri—the urination of a Greek clerk in an inkwell.² In al-'Irāq and its eastern dependencies it was evidently the famous al-Ḥajjāj who initiated the change.

In pre-Islamic days Roman and Persian money was current in al-Ḥijāz, together with a few Ḥimyarite silver coins bearing the Attic owl. 'Umar, Mu'āwiyah and the other early caliphs contented themselves with this foreign coinage already in circulation³ and perhaps in some cases stamped on it certain koranic superscriptions. A number of gold and silver pieces were struck before the time of 'Abd-al-Malik, but those were imitations of Byzantine and Persian types. 'Abd-al-Malik struck at Damascus, in 695, the first gold dinars and silver dirhams which were purely Arabic.⁴ His viceroy in al-'Irāq, al-Ḥajjāj, minted silver in al-Kūfah in the following year.⁵

Besides instituting a purely Islamic coinage and Arabicizing the administration of the empire, 'Abd-al-Malik developed a

¹ Balādhuri, pp. 193, 300-301; Māwardi, pp. 349-50, *Iqd.*, vol. ii, p. 322.

² P. 193 = Hitti, p. 301.

³ Tabari, vol. ii, p. 939; Balādhuri, p. 240.

⁴ Cf. Yāqūt, *Buldān*, vol. iv, p. 886.

⁵ Balādhuri, pp. 465-6.

regular postal service,¹ using relays of horses for the conveyance of travellers and dispatches between Damascus and the provincial capitals. The service was designed primarily to meet the needs of government officials and their correspondence, and the postmasters were charged among other duties with the task of keeping the caliph posted on all important happenings in their respective territories.

Fiscal
and
other
reforms

In connection with the monetary changes it may be well to note the fiscal and administrative reforms that took place at this time. In principle no Moslem, whatever his nationality might be, was under obligation to pay any tax other than the zakāh or poor rate, though in practice the privilege was often limited to Arabian Moslems. Taking advantage of this theory many



From 'Katalog der orientalischen Münzen, Königliche Museen zu Berlin' (Waller de Gruyter & Co., Berlin)

AN IMITATION IN GOLD OF A
BYZANTINE COIN WITH ARABIC
INSCRIPTION

Retaining on the obverse the figures of Heraclius, Heraclius Constantine, and Heraclionas, and on the reverse a modified Byzantine cross. No mint name is given.



From 'Katalog der orientalischen Münzen in Berliner Museen' (Waller de Gruyter & Co., Berlin)

COPPER COIN OF 'ABD-AL-MALIK

Bearing on the obverse his image and his name and on the reverse a cross on four steps together with the *shahādah* and the mint name, Ba'labakk. An imitation of a Byzantine coin.

were entitled to a special subsidy. Al-Ḥajjāj took the necessary measures to restore such men to their farms² and reimposed on them the high tribute they had paid before conversion,

¹ Al 'Umarī, *al-Ta'rif bi al-Muṣṭafāh al-Sharīf* (Cairo, 1312), p. 185.

² This word, used later for freedmen, had at this time no connotation of inferiority.

³ Mubarrad, p. 286

which included the equivalent of *kharāj* (land tax) and *jizyah* (poll tax). He even made Arabs who acquired property in a *kharāj* territory pay the usual land tax.

The Caliph 'Umar II (717-20) tried to remedy the resultant dissatisfaction among the Neo-Moslems by re-establishing the old principle of his earlier namesake that a Moslem, whether Arab or *mawla*, need pay no tribute whatsoever, but he insisted that the *kharāj* land was the joint property of the Moslem community.¹ He thus prohibited after the year A.H. 100 (718-19) the sale of *kharāj* lands to Arabs and Moslems and declared that if the owner of such land be converted his property should revert to the village community and he might continue to use it as a leaseholder.

Though inspired by the best of intentions, 'Umar's policy was not successful. It diminished the revenues of the state and increased the number of clients in the cities.² Many Berbers and Persians embraced Islam to enjoy the pecuniary privileges thus accorded them. Later practice reverted to the system of al-Ḥajjāj, with minor modifications. It was not until then that the distinction was drawn between *jizyah*, a burden which "falls off with the acceptance of Islam", and *kharāj*, which does not. Since the *jizyah* was a comparatively small item, the treasury continued to receive its main income from the *kharāj* and did not in the long run appreciably suffer.

Other cultural and agricultural reforms are attributed to the versatility and energy of al-Ḥajjāj. He dug a number of new canals and restored the large one between the Tigris and the Euphrates. He drained and tilled submerged or uncultivated lands. He contributed to the development of diacritical marks in Arabic orthography to distinguish such similarly written letters as *bā'*, *tā'* and *thā'*, *dāl* and *dhāl*, and to the adaptation from Syriac of vowel signs, *ḍammaḥ* (u), *fathah* (a) and *kasrah* (i), inserted above and below the consonants.³ In this orthographic reform he was prompted by the desire to prevent errors in the

¹ Ibn-Sa'd, vol. v, pp. 262, 277; Ibn-'Asākir, vol. iv, p. 80; Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 362; Ibn-al-Jawzi, *Strat 'Umar ibn-'Abd-al-'Aziz* (Cairo, 1331), pp. 88-9.

² Ibn-al-Jawzi, pp. 99-100.

³ Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-'A'yān* (Cairo, 1299), vol. i, pp. 220-21 = de Siane, *Ibn Khallikān's Biographical Dictionary* (Paris, 1843), vol. i, pp. 359-60, cf. Suyūfi, *Iqān*, vol. ii, p. 171; Theodor Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qurān* (Göttingen, 1860), pp. 305-9; cf. G. C. Miles, *Journal, Near East Studies*, vol. viii (1948), pp. 236-42.

recitation of the sacred text, of which he evidently prepared a critical revision. He who started life as a schoolmaster never lost interest in literature and oratory. His patronage of poetry and science was notable. The Bedouin satirist Jarīr, who with his rivals al-Farazdaq and al-Akḥṭal formed the poetical triumvirate of the Umayyad period, was his panegyrist as well as poet laureate of the Caliph 'Umar. His physician was a Christian named Tayādhūq.¹ The "slave of Thaqīf", as he was dubbed by his 'Irāqī enemies, died in Wāsit, June 714, at the age of fifty-three, leaving a name that is undoubtedly one of the greatest in the annals of Islam.

Among the outstanding achievements of the period were the many architectural monuments, some of which have survived to the present day.

In Palestine the Caliph Sulaymān built on the ruins of a more ancient town the city of al-Ramlah,² which he made his residence. Traces of his palace could be seen there until the time of the first World War, and the minaret of his White Mosque (which after the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem became the third leading sanctuary of Syria) as rebuilt by the Mamlūks in the early part of the fourteenth century is still standing. With Sulaymān the imperial capital ceased to be the home of the caliphs. Hishām resided in al-Ruṣāfah, a Roman settlement near al-Raqqah.³ In 691 'Abd-al-Malik erected in Jerusalem the magnificent Dome of the Rock (Qubbat al-Sakhrah), wrongly styled by Europeans "the Mosque of 'Umar", in order to divert thither the pilgrimage from Makkah which was held by his rival ibn-al-Zubayr. That 'Abd-al-Malik was the builder is attested by the Kufic inscription still preserved round the dome. Over a century later the structure underwent restoration by the 'Abbāsīd Caliph al-Ma'mūn (813-33), who unscrupulously substituted his own name for that of 'Abd-al-Malik but inadvertently forgot to change the date.⁴ The 'Abbāsīd architect set close together the letters of the new name, crowding them into the narrow space originally occupied by the name of

¹ Or Tiyādhūq, Gr. Theodocus. Ibn al-'Ibrī, p. 194.

² Balādūm, p. 143 = Hitti, p. 220.

³ Identified by others with al-Hayr al-Sharqī, east of Palmyra.

⁴ The inscription in its present form runs as follows: HATH BUILT THIS DOME THE SERVANT OF GOD 'ABDULLAH AL-IMĀM AL-MA'MŪN COMMANDER OF THE BELIEVERS IN THE YEAR TWO AND SEVENTY.—MAY GOD ACCEPT OF HIM AND FAVOUR HIM! AMEN.

'Abd-al-Malik.¹ Close by the Dome and in the southern section of the sacred area 'Abd-al-Malik erected another mosque, possibly on the site of an earlier church. Local usage designates this mosque al-Masjid al-Aqsa (the farther mosque²), but the term is also used in a more general sense to include the whole collection of sacred buildings on that area. Al-Haram al-Sharif (the noble sanctuary) is another name for this group, only less sacred than the two Harams of Makkah and al-Madinah.

The greatest Umayyad builder, however, was al-Walid, son of 'Abd-al-Malik, whose rule was one of comparative peace and opulence. So great was this caliph's penchant for building that during his reign whenever people in Damascus met together fine buildings formed the chief topic of conversation, as cookery and the fair sex did under Sulayman, and religion and the Koran under 'Umar ibn-'Abd-al-'Aziz.³ This al-Walid, who lived only forty years, enlarged and beautified the great mosque of Makkah,⁴ rebuilt that of al-Madinah, erected in Syria a number of schools and places of worship and endowed institutions for the lepers, the lame and the blind.⁵ He was perhaps the first ruler in medieval times to build hospitals for persons with chronic diseases, and the many lazar houses which later grew up in the West followed the Moslem precedent.⁶ From a church in Ba'labakk al-Walid removed a dome of gilded brass which he set over the dome of his father's mosque in Jerusalem. But his greatest accomplishment was the conversion in Damascus of the site of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, which he seized from his Christian subjects, into one of the sublimest places of worship in the world. This Umayyad Mosque is still considered the fourth holiest sanctuary of Islam, after the three Harams of Makkah, al-Madinah and Jerusalem. Before al-Walid the Moslems shared a part of the sacred enclosure with its Christian owners. To justify the seizure later tradition claimed that the eastern half of the city was captured by force and the western by capitulation and that the two Moslem contingents, each

¹ De Vogüé, *Le temple de Jérusalem* (Paris, 1864), pp. 85-6, was the first to discover the falsification.

² From a reference to the site in Koran 17:1. Al-Bur'iq made a stop there. *Fak'ari*, p. 173; Tabari, vol. ii, pp. 1272-3.

³ *Fak'ari*, p. 173; Tabari, vol. ii, pp. 1272-3.

⁴ Baladhuri, p. 47 = Hitti, p. 76.

⁵ Tabari, vol. ii, p. 1271; ibn-al-Faqih, pp. 106-7.

⁶ Consult Hitti, art. "Chivalry: Arabic", *Encyclopædia of the Social Sciences*.

without knowing what the other had done, met in the metropolitan cathedral. The cathedral stood on the site of an earlier Roman temple almost in the centre of the town. Over the lintel of the southern portal of the enclosure, long since walled up, an ancient inscription in Greek can still be read: "Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations".¹

Of the remaining caliphs in this period of Umayyad glory there is little to be said save of 'Umar II (717-20) and Hishām. 'Umar was entirely under the influence of the theologians and has enjoyed through the ages a reputation for piety and asceticism that stands in glaring contrast with the alleged impiety of the Umayyad régime. He was, in fact, the Umayyad saint. To the later tradition, which expected a *mab'ūth* (one sent) to appear every hundred years to renovate Islam, he became the one sent "at the head" of the second century (A.H. 100), just as al-Shāfi'i stood "at the head" of the third. His biographer² tells us that 'Umar wore clothes with so many patches and mingled with his subjects on such free terms that when a stranger came to petition him he would find it difficult to recognize the caliph. When one of his agents wrote that his fiscal reforms in favour of new converts would deplete the treasury 'Umar replied, "Glad would I be, by Allah, to see everybody become Moslem, so that thou and I would have to till the soil with our own hands to earn a living."³ 'Umar discontinued the practice established in the time of Mu'āwiyah of cursing 'Ali from the pulpit at the Friday prayers.⁴ The piety of 'Umar, who died at the age of thirty-nine, saved his grave from the desecration which was visited by the 'Abbāsids upon the other tombs of the preceding dynasty.

With Hishām (724-43), the fourth son of 'Abd-al-Malik, the Umayyad golden age came to a close. After Mu'āwiyah and 'Abd-al-Malik, Hishām was rightly considered by Arab authorities the third and last statesman of the house of Umayyah.⁵ When his young son Mu'āwiyah, ancestor of the Spanish Umayyads, fell from his horse while hunting and was killed, the

¹ Cf. Ps. 145 : 13; Heb. 1 : 8.

² Ibn-al-Jawzi, pp. 173-4, 145 *seq.*

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100. *Kitāb al-'Uyūn w-al-Ḥadā'iq fī Akhḥār al-Ḥoḡā'iq*, ed. de Goije (Leyden, 1865), p. 4.

⁴ *Fakhri*, p. 176.

⁵ Mas'ūdi, vol. v, p. 479; cf. Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 393; Ibn-Qutaybah, *Ma'ārif*, p. 185; Abu-al-Fidā', vol. i, p. 216; *Kitāb al-'Uyūn*, p. 69.

father's comment was, "I brought him up for the caliphate and he pursues a fox!"¹ His governor of al-'Irāq, Khālid ibn-'Abdullāh al-Qasri, under whom the region prospered especially through the engineering and drainage works of Ḥassān al-Nabaṭi, appropriated for himself a surplus of 13,000,000 dirhams after squandering revenue to nearly three times that sum.² Subsequently Khālid met the same fate that befell others like him—he was apprehended in 738, jailed, tortured and required to give an account of the state moneys and make repayments. His case is only one illustration of that maladministration and corruption in the body politic which helped to undermine the Umayyad throne and render its occupants an easy prey for their 'Abbāsīd rivals.

¹ Tabari, vol. ii, pp. 1738-9.

² Tabari, vol. ii, p. 1642; Ya'qūbī, vol. ii, p. 387.



By courtesy of E. T. Newell

From 'Numismatic Notes and Monographs,' No. 87 (New York, 1929).

A BYZANTINE WEIGHT VALIDATED
BY AL-WALĪD (†715)

Bearing on the obverse a cross with the inscription ΓΒ, i.e. two ounces, and on the reverse a Kufic inscription stating that the caliph has recognized this as equivalent to two *wasqiyokt*. Probably the earliest inscribed Moslem weight thus far found.

CHAPTER XX

POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS UNDER THE UMAYYADS

THE administrative divisions of the empire in Umayyad and even 'Abbāsid times corresponded in general to the provinces of the preceding Byzantine and Persian empires. They comprised: (1) Syria-Palestine; (2) al-Kūfah, including al-'Irāq; (3) al-Baṣrah with Persia, Sijistān, Khurāsān, al-Baḥrayn, 'Umān and probably Najd and al-Yamāmah; (4) Armenia; (5) al-Ḥijāz; (6) Karmān and the frontier districts of India; (7) Egypt; (8) Ifrīqiyah; (9) al-Yaman and the rest of South Arabia.¹ Gradually combinations were made and five viceroyalties resulted. Mu'āwiyah combined al-Baṣrah and al-Kūfah into one viceroyalty,² that of al-'Irāq, which included most of Persia and eastern Arabia and had al-Kūfah for its capital. Later the viceroy of al-'Irāq was to have a deputy governor for Khurāsān and Transoxiana, usually residing at Marw, and another for Sind and Panjāb. Likewise al-Ḥijāz, al-Yaman and Central Arabia were combined into another viceroyalty. Al-Jazīrah (the northern part of the land between the Tigris and Euphrates) with Armenia, Ādharbayjān and parts of eastern Asia Minor formed the third. Lower and Upper Egypt constituted the fourth. Ifrīqiyah, which embraced northern Africa west of Egypt, Spain, Sicily and other adjacent islands formed the fifth viceroyalty with al-Qayrawān as its seat of government.

The threefold governmental function of political administration, tax collection and religious leadership was now directed as a rule by three different officials. The viceroy (*amīr*, *ṣāḥib*) would appoint his own *'āmil* (agent, prefect) over any particular district and simply forward the name to the caliph. Under Hishām (724-43) we find the newly appointed governor of Armenia and

¹ Cf. Ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iii, pp. 4, 10, 15, 17, 134-41; Alfred von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients unter den Chalifen*, vol. i (Vienna, 1875), pp. 162-3.

² Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 272.

Ādharbayjān remaining in Damascus and sending a *nā'ib* (accredited deputy) in his stead. The viceroy had full charge of political and military administration in his province, but quite often the revenues were under a special officer, *ṣāhib al-kharāj*, responsible directly to the caliph. Mu'āwiyah was apparently the first to appoint such an officer, whom he sent to al-Kūfah.¹ Previously the government of a province in the Moslem empire had meant chiefly its financial administration.

The revenue of the state was derived from the same sources as under the orthodox caliphate, chief among which was tribute from subject peoples. In the provinces all expenses of local administration, state annuities, soldiers' stipends and miscellaneous services were met from the local income, and only the balance went to the caliphal treasury. Mu'āwiyah's measure of deducting the *zakāh*, about 2½ per cent., from the fixed annuities of the Moslems,² bears a close resemblance to the income tax of a modern state.

The judiciary had to do with Moslems only, all non-Moslems being allowed autonomy under their own religious heads. This explains why there were judges only in large cities. The Prophet and the early caliphs administered justice in person, as did their generals and prefects in the provinces, for the various functions of government were as yet undifferentiated. The first purely judicial officials in the provinces received their appointment from the governors. Under the 'Abbāsids appointment by the caliphs became more common. Tradition, however, credits 'Umar with having appointed a judge (*qāḍī*) over Egypt as early as A.H. 23 (643).³ After 661 we find in that country a regular series of judges succeeding one another. They were always recruited from the *faqīh* class, whose members were scholars learned in the Koran and Moslem tradition. Besides deciding cases they administered pious foundations (*waqf*) and the estates of orphans and imbeciles.

Discovering that some of his signed correspondence was being forged, Mu'āwiyah created a bureau of registry,⁴ a kind of state chancery, whose duty it was to make and preserve one copy of

¹ Ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iii, p. 4, l. 24.

² Ya'qūbī, vol. ii, p. 276, l. 10.

³ Al-Kindī, *Kitāb al-Wulāḥ*, ed. R. Guest (Beirut, 1905), pp. 300-301. See also Ibn-Qutaybah, *Uyūn al-Akhbār*, vol. i, p. 61.

⁴ *Dīwān al-khātīm*, "bureau of the signet". Tabarī, vol. ii, pp. 205-6; *Fakhrī*, p. 149.

each official document before sealing and dispatching the original. By the time of 'Abd-al-Malik the Umayyads had developed a state archive in Damascus.¹

Military
organiza-
tion

The Umayyad army was modelled in its general organization after that of the Byzantines. The division was into five corps: centre, two wings, vanguard and rearguard. The formation as of old was in lines. This general plan continued until the time of the last caliph, Marwān II (744-50), who abandoned the old division and introduced the small compact body of troops called *kurḍūs* (cohort).² In outfit and armour the Arab warrior was hard to distinguish from the Greek. The weapons were essentially the same. The cavalry used plain and rounded saddles not unlike those of the Byzantines and precisely like the ones still in fashion in the Near East. The heavy artillery was represented by the ballista (*'arrādah*), the mangonel (*manjanīq*) and the battering-ram (*dabbābah*, *kabsh*). Such heavy engines and siege machines together with the baggage were carried on camels behind the army.

The forces kept at Damascus were chiefly Syrians and Syrianized Arabians. Al-Baṣrah and al-Kūfah were the main recruiting grounds for the army of all the eastern provinces. Under the Sufyānids the standing army numbered 60,000, entailing a yearly expenditure of 60,000,000 dirhams, including family stipends.³ Yazīd III (744) reduced all annuities by 10 per cent. and thereby won the sobriquet *naḍiqīṣ* (diminisher, also deficient).⁴ Under the last Umayyad the army is said to have reached 120,000,⁵ a figure which is probably a mistake for 12,000.

The arab navy was likewise an imitation of the Byzantine model. The fighting unit was a galley with a minimum of twenty-five seats on each of the two lower decks. Each seat held two men, and the hundred or more rowers in each ship were armed. But those who specialized in fighting took up their positions on the upper deck.

The evenings of the caliphs were set apart for entertainment and social intercourse. Mu'āwiyah was particularly fond of

¹ Mas'ūdi, vol. v, p. 239.

² Tabari, vol. ii, p. 1944, Ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iii, p. 165, l. 16 (cf. p. 195, ll. 25-7); Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. v, p. 267, ll. 7-8.

³ Mas'ūdi, vol. v, p. 195.

⁴ Ibn al-Athīr, vol. v, p. 220; Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 401.

⁵ *Fakhrī*, p. 197; *abu-al-Fidā'*, vol. 1, p. 222. See below, p. 285.

Royal
life

listening to historical narratives and anecdotes, preferably South Arabian, and poetical recitations. To satisfy this desire he imported from al-Yaman a story-teller, 'Abd ibn-Sharyah, who entertained the caliph through many long nights with tales of the heroes of the past. The favourite drink was rose sherbet, celebrated in Arabic song¹ and still enjoyed in Damascus and other Eastern towns. It was relished particularly by the women.

Mu'āwiyah's son Yazīd was the first confirmed drunkard among the caliphs and won the title *Yazīd al-khumūr*, the Yazīd of wines.² One of his pranks was the training of a pet monkey, abu-Qays, to participate in his drinking bouts.³ Yazīd, we are told, drank daily, whereas al-Walīd I contented himself with drinking every other day; Hishām, once every Friday after the divine service, and 'Abd-al-Malik only once a month, but then so heavily that he perforce disburdened himself by the use of emetics.⁴ Yazīd II felt such attachment to two of his singing girls, Sallāmah and Ḥabābah, that when the latter was choked on a grape which he playfully threw into her mouth the passionate young caliph fretted himself to death.⁵ But the palm for drinking should be handed to his son al-Walīd II (743-4), an incorrigible libertine, who is said to have gone swimming habitually in a pool of wine of which he would gulp enough to lower the surface appreciably.⁶ Al-Walīd is reported to have opened the Koran one day, and as his eye fell upon the verse "And every froward potentate was brought to naught",⁷ he shot the sacred book to pieces with his bow and arrow, meanwhile repeating in defiance two verses of his own composition.⁸

This caliph spent his time in his desert castles, one of which stood by al-Qaryatayn, midway between Damascus and Palmyra. The *Aghāni*⁹ has preserved for us an eye-witness's report of one of his debauched drinking parties. As always, dancing, singing and music served as the handmaids of drinking. When the caliph

¹ *Aghāni*, vol. xv, p. 48, l. 12.

² *Iqd*, vol. iii, p. 403; Nuwayri, *Nisāy al*, vol. iv, p. 91.

³ Mas'ūdi, vol. v, p. 157.

⁴ Most of our information about the lighter side of the caliphs' lives comes from *Aghāni*, primarily a literary work, and similar books, which should not be taken too literally. *Aghāni*, vol. i, p. 3, gives this criterion for the choice of data "elegance that pleases the onlooker and entertains the hearer".

⁵ *Kitāb al-Uyūn* (1865), pp. 40-41, cf. *Aghāni*, vol. xiii, p. 165.

⁶ Al-Nawā'ji, *Ḥalbat al-Kumayt* (Cairo, 1290), p. 98.

⁷ Sūr. 14: 18.

⁸ *Aghāni*, vol. vi, p. 125.

⁹ Vol. ii, p. 72.

was one of those who maintained reasonable self-respect he screened himself behind curtains which separated him from the entertainers. Otherwise, as in the case of al-Walīd, he joined the party on a footing of equality.¹

Such festivities as these were nevertheless not entirely lacking in cultural value. They undoubtedly encouraged the development of poetry, music and the esthetic side of life in general and were not always mere orgies.

Among the more innocent and fashionable pastimes which engaged the interest of the caliphs and their courtiers were hunting, horse-racing and dicing. Polo, which became a favourite sport under the 'Abbāsīds, was probably introduced from Persia towards the end of the Umayyad period, and cock-fights at the time were not infrequent. The chase was a sport early developed in Arabia, where the saluki (*salūqī*, from *Salūq* in al-Yaman) dog was at first exclusively used. The cheetah (*fahd*) came on the scene later. Legend makes Kulayb ibn-Rabī'ah, hero of the War of Basūs, the first Arabian to use it in hunting. The Persians and Indians had trained this animal long before the Arabians. Yazīd I, son of Mu'āwīyah, was the first great hunter in Islam and the first who trained the cheetah to ride on the croup of a horse. He adorned his hunting dogs with gold anklets and assigned to each a special slave.² Horse-racing was extremely popular among the Umayyads. Al-Walīd, son of 'Abd-al-Malik, was one of the first caliphs to institute and patronize public races.³ His brother and successor, Sulaymān, had just completed arrangements for a national competition in horse-racing when death overtook him.⁴ In one of the courses organized by their brother Hishām the number of racers from the royal and other stables reached 4000, "which finds no parallel in pre-Islamic or Islamic annals".⁵ A favourite daughter of this caliph kept horses for racing.⁶

The ladies of the royal household seem to have enjoyed a relatively high degree of freedom. A Makkan poet, abu-Dahbal al-Jumahi, did not hesitate to address love poems to 'Ātikah, the beautiful daughter of Mu'āwīyah, of whom he had caught a glimpse through the lifted veils and curtains as she was on a pil-

¹ Al-Jāhiz, *al Tayyīf al-Ahhlāq al-Mulūk*, ed. Ahmad Zaki (Cairo, 1914), p. 32.

² *Fakhrī*, p. 76

³ Ibn-al-Jawzi, *Sirat 'Umar*, p. 56.

⁴ *Kitāb al-'Uyūn* (1865), r. 69, l. 12.

⁵ Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, pp. 13-17.

⁶ Mas'ūdi, vol. v, p. 466.

grimage and whom he later followed to her father's capital. The caliph had at last to "cut off the tongue of the poet" by offering him a subsidy and finding him a suitable wife.¹ Another poet, the handsome Waddāh al-Yaman, ventured to make love to one of the wives of al-Walid I in Damascus in spite of the threats of the caliph, and finally paid for his audacity with his life.² The influence exercised by the shrewd and pretty 'Ātikah, granddaughter of Mu'āwiyah, over her husband-caliph, 'Abd-al-Malik, may be illustrated by the story which tells how she locked her door when angry with the caliph and refused to open it until a favourite courtier came weeping and falsely said that one of his two sons had killed the other and that the caliph was intent on executing the fratricide.³ The harem system, with its concomitant auxiliary of eunuchs, was not, it seems, fully instituted until the time of al-Walid II.⁴ The first eunuchs were mostly Greeks and were evidently introduced into the Arab world following the Byzantine precedent.⁵

It is safe to assume that Damascus has not much changed its general tone of life and character since its days as the Umayyad capital. Then, as now, in the narrow, covered streets the Damascene with his wide trousers, red pointed shoes and huge turban could be seen rubbing shoulders with the sun-tanned Bedouin in his loose gown surmounted by *kūfiyah* (head shawl) and *'iqāl* (head band) and occasionally meeting a European-dressed *Ifranji*.⁶ Here and there the aristocrat, the well-to-do Damascene, might be seen on horseback cloaked in a white silk *'abā'* and armed with a sword or lance. A few women, and those all veiled, cross the streets; others stealthily peep through the latticed windows of their homes overlooking the bazaars and public squares. Sherbet sellers and sweetmeat vendors raise their voices to the highest pitch in competition with the incessant tramp of the passers-by and the multitude of donkeys and camels laden with the varied products of the desert and the sown. The city atmosphere is charged with every kind of smell which the olfactory sense is capable of perceiving.

¹ *Aghāni*, vol. vi, pp. 158-61.

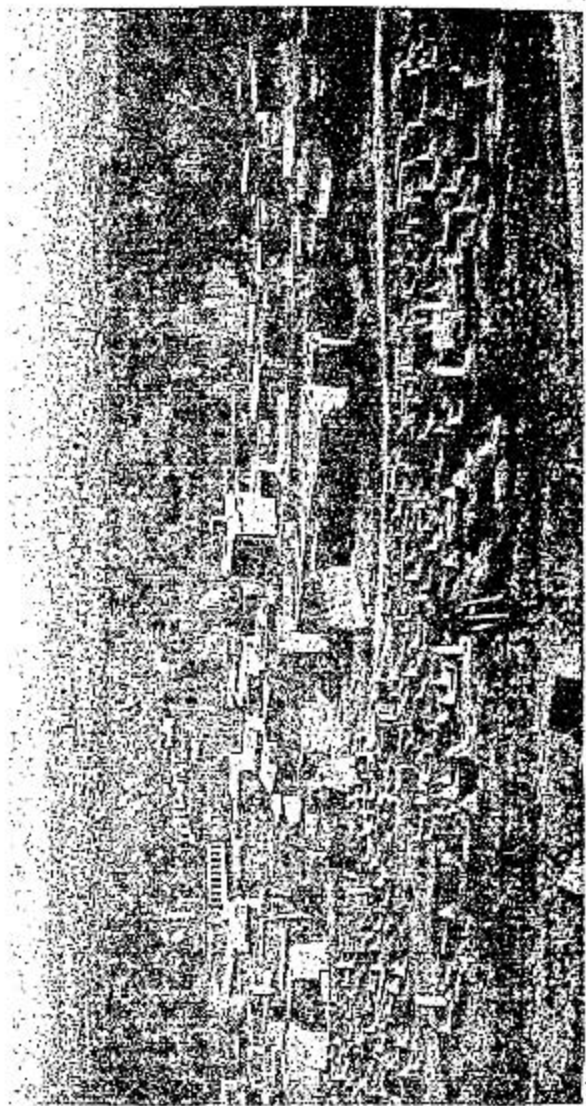
² *Mas'ūdi*, vol. v, pp. 273-5.

³ J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (London, 1911), pp. 120 seq.; Charles Diehl, *Byzance: grandeur et décadence* (Paris, 1919), p. 154.

⁴ A Frank, a word used for all Europeans; especially common during the Crusades

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 36 seq., vol. xi, p. 49.

⁶ *Aghāni*, vol. iv, pp. 78-9.



DAMASCUS TODAY, AS SEEN FROM AL-SALIHIYAH

As in other cities the Arabians lived in separate quarters of their own according to their tribal affiliation. In Damascus, Ḥimṣ, Aleppo (Ḥalab) and other towns these *ḥārāhs* (quarters) are still well marked. The doorway of each house opened from the street into a courtyard in the centre of which usually stood a large water-basin with a flowing jet emitting from time to time a veil-like spray. An orange or citron tree grew by the basin. The rooms surrounded the courtyard, which in larger houses was provided with a cloister. It is to the eternal glory of the banu-Umāyyah that they supplied Damascus with a water system which was unexcelled in the contemporary Orient and still continues to function. Yazīd's name is borne today by a canal, Nahr Yazīd, which this son of Mu'āwiyah dug from the Barada, or more probably widened,¹ in order to perfect the irrigation of the Ghūṭah. This rich oasis outside Damascus with its luxurious gardens owes its very existence to the Barada. Besides the Nahr Yazīd, the Barada sends off four other arms or channels which spread fertility and freshness throughout the town.

The population throughout the empire was divided into four social classes. The highest consisted naturally of the ruling Moslems headed by the caliphal household and the aristocracy of Arabian conquerors. Exactly how numerous was this class cannot be ascertained. Under al-Walīd I the number of annuities apportioned to Arabian Moslems in Damascus and its district (*jund*) reached 45,000.² Under Marwān I, Ḥimṣ and its district registered 20,000 pensions. The number of converted Moslems could not have been great before the restrictions imposed by 'Umar II. Although the capital of the caliphate may have presented by the end of the Umayyad period the aspect of a Moslem town, Syria as a whole remained largely Christian until the third Moslem century. The small towns and villages and especially the mountainous regions—always the home of the lost cause—preserved their native features and ancient cultural patterns. In fact the Lebanon remained Christian in faith and Syriac in speech for centuries after the conquest. Only the physical conflict had ended with the conquest; the religious, the racial,

¹ Consult Iṣṭakhri, p. 59; cf. H. Sauvaire, "Description de Damas: 'Oyoûn et-Tawārikh, par Mohammed ebn Châker", *Journal asiatique*, ser. 9, vol. vii (1896), p. 400.

² Consult H. Lammeis, *La Syrie: précis historique* (Beirut, 1921), vol. i, pp. 119-20.

the social and above all the linguistic conflicts were just beginning.

Clients

Next below the Arabian Moslems came the Neo-Moslems, who by force or persuasion had professed Islam and were thereby admitted in theory, though not in practice, to the full rights of Islamic citizenship. Here Arabian chauvinism, pitted against theoretical claims, proved too strong for those claims to be realized. There is no doubt that throughout practically all the period of the Umayyads, holders of land, whether believers or unbelievers, were made to pay *kharāj* (land tax). There is no evidence of mass conversion to Islam in the provinces until after such stringent regulations as those of 'Umar II and the 'Abbāsīd al-Mutawakkil (847-61). In Egypt resistance to the new religion was always least obstinate. The revenue of that country was reduced from fourteen million dinars in the time of 'Amr ibn-al-'Ās to five in the time of Mu'āwiyah and later to four under the 'Abbāsīd Hārūn al-Rashīd (786-809).¹ In al-'Irāq it fell from a hundred million under 'Umar ibn-al-Khaṭṭāb to forty million in the days of 'Abd-al-Malik.² One of the causes for the decline of state revenue was undoubtedly conversion to Islam. Under the early 'Abbāsīds, the Egyptians, Persians and Aramaeans who had accepted Islam began to outnumber the Moslems of Arabian origin.

Reduced to the position of clients (*mawālī*), these neophyte Moslems formed the lowest stratum of Moslem society, a status which they bitterly resented. This explains our finding them in many cases espousing such causes as the Shī'ite in al-'Irāq or the Khārijite in Persia. Some of them, however, as often happens, proved religiously "more royal than the king", and their zeal for the new faith, bordering on fanaticism, made them persecute non-Moslems. Among the most intolerant early Moslems were some of these converts from Christianity and Judaism.

Within the Moslem society these clients were naturally the first to devote themselves to learned studies and fine arts, for they represented the longer tradition of culture. As they outshone the Moslem Arabians in the intellectual field they began to contest with them the political leadership. Through their intermarriages

¹ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Bulḍān*, ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1892), p. 339.

² Cf. Ya'qūbī, vol. ii, p. 277, T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, 2nd ed. (London, 1913), p. 81.

with the conquering stock they served to dilute the Arabian blood and ultimately make that element inconspicuous amidst the mixture of varied racial strains.

The third class was made up of members of tolerated sects, professors of revealed religions, the so-called *ahl al-dhimmah*, i.e. the Christians, Jews and Sābians with whom the Moslems had made covenant. The Šābians, who were identical with the Mandeans, the so-called Christians of St. John who still survive in the marshy district at the mouth of the Euphrates, are mentioned thrice in the Koran (2 : 59, 5 : 73, 22 : 17). From this it would appear that Muhammad regarded them as believers in the true God. This recognition of tolerated religions, whose devotees were to be disarmed and compelled to pay tribute in return for Moslem protection, was the chief political innovation of Muhammad and was largely due to the esteem in which the Prophet held the Bible and partly to the aristocratic connections of the banu-Ghassān, Bakr, Taghlib and other Christian tribes.

In this status the dhimmis enjoyed, against the payment of land and capitation taxes, a wide measure of toleration. Even in matters of civil and criminal judicial procedure, except where a Moslem was involved, these people were practically under their own spiritual heads. Moslem law was too sacred to be applicable to them. Essential parts of this system were still in force as late as the Ottoman period and the mandatory regimes of 'Irāq, Syria and Palestine.

Originally confined to the *ahl al-kitāb* (Scripturaries) of the Koran¹ who came under the rule of Islam, the tolerated status was later extended by the Moslems to include the fire-worshipping Zoroastrians (*Majūs*), the heathen of Ḥarrān and the pagan Berbers. Though not devotees of a revealed religion and thus technically outside the pale of protection, the Persian Zoroastrians and the North African Berbers were offered by the Moslem invaders the three choices: Islam, the sword or tribute, rather than the first two only. Here, where the sword of Islam was not long enough to reach all the necks involved, technicality gave way to expediency. In such inaccessible regions as the Lebanon the Christians remained always in the ascendant and defied even 'Abd-al-Malik at the height of the Umayyad caliphate.² Throughout all Syria the Christians were well treated under the

¹ Sūras, 9 : 29, 2 : 99, 103, 3 : 62 65, etc.

² See above, p. 205.

banu-Umayyah until the reign of the pious 'Umar II. As we have already learned, Mu'āwiyah's wife was a Christian, as were his poet, physician and secretary of finance. We read of only one conspicuous exception, that of al-Walīd I, who put to death the chief of the Christian Arab tribe of the banu-Taghlib for refusing to profess Islam.¹ Even in Egypt Copts rose several times against their Moslem overlords before they finally succumbed in the days of the 'Abbāsid al-Ma'mūn (813-33).²

*The
Covenant
of 'Umar'

The fame of 'Umar II does not rest solely on his piety or on his remission of taxes imposed on neophyte Moslems. 'Umar was the first caliph and the only Umayyad to impose humiliating restrictions on Christian subjects—measures wrongly ascribed to his earlier namesake and maternal great-grandfather, 'Umar I. This so-called "covenant of 'Umar", implying 'Umar I, is recorded in several forms,³ mostly in later sources; and the provisions presuppose closer intercourse between Moslems and Christians than was possible in the early days of the conquest. The most striking regulations issued by this Umayyad caliph were the excluding of Christians from public offices, prohibiting their wearing turbans, requiring them to cut their forelocks, to don distinctive clothes with girdles of leather, to ride without saddles or only on pack saddles, to erect no places of worship and not to lift their voices in time of prayer. According to his decree if a Moslem killed a Christian his penalty was only a fine and no Christian's testimony against a Moslem in courts could be accepted. The Jews were evidently also included under some of these restrictions and excluded from governmental positions.⁴ That many of these enactments were not long in force is indicated by the fact that Khālid ibn-'Abdullāh al-Qasri, governor of al-'Irāq under Hishām, built a church in al-Kūfah to please his Christian mother,⁵ granted Christians and Jews the privilege of building places of worship and even appointed Zoroastrians to posts in the government.

¹ *Aghant*, vol. x, p. 99. H. Lammens in *Journal asiatique*, ser. 9, vol. iv (1894), pp. 438-9.

² Kindi, pp. 73, 81, 96, 116, 117; Maqrīzī, *Khatīr* (Būlāq, 1270), vol. ii, p. 497.

³ Ibn 'Abd-al-Hakām, pp. 151-2, Ibn 'Asākir, vol. 1, pp. 178-80; al-Tabarī, *al-Mustatraf* (Cairo, 1314), vol. 1, pp. 100-101.

⁴ Abu-Yūsuf, *Kharāy*, pp. 152-3; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Sirat 'Umar*, p. 100; 'Iqd, vol. II, pp. 339-40, Ibn al-Athīr, vol. v, p. 49. A. S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and their non-Muslim Subjects* (Oxford, 1930), pp. 5-35.

Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 302 = de Slane, vol. i, p. 485.

At the bottom of society stood the slaves.¹ Islam preserved the ancient Semitic institution of slavery, the legality of which the Old Testament admitted, but it appreciably ameliorated the condition of the slave. Canon law forbade the Moslem to enslave his co-religionist, but promised no liberty to an alien slave who adopted Islam. Slaves in early Islam were recruited from prisoners of war, including women and children, unless ransomed, and by purchase or raiding. Soon the slave trade became very brisk and lucrative in all Moslem lands. Some slaves from East or Central Africa were black; others from Farghānah or Chinese Turkestan were yellow; still others from the Near East or from eastern and southern Europe were white. The Spanish slaves, called *Ṣaḡālibah*,² from Spanish *esclavo*, fetched about a thousand dinars each, while Turkish slaves fetched only six hundred apiece. According to Islamic law the offspring of a female slave by another slave, by any man other than her master, or by her master in case he does not acknowledge the fatherhood of the child, is likewise a slave; but the offspring of a male slave by a freewoman is free.

An idea of the number of slaves flooding the Moslem empire as a result of conquest may be gained from such exaggerated figures, as the following: Mūsa ibn-Nuṣayr took 300,000 captives from Ifrīqiyah, one-fifth of whom he forwarded to al-Walīd,³ and from the Gothic nobility in Spain he captured 30,000 virgins;⁴ Qutaybah's captives from Sogdiana alone numbered 100,000;⁵ al-Zubayr ibn-al-'Awwām bequeathed among other chattels one thousand male and female slaves.⁶ The famous Makkan poet of love, 'Umar ibn-abi-Rabī'ah († ca. 719), had many more than seventy slaves.⁷ For an Umayyad prince to maintain a retinue of about a thousand slaves was nothing extraordinary. Even the private in the Syrian army at the battle of Ṣiffīn had from one to ten servants waiting on him.⁸

Between the master and the female slave concubinage, but not legal marriage, was permissible. The children of such a union

¹ Ar. 'abd (pl. 'abid), especially if black; otherwise *mamlūk* (pl. *mamlūk*), possessed.

² Same term used by the Arabs for the Slavs. See below, p. 525.

³ Maqqarī, vol. i, p. 145.

⁴ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. iv, p. 448.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. iv, p. 454.

⁶ Mes'ūdi, vol. iv, p. 254.

⁷ *Aghāni*, vol. i, p. 37.

⁸ Mes'ūdi, vol. iv, p. 367. Consult Jurjī Zaydān, *Ta'rikh al-Tamaddun al-Islāmī*, 3rd ed. (Cairo, 1922), vol. v, pp. 22 seq.

belonged to the master and were therefore free; but the status of the concubine was thereby raised only to that of *umm-walad* (mother of children), who could neither be sold by her husband-master nor given away and who at his death was declared free. In the melting-pot process which resulted in the amalgamation of Arabians and foreigners, the slave trade undoubtedly played an extremely important rôle.

The liberation of slaves was always looked upon as a good work (*ḡuḡah*) entitling the master to a special reward in the next world. When liberated the slave enjoyed the status of a client to his former master, now his patron. In case the patron died without heirs the client inherited his estate.

Al-Madīnah
and
Makkah

The quiet life of al-Madīnah, rendered venerable by its early Moslem association, attracted thither would-be scholars devoted to the study of the mementos of its sacred past and to the collecting of legal and ritual enactments. The city containing the burial-place of the Prophet thus became the first centre of Islamic tradition, which under such men as Anas ibn-Mālik († between 709 and 711) and 'Abdullāh ibn-'Umar ibn-al-Khaṭṭāb¹ († 693) developed into a science of the first order.

The school of Makkah owes its reputation to 'Abdullāh ibn-al-'Abbās, surnamed abu-al-'Abbās († ca. 688), a cousin of the Prophet and ancestor of the 'Abbāsīd caliphs, a man who was so universally admired for his knowledge of profane and sacred tradition and jurisprudence and for his skill in commenting on the Koran that he won the enviable title of *ḡibr al-ummah* (the sage of the community). Modern criticism, however, has exposed him as a fabricator of several ḡadīths.

Under the Umayyads the two cities of al-Ḥijāz entirely changed their aspect. To al-Madīnah, the forsaken capital of Arabia, now retired many of those anxious to keep aloof from the turmoil of political activity or desirous of enjoying undisturbed the great fortunes which the wars of conquest had gained for them. Following al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, a large number of *nouveaux riches* flocked there. Inside the city arose palaces and outside it villas, all swarming with servants and slaves and providing their occupants with every variety of luxury.² Makkah shared with its

¹ Eldest son of the second caliph. As a traditionalist he is considered more reliable than ibn-Mālik, whose collection has been preserved in the *Musnad* of Aḡmad ibn-Ḥanbal

² Mas'ūdi, vol. iv, pp. 254-5.

sister city this attractiveness for lovers of pleasure. As life in the two cities became more luxurious its excesses became more notorious.¹ Pilgrims from all over the Moslem world brought every year vast fresh supplies of money. What a contrast to the primitive times when the Caliph 'Umar's agent arrived from al-Baḥrayn claiming to be the bearer of tribute amounting to 500,000 dirhams! The caliph questioned the possibility of such a figure, and when doubly assured that it was "a hundred thousand five times", he summoned the people and proclaimed, "O ye men, we have just received an enormous sum. If ye wish we shall give each his share by measure, otherwise by count."²

With this increased flow of wealth the two Holy Cities became less holy. They developed into a centre of worldly pleasure and gaiety and a home of secular Arab music and song. In Makkah was established a kind of clubhouse patronized by guests who, we are told, had facilities for hanging their outer garments on pegs—apparently an innovation for al-Ḥijāz—before indulging in chess, backgammon, dice or reading.³ To al-Madīnah Persian and Byzantine slave songstresses (*qiyān*) flocked in increasing numbers. Amorous poetry kept pace with other new developments. Houses of ill repute (*buyūt al-qiyān*) flourished in al-Madīnah and were patronized by no less a poet than al-Farazdaq of national fame.⁴ As these female slaves sang and played soft melodies for the entertainment of their wealthy masters and guests, the latter, attired in colourful robes, reclined on square mattresses or cushions while they inhaled the perfume of burning spices and sipped from silver goblets the ruddy wines of Syria.

Al-Madīnah boasted under the early Marwānids the proud and beautiful Sayyidah⁵ Sukaynah († 735), daughter of the martyred al-Ḥusayn and granddaughter of 'Ali, one of the most remarkable women of the age.

Sukaynah's rank and learning combined with her fondness for song and poetry and her charm, good taste and quick-wittedness to make her the arbiter of fashion, beauty and literature in the region of the sacred cities. Sukaynah was noted for her jests and hoaxes.⁶ The crude humour appreciated even in the high society of the time is illustrated by the occasion when she

¹ *Aghāni*, vol. xxi, p. 197.

² Ibn-Sa'd, vol. iii, pt. 1, p. 216.

³ *Aghāni*, vol. iv, p. 52; cf. below, p. 339.

⁴ *Ibid.* vol. xxi, p. 197.

⁵ "Lady", a title originally reserved for the descendants of 'Ali and Fāṭimah.

⁶ *Aghāni*, vol. xiv, pp. 164-5; vol. xvii, pp. 97, 101-2.

made an old Persian sheikh sit on a basket of eggs and cluck like a hen, to the merriment of her incoming guests. On another she sent word to the chief of police that a Syrian had broken into her apartment; when the chief himself and his aide arrived in haste they found her maid holding a flea.¹ Then as now Syria was evidently noted for its ficas. The brilliant assemblies of poets and jurists held in her residence, a sort of salon, never failed to be enlivened by her sallies of repartee. Special pride she took in her ancestry, in her daughter, whom she liked to bedeck with jewels, and in her own hair, which she had her own peculiar way of dressing. This coiffure *à la* Sukaynah (*turrah Sukayniyah*)² became popular among men and was at a later date strictly prohibited by the puritan Caliph 'Umar II,³ one of whose brothers had married Sukaynah without consummating the union. As for the successive husbands whom the charms of this lady captivated for a longer or shorter period, they could hardly be counted on the fingers of two hands.⁴ In more than one instance she made complete freedom of action a condition precedent to marriage.

Sukaynah had a rival in al-Ṭā'if, the famous summer resort of Makkah and al-Madīnah, whose patricians witnessed a number of striking scenes and episodes centring on young 'Ā'ishah bint-Ṭalhah. 'Ā'ishah's father was a distinguished Companion of the Prophet; her mother was a daughter of abu-Bakr and sister of 'Ā'ishah, Muhammad's favourite wife. This daughter of Ṭalhah combined with noble descent a rare beauty and a proud and lofty spirit—the three qualities most highly prized in a woman by the Arabs. No favour she requested could very well be refused. Her appearance in public was even more impressive than that of Sukaynah.⁵ Once when she was on a pilgrimage to Makkah she asked the master of ceremonies, who was also the governor of the town, to defer the public religious service until she had completed the last of the seven prescribed processions around the Ka'bah. Thus the gallant governor of course did, which resulted in his dismissal from office by the Caliph 'Abd-al-Malik.⁶ 'Ā'ishah's record of marriages included

¹ *Aghāni*, vol. xiv, p. 166, vol. xvii, p. 94

² *Ibn-Khallikān*, vol. i, p. 377.

³ *Aghāni*, vol. xiv, p. 165

⁴ Compare their lists in *Ibn Sa'd*, vol. viii, p. 349, *Ibn Qutaybah*, *Ma'ārif*, pp. 101, 109-10, 113, 122, 289-90, *Ibn Khallikān*, vol. i, p. 377, *Aghāni*, vol. xiv, pp. 168-72.

⁵ *Aghāni*, vol. x, p. 60.

⁶ *Ibid.* vol. iii, p. 103.

only three.¹ When her second husband, Muṣ'ab ibn-al-Zubayr, who had also married Sukaynah and is said to have given each a million dirhams as dowry,² took her to task for never veiling her face her characteristic reply was, "Since God, may He remain blessed and exalted, hath put upon me the stamp of beauty, it is my wish that the public should view that beauty and thereby recognize His grace unto them. Under no conditions, therefore, will I veil myself."³

¹ Ibn-Sa'd, vol. viii, p. 342.

² *Ag'lānī*, vol. iii, p. 122.

³ *Ibid* vol. x, p. 54.

CHAPTER XXI

INTELLECTUAL ASPECTS OF LIFE UNDER THE Umayyads

THE invaders from the desert brought with them no tradition of learning, no heritage of culture, to the lands they conquered. In Syria, in Egypt, in al-'Irāq, in Persia, they sat as pupils at the feet of the peoples they subdued. And what acquisitive pupils they proved to be!

The closeness of the Umayyad period to the Jāhiliyah age, its many wars, civil and foreign, and the unsettled social and economic conditions of the Moslem world—all these militated against the possibility of intellectual development in that early epoch. But the seed was then sown and the tree of knowledge which came into full bloom under the early 'Abbāsids in Baghdad certainly had its roots in this preceding period of Greek, Syrian and Persian culture. The Umayyad age, therefore, was in general one of incubation.

As Persians, Syrians, Copts, Berbers and others flocked within the fold of Islam and intermarried with the Arabians the original high wall raised earlier between Arabians and non-Arabians tumbled down. The nationality of the Moslem receded into the background. No matter what his nationality may originally have been, the follower of Muḥammad now passed for an Arab. An Arab henceforth became one who professed Islam and spoke and wrote the Arabic tongue, regardless of his racial affiliation. This is one of the most significant facts in the history of Islamic civilization. When we therefore speak of "Arab medicine" or "Arab philosophy" or "Arab mathematics" we do not mean the medical science, philosophy or mathematics that are necessarily the product of the Arabian mind or developed by people living in the Arabian peninsula, but that body of knowledge enshrined in books written in the Arabic language by men who flourished chiefly during the caliphate and were themselves Persians, Syrians, Egyptians or Arabians, Christian, Jewish or Moslem,

and who may have drawn some of their material from Greek, Aramaean, Indo-Persian or other sources.

As the two sister cities of al-Ḥijāz, Makkah and al-Madīnah, <sup>Al-
anc
Kā</sup> became under the Umayyads the home of music and song, love and poetry, so did the twin cities of al-‘Irāq, al-Baṣrah¹ and al-Kūfah, develop during this period into centres of the most animated intellectual activity in the Moslem world.

These two capitals of al-‘Irāq, as we have learned before, were <sup>Ar
E^{ra}</sup> originally military camps built by order of the Caliph ‘Umar in the Moslem year 17 (638).² Al-Kūfah, the former capital of ‘Alī, arose not far from the ruins of ancient Babylon and in a sense fell heir to its neighbour, al-Ḥīrah, the Lakhmid capital. Through favoured location, commerce and immigration the sister towns soon grew into wealthy and populous cities of over a hundred thousand inhabitants. Al-Baṣrah, from which Khurāsān was governed under the Umayyads, is said to have reached as early as the year 50 (670) a total population of 300,000 and to have had at a later date 120,000 (!) canals.³ Here on the borderland of Persia the scientific study of the Arabic language and grammar was begun and carried on mainly for foreign converts and partly by them. The first impulse came from the desire to supply the linguistic needs of Neo-Moslems who wanted to study the Koran, hold government positions and converse with the conquerors. In addition, the ever-widening gap between the classical language of the Koran and the everyday vernacular corrupted by Syriac, Persian and other tongues and dialects was partly responsible for evoking such linguistic interest.

It was by no mere chance, therefore, that the legendary founder of Arabic grammar, abu-al-Aswad al-Du‘ali († 688), should have flourished in al-Baṣrah. According to the famous biographer ibn-Khallikān⁴ it was “‘Alī who laid down for al-Du‘ali this principle: The parts of speech are three—noun, verb and particle, and told him to found a complete treatise thereon”. This he successfully did. Arabic grammar, however, shows slow and long

¹ Eng. Bassora. Present-day al-Baṣrah lies six miles to the north-east of the ancient city.

² Al-Kūfah may have been built one or two years after al-Baṣrah; Yāqūt, vol. iv, pp. 322-3.

³ Iṣṭakṭī, p. 80; ibn-Ḥawqal, p. 159.

⁴ Vol. i, pp. 429-30 = de Slane, vol. i, p. 663.

development and bears striking marks of the influence of Greek logic. Al-Du'ali was followed by al-Khalīl ibn-Aḥmad, another Baṣrite scholar, who died about 786. To al-Khalīl, who was the first to compile an Arabic dictionary, the *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, biographers attribute the discovery of Arabic prosody and its rules, which still hold sway today. His pupil the Persian Sībawayh († ca. 793) composed the first systematic textbook on Arabic grammar, known by the honorific title *al-Kitāb* (the book), which has ever since been the basis of all native studies of the subject.

The study of the Koran and the necessity of expounding it gave rise to the twin sciences of philology and lexicography as well as to that most characteristically Moslem literary activity—the science of tradition (*ḥadīth*, literally “narrative”). In its technical sense a tradition is an act or saying attributed to the Prophet or to one of his Companions. The Koran and tradition provided the foundation upon which theology and *fiqh* (law), the obverse and reverse of sacred law, were raised. Law in Islam is more intimately related to religion than to jurisprudence as modern lawyers understand it. Roman law, directly or through the Talmud and other media, did undoubtedly affect Umayyad legislation, but to what extent has not been fully ascertained. In fact, of this period, from which hardly any literature has come down to us, we know only a few of the traditionists and jurists, the most renowned of whom were al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and ibn-Shihāb al-Zuhri († 742). The latter, who traced his descent to the Prophet's tribe, was always so deeply absorbed in his studies to the neglect of all worldly concerns that his wife once remarked, “By Allah, these books of yours are worse to me than three rival wives possibly could be!”¹ Al-Baṣrī was highly esteemed as a transmitter of tradition, since he was believed to have known personally seventy of those who took part in the battle of Badr. Most of the religious movements within Islam trace their origin back to al-Baṣrī. The Sufis felt throughout the ages the lasting influence of his ascetic piety, the orthodox Sunnis² never tire of quoting his devout sayings and even the Mu'tazilites reckon him as one of themselves. No wonder the populace of al-Baṣrah turned out in a body to follow his funeral on Friday the tenth of October 728, and none was left to attend or conduct the afternoon prayer in

Religious
tradition
and canon
law

¹ Ibn-Khalīkān, vol. ii, p. 223, abu-al-Fidā', vol. i, pp. 215-16.

² See below, p. 393, n. 2.

the mosque that day—"an unprecedented happening in the history of Islam".¹

The contributions of the fickle and unorthodox Kūfans, many of whom were Shi'ites or 'Alids, to Arabic philology and Moslem learning were almost, but not quite, as brilliant as those of their neighbours the Baṣrites. Rivalry between the scholars of the two camps developed two well-recognized schools of Arabic grammar and literature. Among the celebrated Companions, regarded as authorities on Moslem tradition, who settled in al-Kūfah during the caliphates of 'Umar and 'Uthmān was the red-haired, thin-legged 'Abdullāh ibn-Mas'ūd (ca. 653), who is said to have been responsible for eight hundred and forty-eight traditions.² It was a peculiar feature of ibn-Mas'ūd, when giving information about the Prophet, to tremble, exude sweat from his forehead and express himself with deliberate and hesitant caution, lest he transmit something inexact.³ Equally distinguished among the Kūfan traditionists was 'Āmir ibn-Sharāḥīl al-Sha'bi († ca. 728), one of the many South Arabians who gained eminence in the early days of Islam, who is said to have heard traditions from some hundred and fifty Companions⁴ which he related from memory without putting down a single line in black and white. Withal, the general judgment of modern critics is quite favourable in regard to his trustworthiness. The most eminent of al-Sha'bi's pupils was the great abu-Ḥanīfah. We have it on the authority of al-Sha'bi that he himself was sent by the Caliph 'Abd-al-Malik on an important mission to the Byzantine emperor in Constantinople.

It was under the 'Abbāsids, as we shall see later, that these twin cities of al-'Irāq reached their highest level of intellectual endeavour and achievement. In their later development the 'Irāq schools of tradition and jurisprudence were not swayed by the old conservative traditions as were the schools of al-Ḥijāz.

Arabic historiography, which also began at this time, started in the form of tradition (*ḥadīth*). It was therefore one of the earliest disciplines cultivated by the Arab Moslems. The desire of the early caliphs to scan the proceedings of kings and rulers

¹ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 228.

² Al-Nawawī, *Taḥḍīb al-Ashraf*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1842-7), p. 370.

³ Ibn-Sa'd, vol. iii, pt. i, pp. 110-11.

⁴ Al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, ed. Margoliouth (Leyden, 1912), fol. 334 recto; cf. Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 436.

before their time, the interest of the believers in collecting the old stories about the Prophet and his Companions—which stories became the bases of later books on biography (*sīrah*) and conquests (*maghāsi*)—the necessity of ascertaining the genealogical relationship of each Moslem Arabian in order to determine the amount of stipend he received from the public treasury, the elucidation of passages in Arabic poetry and the identification of persons and places cited in religious works, the anxiety of the subject peoples to record the past achievements of their races as a counterpoise to Arab chauvinism—all these provided the stimulus for historical research. Among the early distinguished story-tellers was the semi-legendary South Arabian 'Abīd ('Ubayd) ibn-Sharyah, who on the invitation of Mu'āwiyah went to Damascus to inform the caliph about "the early kings of the Arabians and their races".¹ 'Abīd composed for his royal patron a number of works on his specialty, one of which, the *Kitāb al-Mulūk wa-Akhhār al-Māqān* (the book of kings and the history of the ancients), was in wide circulation at the time of the historian al-Mas'ūdī² († 956). Another of those versed in the "science of origins" (*ilm al-awā'il*) was Wahb ibn-Munabbih († in Ṣan'ā', ca. 728), a Yamanite Jew of Persian origin who probably professed Islam and one of whose works has recently been published.³ Wahb, whose trustworthiness is open to grave question, became one of the chief sources of information, or rather misinformation, about pre-Islamic South Arabia and foreign lands.⁴ Still another was Ka'b al-Akhhār (Ka'b of the rabbis, † 652 or 654 in Ḥimṣ), also a Yamanite Jew, who accepted Islam under one of the first two caliphs and acted as teacher and counsellor to the court of Mu'āwiyah when the latter was still governor of Syria.⁵ Thus did Ka'b become the earliest authority for the Jewish-Moslem traditions. Through Ka'b, ibn-Munabbih and other Jewish converts a number of talmudic stories ultimately found their way into Moslem tradition and were incorporated with Arabic historical lore.

¹ Al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel (Leipzig, 1872), p. 89, l. 26; cf. Ibn-Khalikān, vol. ii, p. 365.

² Vol. iv, p. 89.

³ *Al-Tayān fī Mulūk Ḥimṣ* (Haydarābād, 1347), with a supplement (pp. 311-489) entitled "Akhhār 'Abīd", by 'Abīd.

⁴ Ibn-Khalikān, vol. iii, pp. 106-7; Tabari, vol. iii, pp. 2493-4; Nawawī, p. 619.

⁵ Consult Nawawī, p. 523; Ibn-Sa'd, vol. vii, pt. 2, p. 156; Ibn-Qutaybah, *Ma'ārif*, p. 219.

In the Umayyad period we can also detect the rudiments of many of those religio-philosophical movements which were later to shake Islam to its very foundation. In the first half of the eighth century there flourished in al-Basrah a certain Wāṣil ibn-'Aṭā' († 748), the founder of the famous school of rationalism termed Mu'tazilah. The Mu'tazilites (seceders, schismatics) were so called because of their major doctrine that he who commits a mortal sin (*kaḥīrah*) secedes from the ranks of the believers but does not become an unbeliever; he occupies a medial position between the two.¹ Wāṣil was a pupil of al-Ḥasan al-Basri, who inclined for a time to the doctrine of free will, which doctrine became another cardinal point in Mu'tazilite belief. This doctrine of free will was at the time held by a group called Qadarites (from *qadar* = power) as opposed to the Jabrites (from *jabr* = compulsion).² The Qadarites represent a reaction against the harsh predestinarianism of Islam, a corollary of God's almightiness so strongly emphasized in the Koran,³ and betray Christian Greek influence. The Qadarites were the earliest school of philosophy in Islam, and how widely spread their ideas were may be inferred from the fact that two of the Umayyad caliphs, Mu'āwiyah II and Yazīd III, were Qadarites.⁴

To the cardinal doctrine of free will the Mu'tazilites added another: the denial of the coexistence with God of the divine attributes, such as power, wisdom and life, on the ground that such conceptions would destroy the unity of God. Hence the Mu'tazilites' favourite appellation for themselves: "the partisans of justice and unity". This rationalistic movement attained significant importance under the 'Abbāsids, especially al-Ma'mūn (813-33), as we shall see later. Intellectually, Baghdād began where al-Basrah and al-Kūfah ended.

One of the principal agents through whom Christian lore and Greek thought at this time found their way into Islam was St. John of Damascus (Joannes Damascenus), surnamed Chrysorroas (golden-tongued), as his earlier Antiochene namesake was surnamed Chrysostom. Although he wrote in Greek, John was

¹ Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, p. 22, vii, p. 234. Cf. Shahrastāni, p. 33, al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn* (Istanbul, 1928), vol. i, p. 335, do, *Mukhtasar al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, ed. Hitti (Cairo, 1924), p. 98, al-Nawbakhti, *Firaq al-Shā'ak*, ed. H. Ritter (Istanbul, 1931), p. 5.

² Cf. al-Ījī, *Kitāb al-Mawāḍi'if*, ed. Th. Soerensen (Leipzig, 1848), pp. 334, 362.

³ Sūras 3: 25-26, 15: 21, 42: 26, 43: 10, 54: 49, etc.; cf. Ibn Hazm, vol. iii, p. 31.

⁴ Ibn-al-'Ibn, p. 190, Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 402.

not a Greek but a Syrian who spoke Aramaic at home and knew, in addition to both of these languages, Arabic. His grandfather Maṣṣūrah ibn-Sarjūn was the financial administrator of Damascus at the time of its Arab conquest and connived with its bishop in surrendering the town. He kept his position under the Moslems and John's father succeeded to the office. As a young man John attended drinking bouts of al-Akḥḥāl and Mu'āwiyah's son Yazīd and succeeded his father in that most important office in the Arab government. In his early thirties he gave it all up in favour of a life of asceticism and devotion in the monastery of St. Sāba near Jerusalem. Here he died about 748. Among St. John's works is a dialogue with a "Saracen" on the divinity of Christ and the freedom of human will which is intended to be an apology for Christianity, a manual for the guidance of Christians in their arguments with the Moslems. John himself probably held many such debates in the presence of the caliph. His influence is not hard to detect in the formation of the Qadarite school. To St. John tradition ascribes the story of the ascetic Barlaam and the Hindu prince Josaphat, perhaps the most famous religious romance of the Middle Ages. Modern critics recognize the story as a Christian version of an episode in the life of the Buddha, who under the name Josaphat (or Ioasaph) was, strange as it may seem, canonized by both the Latin and the Greek Churches. Thus did the Buddha twice become a Christian saint. The medieval story of Barlaam and Josaphat goes back through Latin, Greek and Georgian into Arabic, itself evidently a translation from Pahlawi done after St. John's days.¹ Mention is made in the *Fihrist*² of a *Kitāb al-Budd* (the book of Buddha) and of a *Kitāb Būdāsaf*. John Damascene is considered the greatest and last theologian of the Oriental Greek Church. In ecclesiastical literature the hymns he composed (some of which are still used in Protestant hymnals) mark the highest attainment of beauty by Christian Church poets. As hymnologist, theologian, orator, polemic writer, father of Byzantine music and codifier of Byzantine art he stands out as an ornament to the body of the Church under the caliphate.

Khārijites

The Qadarite was the earliest philosophical school of thought in Islam, but the Khārijites formed the earliest religio-political

¹ Paulus Peetrus in *Annalects Bollandians*, vol. xlix (Brussels, 1931), pp 276-312

² P. 305.

sect. These deadly opponents of 'Ali, once his supporters, repeatedly arose in armed opposition to the prerogative conferred on the Quraysh that the caliph should be one of their number.¹ In endeavouring to maintain the primitive, democratic principles of Islam the puritanical Khārijites caused rivers of blood to flow in the first three Moslem centuries. In course of time they forbade the cult of saints with the attendant local pilgrimages and prohibited Sufi fraternities. Today they survive in the form of a subdivision called Ibādite (commonly Abādite), after ibn-Ibād² (second half of first Moslem century), the most tolerant of the Khārijite founders of sub-sects, and are scattered in Algeria, Tripolitania and 'Umān, whence they later crossed to Zanzibar.

Another sect, but of minor importance, which arose in the Umayyad age was the Murji'ite, whose fundamental article of faith consisted in the suspension (*irjā'*) of judgment against believers who commit sins and in not declaring them infidels.³ More specifically, the Murji'ites refused to see in the suppression of religious law by the Umayyad caliphs a justifiable cause for denying that house the homage due them as the *de facto* political leaders of Islam. To the followers of this doctrine the fact that the Umayyads were nominally Moslems sufficed. 'Uthmān and 'Ali as well as Mu'āwiyah were all servants of God, and by God alone must they be judged. In general, Murji'ite influence was on the side of tolerance. The most illustrious representative of the moderate wing of this school was the great divine abu-Ḥanīfah († 767), who founded the first of the four orthodox schools of jurisprudence in Islam.

The Shi'ah, one of the two hostile camps into which early Islam split on the issue of the caliphate, took definite form during the Umayyad period. The imāmship then became, and has since continued to be, the differentiating element between Sunnites (orthodox) and Shi'ites. The persistence with which the Shi'ah clings to its basic belief in 'Ali and 'Ali's sons as the true imāms, not unlike the persistence of the Roman Catholic Church in the dogma of its relation to Peter and his successors, has ever remained its distinguishing feature. The founder of Islam made a revelation, the Koran, the intermediary between God and man;

¹ Ibn-al-Jawzi, *Naqd al-'Im w-al-'Ulamā'* (Cairo, 1340), p. 102.

² Shahrastāni, p. 100, Baghdādī, ed. Hitti, pp. 87-8; Ijī, p. 356.

³ Cf. Baghdādī, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-3; Ibn-Ḥazm, vol. ii, p. 89.

the Shī'ah made the intermediary a person, the imām.¹ To "I believe in Allah the one God" and "I believe in the revelation of the Koran, which is uncreated from eternity", the Shī'ites now added a new article of faith: "I believe that the imām especially chosen by Allah as the bearer of a part of the divine being is the leader to salvation".

The institution of the imāmate was a product of theocratic opposition to the profane conception of might. According to its theory, as opposed to the Sunnite view,² the imām is the sole legitimate head of the Moslem community, divinely designated for the supreme office. He is a lineal descendant of Muhammad through Fāṭimah and 'Ali. He is a spiritual and religious leader as well as a secular one, endowed with a mysterious power transmitted to him from his predecessor.³ As such he stands far superior to any other human being and enjoys impeccability (*'iṣmah*).⁴ Extremists among the Shī'ah went so far as to consider the imām, on account of this divine and luminous essence, the incarnation of God himself.⁵ To them 'Ali and his descendent imāms constitute a continuous divine revelation in human form. A later ultra-Shī'ite sect even held that Gabriel mistook Muhammad for 'Ali,⁶ who was originally intended for the reception of the revelation. In all this the Shī'ite stands in opposition to the Sunnite creed.

How much Shī'ah in its birth and evolution owed to Persian notions and how much to Judæo-Christian ideas is hard to ascertain. The Mahdi hypothesis which developed later and involved the expectation of a saviour-leader who will usher in a new era of liberty and prosperity was undoubtedly a reflex of Messianic and allied ideas. The enigmatic 'Abduļlāh ibn-Saba', who was converted to Islam during the caliphate of 'Uthmān and embarrassed 'Ali with his excessive veneration, thus be-

¹ From an Arabic stem meaning to precede, to lead. The term, which occurs in the Koran (2: 118, 15: 79, 23: 74, 36: 11) in no technical sense, is ordinarily applied to the person who in the canonical services indicates the ritual movements. Originally the Prophet, and after him the caliphs or their delegates, filled this office. Ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, pp. 159-60.

² For this view consult Ījī, pp. 296 *seq.*

³ Shahrastāni, pp. 108-9, Mas'ūdi, vol. 1, p. 70.

⁴ Immunity from error and sin is ascribed in varying degrees by Sunnites to the prophets only, especially to Muhammad. Ibn-Hazm, vol. 11, pp. 2-25; I. Goldziher in *Der Islam*, vol. 11 (1912), pp. 238-45; Ījī, pp. 218 *seq.*

⁵ See below, pp. 440 *seq.*

⁶ Baghdādi, ed. Hitti, p. 157; ibn-al-Jawzi, *Nagā*, pp. 103-4.

coming the founder of extreme Shi'ism,¹ was a Yamanite Jew. Gnosticism also undoubtedly contributed its share to the development of the imāmate conception. Of all the lands of Islam, al-'Irāq proved the most fertile soil for the germination of 'Alid doctrines, and to the present day Persia with its fifteen millions is the bulwark of the Shi'ah.² Within the Shi'ite community itself an almost unlimited number of minor sects arose. Different members of "the house of the Prophet" (*ahl al-bayt*, i.e. 'Ali and his descendants) became the natural centre of attraction for all sorts of non-conformists and malcontents, economic, social, political and religious. Many of the heterodoxies which arose in the first century of Islam and were in themselves a veiled protest against the victorious religion of the Arabians, gradually gravitated to the bosom of Shi'ah as the representative of opposition to the established order. The Ismā'ilites, the Qarmatians, the Druzes, the Nuṣayris and the like, with whom we shall deal later, were all offshoots from the Shi'ite sect.

Public speaking in its several forms was cultivated during the Umayyad epoch as never before and attained a height unsurpassed in later times. The *khaṭīb* used it as an instrument of religion in his Friday noon sermons, the general resorted to it as a means of arousing military enthusiasm among his troops and the provincial governor depended upon it for instilling patriotic feeling in his subjects. In an age with no special facilities for propaganda, oratory provided an excellent channel for spreading ideas and kindling emotions. The highly ethical orations of 'Ali, with their rhymes and wise sayings, the sermonettes of the ascetic al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī († 728) delivered in the presence of the Caliph 'Umar ibn-'Abd-al-'Azīz and preserved by the latter's biographer,³ the military and patriotic speeches of Ziyād ibn-Abīh and the fiery al-Ḥajjāj—all these are among the most valuable literary treasures handed down to us from that early age.⁴

¹ *Ij*, p. 343.

² In all there are today some 50,000,000 Shi'ites, of whom about eighteen millions live in Iran, seven in India, three in al-'Irāq, four in al-Yaman, where they are known by the name of Zaydis, 350,000 in Lebanon and Syria, where they go by the name of *Matāwilah* (i.e. partisans [of 'Ali]). Ultra-Shi'ite sects, including the Ismā'ilites, Druzes, Nuṣayris, Yazidis and 'Alī-Ilāhīs, swell the total to approximately 60,000,000, about 14 per cent. of the whole Moslem body. Cf. above, p. 3; below, p. 442.

³ Ibn-al-Jawzī, *Sirah*, pp. 121-6.

⁴ Consult Ibn-Qutaybah, *Uyūn al-Akhbār*, vol. ii, pp. 231-52; al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān*, vol. i (Cairo, 1926), pp. 177 seq., vol. ii, pp. 47 seq.; *Iqd*, vol. ii, pp. 172 seq.

Corre-
spondence

Political correspondence under the orthodox caliphs was so brief and to the point that we hardly have an official note more than a few lines in length.¹ To 'Abd-al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib (i.e. the scribe, † 750); secretary of the last Umayyad caliphs, is ascribed by ibn-Khallikān² the introduction of the flowery, long-drawn-out style with its conventional, polite phraseology betraying Persian influence. This affected style became a model for future generations of writers. A favourite Arabic saying had it that "the art of epistolary composition [*inshā'*] began with 'Abd-al-Ḥamīd and ended with ibn-al-'Amīd".³ Persian literary influence can also be detected in the many wise sayings and proverbs attributed to 'Ali, to his lieutenant al-Ahnaf (the bandy-legged)⁴ ibn-Qays († after 687) and even to Aktham ibn-Sayfi of pre-Islamic reputation, one of whose titles was "the sage [*ḥakīm*] of the Arabians".⁵

Poetry

The greatest intellectual measure of progress achieved under the Umayyads, however, was undoubtedly in the field of poetical composition. That the birth of Islam was not favourable to the chief of the Muses is evinced by the fact that the glorious period of conquest and expansion inspired no poet in a "nation of poets". With the accession of the worldly Umayyads the old connections with the goddesses of wine, song and poetry were re-established. For the first time the poet of love makes his full appearance in Arabic. While many pre-Islamic bards did preface their long pieces (*qaṣīdahs*) with a few verses of erotic character, yet none of them could be said to have specialized in love poetry (*ghazal*). From this amatory prelude (*nasīb*) of the early *qaṣīdahs* Arabic lyric poetry arose under the influence of Persian singers and after their example.

The peninsular school has 'Umar ibn-abi-Rabi'ah⁶ († ca. 719) as its chief exponent. This prince of erotic poetry, "the Ovid of Arabia", was an impious Qurayshite of independent means,⁷ who made it his business to make love to the beautiful damsels

¹ For specimens consult Qalqashandī, *Subh*, vol. vi, pp. 388-91.

² Vol 1, p 550; cf Mas'ūdi, vol vi, p 81.

³ A vizir of Rukn al-Dawlah the Buwayhid.

⁴ Jāhiz, *Bayān*, vol i, p. 58 See ibn Qutaybah, *Ma'ārif*, p. 216; Tabari, vol. ii, pp 438-9

⁵ Ibn-Qutaybah, *Ma'ārif*, p 153, cf. *Aghāni*, vol xi, p 73, l 28. See Jāhiz, *Bayān*, vol ii, p 63

⁶ *Bayān*, vol ii, p 63 ⁷ His *Dīwan*, ed Paul Schwarz, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1901-9) *Aghāni*, vol i, p. 32. On his life and works. see Jibrīl Jalbūr, 'Umar ibn-abi-Rabi'ah, 2 vols (Beirut, 1935-9).

pilgrimage in Makkah and al-Madīnah as well as to such charming residents as the famous Sukaynah.¹ In language of intense passion and exquisite felicity he immortalized his feeling towards the fair sex. The freshness and chivalry of his verse stand in marked contrast to the primitive passion of Imru'-al-Qays on the one hand and to the stereotyped sentiment of a later age on the other.²

If 'Umar represented free love in poetry, his contemporary Jamīl († 701) of the banu-'Udhrah, a Christian tribe of Yamanite origin settled in al-Ḥijāz, stood for pure and innocent love of the platonic type. Jamīl's verses, all addressed to his sweet-heart Buthaynah, who belonged to the same tribe,³ breathe a spirit of tenderness unparalleled in that age. Because of their esthetic value and simple unaffected language they have since been set to music by many Arabic singers. Like Jamīl al-'Udhri, the semi-mythical Majnūn Layla,⁴ whose original name is said to have been Qays ibn-al-Mulawwah,⁵ represents the lyric type of poetical composition. Qays, according to legend, became infatuated to the point of madness (whence his surname *majnūn*) with a woman of the same tribe named Layla, who reciprocated his love but was obliged to marry another to satisfy her father. Crazy with despair, Qays passes the rest of his life wandering half-naked among the hills and valleys of his native Najd singing the beauty of his beloved and yearning for a sight of her. Only when her name was mentioned would he return to his normal self.⁶ Thus did Majnūn Layla become the hero of numberless Arabic, Persian and Turkish romances extolling the power of undying love. Undoubtedly many of the poems attached to the names of Jamīl and Majnūn were not actually composed by them but were originally ballads and folk-songs.

Besides love poetry, political poetry made its appearance under Umayyad auspices. The first occasion was the request made of Miskīn al-Dārīmī to compose and sing publicly verses commemorating the nomination of Yazīd to the caliphate.⁷ To this

¹ Ibn-Qutaybah, *Šīr*, p. 349.

² See W. G. Palgrave, *Essays on Eastern Questions* (London, 1872), p. 279.

³ Consult Ibn-Qutaybah, *Šīr*, pp. 260-68, *Aghāni*, vol. vii, pp. 77-110.

⁴ *Aghāni*, vol. i, p. 169, quoted by Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 148.

⁵ Al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt* (Būlāq, 1283), vol. ii, p. 172, makes the date of his death about A.H. 80 = 699.

⁶ Ibn-Qutaybah, *Šīr*, pp. 358-62.

⁷ *Aghāni*, vol. xviii, pp. 71-2; cf. Ibn-Qutaybah, *Šīr*, p. 347.

period also belongs the first attempt to compile ancient pre-Islamic poetry, which attempt was undertaken by Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah (i.e. the transmitter, ca. 713-72).¹ Ḥammād was born in al-Kūfah of a Daylami (Persian) prisoner of war² and spoke Arabic with an accent, but he was one of those famed in Arabic annals for possessing phenomenal memories. In answer to a question by al-Walid II he offered to recite of the *jāhiliyah* poems alone, rhyming in each of the letters of the alphabet, at least one hundred different odes for each letter. After listening in person and by proxy to 2900 *qaṣīdahs*, as we are told, al-Walid felt satisfied and ordered 100,000 dirhams for the reciter.³ Ḥammād's great merit, no doubt, was his collection of the famous Golden Odes, otherwise called Mu'allaqāt.

The provincial school of poetry in the Umayyad period was headed by al-Farazdaq (ca. 640-728) and Jarīr († ca. 729), that of the capital by al-Akḥṭal (ca. 640-ca. 710). All three were born and brought up in al-'Irāq. They were satirists as well as panegyrists. As poets the trio stand in the very front rank among those with whom Arab criticism has found nothing to compare since their time. Al-Akḥṭal, the Christian, was the champion of the Umayyad cause against the theocratic party;⁴ al-Farazdaq, the dissolute, was the poet laureate of 'Abd-al-Malik and his sons al-Walid, Sulaymān⁵ and Yazid; Jarīr, the greatest satirist of the age, was the court poet of al-Ḥajjāj.⁶ In their panegyrics, on which they lived rather than on their lampoons, these poets performed the same function as the party press today. Al-Farazdaq⁷ and Jarīr often attacked each other in the most virulent and abusive language, and al-Akḥṭal as a rule sided with the former. How lightly Christianity sat on the heart of the profane, wine-bibbing Akḥṭal is illustrated by the words of consolation he addressed to his pregnant wife as she rushed to touch

¹ *Fikrist*, p. 91; Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 294.

² Ibn-Qutaybah, *Ma'ārif*, p. 268.

³ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 292; *Aghāni*, vol. v, pp. 164-5. See *Iqd*, vol. iii, pp. 137-8.

⁴ Ibn Qutaybah, *Shi'r*, pp. 301-4.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 297-8. For Farazdaq's eulogies of his patron caliphs see his *Diwān*, ed. R. Boucher (Paris, 1875), *passim*.

⁶ Ibn-Qutaybah, p. 287. For samples of his encomiums see his *Diwān* (Cairo, 1313), vol. i.

⁷ On him see *Aghāni*, vol. viii, pp. 186-97, vol. xix, pp. 2-52; Ibn-Khallikān, vol. iii, pp. 136-46 = de Slane, vol. iii, pp. 612-28; Joseph Hell, *Das Leben des Farazdaq* (Leipzig, 1903).

the garment of a passing bishop and succeeded only in reaching the tail of the donkey he was riding: "He and the tail of his ass—there is no difference!"¹

Education of the formal type was not common in those days. To the early Umayyad princes the *bādiyah*, Syrian desert, acted as a sort of school to which they sent their young sons to acquire the pure Arabic tongue and become well versed in poetry. It was thither that Mu'āwiyah sent his son and future successor Yazīd. The public considered him educated who could read and write his native language, use the bow and arrow and swim. Such a person was styled *al-kāmil*, the perfect one.² The value of swimming was enhanced by life on the Mediterranean coast. The ethical ideals of education as gleaned from the literature bearing on the subject were courage, endurance in time of trouble (*sabr*), observance of the rights and obligations of neighbourliness (*jiwār*), manliness (*murwāh*), generosity and hospitality, regard for women and fulfilment of solemn promises. Many of these will be recognized as the virtues highly prized in Bedouin life.

After the time of 'Abd-al-Malik the tutor or preceptor (*mu'addib*), usually a client or a Christian, became a standing figure in the court. The tutor of this caliph's sons received the following injunction from their father: "Teach them to swim and accustom them to little sleep".³ 'Umar II took his children so severely to task for violating the rules of Arabic grammar that he was inclined to use corporal punishment.⁴ Significant are the instructions he communicated officially to their tutor: "Let the first moral lesson impressed upon them be hatred of means of amusement, whose initiative is from the devil and whose consequence is the wrath of God".⁵

The public desiring to secure an education, as education went in those days, patronized the mosques where classes centring on the Koran and hadīth were given. The earliest teachers in Islam were therefore the Koran readers (*qurrā'*). As early as the year 17 (638) the Caliph 'Umar sent such teachers in all

¹ *Aghāni*, vol. vii, p. 183, where the anecdote is reported to illustrate his devotion to religion.

² Ibn-Sa'd, vol. iii, pt. 2, p. 91, ll. 10-11, cf. vol. v, p. 309, ll. 7 seq.; *Aghāni*, vol. vi, p. 163, l. 9.

³ *Mubarrad*, p. 77, ll. 6-7.

⁴ *Fāqih*, *Mu'jam al-Udabā'*, ed. Margoliouth, vol. i (Leyden, 1907), pp. 25-6.

⁵ Ibn-al-Jawzi, *Strak*, pp. 257-8. Consult Jāhiz, *Bayān*, vol. ii, pp. 138-43.

directions and ordered the people to meet with them on Fridays in the mosques. 'Umar II sent as chief judge to Egypt Yazīd ibn-abi-Īḥābīb († 746), who is said to have been the first to distinguish himself as teacher there.¹ In al-Kūfah we read of a certain al-Daḥḥāk ibn-Muzāḥim² († 723), who kept an elementary school (*kuttāb*) and made no charges for instruction.³ In the second Moslem century we even hear of a Bedouin settling in al-Baṣrah and conducting a school where fees were charged.⁴

Science

"Science," the Arabs say, ascribing the words to the Prophet, "is twofold: that which relates to religion and that which relates to the body [i.e. medicine]."

The peninsular medicine was very primitive indeed. Legitimate remedies mingled with magical practices and talismans against the evil eye. A few prescriptions limiting treatment to the use of honey, cupping and bleeding embedded in traditions termed "the Prophet's medicine" have been preserved and handed down to posterity. The critical ibn-Khaldūn in his famous *Muqaddimah*⁵ speaks slightly of this type of medicine, declaring that the Prophet was sent to teach religious laws and principles rather than medication.

Scientific Arab medicine springs from sources mainly Greek and partly Persian. Persian medicine itself was influenced by Greek tradition. The list of Arabian physicians in the first century of Islam is headed by al-Ḥārith ibn-Kaladah († ca. 634) of al-Ṭā'if, who studied in Persia.⁶ Al-Ḥārith was the first scientifically trained man in the peninsula and won the honorary title of "the doctor of the Arabians".⁷ In the art of healing he was succeeded, as was customary, by his son al-Naḍr, whose mother was the Prophet's maternal aunt.⁸

By the time of the Arab conquest of Western Asia, Greek science was no more a living force. It was rather a tradition in the hands of Greek- or Syriac-writing commentators and practitioners. The court doctors of the Umayyads belonged to this group. Outstanding among them were ibn-Uthāl, the Christian

¹ Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, vol. i, p. 134; cf. Kindī, *Wulāḥ*, p. 89.

² Mentioned by Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, vol. i, p. 175, as a tutor to 'Abd-al-Mahk's sons.

³ Ibn-Sa'd, vol. vi, p. 210. ⁴ Yūqūt, *Uḍādā'*, vol. ii, p. 239. ⁵ P. 412.

⁶ Ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah, *Uyūn al-Anbā' fī Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭṭibā'*, ed. A. Müller (Cairo, 1882), vol. i, p. 109; ibn al-'Ibrī, p. 156.

⁷ Ibn al-'Ibrī, pp. 156-7; Qifī, *Ḥukamā'*, p. 161.

⁸ Ibn al-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. i, p. 113; cf. Nawawī *Ṭaḥḥib*, p. 593.

physician of Mu'āwiyah,¹ and Tayādhūq, the evidently Greek physician of al-Ḥajjāj.² Some of Tayādhūq's aphorisms have been preserved, but none of the three or four books ascribed to him. A Jewish physician of Persian origin, Māsarjawayh of al-Baṣrah, who flourished in the first days of Marwān ibn-al-Ḥakam, translated (683) into Arabic a Syriac treatise on medicine originally composed in Greek by a Christian priest in Alexandria, Ahrūn by name,³ and was thus responsible for the earliest scientific book in the language of Islam. The Caliph al-Walīd is credited with having segregated persons afflicted with leprosy and with having made special provision for their treatment.⁴ 'Umar II is said to have transferred the schools of medicine from Alexandria, where the Greek tradition flourished, to Antioch and Ḥarrān.⁵

Alchemy, like medicine, one of the few sciences in which the Arabs later made a distinct contribution, was one of the disciplines early developed. Khālīd († 704 or 708), the son of the second Umayyad caliph and the "philosopher [*hakīm*] of the Marwānids", was according to the *Fihrist*⁶ (our oldest and best source of information) the first in Islam to have translations made from Greek and Coptic books on alchemy, medicine and astrology. Though proved legendary,⁷ the ascription of this activity to Khālīd is significant, since it points out the truth that the Arabs drew their scientific knowledge from the older Greek sources and received their first impulse therefrom. With the name of this Umayyad prince legend associates the name of the famous Jābir ibn-Ḥayyān (Latinized Geber); but Jābir flourished later, about 776, and will be dealt with under the 'Abbāsids. Likewise the astrological and alchemical treatises ascribed to Ja'far al-Šādiq (700-765),⁸ a descendant of 'Alī and one of the twelve imāms of the Shī'ah, have been discredited by critical modern scholarship.⁹ The most unfortunate fact about the intellectual

¹ Ibn-abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. i, p. 116.

² *Ibid.* p. 121; see above, p. 220.

³ Ibn-al-'Ibrī, p. 192.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 195; Ṭabarī, vol. ii, p. 1196.

⁵ Ibn abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. i, p. 116, ll. 25-6.

⁶ Pp. 242, 354.

⁷ Julius Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten*, I. *Chālīd Ibn Jazīd Ibn Mu'āwija* (Heidelberg, 1924), pp. 8 seq.

⁸ *Fihrist*, p. 317, l. 25; Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 185 = de Slane, vol. i, p. 300; Ḥijji Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn 'an Asāmi al-Kutub w-al-Funūn*, ed. Fluegel, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1837), pp. 581, 604, vol. iii (London, 1842), pp. 53, 128.

⁹ J. Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten*, II. *Ga'far Alīšādīq, der Sechste Imām* (Heidelberg, 1924), pp. 49-59.

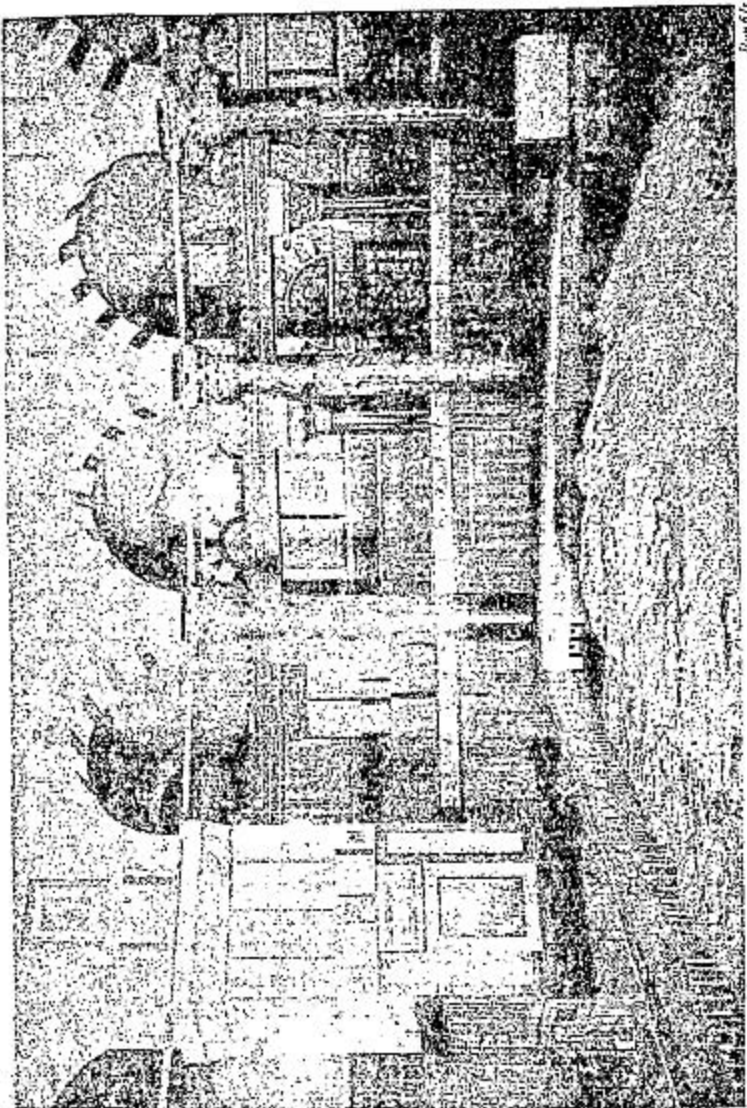
life under the Umayyads is that it left no extant traces in the form of documents from which we can properly evaluate it.

Architec-
ture

If there ever was an indigenous Arabian architecture it could have existed only in al-Yaman, concerning which our present state of investigation and exploration is as yet unable to afford sufficient data. Even then South Arabian art could not have played much of a part in the northern life of the peninsula. Here the tent was the ordinary dwelling, the open air the temple and the desert sands the tomb. The inhabitant of the rare oasis had, as he still has today, a rude architecture represented by buildings of sun-dried brick covered with flat roofs of palm wood and clay, devoid of decoration and ornament and suited only to the simplest needs. Even the Ḥijāz national shrine, al-Ka'bah, was nothing but a primitive cube-like structure with no roof. As the structure stood at the time of Muhammad it was the work of a Coptic Christian carpenter who used wood salvaged from the wreck of some Byzantine ships cast ashore at Juddah. The rock-cut tombs of Madā'in Sālih (ancient al-Ḥijr), the picturesque chambers carved in the multi-coloured sand cliffs of Petra, the colonnaded and arched palaces and sanctuaries of Palmyra, such churches as the magnificent one rebuilt by the Ghassānid phylarch al-Mundhir ibn-al-Ḥārith on the grave of the martyred St. Sergius at al-Rusāfah—all these indeed reveal a high order of artistic technique, but it is a technique borrowed from Hellenized Egypt and Syria and is not characteristically Arabian.

Architecture, as the first and most permanent of the arts, has in its religious variety always been the principal representative of the building art. The place of worship, literally the home of the deity, is the first structure on which the newly awakened soul strives to impress a loftier character than that required to satisfy the material needs of a human habitation. In the case of the Moslem Arabs art found its supreme expression in religious architecture. The Moslem architects, or the men they employed, evolved a scheme of building, simple and dignified, based on earlier patterns but singularly expressive of the spirit of the new religion. Thus we have in the mosque (from Ar. *masjid*, a place to prostrate oneself) an epitome of the history of the development of Islamic civilization in its interracial and international relationships. Perhaps no clearer example could be cited to illustrate

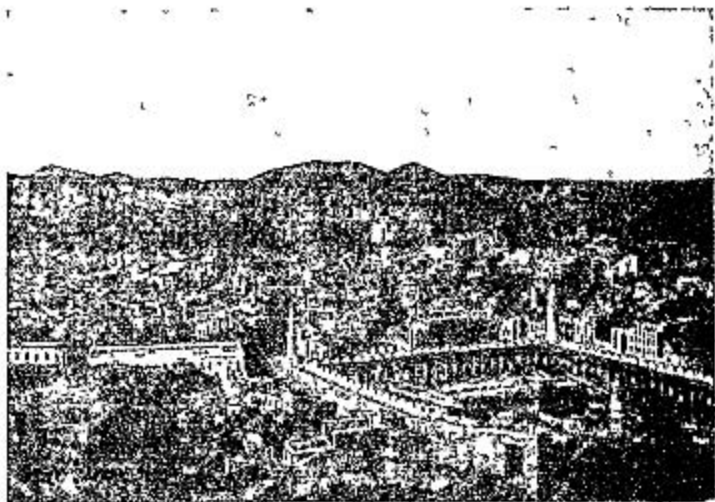
INTERIOR OF THE DOME OF THE ROCK



the cultural interplay between Islam and its neighbours than the mosque.

The simple mosque of Muhammad at al-Madīnah rather than the Makkan sanctuary fortuitously became the general prototype of the congregational mosque in the first century of Islam. This mosque consisted of a courtyard open to the sky enclosed by walls of sun-baked clay.¹ As a protection from the sun the Prophet later extended the flat roof from the adjacent buildings

The
Mosque
of al-
Madīnah



From Ibrahim Rif'at, *Mir'at al-Haramayn*

THE MOSQUE OF MAKKAH SEEN FROM THE EAST

to cover the whole open court. The roof consisted of palm trunks used as columns to support a cover of palm fronds and mud.² A palm trunk fixed in the ground served first as a pulpit (*minbar*)³ for the Prophet to stand on while addressing the congregation.⁴ This was later replaced by a small platform of tamarisk wood with three steps copied from those seen in Christian churches in Syria.

¹ Ibn Hishām, pp 336-7.

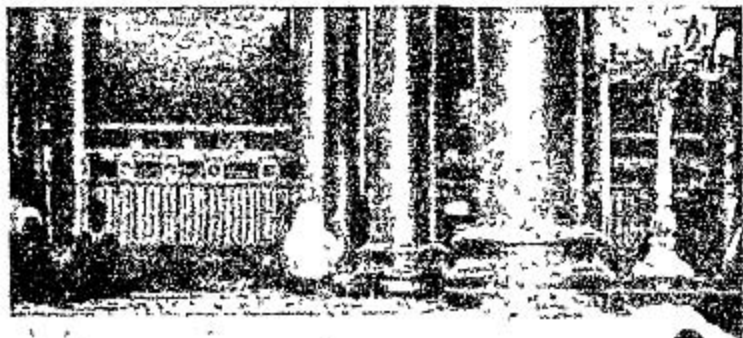
² Balādhuri, p 6, Bukhārī, vol. i, pp 106-7.

³ In *Orientalische Studien*. Theodor Noldeke, ed C Bezold (Giessen, 1906), vol 1, pp 331 seq., C H Becker has shown that the *minbar* was originally a raised seat or throne used by the ruler and not associated with worship.

⁴ Ibn-Sa'īd, vol 1, pt 2, p 9, F. Wüstenfeld, *Geschichte der Stadt Medina* (Göttingen, 1860), p 63, cf Bukhārī, vol 1, p. 107.

Whether the Prophet found it necessary to erect an indicator (*mihṛāb*) of the direction of prayer (*qiblah*) in his mosque is not certain. In reciting their prayers the worshippers arranged themselves in ranks parallel to and facing the wall, originally toward Jerusalem and later toward Makkah.¹ From the top of the flat roof the Abyssinian Bilāl with his stentorian voice called the believers to prayer.² Here, then, we have in their simplest forms almost all the rudiments of a congregational mosque—a court, some cover to shelter the worshipper and a pulpit.

The subsequent advance of the Arabians fanwise through Western Asia and North Africa brought them into possession



From Ibrahim Rif at, "Mas al al Madīnah"

THE INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF AL MADĪNAH

of numberless standing and ruined structures representing a high artistic development and, what is more essential, it put them in control of the living technical knowledge and skill inherited by members of the conquered races from ages past. This technique, applied to the religious needs of the Moslem community as indicated by the Madīnah Mosque and modified by local conditions in different regions, produced in course of time what has been variously designated Saracenic, Arabian, Moslem and Mohammedan² art. The structural material, whether stone, brick

¹ Ibn-Sa'd, vol. i, pt. 2, pp. 3-5.

² One or two years after his arrival in al-Madīnah the Prophet decided on the *ashān* as the formal call to prayer after considering the possibility of using the *ndgās* (wooden gong) as in the Christian churches Ibn-Sa'd, vol. i, pt. 2, p. 7.

³ Modern Moslems object to the use of this term because of its parallelism to the term "Christian" applied to the worshippers of Christ, while they, as they maintain, are not worshippers of Muhammad.

or clay, was in each case determined by what had prevailed in the particular locality. In Syria Moslem architecture was influenced by the pre-existent Christian Syro-Byzantine style with its native and Roman antecedents. In Mesopotamia and Persia it was affected by the Nestorian and Sāsānid forms based on an earlier native tradition. In Egypt many decorative motifs were supplied by the local Copts. Thus there gradually developed a number of distinct schools of Arab art: (1) Syro-Egyptian, following the Greco-Roman and native precedents; (2) 'Irāqo-Persian, based on Sāsānid and ancient Chaldaean and Assyrian styles; (3) Spanish and North African, showing native Christian and Visigothic influence and often called Moorish or Maghribi; and (4) Indian, bearing clear marks of the Hindu style. In China the mosque is almost a replica of the Buddhist temple.

Early
mosques
in the
provinces

The first mosque erected in a conquered land was that of al-Basrah built by 'Utbah ibn-Ghazwān (637 or 638), who also founded the city itself as a winter camp for the army. This place of prayer was at first an open space fenced round with reeds. The edifice was later rebuilt of clay and sun-dried bricks (*libn*) by abu-Mūsa al-Ash'ari, 'Umar's governor, who covered the roof with grass.¹ In 638 or 639 the invading general, Sa'd ibn-abi-Waqqās, established the other military camp, al-Kūfah, with a simple mosque as its centre. Close by the mosque stood the governor's residence (*dār al-umārāh*). As in al-Basrah, the mosque was originally an open square with walls of reed and later of clay and sun-dried bricks.² Ziyād, the viceroy of Mu'āwiyah, rebuilt this mosque with a colonnade following the Sāsānid model. In other respects the mosque conformed to the type fortuitously formulated by Muhammad in al-Madīnah. No trace is left of this structure or of the Basrah mosque. Of the 'Ali mosque in al-Kūfah, erected about 656 and visited in 1184 by the famous Andalusian traveller ibn-Jubayr,³ little is known.

The third important camp in Islam was that of 'Amr ibn-al-'Ās in al-Fuṣṭāt (Old Cairo). Here in 642 'Amr laid out the first Moslem place of prayer in Africa. In its original form 'Amr's mosque, of which there is likewise no trace,⁴ was like the others a simple quadrangle with no niche (*niḥrāb*) to indicate the direc-

¹ Bal'idhun, pp. 346-7, 350, Yāqūt, *Buldān*, vol. 1, p. 642

² Tabari, vol. 1, p. 2489, Yāqūt, vol. 14, pp. 323-4.

³ Pp. 211-12.

⁴ For the many early rebuildings it underwent see Yāqūt, vol. 14, pp. 899-900.

tion of prayer and with no minaret (*mi'dhanāh*). 'Amr equipped it later with a pulpit built and presented by the Christian king of Nubia.¹ The next important mosque was that of 'Uqbah ibn-Nāfi' in al-Qayrawān (670-75) which, like al-Fuṣṭāṭ, was a military camp. 'Uqbah started with the mosque and government house as a centre and grouped the people's dwellings around them.² The mosque was rebuilt several times by his successors and finally by the Aghlabid Ziyādat-Allāh I (817-38), since whose days it has stood as one of the greatest sanctuaries in Islam.

In those cases where Moslems established themselves in towns already standing, use was made of older structures. In al-Madā'in, Sa'd ibn-abi-Waqqāṣ used the *Iwān* (arched hall) of the Persian emperor as a place of worship.³ In Damascus the Cathedral of St. John was rebuilt into a mosque by al-Walīd I.⁴ But in Ḥimṣ the same building is said to have been used in common as a mosque and as a church.⁵

The *mihrāb*, a recess or niche in the wall of the mosque indicating the direction of prayer, was a later addition into the equipment of the mosque taken over from the church. Al-Walīd and his governor, 'Umar ibn-'Abd-al-'Azīz, are usually credited with its introduction,⁶ though some credit Mu'āwiyah.⁷ The Madīnah Mosque was evidently the first to get a *mihrāb*. The *mihrāb* rapidly became a common feature of all mosques and like the Christian altar appropriated for itself the largest measure of sacredness. As such it became the recipient of the varied forms of decoration lavished on it by the believers and may therefore be considered the standard for determining the quality of the continually changing styles of Islamic decorative art.

A profane innovation in the mosque for which Mu'āwiyah⁸ is generally blamed is the *maqṣūrah*, a fenced-off part in the interior of the mosque reserved for the use of the caliph. Different

¹ Maqrīzī (Būlāq), vol. II, p. 248, l. 30

² Yāqūt, vol. IV, p. 213

³ Tabarī, vol. I, pp. 2443, 2451.

⁴ Balādhurī, p. 125; Yāqūt, vol. II, p. 591; ibn Jubayr, p. 262.

⁵ Isṭakhri, p. 61; ibn-Hawqal, p. 117; Maqdīsī, p. 156

⁶ Maqrīzī, vol. II, p. 247, ll. 16-17; Maqdīsī, p. 80, l. 17; ibn-Battūyah, vol. I, pp. 271, 272; ibn Duqmāq, *al-Intisāb li-Wāsiṭat 'Iqd al-Amsār*, ed. Vellens (Būlāq, 1893), pt. IV, p. 62, l. 12; Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, vol. II, p. 149

⁷ Ibn-al-Fuqūh, p. 109, l. 2.

⁸ Ya'qūbi, vol. II, p. 571. Others ascribe it to Marwān ibn-al-Hakam (Balādhurī, p. 6, l. 16 = Hitti, p. 20) or to 'Uthmān (Maqrīzī, vol. II, p. 247, l. 32).

reasons have been assigned for its introduction, the chief being protection for the person of the caliph after the Khārijite attempt upon his life.¹ The *maqṣūrah* was evidently used by the caliphs for retirement and rest or for deliberation.²

Like the *mīhrāb*, the minaret was introduced by the Umayyads. Syria was therefore the original home of the minaret. Here the minaret took the form of the native watch-tower or of its successor the church tower, which was square.³

One of the earliest authorities⁴ to mention a minaret on the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus explicitly states that it had been a watch-tower (*nātūr*) belonging to the Cathedral of St. John. In Egypt the minaret is said to have been introduced by a governor of Mu'āwiyah who provided each of the four corners of the Mosque of 'Amr in al-Fustāt with one.⁵ In al-'Irāq the Basrah Mosque was provided by Mu'āwiyah's governor, Ziyād, with a stone minaret.⁶ But it was again the famous Umayyad builder, al-Walid, who was probably responsible for many minarets in Syria and al-Hijāz. Al-Walid's governor, 'Umar, introduced the new feature into the Madīnah Mosque.⁷ After his time minarets became more and more numerous.

While the square stone minaret of Syria was the oldest in Islam and served as prototype for others, especially in North Africa and Spain, it was not the only type developed. Moslem minarets followed the traditional shape of the towers of the country in which they arose. In Egypt minarets for many centuries were built only of brick and the famous lighthouse of Alexandria, the Pharos, is said by some to have exercised some architectural influence. In al-'Irāq a ninth-century Moslem tower-minaret at Sāmarrā on the Tigris reflects the ancient Assyrian *ziggurat* (high place) with its seven stories representing the sun, the moon and the five planets then known.⁸

Because of its biblical association and as the first *gīblah* of Islam⁹ and the traditional stopping-place of Muḥammad on

¹ Dinawarī, p. 229; Ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, pp. 224-6; cf. Tabarī, vol. I, p. 3465, ll. 8-9

² Cf. *Aghāni*, vol. xvii, p. 126, l. 6

³ Maqdisī, p. 182, ll. 8-9.

⁴ Ibn al-Faqīh, p. 108, cf. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, vol. I, p. 203

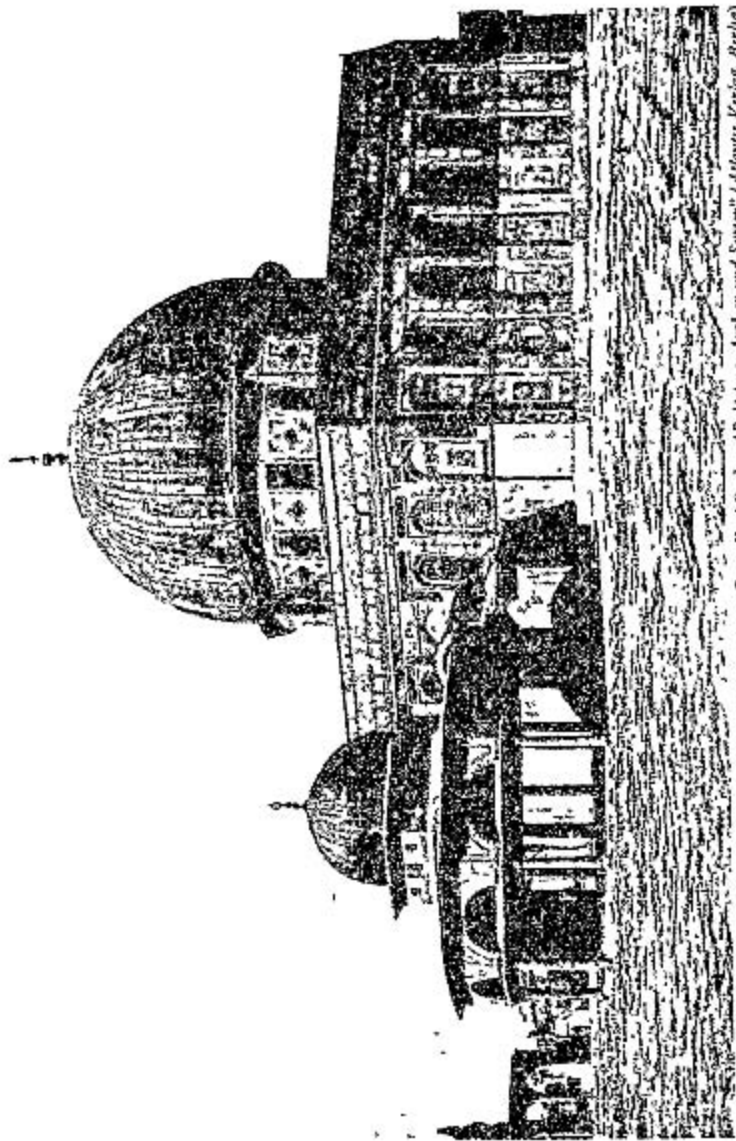
⁵ Maqdisī, vol. II, p. 248.

⁶ Balādhuri, p. 348

⁷ Wüstenfeld, *Stadt*, p. 75; Ibn-Baṭṭūṭah, vol. I, p. 272.

⁸ Morris Jastrow, Jr., *The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria* (Philadelphia, 1915), pp. 376-7. See below, pp. 418-19

⁹ Ibn-Sa'd, vol. I, pt. 2, p. 3; see Koran 2: 136, 138.



From *Karl Grober, 'Palaestina, Arabien und Syrien' (Atlantis Verlag, Berlin)*

THE DOME OF THE ROCK AND THE DOME OF THE CHAIN

his famous nocturnal journey heavenward, Jerusalem very early acquired special sanctity in the eyes of all Moslems.¹ In 638 when the Caliph 'Umar visited the city he possibly erected a simple place of worship of timber or brick on the Moriah hill, where once stood the Temple of Solomon and later a heathen sanctuary and a Christian church. When 'Abd-al-Malik felt the need for a centre of worship that should outshine the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,² rival the Mosque of Makkah then in the hands of the anti-caliph 'Abdullāh ibn-al-Zubayr and deviate therefrom the current of pilgrimage,³ he built in 691 on the same site in Jerusalem the Dome of the Rock, wrongly called the "Mosque of 'Umar". The Dome therefore stands on one of the most sacred spots on earth, a spot hallowed by Jewish, heathen, Christian and Moslem associations and considered by tradition the place where Abraham intended to sacrifice his son Isaac. The Kufic inscription round its dome, a part of which was later falsified by the Caliph al-Ma'mūn,⁴ is one of the oldest Islamic writings extant.⁵ 'Abd-al-Malik used materials derived from the Christian buildings that had stood there before they were destroyed or damaged by Chosroes II in 614 and employed native craftsmen, some of whom may have been of Byzantine origin. Here was a radical change from the old pattern, involving the introduction of mosaic and other decorative motifs and a dome intended to surpass the beautiful cupola of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.⁶ The result was an architectural monument of such noble beauty that it has scarcely been surpassed anywhere. To the Moslems the Dome of the Rock is more than a place of archaeological interest and artistic value—it is a living symbol of their faith. Although it has gone through a few changes and repairs, particularly as a result of the terrific earthquake of 1016,⁷ the Dome has preserved in general its original form and is therefore the earliest Moslem monument surviving. The oldest description of it is that of ibn-al-Faqīh,⁸ written about 903, followed by that of al-Maqdisi⁹ written about 985.

¹ For Jerusalem as the scene of judgment day see Nuwaynī, vol. i, pp. 334 seq.

² Maqdisi, p. 159. ³ Ya'qūbī, vol. II, p. 311. ⁴ See above, p. 220.
⁵ In the Arab Museum at Cairo is a tombstone found in the cemetery of Old Cairo bearing a Kufic inscription dated A H 31/651-2. See Hasan Muhammad al-Hawārī in *al-Hilāl*, vol. xxxviii (1930), pp. 1179-91.

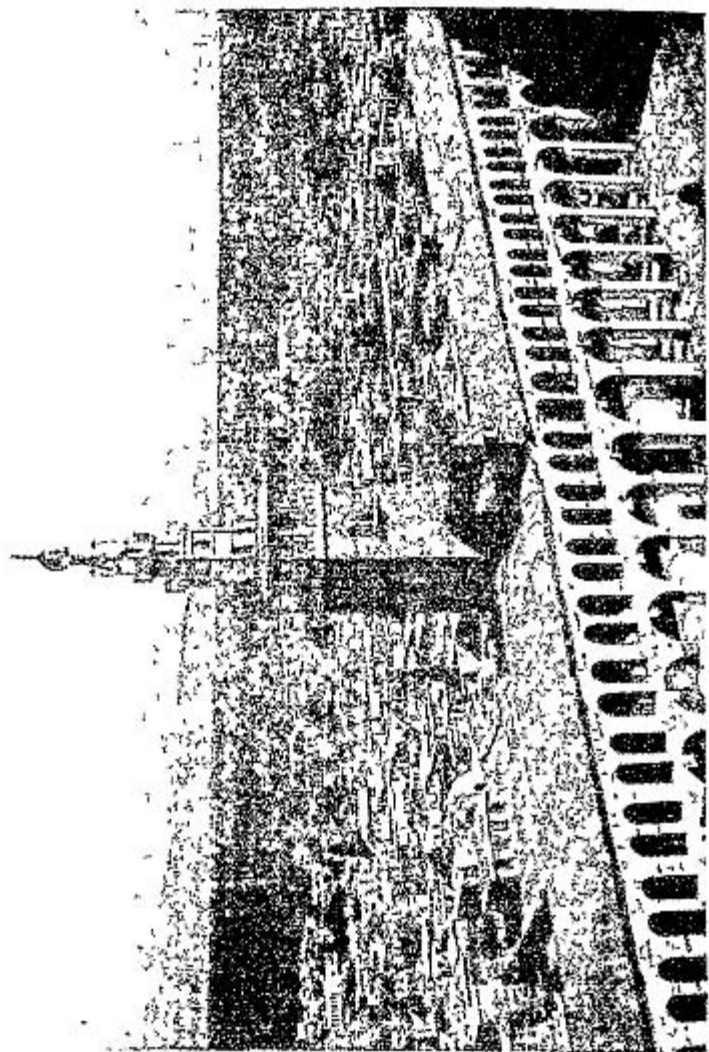
⁶ Maqdisi, p. 159. The Dome was modelled after the cathedral of Bursa. Cf. M. S. Briggs, *Muhammadan Architecture in Egypt and Palestine* (Oxford, 1924), p. 37.

⁷ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. ix, p. 209. ⁸ Pp. 100-101. ⁹ Pp. 169-71.

The Dome is the shrine of which the Aqşa Mosque is the sanctuary. The term al-Masjid al-Aqşa, as we have learned before, is used in Arabic literature in a general sense to include the whole collection of sacred buildings comprising the Dome itself, the tombs, dervish monasteries (sing. *takīyah* or *zāwiyah*), and public fountains (sing. *sabīl*) erected by many caliphs from 'Abd-al-Malik to the Ottoman Sultan Sulaymān the Magnificent which cover an area of some thirty-four acres. Strictly, the word Aqşa is applied to the mosque built by 'Abd-al-Malik not far from the Dome. In its construction use was made of the ruins of St. Mary's Church of Justinian, which stood on that site until demolished by Chosroes. The Aqşa was rebuilt about 771 by the 'Abbāsīd al-Manşūr following an earthquake, and was later modified by the Crusaders. Şalāḥ-al-Dīn (Saladin) restored it (1187) to Islam. As in the case of the Dome our earliest description of it dates from ibn-al-Faqīh¹ and al-Maqdisi.²

In 705 'Abd-al-Malik's son al-Walīd took over the site of the basilica of Damascus dedicated to St. John, originally a temple of Jupiter, and built there the grand mosque named after the Umayyads.³ How much of the Christian construction was preserved in al-Walīd's mosque is difficult to ascertain. The two southern minarets stand on ancient church towers which belonged to the old basilica,⁴ but the northern minaret, used as a beacon tower, was certainly constructed by al-Walīd and became the model for similar structures in Syria, North Africa and Spain. It is the oldest purely Moslem minaret surviving. The three naves and a transept, above which rises the great dome, with their mosaics, are also the work of this caliph who, we are told, employed Persian and Indian craftsmen as well as Greek artisans provided by the emperor of Constantinople.⁵ Papyri recently discovered show that material and skilled workmen were imported from Egypt.⁶ The walls were sumptuously decorated with marbles and mosaics. The geographer al-Maqdisi,⁷ who visited the mosque in the latter part of the tenth century, speaks

¹ P. 100.² Pp. 168-9³ Among the present leading mosques of Aleppo, Hims and Beirut are some which were churches in the past.⁴ Cf. Yāqūt, vol. ii, p. 593.⁵ Maqdisi, p. 158; ibn-'Asākir, vol. i, p. 202; ibn-Jubayr, p. 261; cf. Tabarī, vol. ii, p. 1194.⁶ H. I. Bell in *Der Islam*, vol. ii (1911), pp. 274, 374.⁷ P. 157; see also Isḥākhri, p. 57; ibn-Rustah, p. 326.



UMAYYAD MOSQUE OF DAMASCUS THE COLONNADE AND NORTHERN MINARET

of its mosaics of gold and precious stones representing trees and cities and bearing beautiful inscriptions. These same representations, covered later by some pious caliph, were rediscovered in 1928.¹ In this mosque we find the first appearance of the semi-circular niche for prayer (*mihrāb*). Here the horseshoe arch is also apparent. The vignette decorations served as a model for those of the great Qayrawān Mosque as remodelled by the Aghlabids in the ninth century. Though it was burned in 1069, again in 1400 by Tamerlane and for the last time in 1893, the Umayyad Mosque has always held its place in Moslem imagination as the fourth wonder of the world.² It is also considered the fourth sanctuary in Islam (above, p. 221).

In the period between the first primitive place of worship of al-Madīnah and the two sumptuous mosques of Jerusalem and Damascus the evolution of the Moslem congregational (*jamā'ah*) mosque was rendered complete. The congregational mosque, be it noted, has always been more than a building for devotion; it serves as a general assembly hall and as a political and educational forum.³ The physical needs of the congregation are now amply provided for by a sheltered sanctuary and a covered approach; the ritual needs are met by the minarets, niches, pulpits and outside fountains for ablution; and the political needs by a majesty of plan and splendour of ornament that help to serve notice on the world that the followers of the new faith are in nowise behind those who worship in the grand cathedrals of Christendom.

In architectural fields other than the religious the Umayyads left but few monuments. Chief among these are the desert palaces erected by princes of the caliphal family. Most of the caliphs themselves, like the Ghassānid rulers before them, had country seats, and apart from Mu'āwiyah and 'Abd-al-Malik hardly any of them lived in Damascus. In the capital itself nothing is left of the Khadrā',⁴ the imperial residence adjoining the great mosque, nor are any traces left of al-Ḥajjāj's residence of the same name, al-Qubbah al-Khadrā',⁵ in Wāsiṭ. But the

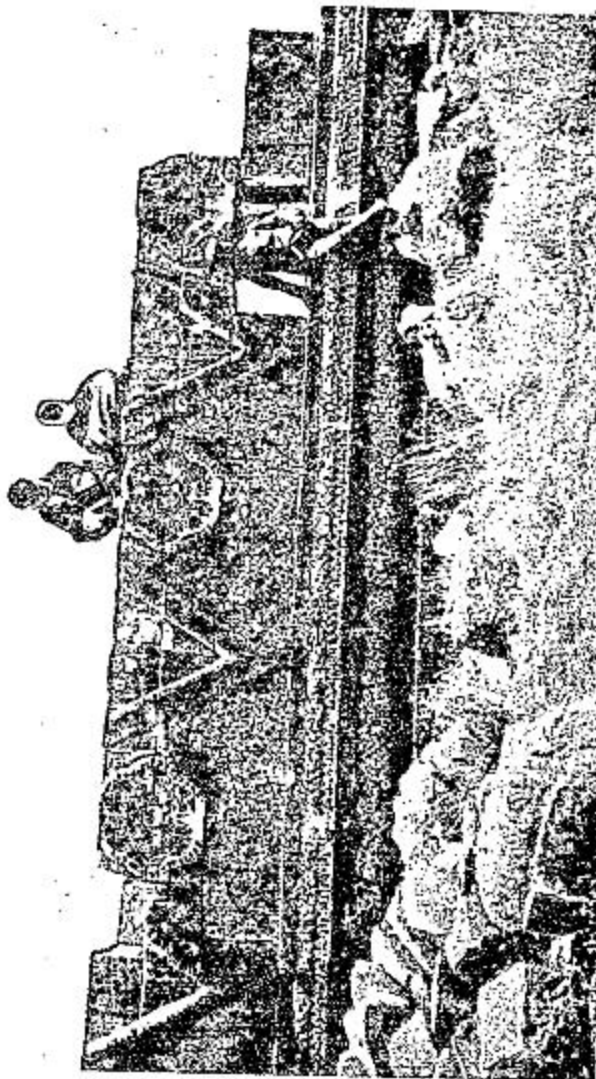
¹ E. de Lorey and M. van Berchem, *Les mosquées de la mosquée des Omayyades à Damas* (Paris, 1930). K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, pt. 1 (Oxford, 1932), pp. 119-20.

² Ibn-al-Faqīh, p. 106; Ibn-'Asākir, vol. i, p. 198; Yāqūt, vol. ii, p. 591.

³ In recent years the principal outbreaks against European authority in Syria and Egypt have had their inception in the Friday mosque meetings.

⁴ See above, p. 215. Ibn-al-Āthīr, vol. 7, p. 224.

⁵ Balādhurī, p. 290; Mas'ūdi, *Tanbih*, p. 360; Ya'qūbi, p. 317



From B. Mariti, "Bilder aus Palästina, Nord-Arabien und dem Sinai" (Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin)

FACADE OF AL-MUSHATTA

fringes of the Syrian desert are strewn with the remains of palaces which were originally either Roman fortresses on the *limes* repaired and remodelled by Umayyad architects or which were erected by those architects on Byzantine and Persian patterns. The ruins of a palace known by the modern name of al-Ukhaydir lie not far from 'Ayn al-Tamr on the eastern side of the Syrian desert, but it is not certain whether they belong to a late Umayyad or an early 'Abbāsid structure.¹ On the south-western edge of the desert the remains are more numerous. Here Yazīd, son of 'Abd-al-Malik, either built or restored a palace called Muwaqqar,² of which few remains are left. His son al-Walid II, who was addicted to the chase and less innocent pastimes, occupied the neighbouring Qaṣṣal³ and al-Azraq,⁴ both Roman posts in Transjordan. To this same Caliph al-Walid II is ascribed the building of another palace in this region known by the modern name al-Mushatta (al-Mashta),⁵ which was the first in this region to be visited by archæologists. The structure was left unfinished at the death of its caliph-builder. The magnificently carved façade of this beautiful château is now in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin.⁶ The best known structure in this group is, however, Quṣayr (the little palace of) 'Amrah, lying east of the Jordan in a direct line from the northern edge of the Dead Sea. This castle, built between 712 and 715 probably by al-Walid I, was discovered for the learned world by Alois Musil⁷ in 1898. The name is presumably modern, since we see no trace of it in Arabic literature. What makes this building especially remarkable is the extraordinary mural paintings to be discussed in the next section.

Most theologians of Islam maintained that the representation of men and animals was the prerogative of God alone and

¹ Gertrude L. Bell, *Palace and Mosque at Ukhaider* (Oxford, 1914), p. 167.

² Yāqūt, vol. iv, p. 687. Al-Balqā', where the palace stood, was the southern region of the eastern Jordan district and comprised ancient Moab.

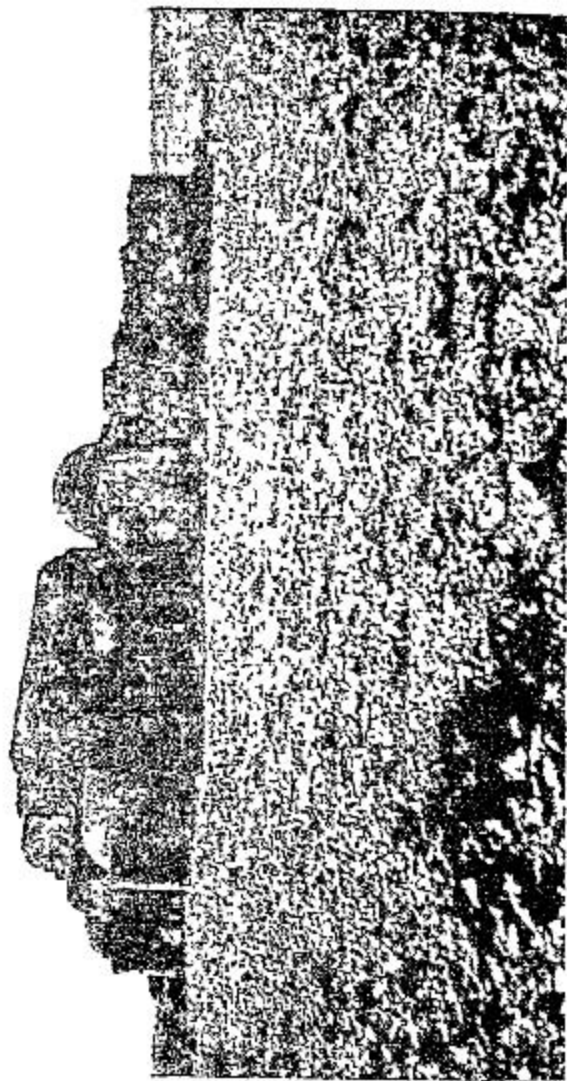
³ From Latin *castellum*, castle. Yāqūt, vol. iv, p. 95.

⁴ Tabarī, vol. ii, p. 1743.

⁵ Bedouin pronunciation Mshatta, winter resort.

⁶ Consult R. E. Brünnow and A. v. Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia*, vol. ii (Strassburg, 1905), pp. 105-70; B. Schulz and J. Strzygowski, "Mschatta", *Jahrbuch der königlich-preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, vol. xxv (1904), pp. 205-373.

⁷ *Kuṣayr 'Amra und andere Schlösser östlich von Moab*, pt. 1 (Vienna, 1902), pp. 5 seq.; Musil, *Kuṣayr 'Amra, I. Textband* (Vienna, 1907). Musil considered al-Walid II the builder.



From H. Moritz, *Reise in Arabien*, A. v. Schubert und Lemmerling (Dietrich'sche Verlags-Buchh.)

QUSAYR 'AMRAH FROM THE SOUTH EAST

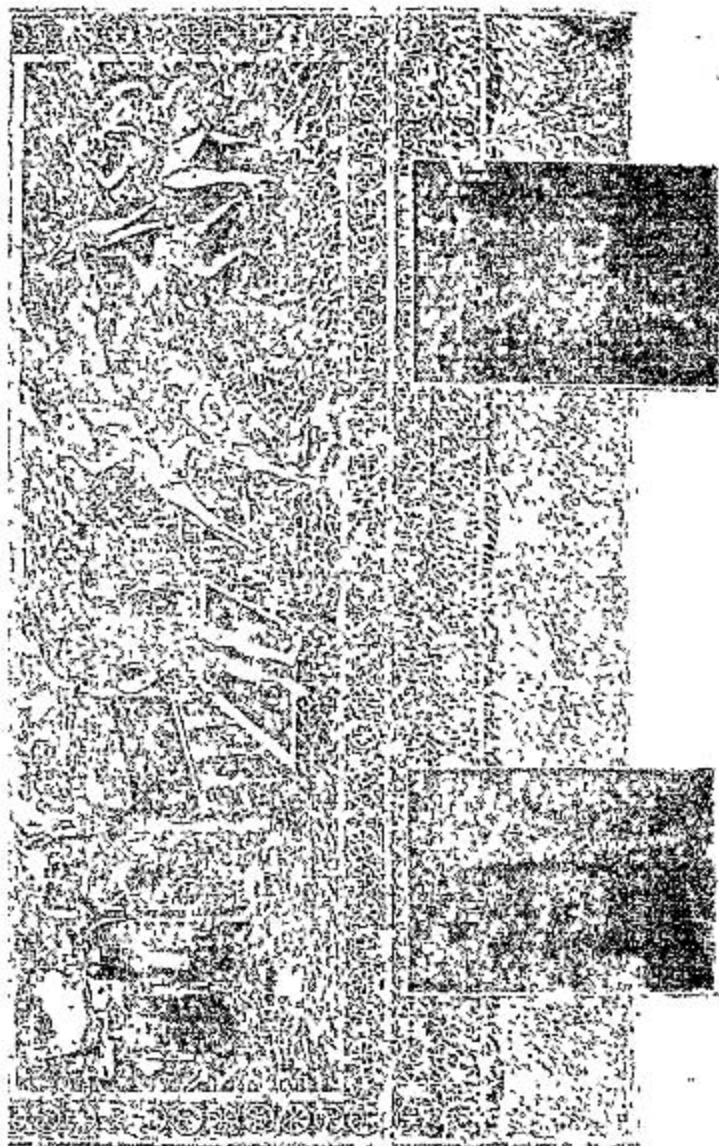
considered him who intruded on this domain a blasphemer. This hostile attitude toward representational art, a corollary of the uncompromising monotheism of the Koran and its prohibition of idolatry, derives its direct sanction from a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet is reported to have declared that those to be most severely punished on the day of judgment are the painters.¹ The term used, *muṣawwirīn* (portrayers), would apply to sculptors as well. No representation of human beings therefore occurs anywhere on mosques, though in a few cases we find it on palaces and in books. Almost all decorative motifs in Moslem art are derived from the vegetable kingdom or from geometrical figures. The success achieved in later ages in this field is evinced by the term "arabesque" applied to this style of decoration in most of the European languages. But the Arabians themselves had no developed feeling for either plastic or pictorial art, as their remains in the peninsula and the literary descriptions of their sanctuaries clearly indicate. What we call Moslem art was eclectic in its origin, motifs and execution, mostly the product of the artistic genius of the subjugated peoples, but developed under Moslem auspices and peculiarly adapted to the demands of the Moslem religion.

The earliest illustrations of Moslem pictorial art are the frescoes of Quṣayr 'Amrah, which suggest workmanship of Christian painters. On the walls of this Transjordanian pleasure-house and bath of al-Walid I are pictures of six royal personages, including Roderick, the last Visigothic king of Spain. "Qayṣar" (Caesar) and "Najāshī" (Negus) are inscribed above two of the figures and "Chosroes" (in Greek) above the third. Sāsānid influence is manifest in the painting. Other symbolic figures represent Victory, Philosophy, History and Poetry. A hunting-scene depicts a lion attacking a wild ass. A number of nude pictures represent dancers, musicians and merrymakers. The ornament consists of draperies, foliage growing out of vases, vines, palm trees with clusters of fruit, laurel and birds of the desert. The inscriptions are mostly Arabic with a few names in Greek.

In pre-Islamic time the Arabians had various types of song: Muḥarrab, martial, religious and amorous. Traces of the primitive religious hymns are still preserved in the *talbiyah*² of the

¹ Bukhārī, vol. vi, p. 61.

² The recitation of the hymn beginning with "*Labbayka*" (here I am); Bukhārī, vol. ii, p. 135.



FIGURES ON WEST WALL OF THE MAIN HALL OF THE QUSAYR 'AMRAH
From a painting by I. Uthch.

In courtesy of the Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin

pilgrimage ceremony. The *inshād*, or chanting of poetry, is maintained in the cantillation (*taywīd*) of the Koran. But the caravan song, *hudā'*, was their favourite and, in their estimation, the first form of singing. The *hudā'*—so goes the legend in al-Mas'ūdi¹—originated when one of the founders of the race, Mudar ibn-Ma'add,² fell from his camel, fractured his hand and in his beautiful voice began to cry, "Yā-yadāh! Yā-yadāh!" (O, my hand! O, my hand!), which synchronized with the steps of the camel and kept it moving. It was this cry that created the metre of *rajaz* used in caravan songs and the simplest of all poetical metres.

The South Arabians undoubtedly had their own types of song and musical instruments³ about which very little is known, but it is doubtful whether that tradition formed a part of the heritage of the Northern, and consequently the Moslem, Arabians. The pre-Islamic inhabitants of al-Ḥijāz used as their principal instruments the square tambourine (*duff*), the flute (*qaṣabah, qassābah*) and the reed pipe or oboe (*samr, mizmār*).⁴ They also knew the skin-bellied lute (*mizhar*).⁵ At about the time of the Prophet foreign musical influences were beginning to tell. The Ghasānid princes kept choruses of Greek girl singers. The Lakhmids of al-Ḥīrah had the Persian wooden-bellied lute (*ūd*, whence Eng. "lute"), which the Ḥijāzis borrowed. One tradition makes al-Nadr ibn-al-Ḥārith ibn-Kaladah, the physician and poet-minstrel whose pagan recitals competed with the revelations of Muhammad in winning the favour of the people,⁶ responsible for the introduction of this instrument into Makkah from al-Ḥīrah.⁷ Another tradition credits ibn-Surayj († ca. 726) with introducing this Persian lute. He is said to have seen it for the first time in the hands of Persian workers brought to Arabia in 684 by 'Abdullāh ibn-al-Zubayr to rebuild the Ka'bah.⁸ Later the wood-wind instrument called in Persian *nāy* (vertical flute) was likewise borrowed, together with the name, as the researches of Henry G. Farmer⁹ indicate. Evidently

¹ Vol. viii, p. 92.² Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, p. 93.³ *Iqd*, vol. iii, p. 237, Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, p. 93.⁴ He is supposed to be the one referred to in *sūr* 31: 5-6.⁵ Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, pp. 93-4.⁶ *Aghām*, vol. i, p. 98.⁷ In *Journal Royal Asiatic Society* (1929), pp. 119 seq., pp. 489 seq.; *A History of Arabian Music to the XIIIth Century* (London, 1929), p. 7.⁸ Cf. "Almoḥad" in I Ch. 1: 20.⁹ *Aghām*, vol. ii, p. 175.

most of the Jāhiliyah professional singers were female, and the *Aghāni*,¹ itself a book of songs, has handed down to us the names of a few of them. Some of the elegies mourning the famous hero Ṣakhr by his sister al-Khansā', a contemporary of the Prophet and celebrated as the greatest poetess of the Arabs, were evidently composed as songs.² Most of the pre-Islamic poets evidently sang their compositions to music.

Muhammad's denunciation of poets³ was not directed against them as such but merely as the mouthpieces of heathenism. The Prophet may have looked with disfavour upon music also because of its association with pagan religious rites. According to a *ḥadīth* he is said to have declared the musical instrument to be the devil's muezzin, serving to call men to his worship.⁴ Most Moslem legists and theologians frowned on music; some condemned it in all its aspects; a few looked upon it as religiously unpraiseworthy (*makrūh*), though not actually sinful (*ḥarām*), but the view of the masses was better expressed in the adage, "Wine is as the body, music as the soul, and joy is their offspring".⁵

Soon after the first awe inspired by Islam had worn off the tendency of social change in al-Ḥijāz veered toward the esthetic side, especially under 'Uthmān, the first caliph with a taste for wealth and display. Harmony between voice and instrument was then learned. What the Arabic authors style *al-ghinā'* *al-mutqan* or *al-raḡīq*, artistic or elegant singing, that highly developed type in which there is application of rhythm (*īqā'*) to the melody of song, became well established in al-Ḥijāz. Male professional musicians appear for the first time under the sobriquet *mukhannathūn*, i.e. effeminate, men who dyed their hands and affected the manners of women. Such a man was Ṭuways (the little peacock, 632-710) of al-Madīnah, considered the father of song in Islam. Ṭuways is supposed to have introduced rhythm into Arabic music and to have been the first to sing in that language to the accompaniment of an instrument, the tambourine.⁶

¹ Vol. viii, p. 3, vol. x, p. 48. ² *Aghāni*, vol. xiii, p. 140. ³ Sūr. 26: 224-6

⁴ Consult Nuwayri, *Nihoyah*, vol. iv, pp. 132-5; Farmer, *Arabian Music*, pp. 24-5; A. J. Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition* (Leyden, 1927), p. 173

⁵ *Nawāḥi*, p. 178. Consult Nuwayri, vol. iv, pp. 136 *seq.*

⁶ *Aghāni*, vol. ii, pp. 170, 171, 173.

The first generation of Moslem singers, headed by Tuways, consisted of foreign libertines. Tuways left a progeny of students, chief among whom was ibn-Surayj (ca. 634-726), regarded as one of the four great singers of Islam.¹ Besides crediting him with the introduction of the Persian lute tradition ascribes to him the use of the baton for directing musical performances. Ibn-Surayj was a freedman, the son of a Turk, and enjoyed the patronage of the famous beauty Sukaynah, daughter of al-Husayn. He counted among his teachers the Makkan negro client Sa'id ibn-Misjah (or Musajjah, † ca. 714). Sa'id, the first Makkan musician and perhaps the greatest of the Umayyad period, is said to have travelled in Syria and Persia and to have been the first to put Byzantine and Persian songs into Arabic.² He is evidently the one who systematized Arabian musical theory and practice of classical times. Another student of his was al-Gharid,³ a half-breed Berber who, as a slave of Sukaynah, was also trained by ibn-Surayj⁴ and, after his second master, attained the enviable rank of one of the four singers of Islam. The other two were ibn-Muhriz († ca. 715), of Persian origin, popularly dubbed "the cymbalist [*sannāj*] of the Arabs",⁵ and Ma'bad († 743), a Madīnese mulatto who was a special favourite at the courts of al-Walid I, Yazid II and al-Walid II.⁶ Before settling in the capital Ma'bad had wandered as a minstrel all over Arabia. Among the songstresses (*ḡayān*) Jamīlah († ca. 720), a Madīnese freedwoman, was the artistic queen of the first generation.⁷ Her residence proved a centre of attraction for the leading musicians and singers of Makkah and al-Madīnah, many of whom were her pupils; conspicuous among the frequent auditors at her concerts was the poet of love, 'Umar ibn-abī-Rabī'ah. Among her pupils she counted Ḥabābah and Sallāmah, the favourites of Yazid II. The crowning event of Jamīlah's picturesque career was her imposing pilgrimage to Makkah at the head of a gorgeous procession of singers and songstresses, poets and musicians, admirers and friends, all in gala dress and on richly caparisoned mounts.⁸

Occasional concerts and brilliant musical events held in the

¹ *Aghāni*, vol. i, p. 98.

² His first name was 'Abd-al-Mahk. *Gharid* means "the good singer".

³ *Aghāni*, vol. i, pp. 99-100.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 10 seq.

⁵ *Ibid.* vol. vii, p. 135.

⁶ *Ibid.* vol. iii, p. 84.

⁷ *Ibid.* vol. i, p. 151.

⁸ *Ibid.* vol. vii, pp. 124 seq.

homes of aristocratic ladies attracted throngs of dilettanti. The wood-bellied lute introduced from Persia through al-Ḥīrah had by this time partly superseded the native skin-bellied lute. Another favourite stringed instrument was the *mī'zafah*, a kind of psaltery. The wind instruments included the flute (*qaṣābah*) and reed pipe (*mizmār*) as well as the horn (*būq*). The percussion instruments were represented by the square tambourine, especially favoured by the women, and by the drum (*ṭabl*) and cymbals or castanets (*sunūj*). Notes, when known, were transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to another and have consequently been entirely lost. The *Aghāni* is replete with verses set to music under the Umayyads, yet it has preserved not a solitary note for us. On the occasion of a visit to al-Ḥijāz by the Christian Hunayn al-Ḥīrī, dean of the 'Irāq singers, such a crowd gathered at the residence of Sukaynah to hear him that the porch on which they met collapsed, resulting in the death of the distinguished visiting artist.¹ The holy pilgrimage, with all the celebrities it brought from different parts of the Moslem world, afforded the Ḥijāz musicians and singers an annual opportunity for the display of their talent. It was customary for them on special occasions to meet the caravan and perform en route. The *Aghāni* has left us a description of a pilgrimage-parade in which 'Umar ibn-abī-Rabī'ah, the representative of the poetical spirit of the age, clad in his finest attire and flirting with female wayfarers, took the leading part. In his company was ibn-Surayj, whose singing of 'Umar's verses distracted the pilgrims from the observance of their ritualistic ceremonies.²

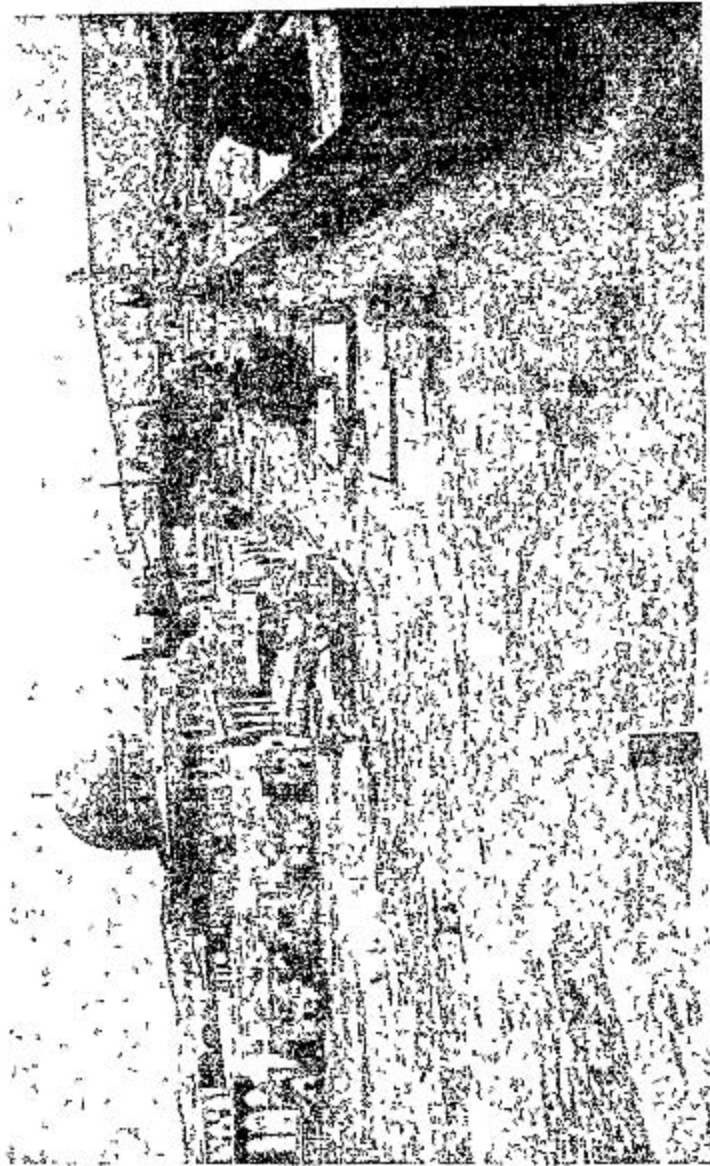
Thus did Makkah, and more particularly al-Madīnah, become in the Umayyad period a nursery of song and a conservatory for music.³ As such they supplied the court of Damascus with an ever-increasing stream of talent. In vain did the conservatives and ulema press their objections, linking music and song with wine-bibbing and gaming as forbidden pleasures (*malāhi*) and quoting Prophetic *hadiths* which place such diversions among the most powerful means by which the devil seduces men. The tide could not be stemmed; the Muses stood too high in public favour to suffer from such verbal attacks. Their devotees could quote equally striking sayings ascribed to the Prophet⁴ and

¹ *Aghāni*, vol. II, p. 127.

² *Ibid.* vol. I, p. 102.

³ *Iqd.* vol. II, p. 237.

⁴ Ghazālī, *Ikjā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Cairo, 1334), vol. II, pp. 238 seq.



THE JARAM AREA FROM THE NORTH WEST WITH THE AQSA MOSQUE IN THE BACKGROUND

might very well argue that poetry, music and song did not always tend to debase, that they contributed their share to the refinement of social intercourse and to the sublimation of the relationships between the sexes.¹ It was the second Umayyad caliph, Yazīd I, himself a composer, who introduced singing and musical instruments into the Damascus court.² He initiated the practice of holding grand festivities in the palace which featured wine and song, hereafter inseparable in royal festivals. 'Abd-al-Malik patronized ibn-Misjah of the Hijāz school. His son al-Walīd, the patron of arts, summoned ibn-Surayj and Ma'bad to the capital, where they were received with great honour. Yazīd II, successor of the austere and puritanical 'Umar, reinstated poetry and music in public favour through his Ḥabābah and Sallāmah.³ Hishām bestowed his patronage on Ḥunayn of al-Ḥīrah. The pleasure-loving Walīd II, himself a player on the lute and composer of songs, welcomed to his court a host of musician-singers, including the noted Ma'bad.⁴ His reign coincided with the blossoming of music in the twin cities of al-Hijāz. So widely spread was the cultivation of the musical art under the last Umayyads that it provided their enemies, the 'Abbāsīd faction, with an effective argument in their propaganda to undermine the house of "ungodly usurpers".

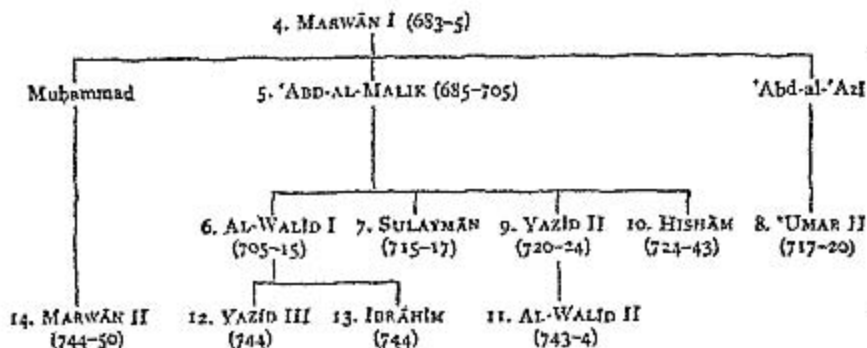
¹ *Iqd.*, vol. iii, pp. 225-6, Nawāji, pp. 177-9.

² *Aghāni*, vol. xvi, p. 70, cf. *Mas'ūdi*, vol. v, pp. 156-7.

³ *Mas'ūdi*, vol. v, pp. 446 *seq.* ⁴ *Ibid.* vol. vi, p. 4.

CHAPTER XXII

DECLINE AND FALL OF THE Umayyad Dynasty



A tree showing the genealogical relationship of the Marwanid caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty

ARAB authorities highly esteem Hishām and, as we learned before, rightly rank him after Mu'āwiyah and 'Abd-al-Malik as the third and last true statesman of the banu-Umayyah. His four successors, with the exception of Marwān II, who ended the dynasty, proved incapable if not dissolute or degenerate. Even before the time of Hishām it became the fashion for the caliph, as exemplified by Yazid II, to pass his time in the chase and over his wine cup and to be absorbed more in music and poetry than in the Koran and state affairs. The eunuch system, which made the harem institution possible, was now fully developed. Indulgence in luxury due to increased wealth and a superabundance of slaves was rife. Even the reigning family could no longer boast pure Arabian blood. Yazid III (744) was the first caliph in Islam born of a slave mother.¹ His two successors were also sons of such freed women.² Such evils among

¹ Tabari, vol. ii, p. 1874; Ya'qūbī, vol. ii, p. 401; Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, pp. 31-2. See below, p. 332.

² Ya'qūbī, vol. ii, pp. 403, 404.

the ruling class were only too symptomatic of general moral turpitude. The characteristic vices of civilization, especially those involving wine, women and song, had seized upon the sons of the desert and were beginning to sap the vitality of the youthful Arab society.

The ancient and typical weakness of Arabian social life, with its over-emphasis on individualism, tribal spirit (*'asabīyah*) and feuds, was again reasserting itself. Such bonds as Islam had temporarily provided for holding in check the centrifugal forces latent in social life organized on a large scale were now becoming loose. Beginning with 'Uthmān, the hitherto repressed family spirit began to assert itself.

North Arabian tribes had before Islam emigrated into al-'Irāq, where they established the Diyār Rabi'ah (the abode of the Rabi'ah tribe) along the Tigris, and the Diyār Muḍar (the abode of the Mudar tribe) along the Euphrates. The first place among the banu-Mudar was held by the Qays clan. Other tribes who had settled in Syria originally came from South Arabia and were therefore called Yamanites. In the Yamanite party of Syria the leading faction was the banu-Kalb. The Arabs of Khurāsān, the north-eastern province of Persia, were mainly colonists from al-Basrah and were therefore mostly North Arabians; the leading tribe there was Tamīm, corresponding to Qays in the Euphrates region. In Khurāsān the Yamanite party went by the appellation of Azdite, after the name of the leading family. In other regions the Qaysites were called Nizārites or Ma'addites.¹ But no matter what name these tribes went by the alignment was usually that of North Arabian against South Arabian tribes. Conscious of some deep-rooted national distinction, the North Arabians, who traced their descent to Ishmael and styled themselves 'Adnāni, were never fully amalgamated with the South Arabians, who carried their pedigree back to Qahtān, the Joktan of Genesis 10 : 25 *seq.* The Qaysites became in course of time the nucleus of one political party, and the Yamanites of another.

Mu'āwiyah, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, raised his Syrian throne on Yamanite shoulders. His son and successor,

¹ On Arab tribes consult ibn-Durayd, *Ishtiqāq*, F. Wüstenfeld, *Genealogische Tabellen der arabischen Stämme* (Göttingen, 1852); and *Register zu den genealogischen Tabellen der arabischen Stämme* (Göttingen, 1853).

Yazīd, whose mother, Maysūn, belonged to the Kalbites of the Yamanite party, contracted a marriage with a Kalbite woman. The jealous Qaysites refused to recognize his successor, Mu'āwiyah II, and declared for the pseudo-caliph ibn-al-Zubayr. The decisive victory of the Kalbites over the Qaysites at Marj Rāhiṭ (684) secured the throne for Marwān, the father of the Marwānid branch of the Umayyad house. Under al-Walīd I Qaysite power reached its culmination in al-Ḥajjāj and his cousin Muhammad, the conqueror of India, and in Qutaybah, the subduer of Central Asia. Al-Walīd's brother Sulaymān favoured the Yamanites. Yazīd II, however, under the influence of his Muḍari mother patronized the Qaysite party, as did al-Walīd II; Yazīd III relied upon Yamani arms in wresting the sceptre from the hands of his predecessor, al-Walīd II. Thus did the caliph in the latter part of the Umayyad period appear to be rather the head of a particular party than the sovereign of a united empire.

The polarization of the Moslem world by this Arab dualism of Qays and Yaman, who also appear under other names, became now complete. It precipitated the downfall of the dynasty and its ill effects were manifest in years to come and in widely separated places. The district of Damascus itself was once the scene of relentless warfare for two years all because, as we are told,¹ a Ma'addite had filched a water-melon from a Yamanite's garden. In distant Murcia in Spain blood is said to have flowed for several years because a Muḍarite picked a vine leaf from the yard of a Yamanite.² Everywhere, in the capital as well as in the provinces, on the banks of the Indus, the shores of Sicily and the borders of the Sahara, the ancestral feud, transformed into an alignment of two political parties, one against the other, made itself felt. It proved a potent factor in ultimately arresting the progress of Moslem arms in France and in the decline of the Andalusian caliphate. In Lebanon and Palestine the issue seems to have remained a living one until modern times, for we know of pitched battles fought between the two parties as late as the early part of the eighteenth century.

The lack of any definite and fixed rule of hereditary succession to the caliphal throne caused no small measure of national disturbance. Mu'āwiyah initiated the wise and far-sighted policy

¹ Abu-al-Ḥikm, vol. ii, p. 14.

² Ibn-'Idhār, *Dejān*, vol. ii, p. 84.

of nominating his son as his successor, but the antiquated Arabian tribal principle of seniority in succession stood in constant conflict with the natural ambition of the ruling father to pass the sovereignty on to his son. Homage by the people became the only sure title to the throne. Of the fourteen Umayyad caliphs only four—Mu'āwiyah I, Yazīd I, Marwān I and 'Abd-al-Malik—had their sons as immediate successors. The already complicated problem was rendered more complicated by the precedent established when the founder of the Marwānid branch designated his son 'Abd-al-Malik as his successor, to be followed by his other son 'Abd-al-'Azīz.¹ Once in power, 'Abd-al-Malik did the natural thing: he tried to divert the succession from his brother 'Abd-al-'Azīz to his own son al-Walīd, in the meantime designating his other son, Sulaymān, as the second nominee.² Al-Walīd in his turn made an unsuccessful effort to deprive his brother Sulaymān of his right in favour of his own son. All these manoeuvres were, of course, far from being conducive to the stability and continuity of the régime.

The
partisans
of 'Alī

The dissentient Shi'ites, who never acquiesced in the rule of the "Umayyad usurpers" and never forgave them the wrong they perpetrated against 'Alī and al-Ḥusayn, became now more active than ever. Their whole-hearted devotion to the descendants of the Prophet made them the focus of popular sympathy. To their camp rallied many of those who were dissatisfied politically, economically or socially with the rule of the banu-Umayyah. In al-'Irāq, where the majority of the population had by now become Shi'ah, opposition to Syrian rule, which arose originally out of the feeling that it deprived their country of its national independence, now took on a religious colour. In the Sunnite ranks themselves, the pietists charged the caliphs with worldliness and neglect of koranic and traditional law and were everywhere ready to give religious sanction to any opposition that might be raised.

'Abbāsīd
claimants

Still another destructive force was in operation. The 'Abbāsīds, descendants of an uncle of the Prophet, al-'Abbās ibn-'Abd-al-Muṭṭalib ibn-Hāshim, began to press their claim to the throne. Cleverly they made common cause with the 'Alīds by emphasizing the rights of the house of Hāshim. The Shi'ah regarded this family as consisting primarily of the descendants of 'Alī, but

¹ Ya'qūbi, vol. II, p. 306.

² *Ibid* pp 334-5.

the 'Abbāsids included themselves as members of the Hāshimite branch of the Quraysh and therefore closer to the Prophet than the banu-Umayyah.¹

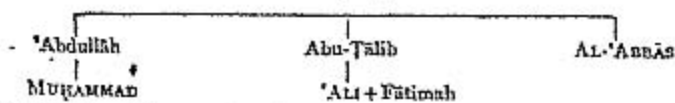
Taking advantage of the widespread discontent and posing as defenders of the true faith, the descendants of al-'Abbās soon became the champions and leaders of the anti-Umayyad movement. For their headquarters and seat of propaganda they chose a little village south of the Dead Sea, al-Ḥumaymah² by name, seemingly harmless and aloof from the rest of the world but in reality strategically close to the caravan route and the junction of the pilgrim roads. Here the stage was set for the earliest and most subtle propagandist movement in political Islam.

Non-Arabian Moslems in general and Persian Moslems in particular had good reason for dissatisfaction. Far from being granted the expected economic and social equality with Arabian Moslems, they were instead generally reduced to the position of clients and were not always exempted from the capitation tax paid by non-Moslems. What made them more discontented was the consciousness that they represented a higher and more ancient culture, a fact acknowledged even by the Arabians themselves. It was among such discontented neophytes that the Shī'ite-'Abbāsīd seed found fertile soil. From al-'Irāq, always loyal to the 'Alid cause, the Shī'ah doctrine spread into Persia and struck root especially in the north-eastern province, Khurāsān, which was then much larger than now. In Persia the way had been somewhat prepared by the Azd-Muḍar feud perpetuated by the Arabs. But deeper forces were at work. Under the guise of Shī'ah Islam, Iranianism was revivifying itself.

The zero hour in the life of the Umayyad dynasty approached when a coalition was effected between the Shī'ite, Khurāsānian and 'Abbāsīd forces which was utilized by the last for their own

2 Hāshim

'Abd-al-Muṭṭalib



¹ Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, pp. 356-7; *Fakhri*, pp. 192-3; *Ṭabari*, vol. iii, p. 34; *Yāqūt*, vol. ii, p. 342; *Muslī*, *Northern Hegāz* (New York, 1926), pp. 56-61 and map in pocket.

advantage. This coalition was headed by abu-al-'Abbās, a great-great-grandson of al-'Abbās, the uncle of the Prophet. Under his leadership revolutionary Islam opposed the existing order with a feigned ideal of theocracy and a promise of return to orthodoxy. On June 9, 747, the long-meditated revolt broke out when the 'Abbāsid agent in Khurāsān, abu-Muslim, a Persian freedman of obscure origin,¹ unfurled the black banner, originally the standard of Muḥammad but now the 'Abbāsid emblem. At the head of the Azd (Yamani) tribe he entered the capital, Marw, but the majority of his adherents were Iranian peasants and clients rather than Arabs.² In vain did Naṣr ibn-Sayyār, the Umayyad governor of Khurāsān, appeal to Marwān II for aid. In a pathetic letter he had recourse to poetry.³ But Marwān, though in personal energy and capacity superior to his immediate predecessors, made no response, for his hands were full with an uprising at home which had spread from Palestine to Ḥims. It was the same old trouble between Qaysites and Yamanites which, exploited by ambitious aspirants to the caliphate, had assumed the proportions of civil war under his two predecessors Yazīd III and Ibrāhīm. Yazīd had made matters worse by espousing the Qadarite doctrine. Ibrāhīm headed the Yamanite party. Marwān II, favoured by the Qaysites, had committed the fatal mistake of transferring not only his residence but also the state bureaux to Ḥarrān in Mesopotamia, thus alienating the sympathies of all Syrians. Besides the Syrians, the mainstay of Umayyad power, the Khārijites of al-'Irāq—ever the deadly enemy of established order—were now in open rebellion.⁴ In Spain the ancestral feuds were rending in pieces that westernmost province of Islam. For three years the sexagenarian caliph, who previous to his accession had won the sobriquet Marwān al-Ḥimār (the ass) for his unfailing perseverance in warfare,⁵ held the field against the Syrian and Khārijite insurgents and proved himself an able general. To him as the military organizer of these campaigns is ascribed the change from fighting in lines (*sufūf*), a practice hallowed by association with the Prophet's method of warfare, to that of cohorts (*karādīs*), small units more compact and at the same time more mobile. But it was too late

¹ Cf. *Fakhrī*, p. 186.

² *Ṭabari*, vol. ii, pp. 1953 *seq.*; *Dīnawari*, pp. 359 *seq.*

³ *Fakhrī*, p. 194; Nicholson, *Literary History*, p. 251.

⁴ *Ṭabari*, vol. ii pp. 1943-9.

⁵ *Fakhrī*, p. 184.

for him to redeem the general situation. The sun of the banu-Umayyah was fast approaching its setting.

The fall of the capital of Khurāsān, Marw, was followed in 749 by the fall of the leading city of al-'Irāq, al-Kūfah, the hiding-place of abu-al-'Abbās, which surrendered to the insurgents without much opposition. Here on Thursday, October 30, 749, public homage was paid in the chief mosque to abu-al-'Abbās as caliph.¹ The first 'Abbāsīd caliph was thus enthroned. Everywhere the white banner of the Umayyads was in retreat before the black banner of the 'Abbāsīds and their confederates. Marwān resolved on a last, desperate stand. With 12,000² men he advanced from Ḥarrān and was met (January 750) on the left bank of the Greater Zāb, a tributary of the Tigris, by the enemy forces headed by 'Abdullāh ibn-'Alī, an uncle of the new caliph. The will to win and the expectation of victory were no longer on the side of the Syrian army and its defeat was decisive. After the battle of the Zāb Syria lay at the feet of the 'Abbāsīd victors. Its leading towns, one after the other, opened their gates to 'Abdullāh and his Khurāsāni troops. Only at Damascus was it found necessary to lay siege, but the proud capital surrendered on April 26, 750, after a few days. From Palestine 'Abdullāh sent a detachment in pursuit of the fugitive caliph, who was caught and killed (August 5, 750) outside a church in which he had sought refuge at Būšīr³ (Busiris) in Egypt, where his tomb is still pointed out. His head and, according to al-Mas'ūdi,⁴ the insignia of the caliphate were sent to abu-al-'Abbās.

The 'Abbāsīds now embarked upon a policy of exterminating the Umayyad house. Their general 'Abdullāh shrank from no measure necessary for wiping out the kindred enemy root and branch. On June 25, 750, he invited eighty of them to a banquet at abu-Fuṭrus, ancient Antipatris on the 'Awjā' River near Jaffa, and in the course of the feast had them all cut down. After spreading leathern covers over the dead and dying he and his lieutenants continued their repast to the accompaniment of

¹ Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, pp. 417-18; Ṭabari, vol. iii, pp. 27-33; Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, pp. 87, 98.

² Ṭabari, vol. iii, p. 47 (cf. p. 45). See above, p. 226.

³ Also Abūšīr, probably Būšīr al-Malaq in the Fayyūm. Consult Sāwir ibn-al-Muqallā', *Siyar al-Baṭārikah al-Iskandarāniyyin*, ed. C. F. Seybold (Hamburg, 1912), pp. 181 seq.; Ṭabari, vol. iii, pp. 49-50.

⁴ Vol. vi, p. 77.

human groans.¹ Agents and spies were sent all over the Moslem world to hunt down fugitive scions of the fallen family, some of whom "sought refuge in the bowels of the earth".² The dramatic escape of the youthful 'Abd-al-Rahmān ibn-Mu'āwiyah ibn-Hishām to Spain, where he succeeded in establishing a new and brilliant Umayyad dynasty, belongs to a later chapter. Even the dead were not to escape the ruthless chastisement meted out by the 'Abbāsīds. The remains of the caliphs in Damascus, Qinnasrīn and other places were exhumed by 'Abdullāh and desecrated. The corpse of Sulaymān was dug out from Dābiq. That of Hishām was disinterred from al-Ruṣāfah, where it was found embalmed, and after being scourged eighty times was burned to ashes.³ Only the tomb of the pious 'Umar II escaped violation.

With the fall of the Umayyads the glory of Syria passed away, its hegemony ended. The Syrians awoke too late to the realization that the centre of gravity in Islam had left their land and shifted eastward, and though they made several armed attempts to regain their former importance all proved futile. At last they set their hopes on an expected Sufyāni,⁴ a sort of Messiah, to come and deliver them from the yoke of their 'Irāqī oppressors. To the present day one hears Moslems in Syria referring to a forthcoming descendant of Mu'āwiyah. But the Umayyad fall meant more than this. The truly Arab period in the history of Islam had now passed and the first purely Arab phase of the Islamic empire began to move rapidly toward its close. The 'Abbāsīd government called itself *dawlah*,⁵ new era, and a new era it was. The 'Irāqīs felt freed from Syrian tutelage. The Shī'ites considered themselves avenged. The clients became emancipated. Al-Kūfah, on the border of Persia, was made the new capital. Khurāsānians formed the caliphal bodyguard and

¹ Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, pp. 425-6; Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, p. 76; ibn-al-Athīr, vol. v, pp. 329-30; Mubarrad, p. 707; *Aghāni*, vol. iv, p. 161; cf. *ibid.* pp. 92-6; *Fakhri*, pp. 203-4; Theophanes, p. 427. Compare the story of Jehu's extermination of Ahab's house (2 K. 9: 14-34) and the destruction of the Mamlūks of Egypt by Muḥammad 'Alī (Jurjī Zaydān, *Tarīkh Misr al-Iḥdith*, 3rd ed., Cairo, 1925, vol. ii, pp. 160-62).

² Ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iv, p. 120.

³ Mas'ūdi, vol. v, p. 471; cf. Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, pp. 427-8. See *Fakhri*, p. 204.

⁴ Ṭabari, vol. iii, p. 1320; ibn-Miskawayh, *Tayārīb al-Umam wa-Ta'āqūb al-Himam*, ed. de Goeje and de Jong, vol. ii (Leyden, 1871), p. 526; Yāqūt, vol. iv, p. 1000; *Aghāni*, vol. xvi, p. 88; H. Lammens, *Études sur le siècle des Omayyades* (Beirut, 1930), pp. 391-403.

⁵ Ṭabari, vol. iii, p. 85, ll. 16, 17, p. 115, l. 9.

Persians occupied the chief posts in the government. The original Arabian aristocracy was replaced by a hierarchy of officers drawn from the whole gamut of nationalities under the caliphate. The old Arabian Moslems and the new foreign converts were beginning to coalesce and shade off into each other. Arabianism fell, but Islam continued, and under the guise of international Islam Iranianism marched triumphantly on.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE 'ABBĀSID DYNASTY

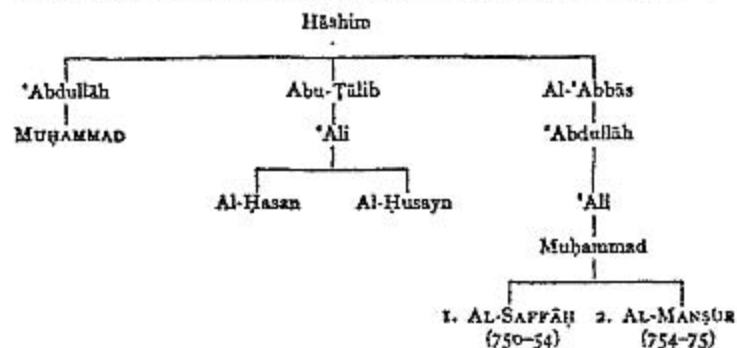
THE third act in the great political drama of Islam opens with the Caliph abu-al-'Abbās (750-54) playing the chief rôle. Al-'Irāq is the stage. In his inaugural *khutbah*, delivered the preceding year in the mosque of al-Kūfah, the first 'Abbāsīd caliph referred to himself as *al-saffāh*,¹ the bloodshedder, which became his sobriquet. This was ominous, since the incoming dynasty, much more than the outgoing, depended upon force in the execution of its policies. For the first time in the history of Islam the leathern spread beside the caliph's seat, which served as a carpet for the use of the executioner, became a necessary adjunct of the imperial throne. This al-Saffāh became the founder of the most celebrated and longest-lived Arab dynasty in Islam, the third, after the Orthodox (Rāshidūn) and the Umayyad. From 750 to 1258 the successors of abu-al-'Abbās reigned, though they did not always rule.

At the time of its achievement the 'Abbāsīd victory was generally hailed as representing the substitution of the true conception of the caliphate, the idea of a theocratic state, for the purely secular state (*mulk*) of the Umayyads. As a mark of the religious character of his exalted office, the caliph now donned on such ceremonial occasions as the day of his accession and the time of the Friday prayer the mantle (*burdah*) once worn by his distant cousin, the Prophet.² He surrounded himself with men versed in canon law whom he patronized and whose advice on matters of state affairs he sought. The highly organized machinery for propaganda which helped to undermine public confidence in the Umayyad régime was now cleverly directed toward permanently entrenching the 'Abbāsīds in public favour. From the very beginning the idea was cultivated that authority should

¹ Tabari, vol. III, p. 30, l. 20, ibn al-Athir, vol. v, p. 316.

² The genealogical tree on the following page makes clear the relationship between the 'Abbāsīds and Muhammad.

remain forever in 'Abbāsīd hands, to be finally delivered to Jesus (*Īsa*), the Messiah.¹ Later the theory was promulgated that if this caliphate were destroyed the whole universe would be disorganized.² As a matter of fact the religious change was more apparent than real; although unlike his Umayyad predecessor he assumed piety and feigned religiosity, the Baghdād caliph proved as worldly-minded as he of Damascus whom he had displaced. In one respect there was a fundamental difference: the Umayyad empire was Arab, the 'Abbāsīd was more inter-



Tree showing the relationship between the 'Abbāsīds and Muhammad

national. The 'Abbāsīd was an empire of Neo-Moslems in which the Arabs formed only one of the many component races.

There were also other differences. For the first time in its history the caliphate was not coterminous with Islam. Spain and North Africa, 'Umān, Sind and even Khurāsān³ did not fully acknowledge the new caliph. Egypt's acknowledgment was more nominal than real. Wāsiṭ, the Umayyad capital of al-'Irāq, held out for eleven months.⁴ Syria was in constant turmoil, chiefly as a result of the outrages perpetrated against its royal house. The 'Abbāsīd 'Alid alliance cemented solely by a feeling of common hatred toward a mighty foe could not long survive the overthrow of that foe. Those 'Alids who had naïvely thought the 'Abbāsīds were fighting the battle for them were soon to be disillusioned.

Feeling insecure in the fickle and pro-'Alid Kūfah, al-Saffāh built a courtly residence, al-Hāshimiyah⁵ (after Hāshim, an early

¹ Tabari, vol. iii, p. 33; ibn-al-Athīr, vol. v, p. 318

² See below, p. 487.

³ Dinawari, p. 373.

⁴ Dinawari, pp. 367-72; Tabari, vol. iii, pp. 61-6; ibn-al-Athīr, vol. v, p. 338.

⁵ Ya'qūbī, vol. ii, p. 429, Dinawari, pp. 372-3.

ancestor of the family), in al-Anbār.¹ Al-Kūfah's sister-city, al-Basrah, was avoided for the same reason, also because of its southern situation, which made it unsuitable for a centre of a kingdom. In his newly erected capital al-Saffāh died (754) of smallpox in his early thirties.²

His brother and successor, abu-Ja'far (754-75), who now assumed the honorific title al-Mansūr (rendered victorious [by God]), proved one of the greatest, though most unscrupulous, of the 'Abbāsids. He, rather than al-Saffāh, was the one who firmly established the new dynasty. All the thirty-five caliphs who succeeded were his lineal descendants. His uncle 'Abdullāh, the hero of the Zāb and under al-Saffāh the governor of Syria, now disputed the caliphate with his nephew, but was defeated (November 754) by abu-Muslim at Nāsībīn (Nisibis). After seven years' imprisonment he was ceremoniously conducted into a house the foundations of which had been purposely laid on salt surrounded by water, which buried him under its ruins.³ Immediately after the victory of Nāsībīn the turn of abu-Muslim himself came. On his way back to his province, Khurāsān, which he ruled almost independently, abu-Muslim was induced to turn aside from his march and visit the caliphal court. The Khurāsāni leader, to whose sword after that of 'Abdullāh the 'Abbāsids owed their throne, was attacked while having an audience with the caliph and treacherously put to death.⁴ A curious new sect of Persian extremists, the Rāwandīyah, who tried to identify the caliph with God, were mercilessly put down (758).⁵ The revolt of the disgruntled Shī'ah, headed by Ibrāhīm and by his brother Muhammad, surnamed al-Nafs al-Zakīyah (the pure soul), the great-grandsons of al-Ḥasan,⁶ was ruthlessly crushed. Muḥammad was killed and gibbeted (December 6, 762) in al-Madīnah; Ibrāhīm was decapitated (February 14, 763) near the unruly Kūfah and his head dispatched to the caliph.⁷ To the irreconcilable 'Alids the 'Abbāsīd caliphs were usurpers, the rightful caliphs, imāms, being the descendants of 'Alī and Fāṭimah.

¹ On the left bank of the Euphrates, in the north of al-'Irāq. The site is today quite waste.

² Ya'qūbi, vol. II, p. 434; Tabari, vol. III, pp. 87-8.

³ Tabari, vol. III, p. 330.

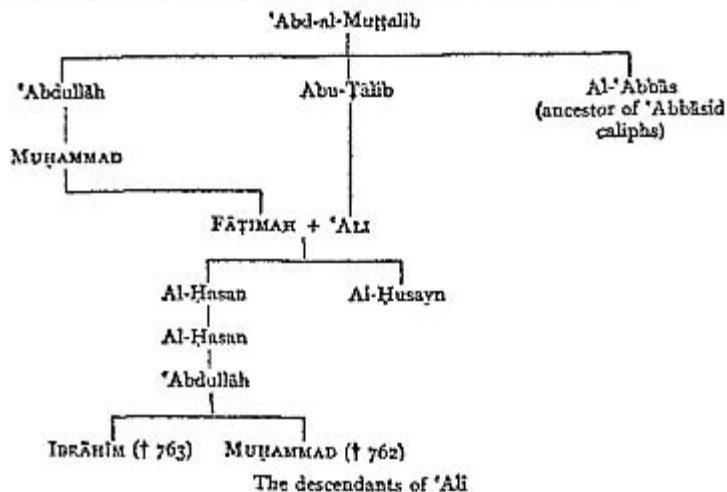
⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 105-17; Dīnawari, pp. 376 S.

⁵ Tabari, vol. III, pp. 129-33; Mas'ūdi, vol. VI, pp. 26, 54 seq; Baghdādī, *ed* Hitt: p. 37 Rāwand was a town near Isfahān.

⁶ See genealogical tree on following page.

⁷ Tabari, vol. III, pp. 245-65, 315-16; Mas'ūdi, vol. VI, pp. 189-203; Dīnawari, p. 381.

The 'Alids never ceased to exercise a disruptive influence on the body politic of Islam, and persisted in claiming for their imāms a measure of hereditary wisdom derived from the Prophet, as well as a sort of special divine illumination. In Khurāsān the insurrection of Sunbād (Sinbādh) the Magian (755), who came out as the avenger of abu-Muslim, and that of Ustādhsīs (767-8), were quenched;¹ Persia, where strong national sentiments were interwoven with ancient Zoroastrian and Mazdakian religious ideas, was at least temporarily pacified. Thus was the greater part of the Islamic empire once more consolidated, with the



exception of North Africa, where the caliph's authority did not extend much beyond al-Qayrawān, and of Spain, where the 'Abbāsīd caliph found in the Umayyad 'Abd-al-Raḥmān (whose mother, like al-Manṣūr's,² was a Berber slave) more than his match.

With the domestic situation well in hand the baneful frontier wars with the eternal enemy to the west, the Byzantines, which had been carried on intermittently for over a century, were resumed in the nature of raids on neighbouring strongholds. The ruined border fortresses (*thughūr*) of Malatyah (Melitenc) in Lesser Armenia and al-Maṣṣīṣah in Cilicia were restored.³ Even

¹ Tabari, vol. iii, pp. 119-20, 354-8; Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, pp. 441-2; ibn-al-Athīr, vol. v, pp. 368-9.

² Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 436; ibn-Qutaybah, *Ma'arif*, p. 191.

³ Ya'qūbi, *Buldān*, p. 238, l. 5.

the naphtha springs of Baku¹ were reached and a tax levied on them. Mountainous Ṭabaristān, south of the Caspian (Baḥr al-Khazar), where a family of high functionaries of the defunct Sāsānid empire had maintained a virtually independent rule, was now temporarily annexed.² On the Indian frontier Qandahār (al-Qunduhār), among other places, was reduced, and a statue of the Buddha found in it was demolished.³ In fact, al-Manṣūr's lieutenants carried their raids as far as Kashmīr (Ar. Qashmīr), the rich and extensive valley of the north-west Himalaya. A fleet was dispatched (770) from al-Baṣrah to the delta of the Indus to chastise pirates who had ventured to plunder Juddah.

Madīnat
al-Salām

In 762 al-Manṣūr, who had his residence at al-Hāshimiyah between al-Kūfah and al-Ḥīrah,⁴ laid the foundation stone of his new capital, Baghdād, scene of the legendary adventures so brilliantly commemorated by Shahrzād in *The Thousand and One Nights*. The site was an ancient one occupied by a Sāsānid village of the same name,⁵ meaning "given by God". Al-Manṣūr fixed on the site after canvassing a number of others "because", said he, "it is excellent as a military camp. Besides, here is the Tigris to put us in touch with lands as far as China and bring us all that the seas yield as well as the food products of Mesopotamia, Armenia and their environs. Then there is the Euphrates to carry for us all that Syria, al-Raqqah and adjacent lands have to offer."⁶ In the construction of his city, completed in four years, al-Manṣūr spent some 4,883,000 dirhams⁷ and employed about a hundred thousand architects, craftsmen and labourers drawn from Syria, Mesopotamia and other parts of the empire.⁸

Madīnat al-Salām (city of peace), which was the official name given by al-Manṣūr to his city, lay on the west bank of the Tigris in that same valley which had furnished sites for some of the mightiest capitals of the ancient world. It was circular in form, whence the name the Round City (*al-mudawwarah*), with double brick walls, a deep moat and a third innermost wall rising

¹ Mas'ūdī, vol. ii, p. 25; Yāqūt, vol. i, p. 477.

² Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, pp. 446-7.

³ Balādhuri, p. 445; Yāqūt, vol. iv, pp. 183-4; Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 449.

⁴ Ya'qūbi, *Buldān*, p. 237.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 235, Balādhuri, p. 294 = Hitti, p. 457.

⁶ Ṭabarī, vol. iii, p. 272.

⁷ Al-Khaṭīb (al-Baghdādī), *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, vol. i (Cairo, 1931), pp. 69-70; Ṭabarī, vol. iii, p. 326; Yāqūt, vol. i, p. 683.

⁸ Ṭabarī, vol. iii, p. 276; Ya'qūbi, *Buldān*, p. 238; Khaṭīb, vol. i, pp. 66-7.

ninety feet and surrounding the central area. The walls had four equidistant gates from which four highways, starting from the centre of the circle, radiated like the spokes of a wheel to the four corners of the empire. The whole thus formed concentric circles with the caliphal palace, styled the Golden Gate (*bāb al-dhahab*) on account of its gilded entrance, or the Green Dome (*al-qubbah al-khadra'*), as the hub. Beside the palace stood the great mosque. The dome of the audience chamber, after which the imperial palace was named, rose to a height of one hundred and thirty feet. Later tradition topped it by the figure of a mounted man holding a lance which in time of danger pointed the direction from which the enemy might be expected.¹ But Yāqūt, quick to detect the fallacy, remarks that the figure necessarily pointed always in some direction, which would mean the existence of a constant enemy threatening the city, and declares the Moslems "too intelligent to believe such fabrications".² The adjacent ruins of the Sāsānid capital, Ctesiphon, served as the main quarry for the new city and furnished the necessary building material, while brick was also made on the spot. Before his death al-Manṣūr built on the bank of the Tigris outside the walls another palace, Qaṣr al-Khuld (palace of eternity), so called because its gardens were supposed to rival those of Paradise (Koran 25 : 16-17), and farther north a third palace called al-Ruṣāfah (causeway), which was intended for the crown prince, the caliph's son al-Mahdi.

The horoscope under which al-Manṣūr started the building of this military post for himself, his family and his Khurāsānian bodyguard certainly proved fully as auspicious as predicted by the court astrologer.³ In a few years the town grew into an emporium of trade and commerce and a political centre of the greatest international importance. As if called into existence by a magician's wand this city of al-Manṣūr fell heir to the power and prestige of Ctesiphon, Babylon, Nineveh, Ur and other capitals of the ancient Orient, attained a degree of prestige and splendour unrivalled in the Middle Ages, except perhaps by Constantinople, and after many vicissitudes was recently re-suscitated as the capital of the new 'Irāqī kingdom under a truly Arabian king, Fayṣal.

¹ Khaṭīb, vol. i, p. 73.

² Vol. i p. 633.

³ Yāqūt, vol. i, pp. 684-5; Khaṭīb, vol. i, pp. 67-8

The new location opened the way for ideas from the East. Here the caliphs built up a government modelled on Sāsānid Chosroism. Arab Islam succumbed to Persian influence; the caliphate became more of a revival of Iranian despotism and less of an Arabian sheikhdom. Gradually Persian titles, Persian wines and wives, Persian mistresses, Persian songs, as well as Persian ideas and thoughts, won the day. Al-Mansūr, we are told, was the first to adopt the characteristic Persian head-gear (pl. *qalānis*), in which he was naturally followed by his subjects.¹ Persian influence, it should be noted, softened the rough edges of the primitive Arabian life and paved the way for a new era distinguished by the cultivation of science and scholarly pursuits. In two fields only did the Arabian hold his own: Islam remained the religion of the state and Arabic continued to be the official language of the state registers.

A Persian
viziral
family

Under al-Mansūr the vizirate, a Persian office, appears for the first time in Islamic government. Khālid ibn-Barmak was the first incumbent of that high office.² Khālid's mother was a prisoner whom Qutaybah ibn-Muslim captured (705) in Balkh; his father was a *barmak*, i.e. chief priest, in a Buddhist monastery in the same place.³ Khālid was on such intimate terms with al-Saffāh that his daughter was nursed by the wife of the former caliph, whose daughter was likewise nursed by Khālid's wife.⁴ Early under the 'Abbāsīd régime Khālid rose to the headship of the department of finance (*dīwān al-kharāj*). In 765 he received the governorship of Ṭabaristān, where he crushed a dangerous uprising.⁵ In his old age he distinguished himself at the capture of a Byzantine fortress.⁶ Though not actually a vizir,⁷ a minister in the later sense of the term, this official of Persian origin seems to have acted on various occasions as counsellor for the caliph and became the founder of an illustrious family of vizirs.

On October 7, 775, al-Mansūr died near Makkah while on a pilgrimage. He was over sixty years of age. One hundred graves were dug for him near the Holy City, but he was secretly interred in another which no enemy might find and desecrate.⁸ He was a

¹ Ṭabarī, vol. III, p. 371.

² Cf. Ibn-Khallikān, vol. I, p. 290.

³ *lure u azir* for al-Hamūdūnī is probably used in same sense as in *sūr*, 20-30.

⁴ Ibn al-Faqqih, pp. 322-4, Ṭabarī, vol. II, p. 1181; Yāqūt vol. IV, p. 818.

⁵ Ṭabarī, vol. II, p. 640.

⁶ Ibn-al-Faqqih, p. 314.

⁷ Cf. *Fakhrī*, vol. III, p. 497.

⁸ Cf. *Fakhrī*, pp. 206, 211. Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, p. 340.

⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, vol. VI, p. 13.

slender, tall man, dark of complexion and thin-bearded.¹ Austere in nature and stern in manner, he stands in marked contrast to the type represented by his successors. But his policies continued for many generations to guide those who came after him just as those of Mu'āwiyah had guided the Umayyads.

To Khālid's son Yahya, al-Manṣūr's successor, al-Mahdi (775-85), entrusted the education of his son Hārūn. When Hārūn, following the brief reign of his brother al-Hādi (785-6), became caliph he appointed the Barmakid, whom he still respectfully called "father", as vizir with unrestricted power. Yahya, who died in 805, and his two sons al-Faḍl and Ja'far practically ruled the empire from 786 to 803.²

These Barmakids had their palaces in eastern Baghdād, where they lived in grand style. Here Ja'far's palace, al-Ja'fari, became the nucleus of a large group of magnificent residences later occupied by al-Ma'mūn and transformed into the Caliphal Palace (*dār al-khilāfah*). The buildings stood by the Tigris with spacious gardens behind enclosing many minor structures within their precincts. Fabulous fortunes were amassed by the members of the Barmakid family. Even what they saw fit to bestow on their clients, panegyrists and partisans was enough to make such protégés wealthy. Their generosity was proverbial. Even today in all the Arabic-speaking lands the word *barmakī* is used as a synonym of generous, and "as munificent as Ja'far"³ is a simile that is everywhere well understood.

A number of canals,⁴ mosques and other public works owe their existence to the initiative and munificence of the Barmakids. Al-Faḍl is credited with being the first in Islam to introduce the use of lamps in the mosques during the month of Ramadān. Ja'far acquired great fame for eloquence, literary ability and penmanship.⁵ Chiefly because of him Arab historians regard the Barmakids as the founders of the class designated "people of the pen" (*ahl al-qalam*). But he was more than a man of letters. He was a leader of fashion, and the long neck which he possessed is said to have been responsible for the introduction of the custom of wearing high collars.⁶ Ja'far's intimacy with the

¹ Tabari, vol. III, p. 392, *ibn-al-Athīr*, vol. VI, p. 14, Mas'ūdi, *Tanbih*, p. 341.

² Ya'qūbī, vol. II, p. 520. ³ Consult *ibn-Khallikān*, vol. I, pp. 185 seq.

⁴ See Tabari, vol. III, p. 645, ll. 18-19, *Balādhuri*, p. 363.

⁵ Tabari, vol. II, p. 443, Mas'ūdi, vol. VI, p. 361.

⁶ Jāhīz, *Ḥayawān*, vol. III, p. 201.

Caliph Hārūn was not pleasing to his father, Yaḥya, as it was suspiciously immoral.¹

The time at last came for the caliph to rid himself of this Persian tutelage. The Shi'ite Barmakids were getting too powerful for the strong-willed Hārūn (786-809), in whose caliphal firmament there could not be two suns. First the thirty-seven-year-old Ja'far was slain in 803; his severed head was impaled on one bridge of Baghdād and the two halves of his body on the other two bridges.² The usual reason given by historians is that the caliph had allowed him, as a boon companion, to marry in name only his favourite sister, al-'Abbāsah, but discovered later while on a holy pilgrimage that she had secretly given birth to a son whom she had concealed in Makkah.³ The aged Yaḥya, together with his distinguished son al-Faḍl and his other two sons, were all apprehended and cast into prison. Both Yaḥya and al-Faḍl died in confinement. All the property of the family, said to have amounted to 30,676,000 (dinars) in cash exclusive of farms, palaces and furniture, was confiscated.⁴ Thus the celebrated house founded by Khālid al-Barmaki fell, never to rise again.

¹ Tabari, vol. iii, pp. 674-6.

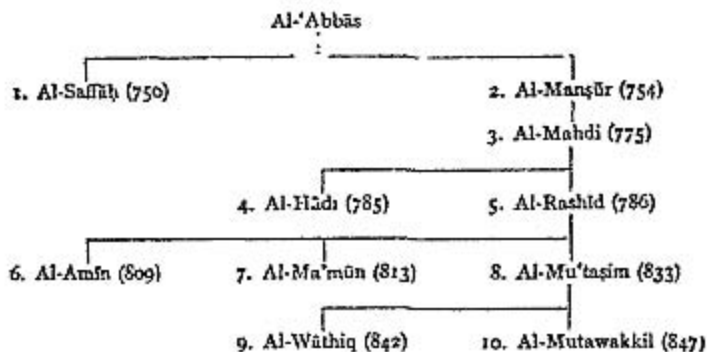
² *Iqd*, vol. iii, p. 28; Tabari, vol. iii, p. 680.

³ Tabari, vol. iii, pp. 676-7; Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, pp. 387-94; *Fakhrī*, p. 288. Cf. Ibn-Khalḍūn vol. iii, pp. 223-4; *Kitāb al-'Uyūn*, pt. 3, pp. 306-8.

⁴ *Iqd*, vol. iii, p. 28.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE GOLDEN PRIME OF THE 'ABBĀSIDS



THE 'Abbāsīd dynasty, like others in Moslem history, attained its most brilliant period of political and intellectual life soon after its establishment. The Baghdād caliphate founded by al-Saffāh and al-Mansūr reached its prime in the period between the reigns of the third caliph, al-Mahdi, and the ninth, al-Wāthiq, more particularly in the days of Hārūn al-Rashīd and his son al-Ma'mūn. It was chiefly because of these two luminous caliphs that the 'Abbāsīd dynasty acquired a halo in popular imagination and became the most celebrated in the history of Islam. The dictum quoted by the anthologist al-Tha'ālibī¹ († 1038) that of the 'Abbāsīd caliphs "the opener" was al-Mansūr, "the middler" was al-Ma'mūn and "the closer" was al-Mu'tadīd (892-902) is therefore not far from the historical truth. After al-Wāthiq the state starts on its downward course until under the Caliph al-Musta'sīm, the thirty-seventh of the line, it meets its final destruction at the hands of the Mongols in 1258. An idea of the degree of power and glory and progress attained by the 'Abbāsīd caliphate at its highest and best may be gained from a scrutiny of its foreign relations, a study of court and aristocratic life in

¹ *Lata'if al-Ma'ārif*, ed. P. de Jong (Leyden, 1867), p. 71.

its capital, Baghdād, and a survey of the unparalleled intellectual awakening that culminated under the patronage of al-Ma'mūn.

Relations
with the
Franks

The ninth century opened with two imperial names standing supreme in world affairs: Charlemagne in the West and Hārūn al-Rashīd in the East. Of the two Hārūn was undoubtedly the more powerful and represented the higher culture. The mutual friendly relations into which these two contemporaries entered were, of course, prompted by self-interest; Charlemagne cultivated Hārūn as a possible ally against hostile Byzantium and Hārūn desired to use Charlemagne against his rivals and deadly foes, the neighbouring Umayyads of Spain, who had succeeded in establishing a mighty and prosperous state. This reciprocity of cordial feelings found expression, according to Western writers, in the exchange of a number of embassies and presents. A Frankish author who knew Charlemagne personally and is sometimes referred to as his secretary relates that the envoys of the great king of the West returned home with rich gifts from "the king of Persia, Aaron", which included fabrics, aromatics and an elephant.¹ This account is based on the *Annales royales*,² which further speaks of an intricate clock as among the gifts from Baghdād. But the account of the pipe organ sent to Charlemagne by Hārūn, like many other charming bits of history, is fictitious. Its story is apparently based on a mistranslation of the term *clepsydra* in the sources, which in reality meant a device for measuring time by water and referred to the clock presented. Likewise the assertion that the keys of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were delivered by Hārūn's consent to Charlemagne has been discredited.³

The strange thing about this exchange of embassies and gifts, said to have taken place between 797 and 806, is the utter silence of Moslem authors regarding it. While reference is made to various other diplomatic exchanges and courtesies, none is made to this. The *'Iqd'*⁴ cites several cases of correspondence between Umayyad caliphs and Byzantine emperors and speaks of a delegation from "the king of India" which brought Hārūn

¹ Éginhard, *Vie de Charlemagne*, ed. and tr. L. Halphen (Paris, 1923), p. 47.

² "Annales regni Francorum", ed. G. H. Pertz and F. Kurze in *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, vol. 43 (Hanover, 1805), pp. 114, 123-4.

³ See below, pp. 307, 635-6. Cf. Louis Bréhier in *Chambre de Commerce de Marseille. Congrès français de Syrie. Séances et travaux*, fasc. 2 (1919), pp. 15-39.

⁴ Vol. i, pp. 197-8.

valuable presents and was received with great pomp. Another source¹ states that Hārūn's son al-Ma'mūn received an especially rich gift from his contemporary "the king of the Romans", possibly Michael II.

The more-than-century-old struggle between the caliphate and the Byzantine empire was resumed by the third caliph, al-Mahdi (775-85), but the engagements were of less frequency and success. The internal conflicts that convulsed the Arab state and resulted in the transference of the capital to distant Baghdād had made it possible for Constantine V (741-75) to push the imperial border farther east along the entire boundary of Asia Minor and Armenia.² The Moslem line of frontier fortifications (*thughūr*) extending from Syria to Armenia retreated as the Byzantine line opposite advanced.

Al-Mahdi, the first 'Abbāsīd caliph to resume the "holy war" against the Byzantines, initiated a brilliant and successful attack against the enemy capital itself. Hārūn, his young son and future successor, commanded the expedition. In 782³ the Arab forces reached the Bosphorus,⁴ if not Constantinople itself; and Irene, who held the regency in the name of her son Constantine VI, was forced to sue for peace and conclude a singularly humiliating treaty involving the payment of a tribute of 70,000 to 90,000 dinars in semi-annual instalments.⁵ It was in the course of this campaign that Hārūn so distinguished himself that his father gave him the honorific title al-Rashīd (follower of the right path) and designated him the second heir apparent to the throne, after his elder brother Mūsa al-Hādi.

This proved the last time that a hostile Arab army stood before the walls of the proud capital. In all there were four distinct expeditions which reached Byzantium; the first three were sent under the Umayyads by Mu'āwiyah and by Sulaymān.⁶ Of the four only two involved real sieges of the city: one by Yazīd (49/669) and the other by Maslamah (98/716). Turkish tradition,

¹ Kutubi, *Fawa'id*, vol. i, p. 307, ll. 12-13.

² A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, tr. S. Ragozin, vol. i (Madison, 1928), p. 291; Charles Diehl, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, tr. G. B. Ives (Princeton, 1925), p. 55.

³ *Kitāb al-Uyūn*, pt. 3, p. 278, dates the expedition 163 (A.D. 780), Ya'qūbi (vol. II, pp. 478, 486) 164 and Tabari (vol. III, pp. 503-4) 165.

⁴ Theophanis, who wrote in 813, says (p. 456) that Hārūn advanced as far as Chrysopolis, on the site of modern Scutari.

⁵ Tabari, vol. III, p. 504.

⁶ See above, pp. 200 seq.

however, makes the sieges seven to nine in number, of which two are ascribed to Hārūn. In the *Arabian Nights* and other Arabic romances of chivalry the Moslem expeditions against Constantinople form the subject of themes highly coloured and developed during the period of the Crusades.

Irene (797-802), who had seized the throne and become "the first instance in Byzantine history of a woman who ruled with full authority of supreme power",¹ was succeeded by Nicephorus I² (802-11), who repudiated the terms of the treaty contracted by the empress and even demanded from the caliph, now al-Rashīd, the return of the tribute already paid. Inflamed with rage, al-Rashīd called for pen and ink and wrote on the back of the scornful epistle:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

From Hārūn, the commander of the believers, to Nicephorus, the dog of a Roman.

Verily I have read thy letter, O son of an infidel mother. As for the answer it shall be for thine eye to see, not for thine ear to hear. Salam.³

True to his word, Hārūn started at once a series of campaigns directed from his favourite town of residence, al-Raqqah, situated beside the Euphrates and commanding the Syrian frontier. These expeditions ravaged Asia Minor and culminated in the capture of Heraclea (Ar. Hiraqlah) and Tyana (al-Ṭuwānah) in 806 and the imposition, in addition to the tribute, of an ignominious tax on the emperor himself and on each member of his household.⁴ This event and date in the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd may be taken as marking the topmost point ever reached by 'Abbāsīd power.

After 806 there was only one serious attempt at securing a footing beyond the Taurus, and that by al-Mu'taṣim in 838. Though al-Mu'taṣim's huge army, "equipped as no caliph's army before had ever been equipped",⁵ penetrated into the heart

¹ Vasiliev, vol. i, p. 287.

² Niqfūr of Arabic sources. He was of Arab origin; possibly a descendant of Jabalah the Ghassānid. Tabari, vol. iii, p. 693; Michel le Syrien, *Chronicle*, ed. J.-B. Chabot, vol. iii (Paris, 1905), p. 15. Irene, whom he dethroned, was the last of the Isaurian or Syrian dynasty (717-802) founded by Leo III (717-41), who with his successors headed the iconoclastic movement which bears traces of Moslem influence. Iheophanus, p. 405, calls Leo "the Saracen-minded".

³ Tabari, vol. iii, p. 606.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 606, 709 10, Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 519, l. 14, p. 523, l. 2; Dīnawari, pp. 356-7, Mas'ūdi, vol. ii, pp. 337-52.

⁵ Tabari, vol. iii, p. 1236.

of "the land of the Romans" and temporarily occupied Amorium (Amorion, Ar. 'Ammūriyah), the birthplace of the founder of the then ruling dynasty,¹ the attempt on the whole was unsuccessful. The Arab forces expected to march upon Constantinople but returned on the receipt of alarming reports of a military conspiracy at home. The reigning emperor, Theophilus (829-42), so feared the loss of his capital that he dispatched envoys to Venice, to the Frankish king and to the Umayyad court in Spain soliciting aid. Theophilus had once before been threatened from the east when al-Ma'mūn, son of Hārūn, took the field in person but met his death (833) near Tarsus. After al-Mu'taṣim no serious offensive on the Arab side was ever undertaken. Those of his successors who sent armies across the border aimed at plunder rather than conquest. In no case did the collision assume significance or occur deep in the land. Yet throughout the ninth century the hostile contacts, though of minor importance, occurred with almost annual regularity on the eastern border-line. One Arab geographer² informs us that it was the practice then to make three raids each year: one in winter covering the end of February and the beginning of March, another in spring lasting thirty days from May 10, and a third in summer extending over a period of sixty days from July 10. Such raids served to keep the military forces in good trim and netted profitable spoils. But the original Arabian national motive, and to a large extent the religious impulse which figured in the early campaigns of Islam, had now become far less important factors. The internal weakening of the Moslem state was beginning to tell in its foreign relations. One of the petty dynasties, the Ḥamdānid in Aleppo, which arose about the middle of the tenth century at the expense of the caliphate, did take up the cudgels against Byzantium. But of that we shall hear later.

History and legend unite in placing the most brilliant period of Baghdād during the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashīd (786-809). Though less than half a century old, Baghdād had by that time grown from nothingness to a world centre of prodigious wealth and international significance, standing alone as the rival of Byzantium. Its splendour kept pace with the prosperity of the empire of which it was the capital. It was then

¹ Michel le Syrien, vol. iii, p. 72.

² Qudāmah, *Kiṭāb al-Kharāj*, ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1889), p. 259.

that Baghdād became "a city with no peer throughout the whole world".¹

The royal palace with its many annexes for harems, eunuchs and special functionaries occupied one-third of the Round City. Particularly impressive was its audience chamber with its rugs, curtains and cushions, the best the Orient could produce. The caliph's cousin-wife, Zubaydah, who in tradition shares with her husband the halo of glory and distinction bestowed by later generations, would tolerate at her table no vessels not made of gold or silver and studded with gems. She set the fashion for the smart set and was the first to ornament her shoes with precious stones.² In one holy pilgrimage she is reported to have spent three million dinars, which included the expense of supplying Makkah with water from a spring twenty-five miles away.³

Zubaydah had a rival in the beautiful 'Ulayyah, daughter of al-Mahdi and half-sister of Hārūn, who to cover a blemish on her forehead devised a fillet set with jewels which, as the fillet *à la* 'Ulayyah, was soon adopted by the world of fashion as the ornament of the day.⁴

Especially on ceremonial occasions, such as the installation of the caliph, weddings, pilgrimages and receptions for foreign envoys, did the courtly wealth and magnificence find its fullest display. The marriage ceremony of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn to the eighteen-year-old Būrān,⁵ daughter of his vizir, al-Ḥasan ibn-Sahl, was celebrated in 825 with such fabulous expenditure of money that it has lived in Arabic literature as one of the unforgettable extravaganzas of the age. At the nuptials a thousand pearls of unique size, we are told, were showered from a gold tray upon the couple who sat on a golden mat studded with pearls and sapphires. A two-hundred-rotl candle of ambergris turned the night into day. Balls of musk, each containing a ticket naming an estate or a slave or some such gift, were showered on the royal princes and dignitaries.⁶ In 917 the Caliph al-Muqtadir received in his palace with great ceremony and pomp the envoys of the young Constantine VII, whose mission evidently

¹ Khaṭīb, vol. i, p. 119.

² Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, pp. 298-9.

³ Cf. ibn-Khalkān, vol. i, p. 337; Burckhardt, *Travels*, vol. i, p. 196.

⁴ *Ag'āni*, vol. ix, p. 83.

⁵ She was ten years old when betrothed to al-Ma'mūn; ibn-Khalkān, vol. i, p. 166.

⁶ Ṭabarī, vol. iii, pp. 1081-4; Mas'ūdi, vol. vii, pp. 65-6; ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vi, p. 279; Tha'alibī, *Lata'if*, pp. 73-4; ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddamak*, pp. 144-5.

involved the exchange and ransom of prisoners.¹ The caliphal array included 160,000 cavalry and footmen, 7000 black and white eunuchs and 700 chamberlains. In the parade a hundred lions marched, and in the caliphal palace hung 38,000 curtains, of which 12,500 were gilded, besides 22,000 rugs. The envoys were so struck with awe and admiration that they first mistook the chamberlain's office and then the vizir's for the royal audience chamber. Especially impressed were they with the Hall of the Tree (*dār al-shajarah*) which housed an artificial tree of gold and silver weighing 500,000 drams, in the branches of which were lodged birds of the same precious metals so constructed that they chirped by automatic devices. In the garden they marvelled at the artificially dwarfed palm trees which by skilled cultivation yielded dates of rare varieties.²

Like a magnet the princely munificence of Hārūn, the *beau idéal* of Islamic kingship, and of his immediate successors attracted to the capital poets, wits, musicians, singers, dancers, trainers of fighting dogs and cocks and others who could amuse, interest or entertain.³ Ibrāhīm al-Mawsili, Siyāṭ and ibn-Jāmi' led the roster of musician-singers. The libertine poet abu-Nuwās, the boon companion of al-Rashīd and his comrade on many a nocturnal adventure, has depicted for us in unforgettable terms the colourful court life of this period of glory. The pages of *al-Aghāni* abound with illustrative anecdotes whose nucleus of truth is not hard to discern. According to one story the Caliph al-Amīn (809-13) one evening bestowed on his uncle Ibrāhīm ibn-al-Mahdi, a professional singer, the sum of 300,000 dinars for chanting a few verses of abu-Nuwās'. This raised the gratuities thus far received by Ibrāhīm from the caliph to 20,000,000 dirhams.⁴ Al-Amīn, of whom ibn-al-Athīr⁵ found nothing praiseworthy to record, had a number of special barges shaped like animals built for his parties on the Tigris. One of these vessels looked like a dolphin, another like a lion, a third like an eagle; the cost of one was 3,000,000 dirhams.⁶ We read in the *Aghāni*⁷ of a picturesque all-night ballet conducted under the Caliph al-Amīn's personal direction in which a large number of

¹ Mas'ūdi, *Tamdhī*, p. 193.

² Khatīb, vol. i, pp. 100-105; abu-al-Fidā', vol. ii, p. 73; Yāqūt, vol. ii, pp. 520-21.

³ Balādhuri, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, ed. Max Achloessinger, vol. iv B (Jerusalem, 1938), p. 1. ⁴ *Aghāni*, vol. ix, p. 71. See below, p. 321. ⁵ Vol. vi, p. 207.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 206; Tabarī, vol. iii, pp. 951-3.

⁷ Vol. xvi, pp. 138-9.

beautiful girl dancers performed in rhythmic unison to the soft harmony of music and were joined in their singing by all those who attended. Al-Mas'ūdi¹ relates that on the occasion of a dinner given by Ibrāhīm in honour of his brother al-Rashīd, the caliph was served with a dish of fish in which the slices looked exceedingly small. In explanation the host remarked that the slices were fishes' tongues, and the waiter added that the cost of the hundred and fifty tongues in the dish was over a thousand dirhams. Even when stripped of the adventitious glow cast by Oriental romance and fancy, enough of the splendour of court life in Baghdād remains to arouse our astonishment.

Next to the royal master in high and luxurious living came the members of the 'Abbāsīd family, the vizirs, officials, functionaries and other satellites of the imperial household. Members of the Hāshimite tribe, to which the 'Abbāsīds belonged, received large regular stipends from the state treasury until the practice was discontinued by al-Mu'tasim (833-42).² Al-Rashīd's mother, al-Khayzurān, is said to have had an income of 160,000,000 dirhams.³ A certain Muhammad ibn-Sulaymān, whose property was confiscated on his death by al-Rashīd, left 50,000,000 dirhams in cash and a daily income of 100,000 dirhams from his real estate.⁴ The scale on which the Barmakids lived could not have been much lower than that of the caliphal household itself. As for the humdrum life of the ordinary citizen in Baghdād and the feelings that surged in the breast of the common man, we find little in the sources with the possible exception of the poetical works of the ascetic abu-al-'Atāhiyah.

When al-Ma'mūn in 819, after several years of civil war with his elder brother al-Amīn (who had been designated to the successorship by their father) and with his uncle Ibrāhīm ibn-al-Mahdī, who also claimed the throne, made his victorious entry into Baghdād a large part of the city lay in ruins. We hear no more of the Round City. As caliph, al-Ma'mūn took up his abode in the Ja'fari palace, originally built for Ja'far al-Barmaki on the east side of the river. But it was not long before the town rose again to eminence as a commercial and intellectual centre. The natural successor to a long line of distinguished metropolitan towns which flourished in the Tigris-Euphrates valley beginning with

¹ Vol vi, pp 349-50

² Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, p 259

³ Cf. Tha'ābbi, *Lafā'if*, p. 16.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Ur and Babylon and ending with Ctesiphon, the 'Abbāsīd capital could not be easily suppressed. Its advantageous position as a shipping centre made all parts of the then charted world accessible to it. Along its miles of wharves lay hundreds of vessels, including ships of war and pleasure craft and varying from Chinese junks to native rafts of inflated sheepskins, not unlike those of our present day, which were floated down from al-Mawṣil. Into the bazaars of the city came porcelain, silk and musk from China; spices, minerals and dyes from India and the Malay Archipelago; rubies, lapis lazuli, fabrics and slaves from the lands of the Turks in Central Asia; honey, wax, furs and white slaves from Scandinavia and Russia; ivory, gold dust and black slaves from eastern Africa. Chinese wares had a special bazaar devoted to their sale. The provinces of the empire itself sent by caravan or sea their domestic products: rice, grain and linen from Egypt; glass, metal ware and fruits from Syria; brocade, pearls and weapons from Arabia; silks, perfumes and vegetables from Persia.¹ Communication between the east and west sides of the city was assured by three main pontoon bridges like the Baghdād bridges of today. Al-Khatīb² devotes a section of his history to the bridges of Baghdād and another to its canals (*anhār*). From Baghdād and other export centres Arab merchants shipped to the Far East, Europe and Africa fabrics, jewellery, metal mirrors, glass beads, spices, etc.³ The hoards of Arab coins recently found in places as far north as Russia, Finland,⁴ Sweden and Germany testify to the world-wide commercial activity of the Moslems of this and the later period. The adventures of Sindbād the Sailor, which form one of the best-known tales in *The Thousand and One Nights*, have long been recognized as based upon actual reports of voyages made by Moslem merchants.

Merchants played a leading part in the Baghdād community. Members of each craft and trade had their shops in the same market (*sūq*),⁵ as in the present day. The monotony of street life was interrupted from time to time by the occasional passage of a wedding or circumcision procession. Professional men—physicians, lawyers, teachers, writers and the like—began to occupy a conspicuous place under the patronage of al-Ma'mūn.

¹ Consult Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, *passim*. See below, pp. 313, 351.

² Vol. i, pp. 111-17.

³ See below, pp. 345 *seq.*

⁴ The museum at Helsinki contains many such coins.

⁵ Ya'qūbi, *Buldān*, p. 246.

By the time al-Nadīm composed (988) his monumental *al-Fihrist*, a sort of catalogue of existing Arabic works, there were abundant manuscripts dealing even with such subjects as hypnotism, jugglery, sword-swallowing and glass-chewing.¹ Ibn-Khallikān² has fortunately left us a cross section of the daily routine of a member of the learned fraternity, Ḥunayn ibn-Ishāq, which indicates that scholarship had a considerable market value in those days. We are first shown Ḥunayn, after his daily ride, at the public bath, where attendants poured water over him. On emerging he put on a lounging-robe, sipped a drink, ate a biscuit and lay down, sometimes falling asleep. The siesta over, he burned perfume to fumigate his person and ordered a dinner which generally consisted of soup, fattened chicken and bread. Then he resumed his sleep and on waking drank four rotls of old wine, to which he added quinces and Syrian apples if he felt the desire for fresh fruits.

The victory of Moslem arms under al-Mahdi and al-Rashīd over the inveterate Byzantine enemy undoubtedly shed its lustre on this period, the luxurious scale of living made this period popular in history and in fiction, but what has rendered this age especially illustrious in world annals is the fact that it witnessed the most momentous intellectual awakening in the history of Islam and one of the most significant in the whole history of thought and culture. The awakening was due in a large measure to foreign influences, partly Indo-Persian and Syrian but mainly Hellenic, and was marked by translations into Arabic from Persian, Sanskrit, Syriac and Greek. Starting with very little science, philosophy or literature of his own, the Arabian Moslem, who brought with him from the desert a keen sense of intellectual curiosity, a voracious appetite for learning and many latent faculties, soon became, as we have learned before, the beneficiary and heir of the older and more cultured peoples whom he conquered or encountered. As in Syria he adopted the already existing Aramaic civilization, itself influenced by the later Greek, so did he in al-'Irāq adopt the same civilization influenced by the Persian. In three-quarters of a century after the establishment of Baghdād the Arabic-reading world was in possession of the chief philosophical works of Aristotle, of the leading Neo-Platonic commentators, and of most of the medical writings of Galen, as well

Intellectual
awakening

¹ P. 312.

² Vol. I, p. 295.

as of Persian and Indian scientific works.¹ In only a few decades Arab scholars assimilated what had taken the Greeks centuries to develop. In absorbing the main features of both Hellenic and Persian cultures Islam, to be sure, lost most of its own original character, which breathed the spirit of the desert and bore the stamp of Arabian nationalism, but it thereby took an important place in the medieval cultural unit which linked southern Europe with the Near East. This culture, it should be remembered, was fed by a single stream, a stream with sources in ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Phoenicia and Judaea, all flowing to Greece and now returning to the East in the form of Hellenism. We shall later see how this same stream was re-diverted into Europe by the Arabs in Spain and Sicily, whence it helped create the Renaissance of Europe.

India acted as an early source of inspiration, especially in wisdom literature and mathematics. About A.H. 154 (771) an Indian traveller introduced into Baghdād a treatise on astronomy, a *Siddhānta* (Ar. *Sindhīnd*), which by order of al-Manṣūr was translated by Muḥammad ibn-Ibrāhīm al-Fazāri († between 796 and 806), who subsequently became the first astronomer in Islam.² The stars had of course interested the Arabians since desert days, but no scientific study of them was undertaken until this time. Islam added its impetus to the study of astronomy as a means for fixing the direction in which prayer should be conducted Ka'bah-ward. The famous al-Khwārizmī († ca. 850) based his widely known astronomical tables (*zīj*) on al-Fazāri's work and syncretized the Indian and Greek systems of astronomy, at the same time adding his own contribution. Among other translations of astronomical works at this period were those from Persian into Arabic by al-Faḍl ibn-Nawbakht³ († ca. 815), the chief librarian of al-Rashīd.⁴

This same Indian traveller had also brought a treatise on mathematics by means of which the numerals called in Europe

¹ Since the latter part of the nineteenth century the modern Arab Orient has been passing through a similar period of translation, mainly from French and English.

² Šā'id ibn-Aḥmad (al-Qāḍi al-Andalusi), *Tabaqāt al-Umam*, ed. L. Cheikho (Beirut, 1912), pp. 49-50; Yāqūt, *Udabāt*, vol. vi, p. 266; Mas'ūdī, vol. viii, pp. 290-91.

³ Pers. *nawbakht*, good luck. Many members of this family distinguished themselves in the science of the stars. Tabari, vol. iii, pp. 317, 318 (where the name occurs as Nibakht or Naybakht), 1364.

⁴ *Fihrist*, p. 274.

Arabic and by the Arabs Indian (*Hindī*) entered the Moslem world.¹ Later, in the ninth century, the Indians made another important contribution to Arabic mathematical science, the decimal system.

Persia

Except in the arts and *belles-lettres* Persia did not have much that was original to contribute. The esthetic temperament of its Iranian population was a sorely needed element in the cultural life of the Semitic Arabians. Next to the artistic, the literary—rather than the scientific or philosophical—was the influence most clearly felt from Persia. The earliest literary work in Arabic that has come down to us is *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah* (fables of Bidpai), a translation from Pahlawi (Middle Persian) which was itself a rendition from Sanskrit. The original work was brought to Persia from India, together with the game of chess, in the reign of Anūsharwān (531–78). What gives the Arabic version special significance is the fact that the Persian was lost, as was the Sanskrit original, though the material in an expanded form can still be found in the *Panchatantra*. The Arabic version therefore became the basis of all existing translations into some forty languages, including, besides European tongues, Hebrew, Turkish, Ethiopic and Malay. Even Icelandic has a translation. This book, intended to instruct princes in the laws of polity by means of animal fables, was done into Arabic by ibn-al-Muqaffa',² a Zoroastrian convert to Islam whose suspect orthodoxy brought about his death by fire *ca.* 757.

Ibn-al-Muqaffa''s translation was in itself a stylistic work of art, and ever since the 'Abbāsid age Arabic prose has borne the impress of Persian style in its extravagant elegance, colourful imagery and flowery expression. The ancient Arabic style with its virile, pointed and terse form of expression was replaced to a large extent by the polished and affected diction of the Sāsānid period. Such Arabic literary works as *al-Aghāni*, *al-'Iqd al-Farīd* and al-Ṭurtūshī's *Sirāj al-Mulūk*³ teem with references to earlier Indo-Persian sources, especially when dealing with etiquette, wisdom, polity and history. Arabic historiography, as we shall see, was modelled after Persian patterns.

¹ See below, pp. 573 *seq.*

² For printed editions of *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah* see Sylvester de Sacy's (Paris, 1816), reprinted in Bōlāq, 1249, Khalīl al-Yāzjī's 2nd ed. (Beirut, 1885), L. Cheikho's (Beirut, 1905). On ibn-al-Muqaffa' consult *Fihrst*, p. 118, Ibn-Khallikān, vol. 1, pp. 266-9.

³ Published in Cairo, 1289, 1306, etc.

In 765 the Caliph al-Manṣūr, afflicted with a stomach disease which had baffled his physicians, summoned from Jundi-Shāpūr¹ the dean of its hospital, the Nestorian Jūrjīs² (George) ibn-Bakhtishū' († ca. 771). Jundi-Shāpūr was noted for its academy of medicine and philosophy founded about 555 by the great Anūsharwān. The science of the institution was based on the ancient Greek tradition, but the language of instruction was Aramaic. Jūrjīs soon won the confidence of the caliph and became the court physician, though he retained his Christian faith. Invited by the caliph to embrace Islam his retort was that he preferred the company of his fathers, be they in heaven or in hell.³ Ibn-Bakhtishū' became in Baghdād the founder of a brilliant family which for six or seven generations, covering a period of two centuries and a half, with many ups and downs, exercised an almost continuous monopoly over the court medical practice. Scientific lore in those days, like jewellery-making and other forms of craftsmanship, was considered an exclusive family affair and transmitted from father to son. Jūrjīs' son Bakhtishū' († 801) was chief physician of the Baghdād hospital under al-Rashīd. Bakhtishū's son Jibrīl (Gabriel), who successfully treated a favourite slave of al-Rashīd for hysterical paralysis by pretending to disrobe her in public, was appointed the caliph's private physician in 805.⁴

At the time of the Arab conquest of the Fertile Crescent the intellectual legacy of Greece was unquestionably the most precious treasure at hand. Hellenism consequently became the most vital of all foreign influences in Arab life. Edessa (al-Ruhā'), the principal centre of Christian Syrians; Harrān, the headquarters of the heathen Syrians who in and after the ninth century claimed to be Sābians (Ar. Ṣābi'ah or Ṣābi'ūn);⁵ Antioch, one of the many ancient Greek colonies; Alexandria, the meeting-place of Occidental and Oriental philosophy; and the numberless cloisters of Syria and Mesopotamia where not only ecclesiastical

¹ Ar Jundaysūbūr The city, founded by the Sāsānid Shāpūr I, whence the name, which may mean "camp of Shāpūr", stood on the site of the modern village Shāhābād in Khūzistān, south-western Persia.

² Cf. *Fihrist*, p. 296, Ibn al-'Ibrī, pp. 213-15 "Bakht", which Ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah (vol. 1, p. 125) takes for a Syriac word meaning "servant", is for Pahlawi *dākt*, "hath delivered", making the family name mean "Jesus hath delivered".

³ Ibn-abi-'Ibrī, p. 215, copied by Ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. 1, p. 125.

⁴ Ibn-abi-'Ibrī, pp. 226-7, *Qifti*, pp. 134-5.

⁵ See below, p. 357.

but scientific and philosophic studies were cultivated, all served as centres radiating Hellenistic stimuli. The various raids into "the land of the Romans", particularly under Hārūn, resulted in the introduction, among other objects of booty, of Greek manuscripts, chiefly from Amorium and Ancyra¹ (Ankara). Al-Ma'mūn is credited with the dispatch of emissaries as far as Constantinople, to the Emperor Leo the Armenian himself, in quest of Greek works. Even al-Mansūr is said to have received in response to his request from the Byzantine emperor a number of books, including Euclid.² But the Arabians knew no Greek and had at first to depend upon translations made by their subjects, Jewish, heathen and more particularly Nestorian Christian. These Syrian Nestorians, who translated first into Syriac and then from Syriac into Arabic, thus became the strongest link between Hellenism and Islam and consequently the earliest Oriental purveyors of Greek culture to the world at large. Before Hellenism could find access to the Arab mind it had to pass through a Syriac version.

The apogee of Greek influence was reached under al-Ma'mūn. The rationalistic tendencies of this caliph and his espousal of the Mu'tazilite cause, which maintained that religious texts should agree with the judgments of reason, led him to seek justification for his position in the philosophical works of the Greeks. The way the *Fihrist*³ expresses it is that Aristotle appeared to him in a dream and assured him that there was no real difference between reason and religious law. In pursuance of his policy al-Ma'mūn in 830 established in Baghdād his famous Bayt al-Hikmah (house of wisdom), a combination library, academy and translation bureau which in many respects proved the most important educational institution since the foundation of the Alexandrian Museum in the first half of the third century B.C. Down to this time sporadic translation work had been done independently by Christians, Jews and recent converts to Islam. Beginning with al-Ma'mūn and continuing under his immediate successors the work was centred mainly in the newly founded academy. The 'Abbāsīd era of translation lasted about a century after 750. Since most of the translators were Aramaic-speaking many of the Greek works were first done into Aramaic (Syriac)

¹ Ar Anqirah, Ya'qūbi, vol. 1, p. 480.

² Ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, p. 401.

³ P. 243.

before their rendition into Arabic. In the case of many difficult passages in the original the translation was made word by word, and where no Arabic equivalent was found or known the Greek term was simply transliterated with some adaptation.¹

The translators into Arabic did not interest themselves in Greek productions of the literary type. No close contact was therefore established between the Arab mind and Greek drama, Greek poetry and Greek history. In that field Persian influence remained paramount. Homer's *Iliad* was partially translated into Syriac by Thāwafīl (Theophilus) ibn-Tūma of al-Ruhā' († 785),² the Maronite astrologer of al-Mahdī, but evidently it was not carried through the second step into Arabic as in other cases. It was first Greek medicine as represented by Galen († ca. A.D. 200) and Paul of Aegina (fl. ca. A.D. 650),³ Greek mathematics and allied sciences for which Euclid (fl. ca. 300 B.C.) and Ptolemy (fl. first half of second Christian century) stood, Greek philosophy as originated by Plato and Aristotle and expounded by later Neo-Platonists, that served as the starting-point of this voyage of intellectual discovery.

One of the pioneer translators from Greek was abu-Yahya ibn-al-Baṭrīq († between 796 and 806), who is credited with having translated for al-Manṣūr the major works of Galen and Hippocrates (fl. ca. 436 B.C.) and for another patron Ptolemy's *Quadripartitum*.⁴ The *Elements* of Euclid and the *Almagest*, Arabic *al-Majisti* or *al-Mijisti* (originally from Gr. *megistē*, greatest), the great astronomical work of Ptolemy,⁵ may have also been translated about the same time if a report in al-Mas'ūdī⁶ is correct. But evidently all these early translations were not properly done and had to be revised or remade under al-Rashīd and al-Ma'mūn. Another early translator was the Syrian Christian Yūḥanna (Yahya) ibn-Māsawayh⁷ († 857), a pupil of Jibrīl

¹ Hence such Arabic words as *arithmāṭiqi* (arithmetic), *jūmaṭriya* (geometry), *ṣiḡrāfiyah* (geography), *mūsīqi* (music), *falṣafah* (philosophy), *asṭurlāb* (astrolabe), *akḥir* (ether), *ikḥir* (elixir), *sūrīn* (pure gold), *maḡnāṭis* (magnet), *urghun* (organ). Consult abu-'Abdullāh al-Khwārizmī, *Maḡāṭib al-'Ulūm*, ed. G. van Vloten (Leyden, 1895), index; *Fihrist, passim*; *Rasā'il Iḥwān al-Ṣafā'*, ed. Khayr-al-Dīn al-Zirikli (Cairo, 1928), *passim*.

² Ibn-al-'Ibrī, pp. 41, 220.

³ *Fihrist*, p. 273.

⁴ Vol. viii, p. 291. Cf. below, pp. 314-15.

⁵ Latin Mesuē (Mesun), or Mesuē Major (the Elder) to distinguish him from Mesuē the Younger (Mūsawayh al-Māridīnī), the Jacobite physician who flourished at the court of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākīm in Cairo and died in 1015.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁷ Ya'qūbī, vol. i, pp. 150-51.

ibn-Bakhtishū' and a teacher of Ḥunayn ibn-Ishāq, who is said to have translated for al-Rashīd certain manuscripts, mainly medical, which the caliph had brought back from Ancyra and Amorium.¹ Yūhanna served also under the successors of al-Rashīd. Once when offended by a court favourite his retort was, "If the folly wherewith thou art afflicted were converted into intelligence and divided amongst a hundred beetles, each would then become more intelligent than Aristotle!"²

The sheikh of the translators, as the Arabs express it, was Ḥunayn ibn-Ishāq (Joannitius, 809-73), one of the greatest scholars and noblest characters of the age. Ḥunayn was an 'Ibādi, i.e. a Nestorian Christian from al-Ḥīrah, and as a youth acted as dispenser to the physician ibn-Māsawayh. Taking as a challenge a chiding remark by the master that the people of al-Ḥīrah had no business with medicine and that he had better go and change money in the bazaar,³ the lad left the service of ibn-Māsawayh in tears, but intent upon the study of Greek. He was then sent by the three scholarly sons of Mūsa ibn-Shākir, who were carrying on independent research work, into various Greek-speaking lands in quest of manuscripts, and later entered the service of Jibrīl ibn-Bakhtishū', physician-in-ordinary to al-Ma'mūn. Subsequently this caliph appointed Ḥunayn superintendent of his library-academy, and in this capacity Ḥunayn had charge of all the scientific translation work, in which he enjoyed the collaboration of his son Ishāq⁴ and his nephew Ḥubaysh ibn-al-Ḥasan,⁵ whom he trained. Of the numerous works ascribed to him some should undoubtedly be credited to these two assistants and to other students and members of his school, such as 'Isa ibn-Yahya⁶ and Mūsa ibn-Khālid.⁷ In many cases Ḥunayn evidently did the initial translation from Greek into Syriac and his colleagues took the second step and translated from Syriac into Arabic.⁸ Aristotle's *Hermeneutica*, for instance, was first done from Greek into Syriac by the father

¹ Ibn-al-'Ibrī, p. 227, ibn-abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. 1, pp. 175 seq.; Qifī, p. 380.

² *Fihrist*, p. 295.

³ Ibn al-'Ibrī, p. 250, ibn-abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. 1, p. 185.

⁴ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. 1, p. 116 = de Slane, vol. 1, pp. 187-8.

⁵ Nicknamed al-A'sam, because of a lame hand. Ibn-abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. 1, pp. 187, 203, *Fihrist*, p. 297, ibn-al-'Ibrī, p. 252.

⁶ *Fihrist*, p. 297.

⁷ He also translated from Persian into Arabic. *Ibid* p. 244 : 28.

⁸ *Fihrist* p. 249.

and then from Syriac into Arabic by the son Ishāq, who was the better Arabist¹ and who became the greatest translator of Aristotle's works. Among other books in Arabic Ḥunayn is supposed to have prepared translations of Galen, Hippocrates and Dioscorides (fl. ca. A.D. 50) as well as of Plato's *Republic* (*Siyāsah*)² and Aristotle's *Categories* (*Maqūlāt*),³ *Physics* (*Ṭabī'iyāt*) and *Magna Moralia* (*Khulqiyāt*).⁴ Among these his chief work was the rendition into Syriac and Arabic of almost all of Galen's scientific output.⁵ Seven books of Galen's anatomy, lost in the original Greek, have luckily been preserved in Arabic.⁶ Ḥunayn's Arabic version of the Old Testament from the Greek Septuagint⁷ did not survive.

Ḥunayn's ability as a translator may be attested by the report that when in the service of the sons of ibn-Shākir he and other translators received about 500 dinars (about £250) per month and that al-Ma'mūn paid him in gold the weight of the books he translated. But he reached the summit of his glory not only as a translator but as a practitioner when he was appointed by al-Mutawakkil (847-61) as his private physician. His patron, however, once committed him to jail for a year for refusing the offer of rich rewards to concoct a poison for an enemy. When brought again before the caliph and threatened with death his reply was, "I have skill only in what is beneficial, and have studied naught else".⁸ Asked by the caliph, who then claimed that he was simply testing his physician's integrity, as to what prevented him from preparing the deadly poison, Ḥunayn replied:

Two things: my religion and my profession. My religion decrees that we should do good even to our enemies, how much more to our friends. And my profession is instituted for the benefit of humanity and limited to their relief and cure. Besides, every physician is under oath never to give anyone a deadly medicine.⁹

Ḥunayn ibn-Ishāq al-'Ibādi was judged by ibn-al-'Ibri and al-Qifti "a source of science and a mine of virtue", and by

¹ *Nihrist*, p. 298, copied by Qifti, p. 80.

² *Ibid.* p. 248.

³ Ibn-abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. i, pp. 188 a, Qifti, pp. 94-5.

⁴ For a MS of another work, *al-Sinā'ah al-Ṣaghīrah*, comprising ten of the sixteen canonical works of Galen and dated 572 (A.D. 1176), see HIRU, Faria and 'Abd-al-Malik, *Catalog of the Garrett Collection of Arabic Manuscripts* (Princeton, 1938), no. 1075.

⁵ Qifti, p. 99.

⁶ Ibn-abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. i, pp. 187-8, ibn-al-'Ibri, p. 251.

⁷ Ibn-al-'Ibri, pp. 251-2.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 246, l. 5.

⁹ Qifti, pp. 38, 42.

Leclerc "la plus grande figure du IX^e siècle", and even "une des plus belles intelligences et un des plus beaux caractères que l'on rencontre dans l'histoire".¹

Just as Hunayn stood at the head of the Nestorian group of translators, so did Thābit ibn-Qurrah² (ca. 836-901) lead another group, recruited from among the heathen Ṣābians³ of Ḥarrān (ancient Carrhae). These Ṣābians were star-worshippers and as such had interested themselves in astronomy and mathematics from time immemorial. During the reign of al-Mutawakkil their native town became the seat of a school of philosophy and medicine which had been previously transferred from Alexandria to Antioch. In this milieu Thābit and his disciples flourished. They are credited with having translated the bulk of the Greek mathematical and astronomical works, including those of Archimedes († 212 B.C.) and of Apollonius of Perga (b. ca. 262 B.C.).⁴ They also improved on earlier translations. The translation of Euclid by Hunayn, for example, was revised by Thābit.⁵ Thābit found a patron in the Caliph al-Mu'taḍid (892-902), whose personal friend and table companion he soon became.⁶

In his great work Thābit was succeeded by his son Sinān († 943), his two grandsons Thābit († 973)⁷ and Ibrāhīm († 946)⁸ and one great-grandson, abu-al-Faraj,⁹ all of whom distinguished themselves as translators and scientists. But the greatest Ṣālian name after Thābit's was that of al-Battānī († 929, the Albategnius or Albatenus of Latin authors), whose first name, abu-'Abdullāh Muḥammad (ibn-Jābir ibn-Sinān), indicates his conversion to Islam. Al-Battānī's fame, however, rests on his original work as an astronomer, as he was not a translator.

The Ḥarrānian school of mathematical and astronomical translators had as its forerunner al-Ḥajjāj ibn-Yūsuf ibn-Matar (fl. between 786 and 833), generally credited with making the first translation of Euclid's *Elements* and one of the first of Ptolemy's *Almagest*. Of the former work he evidently prepared two versions, one for al-Rashīd and the other for al-Ma'mūn,¹⁰

¹ L. Leclerc, *Histoire de la médecine arabe* (Paris, 1876), vol. i, p. 139.

² His *al-Dhakhīrah fi 'Ilm al-Ṭibb* was edited by G. Sobhy (Cairo, 1928).

³ In reality pseudo-Ṣābians. See below, p. 358.

⁴ *Fihrist*, p. 267.

⁵ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, pp. 177, 298.

⁶ Ibn-abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. 1, p. 216.

⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 224-6.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 226, Qisṣī, pp. 57-9; *Fihrist*, p. 272.

⁹ Qisṣī, p. 428.

¹⁰ *Fihrist*, p. 265.

before Hunayn prepared his. Al-Hajjāj's version of the notable astronomical work *Almagest* was made in 827-8 from an earlier Syriac version. The first attempt at the *Almagest* had been made as early as the days of Yahya ibn-Khālid ibn-Barmak,¹ al-Rashīd's vizir, but the result was not satisfactory. A later adaptation of this work was undertaken by abu-al-Wafā' Muḥammad al-Būzjāni al-Hāsib² (940-97 or 998), one of the greatest Moslem astronomers and mathematicians. Another late translator of mathematical and philosophical works was Qusta ibn-Lūqa († ca. 922), a Christian of Ba'labakk, whose list of original works in the *Fihrist*³ numbers thirty-four.

The latter part of the tenth century saw the rise of Jacobite, or Monophysite, translators represented by Yahya ibn-'Adi, who was born in Takrīt in 893 and died in Baghdād in 974, and abu-'Ali 'Isa ibn-Zur'ah of Baghdād († 1008).⁴ Yahya, who became the archbishop of his church, declared once to the author of the *Fihrist*⁵ that he copied in a day and a night an average of a hundred leaves. The Jacobite authors busied themselves with the revision of existing editions of Aristotelian works or the preparation of fresh translations thereof. They were, moreover, the chief influence in introducing Neo-Platonic speculations and mysticism into the Arabic world.

Before the age of translation was brought to an end practically all the extant works of Aristotle, many of which were of course spurious, had become accessible to the Arabic reader. Ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah,⁶ and after him al-Qifti,⁷ cite no less than a hundred works attributed to "the philosopher of the Greeks". All this took place while Europe was almost totally ignorant of Greek thought and science. For while al-Rashīd and al-Ma'mūn were delving into Greek and Persian philosophy their contemporaries in the West, Charlemagne and his lords, were reportedly dabbling in the art of writing their names. Aristotle's logical *Organon*, which in Arabic included Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* as well as Porphyry's *Isagoge*, soon took its place side by side with Arabic grammar as the basis of humanistic studies in Islam. This position it has maintained to the present day.

¹ *Fihrist*, pp. 267-8 Cf. above, p. 311.

² Būzjān in Qūhīstān was his birthplace, *hāsib* means "mathematician".

³ P. 295. Cf. Qifti, pp. 262-3.

⁴ *Fihrist*, p. 264; ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. I, pp. 235-6; Qifti, pp. 245-6.

⁵ l. 264.

⁶ Vol. I, pp. 57 seq.

⁷ Pp. 34 seq.

Moslems accepted the idea of Neo-Platonic commentators that the teachings of Aristotle and Plato (Aflātūn) were substantially the same. Especially in Sufism, Moslem mysticism, did the influence of Neo-Platonism manifest itself. Through Avicenna (ibn-Sīna) and Averroës (ibn-Rushd), as we shall later see, Platonism and Aristotelianism found their way into Latin and exercised a determining influence upon medieval European scholasticism.

This long and fruitful age of translation under the early 'Abbāsīds was followed by one of original contribution which we shall discuss in a later chapter. By the tenth century Arabic, which in pre-Islamic days was only a language of poetry and after Muhammad mainly a language of revelation and religion, had become metamorphosed in a remarkable and unprecedented way into a pliant medium for expressing scientific thought and conveying philosophic ideas of the highest order. In the meantime it had established itself as the language of diplomacy and polite intercourse from Central Asia, through the whole length of Northern Africa, to Spain. Ever since that time the peoples of al-'Irāq, Syria and Palestine as well as of Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco have expressed their best thought in the tongue of the Arabians.



British Museum

From H. W. C. Davis, "Medieval England" (Clarendon Press)

ANGLO SAXON GOLD COIN IMITATING AN ARAB DINAR
OF THE YEAR 774

It bears on the obverse the *shahādah* and on the reverse OF PA REX inscribed upside down

CHAPTER XXV

THE 'ABBĀSID STATE

AT the head of the state stood the caliph, who was, in theory at least, the fountainhead of all power. He could and did delegate the exercise of his civil authority to a vizir (*wazīr*), of his judicial power to a judge (*qāḍī*), of his military function to a general (*amīr*), but the caliph himself ever remained the final arbiter of all governmental affairs. In their imperial conduct and function the early caliphs of Baghdād followed the older Persian pattern. Taking advantage of the popular reaction against the ungodliness of the later Umayyads, the 'Abbāsids made their début with emphasis on the religious character and dignity of their office as an imāmate, an emphasis which in later years increased in inverse proportion to their actual power. With the eighth caliph, al-Mu'taṣim bi-Allāh (833-42), and continuing till the end of the dynasty, they began to assume honorific titles compounded with *Allāh*. In the period of decline their subjects started to shower on them such extravagant titles as *khalīfat Allāh* (God's caliph) and later *ṣill Allāh 'ala al-arḍ* (God's shadow on earth). These were evidently first bestowed on al-Mutawakkil (847-61),¹ and persisted until the last days of the Ottoman caliphate.

The ill-defined hereditary principle of succession instituted by the Umayyad caliphs was followed throughout the 'Abbāsīd régime with the same evil results. The reigning caliph would designate as his successor that one of his sons whom he favoured or considered competent, or any of his kinsmen whom he regarded as best qualified. Al-Saffāh nominated his brother al-Manṣūr, who was succeeded by his son al-Mahdi.² Al-Mahdi was succeeded by his eldest son, al-Hādi, who was followed by his brother Hārūn al-Rashīd.³ Hārūn designated his oldest son, al-Amīn, as his first successor, and his younger but more talented

¹ *Mus'ūdi*, vol. vii, p. 278.

² See Ya'qūbī, vol. ii, pp. 437 seq., 472 seq.; *Fakhri*, p. 236.

³ *Fakhri*, pp. 261-2; Tabarī, vol. iii, p. 523.

son, al-Ma'mūn, as his second successor. He divided the empire between the two, reserving for al-Ma'mūn the government of Khurāsān with Marw (Marv) for his capital.¹ After a bitter struggle which ended in the assassination of al-Amīn (September 813), al-Ma'mūn usurped the caliphate. Four years later, when he donned the green of the Shī'ah in preference to the black of the 'Abbāsīds and designated an 'Alid, 'Alī al-Rida, as heir apparent, the enraged Baghdādīs elected (July 817) al-Ma'mūn's uncle Ibrāhīm ibn-al-Mahdī as caliph. Not until 819, six years after the death of his predecessor, did al-Ma'mūn succeed in effecting an entry into the capital of the empire. Shortly before his death al-Ma'mūn, ignoring his son al-'Abbās, designated his brother al-Mu'tasim as his successor, thus almost precipitating a revolt on the part of the army, with whom the son was a special favourite. Al-Mu'tasim was followed by his son al-Wāthiq († 847), with whom the period of 'Abbāsīd glory ended. Of the first twenty-four caliphs, whose reign covered almost two centuries and a half (750-991), only six were immediately succeeded by a son.

Attached to the person of the caliph was the chamberlain (*hājib*), whose duty consisted in introducing accredited envoys and dignitaries into the caliphal presence and whose influence naturally became great. There was also the executioner, an outstanding figure in the Baghdād court. Vaulted underground chambers used for torture appear for the first time in Arab history. The court astrologer, like the executioner an importation from Persia, became an adjunct of the 'Abbāsīd throne.

VIZIR

Next to the caliph stood the vizir (*wazīr*), whose office was influenced by the Persian tradition.² The vizir acted as the caliph's *alter ego* and grew in power as his chief indulged increasingly in the pleasures of the harem. In the diploma appointing his vizir the Caliph al-Nāsir (1180-1225) has given a perfect expression to the theory of "divine right" of kingship working by proxy:

Muhammad ibn-Barz al-Qummi is our representative throughout the land and amongst our subjects. Therefore he who obeys him obeys us; and he who obeys us obeys God, and God shall cause him who obeys Him to enter Paradise. As for one who, on the other hand,

¹ Ya'qūbi, vol. II, pp. 500 seq; Fakhri, p. 292, Mas'ūdi, *Tanbih*, p. 345.

² Cf. Ibn al-'Abbās, *Asfār al-Uwal fi Tarīkh al-Duwal* (Cairo, 1295), p. 62, S. D. Goitein in *Islam in Culture*, vol. XVI (1942), pp. 255-63, 350-92.

disobeys our vizir, he disobeys us; and he who disobeys us disobeys God, and God shall cause him who disobeys Him to enter hell-fire.¹

As in the case of the Barmakids the vizir was often all-powerful, appointing and deposing governors and judges, theoretically, of course, with the consent of the caliph, and even transmitting his own office according to the hereditary principle. It was customary for the vizir to confiscate the property of the governor who fell from grace, as it was customary for the governor himself to appropriate the estates of inferior officials and private citizens and for the caliph in his turn to mete out the same penalty to the deposed vizir.² Indeed, the forfeiture of possessions was often accompanied by loss of life. Finally a special "bureau of confiscation"³ was instituted as a regular governmental department. In the days of the Caliph al-Mu'tadid the vizir received a monthly salary of a thousand dinars. Al-Māwardī⁴ and other legal theorists distinguish between two varieties of vizirate: a *tafwīḍ* (with full authority, unlimited) and a *tanfīdh* (with executive power only, limited). The unlimited vizir exercised all the powers of sovereignty with the exception of the appointment of his successor; the limited vizir took no initiative but confined his duties to the execution of the caliph's orders and the following of his instructions. After the time of al-Muqtadir (908-32) the vizir was supplanted by the *amīr al-umarrā'*, commander of the commanders, an office which was subsequently held by the Buwayhids.

The vizir, in reality grand vizir, presided over the council, whose membership included the various heads of the departments of state. Sometimes those heads were also designated vizirs, but their rank was always subordinate to that of the real vizir. Under the 'Abbāsids the governmental machinery became much more complicated than heretofore, though greater order was brought into state affairs, especially in the system of taxation and the administration of justice. Since finances constituted the main concern of the government the bureau of taxes (*diwān al-kharāf*), or department of finance (*bayt al-māl*), remained, as under the Umayyads, the most important unit; its chief, often

¹ *Fakhrī*, p. 205.

² Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vi, pp. 19-20.

³ Cf. Hīlāl al-Sābi', *Tuḥfat al-Umarā' fi Ta'rikh al-Ifṣarā'*, ed. H. F. Amedroz (Beirut, 1904), p. 306.

⁴ Pp. 33-47.

referred to as "master of taxes", continued to be an outstanding figure in the government of the caliph.

The sources of revenue for the state included *zakāh*, the only legal tax obligatory on every Moslem. *Zakāh* was imposed on arable lands, herds, gold and silver, commercial wares and other forms of property capable of augmentation through natural increase or by investment. Moslems, as we learned before, paid no poll tax. The official tax-gatherer looked after lands, herds and the like, but personal effects, including gold and silver, were left to the individual's private conscience. All money collected from believers was disbursed from the central treasury for the benefit of believers: the poor, the orphan, the stranger, volunteers for the holy war and slaves and captives to be ransomed. The other main sources of public income were tribute from foreign enemies, truce money, capitation tax from non-Moslem subjects (*jizyah*), land tax (*kharāj*)¹ and tithes levied upon merchandise owned by non-Moslems and imported into Moslem territory. Of these items the land tax was always the largest and constituted the main source of income from unbelievers. All this revenue was at this time referred to as *ḥaq* (cf. Koran 59: 7) and applied by the caliph to the payment of the troops, the maintenance of mosques, roads and bridges and for the general good of the Moslem community.²

The varying reports of the state revenue that have come down to us from the 'Abbāsīd period testify to great prosperity during the first century of the régime, which made it possible for the caliphs to live on the grand scale described above, and to a steady decline in revenue during each succeeding century. Three such reports have been preserved for us: the oldest, in *ibn-Khaldūn*, showing the income under al-Ma'mūn; the second, in *Qudāmāh*, for the revenue a few years later, possibly under al-Mu'taṣim; and the third, in *ibn-Khurdādhbih*, indicating the proceeds in the first half of the third Moslem century. According to *ibn-Khaldūn*³ the

¹ By this time the differentiation between *jizyah* and *kharāj* had been clearly made. See above, p. 171. In later times the *jizyah* corresponded to *al-badal al-'askari* (scutage), which the Ottomans exacted from their non Moslem subjects for exemption from military service.

² *Māwardī*, pp. 366 *seq.*

³ *Muqaddimah*, pp. 150-51. Cf. Huart, *Histoire des Arabes*, vol. 1, p. 376, Alfred von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients unter den Chalifen*, vol. 1 (Vienna, 1875), pp. 356 *seq.* It is obvious that *ibn-Khaldūn's* list, like the other two, is neither clear nor accurate.

annual land tax paid by al-Sawād (lower 'Irāq, ancient Babylonia) in cash, other than what was paid in kind, amounted in the days of al-Ma'mūn to 27,800,000 dirhams; by Khurāsān, 28,000,000; by Egypt, 23,040,000; by Syria-Palestine,¹ 14,724,000; and by all the provinces of the empire, 331,929,008 dirhams exclusive of taxes in kind. From Qudāmah's² balance-sheet it may be gathered that the income in both cash and kind from al-Sawād was equivalent to 130,200,000 dirhams;³ from Khurāsān, 37,000,000; from Egypt, including Alexandria, 37,500,000; from Syria-Palestine, including Hims, 15,860,000; and from the whole empire, 388,291,350 dirhams, which includes taxes in kind. Ibn-Khurdādhbih⁴ lists a number of items from which we may calculate that the tax of al-Sawād in cash and kind was the equivalent of 78,319,340 dirhams;⁵ of Khurāsān and dependencies, 44,846,000; of Syria-Palestine,⁶ 29,850,000; and of the whole empire, 299,265,340.⁷ As for the expenditures, we have no sufficient data in the scattered references to warrant definite conclusions. But we are told that when al-Manṣūr died the central treasury contained 600,000,000 dirhams and 14,000,000 dinars;⁸ when al-Rashīd died it had over 900,000,000,⁹ and at the death of al-Muktafi (908) the public treasures including jewellery, furniture and real estate amounted to 100,000,000 dinars.¹⁰

Besides the bureau of taxes the 'Abbāsīd government had an audit or accounts office (*dīwān al-simām*) introduced by al-Mahdi; a board of correspondence or chancery office (*dīwān al-tawqīf*) which handled all official letters, political documents and imperial mandates and diplomas; a board for the inspection of grievances; a police department and a postal department.

The board for the inspection of grievances (*dīwān al-naẓar fi al-maẓālim*) was a kind of court of appeal or supreme court intended to set aright cases of miscarriage of justice in the

¹ Qinnasrīn, Damascus, the Jordan and Palestine, the taxes of which are given as 1,227,000 dinars.

² *Kharāj*, pp. 237-52.

³ In cash alone 8,095,800 dirhams; Qudāmah, pp. 249, 239. As a matter of fact he gives different figures in different places and on his lists the totals do not tally with the itemized statements.

⁴ *Farrāh*.

⁵ In cash alone about 8,456,840 dirhams; Ibn-Khurdādhbih, pp. 5 *seq.*

⁶ Qinnasrīn and other frontier towns, Hims, Damascus, the Jordan and Palestine.

⁷ Zaydān, *Tamadūn*, vol. ii, p. 61. Cf. Huart, vol. i, p. 376.

⁸ Mas'ūdī, vol. vi, p. 233.

⁹ Tabarī, vol. iii, p. 764.

¹⁰ Tha'ālibī, *Latā'if*, p. 72.

administrative and political departments. Its origin goes back to the Umayyad days, for al-Māwardī¹ tells us that 'Abd-al-Malik was the first caliph to devote a special day for the direct hearing by himself of appeals and complaints made by his subjects. 'Umar II zealously followed the precedent.² This practice was evidently introduced by al-Mahdi into the 'Abbāsīd régime. His successors al-Hādi, Hārūn, al-Ma'mūn and those who followed received such complaints in public audience; al-Muhtadi (869-70) was the last to keep up the custom. The Norman king Roger II (1130-54) introduced this institution into Sicily, where it struck root in European soil.³

The police department (*diwān al-shurṭah*) was headed by a high official designated *sāhib al-shurṭah*, who acted as chief of police and the royal bodyguard and in later times occasionally held the rank of vizir. Each large city had its own special police who also held military rank and were as a rule well paid. The chief of municipal police was called *muhtasib*, for he acted as overseer of markets and morals. It was his duty to see that proper weights and measures were used in trade, that legitimate debts were paid (though he had no judicial power), that approved morals were maintained and that acts forbidden by law, such as gambling, usury and public sale of wine, were not committed. Al-Māwardī⁴ enumerates, among other interesting duties of this prefect of police, the maintenance of the recognized standards of public morality between the two sexes and the chastisement of those who dyed their grey beards black with a view to gaining the favour of the ladies.

A significant feature of the 'Abbāsīd government was the postal department,⁵ of which the chief was called *ṣāhib al-barīd*. Among the Umayyads Mu'āwiyah, as we have already learned, was the first to interest himself in the postal service, 'Abd-al-Malik extended it throughout the empire and al-Walīd made use of it for his building operations. Historians credit Hārūn with

¹ P. 131. Cf. Ibn al Athīr, vol 1, p. 46.

² Māwardī, p. 131. Cf. Ya'qūbi, vol II, p. 367. Consult al-Bayhaqī, *al-Ma'ānī wa al-Masā'ir*, ed. F. Schwally (Giessen, 1902), pp. 525 seq.

³ M. Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*, ed. Nallino, vol. III (Catania, 1937-9), p. 452; von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte*, vol 1, p. 420.

⁴ Pp. 417-18, 431.

⁵ *Diwān al-barīd*, bureau of post. *Ar-barīd* is probably a Semitic word, not related to Latin *veredus*, Pers. *birdan*, a swift horse, *Ar-birdkhan*, horse of burden. Cf. Esth. 8: 10; Isfahān, *Ta'rīkh*, p. 39.

having organized the service on a new basis through his Barmakid counsellor Yahya. Though primarily designed to serve the interests of the state, the postal institution did in a limited way handle private correspondence.¹ Each provincial capital was provided with a post office. Routes connected the imperial capital with the leading centres of the empire² and systems of relays covered these routes. In all there must have been hundreds of such relay routes. In Persia the relays consisted of mules and horses; in Syria and Arabia camels were used.³ The *barīd* was also employed for the conveyance of newly appointed governors to their respective provinces and for the transportation of troops with their baggage.⁴ The public could make use of it on the payment of a substantial sum.

Pigeons were trained and used as letter-carriers. The first recorded instance relates to the news of the capture of the rebel Bābik (Bābak), chief of the Khurrami⁵ sect, carried to al-Mu'tasim by this method in 837.⁶

The postal headquarters in Baghdād had itineraries of the whole empire indicating the various stations and the intervening distances. These itineraries assisted travellers, merchants and pilgrims and laid the basis of later geographical research. Early Arab students of geography made use of such postal directories in the composition of their works. One of the leaders among them, ibn-Khurdādhbih († ca. 912), whose *al-Masālik w-al-Mamālik*, based on material in the state archives, proved an important source for historical topography, was himself *sāhib al-barīd* for the Caliph al-Mu'tamid in al-Jibāl (ancient Media). This elaborate road system which radiated from the imperial capital was an inheritance from the earlier Persian empire. In it the most famous of the trunk roads was the Khurāsān highway, which stretched north-east through Hamadhān, al-Rayy, Naysābūr, Tūs, Marw, Bukhāra, Samarqand, and connected Baghdād with the frontier towns of the Jaxartes and the borders of China. From the principal cities along this highway cross-roads branched off north and south. To the present day the Persian post roads

¹ Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, p. 93, ll. 5-6.

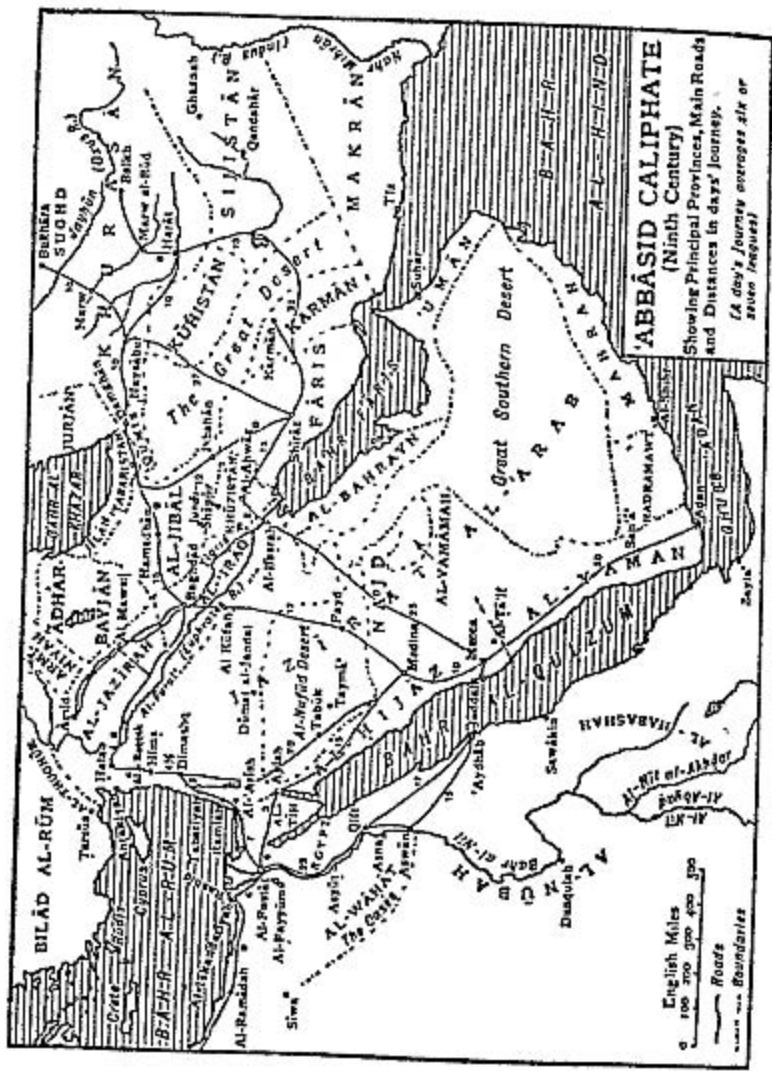
² Ibn-Khurdādhbih, *Passim*.

³ Cf. ibn al Athīr, vol. vi, p. 49, ll. 11-12.

⁴ *Ibid* vol. iv, pp 373-4.

⁵ So called from a district in Persia where the sect evidently arose as a result of the execution of the famous abu-Muslim al-Khurāsāni. Some of them denied that abu-Muslim was dead and foretold his return to spread justice in the world. Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, p. 185, Baghdādī, ed. Hitti, pp. 162 seq.; *Fihrist*, p. 342.

⁶ Mas'ūdi, vol. vii, pp 126-7.



centring in Tīhrān (Teheran), near ancient al-Rayy, follow the same old tracks. Another main road led from Baghdād down the Tigris through Wāsiṭ and al-Baṣrah to al-Ahwāz in Khūzistān and thence to Shīrāz in Fāris. Likewise this road sent off east and west branches which connected its towns with other centres of population and ultimately with the Khurāsān trunk. These roads were frequented by pilgrims, who from Baghdād could take the pilgrim route to Makkah through al-Kūfah or al-Baṣrah. For the benefit of pilgrims and travellers caravanserais, hospices and cisterns dotted the main roads. Such khāns along the Khurāsān road were built as early as the days of 'Umar II.¹ A third highway linked Baghdād with al-Mawsil, Āmid (Diyār Bakr) and the frontier fortresses. On the north-west Baghdād was connected with Damascus and other Syrian towns through al-Anbār and al-Raqqah.

The postmaster-general had another important function besides looking after the imperial mail and supervising the various postal establishments; he was the chief of an espionage system to which the whole postal service was subordinated. As such his full title was *ṣāhib al-barīd w-al-akhbār*,² controller of the post and intelligence service. In this capacity he acted as an inspector-general and direct confidential agent of the central government. The provincial postmaster reported to him or to the caliph directly on the conduct and activities of the government officials in his province, not excluding the governor himself. Such a report, submitted to al-Mutawakkil against a governor of Baghdād who brought back with him from a pilgrimage to Makkah a beautiful slave girl "with whom he amuses himself from noon till night to the neglect of the affairs of the state", has come down to us in a late source.³ Al-Manṣūr employed in his espionage system merchants, pedlars and travellers who acted as detectives; al-Rashīd and other caliphs did the same.⁴ Al-Ma'mūn is said to have had in his intelligence service in Baghdād some 1700 aged women. Especially was "the land of the Romans" covered with 'Abbāsīd spies of both sexes disguised as traders, travellers and physicians.

¹ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. v, p. 44; Nawawī, *Tahdhīb*, p. 468, l. 16.

² Qudāmāh, p. 184.

³ Atlīdī, *I'lām al-Nās* (Cairo, 1297), p. 161.

⁴ Cf. *Aghāni*, vol. xv, p. 36, l. 14; Miskawayh, ed. de Goeje and de Jong, pp. 234, 466, 498, 512, 514, 567.

Judicial
adminis-
tration

The dispensing of justice, always considered in Moslem communities a religious duty, was entrusted by the 'Abbāsīd caliph or his vizir to a member of the *faqīh* (theologian) class, who thus became a *qādi*,¹ or if in Baghdād a *qādi al-quḍāh* (chief judge). The first to receive the title of *qādi al-quḍāh* was the famous abu-Yūsuf († ca. 798), who served under al-Mahdi and his two sons al-Hādi and Hārūn.² The judge, according to the theory of Moslem law, had to be male, adult, in full possession of his mental faculties, a free citizen, Moslem in faith, irreproachable in character, sound of sight and hearing and well versed in the prescriptions of law,³ all of which was of course canon law. Non-Moslems, as noted before, were in matters of civil right under the jurisdiction of their own ecclesiastical heads or magistrates. Al-Māwardī⁴ distinguishes between two types of judgeship: one in which the authority is general and absolute (*'āmmah mutlaqah*) and the other in which the authority is special and limited (*khāssah*). The chief duties of the *qādi* of the first class consisted in deciding cases, acting as guardian for orphans, lunatics and minors, administering pious foundations, imposing punishments on violators of the religious law, appointing judicial deputies (sing. *nā'ib*) in the various provinces and presiding under certain conditions at the Friday congregational prayers. In the early history of the institution the provincial judges held their appointment from the governors, but in the fourth Moslem century those judges were usually deputies of the chief *qādi* in Baghdād. Under al-Ma'mūn the pay of the judge of Egypt is said by a late authority⁵ to have reached 4000 dirhams a month. The judge of the second class, one with special and limited authority, had his power restricted in accordance with the diploma of appointment from the caliph, vizir or governor.⁶

The Arab caliphate never maintained a large standing army in the strict sense of the term, well organized, under strict discipline and subject to regular instruction and drill. The caliphal bodyguard (*haras*) were almost the only regular troops and formed the nucleus around which clustered bands under

¹ Transliterated in at least thirteen different ways, six of which occur in official British documents *qadi, qazi, kazi, cadi, al kadi, kathi*.

² Ibn-Khallikān, vol. III, p. 334 = de Slane, vol. IV, p. 273.

³ Māwardī, pp. 107-11.

⁴ Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, vol. II, p. 100, l. 4.

⁵ Consult Richard Gottheil in *Revue des études ethnographiques* (1908), pp.

⁶ Pp. 117-25.

Military
organiza-
tion

their own chiefs, besides mercenaries and adventurers, and general levies of which the units were tribes or districts. The regulars (*jund*) who were permanently on active service were referred to as *murtasiqah* (regularly paid), for they were in the pay of the government. Others were designated *mutatawwi'ah*¹ (volunteers) and received rations only while on duty. The volunteer ranks were recruited from among the Bedouins as well as from the peasants and townspeople. Members of the bodyguard received higher pay and were equipped with better armour and uniforms. In the reign of the first 'Abbāsīd caliph the average pay of the foot soldier was, besides the usual rations and allowances, about 960 dirhams a year,² the horseman receiving double that amount. Under al-Ma'mūn, when the empire reached its height, the 'Irāq army is said to have numbered 125,000, of whom the infantry received only 240 dirhams a year³ and the cavalry twice as much. And when it is remembered that al-Mansūr paid his master builder at the founding of Baghdād the equivalent of about a dirham a day and the ordinary labourer about a third of a dirham,⁴ it becomes clear how comparatively well paid the military career was.

The regulars under the early 'Abbāsīds were composed of infantry (*harbiyah*)⁵ armed with spears, swords and shields, of archers (*rāmiyah*) and of cavalry (*fursān*) wearing helmets and breast-plates and equipped with long lances and battle-axes. Al-Mutawakkil introduced the practice of wearing the sword in the Persian fashion round the waist in preference to the old Arabian way of carrying it over the shoulder.⁶ Each corps of archers had attached to it a body of naphtha-throwers (*naffātūn*) who wore fireproof suits and hurled incendiary material at the enemy.⁷ Engineers in charge of the siege machinery, including catapults, mangonels and battering-rams, accompanied the army. One such engineer, ibn-Šābir al-Manjanīqi, who flourished

¹ Or *muffawtir'ah*, Tabari, vol. iii, pp. 1008 seq.; ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iii, p. 260.

² Tabari, vol. iii, p. 41, ll. 17-18, copied by ibn-al-Athīr, vol. v, p. 322, ll. 14-15.

³ When al-Ma'mūn was fighting his brother he had to restore the standard 960 dirhams, which sum was likewise paid by his brother. Tabari, vol. iii, p. 830, ll. 7-8, p. 867, l. 14.

⁴ Khaṭīb, vol. i, p. 70; Tabari, vol. iii, p. 326.

⁵ Mentioned by Tabari, vol. iii, pp. 998 seq.; ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iii, p. 238, l. 17 p. 245, ll. 23, 26.

⁶ ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iii, p. 275.

⁷ *Agḥāni*, vol. xvii, p. 45; ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iii, p. 260, l. 20.

later under al-Nāsir (1180-1225), left an unfinished book which treats of the art of warfare in all its details.¹ Field hospitals and ambulances in the shape of litters carried by camels accompanied the army when in the field. As usual, Hārūn is the caliph credited with introducing these features and pressing science into the service of warfare.

During the 'Abbāsīd régime, which, as we have seen before, owed its rise to Persian rather than Arab arms, the Arabian element lost its military, as it did its political, predominance. Under the first caliphs the bodyguard, the strong arm of the military machine, was largely composed of Khurāsāni troops. The Arab soldiery formed two divisions: one of North Arabians, Muḍarite, and the other of South Arabians, Yamanite. New converts to Islam attached themselves to some Arabian tribe as clients and thus formed a part of the military organization of that tribe. Al-Mu'tasim added a new division made up of Turks, originally his slaves, from Farghānah and other regions of Central Asia.² This new imperial bodyguard soon became the terror of the whole capital, and in 836 the caliph had to build a new town, Sāmarrā, to which he transferred his seat of government. After the death of al-Muntaṣir (861-2) these Turks began to play the part of a prætorian guard and exercise a determining influence on affairs of the state.

In Roman-Byzantine fashion every ten men of the army under al-Ma'mūn, al-Musta'in and other 'Abbāsīd caliphs were commanded by an *'arif* (corresponding to the decurion), every fifty by a *khalīfah*, and every hundred by a *qā'id* (corresponding to the centurion).³ At the head of a corps of 10,000, comprising ten battalions, stood the *amīr* (general). A body of a hundred men formed a company or squadron and several such companies constituted a cohort (*kurdūs*). Von Kremer⁴ has reconstructed for us a realistic picture of an Arab army of those days on the march.

Throughout its first century the 'Abbāsīd caliphate depended for its very existence on a strong and contented soldiery, which was used not only for suppressing revolts in Syria, Persia and

¹ Ibn-Khalīkān, vol. iii, p. 397.

² Mas'ūdi, vol. vii, p. 118.

³ Ibn-Khalīdūn, vol. iii, p. 299, l. 7. Cf. Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, p. 452; Ṭabari, vol. lii, p. 1799.

⁴ *Culturgeschichte*, vol. i, pp. 227-9 = S. Khuda Bukhsh, *The Orient under the Caliphs* (Calcutta 1920), pp. 333-5.

Central Asia but for waging aggressive war against the Byzantines. "Two things", in the opinion of a modern scholar,¹ "rendered the Saracens of the tenth century dangerous foes,—their numbers and their extraordinary powers of locomotion." But that was not all. In the treatise on military tactics attributed to the Emperor Leo VI the Wise² (886–912) we are told: "Of all the [barbarous] nations they [the Saracens] are the best advised and most prudent in their military operations". The following passage from the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus³ (913–59) describes the impression left by the Arabs on their Byzantine foes: "They are powerful and warlike, so that if only a thousand of them occupy a camp it is impossible to dislodge them. They do not ride horses but camels." From statements in these and other Byzantine sources such as the work on military tactics composed by the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas (963–9) it is evident that cold and rainy weather was distasteful to the Arab warriors, that once their line was broken in action they usually lacked the necessary discipline to restore it and that their foot was in general a mere rabble of plunderers ineffective as a fighting machine. Yet it is evident that the Byzantines looked upon the Arabs, whom they called infidels and barbarous, as their most formidable enemy. In the course of the tenth century, however, this enemy grew less and less dangerous until by its end the Byzantines were habitually taking the offensive and threatening even Damascus and Baghdād.

The decline of the 'Abbāsīd military power began with the introduction by al-Mutawakkil of the foreign units, which contributed to the destruction of the necessary conditions for the upkeep of the morale and *esprit de corps*. Later on al-Muqtadir (908–32) initiated the policy of farming out provinces to governors or military commanders who were to pay their troops from local state funds and not from the depleted imperial treasury. Under the Buwayhid régime soldiers received grants in the form of lands instead of pay in cash. This sowed the seeds of a feudal military system which was further developed under the Saljūqs. It then became customary for governors and generals to receive as grants towns or districts over which they

¹ Oman, *Art of War*, 2nd ed., vol. i, p. 209.

² "Tactica", *Constitutio xviii*, § 123, in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. cvii.

³ "De administrando imperio", caput xv. in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. cxviii.

ruled with absolute power, paying the Saljūq sultan a yearly tribute and, in time of war, marching under his banner with a fixed number of troops equipped and supported by themselves.

The Umayyad partition of the empire into provinces under governors (sing. *amīr* or *'āmil*), a division based on earlier Byzantine and Persian models, was not radically changed under the 'Abbāsīds. The 'Abbāsīd list of provinces varied from time to time and the political classification may not always have tallied with the geographical as preserved in al-Istakhri, ibn-Ḥawqal, ibn-al-Faqīh and similar works; but the following seem to have been the chief provinces under the early calīphs of Baghdād: (1) Africa west of the Libyan Desert together with Sicily; (2) Egypt; (3) Syria and Palestine, which were sometimes separated; (4) al-Ḥijāz and al-Yamāmah (Central Arabia); (5) al-Yaman or Southern Arabia;¹ (6) al-Bahrayn and 'Umān, with al-Basrah in al-'Irāq for its capital; (7) al-Sawād, or al-'Irāq (Lower Mesopotamia), whose leading cities after Baghdād were al-Kūfah and Wāsit; (8) al-Jazīrah (i.e. the island, rather the peninsula, ancient Assyria), whose capital was al-Mawṣil (Mosul); (9) Ādharbayjān, of which Ardabīl, Tibrīz and Marāghah were the leading towns; (10) al-Jibāl (the mountains, ancient Media), later called al-'Irāq al-'Ajami (the Persian 'Irāq),² of which the principal cities were Hamadhān (ancient Ecbatana), al-Rayy and Iṣbahān (Iṣfahān, Ispahān); (11) Khūzistān, with al-Ahwāz and Tustar³ as chief towns; (12) Fāris, of which Shīrāz was the capital; (13) Karmān, whose present capital bears the same name; (14) Mukrān, which included modern Baluchistan and extended to the highlands overlooking the Indus valley; (15) Sijistān or Sistān, whose capital was Zaranj; (16-20) Qūhīstān, Qūmis, Tabarīstān, Jurjān and Armenia; (21) Khurāsān, which included what has now become the north-western part of Afghanistan and whose leading cities were Naysābūr, Marw, Harāt (Herat) and Balkh; (22) Khwārizm, whose early capital was Kāth; (23) al-Ṣughd (ancient Sogdiana) between the Oxus and Jaxartes, having two famous cities, Bukhāra and Samarqand; (24, etc.) Farghānah, al-Shāsh

¹ These five provinces were often referred to as *aqālīm al-maḡrib*, the occidental provinces, in contradistinction to the rest referred to as *aqālīm al-mashriq*, the oriental provinces.

² In contrast to al-'Irāq al-'Arabī (the Arabian 'Irāq), i.e. Lower Mesopotamia.

³ Called Shustar or Shushtar by the Persians.

(modern Tāshkand) and other Turkish lands.¹ The Ottoman Turkish vilayets in Western Asia, it may be noticed, correspond geographically to the old Arab provinces.

In spite of all efforts on the part of the imperial capital, decentralization was the unavoidable consequence of such a far-flung domain with difficult means of intercommunication. In all local affairs the governor's authority tended to become supreme and his office hereditary. In theory he held his position during the pleasure of the vizir, who recommended his appointment to the caliph, and went out of office when that vizir was removed. As in the case of the vizirate al-Māwardī² distinguishes between two varieties of governorship: one, *imārah 'āmmah* (general amirate), in which the incumbent held supreme direction of military affairs, right of nomination and control of the judiciary, levying of taxes, maintenance of public security, safeguarding the state religion against innovation, administration of police and presiding at public prayers on Friday; and the other of the more restricted type (*khāṣṣah*, special), in which the governor had no jurisdiction over judges and taxes. But all this classification was largely theoretical, as the authority of the provincial governor increased in direct proportion to the personal ability of the governor, the weakness of the caliph and the distance from the federal capital. The local income from each province was in almost every case applied to meet the governmental expenses of that province. If the expenses were less than the local income the governor remitted the balance to the caliphal treasury. The administration of justice was in the hands of a provincial qāḍī assisted by a number of deputies stationed in the various sub-divisions of the provinces.

¹ Compare list of provinces as given here with lists in Le Strange, *Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 1-9; Zaydān, *Tarīkh al-ʿArab*, vol. ii, pp. 37-44; von Kremer, *Culturge-schichte*, vol. i, p. 184.

² Pp. 47-54.

CHAPTER XXVI

'ABBĀSID SOCIETY

THE primitive tribal system, the basic pattern of Arabian social organization, entirely broke down under the 'Abbāsids, who owed their throne to foreign elements. Even the caliphs in such matters as the choice of wives and mothers for their children set no value on Arabian blood. Among the 'Abbāsids only three caliphs were sons of free mothers: abu-al-'Abbās, al-Mahdi and al-Amīn,¹ of whom the last enjoyed the unique distinction of having both parents from the Prophet's family.² Among the Umayyads the twelfth caliph, Yazīd III, was the first whose mother was a non-Arab. But she was at least supposedly a descendant of the last Persian emperor, Yazdagird, and was captured by Qutaybah in Sogdiana and presented by al-Ḥajjāj to the Caliph al-Walid. Among the 'Abbāsids al-Manṣūr's mother was a Berber slave; al-Ma'mūn's a Persian slave; al-Wāthiq's and al-Muhtadi's were Greek; al-Muntasir's was a Greco-Abyssinian; al-Musta'in's a Slav (*saqlabiyah*); al-Muktafi's as well as al-Muqtadir's were Turkish slaves; and al-Mustadi's Armenian.³ Hārūn's mother, another foreign slave, was the famous al-Khayzurān—the first woman to exercise any appreciable influence in 'Abbāsīd caliphal affairs.⁴

In bringing about this fusion of the Arabians with their subject peoples polygamy, concubinage and the slave trade proved effective methods. As the pure Arabian element receded into the background non-Arabs, half-breeds and sons of freed women began to take their place. Soon the Arabian aristocracy was superseded by a hierarchy of officials representing diverse nationalities, at first preponderantly Persian and later Turkish.

¹ Tha'ālibī, *Laḡd'if*, p. 75.

² Tabarī, vol. iii, p. 937, ll. 12-13.

³ See Tha'ālibī, pp. 75-7. Mas'ūdi, *panin*.

⁴ For the part she was suspected of having played in the death of her son, the Caliph al-Hādī, and the succession of her other and favourite son, al-Rashīd, consult Ḥabībī, vol. iii, pp. 569 *seq.*, copied by Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vi, pp. 67 *seq.* Cf. Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, pp. 282-3.

A bard gave expression to the proud Arabian sentiment when he sang:

Sons of concubines have become
So numerous amongst us;
Lead me, O God, to a land
Where I shall see no bastards.¹

Unfortunately Arab historians had their interest too much centred in the caliph's affairs and political happenings to leave us an adequate picture of the social and economic life of the common people in those days. But from sporadic, incidental passages in their works, from mainly literary sources and from ordinary life in the conservative Moslem Orient of today, it is not impossible to reconstruct an outline of that picture.

The early 'Abbāsīd woman enjoyed the same measure of liberty as her Umayyad sister; but toward the end of the tenth century, under the Buwayhids, the system of strict seclusion and absolute segregation of the sexes had become general. Not only do we read of women in the high circles of that early period achieving distinction and exercising influence in state affairs—such as al-Khayzurān, al-Mahdī's wife and al-Rashīd's mother; 'Ulayyah, daughter of al-Mahdī; Zubaydah, al-Rashīd's wife and al-Amīn's mother; and Būrān, al-Ma'mūn's wife—but of Arab maidens going to war and commanding troops, composing poetry and competing with men in literary pursuits or enlivening society with their wit, musical talent and vocal accomplishments. Such was 'Ubaydah al-Ṭunbūrīyah (i.e. the pandore-lady), who won national fame in the days of al-Mu'taṣim as a beauty, a singer and a musician.²

In the period of decline, characterized by excessive concubinage, laxity of sex morality and indulgence in luxury, the position of woman sank to the low level we find in the *Arabian Nights*. There woman is represented as the personification of cunning and intrigue and as the repository of all base sentiments and unworthy thoughts. In an extraordinary letter of condolence to a friend who had lost his daughter, abu-Bakr al-Khwārizmī († ca. 993 or 1002), the first author to leave a collection of literary correspondence, asserts: "We are in an age in which if one of us . . . should marry his daughter to a grave he would acquire thereby the best of sons-in-law".³

¹ Mubarrad, p. 302.

² *Agħāni*, vol. xix, pp. 134-7.

³ *Rasā'id* (Constantinople, 1297), p. 20.

Marriage has been regarded almost universally in Islam as a positive duty, the neglect of which is subject to severe reproach, and the gift of children, especially if sons, a boon from God. A wife's first duty consisted in the service of her husband, the care of the children and the management of household affairs; any spare time would be occupied with spinning and weaving. The fashionable head-dress for women, introduced by 'Ulayyah, half-sister of al-Rashid, was evidently a dome-shaped cap, round the bottom of which was a circlet that could be adorned with jewels. Among other objects of feminine adornment were anklets (sing. *khalkhāl*) and bracelets (*asāwir*).

Men's clothing has varied but little since those days. The common head-gear was the black high-peaked hat, *galanru-wah*, made of felt or wool and introduced by al-Manṣūr.¹ Wide trousers (*sarāwīl*) of Persian origin,² shirt, vest and jacket (*qūṣṭān*),³ with outer mantle ('*abā*' or *jubbah*'), completed the wardrobe of a gentleman.⁴ The theologians, following the instructions of abu-Yūsuf, al-Rashid's distinguished judge, wore distinctive black turbans and mantles (sing. *ṭaylasān*).⁵

Judging by the erotic expressions of the poets of the age the early Arabian ideals of feminine beauty seem not to have suffered much change. Al-Nuwayri devotes a goodly portion of a volume⁷ to quotations descriptive of such physical charms. The woman's stature should be like the bamboo (*khayzurān*) among plants, her face as round as the full moon, her hair darker than the night, her cheeks white and rosy with a mole not unlike a drop of ambergris upon a plate of alabaster, her eyes intensely black without any adventitious antimony (*kuhl*) and large like those of a wild deer, her eyelids drowsy or languid (*sagīm*), her

¹ Above, p. 294. The red fez, *ṭarbūsh*, still worn in Moslem lands, is a modern article.

² Jāhiz, *Bayān*, vol. iii, p. 9; R. P. A. Dozy, *Dictionnaire détaillé des noms des vêtements* (Amsterdam, 1845), pp. 203-4.

³ Dozy, pp. 162-3.

⁴ This Arabic word has worked its way from Spanish, where we find it in a late tenth-century dictionary, into the rest of the Romance languages and thence into English and the other Germanic languages as well as the Slavonic. In English it has left an interesting survival in the word "gibbet", meaning "gallows".

⁵ This style of dress is still followed by the older generation in Lebanon and Syria.

⁶ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. iii, p. 334 = de Slane, vol. iv, p. 273; *Aghāni*, vol. v, p. 109, ll. 23-4, vol. vi, p. 69, l. 23; *ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah*, vol. ii, p. 4, l. 23.

⁷ *Nihāyah*, vol. ii, pp. 18 seq. For an illustration of the wealth of the Arabic language in terms describing women see *ibn-Qayyim al-Jawziyah*, *Akhḍār al-Nisā'* (Cairo, 1319), pp. 119 seq.

mouth small with teeth like pearls set in coral, her bosom pomegranate-like, her hips wide and her fingers tapering, with the extremities dyed with vermilion henna (*hinnā*).

The most conspicuous piece of furniture now came to be the *dīwān*, a sofa extending along three sides of the room. Raised seats in the form of chairs were introduced under the earlier dynasty, but cushions laid on small square mattresses (from Ar. *maṣrah*) on the floor where one could comfortably squat remained popular. Hand-woven carpets covered the floor. Food was served on large round trays of brass set on a low table in front of the *dīwān* or the floor cushions. In the homes of the well-to-do the trays were of silver and the table of wood inlaid with ebony, mother-of-pearl or tortoise-shell—not unlike those still manufactured in Damascus. Those same people who had once enjoyed scorpions, beetles and weasels as a luxury,¹ who thought rice a venomous food² and used flattened bread for writing material,³ by this time had their gastronomic tastes whetted for the delicacies of the civilized world, including such Persian dishes as the greatly desired stew, *sikbāj*, and the rich sweets, *fālūdḥaj*. Their chickens were now fed on shelled nuts, almonds and milk. In summer, houses were cooled by ice.⁴ Non-alcoholic drinks in the form of sherbet,⁵ consisting of water sweetened with sugar and flavoured with extracts of violets, bananas, roses or mulberries, were served, but of course not exclusively. Coffee did not attain vogue until the fifteenth century and tobacco was unknown before the discovery of the New World.⁶ A ninth- to tenth-century author⁷ has left us a work intended to give an exposition of the sentiments and manners of a man or culture (*ḡarīf*), a gentleman, in that period. He is one in possession of polite behaviour (*adab*), manly virtue (*murūʾah*) and elegant manners

¹ Ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, p. 170

² Ibn-al-Faḡh, pp. 187-8.

³ Ibn-Khaldūn, p. 144. Cf. above, p. 156.

⁴ Ibn-abi-Uṣaybiʿah, vol. 1, pp. 139-40. Pp. 82-3 quote from an earlier source a prescription which "can solidify water even in June or July".

⁵ From Ar. *sharḥ*, drink. Eng. "syrup" comes from a cognate word *sharāb*.

⁶ Introduced into South Arabia in the fourteenth century, coffee became domesticated in Makkah early in the fifteenth, and in the first decade of the sixteenth century was first known in Cairo through Sufis from al-Yaman, who used it at the Azhar Mosque to produce the necessary wakefulness for nightly devotions. See above, p. 19. Inhaling of smoke from burning herbs for medicinal purposes or perhaps for pleasure had been practised before America's discovery.

⁷ Al-Washshāʾ, *Kitāb al-Muwashshā*, ed. R. Brünnow (Leyden, 1886), pp. 1, 12, 33, 37, 124, 125, 129-31, 142.



By courtesy of Fahim Kourkaji

A NINTH-CENTURY VASE FROM AL-RAQQAH, PART-TIME
CAPITAL OF HĀRŪN AL-RASHĪD

It is of turquoise greenish-blue colour, forty-nine centimetres high

(*sarf*), who abstains from joking, holds fellowship with the right comrades, has high standards of veracity, is scrupulous in the fulfilment of his promises, keeps a secret, wears unsoiled and unpatched clothes, and at the table takes small mouthfuls, converses or laughs but little, chews his food slowly, licks not his fingers, avoids garlic and onions and refrains from using the toothpick in toilet rooms, baths, public meetings and on the streets.

Alcoholic drinks were often indulged in both in company and in private. Judging by the countless stories of revelry in such works as the *Aghāni* and the *Arabian Nights* and by the numerous songs and poems in praise of wine (*khamrīyāt*) by the debauched abu-Nuwās († ca. 810), the one-day caliph, ibn-al-Mu'tazz († 908), and similar bards, prohibition, one of the distinctive features of Moslem religion, did no more prohibit than did the eighteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Even caliphs, vizirs, princes and judges paid no heed to the religious injunction.¹ Scholars, poets, singers and musicians were especially desired as boon companions. This practice, which was of Persian origin,² became an established institution under the early 'Abbāsids and developed professionals under al-Rashīd. Other than this caliph, al-Hādī, al-Amīn, al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'tasim, al-Wāthiq and al-Mutawakkil were given to drink; al-Manṣūr and al-Muhtadi were opposed to it. Indeed al-Nawāji³ despairs of finding room in his book for all the caliphs, vizirs and secretaries addicted to the use of the forbidden beverage. *Khamr*, made of dates, was the favourite. Ibn-Khaldūn argues that such personages as al-Rashīd and al-Ma'mūn used only *nabīdh*,⁴ prepared by soaking grapes, raisins or dates in water and allowing the juice to ferment slightly. Such drink was judged legal under certain conditions by at least one school of Moslem jurisprudence, the Hanafite. Muḥammad himself drank it, especially before it was three days old.⁵

¹ See Nuwayrī, *Nihāyah*, vol. iv, pp. 92 seq.

² Jāhiz, *Taj*, pp. 23, 72; Nawāji, *Ḥalḥak*, p. 26.

³ P. 99, ll. 24-7.

⁴ *Al-Ḥaddamāh*, p. 16. *Khamr* is the term used in the Koran (5:92-3) for the prohibited drink. What provides opportunity for the exercise of ingenuity on the part of interpreters is firstly the fact that at the time of the Prophet there was not in al-Madīnah any *khamr* of grapes, the beverage of its inhabitants being prepared from dates; and secondly that these juices do not ferment until a certain time lapses unless they are treated by special methods. Consult *Iqd*, vol. iii, pp. 405-14.

⁵ *Al-Ḥaddamāh*, vol. iii, pp. 172-3; ibn-Hanbal, *Muwadd* (Cairo, 1313), vol. I, pp. 240, 287, 220; Bukhārī, vol. vi, p. 272.

Convivial parties featuring "the daughter of the vine" and song were not uncommon. At these drinking-bouts (sing. *majlis al-shirāb*¹) the host and guests perfumed their beards with civet or rose-water and wore special garments of bright colours (*thiyāb al-munādamaḥ*). The room was made fragrant by ambergris or aloes-wood burning in a censer. The songstresses who participated in such gatherings were mostly slaves of loose character, as illustrated by many stories,² who constituted the gravest menace to the morals of the youth of the age.³ The description of a certain home in al-Kūfah during the reign of al-Mansūr sounds more like that of a *café chantant*, with Sallāmah al-Zarqā' (the blue-eyed) as its prima donna.⁴ The laity had access to wine in the Christian monasteries and the special bars conducted mainly by Jews. Christians and Jews were the "bootleggers" of the time.

Baths

"Cleanliness is a part of faith"—so runs a Prophetic tradition that is still on every lip in Moslem lands. Arabia had no baths that we hear of before Muhammad. He himself is represented as prejudiced against them and as having permitted men to enter them for purposes of cleanliness only, each wearing a cloth. In the time we are studying, however, public baths (sing. *ḥammām*) had become popular not only for ceremonial ablutions and for their salutary effects, but also as resorts of amusement and mere luxury. Women were allowed their use on specially reserved days. Baghdād, according to al-Khatib,⁵ boasted in the days of al-Muqtadir (908-32) some 27,000 public baths, and in other times even 60,000,⁶ all of which—like most figures in Arabic sources—seem highly exaggerated. Al-Ya'qūbi⁷ makes the number 10,000 not long after the foundation of Baghdād. The Moorish traveller Ibn-Battūtah,⁸ who visited Baghdād in 1327, found in each of the thirteen quarters composing its west side two or three baths of the most elaborate kind, each supplied with hot and cold running water.

Then as now the bath-house comprised several chambers with mosaic pavements and marble-lined inner walls clustering round a large central chamber. This innermost chamber, crowned by

¹ Nawāḥi, p. 38.² *Aghāni*, vol. xi, pp. 98-9, vol. xviii, pp. 162-9.³ *Washūḥ*, pp. 92 seq.⁴ *Aghāni*, vol. xiii, pp. 128 seq. Cf. Nuwayri, vol. v, pp. 72 seq.⁵ *Tārīkh*, vol. i, pp. 118-19.⁶ *Ibid.* p. 117.⁷ *Buldan*, p. 250, ll. 9-10, cf. p. 254, ll. 8-9.⁸ Vol. ii, pp. 105-7.

a dome studded with small round glazed apertures for the admission of light, was heated by steam rising from a central jet of water in the middle of a basin. The outer rooms were used for lounging and for enjoying drinks and refreshments.

Sports, like the fine arts, have throughout history been an appendage more of Indo-European than Semitic civilization. Engaging in them involves physical exertion for its own sake, which could not very well become a desideratum for the son of Arabia with his utilitarian temperament and the warmth of the climate.

Under the caliphate certain indoor games became popular. Reference has already been made to a sort of club-house in Makkah under the Umayyads provided with facilities for playing chess, backgammon and dice. As with several other innovations, al-Rashīd is credited with being the first 'Abbāsīd caliph to have played and encouraged chess.¹ Chess (Ar. *shīṭranj*, ultimately from Sanskrit), originally an Indian game,² soon became the favourite indoor pastime of the aristocracy, displacing dice. This caliph is supposed to have included among his presents to Charlemagne a chess-board, just as in the Crusading period the Old Man of the Mountain presented another to St. Louis. Among other games played with a board was backgammon (*nard*, trick-track), also of Indian origin.³

Notable in the list of outdoor sports were archery, polo (*jūkhān*, from Pers. *chawgān*,⁴ bent stick), ball and mallets (*sawlajān*, pall-mall, a sort of croquet or hockey), fencing, javelin-throwing (*jarīd*), horse-racing and above all hunting. Among the qualifications of a prospective boon companion al-Jāhīz⁵ lists ability in archery, hunting, playing ball and chess—in all of which the companion may equal his royal master with no fear of affronting him. Among the caliphs particularly fond of polo was al-Mu'taṣim, whose Turkish general, al-Afshīn, once refused to play against him because he did not want to be against the commander of the believers even in a game.⁶ References are made to a ball game in which a broad piece of wood (*tabfāb*) was used.⁷ Could

¹ Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, p. 296.

² *Ibid.* vol. i, pp. 159-61.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 157-8.

⁴ Cf. "chicane", name given to an old game in Languedoc and elsewhere played on foot with a mallet and a ball of hard wood.

⁵ *Taj*, p. 72. For other qualifications consult Nawāḥi, pp. 25 seq.

⁶ Ibn-al-'Abbās, *Aḥbār al-Uṭwal*, p. 130.

⁷ Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, p. 296, l. 2. Cf. *Aḥbār*, p. 129, ll. 3-4.

this be tennis in its rudimentary form?¹ Al-Mas'ūdī² has preserved for us the description of a horse-race at al-Raqqah in which a courser of al-Rashīd's won first place, to the enthusiastic delight of the caliph, who witnessed the event. In the 'Iqd'³ we find a number of poems in description and honour of prize-winning horses. Betting, as we learn from this same source, enlivened such races.

In the 'Abbāsid period, as in the earlier one, hunting was the favourite outdoor pastime of caliphs and princes. Al-Amin was particularly fond of hunting lions,⁴ and a brother of his met his death pursuing wild boars.⁵ Both abu-Muslim al-Khurāsāni and al-Mu'tasim were fond of hunting with the cheetah. The number of early Arabic books dealing with hunting, trapping and falconry testify to the keen interest in these sports.

Falconry and hawking were introduced into Arabia from Persia, as the Arabic vocabulary relating to these sports indicates. They became particularly favoured in the later period of the caliphate⁶ and in that of the Crusades.⁷ Hunting with the falcon (*bās*) or sparrow-hawk (*bāshiq*) is still practised in Persia, al-'Irāq, Dayr al-Zūr and the 'Alawite region of Syria in practically the same manner as described in the *Arabian Nights*. For gazelles or antelopes, hares, partridges, wild geese, ducks and *gafa* (a species of grouse), hawks and falcons were employed and assisted in the case of big game by dogs. The first thing for a Moslem hunter to do after seizing his prey would be to cut its throat; otherwise its flesh would be unlawful.⁸ Under certain conditions the hunting-party would form a circuit (*halqah*) surrounding and closing in on the spot in which the game happened to abound. Al-Mu'tasim built a horseshoe-shaped wall touching the Tigris at its two extremities and used his

¹ The word "tennis", generally supposed to have come from the French verb *tenir* = take heed, is probably from "Tinnis", the Arabic name of an Egyptian city in the Delta noted in the Middle Ages for its linen fabrics, which may have been used for making tennis balls. See Malcolm D. Whitman, *Tennis: Origins and Mysteries* (New York, 1932), pp. 24-32.

² Vol. vi, pp. 348-9.

³ Mas'ūdī, vol. vi, pp. 432-3.

⁴ *Fihrist*, p. 315, and ibn-Khalkān, vol. ii, p. 172, vol. iii, p. 209, mention a number of Arabic books on hunting and falconry.

⁵ For one of the earliest treatments of this subject in Arabic see Usamah ibn-Munqidh, *Kitāb al-'Iṭbār*, ed. Hitti (Princeton, 1930), pp. 191-226; tr. Hitti, *Arab-Syrian Gentlemen and Warriors* (New York, 1929, reprint Beirut, 1964) pp. 221-54.

⁶ Vol. i, pp. 63-5.

⁷ *Aghāmī*, vol. ix, p. 97, ll. 27-9.

⁸ Koran 2:168, 5:4, 16:116

circuit of men to drive the game inside, thus shutting it in between the wall and the river.¹ Al-Musta'sim also used the circuit technique in his chase, as did the Saljūqs.² Among other late caliphs al-Mustanjid (1160-70) organized a number of regular hunting-parties. Certain caliphs and rulers kept wild beasts such as lions and tigers for striking awe into the hearts of their subjects and visitors;³ others had dogs and monkeys for pets. A son of al-Muqtadir's vizir, who resided in Cairo and held a high position in its government, had for a hobby the collecting of serpents, scorpions and other venomous animals, which he kept under good care in a special building near his palace.⁴

At the head of the social register stood the caliph and his family, the government officials, the scions of the Hāshimite clan and the satellites of all these groups. In this last class we may include the soldiers and bodyguards, the favoured friends and boon companions, as well as the clients and servants.

The servants were almost all slaves recruited from non-Moslem peoples and captured by force, taken prisoner in time of war or purchased in time of peace. Some were negroes, others were Turks and still others were white. The white slaves (*mamālik*) were mainly Greeks and Slavs, Armenians and Berbers. Certain slaves were eunuchs (*khisyān*) attached to the service of the harem. Others, termed *ghilmān*, who might also be eunuchs, were the recipients of special favours from their masters, wore rich and attractive uniforms and often beautified and perfumed their bodies in effeminate fashion. We read of *ghilmān* in the reign of al-Rashīd;⁵ but it was evidently al-Amīn who, following Persian precedent, established in the Arabic world the *ghilmān* institution for the practice of unnatural sexual relations.⁶ A judge under al-Ma'mūn used four hundred such youths.⁷ Poets like abu-Nuwās did not disdain to give public expression to their perverted passions and to address amorous pieces of their composition to "beardless young boys".

The maidens (*jawāri*) among slaves were also used as singers, dancers and concubines, and some of them exerted appreciable influence over their caliph masters. Such was dhāt-al-Khāl (she

¹ *Fakhrī*, pp. 73-4.

² *Āthār al-Uwal*, p. 135.

³ *Fakhrī*, p. 30; *Iqd*, vol. i, p. 198, ll. 4 seq.

⁴ Kutubi, vol. i, pp. 134-5.

⁵ Tabarī, vol. iii, p. 669, same in ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vi, p. 120

⁶ Tabarī, vol. iii, p. 950, copied by ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vi, p. 205.

⁷ Mas'ūdī, vol. vii, p. 47.

of the mole), whom al-Rashīd had bought for 70,000 dirhams and in a fit of jealousy bestowed on one of his male servants. Having taken an oath to grant her request on a certain day, no matter what the request might be, al-Rashīd is said to have appointed her husband governor over Fāris for seven years.¹ In order to wean him from another singing-girl to whom he became attached, al-Rashīd's wife Zubaydah presented her husband with ten maidens, one of whom became the mother of al-Ma'mūn and another of al-Mu'tasim.² The legendary story of Tawaddud, the beautiful and talented slave girl in *The Thousand and One Nights* (nights 437-62) whom al-Rashīd was willing to purchase for 100,000 dinars after she had passed with flying colours a searching test before his savants in medicine, law, astronomy, philosophy, music and mathematics—to say nothing of rhetoric, grammar, poetry, history and the Koran—illustrates how highly cultured some of these maids must have been. Al-Amīn's contribution consisted in promoting a corps of female pages, the members of which bobbed their hair, dressed like boys and wore silk turbans. The innovation soon became popular with both the higher and the lower classes of society.³ An eye-witness reports that when on a Palm Sunday he called on al-Ma'mūn he found in his presence twenty Greek maidens, all bedecked and adorned, dancing with gold crosses on their necks and olive branches and palm leaves in their hands. The distribution of 3000 dinars among the dancers brought the affair to a grand finale.⁴

An idea of the prevalence of slavery may be obtained from the high figures used in enumerating those in the caliphal household. The palace of al-Muqtadir (908-32), we are told, housed 11,000 Greek and Sudanese eunuchs.⁵ Al-Mutawakkil, according to a report, had 4000 concubines, all of whom shared his nuptial bed.⁶ On one occasion this caliph received as a present two hundred slaves from one of his generals.⁷ It was customary for governors and generals to send presents, including girls received or exacted from among their subjects, to the caliph or vizir.⁸

¹ *Aghāni*, vol. xv, p. 80, quoted by Nuwayri, vol. v, pp. 889.

² *Aghāni*, vol. xvi, p. 137.

³ *Aghāni*, vol. xix, pp. 138-9.

⁴ Mas'ūdi, vol. vii, p. 276.

⁵ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vii, pp. 211-12, Ṭabarī, vol. iii, p. 627, copied by Ibn al-

⁶ Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, p. 299.

⁷ *Fakhri*, p. 352.

⁸ *Ibid.* vol. vi, p. 281.

failure to do so was interpreted as a sign of rebellion. Al-Ma'mūn devised the scheme of sending some of his trusted slaves as presents, expecting them to act as spies on the suspect recipients or to do away with them in case of necessity.¹

The commonalty was composed of an upper class bordering on the aristocracy and comprised *littérateurs* and *belletrists*,² learned men, artists, merchants, craftsmen and professionals, and of a lower class forming the majority of the nation and made up of farmers, herdsmen and country folk who represented the native population and now enjoyed the status of *dhimmis*. In the following chapter we shall treat of the intellectual class at some length. Suffice it to note here that the general stage of culture in the period of 'Abbāsīd primacy was by no means low.

The wide extent of the empire and the high level which civilization attained involved extensive international trade. The early merchants were Christians, Jews² and Zoroastrians, but these were later largely superseded by Moslems and Arabs, who did not disdain trade as they did agriculture. Such ports as Baghdād, al-Baṣrah, Sīrāf,³ Cairo and Alexandria soon developed into centres of active land and maritime commerce.

Eastward, Moslem traders ventured as far as China, which according to Arab tradition was reached from al-Baṣrah as early as the days of the second 'Abbāsīd caliph, al-Manṣūr.⁴ The earliest Arabic source treating of the subject of Arab and Persian maritime communication with India and China is a report of voyages by Sulaymān al-Tājir (the merchant) and other Moslem traders in the third Moslem century.⁵ This trade was based on silk, the earliest of China's magnificent gifts to the West, and usually followed what has been styled "the great silk way"⁶ going through Samarqand and Chinese Turkestan, a region less traversed today by civilized man than almost any other part of the habitable world. Goods were generally transported by relays; few caravans went the whole distance. But diplomatic relations were certainly established before the time of Arab traders.

¹ *Iqd*, vol. I, p. 196.

² Consult *ibn-Kharrādādhbih*, pp. 153-4.

³ A town in Persia on the Persian Gulf. The people of Sīrāf and 'Uman (Mas'ūdī, vol. I, pp. 281-2) were among the best-known mariners of the early 'Abbāsīd period.

⁴ Cf. Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China* (London, 1910), pp. 5-36.

⁵ *Silsilat al-Tawārīkh* [sic], ed. Langlès (Paris, 1811); tr. G. Ferrand, *Voyage du marchand arabe Sulaymān en Inde et en Chine* (Paris, 1922).

⁶ Thomas F. Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward* (New York, 1925), pp. 85 seq.

Legend makes Sa'd ibn-abi-Waqqās, the conqueror of Persia, the envoy sent by the Prophet to China. Sa'd's "grave" is still revered in Canton. Certain inscriptions on the old Chinese monuments relating to Islam in China are clearly forgeries prompted by religious pride.¹ By the mid-eighth century several embassies had been exchanged. In the Chinese records of that century the *amīr al-mu'minīn* is called *hanmi-mo-mo-ni*; abu-al-'Abbās, the first 'Abbāsīd caliph, *A-bo-lo-ba*; and Hārūn, *A-lun*. In the time of these caliphs a number of Moslems settled in China. At first such Moslems appear under the name *Ta-shih*² and later under the title *Hui-Hui* (Muhammadans).³ The first European mention of Saracens in China appears to be that of Marco Polo.⁴ It was also Moslem traders who carried Islam into the islands that in 1949 formed the United States of Indonesia.

Westward, Moslem merchants reached Morocco and Spain. A thousand years before de Lesseps an Arab caliph, Hārūn, entertained the idea of digging a canal through the Isthmus of Suez.⁵ Arab Mediterranean trade, however, never rose to great prominence. The Black Sea was likewise inhospitable to it, though in the tenth century brisk land trade is noticed with the peoples of the Volga regions to the north. But the Caspian Sea, because of its proximity to the Persian centres and the prosperous cities of Samarqand and Bukhāra with their hinterland, was the scene of some commercial intercourse. Moslem merchants carried with them dates, sugar, cotton and woollen fabrics, steel tools and glassware; they imported, among other commodities, spices, camphor and silk from farther Asia, and ivory, ebony and negro slaves from Africa.

An idea of the fortunes amassed by the Rothschilds and Rockefellers of the age may be gained from the case of the Baghdad jeweller ibn-al-Jaṣṣās, who remained wealthy after al-Muqtadir had confiscated 16,000,000 dinars of his property, and became the first of a family of distinguished jewel merchants.⁶ Certain Basrah merchants whose ships carried goods to distant parts of the world had an annual income of more than a

¹ See Paul Pelliot in *Journal asiatique* (1913), vol. 4, pp. 177-91.

² From Pahlavi *Tayik*, modern *Tāi*, Arab. The term is evidently a Persianized form of *Tayyī'*, an Arab tribe.

³ Consult Isaac Mason in *Journal of the North-China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 1x (1929), pp. 42-78.

⁴ For Moslem settlements in Korea (al-Shīla) see ibn Khurdādhbih, pp. 70, 170.

⁵ Mas'ūdi, vol. 1v, pp. 98-9.

⁶ Kutubi, vol. 1, p. 177.

million dirhams each. An uneducated miller of al-Baṣrah and Baghdād could afford to distribute as daily alms among the poor a hundred dinars, and was later appointed by al-Mu'taṣim as his vizir.¹ In Sīrāf the home of the average merchant cost over ten thousand dinars, some over thirty thousand dinars; and many maritime traders were worth 4,000,000 dinars each.² Some of these Sīrāf merchants "spent their lives on the water", and al-Iṣṭakhri³ heard of one who had spent forty years on board ship.

No commercial activity could have reached such dimensions had it not rested on extensive home industry and agriculture. Hand industry flourished in various parts of the empire. In Western Asia it centred chiefly in the manufacture of rugs, tapestry, silk, cotton and woollen fabrics, satin, brocade (*dībāy*), sofa (from Ar. *ṣuffak*) and cushion covers, as well as other articles of furniture and kitchen utensils. The many looms of Persia, and al-'Irāq turned out carpets and textiles maintained at a high standard by distinctive marks. Al-Musta'in's mother had a rug specially ordered for her at a cost of 130,000,000 dirhams, bearing figures of all sorts of birds in gold which had rubies and other precious stones for eyes.⁴ A quarter in Baghdād named after 'Attāb, an Umayyad prince who was its most distinguished resident, gave its name to a striped fabric, 'attābi,⁵ first manufactured there in the twelfth century. The fabric was imitated by the Arabs in Spain and under the trade name *tabi* became popular in France, Italy and other lands of Europe. The term survives in "tabby", applied to streaked or marked cats. Al-Kūfah produced the silk and partly silk kerchiefs for the head that are still worn under the name *kūfiyah*. Tawwaj, Fasa and other towns of Fāris boasted a number of high-class factories where carpets, embroideries, brocades and robes of honour—a mark of distinction in the East—were manufactured first for the use of the royalty.⁶ Such products were known as *fīrās* (from Pers.) and bore the name or cipher of the sultan or caliph embroidered on them. In Tustar and al-Sūs in Khūzistān⁷ (ancient Susiana) were a number of factories famous for the

¹ *Fakhrī*, pp. 321-2.

² Iṣṭakhri, pp. 127, 139; Ibn-Hawqal, p. 198; Maqdisi, p. 426.

³ P. 138.

⁴ Iḥṣāhī, vol. i, p. 144.

⁵ Mentioned in Maqdisi, p. 323, l. 20; Ibn-Hawqal, p. 261, l. 13; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, vol. i, p. 822, l. 22 (where it is misspelt).

⁶ Iṣṭakhri, p. 153. Cf. Maqdisi, pp. 442-3.

⁷ Maqdisi, pp. 402, 407-9.

embroidery of damask¹ figured with gold and for curtains made of spun silk (*khase*). Their camel- and goat-hair fabrics as well as their spun-silk cloaks were widely known. Shīrāz yielded striped woollen cloaks, also gauzes and brocades. Under the name of "taffeta" European ladies of the Middle Ages bought in their native shops the Persian silken cloth *tāftah*. Khurāsān and Armenia were famous for their spreads, hangings and sofa and cushion covers. In Central Asia, that great emporium of the early Middle Ages, Bukhāra was especially noted for its prayer-rugs. A complete conception of the development of industry and trade in Transoxiana may be gained from the list of exports from the various towns given by al-Maḡdīsī:² soap, carpets, copper lamps, pewter ware, felt cloaks, furs, amber, honey, falcons, scissors, needles, knives, swords, bows, meats, Slavonic and Turkish slaves, etc. Tables, sofas, lamps, chandeliers, vases, earthenware and kitchen utensils were also made in Syria and Egypt. The Egyptian fabrics termed *dimyātī* (after Dimyāt), *dabīqī* (after Dabīq) and *tinnīsī* (after Tinnīs)³ were world-renowned and imitated in Persia. The ancient industrial arts of Pharaonic days survived in an attenuated form in the manufactures of the Copts.

The glass of Sidon, Tyre and other Syrian towns, a survival of the ancient Phoenician industry which after the Egyptian was the oldest glass industry in history, was proverbial for its clarity and thinness.⁴ In its enamelled and variegated varieties Syrian glass as a result of the Crusades became the forerunner of the stained glass in the cathedrals of Europe. Glass and metal vases of Syrian workmanship were in great demand as articles of utility and luxury. Sconces of glass bearing enamelled inscriptions in various colours hung in mosques and palaces. Damascus was the centre of an extensive mosaic and *qāshānī* industry. *Qāshānī*⁵ (colloquial *qāshānī*, *qāshī*), a name derived from Kāshān⁶ in Media, was given to square or hexagonal glazed tiles, sometimes figured with conventional flowers and used in exterior and

¹ This fabric was originally made in Damascus, whence the name.

² Pp 323-6

³ Yāqūt, vol. II, pp 603, 548, vol. I, p 882, Maḡdīsī, pp 201, 433, II 16-17, 443, I. 5 See below, p 631.

⁴ Tha'āibī, *Lafā'if*, p 95

⁵ Mentioned in Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, vol. I, p. 415, vol. II, pp 46, 130, 225, 297, vol. III, p 79

⁶ Ar. Qāshān; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, vol. IV, p 15.

interior decoration of buildings. The predominant colours were indigo blue, turquoise blue, green and less often red and yellow. The art, as ancient as the Elamites and Assyrians, survived in Damascus until the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Worthy of special note is the manufacture of writing-paper, introduced in the middle of the eighth century into Samarqand from China.¹ The paper of Samarqand, which was captured by the Moslems in 704, was considered matchless.² Before the close of that century Baghdād saw its first paper-mill. Gradually others for making paper followed: Egypt had its factory about 900 or earlier, Morocco about 1100, Spain about 1150; and various kinds of paper, white and coloured, were produced. Al-Mu'tasim, credited with opening new soap and glass factories in Baghdād, Sāmarra and other towns, is said to have encouraged the paper industry. The oldest Arabic paper manuscript that has come down to us is one on tradition entitled *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, by abu-'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn-Sallām († 837), dated dhu-al-Qa'dah, A.H. 252 (November 13–December 12, 866) and preserved in the Leyden University Library.³ The oldest by a Christian author is a theological treatise by abu-Qurrah⁴ († ca. 820) dated Rabī' I, A.H. 264 (Nov. 11–Dec. 10, 877) and preserved in the British Museum. From Moslem Spain and from Italy, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the manufacture of paper finally worked its way into Christian Europe, where with the later discovery of printing from movable type (1450–55) it made possible the measure of popular education which Europe and America now enjoy.

The jeweller's art also had its day. Pearls, sapphires, rubies, emeralds and diamonds were favourites with the royalty; turquoise, carnelian and onyx with the lower classes. One of the best-known gems in Arab history is the big ruby, once owned by several Persian monarchs, on which Hārūn inscribed his name after acquiring it for 40,000 dinars.⁵ The ruby was so large and brilliant that "if it were put in the night-time in a dark room it would shine like a lamp". Hārūn's sister, as we learned

¹ Consult Friedrich Hirth, *Chinesische Studien* (Munich and Leipzig, 1890), vol. i, pp. 259–71. See below, p. 414. Paper money, also of Chinese origin, was printed (1294) in Chinese and Arabic at Tibriz, one of the earliest places in the Moslem world with a record of block printing.

² Tha'alibī, p. 126; Maqdisī, p. 326, ll. 3–4.

³ William Wright, *The Palaeographical Society, Oriental Series* (London, 1875–83), pl. vi.

⁴ Theodoros abu Qurra, *De Cultu Imaginum*, ed. and tr. I. Arendzen (Bonn, 1897).

⁵ Mas'ūdi, vol. vii n. 276 Cf. *Fakhrī* no. 272–2. Tabari, vol. iii, p. 602, l. 12.

before, wore jewels on her head-dress and his wife had them on her shoes. Yaliya ibn-Khālid the Barmakid once offered 7,000,000 dirhams to a Baghdād merchant for a jewel-box made of precious stones, but the offer was refused.¹ Al-Muktafi is said to have left 20,000,000 dinars' worth of jewels and perfumes.² At a gorgeous royal banquet given by al-Mutawakkil, and considered together with al-Ma'mūn's wedding "two occasions that have no third in Islam",³ tables and trays of gold studded with gems were used. Even ibn-Khaldūn, who claims that the 'Abbāsīds could not have indulged in luxurious modes of living, accepts the extraordinary display of gold and jewellery at al-Ma'mūn's marriage ceremony.⁴ According to al-Mas'ūdi,⁵ al-Mu'tazz (866-9), the thirteenth 'Abbāsīd caliph, was the first to appear on horseback in gilded armour on a golden saddle, all caliphs before him having used silver decorations. One of the last caliphs to possess much jewellery was al-Muqtadir (908-32), who confiscated the property of the founder of the richest jewellery house in Baghdād⁶ and came into possession of the famous red ruby of Hārūn, as well as the equally famous "unique pearl" weighing three *mithqāls* (miskal) and other gems, all of which he squandered.⁷

The leading mineral resources of the empire which made the jeweller's industry possible included gold and silver from Khurāsān, which also yielded marble and mercury;⁸ rubies, lapis lazuli and azurite from Transoxiana;⁹ lead and silver from Karmān;¹⁰ pearls from al-Baḥrayn;¹¹ turquoise from Naysābūr, whose mine in the latter half of the tenth century was farmed out for 758,720 dirhams a year;¹² carnelian from Ṣan'ā';¹³ and iron from Mt. Lebanon.¹⁴ Other mineral resources included kaolin and marble from Tibriz, antimony from the vicinity of Iṣbahān,¹⁵ bitumen and naphtha from Georgia, marble and sulphur from

¹ Tabari, vol. iii, p. 703.² Tha'ālībī, p. 72.³ *Ibid.* pp. 72-3.⁴ *Muqaddamah*, p. 15, ll. 20 seq., pp. 144-5.⁵ Vol. vii, pp. 401-2, quoted by ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddamah*, p. 15.⁶ Above, p. 344.⁷ *Fakhrī*, p. 353. The "unique pearl" is also mentioned by ibn-Hawqal, p. 38, l. 7. Cf. Maqdisī, p. 101, l. 16.⁸ Maqdisī, p. 326.⁹ *Ibid.* p. 303. "Lazuli", as well as "azure", comes through Latin from Ar. *lāzaward* and ultimately from Pers. *lāshward*.¹⁰ Ibn-al-Faḥḥ, p. 206.¹¹ Maqdisī, p. 101.¹² *Ibid.* p. 341, n.¹³ *Ibid.* p. 101.¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 184, l. 3.¹⁵ Iṣṭakhri, p. 203; Tha'ālībī, *Lafā'if*, p. 110. Ar. *kuḥl*, perhaps "galena", consult H. E. Stapleton et al. in *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. viii (1927), p. 352.

Syria-Palestine,¹ asbestos from Transoxiana² and mercury, pitch and tar from Farghānah.³

Agriculture received great impetus under the early 'Abbāsids because their capital itself lay in a most favoured spot, the alluvial plain commonly known under the name of al-Sawād; because they realized that farming was the chief source of the state income; and because the tilling of the land was almost wholly in the hands of the native inhabitants, whose status was somewhat improved under the new régime. Deserted farms and ruined villages in different parts of the empire were gradually rehabilitated and restored. The lower region of the Tigris-Euphrates valley, the richest in the whole empire after Egypt and the traditional site of the garden of Eden, was the object of special attention on the part of the central government. Canals from the Euphrates, either old and now re-opened or else entirely new, formed a "veritable network".⁴ The first great canal, called Nahr 'Īsa after a relative of al-Manṣūr who had re-excavated it, connected the Euphrates at al-Anbār in the north-west with the Tigris at Baghdād. One of the main branches of the Nahr 'Īsa was the Ṣarāh. The second great transverse canal was the Nahr Ṣarṣar, which entered the Tigris above al-Madā'in. The third was the Nahr al-Malik ("river of the king"), which flowed into the Tigris below al-Madā'in.⁵ Lower down the two rivers came the Nahr Kūtha and the Great Ṣarāh,⁶ which threw off a number of irrigation channels. Another canal, the Dujayl (diminutive of Dijlah, the Tigris), which originally connected the Tigris with the Euphrates, had become silted up by the tenth century, and the name was given to a new channel, a loop canal, which started from the Tigris below al-Qādisiyah and rejoined it farther south after sending off a number of branches.⁷ Other less important canals included the Nahr al-Ṣilah dug in Wāsiṭ by al-Mahdī.⁸ Arab geographers speak of caliphs "digging" or "opening" "rivers", when in most cases the process involved was one of re-digging or re-opening canals that had existed since

¹ Maqdisi, p. 184.

² *Ibid.* p. 303, ll. 13-15.

³ Ibn-Hawqal, p. 362.

⁴ Iṣṭakhri, p. 85, l. 3; Ibn-Hawqal, p. 166, l. 2.

⁵ For these canals see Iṣṭakhri, pp. 84-5; same in Ibn-Hawqal, pp. 165-6; Maqdisi, p. 122; Khaṣīb, *Ta'rikh*, vol. i, pp. 91, 111 *seq.*; Guy Le Strange, "Description of Mesopotamia and Baghdād, written about the year 900 A.D. by Ibn-Serapion" (Sulayb), *Journal, Roy. Asiatic Society* (1895), pp. 255-315.

⁶ Yāqūt, vol. iii, pp. 377-8.

⁷ Iṣṭakhri, pp. 77-8; Yāqūt, vol. ii, p. 555.

⁸ Balādhuri, p. 291 = Hitti, p. 451; Oudāmah, p. 221.

Babylonian days. In al-'Irāq as well as Egypt the task consisted mainly in keeping the ancient systems in order. Even before the first World War, when the Ottoman government commissioned Sir William Willcocks to study the irrigation problem of al-'Irāq, his report stressed the necessity of clearing the old watercourses rather than constructing new ones.¹ It should be noted, however, that the face of the alluvial Sawād has greatly changed since 'Abbāsīd days and that both the Tigris and the Euphrates have considerably shifted their courses in historical times.

The staple crops of al-'Irāq consisted of barley and wheat, rice, dates, sesame, cotton and flax. Especially fertile was the alluvial plain to the south, al-Sawād, where quantities of fruit and vegetables, both of the cold and the hot regions, were grown. Nuts, oranges, egg-plants, sugar-cane, lupines and such flowers as roses and violets were produced in abundance.

Khurāsān vied with al-'Irāq and Egypt as a rich agricultural country. A review of the revenue sheets discussed above² would indicate that it yielded one of the largest kharājs of the empire. Politically it embraced, at least for some time, Transoxiana and Sijistān, and was therefore a great source of man-power as well. No wonder, then, that we hear it referred to in the presence of al-Ma'mūn as "the whole empire".³

The land round Bukhāra, in the judgment of Arab geographers, was, especially under the Sāmānids in the 900's, a veritable garden.⁴ Here, between Samarqand and Bukhāra, lay the Wādi al-Sughd (the valley of Sogdiana), one of the "four earthly paradises", the other three being the Shi'b Bawwān (gap of Bavvān in Fāris), the gardens of the Ubullah Canal, extending from al-Basrah to the south-east,⁵ and the orchards (*ghūtah*) of Damascus.⁶ In these gardens flourished several varieties of fruits, vegetables and flowers, such as dates, apples, apricots,⁷ peaches, plums, lemons, oranges, figs, grapes, olives, almonds, pomegranates, egg-plants, radishes, cucumbers, roses and basil (*rayhān*). Water-melons were exported from Khwārizm to the

¹ William Willcocks, *Irrigation of Mesopotamia* (London, 1917), pp. xvii seq.; 11 seq.

² P. 321.

³ Ya'qūbī, vol. ii, p. 555, l. 4.

⁴ Iṣṭakhrī, pp. 305 seq., copied by Ibn-Hawqal, pp. 355 seq.

⁵ Iṣṭakhrī, p. 81; same in Ibn-Hawqal, p. 160, Maqādis, pp. 117-18.

⁶ Yāqūt, vol. i, p. 751, vol. iii, p. 394; cf. vol. i, p. 97, ll. 15-16.

⁷ For etymology see below, p. 528, n. 6. The plant itself was a native of China.

courts of al-Ma'mūn and al-Wāthiq in lead moulds packed with ice, such fruit would sell in Baghdād for seven hundred dirhams each.¹ In fact most of the fruit trees and vegetables grown at present in Western Asia were known at the time, with the exception of mangoes, potatoes, tomatoes and similar plants introduced in recent times from the New World and distant European colonies. The orange tree, allied to the citron and lemon, had its native habitat in India or Malay, whence it spread at this time into Western Asia, the adjoining lands of the Mediterranean basin and eventually through the Arabs in Spain into Europe.² The sugar-cane plantations of Fāris and al-Ahwāz,³ with their noted refineries, were about this time followed by similar ones on the Syrian coast, from which place the Crusaders later introduced the cane and the sugar⁴ into Europe. Thus did this sweet commodity, probably of Bengalese origin, which has since become an indispensable ingredient in the daily food of civilized man, work its way westward.

Horticulture was not limited to fruits and vegetables. The cultivation of flowers was also promoted, not only in small home gardens round fountains musical with jetting, splashing water, but on a large scale for commercial purposes. The preparation of perfumes or essences from roses, water-lilies, oranges, violets and the like flourished in Damascus, Shīrāz, Jūr and other towns. The whole district of Jūr, or Fīrūzābād, in Fāris was noted for its attar (Ar. *'itr*) of red roses.⁵ Rose-water from Jūr was exported as far as China eastward and al-Maghrib westward.⁶ Fāris included in its kharāj 30,000 bottles of the essence of red roses, which were sent annually to the caliph in Baghdād.⁷ Sābūr (Pers. Shāpūr) and its valley produced ten world-famous varieties of perfumed oils, or unguents, extracted from the violet, water-lily, narcissus, palm flower, iris, white lily, myrtle, sweet marjoram, lemon and orange flowers.⁸ Among

¹ Tha'ālibi, p. 129.

² This is the bitter variety, Ar. *abu sufayr* Eng. "orange" comes through Sp. from *Ar. nārang*, from Pers. *nārang*. "Lemon" is Ar. *laymūn*, Pers. *limūn* (see below, p. 665).

³ Tha'ālibi, p. 107.

⁴ Ar. *sukkar*, "candy" comes from Ar. *qandāh*, *qandī*, which is Pers. *qand*. "Cane" is also of Semitic origin corresponding to Ar. *qandāh*, reed, but was separately introduced into European languages.

⁵ In Syria red roses are still called *ward jūri*.

⁶ Ibn-Hawqal, p. 213, *Istakhrī*, pp. 152-3.

⁷ Tha'ālibi, pp. 109-10.

these the violet extract was the most popular in the Moslem world, as the following words put in the mouth of the Prophet would indicate: "The excellence of the extract of violets above all other extracts is as the excellence of me above all the rest of creation".¹

Among flowers the rose seems to have been the favourite. In the opinion of the cultured slave girl Tawaddud, whose ideas may be taken as an index of popular opinion between the tenth and twelfth centuries, roses and violets are the best scents; pomegranate and citron the best fruits; and endive the best vegetable.² The popular esteem in which the rose is held found expression in a tradition ascribed to Muhammad: "The white rose was created from my sweat on the night of the nocturnal journey [*mi'raj*], the red rose from the sweat of Gabriel and the yellow rose from that of al-Burāq".³ With the words "I am the king of sultans and the rose is the king of the sweet-scented flowers; each of us therefore is worthy of the other", al-Mutawakkil is said to have so monopolized the cultivation of roses for his own enjoyment that in his time that flower could be seen nowhere except in his palace.⁴

The rose and the violet had a rival in the myrtle. "Adam was hurled down from Paradise with three things", claims a Prophetic tradition: "a myrtle tree, which is the chief of sweet-scented plants in the world; an ear of wheat, which is the chief food of the world; and a date, which is the chief of the fruits of this world."⁵ Other highly desired flowers were the narcissus, gillyflower, jasmine, poppy and safflower.

As an index of interest in agriculture mention might be made of the several books on plants, including translations from Greek, listed in the *Fihrist*,⁶ the few books on attar⁷ and the spurious work of ibn-Wahshīyah entitled *al-Filāḥah al-Nabaṣīyah*.

The agricultural class, who constituted the bulk of the population of the empire and its chief source of revenue, were the original inhabitants of the land, now reduced to the position of

¹ Suyūṭi, *Ḥusn*, vol. II, p. 242.

² *Alf Laylah wa Laylah (Thousand and One Nights)*, no. 453. Cf. nos. 864, 865.

³ Suyūṭi, *Ḥusn*, vol. II, p. 236.

⁴ Nawāṣi, p. 235, Suyūṭi, vol. II, p. 236.

⁵ Suyūṭi, vol. II, p. 245. Consult Edward W. Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights*, vol. I (London, 1839), pp. 219 *seq.* (in n. 22 to ch. II).

⁶ P. 78, ll. 12, 23, p. 79, l. 3, p. 83, l. 16, p. 252, ll. 9, 10.

⁷ *Fihrist*, p. 317.

dhimmis. The Arab considered it below his dignity to engage in agricultural pursuits. Originally Scripturaries, viz. Christians, Jews and Sābians, the dhimmis had their status widened, as we learned before, to include Zoroastrians, Manichaeans, Ḥarrān Sābians and others—all of whom were now treated on a par with those with whom a compact for religious tolerance had been made. In country places and on their farms these dhimmis clung to their ancient cultural patterns and preserved their native languages: Aramaic and Syriac in Syria and al-'Irāq, Iranian in Persia and Coptic in Egypt. Many of those who embraced Islam moved to the cities.

Even in cities Christians and Jews often held important financial, clerical and professional positions. This often led to open jealousy on the part of the Moslem populace and found expression in official enactments. But most of this discriminating legislation remained "ink on paper" and was not consistently enforced.

The first caliph, as we have seen, to order Christians and Jews to don distinctive dress and to exclude them from public offices was the pious Ḥumayyad, 'Umar II, whose pact has often been erroneously ascribed to 'Umar I. Among the 'Abbāsids Ḥārūn was evidently the first to re-enact some of the old measures. In 807 he ordered all churches in border-lands, together with those erected subsequent to the Moslem conquest, demolished and commanded members of the tolerated sects to wear the prescribed garb.¹ The stringent regulations against dhimmis culminated in the time of al-Mutawakkil, who in 850 and 854 decreed that Christians and Jews should affix wooden images of devils to their houses, level their graves even with the ground, wear outer garments of honey-colour, i.e. yellow, put two honey-coloured patches on the wear of their slaves, one sewn on the back and the other on the front, and ride only on mules and asses with wooden saddles marked by two pomegranate-like balls on the cantle.² It was on account of this distinctive dress that the dhimmi acquired the epithet "spotted".³ One other grave disability under which the dhimmis laboured was a ruling of the Moslem jurists of the period that the testimony of a

¹ Tabari, vol. III, pp. 712-13; Ibn-al-Athir, vol. VI, p. 141.

² Tabari, vol. III, pp. 1389-93, 1419.

³ Cf. Jābir, *Bayān*, vol. I, p. 79, ff. 27-8.

Christian or a Jew could not be accepted against a Moslem; for the Jews and Christians had once corrupted the text of their scripture, as the Koran charges,¹ and therefore could no more be trusted. The last caliph to renew in an aggravated form the hostile measures against dhimmis was the Fātimid al-Ḥākim (996-1021).

That in spite of these restrictions the Christians under the caliphs enjoyed on the whole a large measure of toleration may be inferred from several episodes. A number of religious debates similar to those staged in the presence of Mu'āwiyah and 'Abd-al-Malik were held in the presence of the 'Abbāsīds. The text of an apology for Christianity delivered in 781 by Timothy, patriarch of the Nestorians, before al-Mahdi has come down to us,² as has also the famous treatise by al-Kindī³ professing to be a contemporary account of a controversy held about 819 before al-Ma'mūn on the comparative merits of Islam and Christianity. The religious discussions of 'Alī al-Ṭabari († ca. 854) in his *Kitāb al-Dīn w-al-Dawlah*,⁴ a semi-official defence and exposition of Islam written at the court with the assistance of al-Mutawakkil, is temperate, singularly free from heat and passion and abounds in references to the Bible, evidently the Syriac version or its early Arabic translation. At the time al-Nadīm wrote his *Fihrist* (988) both the Old and New Testaments were already in existence in Arabic in more than one version.⁵ In fact we are told that a certain Ahmad ibn-'Abdullāh ibn-Salām had translated the Bible into Arabic as early as the days of Hārūn.⁶ There is evidence to show that even in the latter part of the seventh century parts of the Bible had been rendered into Arabic either from Syriac or from the Greek Septuagint. Al-Ṭabari⁷ notes under A.H. 61 that 'Abdullāh, son of the conqueror of Egypt, had read the Book of Daniel. But the first important Arabic translation of the Old Testament was that of Sa'īd al-Fayyūmī (Saadia Gaon, 882-942) of Egypt, which has remained to this day the version for all Arabic-speaking Jews. These translations aroused the interest of Moslems in the controversial points, and we find al-Jāhīz († 869) among the many

¹ Sūrs 2 70, 5 16-18.

² A. Mingana in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 12 (Manchester, 1928), pp. 137-298.

³ *Risālat 'Abd al-Masīḥ* (London, 1870), 2nd ed. (London, 1885).

⁴ Ed. A. Mingana (Cairo, 1923), tr. Mingana, *The Book of Religion and Empire* (Manchester, 1922).

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 22. This may have been a partial translation.

⁶ *Fihrist*, p. 23.

⁷ Vol. II, p. 399.

who penned answers to Christians. We even read of Christian vizirs in the latter half of the ninth century, such as 'Abdūn ibn-Ṣā'id, in whose honour a judge in Baghdād rose up in public, thus receiving the disapproval of the spectators.¹ Al-Muttaqī (940-44) had a Christian vizir,² as did one of the Buwayhids.³ Al-Mu'taḍid (892-902) had a Christian as head of the war office.⁴ Such Christian high officials received the usual marks of honour, for we find certain Moslems objecting to kissing their hands. Most of the personal physicians of the caliphs, as will be remembered, were members of the Nestorian church. A recently published charter of protection granted to the Nestorians in 1138 by al-Muktafi⁵ throws fresh light on the cordial relations between official Islam and official Christianity in that period.

The Christian subjects of the 'Abbāsīd caliphs belonged for the most part to the two Syrian churches considered heterodox⁶ and commonly called Jacobite and Nestorian, with the Nestorians predominant in al-'Irāq. The Nestorian patriarch or catholicos (corrupted into Ar. *jāthiliq*, *jāthaliq*) had the right of residence in Baghdād, a privilege which the Jacobites had always sought in vain. Round the patriarchate styled Dayr al-Rūm⁷ (the monastery of the Romans, i.e. Christians) there grew in Baghdād a Christian quarter called Dār (abode of) al-Rūm. Under the catholicos' jurisdiction there flourished seven metropolitans, including those of al-Baṣrah, al-Mawṣil and Naṣībīn (Nisibis), each with two or three bishops under him. The patriarch-elect received his investiture from the caliph, by whom he was recognized as the official head of all Christians in the empire. In 912-13 the catholicos succeeded in making the caliph prevent the Jacobite patriarch, whose seat was Antioch, from transferring his residence to Baghdād.⁸ The main political charge against the Jacobites was that they sympathized with the Byzantines. But the Jacobites had a monastery in Baghdād⁹ and a metro-

¹ Yāqūt, *Udabā'*, vol. ii, p. 259.

² Al-Tanūkhī, *al-Faraj ba'd al-Shiddah* (Cairo, 1904), vol. ii, p. 149.

³ Naṣr ibn-Hārūn was the Buwayhid vizir. See Miskawayh, *Tajrīb al-Umam*, ed. Margoliouth, vol. ii (Cairo and Oxford, 1915), pp. 408, 412.

⁴ Ṣābr, *Wuzarā'*, p. 95.

⁵ A. Mingana in *Bulletin John Rylands Library*, vol. 10 (1926), pp. 127-33.

⁶ Yāqūt, *Buldān*, vol. ii, p. 662.

⁷ On the Monophysite and Jacobite patriarchs see Assemanī (al-Sam'ānī), *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, vol. ii (Rome, 1721).

⁸ Yāqūt, vol. ii, p. 662, l. 18.

politan seat in Takrīt, not far from the capital. In all, Yāqūt¹ lists half a dozen monasteries in east Baghdād, apart from those on the west side.

The Copts of Egypt, as we have noted before, belonged to the Jacobite communion. The Nubian church was likewise Jacobite and acknowledged the primacy of the patriarch of Alexandria. Along the narrow coast west of Egypt, Christianity had a following among the Berbers, but the majority of the inland population had their local cults corresponding to their tribal divisions.

One of the most remarkable features of Christianity under the caliphs was its possession of enough vitality to make it an aggressive church, sending its missionaries as far as India and China. Al-Nadīm² reports an interesting interview which he himself held with one such missionary returned from China, whom he met in the Christian quarter³ of Baghdād. The famous stela at Sian Fu, China, erected in 781 to commemorate the names and labours of sixty-seven Nestorian missionaries,⁴ together with the affiliation of the Christian church in India, that of the "Christians of St. Thomas" in Malabar on the south-west coast, with the patriarchate in Baghdād, bear witness to the evangelistic zeal of the East Syrian Church under the Moslems. It is also recognized that the existing characters of Mongol and Manchu are lineal descendants of the original Uighurian forms, which were certainly derived from the Syriac alphabet as used by the Nestorians.

As one of the "protected" peoples the Jews fared on the whole even better than the Christians, and that in spite of several unfavourable references in the Koran.⁵ They were fewer and did not therefore present such a problem. In 985 al-Maḡdīsī⁶ found most of the money-changers and bankers in Syria to be Jews, and most of the clerks and physicians Christians. Under several caliphs, particularly al-Mu'taḡid (892-902), we read of more than one Jew in the capital and the provinces assuming responsible state positions. In Baghdād itself the Jews maintained a

¹ Under *dayr*.

² P. 349.

³ *Dār al Rūm*, which Flügel, the editor, in his notes erroneously makes Constantinople.

⁴ Consult P. Y. Saeki, *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China* (Tokyo, 1937), pp. 10 *seq.*

⁵ *Sūras* 2 : 70-73; 5 : 16, 66-9.

⁶ P. 183.

good-sized colony¹ which continued to flourish until the fall of the city. Benjamin of Tudela,² who visited the colony about 1169, found it in possession of ten rabbinical schools and twenty-three³ synagogues; the principal one, adorned with variegated marble, was richly ornamented with gold and silver. Benjamin depicts in glowing colours the high esteem in which the head of the Babylonian Jews was held as a descendant of David and head of the community (Aram. *rēsh gālūtha*, prince of captivity⁴ or exilarch), in fact as chief of all Jews owing allegiance to the Baghdād caliphate. Just as the catholicos exercised a certain measure of jurisdiction over all Christians in the empire, so did the exilarch over his co-religionists. The "prince of captivity" seems to have lived in affluence and owned gardens, houses and rich plantations. On his way to an audience with the caliph he appeared dressed in embroidered silk, wore a white turban gleaming with gems and was accompanied by a retinue of horsemen. Ahead of him marched a herald calling out: "Make way before our lord the son of David!"

The Mandeans,⁵ the genuine Šābians⁶ of Arabic writers, were a Judæo-Christian sect who also called themselves *Naṣoraiē d' Yaḥya*, the Naṣoreans⁷ (i.e. the observants) of St. John, and therefore became erroneously known to the modern world as the Christians of St. John (the Baptist). The Mandeans practised the rite of baptism after birth, before marriage and on various other occasions. They inhabited the lower plains of Babylonia, and as a sect they go back to the first century after Christ. Palestine was perhaps the original home of this and other baptist communities. Their language, Mandaic, is a dialect of Aramaic and its script bears close resemblance to the Nabataean and Palmyrene. Mentioned thrice in the Koran, these Babylonian Šābians acquired a dhimmi status and were classified by

¹ Yāqūt, vol. iv, p. 1045.

² *The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela*, tr. and ed. A. Asher, vol. i (London and Berlin, 1840), pp. 100-105.

³ Other contemporaneous travellers make the number only three, which is more credible.

⁴ Some of the Baghdād Jews might well have been the descendants of those carried into exile by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 and 586 B.C.

⁵ This word is derived from Aramaic *yada'*, to know; the sect was Gnostic.

⁶ Ar. *Šābi'ah*, or *Šābi'ūn*, sing. *Šābi'* from Mandaic (Aram) *Sābi'*, immerse; no etymological connection with *Saba'*, the name of the great people in south-western Arabia.

⁷ Wrongly rendered Nazarenes, i.e. Christians.

Moslems as a "protected" sect. According to the *Fihrist*¹ they included the *mughtasilah* (those who wash themselves), who occupied the marshes of lower al-'Irāq. The community still survives to the number of five thousand in the swampy lands near al-Basrah. Living in the neighbourhood of rivers is necessitated by the fact that immersion in flowing water is an essential, and certainly the most characteristic, feature of their religious practice. In modern Baghdād the Šābians are represented by the so-called 'Amārah silversmiths, makers of the *mīnā*² work.

Quite distinct from these Babylonian Šābians were the pseudo-Šābians of Ḥarrān.³ Arab writers confuse the two. The Ḥarrān Sābians were in reality star-worshippers who under the Moslems adopted the name "Šābians" to secure the advantages of toleration accorded by the Koran. This name has stuck to them ever since, and the curious sect continued to flourish close to the headquarters of the caliphate until the middle of the thirteenth century, when the Mongols destroyed their last temple. Undoubtedly the intellectual merits and scientific services of some of its illustrious men helped to gain Moslem protection.⁴ Reference has already been made to Thābit ibn-Qurrah and other great Ḥarrānian astronomers. Thābit's son Sinān was forced by the Caliph al-Qāhir to embrace Islam.⁵ Among other Sābian luminaries were abu-Ishāq ibn-Hilāl al-Šābi', secretary of both al-Mu'ī' (946-74) and al-Ṭā'ī' (974-91); al-Battāni, the astronomer; ibn-Wahshīyah (fl. ca. 900), pseudo-author of the book on Nabataean agriculture; and possibly Jābir ibn-Ḥayyān, the alchemist. The last three professed Islam.⁶

The Zoroastrians (*Majūs*), mentioned only once in the Koran (22 : 17), could not have been included among the Scripturaries in Muḥammad's mind. But in the hadīth and by Moslem legists they are treated as such; the term "Šābians" was interpreted to cover them. Practical politics and expediency, as we learned before, made it necessary that the dhimmi status be accorded such a large body of population as that which occupied Iran. After the conquest Zoroastrianism, which was the state religion,

¹ P. 340, l. 26, Mas'ūdi, vol. II, p. 112.

² From Pers. *mīno*, heavenly.

³ Mas'ūdi, vol. IV, pp. 61-71, devotes a section to them.

⁴ *Fihrist*, p. 272, l. 11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 302, quoted by Ibn Abi-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. I, pp. 220-21.

⁶ For more on the Šābians consult D. Chwolschun, *Die Sabier und der Sabismus*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1856).

continued to exist and its fire-temples remained standing not only in all the Iranian provinces but in al-'Irāq, India and places east of Persia.¹ The Zoroastrians in India are still represented by the Parsis,² whose ancestors emigrated from Persia early in the eighth century. Zoroastrianism yielded a number of distinguished converts to Islam, the earliest among whom was ibn-al-Muqaffa'. Certain phases of early Islamic theology were either a reaction against dualism or an imitation of its attitudes.

The Manichaeans, at first mistaken by the Moslems for Christians or Zoroastrians, obtained later the status of a tolerated community. The Persian Mani († A.D. 273 or 274) and his teaching seem to have held a special fascination for the followers of Muḥammad, for we see that both al-Mahdi and al-Hādi issued strict measures against the tendency in that direction. Even the last Umayyad caliph, whose tutor was put to death as a *zindīq*, was suspected of Manichaeism.³ In 780 al-Mahdi crucified a number of crypto-Manichaeans in Aleppo,⁴ and during the last two years of his reign instituted an inquisition against them in Baghdād.⁵ Al-Hādi continued the persecution begun by his predecessor.⁶ Al-Rashīd likewise appointed a special officer to conduct an inquisition against such dualists.⁷ But many Manichaeans and even communistic Mazdakites⁸ seem to have survived. And although the Koran⁹ entitles idol worshippers to no consideration, practical Islam connived at minor communities in Northern Africa and Central Asia which were too insignificant to attract public attention, and found it impossible to exterminate paganism in India.

The so-called "Moslem conquests" which were effected mainly under the orthodox caliphs were in reality, as noted

¹ Mas'ūdi, vol. iv, p. 86

² Name derived from Pārs (Fārs), modern Fāris. See above, p. 157, n. 2.

³ *Fihrist*, pp. 337-8. Early Arab writers applied the term *zindīq* (from Pahlavi *zardīk*) to any Moslem whose religious ideas partook of the dogmatic conceptions of the Persians in general and the Manichaeans in particular. In later usage *zindīq* came to mean any person with liberal views, a free-thinker. Cf. E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 1 (New York, 1902), pp. 159-60. Cf. above, p. 84, n. 2.

⁴ Ṭabarī, vol. iii, p. 499

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 519-20, 588.

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 548-51.

⁷ Arabic sources including *Fihrist*, pp. 327 *seq.*, Shahrastāni, pp. 188 *seq.*, and Ya'qūbi, vol. i, pp. 180-82, are among the oldest and best we have on Manichaeism. For a modern treatment consult A. V. Williams Jackson, *Researches in Manichaeism* (New York, 1932).

⁸ See Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pp. 855-6, 897, Shahrastāni, pp. 192 *seq.*; Browne, vol. 1, pp. 166-72.

⁹ Sūrs 4: 116-20, 21: 98 100, 66: 9.

before, the conquest of Arab arms and Arab nationals. They netted the military and political subjugation of Persia, the Fertile Crescent and north-eastern Africa. During the first century of 'Abbāsid rule the conquests entered upon their second stage, the victory of Islam as a religion. It was in the course of this stage that the bulk of the population of the empire was converted to the new religion. Many conversions were, to be sure, concurrent with the early military conquests, but such a country as Syria continued to present the aspect of a Christian land throughout the whole Umayyad period. The situation now, however, began perceptibly to change. The intolerant legislation of al-Rashīd and al-Mutawakkil undoubtedly contributed its quota of fresh converts. Cases of individual and collective forcible conversion added to their numbers; five thousand of the Christian banu-Tanūkh whom al-Mahdi saw near Aleppo responded to his orders and embraced Islam.¹ But the process of conversion in its normal working was more gradual and peaceful, though also inescapable. Self-interest dictated it. To escape the payment of the humiliating tribute and other disabilities, to secure social prestige or political influence, to enjoy a larger measure of freedom and security, these were the strong motives in operation.

Persia remained unconverted to Islam until well into the third century after its inclusion in the Arab empire. It counts among its population today some 9000 Zoroastrians. The population of northern al-'Irāq early in the tenth century was still, in the opinion of ibn-al-Faqīh,² "Moslem in name but Christian in character". Mt. Lebanon has maintained until the present day a Christian majority. Egypt, which had embraced Christianity but very lightly in the fourth century, proved one of the easiest countries to Islamize. Its Copts today form but a small minority. The Nubian kingdom, which had been Christianized in the middle of the sixth century, was still Christian in the twelfth century³ and even in the latter part of the fourteenth.⁴ The conversion to Islam of the Berbers and North Africans, whose

¹ Ibn al 'Izzī, *Chronicon Syriacum*, ed. and tr. P. J. Bruns and G. G. Kirsch (Leipzig, 1789), vol. II (text), p. 133 = vol. I, pp. 134-5.

² *Buldan*, p. 315, l. 9.

³ Al Idrīsī, *Sifat al Maghrib*, ed. and tr. R. Dozy and M. J. de Goeje (Leyden, 1864-66), p. 27 (text) = p. 32 (tr.).

⁴ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, vol. I, pp. 396.

church, as we have before noted, had produced several illustrious champions of Christian orthodoxy, was begun with no marked success by 'Uqbah after the founding of al-Qayrawān in 670 as a permanent base of military operation and centre of Islamic influence. It was carried out in the following century according to a new plan of enlisting the Berbers in the Moslem army and thus winning them over by the new prospects of booty. The Berbers formed the nucleus of the armed forces which completed the conquest of West Africa and effected the subjugation of Spain. But even in their case we find three centuries after the Arab conquest some forty bishoprics left¹ of the church which once comprised five hundred. Here the final triumph of Islam was not achieved till the twelfth century, though certain Kabyls (from Ar. *qabā'il*, tribes) of Algeria had the Andalusian Moors, driven out after the fall of Granada in 1492, to thank for their conversion.

The third stage in the series of conquests was the linguistic one: the victory of the Arabic tongue over the native languages of the subjugated peoples. This was the latest and slowest. It was in this field of struggle that the subject races presented the greatest measure of resistance. They proved, as is often the case, more ready to give up their political and even religious loyalties than their linguistic ones. The complete victory of Arabic as the language of common usage was not assured until the latter part of the 'Abbāsid period. In Persia Arabic became for some time after the military conquest the language of learning and society, but it never succeeded in displacing permanently the Iranian speech. In al-'Irāq and Syria the transition from one Semitic tongue, the Aramaic, to another, the Arabic, was of course easier. In the out-of-the-way places, however, such as the Lebanons with their preponderant Christian population, the native Syriac put up a desperate fight and has lingered until modern times. Indeed Syriac is still spoken in Ma'lūla and two other villages in Anti-Lebanon. With its disappearance Aramaic has left in the colloquial Arabic unmistakable traces noticeable in vocabulary, accent and grammatical structure.²

Arabic as the language of learning, it should be noted, won

¹ De Mas Latrie, *Relations et commerce de l'Afrique septentrionale* (Paris, 1886), pp. 27-8; Arnold, *Preaching*, pp. 126 seq.

² Hitti, *al-Lughāt al-Sāmiyah* (Beirut, 1922), pp. 30-46.

its day before Arabic as the vernacular. In the preceding chapter we have seen how fresh streams of thought from Byzantium, Persia and India resulted in a new concentration of culture in the 800's in Baghdād, al-Basrah and al-Kūfah, comparable only to that of Alexandria in earlier times, and rendered Arabic, never used before for scientific purposes, the vehicle of the Moslem civilization. We shall now proceed to trace that cultural movement.

CHAPTER XXVII

SCIENTIFIC AND LITERARY PROGRESS

THE epoch of translation (*ca.* 750–850), discussed in a previous chapter (XXIV), was followed by one of creative activity; for the Arabs not only assimilated the ancient lore of Persia and the classical heritage of Greece but adapted both to their own peculiar needs and ways of thinking. In medicine and philosophy their independent work was less conspicuous than in alchemy, astronomy, mathematics and geography. In law, theology, philology and linguistics as Arabs and Moslems they carried on original thinking and research. Their translations, transmuted in no small degree by the Arab mind during the course of several centuries, were transmitted, together with many new contributions, to Europe through Syria, Spain and Sicily and laid the basis of that canon of knowledge which dominated medieval European thought. And transmission, from the standpoint of the history of culture, is no less essential than origination, for had the researches of Aristotle, Galen and Ptolemy been lost to posterity the world would have been as poor as if they had never been produced.

The line of demarcation between translated and original work is not always clearly drawn. Many of the translators were also contributors. Such was the case with Yūḥanna ibn-Māsawayh (777–857) and Ḥunayn ibn-Ishāq (809–73). The former, a Christian physician and pupil of Jibrīl ibn-Bakhtīshū¹, failing to obtain human subjects for dissection, a practice which was never encouraged by Islam, had recourse to apes, one of which came from Nubia in 836 as a present to al-Mu'taṣim.¹ Under these conditions little progress was made in the science of anatomy, except possibly in studying the anatomical structure of the eye. The prevalence of eye diseases in the sunny climate of al-'Irāq and other Moslem lands concentrated early medical attention on this subject. From the pen of ibn-Māsawayh we

¹ Ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. i, p. 178.

have the oldest systematic treatise on ophthalmology extant in Arabic.¹ A book entitled *al-'Ashr Maqālāt fi al-'Ayn* (the ten treatises on the eye) and ascribed to his pupil Ḥunayn ibn-Ishāq has recently been published with an English translation² as the earliest existing text-book of ophthalmology.

Arab interest in the curative science found expression in the Prophetic tradition that made science twofold: theology and medicine. The physician was at the same time metaphysician, philosopher and sage, and the title *hakīm* was indifferently applied to him in all these capacities. The case of the Nestorian Jibrīl ibn-Bakhtishū' († ca. 830), who was court physician of al-Rashīd, al-Ma'mūn and the Barmakids and is said to have amassed a fortune of 88,800,000 dirhams,³ shows that the medical profession was a paying one. As private physician of al-Rashīd Jibrīl received, we are told, 100,000 dirhams for bleeding the caliph twice a year and an equal sum for administering a semi-annual purgative draught. The Bakhtishū' family produced six or seven generations of distinguished physicians, the last of whom flourished in the second half of the eleventh century.

In the curative use of drugs some remarkable advances were made at this time by the Arabs. It was they who established the first apothecary shops, founded the earliest school of pharmacy and produced the first pharmacopœia. Several pharmacological treatises were composed, beginning with those of the world-famed Jābir ibn-Ḥayyān, the father of Arabic alchemy, who flourished about 776. As early as the days of al-Ma'mūn and al-Mu'tasim pharmacists had to pass some kind of examination.⁴ Like druggists, physicians also were required to submit to a test. Following a case of malpractice Sinān ibn-Thābit ibn-Qurrah was ordered by al-Muqtadir in 931 to examine all practising physicians and grant certificates (sing. *ʿijāzah*) only to those who satisfied him. Over eight hundred and sixty such men in Baghdād passed the test and the capital rid itself of its quacks.⁵ On the orders of al-Muqtadir's virtuous vizir 'Alī ibn-'Īsā, Sinān organized a staff of physicians who would go from place to

¹ *Doḡhal al-'Ayn* (the disorder of the eye), MS, one copy is in Taymūr Pasha's library, Cairo, another in Leningrad.

² By Max Meyerhof (Cairo, 1928).

³ Qisṣa, p. 143.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 188-9.

⁵ Ibn-abī-U-ayyūh, vol. I, p. 222; Qisṣa, p. 191.

place carrying drugs and administering relief to ailing people. Other physicians made daily visits to jails.¹ Such facts show an intelligent interest in public hygiene unknown to the rest of the world at that time. In his efforts to raise the scientific standard of the medical profession and in his efficient administration of the Baghdād hospital lay Sinān's chief title to fame. This hospital, the first in Islam, was created by Hārūn al-Rashīd at the beginning of the ninth century, following the Persian model, as the Arabic name *bīmāristān*² indicates. Not long afterwards other hospitals to the number of thirty-four grew up throughout the Moslem world. Cairo saw its first hospital under ibn-Ṭūlūn³ about 872, an institution which survived until the fifteenth century. Travelling clinics made their appearance in the eleventh century. Moslem hospitals had special wards for women and each had its own dispensary. Some were equipped with medical libraries and offered courses in medicine.

The most notable medical authors who followed the epoch of the great translators were Persian in nationality but Arab in language: 'Alī al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzi, 'Alī ibn-al-'Abbās al-Majūsi and ibn-Sīna. The portraits of two of these, al-Rāzi and ibn-Sīna, adorn the great hall of the School of Medicine at the University of Paris.

'Alī ibn-Sahl Rabban al-Ṭabarī, who flourished in the middle of the ninth century, was originally a Christian from Ṭabaristān, as he tells us in his *Kitāb al-Dīn* and as his father's name indicates.⁴ In the reign of al-Mutawakkil he turned Moslem and became a physician to the caliph himself, under whom he produced in 850 his *Firdaws al-Ḥikmah* (paradise of wisdom), one of the oldest Arabic compendiums of medicine. This work includes to some extent philosophy and astronomy and is based on Greek and Hindu sources. After 'Alī the distinguished theologian-philosopher and physician al-Rāzi flourished.

Abu-Bakr Muḥammad ibn-Zakarīyā' al-Rāzi (Rhazes, 865-925), so called after the place of his birth, al-Rayy, not far from Ṭīhrān, the capital of modern Persia, was probably "the greatest

¹ Ibn-abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. i, p. 221; Qiftī, pp. 193-4.

² Pers. *bīmār*, sick + *stān*, place of.

³ Ibn-Duqmāq, pt. iv, p. 99.

⁴ Pp. 124-5 = *Book of Religion*, p. 147. See also *Fihrist*, p. 296; cf. ibn-Khallikān, vol. ii, p. 503, l. 25. "Rabban" in his father's name, which made scholars think that he was of Jewish origin, is obviously Syriac for "our master", as 'Alī explains in his introduction to *Firdaws al-Ḥikmah fī al-Ṭibb*, ed. Muḥammad Z. Ṣiddīqī (Berlin, 1928).

and most original of all the Muslim physicians, and one of the most prolific as an author".¹ In selecting a new site for the great hospital² at Baghdād, of which he was chief physician, he is said to have hung up shreds of meat in different places, choosing the spot where they showed the least signs of putrefaction.³ He is also considered the inventor of the seton in surgery. The *Sihrist*⁴ lists one hundred and thirteen major and twenty-eight minor works by al-Rāzi, of which twelve deal with alchemy. One of his principal works on alchemy, the *Kitāb al-Asrār* (the book of secrets), after having passed through numerous editorial hands was rendered into Latin by the eminent translator Gerard of Cremona († 1187) and became a chief source of chemical knowledge until superseded in the fourteenth century by Jābir's (Geber's) works. Under the title *De spiritibus et corporibus* it was quoted by Roger Bacon. While still in Persia al-Rāzi wrote for Maṣṣūr ibn-Ishāq al-Sāmāni of Sijistān a monumental work in ten volumes, named after his patron *Kitāb al-Ṭibb al-Manṣūri*, of which a Latin translation (*Liber Almansoris*) was first published in Milan in the eighties of the fifteenth century. Parts of it have been recently done into French and German. Of his monographs one of the best known is a treatise on smallpox and measles (*al-Judari w-al-Ḥaṣbali*), the earliest of its kind and rightly considered an ornament to the medical literature of the Arabs. In it we find the first clinical account of smallpox.⁵

Translated into Latin in Venice (1565) and later into several modern languages, this treatise served to establish al-Rāzi's reputation as one of the keenest original thinkers and greatest clinicians not only of Islam but of the Middle Ages. His most important work, however, was *al-Hāwi* (the comprehensive book), first translated into Latin under the auspices of Charles I of Anjou by the Sicilian Jewish physician Faraj ben-Sālim in 1279. Under the title *Continens* it was repeatedly printed from 1486 onwards, a fifth edition appearing in Venice in 1542. As the name indicates, this book was meant to be encyclopædic in its range of medical information. It sums up the knowledge the

¹ Edward G. Browne, *Arabian Medicine* (Cambridge, 1921), p. 44

² Wrongly referred to by later writers as 'al 'Adudi', after the Buwayhid ruler 'Aḍud al-Dawlah, who established on its site his own hospital.

³ Ibn abi-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. 1, pp. 309-10.

⁴ Pp. 299-302.

⁵ Ed. Cornelius Van Dyck (London, 1866, and Beirut, 1872); tr. W. A. Greenhill, *A Treatise on the Small Pox and Measles* (London, 1848).

Arabs possessed at that time of Greek, Persian and Hindu medicine and adds some fresh contributions. Printed when printing was still in its infancy, these medical works of al-Rāzi exercised for centuries a remarkable influence over the minds of the Latin West.

'Ali ibn-al-'Abbās (Haly Abbas, † 994), originally a Zoroastrian as his last name, al-Majūsi (the Magian), indicates, distinguished himself as the author of *al-Kitāb al-Maliki* (the royal book, *Liber regius*), which he composed for the great Buwayhid 'Aḍud-al-Dawlah Fanna Khusraw, who reigned 949-83.¹ This work, also called *Kāmil al-Ṣinā'ah al-Ṭibbīyah*, a "noble thesaurus comprehending the science and practice of Medicine",² was more concise than *al-Hāwi* and was diligently studied until superseded by ibn-Sīna's *al-Qānūn*. The best parts of *al-Maliki* are devoted to dietetics and materia medica. Among its original contributions are a rudimentary conception of the capillary system and a proof that in the act of parturition the child does not come out by itself but is pushed out by the muscular contractions of the womb.

The most illustrious name in Arabic medical annals after al-Rāzi's is that of ibn-Sīna (Latin Avicenna, through Heb. Aven Sīna, 980-1037), called by the Arabs *al-shaykh al-ra'īs*, "the sheikh" (of the learned) and "prince" (of the courtiers).³ Al-Rāzi was more of a physician than ibn-Sīna, but ibn-Sīna was more of a philosopher. In this physician, philosopher and poet Arab science culminates and is, one might say, incarnated.

Abu-'Ali al-Ḥusayn, to use his first name, was the son of an Ismā'īli, 'Abdullāh. Born near Bukhāra, he spent all his life in the eastern part of the Moslem world and was buried in Hamadhān, where his grave is still shown. As a young man he had the good fortune to cure the Sāmānid sultan of Bukhāra, Nūḥ ibn-Manṣūr (reigned 976-97), and was therefore given the privilege of using the ruler's remarkable library. Endowed with extraordinary powers of absorbing and retaining knowledge, this Moslem Persian scholar devoured the contents of the royal library and at the early age of twenty-one was in a position to embark on his career of writing. This included the systematizing

¹ Ibn-abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. i, pp. 236-7; Qisṣi, p. 232.

² Qisṣi, p. 232. For a complete MS. copy dated 586 (A.D. 1190) see Hitti, Fans and 'Abd al-Malik, *Catalog of Arabic Manuscripts*, supp. no. 1.

³ Also called *al-ru'āṣim al-shāmī*, the second teacher (after Aristotle).

of the knowledge of his time. Al-Qiṣṭī¹ lists only forty-five works of ibn-Sīna; but a modern bibliographer lists under his name over two hundred titles, dealing with philosophy, medicine, geometry, astronomy, theology, philology and art. Of these his best-known poetical production is a lengthy ode describing "the descent of the soul into the body from the higher sphere" and is still memorized by young students in the Arabic East. Among his scientific works the leading two are the *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (book of healing), a philosophical encyclopædia based upon the Aristotelian tradition as modified by Neo-Platonic influences and Moslem theology, and *al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb*, which represents the final codification of Greco-Arabic medical thought. The Arabic text of the *Qānūn* was published in Rome in 1593 and was therefore one of the earliest Arabic books to see print.² Translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona in the twelfth century, this *Canon*, with its encyclopædic contents, its systematic arrangement and philosophic plan, soon worked its way into a position of pre-eminence in the medical literature of the age, displacing the works of Galen, al-Rāzi and al-Majūsi and becoming the text-book for medical education in the schools of Europe. In the last thirty years of the fifteenth century it passed through fifteen Latin editions and one Hebrew. In recent years a partial translation into English was made.³ The book distinguishes mediastinitis from pleurisy and recognizes the contagious nature of phthisis and the spreading of diseases by water and soil. It gives a scientific diagnosis of ankylostomiasis and attributes it to an intestinal worm. Its materia medica considers some seven hundred and sixty drugs. From the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries this work served as the chief guide to medical science in the West and it is still in occasional use in the Moslem East. In the words of Dr. Osler⁴ it has remained "a medical bible for a longer period than any other work".

Among the lesser lights in the medical firmament mention may be made of 'Alī ibn-'Īsa (Jesu Haly), the most famous

¹ P. 478. Cf. ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. ii, pp. 18-20, ibn-Khalīkān, vol. i, pp. 273-4; Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, vol. i (Weimar, 1895), pp. 453-8.

² The first edition of a compendium of *al-Shifā'* appeared as a supplement to this work.

³ O. Cameron Gruner, *A Treatise on the Canon of Medicine of Avicenna* (London, 1930).

⁴ William Osler, *The Evolution of Modern Medicine* (New Haven, 1922), p. 98.

oculist (*kahhāl*) of the Arabs. 'Ali, a Christian, flourished in Baghdād in the first half of the eleventh century, a century and a half after the court physician of al-Mu'tamid, whose name, 'Īsa ibn-'Alī,¹ is often confused with his. Of the thirty-two medieval Arabic works on ophthalmology his *Tadhkirat al-Kahhālīn*² (a note for oculists), which has survived in its complete and original form, is one of the oldest and worthiest. Only the two treatises by ibn-Māsawayh and Hunayn ibn-Ishāq antedate it. The *Tadhkirah* carefully describes one hundred and thirty eye diseases. It was done once into Hebrew and twice into Latin and is still in use in the East.

Another physician of the second class was ibn-Jazlah (Ben-gesla, Byngezla, † 1100), originally a Christian,³ who wrote a medical synopsis entitled *Taqwīm al-Abdān fī Tadbīr al-Insān* (tables of the body with regard to the physical management of man) modelled on the *Taqwīm al-Ṣiḥḥah* by another Christian physician, ibn-Butlān,⁴ who died in Antioch about 1063. In a *Taqwīm* diseases are arranged as are the stars in astronomical tables. Ibn-Jazlah's work was translated into Latin at Strassburg in 1532. The last physician to be mentioned in this series is Ya'qūb ibn-akhi-Ḥizām, the stable-master of al-Mu'taḍid (892-902), who composed a treatise on horsemanship (*al-Furūsiyah wa-Shiyāt al-Khayl*) which is the first Arabic work of its kind. It contains some rudiments of the veterinary art and has survived in a manuscript now preserved in the British Museum.⁵

To the Arabs philosophy (*falsafah*) was a knowledge of the true cause of things as they really are, in so far as it is possible to ascertain them by human faculties. In essence their philosophy was Greek, modified by the thought of the conquered peoples and by other Eastern influences, adapted to the mental proclivities of Islam and expressed through the medium of Arabic. These Arabs believed Aristotle's works to have represented a complete codification of Greek philosophical lore, as Galen's represented Greek medical lore. Greek philosophy and medicine meant then,

¹ *Fihrist*, p. 207; ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. 1, p. 203.

² Ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. 1, p. 247. Translated, not from the original Arabic, by Casey A. Wood, *The Tadhkirat of Alī ibn Isā* (Chicago, 1936).

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 255; Qifti, p. 365; ibn-Khallikān, vol. III, p. 255.

⁴ Hitti, *Arab-Syrian Gentlemen*, pp. 214-16, ibn-abi Uṣaybi'ah, vol. 1, pp. 241 seq.; Qifti, pp. 294 seq.

⁵ *Fihrist*, p. 315, mentions an ibn-akhi-Ḥizām, perhaps a son of Ya'qūb.

of course, all that the West possessed. As Moslems the Arabs believed that the Koran and Islamic theology were the summation of religious law and experience. Their original contribution, therefore, was made in the borderland between philosophy and religion on one hand and philosophy and medicine on the other. In course of time Arab authors came to apply the word *falāsifah* or *hukamā'* (philosophers or sages) to those philosophers among them whose speculations were not limited by religion, reserving the term *mutakallimūn* or *ahl al-kalām* (speech-makers, dialecticians) for those whose system was conditioned by subordination to revealed religion. The *mutakallimūn*, who corresponded to the scholastic writers of Christian Europe, set forth their theories in the form of propositions and were therefore called by that title. *Kalām* came slowly to mean theology and *mutakallim* became a synonym for theologian. Al-Ghazzālī was primarily a theologian and will be dealt with later. The greatest names in the field of early Arab philosophy were those of al-Kindī, al-Fārābī and ibn-Sīna.

Al Kindi

Al-Kindī, abu-Yūsuf Ya'qūb ibn-Ishāq, was born probably in al-Kūfah about 801 and flourished in Baghdād, where he died about 873. His pure Arabian descent earned him the title "the philosopher of the Arabs", and indeed he was the first and last example of an Aristotelian student in the Eastern caliphate who sprang from Arabian stock. Eclectic in his system, al-Kindī endeavoured in Neo-Platonic fashion to combine the views of Plato and Aristotle and regarded the Neo-Pythagorean mathematics as the basis of all science. Al-Kindī was more than a philosopher. He was astrologer, alchemist, optician and music theorist. No less than three hundred and sixty-one works are ascribed to him, but most of them unhappily have been lost. His principal work on geometrical and physiological optics, based on the *Optics* of Euclid in Theon's recension, was widely used in both East and West until superseded by the greater work of ibn-al-Haytham. In its Latin translation, *De aspectibus*, it influenced Roger Bacon. Al-Kindī's three or four treatises on the theory of music are the earliest extant works in Arabic showing the influence of Greek writers on that subject. In one of these treatises al-Kindī describes rhythm (*īqā'*) as a constituent part of Arabic music. Measured song, or mensural music, must therefore have been known to the Moslems centuries before it was introduced into Christian

Europe.¹ Of al-Kindi's writings more have survived in Latin translations, including those of Gerard of Cremona, than in the Arabic original.

The harmonization of Greek philosophy with Islam begun by al-Kindi, an Arab, was continued by al-Fārābī, a Turk, and completed in the East by ibn-Sīna, a Persian

Muhammad ibn-Muhammad ibn-Tarkhān abu-Naṣr al-Fārābī² (Alpharabius) was born in Transoxiana, educated under a Christian physician and a Christian translator in Baghdād and flourished as a Sufi at Aleppo in the brilliant court of Sayf-al-Dawlah al-Ḥamdānī. He died at Damascus in 950 at the age of about eighty. His system of philosophy, as revealed by his several treatises on Plato and Aristotle, was a syncretism of Platonism, Aristotelianism and Sufism and won him the enviable title of "the second teacher" (*al-mu'allim al-thānī*), after the great Stagirite. Besides a number of commentaries on Aristotle and other Greek philosophers, al-Fārābī composed various psychological, political and metaphysical works, of which the best-known are the *Risālat Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*³ (epistle containing bezels of wisdom) and the *Risālah fi Ārā' Ahl al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah* (epistle on the opinions of the people of the superior city).⁴ In the latter and in his *al-Siyāsah (Siyāsāt) al-Madanīyah* (political regime), al-Fārābī, inspired by Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*, presents his conception of a model city, which he conceives as a hierarchical organism analogous to the human body. The sovereign, who corresponds to the heart, is served by functionaries who are themselves served by others still lower. In his ideal city the object of association is the happiness of its citizens, and the sovereign is perfect morally and intellectually.

Al-Fārābī's other writings reveal him as a fair physician and mathematician, an occult scientist and an excellent musician. In fact he is considered the greatest of all Arabic music theorists. Besides his treatment of music in two of his compendiums of the sciences, he devotes three major works to the subject, of which

¹ See below, p. 600.

² From Fārah in Turkestan. Ibn-abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. ii, p. 134; Qisṭī, p. 277.

³ Published by Friedrich Dieterici in his *Die Philosophie der Araber im IX. und X. Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, vol. xiv (Leyden, 1890), pp. 66-83.

⁴ Published at Cairo, 1323, and also by Dieterici, *Philosophie der Araber*, vol. xv (Leyden, 1895), who also translated it as *Der Musterstaat von Alfarabi* (Leyden, 1900).

the leading is the *Kitāb al-Mūsīqī al-Kabīr* (the great book of music).¹ In the presence of his patron Sayf-al-Dawlah he is said to have been able to play his lute so as to cast his hearers into a fit of laughter, draw tears from their eyes or set them all asleep, including even the doorkeepers.² Ancient chants attributed to him are still sung by the Mawlawi dervishes.

After al-Fārābī it was ibn-Sīna († 1037) who contributed the most important works in Arabic on the theory of music. Ibn-Sīna, already treated with the medical men, was indebted to al-Fārābī in his philosophical views. In the judgment of ibn-Khalīkān³ "no Moslem ever reached in the philosophical sciences the same rank as al-Fārābī; and it was by the study of his writings and by the imitation of his style that ibn-Sīna attained proficiency and rendered his own work so useful". It was ibn-Sīna, however, who placed the sum-total of Greek wisdom, codified by his own ingenuity, at the disposal of the educated Moslem world in an intelligible form. Through him the Greek system, particularly that of Philo, was rendered capable of incorporation with Islam.

The
Brethren of
Sincerity

About the middle of the fourth Moslem century (*ca.* 970) there flourished in al-Basrah an interesting eclectic school of popular philosophy, with leanings toward Pythagorean speculations, known as *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* (the brethren of sincerity). The appellation is presumably taken from the story of the ringdove in *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah* in which it is related that a group of animals by acting as faithful friends (*ikhwān al-ṣafā'*)⁴ to one another escaped the snares of the hunter.⁵

The *Ikhwān*, who had a branch in Baghdād, formed not only a philosophical but also a religio-political association with ultra-Shī'ite, probably Ismā'īlīte, views and were opposed to the existing political order, which they evidently aimed to overthrow by undermining the popular intellectual system and religious beliefs. Hence arises the obscurity surrounding their activities and

¹ Extracts by J. P. N. Land appeared in *Actes du sixième congrès international des orientalistes*, pt. 2, sec. 1 (Leyden, 1885), pp. 100-168. Fr. tr. by Rodolphe d'Erclanger, *La musique arabe*, vols. i, ii, *al-Fārābī* (Paris, 1930-35). Hunt, Paris and 'Abd-al-Malik, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts*, no. 1984.

² Ibn-Khalīkān, vol. ii, p. 501.

³ Vol. ii, p. 499 = de Slane, vol. iii, p. 307.

⁴ From this it would appear that the usual rendition, "the brethren of purity", "les frères de la pureté", "die lautereren Brüder", is not exact.

⁵ I. Goldziher in *Der Islam*, vol. i (1910), pp. 22-6.

membership. A collection of their epistles, *Rasā'il*,¹ arranged in encyclopædic fashion survives, bearing some obscure names as collaborators. The epistles number fifty-two and treat of mathematics, astronomy, geography, music, ethics, philosophy, embodying the sum-total of knowledge that a cultured man of that age was supposed to acquire. The first fifty-one epistles lead up to the last, which is a summation of all sciences. The language of the epistles shows that Arabic had by that time become an adequate instrument for expressing scientific thought in all its various aspects. Al-Ghazzālī was influenced by the Ikhwān's writings,² and Rāshid-al-Dīn Sinān ibn-Sulaymān, the chief of the Assassins in Syria, used them diligently.³ When in Baghdād abu-al-'Alā' al-Ma'arri, the great Syrian poet-philosopher, attended the association's Friday meetings.⁴ Abu-Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī († 1023⁵), the famous Mu'tazilite who with al-Rāwandī († 915) and al-Ma'arri († 1057) formed the trinity of arch-heretics in Islam,⁶ was a pupil if not an active member of the fraternity.

The scientific study of astronomy in Islam was begun, as we have already learned, under the influence of an Indian work, the *Siddhānta* (Ar. *Sindhīnd*), brought to Baghdād (771), translated by Muḥammad ibn-Ibrāhīm al-Fazārī and used as a model by later scholars. Pahlāwi tables (*sīk*) compiled in the Sāsānid period were soon added in translated form (*sīf*). Greek elements, last in order of time, were first in importance. An early translation of Ptolemy's *Almagest* was followed by two superior ones: the one by al-Ḥajjāj ibn-Maṣar completed in A.H. 212 (827-8) and the other by Ḥunayn ibn-Ishāq revised by Thābit ibn-Qurrah († 901). Early in the ninth century the first regular observations (*raṣd*) with fairly accurate instruments were made in Jundaysābūr (south-west Persia). In connection with his Bayt al-Ḥikmah, al-Ma'mūn erected at Baghdād near the Sham-māsiyah gate an astronomical observatory under the directorship

¹ Dieterici issued and translated a great part of the text in his *Die Philosophie der Araber*, 16 vols. (Leipzig and Leyden, 1855-1895). The last Oriental edition is that of Khayr-al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1928).

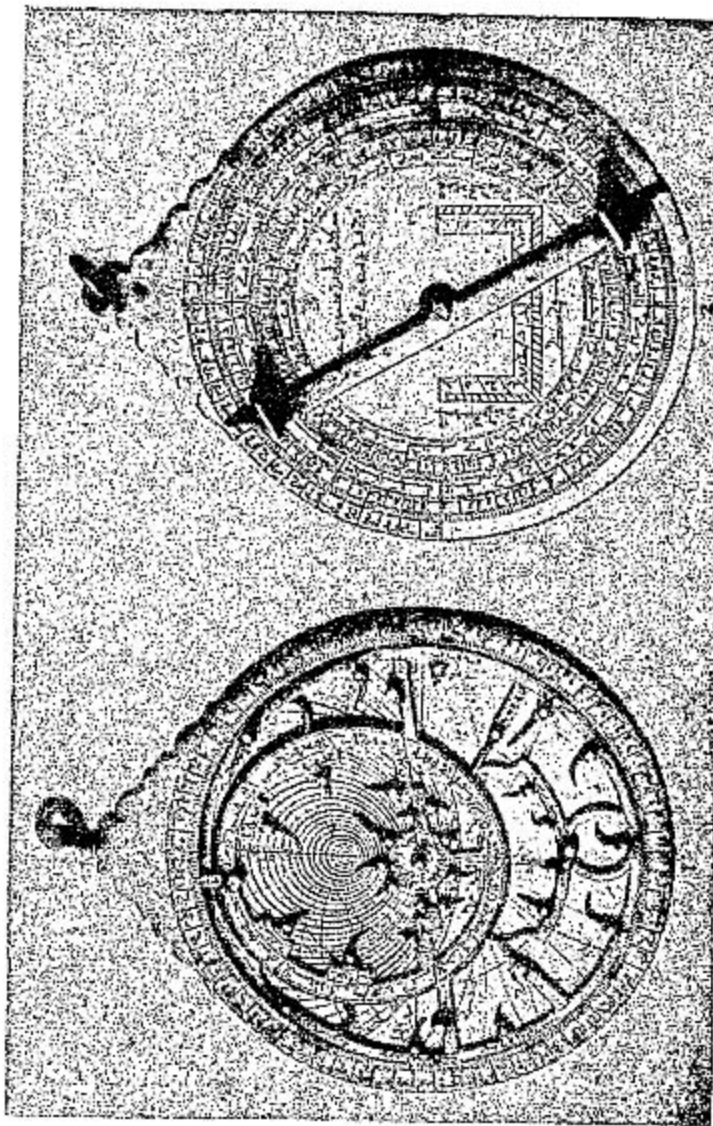
² Cf. *Ihyā'*, vol. ii, p. 254, ll. 8-12, p. 262, ll. 18-20, with *Rasā'il*, vol. i, p. 180.

³ M. C. Desfrémery in *Journal asiatique*, ser. 5, vol. v (1855), pp. 5-6.

⁴ Consult his *Dīwān: Siq' al-Zand*, ed. Shākir Shuqayr (Beirut, 1884), p. 112, l. 15, p. 104, ll. 4-5.

⁵ Cf. Ibn-Kharrīz-mān, vol. ii, p. 470; Yāqūt, *ʿUdabā'*, vol. v, p. 381.

⁶ Al-Sulūkī, *Tabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyāh al-Kubra* (Cairo, 1906), vol. iv, p. 3.



By courtesy of B. Ebrünl

AN ASTROLABE DATED A.H. 1010 (A.D. 1601-2)

1. Face; 2. Back

of a converted Jew, Sind ibn-'Alī, and Yaḥya ibn-abi-Manṣūr († 830 or 831).¹ Here the caliph's astronomers "not only made systematic observation of the celestial movements, but also verified with remarkably precise results all the fundamental elements of the *Almagest*: the obliquity of the ecliptic, the precession of the equinoxes, the length of the solar year, etc."² To this observatory al-Ma'mūn soon added another on Mt. Qāsiyūn outside of Damascus.³ The equipment in those days consisted of quadrant, astrolabe, dial and globes. Ibrāhīm al-Fazāri († ca. 777) was the first Moslem to construct an astrolabe,⁴ undoubtedly on the Greek model, as the Arabic name (*aṣṭurlāb*) indicates. One of the earliest Arabic treatises on this instrument was written by 'Alī ibn-'Isa al-Aṣṭurlābi (maker of astrolabes), who flourished in Baghdād and Damascus before 830.

Al-Ma'mūn's astronomers performed one of the most delicate geodetic operations—the measuring of the length of a terrestrial degree. The object was to determine the size of the earth and its circumference on the assumption that the earth was round. The measurement, carried out on the plain of Sinjār north of the Euphrates and also near Palmyra, yielded 56½ Arabic miles as the length of a degree of the meridian—a remarkably accurate result, exceeding the real length of the degree at that place by about 2877 feet.⁵ This would make the circumference of the earth 20,400 miles and its diameter 6500. Among those who took part in this operation were the sons of Mūsa ibn-Shākir and perhaps al-Khwārizmī, whose tables (*siḥ*), revised a century and a half later by the Spanish astronomer Maslamah al-Majrīti († ca. 1007) and translated into Latin in 1126 by Adelard of Bath, became the bases for other works both in the East and the West. Such Arab astronomical tables replaced all their Greek and Indian predecessors and came to be used even in China.

Another eminent astronomer of the period was abu-al-'Abbās Aḥmad⁶ al-Farghāni (Alfraganus), of Farghānah in Transoxiana, who in 861 superintended for al-Mutawakkil the erection of a Nilometer at al-Fustāṭ.⁷ Al-Farghāni's principal work, *al-Mud-*

¹ *Fihrist*, p. 275.

² C. A. Nallino, art. "Astronomy", *Encyclopedia of Islām*. Cf. Ṣā'id, *Ṭabaqāt*, pp. 50-51.

³ Ibn-al-'Ibrī, p. 237.

⁴ *Fihrist*, p. 273.

⁵ Nallino, *Ilm al-Falak* (Cairo, 1911), pp. 281 seq. Ar. *falak* (celestial sphere) may be Babylonian, pp. 105-6.

⁶ "Muḥammad" in *Fihrist*, p. 279, followed by Qisṭī, p. 286.

⁷ Ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. 1, p. 207.

khyl ila 'ilm Ha'yat al-Aflāk,¹ was done into Latin in 1135 by John of Seville and Gerard of Cremona, and also into Hebrew. In Arabic it has survived under different titles.²

Besides the Ma'mūni observatory, one was operated by the three sons of Mūsa ibn-Shākir (850-70) in their house at Baghdad. The Buwayhid Sultan Sharaf-al-Dawlah (982-9) instituted another in his Baghdad palace, where 'Abd-al-Rahmān al-Šūfi († 986), whose *al-Kawākib al-Thābitah* (fixed stars) is a masterpiece of observational astronomy, Aḥmad al-Sāghāni († 990) and abu-al-Wafā' († 997)³ worked. In the court of another Buwayhid, Rukn-al-Dawlah (932-76) of al-Rayy, flourished abu-Ja'far al-Khāzin of Khurāsān,⁴ who ascertained the obliquity of the ecliptic and solved a problem in Archimedes which leads to a cubic equation. Other astronomers made a systematic study of the heavens in Shīrāz, Naysābūr and Samarqand.

Al-Battāni

Between 877 and 918 abu-'Abdullāh Muhammad ibn-Jābir al-Battāni¹ (Albatagnius), originally a Sābian from Ḥarrān and unquestionably the greatest astronomer of his nationality and time and one of the greatest in Islam, made his observations and studies in al-Raqqah. Al-Battāni was an original research worker. He made several emendations to Ptolemy and rectified the calculations for the orbits of the moon and certain planets. He proved the possibility of annular eclipses of the sun, determined with greater accuracy the obliquity of the ecliptic and presented original theories on the determination of the visibility of the new moon.²

Al-Bīrūni

At Ghaznah, Afghanistan, lived abu-al-Rayḥān Muḥammad ibn-Aḥmad al-Bīrūni³ (973-1050), considered the most original and profound scholar Islam produced in the domain of natural science. Here this Arabic author of Persian origin, who spoke Turkish and knew besides Persian Sanskrit, Hebrew and Syriac, produced in 1030 for his patron Mas'ūd, son of the famous Maḥmūd, an account of the science of astronomy entitled *al-*

¹ Ibn-al-'Ibrī, p. 236, Qisṣ, p. 78

² See Hitb, Fāris and 'Abd al-Malik, *Catalog of Arabic Manuscripts*, no. 967.

³ *Fihrist*, p. 283; Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. ix, p. 97; Ibn-Khallikān, vol. ii, pp. 508-9

⁴ Qisṣ, p. 396, *Fihrist*, pp. 266, 282.

⁵ His astronomical work *al-Zij al-Sādir* was edited by C. A. Nallino (Rome, 1899).

⁷ Ibn al-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. ii, pp. 20-21; Ibn-al-'Ibrī, pp. 324-5. His surname is derived from Bīrūn (Pers. for outside), a suburb of Kāth, capital of Khwāzizm, though an autograph on a manuscript title page reproduced in *Islamic Culture*, vol. vi (1932) facing p. 534, spells "al-Bāvūni"

Qānūn al-Mas'ūdi fī al-Hay'ah w-al-Nujūm. In the same year he composed a short catechism of geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and astrology entitled *al-Tashhīm li-Awā'il Šinā'at al-Tanfīm*. His first work was *al-Āthār al-Bāqiyah 'an al-Qurūn al-Khāliyah*,¹ dealing chiefly with the calendars and eras of ancient peoples. In these works al-Bīrūni discusses intelligently the then debatable theory of the earth's rotation on its axis and makes accurate determination of latitudes and longitudes. Al-Bīrūni, who was a Shī'ite with agnostic leanings, sojourned in India² and was charmed by Hindu philosophy. Among his scientific contributions are an explanation of the working of natural springs by the hydrostatic principle, the suggestion that the Indus valley must have been an ancient sea basin filled up with alluvium, and the description of several monstrosities, including what we call Siamese twins.³

Of the Saljūq sultans, Jalāl-al-Dīn Malikshāh patronized astronomical studies. He established in 467 (1074-5) at al-Rayy or at Naysābūr an observatory where there was introduced into the civil calendar an important reform based on an accurate determination of the length of the tropical year. To this task of reforming the old Persian calendar he called to his new observatory the celebrated 'Umar al-Khayyām.⁴ Born between 1038 and 1048 at Naysābūr, where he died in 1123-4, 'Umar is known to the world primarily as a Persian poet⁵ and free-thinker; very few realize that he was a first-class mathematician and astronomer as well. The researches of al-Khayyām and his collaborators resulted in the production of the calendar named after his patron *al-Ta'rīkh al-Jalāli*, which is even more accurate than the Gregorian calendar. The latter leads to an error of one day in 3330 years, whereas al-Khayyām's apparently leads to an error of one day in about 5000 years.

One year after he had destroyed Baghdād, Hülāgu commenced (1259) the construction near Lake Urmīyah of the great

¹ Ed. E. Sachau (Leipzig, 1878); tr. Sachau (London, 1879).

² See his account *Tahqīq Ma li-al-Hind*, ed. E. Sachau (London, 1887); tr. Sachau (London, 1888), 2 vols. (reprinted London, 1910).

³ In a still unpublished work of his the first reference to tea in other than Chinese works occurs, F. Krenkow in *Majallat al-Majma'*, vol. xiv (1935), p. 388.

⁴ Full Arabic name abu-al-Fath 'Umar ibn-Ibrāhīm al-Khayyāmi (the tent-maker). On his life see Qifti, pp. 243-4; Qazwīni, *Āthār*, p. 318.

⁵ His *Rudā'īyāt* (quatrains), done first into English by FitzGerald (London, 1859), have since appeared in French, German, Italian, Danish and Arabic translations.

Marāghah observatory, whose first director was the illustrious Nasīr-al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī¹ († 1274), the last of 'Abbāsīd astronomer-philosophers. The instruments at this observatory were much admired and included an armillary sphere, a mural quadrant and a solstitial armil. In this observatory Nasīr-al-Dīn compiled new astronomical tables called *al-Zij al-Il-Khāni* in honour of Hūlāgu, the first Il-Khān.² The tables became popular throughout Asia, even in China. The foundations of this short-lived observatory are still extant. Close by it stood a library, also built by Hūlāgu, and said to have contained 400,000 volumes (?). Most of these books were pillaged by the Mongol armies from Syria, al-'Irāq and Persia.

Astrology

In astrology, a handmaid of astronomy, abu-Ma'shar († 886), a native of Balkh in Khurāsān who flourished at Baghdād, was the most distinguished figure.³ He is the one most frequently cited as an authority in the Christian Middle Ages and under the name Albumasar figured as a prophet in the iconography. Four of his works were translated into Latin in the twelfth century by John of Seville and Adelard of Bath. Apart from his fantastic belief in astral influence as the cause of the birth, events of life and death of everything, abu-Ma'shar communicated to Europe the laws of the tides, which in a treatise he explained on the basis of the relation to the moon's rising and setting.

Several of the Moslem works on astronomy were translated in course of time into Latin, especially in Spain, and exercised a determining influence on the development of the science in Christian Europe.

The same Hindu scholar who brought to the court of al-Mansūr the astronomical work *Sindhind* is credited with having also introduced Hindu arithmetical lore with its numeral system (called in Arabic *Hindī*) and the zero.⁴ Al-Fazārī's translation of

¹ Ibn al-'Ibri, p. 500, Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, ed. and tr. by Quatremere as *Histoire des Mongols de la Perse*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1836), pp. 324 seq. (where the name occurs as Naṣīr al-Dīn).

² See below, p. 488, n. 1. ³ *Fihrist*, p. 277; Ibn-Khalkān, vol. 1, pp. 198-9.

⁴ G. Coëdès in *Bulletin School of Oriental Studies*, vol. vi (1931), pp. 323-8, notes the appearance of the Arabic figures and the zero early in the seventh Christian century in Indo-China, long before its appearance in India proper. Both "zero", which came to English from an Italian form, and "cipher", which appeared in English about 200 years earlier, come from Ar. *ṣifr*, which is a translation of a Sanskrit word meaning "empty". According to a Syriac source cited by F. Nau in *Journal asiatique*, ser. 10, vol. xvi (1910), pp. 225 seq., the numerals were known to a Syrian at the monastery of Qannāsīn in 662.

The Arabic numerals

the Hindu works was therefore responsible for making the numerals known to Islam. The tables of al-Khwārizmi and Ḥabash al-Ḥāsib († between 867 and 874) probably spread the use of them throughout the Arabic world. But the Arab mathematicians and astronomers were slow to adopt the ingenious Hindu invention. As late as the eleventh century we find abu-Bakr Muḥammad al-Karaji (wrongly Karkhi, † between 1019 and 1029) still writing out in his *al-Kāfi fi al-Ḥisāb* (the sufficient in arithmetic) all numbers in words. Others, following the old Semitic and Greek practice, used the letters of the alphabet, *ḥisāb al-jummal*. Aḥmad al-Nasawi¹ († ca. 1040), whose *al-Muqni' fi al-Ḥisāb al-Hindi* (the convincer on Hindu calculation) explains the division of fractions and the extraction of the square and cubic roots in an almost modern manner, used the Indian numerals as had al-Khwārizmi before him.

This al-Khwārizmi,² Muḥammad ibn-Mūsa (780-ca. 850), was the principal figure in the early history of Arabic mathematics. One of the greatest scientific minds of Islam, he influenced mathematical thought to a greater extent than any other mediæval writer. Apart from compiling the oldest astronomical tables,³ al-Khwārizmi composed the oldest work on arithmetic, known only in a translation, and the oldest work on algebra. The last, *Ḥisāb al-Jabr w-al-Muqābalah* (the calculation of integration and equation), presented through over eight hundred examples, some of which were anticipated by Neo-Babylonians, was his chief work, still surviving in Arabic. Translated in the twelfth century into Latin by Gerard of Cremona, this work of al-Khwārizmi was used until the sixteenth century as the principal mathematical text-book of European universities and served to introduce into Europe the science of algebra, and with it the name. Al-Khwārizmi's works were also responsible for the introduction into the West of the Arabic numerals called algorisms after him.⁴ Among later mathematicians influenced by al-Khwārizmi are 'Umar al-Khayyām, Leonardo Fibonacci of Pisa († after 1240) and Master Jacob of Florence, whose Italian treatise

¹ From Nasa in Khurāsān.

² Khwārizm, whose name he bears, is modern Khjwa, a country on the lower course of the Amu Darya (ancient Oxus). Ṭabari, vol. iii, p. 1364, calls him al-Majūsi, i.e. the descendant of a Magian.

³ Consult *Fahrist*, p. 274, copied by Qifti, p. 286. Cf. ibn-al-'Ibn, p. 237.

⁴ "Augrim", "augrym", in Chaucer, *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*, pt. i, § 7 and § 8.

on mathematics, dated 1307, contains, as does one of Leonardo's works, the six types of quadratic equations given by the Moslem mathematician. Al-Khayyām's algebra,¹ which marks a considerable advance on that of al-Khwārizmī, contains geometric and algebraic solutions of equations of the second degree and an admirable classification of equations.

Al-chemistry After materia medica, astronomy and mathematics the Arabs made their greatest scientific contribution in chemistry. In the study of chemistry and other physical sciences the Arabs introduced the objective experiment, a decided improvement over the hazy speculation of the Greeks. Accurate in the observation of phenomena and diligent in the accumulation of facts, the Arabs nevertheless found it difficult to project proper hypotheses. To draw truly scientific conclusions and elaborate a final system was the weakest point in their intellectual armour.

The father of Arabic alchemy² was Jābir ibn-Ḥayyān³ (Geber), who flourished in al-Kūfah about 776. His name, after that of al-Rāzi († 925), is the greatest in the field of medieval chemical science. Legend makes the Umayyad prince Khālid ibn-Yazīd ibn-Mu'āwiyah († 704) and the sixth imām, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq of al-Madīnah († 765), his teachers. Like his Egyptian and Greek forerunners Jābir acted on the assumption that base metals such as tin, lead, iron and copper could be transmuted into gold or silver by means of a mysterious substance, to the search for which he devoted his energy. He more clearly recognized and stated the importance of experimentation than any other early alchemist and made noteworthy advance in both the theory and practice of chemistry. Some two centuries after his death, as a street was being rebuilt in al-Kūfah, his laboratory was found and in it a mortar and a large piece of gold were unearthed. Western tradition credits him with the discovery of several chemical compounds not mentioned in the twenty-two surviving Arabic works that bear his name.⁴ Five of these works ascribed to Jābir, including *Kitāb al-Raḥmah* (the book of mercy), *Kitāb al-Tajmī'* (of concentration) and *al-Zi'baq al-Sharqi* (of

¹ Tr. Daoud S. Kasir, *The Algebra of Omar Khayyam* (New York, 1932).

² This word is Ar. *al-kīmīyā'*, which goes back through Gr. to an ancient Egyptian word meaning "black".

³ Said to have been a Ṣābian converted to Shī'ah; according to others, descended from the South Arabian tribe al-Azd. *Fihrist*, pp. 354-5; *Qifā'*, pp. 160-61.

⁴ *Ilāḥī Khalfah*, *passim*, cites twenty-seven works. See Paul Kraus *Jābir Ibn Ḥayy ān*, vol. 1 (Cairo, 1943), pp. 3-170.

Eastern mercury) have been published. It is evident that the vast majority of the hundred extant alchemical works in Arabic and in Latin which pass under his name are spurious. Nevertheless, the works to which his name was attached were after the fourteenth century the most influential chemical treatises in both Europe and Asia. Of a few contributions we are certain. Jābir described scientifically the two principal operations of chemistry: calcination and reduction. He improved on the methods for evaporation, sublimation, melting and crystallization. But the claim that he knew how to prepare crude sulphuric and nitric acids and mix them supposedly with salt so as to produce aqua regia is unsubstantiated. In general Jābir modified the Aristotelian theory of the constituents of metal in a way that survived, with slight alterations, until the beginning of modern chemistry in the eighteenth century.

Later Moslem chemists acclaim ibn-Ḥayyān as their master. Even the best among them, e.g. the Arabic-writing Persian poet-statesman al-Ṭughrā'i¹ († ca. 1121) and abu-al-Qāsim al-'Irāqi, who flourished in the second half of the thirteenth century,² made very little improvement on his methods. They continued the quest for the two alchemical will-o'-the-wisps: the philosopher's stone³ and the elixir⁴ of life. In fact in no branch of pure or physical science was any appreciable advance made after 'Abbāsīd days. The Moslems of today, if dependent on their own books, would have even less than their distant ancestors in the eleventh century. In medicine, philosophy, mathematics, botany and other disciplines a certain point was reached, and then followed a standstill. Reverence for the past with its traditions, both religious and scientific, has bound the Arab intellect with fetters which it is only now beginning to shake off. It should, however, be noted to the eternal glory of medieval Islam that it succeeded for the first time in the history of human thought in harmonizing and reconciling monotheism, the greatest contri-

¹ Famous for his *Lāmīyat al-'Ajām*, the ode rhyming in / for the non-Arabs. *Ṭughrā'i* means "chancellor", the one who writes at the top of state papers the elegant flourish containing name and title of the ruler issuing the document. Iba Khallikān, vol. 1, pp. 284 seq.

² See Hājī Khalīfah, vol. 10, p. 218, vol. v, p. 47, vol. vi, p. 304. His *al-'Ilm al-Muktasab fī Zirā'at al-Dhahab* (knowledge acquired concerning the cultivation of gold) was edited and Englished by E. J. Holmyard (Paris, 1923).

³ *Al-kābirī* at *ahmar*, literally "the red sulphur"

⁴ From Ar. *al-iskīr*, originally Gr.

bution of the ancient Semitic world, with Greek philosophy, the greatest contribution of the ancient Indo-European world, thus leading Christian Europe towards the modern point of view.¹

In the field of natural history the Arabs' least striking success was in zoology, whereas the Spanish Moslems made a distinct contribution in botany, as we shall later see. Arabic writers on the animal kingdom were primarily literary men whose works consisted of collections of names and epithets given by the Arabs to animals and illustrated by quotations from the poets. The study of the horse formed one conspicuous exception and was developed almost to the rank of a science. A number of special monographs were composed on this animal, enumerating its varieties, naming the parts of its body, describing its colours and designating its desirable and undesirable qualities.²

Al-Jāhīz An early representative of the zoological and anthropological sciences was abu-'Uthmān 'Amr ibn-Baḥr al-Jāhīz (the goggle-eyed, † 868-9), who flourished in al-Baḥrah and whose *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (book of animals) is more theological and folkloric than biological. This work, in which the author quotes Aristotle, contains germs of later theories of evolution, adaptation and animal psychology. Al-Jāhīz knew how to obtain ammonia from animal offal by dry distillation. His influence over later zoologists, e.g. the Arabic-writing Persian cosmographer al-Qazwīnī³ († 1283) and the Egyptian al-Damīri († 1405)—both of whom treated zoology as a branch of philology and literature—is manifest. Al-Damīri is the greatest Arab zoologist.⁴ But the influence of al-Jāhīz as a radical theologian and man of letters is greater. He founded a Mu'tazilite sect bearing his name⁵ and was one of the most productive and frequently quoted scholars in Arabic literature.⁶ His originality, wit, satire and learning made him widely known, but his repulsive ugliness made the Caliph al-

¹ See below, p. 580.

² Consult al-Aḡma'i, *Kitāb al-Khayl*, ed. August Haffner (Vienna, 1895); Ibn-Durayd in William Wright, *Opuscula Arabica* (Leyden, 1859); al-Kalīn, *Nasab al-Khayl fī al-Jāhiliyah wa-al-Islām* and al-'A'rabī, *Asmā' Khayl al-'Arab wa-Fursānīha*, ed. G. Levi della Vida (Leyden, 1928).

³ His leading work is *Ajāsīb al-Alakhlūqāt wa-Gharā'ib al-Mawjūdat* (the wonders of creation and the oddities of existence), ed. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1849).

⁴ His *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* (animal life) was printed in Cairo several times; tr. into English by A. S. G. Jayakar (London, 1906, 1908), vol. i and vol. ii, pt. 1.

⁵ Baghdādī, ed. Hitt, pp. 117-18.

⁶ Yāqūt, vol. vi, pp. 75-8, lists over 120 books from his pen.

Mutawakkil change his mind about appointing him tutor to his sons.¹

In mineralogy, which stood in close relation to alchemy, the Arabs made little progress. Their fondness for precious stones and their interest in the occult qualities of minerals explains the many lapidaries, over fifty, composed by Arabic authors. Of these the oldest extant is that of 'Utārid ibn-Muḥammad al-Ḥāsib (possibly al-Kātib²) of the ninth century, but the best known is *Azhār al-Afkār fi Jawākir al-Aḥjār* (the flowers of thought on precious stones) by Shihāb-al-Dīn al-Tifāshi,³ who died in Cairo, 1253. Al-Tifāshi discusses twenty-four precious stones: their origin, geography, purity, price, medicinal and magical values and, except for Pliny and the spurious Aristotelian lapidary, quotes only Arabic sources. The famous al-Bīrūnī with almost complete accuracy determined the specific gravity of eighteen precious stones and metals.

The institution of the holy pilgrimage, the orientation of the mosques towards Makkah and the need for determining the direction of the Ka'bah at the time of prayer gave religious impetus to the Moslem study of geography. Astrology, which necessitated the determining of the latitudes and longitudes of all places throughout the world, added its scientific influence. Moslem traders between the seventh and ninth centuries reached China on the east both by sea and by land, attained the island of Zanzibar and the farthest coasts of Africa on the south, penetrated Russia on the north and were checked in their advance westward only by the dreaded waters of the "Sea of Darkness" (Atlantic). The reports of returning merchants naturally aroused popular interest in distant lands and alien peoples. Sulaymān al-Tājir (the merchant) of Sirāf on the Persian Gulf, the account of whose journeys into the Far East was written by an anonymous author in 851, gives us the first Arabic description of China and the coast-lands of India. Sulaymān reports the use of finger-prints as signatures by the Chinese.⁴ From this and similar narratives there gradually

¹ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. ii, pp. 108-9.

² *Fihrist*, p. 278. His work *Manāẓif al-Aḥjār* (the uses of precious stones) is preserved in manuscript form in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; de Slane, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes* (Paris, 1893-5), no. 2775^a.

³ Ed. and tr. (Italian) Antonio Raimeri (Biscia) (Florence, 1818).

⁴ *Silsilat al-Tawārikh*, ed. Langles, p. 44. Cf. tr. by E. Renaudot (London, 1733), p. 26; *Aḥbār ap-Sūr wa-l-Hud*, ed. and tr. J. Sauvaget (Paris, 1938), p. 19.

evolved the stories that have clustered round the name of Sindbād the Sailor. The earliest reliable account of Russia is that of Aḥmad ibn-Faḍlān ibn-Ḥammād, sent in 921 by al-Muqtadir to the king of the Bulgars, who resided along the Volga. Most of his account is reproduced in Yāqūt's monumental geographical dictionary, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*. Al-Mas'ūdi¹ refers to Moslem traders among al-Dīr, Slavic tribes perhaps near the Pripet, a tributary of the Dnieper.

Greek
precedents

Ptolemy's *Geography*, which had a list of places located by latitude and longitude, was translated into Arabic either directly or through Syriac several times, notably by Thābit ibn-Qurrah († 901). With this as a model the celebrated Khwārizmi had composed his *Ṣūrat al-Ard'*² (image of the earth), which served as a basis for later works and stimulated geographical studies and the composition of original treatises. Al-Khwārizmi's work was accompanied by an "image of the earth", a map executed by him and sixty-nine other scholars at the instigation of al-Ma'mūn—the first map of the heavens and the world in Islam. Al-Mas'ūdi,³ who flourished in the first half of the tenth century, consulted this map. Al-Khwārizmi's geography continued to influence Moslem authors down to the fourteenth century, as is illustrated by abu-al-Fidā'.

"World
cupola"

In the meantime the early Arab geographers had gained from India the notion that there was a world centre which they styled *arīn*,⁴ a corruption of the name of the Indian town Ujjayinī (Ozēnē in Ptolemy's *Geography*), where there had been an astronomical observatory and on the meridian of which the "world cupola"⁵ or "summit" was supposed to lie. This *arīn* they located on the equator between the extremes of east and west. The western prime meridian was thought by them to be 90° from this mythical place. Moslem geographers in general measured longitude from the prime meridian used by Ptolemy, that of the islands now called the Canaries.

The first independent geographical treatises in Arabic took the form of road books in which itineraries occupied a prominent place. Ibn-Khurdādhbih († ca. 912), of Persian descent, director

¹ Vol III, p. 64. ² Ed Hans v. Mīlik (Leipzig, 1926). ³ Vol II, p. 308.

⁴ Variants *Ujjayn*, *Uccayn*, *Udhayn*, etc. Ibn-Rustah, p. 22, l. 17; Mas'ūdi *Tamhik*, p. 225, l. 2; abu-al-Fidā', ed Reinaud and de Slane, p. 376, ll. 8, 12.

⁵ *Qubbat al-ard*, abu-al-Fidā', pp. 375, 376; Ibn-Rustah, p. 22, ll. 17 seq.; Birūnī, *Tahqiq*, p. 158.

of the post and intelligence service in al-Jibāl (Media), initiated the series with his *al-Masālik w-al-Mamālik*,¹ the first edition of which appeared about 846. This work, especially valuable for its historical topography, was used by ibn-al-Faqīh, ibn-Ḥawqal, al-Maqdisi and later geographical writers. In 891-2 the Shi'ite ibn-Wādiḥ al-Ya'qūbi,² who flourished in Armenia and Khurāsān, produced his *Kitāb al-Buldān*³ (book of countries), which struck a new note in emphasizing topographical and economical detail. Soon after 928 Qudāmah, who was born a Christian but adopted Islam and held office as revenue accountant in the central administration at Baghdād, completed his *al-Kharāj*, which discusses the division of the caliphate into provinces, the organization of the postal service and the taxation for each district. Another Arab geographer of Persian origin, ibn-Rustah, compiled about 903 his *al-A'lāq al-Nafīseh*⁴ (precious bags of travelling provisions). In that same year ibn-al-Faqīh al-Hamadhāni, so called from his birthplace, completed his *Kitāb al-Buldān*,⁵ a comprehensive geography often quoted by al-Maqdisi and Yāqūt.

The great systematic geographers of the Arabs do not make their appearance until the advent of al-Iṣṭakhri, ibn-Ḥawqal and al-Maqdisi in the middle of the fourth Moslem century. Born in Iṣṭakhr (Persepolis), al-Iṣṭakhri flourished about 950 and produced his *Masālik al-Mamālik*⁶ with coloured maps for each country. This work was an elaboration of the geographical system established by abu-Zayd al-Balkhi († 934), who flourished at the Sāmānid court and whose work has not been preserved. The system initiated by al-Balkhi and al-Iṣṭakhri paid little attention to countries outside Islam and made the text largely a description of the accompanying maps. Its representatives were travellers themselves. Al-Iṣṭakhri is the second writer to mention windmills (in Sijistān), the first reference to them having been made by al-Mas'ūdi.⁷ At al-Iṣṭakhri's request ibn-Ḥawqal (fl. 943-77), who travelled as far as Spain, revised the maps and text of his geography. Ibn-Ḥawqal later rewrote the whole book

¹ Ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1889).

² Al-'Abbāsī; Yāqūt, vol. ii, pp. 156-7.

³ Ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1892).

⁴ Ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1885).

⁵ Vol. ii, p. 80. For an illustration see Dinashqi, *Nakhat al-Dahr fi 'Asy'at*

⁶ Ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1891-2).

⁷ Ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1870).

al-Barr w-al-Bahr (St. Petersburg, 1866), p. 182.

and issued it under his own name as *al-Masālik w-al-Mamālik*.¹ To this same school belongs the more original work of al-Maqdisi (or al-Muqaddasi), so called because he was born in Jerusalem (*Bayt al-Maqdis*). This geographer visited all the Moslem lands except Spain, Sijistān and India and in 985-6 embodied an account of his twenty years of travel in a delightful work, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fi Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm*² (the best of classification for the knowledge of regions), which contains much valuable and fresh information.

In this same period flourished the Yamanite geographer and archæologist al-Ḥasan ibn-Aḥmad al-Hamdāni, who died (945) in a prison at Ṣan'ā' and whose two works *al-Iklīl*³ and *Ṣifat Jaṣīrat al-'Arab*⁴ constitute an important contribution to our knowledge of pre-Islamic and Islamic Arabia. The globe-trotter al-Mas'ūdi, who flourished in this period, we shall treat of with the historians. In the mineralogical part of their epistles⁵ the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', who also belong to this time, elaborated a theory of cosmic cycles by which cultivated lands become desert, desert lands become cultivated, steppes change into seas and seas change into steppes or mountains.

Yāqūt

Before the close of the 'Abbāsid age lived the greatest of the Eastern Moslem geographers, Yāqūt⁶ ibn-'Abdullāh al-Ḥamawī (1179-1229), author of the geographical dictionary *Mu'jam al-Buldān*,⁷ often cited in the foregoing pages, and of the equally important dictionary of literati *Mu'jam al-Udabā'*. Born in Asia Minor of Greek parents, young Yāqūt was bought in Baghdād by a merchant from Ḥamāh (hence his surname al-Ḥamawī) who, after giving him a good education and employing him for several years as a travelling clerk, enfranchised him. To support himself Yāqūt roamed from place to place copying and selling manuscripts. In 1219-20 he had to flee before the Tartar invasion of Khwārizm "as naked as he shall be when raised from the dust of the grave on the day of the resurrection".⁸ The first

¹ Ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1873); another version, *Sūrat al-Ard*, ed. J. H. Kramers, 2 vols (Leyden, 1938-9).

² Ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1877).

³ See above, p. 50, n. 2.

⁴ Ed. D. H. Müller, 2 vols. (Leyden, 1884-91).

⁵ Ed. Zinkli, vol. II, pp. 80 seq. Cf. Mas'ūdi, *Tamdhūn*, p. 3.

⁶ The word means "ruby". Slaves were often given names of precious things, e.g. Lu'lu' (pearl), Jawhar (gem).

⁷ Ed. F. Wüstenfeld, 6 vols. (Leipzig, 1866-73).

⁸ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. III, p. 162 = de Blane, vol. IV, p. 10.

draft of his geographical dictionary was drawn at al-Mawṣil in 1224 and the final redaction was completed in 1228 at Aleppo, where he died. This *Mu'jam*, in which names of places are alphabetically arranged, is a veritable encyclopædia, containing, in addition to the whole fund of geographical knowledge of the age, valuable information on history, ethnography and natural science.

Literary Islamic geography left no direct impression on European medieval thought, as the works of these geographers found no translators into Latin. Certain aspects of astronomical geography, including an approximately correct theory of the causation of tides, worked out by abu-Ma'shar, and of the length of the terrestrial degree, did find their way into the West, the latter through a translation of al-Farghāni's work on astronomy. Likewise fragments of the geographical lore of the Greeks as exemplified by Aristotle and Ptolemy were reintroduced to the West through the Arabs. But most of the contribution of the Arab geographers failed to pass on. This contribution included descriptive geography of the Far East, East and Sudanese Africa and the steppic land of Russia; more accurate cartography, especially in the form of world maps; and provincial geography, where one country is taken as a unit and the relation between the lives of the people and the physical environment is shown. The primary interest of the Latin Occident in Arabic books had for its object the preparation of calendars, star tables and horoscopes and the interpretation of the hidden meaning in the words of the Scriptures through commentaries on Aristotle. The bulk of this scientific material, whether astronomical, astrological or geographical, penetrated the West through Spanish and Sicilian channels. The contributions of al-Bīṭrūjī of Cordova, al-Zarqālī of Toledo and al-Iḍrīsī of Palermo will be discussed under Spain and Sicily.

The majority of the earliest historical writings surviving in Arabic date from the 'Abbāsīd period. Few of those composed under the Umayyads have been preserved. The first subject-matter came, as we have learned before, from the oral legends and anecdotes relating to pre-Islamic days and from the religious traditions which clustered round the name and life of the Prophet. In the pre-Islamic field Hishām al-Kalbī of al-Kūfah († 819) particularly distinguished himself. Of the one hundred

and twenty-nine works listed in *al-Fihrist*¹ as his, only three have survived;² but extracts from others can be found quoted by al-Tabari, Yāqūt and other historical writers.

The first work based upon religious traditions was the *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, the biography of the Prophet by Muhammad ibn-Ishāq of al-Madīnah, whose grandfather Yasār was among the Christian children captured in 633 by Khālid ibn-al-Walīd at 'Ayn al-Tamr in al-'Irāq.³ This biography by ibn-Ishāq, who died in Baghdād about 767, has come down to us only in the later recension of ibn-Hishām,⁴ who died in 834 at Cairo.⁵ Then came works dealing with the early wars and conquests of Islam, the *Maghāzi* by Mūsa ibn-'Uqbah⁶ († 758), by al-Wāqidī⁷ († 822/3), both of al-Madīnah, and by others. From the pen of ibn-Sa'd, who died in Baghdād in 845 and is known as the secretary of al-Wāqidī,⁸ we have the first great book of classified biographies⁹ containing sketches of the lives of the Prophet, the Companions and their Successors (*al-tābi'ūn*) down to his own time. Two of the leading historians of the Moslem conquests were the Egyptian ibn-'Abd-al-Ḥakam († 870-71), whose *Futūh Mīsr wa-Akhhāruha*¹⁰ is the earliest extant document on the conquest of Egypt, North Africa and Spain, and the Arabic-writing Persian Ahmad ibn-Yahya al-Balādhuri († 892), whose main works were the *Futūh al-Buldān*¹¹ and the *Ansāb al-Ashraf*¹² (book of the lineages of nobles). Al-Balādhuri was one of the first to integrate the many stories of the conquests of various cities and lands into one comprehensive whole, thus ending the era in which the monograph was the typical form of historical composition.

The time was now ripe for formal historical composition based on these legends, traditions, biographies, genealogies and

¹ Pp 95-8

² Of these the best known is the *Kitāb al-Aḥnām*, ed. Ahmad Zaki (Cairo, 1914).

³ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. II, p. 282.

⁴ Ed. Wustenfeld, 2 vols (Göttingen, 1858-60).

⁵ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. I, p. 520.

⁶ Compiled by ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah in 1387.

⁷ Ed. von Kremer (Calcutta, 1856). See Ibn-Khallikān, vol. II, pp. 324-6.

⁸ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. II, p. 326.

⁹ Ed. Sachau *et al.*, 9 vols (Leiden and Berlin, 1904-28).

¹⁰ Ed. Charles C. Torrey (New Haven, 1922).

¹¹ Ed. de Goeje (Leiden, 1866), tr. Hitti, *The Origins of the Islamic State* (New York, 1916), first part, second part, F. C. Murgotten (New York, 1924).

¹² Ed. W. Ahlwardt, vol. XI (Greifswald, 1883), S. D. F. Goitein, vol. V (Jerusalem, 1936), Max Schloessinger, vol. IV B (Jerusalem, 1938).

narratives. The model was evidently Persian and was provided by such works as the Pahlawi *Khudhāy-nāmah* (the book of kings), which had been turned into Arabic by ibn-al-Muqaffa' († 757) under the title *Siyar Mulūk al-'Ajam*. The concept of a world history in which early events are but a prelude to the history of Islam goes back to Jewish-Christian tradition. The form of presentation, however, continued to be that of the stereotyped Islamic tradition.¹ Each event is related in the words of eye-witnesses or contemporaries and transmitted to the final narrator, the author, through a chain of intermediary reporters. This technique served to develop exactitude, as did also the insistence on dating occurrences even to the month and day. But the authenticity of the reported fact generally depended upon the continuity of this chain (*isnād*) and the confidence in the integrity of each reporter rather than upon a critical examination of the fact itself. Apart from the use of personal judgment in the choice of the series of authorities and in the arrangement of the data, the historian exercised very little power of analysis, criticism, comparison or inference.

Among the first formal historians was ibn-Qutaybah, properly Muḥammad ibn-Muḥammad al-Dīnawari.² Ibn-Qutaybah died at Baghdād in 889 after producing his *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif*³ (book of knowledge), a manual of history. Another was his contemporary abu-Ḥanīfah Aḥmad ibn-Dāwūd al-Dīnawari⁴ († 895), who flourished in Iṣbahān (Iṣfahān) and Dīnawar (in the Persian 'Irāq). His principal work was *al-Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl*⁵ (long narratives), a universal history from the Persian point of view. Both were of Iranian extraction and produced several literary and philological works besides histories. At the same time flourished the geographer and historian ibn-Wāḍiḥ al-Ya'qūbi, whose compendium of universal history⁶ ending in A.H. 258 (872) preserves the ancient and unfalsified Shī'ite tradition. To this group belongs Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahāni, who worked in Iṣbahān, where he died ca. 901, and whose rather critical annals⁷ became

¹ See below, p. 394.

² See *Fihrist*, pp. 77-8; Nawawi, *Tahdhīb*, p. 771; Sam'āni, *Ansāb*, fol. 443n.

³ Ed. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1850).

⁴ See *Fihrist*, p. 78; Yāqūt, *Uḍabā'*, vol. i, pp. 123-7.

⁵ Ed. Vladimir Guirgass (Leyden, 1888).

⁶ *Ta'rikh*, ed. Th. Houtsma, 2 vols. (Leyden, 1883).

⁷ *Ta'rikh Sini Mulūk al-Ard wa-al-Anbiyā'*, ed. I. M. E. Gottwaldt (Leipzig, 1844); tr. into Latin by Gottwaldt (Leipzig, 1848).

known comparatively early in modern Europe. Another great historian of Persian stock was Miskawayh¹ († 1030), who held a high office in the court of the Buwayhid 'Adud-al-Dawlah and compiled a universal history² reaching down to A.H. 369 (979-80). Miskawayh, who was also a philosopher and physician, ranks among the leading Moslem historians, of whom the two greatest were undoubtedly al-Ṭabari and al Mas'ūdi.

Al-Ṭabari

The fame of abu-Ja'far Muhammad ibn-Jarīr al-Ṭabari (838-923), who was born in Ṭabaristān, that mountainous district of Persia along the south coast of the Caspian Sea, rests on his remarkably elaborate and accurate history *Ta'riḫ al-Rusul wa-al-Mulūk*³ (annals of the apostles and kings), as well as on his commentary on the Koran.⁴ In his commentary, originally composed on a far larger scale, he made not only the earliest but the largest collection of exegetical traditions. This became a standard work upon which later koranic commentators drew. His monumental work on universal history, the first complete one in the Arabic tongue, likewise served as a source for later historians such as Miskawayh, ibn-al-Athīr and abu-al-Fidā'. Like most Moslem historians, al-Ṭabari arranges the events chronologically, tabulating them under the successive years of the Hijrah. In fact his history begins with the creation of the world and goes down to A.H. 302 (915). The same annalistic method was used by al-Wāqidi and others before him as well as by Miskawayh, ibn-al-Athīr, abu-al-Fidā'⁵ (1273-1331) and al-Dhahabi⁶ (1274-1348) after him. The original edition of al-Ṭabari's history is said to have been ten times as long as the surviving edition. His favourite method of presenting the narrative is that of the religious tradition, by *isnād*. Besides making use of the literary sources extant in his day, such as the works of ibn-Ishāq, al-Kalbi, al-Wāqidi, ibn-Sa'd and ibn-al-Muqaffa' and of several historical translations from Persian, al-Ṭabari procured data for his history from oral traditions collected during his travels and from the lectures of the sheikhs under whom he studied in

¹ Less correctly "ibn-Miskawayh", Yāqūt, vol ii, p. 88; Qifī, p. 331.

² *Tajārīb al-Umam*, ed A. I. Amedroz, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1914-21); tr. D. S. Margoliouth, *The Experiences of the Nations*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1921).

³ Ed de Gouje et al., 15 vols (Leyden, 1879-1901).

⁴ *Jāmi' al-Bayān fi Tafsiṛ al-Qur'ān*, 30 vols (Bulāq, 1323-9).

⁵ See his *Ta'riḫ*, also called *al-Mubtata'at fi Akhbar al-Bashar*, 4 vols. (Constantinople, 1286)

⁶ See his *Duwal al-Islām*, 2 vols. (Haydarābād, 1337).

Baghdād and other intellectual centres. His journeys in quest of learning covered Persia, al-'Irāq, Syria and Egypt.¹ On one occasion he was forced to sell the sleeves of his shirt to buy bread for sustenance. An idea of his industry and enthusiasm for learning may be gained from the popular tradition that during forty years al-Ṭabari wrote forty sheets every day.²

Abu-al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Mas'ūdi,³ styled the "Herodotus of the Arabs", inaugurated among the Arabs the topical method of writing history. Instead of grouping his events around years he grouped them around dynasties, kings and peoples, a treatment followed by ibn-Khaldūn and minor historians. He was also one of the first to make good use of the historical anecdote. Young al-Mas'ūdi, who belonged to the rationalistic school of Mu'tazilites, undertook the usual scholar's "journey in quest of learning" which carried him from his native Baghdād⁴ into almost every country of Asia and even into Zanzibar. The last decade of his life he spent in Syria and Egypt compiling the material into a thirty-volume work, surviving in an epitome, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa-Ma'ādin al-Jawhar*⁵ (meadows of gold and mines of gems). In this encyclopaedic historico-geographical work the author, with catholicity and scientific curiosity, carried his researches beyond the typically Moslem subjects into Indo-Persian, Roman and Jewish history. At its beginning he states that what is now dry land had been sea, and what is sea had been dry land—all as a result of physical forces. Before his death at al-Fūstāt in 957 al-Mas'ūdi summarized his philosophy of history and nature and the current philosophers' views on the gradation between minerals, plants and animals⁶ in *al-Ta'nbiḥ w-al-Ishrāf*,⁷ comparable to Pliny's.

Arabic historical composition reached its highest point in al-Ṭabari and al-Mas'ūdi, and after Miskawayh († 1030) started on a rapid decline. 'Izz-al-Dīn ibn-al-Athīr⁸ (1160-1234) abridged in his *al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rikh*⁹ (the complete book

¹ *Fihrist*, p. 234.

² Yāqūt, vol. vi, p. 424.

³ A descendant of 'Abdullāh ibn-Mas'ūd.

⁴ *Fihrist*, p. 154, wrongly makes him a native of al-Maghrib. Cf. Yāqūt, vol. v, p. 148.

⁵ Ed. and tr. de Meynard and de Courteille, 9 vols. (Paris, 1861-77).

⁶ Cf. Ikhwān, *Rasā'il*, vol. i, pp. 247-8.

⁷ Ed. de Goeje (Leyden, 1893-4).

⁸ Born in Jazīrat ibn-'Umar on the Tigris, flourished in al-Mawṣil. Ibn-Khalkān, vol. ii, pp. 35-6.

⁹ Ed. C. J. Tornberg, 13 vols. (Leyden, 1867-74).

of chronicles) al-Ṭabarī's work and continued the narrative to 1231. The period dealing with the Crusades is an original contribution. Ibn-al-Athīr produced another important work, *Usd al-Ghābah*¹ (the lions of the thicket), a collection of 7500 biographies of the Companions. His contemporary Sibṭ ibn-al-Jawzī² (1186-1257), who was born in Baghdād and whose father was a Turkish slave, wrote among other works the *Mir'āt al-Zamān fi Ta'rīkh al-Ayyām*, a universal history from Creation to 1256.³ To this late 'Abbāsīd period belongs the chief judge of Syria, ibn-Khallikān († 1282), the first Moslem to compose what we might term a dictionary of national biography. Before him Yāqūt had issued his dictionary of literatī and ibn-'Asākir († 1177) had sketched in eighty volumes the biographies of distinguished men connected with his native town, Damascus.⁴

Like most other treasures of historical and geographical lore written in a foreign tongue the works of al-Ṭabarī, al-Mas'ūdī, ibn-al-Athīr and their confrères remained inaccessible to medieval Occidental readers. In modern times many have been translated in part or in full into modern European tongues. This, however, does not mean that the Arabic authors made no contribution to the social sciences. In appreciating their work in this and other disciplines Sarton⁵ enthusiastically declares: "The main task of mankind was accomplished by Muslims. The greatest philosopher, al-Fārābī, was a Muslim; the greatest mathematicians, Abū Kāmil⁶ and Ibrāhīm ibn Sinān,⁷ were Muslims; the greatest geographer and encyclopædist, al-Mas'ūdī, was a Muslim; the greatest historian, al-Ṭabarī, was still a Muslim".

Theology

We now come to those intellectual activities evoked by the predilections of the Arabs as Arabs and Moslems. Foremost among the sciences thus developed were theology, tradition,

¹ 5 vols. (Cairo, 1280).

² This surname he owes to his famous maternal grandfather, ibn-al-Jawzī († 1201).

³ Extracts ed. and tr. in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens orientaux*, vol. III (Paris, 1884). Pt. 8 was reproduced in facsimile by James R. Jewett (Chicago, 1907).

⁴ *Al-Ta'rīkh al-Kabīr*, ed. 'Abd-al-Qādir Badrān and Aḥmad 'Ubayd (Damascus 1329-51), first seven volumes.

⁵ *Introduction to the History of Science*, vol. I (Baltimore, 1927), p. 624.

⁶ Shujā' ibn-Aslam of Egypt, who at the beginning of the tenth century perfected al-Khwārizmī's algebra.

⁷ Grandson of Thābit ibn-Qurrah, lived 908-46. His quadrature of the parabola was the simplest ever made before the invention of integral calculus.

jurisprudence, philology and linguistics. Most of the scholars in this field were of Arab descent, in contrast to the physicians, astronomers, mathematicians and alchemists cited above, who were of Syrian, Jewish or Persian origin.

The attention and interest of the Moslem Arabs were drawn quite early to those branches of learning motivated by the religious impulse. The necessity of comprehending and explaining the Koran soon became the basis of intensive theologic as well as linguistic study. Contact with Christendom provoked in the first century at Damascus theological speculation leading to the rise of the Murji'ite and Qadarite schools of thought.¹

Next to the holy Koran, the sunnah,² i.e. the deeds, utterances and silent approval (*taqrīr*) of the Prophet, stood as the most important doctrinal source. Transmitted at first orally, this sunnah of Muḥammad was fixed during the second century in the form of written ḥadīths. A ḥadīth, therefore, is a record of an action or saying of the Prophet. In a more general sense it may be used also for a record of an action or saying of any of his Companions or their Successors.³ Though not equally canonical with the Koran, the Prophetic ḥadīth nevertheless exerted an equally great influence over the development of Islamic thought. In the ḥadīth Muḥammad speaks; in the Koran Allah speaks. In the ḥadīth the meaning only is inspired; in the Koran the meaning and the word are inspired. The bases of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) as well as of theology are firstly in the Koran, secondly in the ḥadīth. Among all peoples Moslems stand unique in having developed a science (*ilm*) out of their mass of religious traditions (*ḥadīths*).

To the pious Moslem the science of ḥadīth soon became the science par excellence.⁴ It was primarily in its quest that the would-be scholar, in response to the famous Prophetic tradition, "Seek ye learning though it be in China", undertook long and tiresome journeys throughout the extensive domains of the caliphate. Such journeys (*al-riḥlah fi ṭalab al-'ilm*)⁵

¹ Other Moslem sects will be treated in the following chapter.

² Etymologically meaning "custom," "use", the word has developed several technical meanings. In opposition to *Shū'ah*, it is used for the theory and practice of the catholic Moslem community.

³ See above, p. 242.

⁴ Consult the chapter on *'ilm* in Bukhārī, vol. i, pp. 19 seq.

⁵ Consult Ibn-Khaldūn, *Asfūd-damāshq*, p. 476; Alfred Guillaume, *The Traditions of Islam* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 68-9.

were elevated into acts of consummate piety; he who lost his life through their perils was likened to him who lost it in the holy war.

In the course of the first two and a half centuries after Muḥammad the records of his sayings and doings increased in number and copiousness. Whenever an issue—religious, political or sociological—arose each party sought to find authority for its views in some word or decision of the Prophet, be it real or fictitious. The political rivalry between 'Alī and abu-Bakr, the struggle between Mu'āwiyah and 'Alī, the enmity between the 'Abbāsīds and Umayyads, the burning question of superiority between Arabs and non-Arabs—these and similar exigencies provided ample opportunity for the fabrication of ḥadīths and motivated their dissemination. Moreover, the manufacture of ḥadīths had commercial value and many teachers thrived on it. Before his execution at al-Kūfah in 772, ibn-abi-al-'Awjā' confessed to having circulated 4000 traditions of his own invention.¹ In general more weight is attached to the Madīnese than to the Kūfan school of traditions, yet here again not all transmitters are above suspicion. Abu-Hurayrah, for instance, a Companion of the Prophet and a most zealous propagator of his words and deeds, reputedly transmitted some 5374 ḥadīths,² many of which were unquestionably foisted on him after his death. 'Ā'ishah transmitted 2210 traditions, Anas ibn-Mālik 2286 and 'Abdullāh ibn-'Umar ibn-al-Khattāb 1630.³

Every perfect ḥadīth consists of two parts: a chain of authorities (*isnād*) and a text (*matn*). The text follows the chain and should be in direct address: A related (*ḥaddatha*) to me that B related to him, on the authority of C, on the authority of D, on the authority of E, who said . . . The same formula was used in historiography and in wisdom literature. In all these fields criticism was usually external, being limited to a consideration of the reputation of the transmitters, who are at the same time guarantors, and to the possibility of their forming an uninterrupted chain leading back to the Prophet. On the basis of such criticism ḥadīths are classified as genuine (*ṣaḥīḥi*), fair (*ḥasan*)

¹ Ṭabarī, vol. iii, p. 376, copied by ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vi, p. 3. Cf. Baghdādī, ed. Hitti, p. 164.

² Ibn-Hajar, *Iṣṭiṣṣah*, vol. vii, p. 201. His title "abu-Hurayrah", "father of the kitten", was due to his fondness for cats; ibn-Qutaybah, *Ma'ārif*, p. 141; ibn-Sa'd, vol. iv, pt. 2, p. 55.

³ Nawawī, pp. 165, 358.

and weak (*da'if*).¹ The ludicrous extreme to which this external criticism may lead is illustrated in the story of a traditionist who accepted a large cup of wine offered him by a Christian, and when reminded that this was a prohibited drink bought by the Christian's slave from a Jew his excuse was: "We traditionists consider as authority such men as Sufyān ibn-'Uyaynah and Yazīd ibn-Hārūn. Are we then to believe a Christian, on the authority of his slave, on the authority of a Jew? By Allah, I drank it only because of its weak *isnād*!"²

The third Moslem century saw the compilation of the various collections of ḥadīths into six books which have since become standard. Of "the six books" the first and most authoritative is that of Muḥammad ibn-Ismā'il al-Bukhāri (810-70).³ Al-Bukhāri, who was a Persian, selected out of the 600,000 traditions he collected from 1000 sheikhs in the course of sixteen years of travel and labour in Persia, al-'Irāq, Syria, al-Ḥijāz and Egypt some 7397 traditions⁴ which he classified according to subject-matter, such as prayer, pilgrimage and holy war. Before committing a tradition to writing it was al-Bukhāri's wont to perform the ceremonial ablution and prayer.⁵ His collection has acquired a quasi-sacred character. An oath taken on it is valid, as if taken on the Koran itself. Next to the Koran this is the book that has exerted the greatest influence over the Moslem mind. Its author's tomb outside of Samarqand is still visited by pilgrims who accord him the next rank in Islam after Muḥammad.

Al-Bukhāri's corpus of traditions came near finding a rival in the collection of Muslim ibn-al-Ḥajjāj († 875) of Naysābūr, a work on which Islam has conferred the same title, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, the genuine collection. The contents of Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* are almost identical with al-Bukhāri's, though the *isnād* may vary. Next to these "two genuine books" come four others which Moslems have elevated to canonical rank. These are the *Sunan* of abu-Dāwūd of al-Baṣrah († 888), the *Jāmi'* of al-Tirmidhi († ca. 892), the *Sunan* of ibn-Mājah of Qazwīn († 886) and the *Sunan* of al-Nasā'i, who died at Makkah in 915.⁶

¹ Consult ibn-'Asākir, *Tārīkh*, vol. ii, pp. 18 seq.; ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, pp. 370 seq.

² Nawāwī, *Ḥalab*, p. 17.

³ *Al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 8 vols. (Bulāq, 1296).

⁴ Nawāwī, pp. 93, 95-6.

⁵ Ibn-Khaldūn, vol. ii, p. 231.

⁶ Various editions of these works, but none critical, have been printed or lithographed in Egypt and India.

Besides clarifying and supplementing the Koran, the ḥadīth literature provided the Moslem community with apostolic precept and example covering the whole range of man's duty. Even such trivial questions as the proper way of cutting a water-melon before eating it or cleaning the teeth with a toothpick—"proper" from the standpoint of the Prophetic practice—did not escape the traditionists' researches. The nocturnal journey vaguely reported in one solitary koranic verse (17:1) developed in the ḥadīth an extensive and colourful crop of elaborate traditions with which the Occident has long been familiar as reflected in the pages of Dante. The ḥadīth literature further served as a vehicle for transmitting wise sayings, anecdotes, parables and miracles—all ascribed to Muhammad—from various secular and religious sources, including the New Testament. In abu-Dāwūd¹ a version of the Lord's Prayer is put in Muhammad's mouth. In al-Bukhārī² and Muslim,³ Muhammad, on the authority of abu-Hurayrah, upon whom many such pious and edifying sayings are fathered, once commended "him who gives alms only in secret, so that his left hand knows not what his right hand does". Nothing could better illustrate the general receptivity and hospitality of Islam as a system. In the ḥadīth lore the Moslem home found its fireside literature and the Moslem community its Talmud.

After the Romans the Arabs were the only medieval people who cultivated the science of jurisprudence and evolved therefrom an independent system. Their system, *fiqh*⁴ as they called it, was primarily based on the Koran and the sunnah (i.e. ḥadīth), styled *uṣūl* (roots, fundamental principles) and influenced by the Greco-Roman system. *Fiqh* was the science through which the canon law of Islam (*sharī'ah*⁵), the totality of Allah's commandments as revealed in the Koran and elaborated in the ḥadīth, was communicated to later generations. These commandments embrace regulations relative to ritual and worship (*'ibādāt*), civil and legal obligations (*mu'āmalāt*) and punishments (*uqūbāt*).

Of the six thousand verses or thereabouts in the Koran only about two hundred, most of which occur in the Madīnese portion,

¹ (Cairo, 1280), vol. II, p. 101.

² Vol. II, p. 105.

³ (Delhi, 1319), vol. I, p. 337.

⁴ Literally "knowledge", "wisdom"

⁵ Literally "road to the watering place", "clear path to be followed".

especially *sūrahs* two and four, may be classed as strictly legislative. It soon became evident that these statutes were not sufficient to cover all cases—civil, criminal, political, financial—which might and did arise under the new conditions and varied situations encountered in Syria, al-'Irāq and other conquered territories. Hence the necessity for speculation. Speculation gave rise to two new fundamental principles: *qiyās*, i.e. analogical deduction, and *ijmā'*, i.e. catholic consent. Thus did Moslem jurisprudence come to have two new roots in addition to the Koran and tradition: analogy and consensus of opinion. As for *ra'y*, i.e. private judgment, though often resorted to, it was never quite elevated to the rank of a fifth fundamental principle. A traditional discourse between the Prophet and his appointee as *qāḍī* over al-Yaman, Mu'ādh ibn-Jabal, sums up the Magna Charta of Islamic legal fundamentals:

Muḥammad: "How wilt thou decide when a question arises?"

Mu'ādh: "According to the Book of Allah".

Muḥammad: "And if thou findest naught therein?"

Mu'ādh: "According to the *sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah".

Muḥammad: "And if thou findest naught therein?"

Mu'ādh: "Then shall I apply my own reasoning".¹

The leader of the 'Irāq school, which insisted on the right of juridical speculation in contrast to the Madīnah school, which attached special importance to hadīth,² was abu-Ḥanīfah, properly al-Nu'mān ibn-Thābit. Abu-Ḥanīfah was the grandson of a Persian slave,³ flourished in al-Kūfah and Baḡhdād and died in 767. A merchant by profession, abu-Ḥanīfah became the first and most influential jurist in Islam. His teachings he imparted orally to his disciples, one of whom, abu-Yūsuf († 798), has preserved for us in his *Kitāb al-Kharāj*⁴ the chief views of the master. Abu-Ḥanīfah did not actually introduce, though he emphasized strongly, the principle of analogical deduction leading to what we call legal fiction. He also insisted upon the right of "preference" (*istihṣān*),⁵ departure from analogy on grounds of equity. Like his competitor Mālik of al-Madīnah he had no idea of forming a juridical school (*madhhab*, rite), yet abu-Ḥanīfah became the founder of the earliest, largest and most

¹ Shahrstāni, p. 155. ² *Ibid.* pp. 160-61; Ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, p. 372.

³ *Fikrī*, p. 201; Ibn-Khaldūn, vol. II, p. 74. ⁴ (Cairo, 1346.)

⁵ The *istihṣān* of the Hanafite school, the *istifāh* (principle of public advantage) of the Mālikite school, and the *ra'y* are often treated as synonyms of *qiyās* (analogy).

tolerant school of Islam. To his rite almost one half of the world of Sunnite Islam adheres. It was officially recognized in the territories of the defunct Ottoman empire as well as in India and Central Asia. As a system of religio-juridical thought von Kremer considers it "the highest and loftiest achievement of which Islam was capable".¹

The leader of the Madīnah school, supposedly better acquainted with the Prophet's life and frame of mind, was Mālik ibn-Anas (ca. 715-95²), whose *al-Muwatta'*³ (the levelled path), next to the compendium of Zayd ibn-'Alī⁴ († 743), is the oldest surviving corpus of Moslem law. This monumental work, with its 1700 juridical traditions, codified the sunnah, outlined the first formula of the *ijmā'* (consensus of opinion) as prevalent in al-Madīnah and became the canon for the Mālikite rite. This rite drove from the Maghrib and Andalusia the two minor systems of al-Awzā'i († 774) and of al-Zāhiri⁵ (815-83) and to the present day prevails throughout northern Africa, with the exception of Lower Egypt, and in eastern Arabia. After abu-Ḥanīfah and Mālik juridico-theological studies so developed as to become the most extensively cultivated branch of Arabic learning.

Between the liberal 'Irāq and the conservative Madīnah schools there arose one which professed to have found the golden mean by accepting speculation with certain reservations. This is the Shāfi'ite school, whose founder was Muhammad ibn-Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī. Born in Ghazzah (767), al-Shāfi'ī, who belonged to the Quraysh family, studied under Mālik in al-Madīnah, but the main scenes of his activity were Baghdād and Cairo.⁶ He died in 820 at Cairo, where his tomb at the foot of al-Muqattam is still the object of pilgrimage. The Shāfi'ī rite still dominates Lower Egypt, eastern Africa, Palestine, western and southern Arabia, the coastal regions of India and the East Indies. Its adherents number about 105,000,000 as against 180,000,000 Hanafites, 50,000,000 Mālikites and 5,000,000 Hanbalites.

¹ *Culturgeschichte*, vol. 1, p. 497.

² Cf. ibn-Khallikān, vol. II, p. 201.

³ Delli, 1302. See also his *al-Mudawwanah al-Kubra* (Cairo, 1323), 16 vols.

⁴ *Majma' al-Fiqh*, ed. E. Griffini (Milan, 1919).

⁵ Dīwūd ibn Khalaf al-Ishbahānī (ibn Khalikān, vol. I, p. 312), surnamed al-Zāhirī because he regarded only the literal (*ẓāhir*) meaning of the Koran and hadith as authoritative. Though his teachings found a most gifted protagonist in ibn-Ḥazm of Cordova (924-1064), yet they did not survive.

⁶ Yāqūt, *Udabā'*, vol. VI, pp. 367 seq.; ibn-Khallikān, vol. II, pp. 215-16.

The last of the four rites into which the whole Moslem community, exclusive of the Shī'ah, has divided itself is the Ḥanbalite, which takes its name from Aḥmad ibn-Ḥanbal, a student of al-Shāfi'i and a representative of uncompromising adherence to the letter of the ḥadīth. Ibn-Ḥanbal's conservatism served as the bulwark of orthodoxy in Baghdād against the Mu'tazilite innovations. Though subjected to the inquisition (*miḥnah*) and put in chains under al-Ma'mūn, scourged and imprisoned by al-Mu'tasim, ibn-Ḥanbal stubbornly refused to recant and allowed no modification in the traditional form of confession.¹ The 800,000 men and 60,000 women who are estimated to have attended his funeral in 855 at Baghdād² testify to the hold this stalwart champion of orthodoxy had on public imagination. Posterity venerated his tomb as that of a saint and honoured him with the same title, *imām*, bestowed upon abu-Ḥanīfah, Mālik and al-Shāfi'i. For a long time the collection of over 28,000 traditions, *Musnad*,³ ascribed to him, enjoyed special renown. Today, however, the Ḥanbalite rite claims no considerable following outside of the Wahhābis.

In the principle of *ijmā'*, elaborated by al-Shāfi'i, the Moslem community hit upon a most useful theological expedient which has enabled its members to adapt their institutions and beliefs to varied and novel situations in a changing world. In a community where no church, no clergy and no central authority are recognized, deference to public opinion naturally assumes an important rôle. It was through this principle that the vulgate text of the Koran was canonized, the six canonical books of ḥadīths were approved, the miracles of the Prophet were accepted, lithographic reproductions of the Koran were authorized and the necessity of belonging to the Quraysh was dispensed with in favour of the Ottoman caliphs. The Shī'ites, it should be remembered, have their own rite and do not accept *ijmā'*. To it they oppose the absolute authority and judgment of the infallible *imāms*, all descendants of 'Alī. With the above four rites, which crystallized traditional dogma and everything necessary for doctrinal and juridical development, the door of *ijtihād*, the right of further interpreting the Koran and the sunnah or of forming a new opinion by applying analogy, was for ever closed to the

¹ Ibn-'Asakir, *Ta'rikh*, vol. ii, pp. 41 seq.

² Ibn-Khalkikān, vol. i, p. 23.

³ 6 vols. (Cairo, 1313).

Sunni community; but the Shi'ites still have their *mujtahids*, learned men who are qualified to act as spokesmen for the sublime and hidden imām and to interpret his ideas.

The indebtedness of the Islamic juridical system to the Roman-Byzantine laws, which had been for centuries naturalized in Syria, Palestine and Egypt, has not yet been made the object of the study it deserves by competent scholarship. Certain orientalist see Roman influence not only in particular regulations but also, and what is more important, in questions of principle and methodology. The Justinian Code recognized the method of analogical deduction and private judgment. Certain Byzantine regulations may have left their impress upon the Islamic statutes of purchase, sale and other commercial relationships; others relating to guardianship and will, letting and hiring may have passed through Judaic, rabbinical or talmudic channels. But it is surprising that the Roman influence is not better marked in the system of the Syrian al-Awzā'i († 774), who laboured in Beirūt,¹ as late as the sixth century still the seat of a flourishing school of Roman law, and came very near establishing a fifth rite.

Ethics

The prescriptions of the canon law (*shari'ah*) discussed above regulate for the Moslem his entire life in its religious, political and social aspects. They govern his marital and civic relations as well as his relations with non-Moslems. Accordingly ethical conduct derives its sanctions and inhibitions from the sacred law. All man's acts are classified under five legal categories: (1) what is considered absolute duty (*farḍ*), embracing actions the commission of which is rewarded and the omission punished by law; (2) commendable or meritorious actions (*mustahabb*), the performance of which is rewarded but the omission not punished; (3) permissible actions (*ajāz, mubāh*), which are legally indifferent; (4) reprehensible actions (*makrūh*), which are disapproved but not punishable; (5) forbidden actions (*ḥarām*), the doing of which calls for punishment.

Ethical works based on the Koran and tradition, though numerous, do not exhaust all the material in Arabic literature dealing with morals (*akhlāq*).² There are at least three other types. Several works deal with good morals and refinement of spirit and deportment (*adab*). These are based mainly on Indo-

¹ Ibn Khallikān, vol. i, p. 493

² See Ḥājji Khalfah, vol. i, pp. 200-205.

Persian anecdotes, proverbs and wise sayings. *Al-Durrah al-Yatimah*¹ by ibn-al-Muqaffa' (executed ca. 757), which eulogizes temperance, courage, liberality and proficiency in discourse and business, may be taken as a specimen of this type. A similarly popular philosophy of morality is found in the fables and proverbs of Luqmān, the Æsop of the Arabs. An ethical treatise by the celebrated constitutional theorist of Baghdād, al-Māwardī († 1058),² rich in wise sayings of the Prophet and the Companions, is still popular as a text-book in Egyptian and Syrian schools. Another type of work is philosophical, ultimately going back to Aristotle through Neo-Platonic and Neo-Pythagorean sources. These Greek works, headed by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* translated as *Kitāb al-Akhlāq* by Ḥunayn or his son Ishāq,³ laid the foundation of Arabic moral philosophy (*ilm al-akhlāq*), whose aim, like that of Aristotle and Plato, was to facilitate the attainment of earthly felicity. Of this school the most notable representative was the historian Miskawayh, whose *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*⁴ is the best ethical work of the strictly philosophical or Neo-Platonic type composed by a Moslem. We also have in the epistles of the Brethren of Sincerity, of which the ninth is devoted to *akhlāq*, a characteristic deposit of Greek ethics pervaded by astrological and metaphysico-psychological speculation. The Brethren show special enthusiasm for Christ and Socrates as examples of the moral man, though to the Sunnites Muḥammad and to the Shī'ites 'Alī are the perfect men. The third type of ethics may be styled the mystico-psychological. Its exponents were al-Ghazzālī and various Sufi authors whom we shall consider in a forthcoming chapter. In all these Moslem moral philosophies certain virtues such as resignation, contentment and endurance are admired; vices are treated as maladies of the soul with the moral philosopher as the physician; and the classification is founded on the analysis of the faculties of the soul, each faculty having its own virtue and its own vice.

In the early centuries of the 'Abbāsīd power an interesting movement developed among the subjected races, particularly the Persians, whose object it was to combat the feeling of

¹ Ed. Shakīb Arisūn (Cairo).

² *Idārah al-Dunyā w-al-Dīn*, 16th ed. (Cairo, 1925).

³ Cf. *Fihrist*, p. 252.

⁴ Several Cairo editions, none of them critical.

superiority which those Moslems of Arabian descent, real or claimed, had long manifested. The movement took its name *Shu'ūbiyah* (belonging to the peoples, non-Arabs) from a koranic verse (49:13) the purport of which was to inculcate the brotherhood and equality of all Moslems. Whilst among the Khārijites and the Shī'ites it took dynastic and political aspects, and among some Persians it took religious aspects involving heresy and *zindiqism*, yet the form which al-Shu'ūbiyah assumed in general was that of literary controversy. It derided the Arab pretension to intellectual superiority and claimed for non-Arabs superiority in poetry and literature. The non-Arab cause was championed by such leaders as al-Bīrūni and Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahāni, whilst the Arab side was represented by several of Arabian as well as others of Persian extraction, including al-Jāhiz,¹ ibn-Durayd,² ibn-Qutaybah and al-Balādhuri. It was in connection with such controversial questions that some of the earliest original pieces of Arabic literature were composed.

What we call "Arabic literature" was no more Arabian than the Latin literature of the Middle Ages was Italian. Its producers were men of the most varied ethnic origins³ and in its totality it represents the enduring monument of a civilization rather than of a people. Even such disciplines as philology, linguistics, lexicography and grammar, which were primarily Arabian in origin and spirit and in which the Arabs made their chief original contribution, recruited some of their most distinguished scholars from the non-Arab stock. Al-Jawhari († ca. 1008), whose lexicon,⁴ arranged in the alphabetical order of the final radical letters of the words, served as a model for later lexicographers, was a Turk from Fārāb.⁵ His contemporary ibn-Jinnī († 1002), who adorned the Ḥamdānid court at Aleppo and whose chief merit was a philosophical treatment of philology, was the son of a Greek slave.⁶

Arabic literature in the narrow sense of *adab* (belles-lettres) began with al-Jāhiz († 868-9), the sheikh of the Baṣrah litterateurs, and reached its culmination in the fourth and fifth

¹ *Bayān*, vol. iii, pp. 9 seq.

² A lexicographer, died at Baḡhdād, 933. He wrote against the *Shu'ūbiyah Kitāb al-Ishṭiqāq*, ed. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1854).

³ In his *Muqaddimah*, pp. 477-9, ibn-Khalḍūn has a chapter headed "Most of the learned men in Islam were non-Arabsians".

⁴ *Siḥāh*, 2 vols. (Bulāq, 1292).

⁵ Yāqūt, *Udabā'*, vol. II, p. 266.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. v, p. 15.

Moslem centuries in the works of Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhāni (969-1008), al-Tha'ālibī¹ of Naysābūr (961-1038) and al-Ḥarīri (1054-1122). One characteristic feature of prose-writing in this period was the tendency, in response to Persian influence, to be affected and ornate. The terse, incisive and simple expression of early days had gone for ever. It was supplanted by polished and elegant style, rich in elaborate similes and replete with rhymes. The whole period was marked by a predominance of humanistic over scientific studies. Intellectually it was a period of decline. It supported a literary proletariat, many of whose members, with no independent means of livelihood, roamed from place to place ready to give battle over linguistic issues and grammatical technicalities or to measure poetical swords over trivial matters with a view to winning favours from wealthy patrons. This period also saw the rise of a new form of literary expression, the *maqāmah*.

Badī' al-Zamān (wonder of the age) al-Hamadhāni is credited with the creation of the *maqāmah* (assembly), a kind of dramatic anecdote in the telling of which the author subordinates substance to form and does his utmost to display his poetical ability, learning and eloquence. In reality such a form of composition as the *maqāmah* could not have been the creation of any one man; it was a natural development of rhymed prose and flowery diction as represented by ibn-Durayd and earlier stylists. Al-Hamadhāni's work² served as a model for al-Ḥarīri of al-Baṣrah,³ whose *Maqāmāt*⁴ for more than seven centuries were esteemed as the chief treasure, next to the Koran, of the literary Arabic tongue. In these *maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīri and other writers there is much more than the elegant form and rhetorical anecdote which most readers consider the only significant feature. The anecdote itself is often used as a subtle and indirect way of criticizing the existing social order and drawing a wholesome moral. Since the days of al-Hamadhāni and al-Ḥarīri the *maqāmah* has become the most perfect form of literary and dramatic presentation in Arabic, a language which has never

¹ The name means furrier; ibn-Khalīkān, vol. i, p. 522. His best-known work is *Yatimat al-Duhr*, 4 vols. (Damascus, 1302), an anthology of contemporary poets.

² *Maqāmāt*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abduh (Beirut, 1889).

³ Ibn-Khalīkān, vol. i, p. 68.

⁴ Ed. de Sacy, 2 vols. (Paris, 1847-53); tr. into English by Thomas Chenery and F. Steingass, 2 vols. (London, 1867-98).

produced real drama. Early Spanish and Italian tales of the realistic or picaresque type display clear affinities with the Arabic *maqāmah*.

Before the *maqāmah* was developed Arabic literature saw the rise of its greatest literary historian, abu-al-Faraj al-Isbahāni, or al-Isfahāni (ca. 897-967), a lineal descendant of Marwān, the last Umayyad caliph. Abu-al-Faraj flourished in Aleppo, where he produced his *Kitāb al-Aghāni*¹ (book of songs), a veritable treasury of poetry and literature and an indispensable source for the study of Moslem civilization. In his *Muqaddamah*² ibn-Khaldūn rightly calls it "the register of the Arabs" and "the final resource of the student of belles-lettres". His Aleppine patron Sayf-al-Dawlah al-Ḥamdāni bestowed on the author a thousand gold pieces as a reward for this work,³ and the Andalusian al-Ḥakam II sent him a like sum. A Buwayhid vizir, al-Ṣāhib ibn-'Abbād († 995), who is said to have been wont to take with him on his journeys thirty camel-loads of books, dispensed with them all on receiving a copy of *al-Aghāni*, which he thereafter carried about alone.⁴

In this period, shortly before the middle of the tenth century, the first draft of what later became *Alf Laylah wa-Laylah*⁵ (a thousand and one nights) was made in al-'Irāq. The basis of this draft, prepared by al-Jahshiyāri⁶ († 942), was an old Persian work, *Hasār Afsāna* (thousand tales), containing several stories of Indian origin. Al-Jahshiyāri added other tales from local storytellers.⁷ The *Afsāna* provided the general plot and framework as well as the nomenclature for the leading heroes and heroines, including Shahrazād. As time went on additions were made from numberless sources: Indian, Greek, Hebrew, Egyptian and the like. Oriental folk-tales of every description were absorbed in the course of centuries. The court of Hārūn al-Rashīd provided a large quota of humorous anecdotes and love romances. The final form was not taken by the *Nights* until the later Mamlūk period in Egypt. Its heterogeneous character has inspired the

¹ 20 vols. (Būlūq, 1285); Brūnnow edited vol. 21 (Leyden, 1888) and Guidi issued index (Leyden, 1900).

² P. 487.

³ Yūqūt, vol. v, p. 150, ibn-Khallikān, vol. ii, p. 11.

⁴ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. ii, p. 11, cf. vol. i, p. 133.

⁵ Būlūq editions A. H. 1251 (1835) and 1279 fixed the vulgate Arabic text.

⁶ Better known for his *Kitāb al-U'arā' wa-al-Kuttāb*, ed. Hans v. Mīk (Leipzig, 1926).

⁷ *Fihrist*, p. 304. Cf. Mas'ūdi, vol. iv, p. 90.

facetious words of a modern critic who has described the *Arabian Nights* as Persian tales told after the manner of Buddha by Queen Esther¹ to "Haroun Alraschid" in Cairo during the fourteenth century of the Christian era. First translated into French by Galland,² the *Nights* have worked their way into all the principal languages of modern Europe and Asia and have taken their place as the most popular piece of Arabic literature in the West, vastly more popular than in the Moslem East itself. In English the first important translation, incomplete but accurate, is that of Edward William Lane.³ It has a valuable and full commentary and has gone through several editions. John Payne's translation,⁴ the best in English, is complete but has no commentary. In his rendition Sir Richard F. Burton⁵ follows Payne's except in the poetical part and endeavours to improve on it by attempting to reproduce the Oriental flavour of the original.

The pre-Islamic poetry of the heroic age of the jāhiliyah⁶ provided models for the Umayyad bards, whose imitations of the antique odes were treated as classical by the 'Abbāsīd poets. The pietistic spirit fostered by the new régime of the banu-al-'Abbās, the foreign cultural and religious influences streaming mainly from Persia, and the patronage of the caliphs under whom the poets flourished and whom they were expected to laud and glorify, tended to produce deviation from the old trodden paths of classicism and develop new forms of poetical expression. Nevertheless poesy proved the most conservative of all Arab arts. Throughout the ages it never ceased to breathe the spirit of the desert. Even modern Arabic versifiers of Cairo, Damascus and Baghdād feel no incongruity in introducing their odes by apostrophizing the deserted encampments (*aṭṭāl*) of the beloved, whose eyes they still liken to those of wild cows (*maha*). Other than poetry, law—particularly in its marital ordinances—is perhaps the only field in which the old desert elements have succeeded in perpetuating themselves.

The earliest exponent of the new style in poetry was the blind Persian Bashshār ibn-Burd, who was put to death in 783 under al-Mahdī, according to some for satirizing his vizir but more

¹ Cf. *Pierist*, p. 304, l. 16, with Tabari, vol. 1, p. 688, ll. 1, 12-13, and p. 689, l. 1.

² 12 vols. (Paris, 1704-17)

³ 3 vols. (London, 1839-41). Ed. with illustrations by E. S. Poole, 3 vols. (London, 1850) Rev. by E. S. Poole, 3 vols. (London, 1883) Several later reprints

⁴ 9 vols. (London, 1882-4)

⁵ 16 vols. (London and "Benares", 1885-8).

probably on account of his *zindīqism*, Zoroastrian or Manichaean secret views. Bashshār, who once thanked Allah for having made him blind "so that I need not see that which I hate",¹ was a rebel against the archaic formulas of ancient poetry.² Another early representative of the new school was the half-Persian abu-Nuwās³ († ca. 810), the boon companion of Hārūn and al-Amīn and the poet in whose songs love and wine found their best expression. The name of abu-Nuwās has lived to the present day in the Arabic world as a synonym for clown; in reality he has few rivals in amorous sentiment, erotic expression and elegant diction. He is the lyric and bacchic poet par excellence of the Moslem world. The many songs on the beauty of boys attributed to this dissolute favourite of the 'Abbāsīd court, as well as his poems in praise of wine (*khanrīyāt*), which have not ceased to enchant those who read and drink, throw interesting light upon contemporaneous aristocratic life.⁴ The *ghazal* of abu-Nuwās, short poems of love ranging from five to fifteen verses, follow the model of Persian bards, who developed this verse form long before the Arabs.

Just as the witty and licentious abu-Nuwās represented the lighter side of court life, so did his ascetic contemporary abu-al-'Atāhiyah⁵ (748-ca. 828), a potter by profession, give expression to pessimistic meditations on mortality which the common man of religious mentality entertained. The soul of this scion of the Bedouin tribe of 'Anazah rebelled against the frivolous high life of Baghdād, where he lived, and although Hārūn assigned to him a yearly stipend of 50,000 dirhams, he adopted the garb of a dervish and produced those ascetic and religious poems (*zuhdīyāt*) which entitle him to the position of father of Arabic sacred poetry.⁶

The provinces, particularly Syria, reared during the 'Abbāsīd period a number of first-class poets, among whom the most renowned were abu-Tammām († ca. 845) and abu-al-'Alā'.

¹ *Aghāni*, vol. iii, p. 22.

² Consult the collection edited by Ahmad H. al-Qirni as *Bashshār ibn-Burd-Shīrkuh u a-Akhbārkuh* (Cairo, 1925); *Aghāni*, vol. iii, pp. 19-73, vol. vi, pp. 47-53; ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 157; ibn-Qutaybah, *Shīr*, pp. 476-9.

³ Al-Hasan ibn-Hānī; ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 240.

⁴ Consult his *Diwān*, ed. Mahmūd Wāṣif (Cairo, 1898); *Aghāni*, vol. xviii, pp. 2-8; ibn-Qutaybah, *Shīr*, pp. 501-25.

⁵ Ismā'il ibn-al-Qāsim. On his life see *Aghāni*, vol. iii, pp. 126-83; Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, pp. 240-50, 333-40, vol. vii, pp. 81-7; ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, pp. 125-30.

⁶ Consult his *Diwān* (Beirut, 1887).

Abu-Tammām's father, who kept a wine shop in Damascus, was a Christian by the name of Thādus (Thaddaios), which the son changed to Aws when he embraced Islam.¹ Abu-Tammām was a court poet in Baghdād. His title to fame rests as much on his *Dīwān*² as on his compilation of *Dīwān al-Hamāsah*,³ poems celebrating valour in battle. This *Dīwān* embraces gems of Arabic poetry. The collection of *Hamāsah*⁴ poems of the same description by the other court poet, al-Buḥturi (820-97), is inferior to that of Abu-Tammām, after which it was modelled.

The patronage accorded by the 'Abbāsīd caliphs, vizirs and governors to poets, whom they employed as encomiasts, not only made the panegyric (*madiḥ*) an especially favourite form of poetical composition but led poets to prostitute their art, and resulted in that false glitter and empty bombast often said to be characteristic of Arabic poetry. 'Abbāsīd poetry, not unlike Arabic poetry of other periods, was moreover mainly subjective and provincial in character, full of local colour but unable to soar above time and place to gain a position among the timeless and landless offspring of the Muses.

¹ See *Agḥām*, vol. xv, pp 99-108, *Mas'ūdī*, vol. vi, pp 147-67, *ibn-Khalīkūn*, vol. 1, pp 214-18

² Ed Shāhīn 'Atīyah, (Beirut, 1889)

³ Ed as *Ash'ār al-Hamāsah* by Freytag (Bonn, 1828), supplemented by a commentary in 2 vols. (Bonn, 1847-51)

⁴ Photographic reproduction with indexes by Geyer and Margoliouth (Leyden, 1909).



THE OLDEST REPRESENTATION OF THE CAESAREAN SECTION
From al-Birūnī, *al-Āthār al-Baqīyah*, MS dated A. H. 707 (1307-8), in the Library
of the University of Edinburgh

CHAPTER XXVIII

EDUCATION

THE child's education began at home. As soon as he could speak it was the father's duty to teach him "the word" (*al-kalimah*): *La ilāha illa-l-Lāh* (no god whatsoever but Allah). When six years old the child was held responsible for the ritual prayer. It was then that his formal education began.¹

The elementary school (*ḥuttāb*) was an adjunct of the mosque, if not the mosque itself. Its curriculum centred upon the Koran as a reading text-book. With reading went writing. On visiting Damascus in 1184 ibn-Jubayr² noticed that the writing exercises by the pupils were not from the Koran but from secular poetry, for the act of erasing the word of Allah might discredit it. Together with reading and penmanship the students were taught Arabic grammar, stories about the prophets—particularly ḥadīths relating to Muḥammad—the elementary principles of arithmetic, and poems, but not of erotic character. Throughout the whole curriculum memory work was especially emphasized. Deserving pupils in the elementary schools of Baghdād were often rewarded by being paraded through the streets on camels whilst almonds were thrown at them. In one instance the shower had tragic results by destroying the eye of a young scholar.³ Similar scenes enacted in honour of young pupils who have memorized the Koran are not infrequent today in Moslem lands. In certain cases the scholars were granted a whole or partial holiday whenever one of them had finally mastered a section of the Koran.

Girls were welcome to all the religious instruction in the lower grades of which their minds were capable, but there was no special desire to guide them further along the flowery and thorny path of knowledge. For after all was not the centre of a woman's sphere the spindle?⁴ The children of the wealthy had private

¹ Cf. Ghazzālī, *Iḥṣā'*, vol. i, p. 83.

² *Aghāni*, vol. xviii, p. 101.

³ P. 272.

⁴ Cf. Muḥarrad, p. 150, l. 3.

tutors (sing. *mu'addib*) who instructed them in religion, polite literature and the art of versification. Very commonly these tutors were of foreign extraction. The ideals of aristocratic education may be ascertained from the instructions given by al-Rashīd to the tutor of his son al-Amīn :

Be not strict to the extent of stifling his faculties or lenient to the point of making him enjoy idleness and accustom himself thereto. Straighten him as much as thou canst through kindness and gentleness, but fail not to resort to force and severity should he not respond.¹

The rod was considered a necessary part of a teacher's equipment and, as is evident from the above, had the caliph's approval for use on his children. In his chapter on the parental management of children in *Risālat al-Siyāsah*,² ibn-Sīna speaks of "seeking the aid of the hand" as a valuable auxiliary of the educator's art.

The teacher in the elementary school, called *mu'allim*, sometimes *faqīh* on account of his theological training, came to occupy a rather low status socially. "Seek no advice from teachers, shepherds and those who sit much among women",³ admonished a favourite adage. A judge under al-Ma'mūn went so far as to refuse to admit teachers' testimonies as satisfactory evidence in court. A whole body of anecdotes in Arabic literature developed round the teacher as a dunce. "More foolish than a teacher of an elementary school"⁴ acquired proverbial usage. But the higher grade of teachers were on the whole highly respected. They evidently were organized into a sort of a guild, and the master would grant a recognized certificate (*ijāsah*) to those students who satisfactorily passed the prescribed course of study under him. In his treatise on pedagogy al-Zarnūjī,⁵ who wrote in 1203, devotes a section to the high regard in which a student should hold the profession of teaching, quoting the adage attributed to 'Alī: "I am the slave of him who hath taught me even one letter". Al-Zarnūjī's is the best known of some two score Arabic treatises on education, most of which have survived in manuscript form.⁶

¹ Mas'ūdī, vol. vi, pp. 321-2; ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, pp. 475-6.

² Ed. Luwī Ma'ūf in *al-Mashriq*, vol. ix (1906), p. 1074.

³ Jūhiz, *Bayān*, vol. i, p. 173.

⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁵ *Ta'lim al-Mufa'allim Tariq al-Ta'allum*, ed. C. Caspari (Leipzig, 1835), pp. 14-16. See also Ghazzālī, vol. i, pp. 8-11.

⁶ For a list see Khalīl A. Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education* (New York, 1926), pp. 67-76.

Institutions
of higher
education

The first prominent institution for higher learning in Islam was the Bayt al-Ḥikmah (the house of wisdom) founded by al-Ma'mūn (830) in his capital. Besides serving as a translation bureau this institute functioned as an academy and public library and had an observatory connected with it. The observatories, which sprang up at this time, it should be remembered, were also schools for teaching astronomy, just as the hospitals, which also made their first appearance at this period, served as centres for medical studies. But the first real academy in Islam¹ which made provision for the physical needs of its students and became a model for later institutions of higher learning was the Nizāmīyah, founded in 1065-7 by the enlightened Nizām-al-Mulk, the Persian vizir of the Saljūq Sultans Alp Arslān and Malikshāh and the patron of 'Umar al-Khayyām. The Saljūqs, like the Buwayhids and other non-Arab sultans who usurped the sovereign power in Islam, vied with each other in patronizing the arts and higher education, evidently as a means of ingratiating themselves with the populace. The Nizāmīyah was consecrated as a theological seminary (*madrasah*), particularly for the study of the Shāfi'ī rite and the orthodox Ash'ari system. In it the Koran and old poetry formed the backbone of the study of the humanities (*ilm al-adab*), precisely as the classics did later in the European universities. The students boarded in this academy and many of them held endowed scholarships. It is claimed that certain details of its organization appear to have been copied by the early universities of Europe.² That the students cherished a measure of *esprit de corps* is evidenced by the rough treatment accorded a representative of the court who came to seal the door of a room formerly occupied by a scholar who died in 1187 leaving no heirs.³

The Nizāmīyah was a theological institution recognized by the state. Ibn-al-Athīr⁴ cites the incident of a lecturer (*mudarris*) who received his appointment but could not perform his duty pending confirmation from the caliph. Evidently one lecturer was appointed at a time.⁵ The lecturer had under him two or more *répétiteurs* (sing. *mu'id*, repeater)⁶ whose duty consisted in reading over the lecture after class and explaining it to

¹ Consult Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, vol. II, pp. 156-7. Cf. Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, p. 276.

² Reuben Lev, *A Baghdad Chronicle* (Cambridge, 1929), p. 193.

³ Ibn al-Athīr, vol. XI, p. 115.

⁴ Vol. XI, p. 100.

⁵ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. X, p. 123.

⁶ See Ibn-Khalkān, vol. III, p. 430.

the less-gifted students. Ibn-Jubayr¹ once attended a lecture delivered after the mid-afternoon prayers by the ranking professor. The lecturer stood on a platform while the students sat on stools and plied him with written and oral questions till evening prayer. It was in this Nizāmiyah that al-Ghazzālī lectured for four years (1091-5).² In the chapter on learning with which he introduced his *Iḥyā'*³ al-Ghazzālī combated the idea that the imparting of knowledge was the object of education and emphasized the necessity of stimulating the moral consciousness of the student, thus becoming the first author in Islam to bring the problem of education into organic relation with a profound ethical system. Among the later eminent teachers of the Nizāmiyah was Bahā'-al-Dīn, Ṣalāḥ-al-Dīn's (Saladin's) biographer, who tells us in his reminiscences, as reported in Ibn-Khallikān,⁴ that to sharpen their memories a group of students once drank such a heavy dose of an infusion of anacardiac⁵ kernels that one of them lost his wits entirely and came naked to the class. When amidst the laughter of the class he was asked for an explanation, he gravely replied that he and his companions had tried the anacardiac infusion, which made them all insane with the exception of himself, who had happily kept his senses.

Al-Nizāmiyah survived the catastrophe that befell the capital at its capture by Hülāgu in 1258, as it survived the later invasions by the Tartars, and was finally merged with its younger sister, al-Mustanṣiriyah, about two years after Tīmūr Lang (Tamerlane) captured Baghdād in 1393. Al-Mustanṣiriyah derived its name from the next-to-last caliph, al-Mustanṣir,⁶ who built it in 1234 as a seminary for the four orthodox rites. The building had a clock (doubtless of the clepsydra type) at the entrance, was equipped with baths and kitchens and included a hospital and a library. Ibn-Battūṭah,⁷ who visited Baghdād in 1327, gives us a detailed description of the building. Renovated as a school in 1961 this structure and al-Qaṣr (palace) al-'Abbāsi, now a museum, are the only ones surviving from 'Abbāsid days.

¹ Pp. 219-20.

² Ibn-Khallikān, vol. ii, p. 246; *al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl* (Cairo, 1329), pp. 29-30.

³ Vol. i, pp. 43-9; *Ayyūka al-Walad*, ed. and tr. Hammer-Purgstall (Vienna, 1838); tr. (Eng.) G. H. Scherer (Beirut, 1933).

⁴ Vol. iii, pp. 435 seq.

⁵ *Ar. balādūr*, from Pers. *balādur*. The celebrated historian al-Bulādhuri is said to have died as a result of drinking the juice of the anacardiac (cashew nut). Hence his surname.

⁶ Abu-al-Fidā', vol. iii, p. 179.

⁷ Vol. ii, pp. 108-9.

Besides the Nizāmīyah of Baghdād the Saljūq vizir is credited with establishing several other seminaries in Naysābūr and other towns of the empire. Prior to Ṣalāh-al-Dīn he was the greatest patron of higher education in Islam. The Nizāmīyah type of *madrasah* spread over Khurāsān, al-'Irāq and Syria. Founding a *madrasah* was always considered a meritorious act in Islam. This explains the large number of such institutions reported by travellers. Ibn-Jubayr¹ counted in Baghdād about thirty schools; in Damascus, which then enjoyed its golden age under Ṣalāh-al-Dīn, about twenty; in al-Mawsil, six or more; and in Hims only one.

In all these higher institutions of theology the science of tradition lay at the basis of the curriculum, and memory work was especially stressed. In those days of no diaries and no memoranda the retentive faculties must have been developed to phenomenal limits, if we are to believe the sources. Al-Ghazzālī earned his title *hujjat al-Islām* (the authority of Islam) by memorizing 300,000 traditions. Ahmad ibn-Iḥanbal, it is said, knew by heart 1,000,000.² Al-Bukhārī was tested by one hundred traditions in which the chain of authorities (*isnād*) of the one was affixed to the text (*matn*) of the other—all of which he straightened out nicely from memory.³ Poets vied with traditionists in memory work. Having read a copy of a book loaned him by a bookseller, al-Mutanabbi⁴ saw no more reason for buying the book, for its contents were already stored in his mind. Anecdotes of a similar nature are told to prove the prodigious memories of abu-Tammām and al-Ma'arri.

Adult education was nowhere carried on in a systematic way, but the mosques in almost all Moslem towns served as important educational centres. When a visitor came to a new city he could make his way to the congregational mosque confident that he could attend lectures on hadith. This is what al-Maqdisi⁵ tells us he did on visiting distant al-Sūs. This travelling geographer of the tenth century found in his native Palestine and in Syria, Egypt and Fāris many circles (sing. *ḥalqah*) or assemblies (sing. *majlis*) centring upon *faqīhs*, Koran readers and littérateurs in the mosques.⁶ The Imām al-Shāfi'i presided at such a *halqah*

¹ P. 229, l. 10, p. 283, l. 8, p. 236, ll. 1-2, p. 258, l. 20.

² Ibn Khallikān, vol. 1, p. 28.

³ Ibn Khallikān, vol. 11, pp. 230-31.

P. 415

⁴ Maqdisi, pp. 182, 179, l. 20, pp. 205, 439, l. 11.

at the Mosque of 'Amr at al-Fuṣṭāṭ, where he taught various subjects every morning till his death in 820.¹ Ibn-Hawqal² mentions similar assemblies in Sijistān. Not only religious but linguistic and poetical subjects were treated in these assemblies.³ Every Moslem had free admission to such lectures in the mosques, which remained until the eleventh century the extension school of Islam.

These mosque circles bring to mind another type of coterie, chiefly literary, which met in the homes of the aristocracy and cultured society under the name of *majālis al-adab*,⁴ literary salons. These gatherings begin to appear early under the 'Ab-bāsids. In the presence of several early caliphs poetical contests, religious debates and literary conferences were often held. We owe a few surviving works to such debates.⁵

Mosques also functioned as repositories for books. Through gifts and bequests mosque libraries became especially rich in religious literature. Among others the historian al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (1002-71) willed his books "as a *wagf* [mortmain] for the Moslems", but they were housed in the home of a friend of his.⁶ Other libraries established by dignitaries or men of wealth as semi-public institutions housed collections bearing on logic, philosophy, astronomy and other sciences.⁷ Scholars and men of standing had no difficulty in finding access even to private collections. Al-Mawṣil had before the middle of the tenth century a library, built by one of its citizens, where students were even supplied with free paper.⁸ The library (*khizānat al-kutub*) founded in Shīrāz by the Buwayhid 'Aḍud-al-Dawlah (977-82) had its books arranged in cases and listed in catalogues and was administered by a regular staff.⁹ In the same century al-Baṣrah had a library whose founder granted stipends for scholars working in it.¹⁰ In al-Rayy there flourished at the same time a "home of books" with over four hundred camel-loads of manuscripts listed in a ten-volume catalogue.¹¹ Libraries were used as meeting-places for scientific discussion and debate. Yāqūt spent three years collecting material for his geographical dictionary from the

¹ Yāqūt, *Uḍūd*, vol. vi, p. 383; Suyūṭī, *Ḥurūf*, vol. i, p. 136.

² P. 317.

³ Yāqūt, vol. iv, p. 135, ll. 14-16, vol. vi, p. 432, ll. 14-16.

⁴ *Aghāni*, vol. xviii, p. 101.

⁵ See above, p. 354.

⁶ Yāqūt, vol. i, p. 252, vol. iv, p. 287.

⁷ For an illustration see *ibid.* vol. v, p. 467.

⁸ Yāqūt, vol. ii, p. 420.

⁹ Maqdisi, p. 449. See also Yāqūt, vol. v, p. 446.

¹⁰ Maqdisi, p. 413.

¹¹ Yāqūt, vol. ii, p. 315.

libraries of Marw and Khwārizm, whence he fled in 1220 at the approach of the Mongol hordes of Chingiz Khān, who committed all these libraries to the flames.

Bookshops

The bookshop as a commercial and educational agency also makes its appearance early under the 'Abbāsids. Al-Ya'qūbi¹ asserts that in his time (891) the capital boasted over a hundred book-dealers congregated in one street. Many of these shops, like their modern successors in Cairo and Damascus, were but small booths by the mosques, but some were undoubtedly large enough to act as centres for connoisseurs and bibliophiles. The book-sellers themselves were often calligraphers, copyists and literati who used their shops not only as stores and ateliers but as centres for literary discussion. They occupied a not inconspicuous place in society. Yāqūt started on his career as a book-dealer's clerk. Al-Nadīm († 995), also called al-Warrāq (stationer), was evidently himself a librarian or book-dealer to whose catalogue we possibly owe that scholarly and remarkable work *al-Fihrist*. In this work² we read of an 'Irāqi bibliophile whose large trunk housed treasures of manuscripts which included parchments, Egyptian papyri, Chinese paper and leather scrolls, each bearing the name of the scribe attested by the notes of from five to six generations of learned men.

Paper

The common writing-material was parchment or papyrus down to the beginning of the third Moslem century. Certain official documents written on parchment and looted in the civil war between al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn were later washed clean and sold again.³ After the beginning of the third century some Chinese paper was imported into al-'Irāq, but soon the paper industry became indigenous. It was first into Samarquand, as we have already pointed out, that certain Chinese prisoners introduced in 751 the art of manufacturing paper from flax, linen or hemp rags.⁴ The ancient Arabic word for paper, *kāghad*, is probably of Chinese origin through Persian. From Samarquand the industry soon passed to al-'Irāq. At the instance of the Barmakid al-Faḍl ibn-Yaḥya, who had been governor of Khurāsān in 794, the first paper-mill was established in Baghḍād.⁵ His brother Ja'far, Hārūn's vizir, had parchment replaced by paper in the

¹ P. 245.

² P. 40

³ *Fihrist*, p. 21.

⁴ W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, 2nd ed (Oxford, 1928), pp. 236-7. Cf. *Fihrist*, p. 21.

⁵ Ibn-Khaldūn, *Mufaḍḍalāt*, p. 352

government offices.¹ Other Moslem towns erected mills on the plan of those in Samarqand. A native factory arose in Tihāmah for the manufacture of paper from vegetable fibre.² At the time of al-Maḡḡdīsī³ the Samarqand product was still considered the finest. But in the following century, the eleventh, even better paper was manufactured in such Syrian towns as Tripoli.⁴ From Western Asia the industry made its way at the end of the ninth century into the Delta of Egypt, where several towns had been for a long time exporting to the Greek-speaking lands papyrus for writing-material under the name *garāfīs*.⁵ By the end of the tenth century paper had succeeded in entirely displacing papyrus and parchment throughout the Moslem world.

That there was an élite of highly educated men under the first 'Abbāsids is fully recognized, but how high the general level of culture was among the masses is not so easy to determine. A story about a starving scholar of Baghdād who hesitated to sell his books even when his daughter was taken ill has been preserved in Yāqūt.⁶ The answers submitted by the educated slave girl Tawaddud to the questions of the savants as reported in *The Thousand and One Nights* (nos. 438-61) may be taken as an index of the degree of knowledge attained by the cultured person after Hārūn and down to the twelfth century. According to Tawaddud intellect is of two kinds: one innate and the other acquired. Its seat is the heart, where God deposits it and whence it ascends to the brain. Man has three hundred and sixty veins, two hundred and forty bones and five senses. He is compounded of four elements: water, earth, fire and air. The stomach lies in front of the heart, to which the lungs are ventilators. The liver is the seat of compassion; the spleen, of laughter; and the two kidneys, of cunning. The head has five faculties: sensation, imagination, will, fancy and retention. The stomach is the home of all disease, and diet is the source of all healing. The planets are seven: the sun, the moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.⁷

¹ Maḡḡḡdīsī, *Khifāf*, ed. Wiet, vol. ii, p. 34. Cf. Qalqashandī, vol. ii, pp. 475-6.

² See *Fihrist*, p. 40, l. 23.

³ P. 326

⁴ Nāsīr-i-Khustaw, *Sefer Nāme*, ed. and tr. Charles Schefer (Paris, 1881), text p. 12, tr. p. 41.

⁵ Sing. *gīrfās*, from Gr. *chartēs*. See Ya'qūbī, p. 338, li. 8, 13; Qalqashandī, vol. ii, p. 474. See above, p. 347.

⁶ Vol. i, pp. 38-9.

⁷ The very same planets of the Ptolemaic system. The last five were those known to the Assyrians and Babylonians; Jastrow, *Civilization of Babylonia*, p. 261.



From T. W. Arnold and A. Grohmann, "The Islamic Book," by permission of the Pegasus Press, Paris

A SILVER PORTRAIT COIN OF AL-MUTAWAKKIL (OF THE YEAR 855) WITH A TWO-POINTED BEARD, WEARING A LOW CAP OF THE SĀSĀNID TYPE

(Original in Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

CHAPTER XXIX

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FINE ARTS

IN his art as in his poetry the Arab, a Semite, revealed himself with a keen appreciation of the particular and the subjective and with a delicate sense for detail, but with no particular capacity for harmonizing and unifying the various parts into a great and united whole. However, in architecture and painting particularly, he did not so early attain a certain degree of progress, and stand still for ever after, as he did in his sciences after the tenth century.

Of the architectural monuments which once adorned the city of al-Manṣūr and al-Rashīd no trace has been left, whereas two of the noblest surviving structures of Islam, the Umayyad Mosque at Damascus and the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem, date from the earlier Umayyad period. The caliphal palace called the Golden Gate (*bāb al-dhahab*) or Green Dome (*al-qubbah al-khadra'*) erected by the founder of Baghdād, as well as his Palace of Eternity (*qaṣr al-khuld*) and the Ruṣāfah

palace, built for the crown prince al-Mahdi;¹ the palaces of the Barmakids at al-Shammāsīyah;² the palace of the Pleiades (*al-thurayya*), on which al-Mu'tadid (892-902), who restored Baghdad as capital after Sāmarrā, spent 400,000 dinars,³ and his adjoining palace styled the Crown (*al-tāf*),⁴ completed by his son al-Muktafi (902-8); the unique mansion of al-Muqtadir (908-32) designated the Hall of the Tree (*dār al-shajarah*) on account of the gold and silver tree that stood in its pond; the Buwayhid mansion known by the name al-Mu'izzīyah after Mu'izz-al-Dawlah (932-67), which cost 1,000,000 dinars⁵—all these and many others like them left no remains to give us an inkling of the splendour that was theirs. So complete was the destruction wrought by the civil war between al-Amin and al-Ma'mun, by the final devastation of the capital by Hülāgu in 1258 and by natural causes that even the sites of most of these palaces cannot today be identified.

Outside of the capital no 'Abbāsīd ruin can be dated with any degree of probability prior to the reigns of al-Mu'tasim (833-42), founder of Sāmarrā, and of his son al-Mutawakkil (847-861), the builder of its great mosque.⁶ This congregational mosque, which cost 700,000 dinars,⁷ was rectangular and the multifoil arches of its windows suggest Indian influence. Neither here nor in the mosque at abu-Dulaf (also of the mid-ninth century) near Sāmarrā has any trace been found of the *mihrāb* (prayer niche) in the *qiblah* wall. The wall *mihrāb* seems to have been a Syrian invention, suggested in all likelihood by the apse in the Christian church.⁸ Outside, against the wall of the great mosque of Sāmarrā, rose a tower which is analogous to the ancient Babylonian *ziggurat*.⁹ This tower was copied by ibn-Ṭūlūn for the minaret of his mosque (876-9), in which the pointed arch appears for the third time in Egypt, after the repaired mosque of 'Amr (827) and the Nilometer (861). Such 'Abbāsīd remains as have survived at al-Raqqah, of the late

¹ Al-Khaṭīb (al-Baghdādī), vol. i, pp. 82-3.

² One of the eastern quarters of Baghdad.

³ Mas'ūdī, vol. viii, p. 116. This palace was destroyed two centuries later.

⁴ Khaṭīb, vol. i, pp. 99 seq.

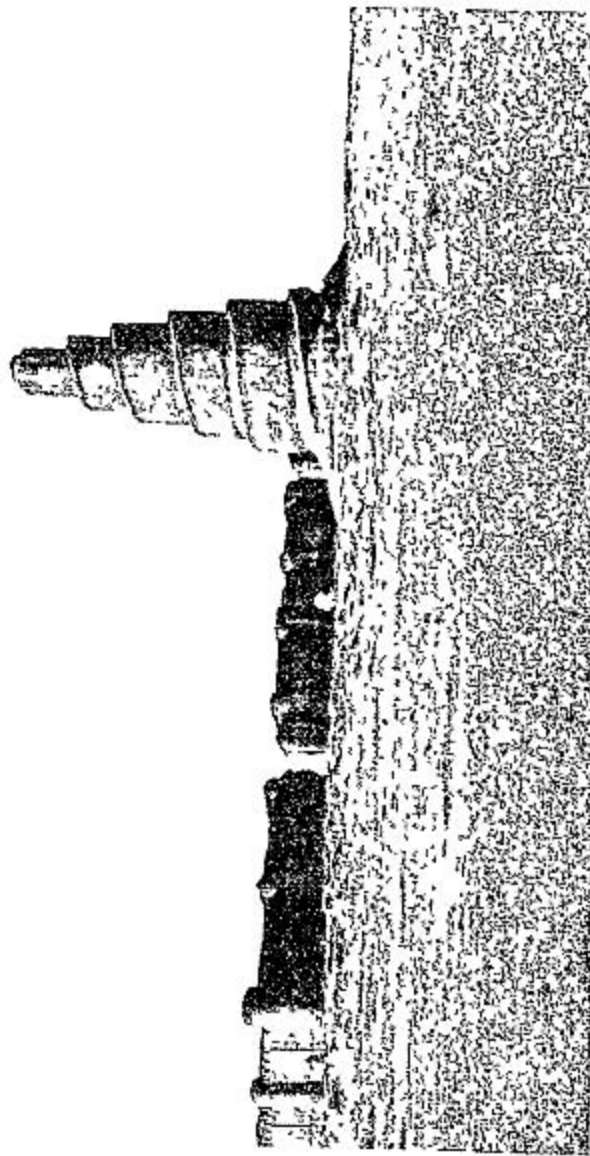
⁵ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. ix, p. 256.

⁶ Ya'qūbī, p. 260; Maqḍisī, p. 122.

⁷ Yāqūt, *Buldān*, vol. iii, p. 17.

⁸ Ernest T. Richmond, *Moslem Architecture, 623 to 1516* (London, 1926), p. 54; cf. Ernst Herzfeld, *Erster vorläufiger Bericht über die Ausgrabungen von Samarra* (Berlin, 1912), p. 10. See above, p. 261.

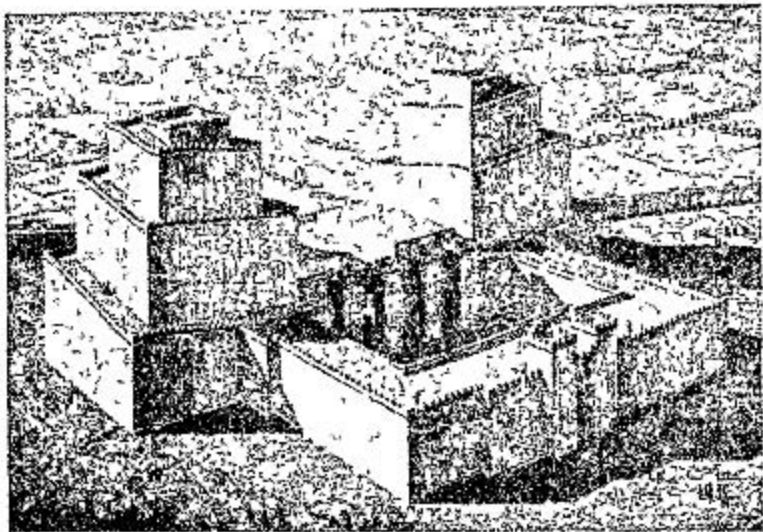
⁹ Above, p. 262. This ancient minaret with its spiral outside stairway still exists under the name Malwīyah (the bent one).



From Faust Herzfeld. Fester Fortwähner Bericht über die Anstalt der Königl. Universität zu Samarra. (Dietrich Reimer 1 erbeig Berlin)

III' MAIWIYAH TOWER OF THE GREAT MOSQUE AT SAMARRA NINTH CHRISTIAN CENTURY

eighth century, and at Sāmarrā carry on the tradition of Asiatic, more particularly Persian, architecture in contrast to the Umayyad structures which bear clear traces of Byzantine-Syrian art. Under the Sāsānid dynasty (A.D. 226-641) a distinctive type of Persian architecture was developed, with ovoid or elliptical domes, semicircular arches, spiral towers, indented



From Andrae "Der Anu-Adad Tempel" (Stuttgart, Leipzig)

**STAGE TOWERS, ZIGGURAT, OF THE ANU-ADAD TEMPLE
AT ASHUR (A RECONSTRUCTION)**

battlements, glazed wall-tiles and metal-covered roofs. This type became one of the most powerful factors in the formation of 'Abbāsīd art.

The theologians' hostility to all forms of representational art¹ did no more stop its development along Islamic lines than did the more explicit koranic injunction against wine enforce prohibition in Moslem society. We have already noticed that al-Manṣūr set upon the dome of his palace the figure of a horseman which might have served as a weathercock, that al-Amīn had his pleasure boats on the Tigris fashioned like lions, eagles and dolphins and that al-Muqtadīr had a gold and silver tree with eighteen branches planted in a huge tank in his palace.

¹ See above, pp. 269-71.

On either side of the tank stood the statues of fifteen horsemen, dressed in brocade and armed with lances, constantly moving as though in combat.

The builder of Sāmarrā (836), the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim, had the walls of his palace there ornamented like those of Qusayr 'Amrah with frescoes of nude female figures and hunting-scenes, probably the work of Christian artists. His second successor, al-Mutawakkil, under whom this temporary capital reached its zenith,¹ employed for the mural decoration of his palace Byzantine painters who had no scruples against including among the many pictures a church with monks.²

In Islam painting was pressed into the service of religion at a rather late date and never became its handmaid as it did in Buddhism and Christianity. The earliest record of any pictorial representation of the Prophet was noted by an Arabian traveller of the late ninth century who saw it in the Chinese court,³ but it may well have been produced by Nestorians. The many representations of the Burāq seem to have taken for their prototype, through Persian channels, Greek centaurs or the human-headed, winged beasts of the earlier Assyrians. Moslem religious painting, however, does not make its full appearance until the beginning of the fourteenth century. Its derivation was evidently from the art of the Oriental Christian churches, particularly the Jacobite and the Nestorian, as the researches of Arnold have shown,⁴ and developed from book-decoration. In miniature illustration the Manichaean influence is sometimes apparent.⁵ Of the few Arabic works dealing with the history of Islamic painters unfortunately none have survived—so little has been the interest in the subject.

The oldest illustrated Arabic manuscript extant is al-Sūfī's astronomy dated 1005 (now in Leningrad). In belles-lettres we have no work before the thirteenth and twelfth Christian centuries, as represented by *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*, al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*, and *al-Aghānī*.⁶ These miniatures reveal artists who worked under

¹ His buildings are discussed by Ya'qūb, pp. 266-7, and by Yāqūt, vol. II, pp. 17-18, who estimates that they cost al-Mutawakkil 294,000,000 dirhams.

² Ernst Herzfeld, *Die Malereien von Samarra* (Berlin, 1927), pls. 10, 11.

³ Mas'ūdī, vol. 1, pp. 315-18.

⁴ *Painting in Islam* (Oxford, 1928), ch. III.

⁵ Cf. Thomas W. Arnold and Adolf Grohmann, *The Islamic Book* (London, 1929), p. 2.

⁶ For a 1217/18 miniature of the Prophet consult *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, vol. XXVII (Cairo, 1946), pp. 1-5.



By courtesy of Edinburgh University Library

THE MONK BAHĪRA RECOGNIZING THE PROPHETIC MISSION OF MUĤAMMAD

Original in *Rashid-al-Dīn, Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, MS. dated A.H. 710 (1310-11),

Edinburgh University Library, Arabic No. 20

the influence of traditions derived from a Christian source or were Christians themselves. Such Moslems as cared to ignore the teaching of their theologians had first to employ Jacobite or Nestorian painters until the Moslems themselves had time to develop their independent artists. Persia with its old Indo-Iranian instincts and traditions was particularly fertile in the



From *Arundel and Grohmann: The Islam in Book (The Precious Feast)*

A SCENE FROM AL HARIRI, *MAQĀMAH* 19

A sick man, with his son behind his head, is visited by his friends

MS. dated A H 734 (1334), in the National Library, Vienna

early production of such independent painters. But the prevailing idea that this production was due to non-conformist Shi'ite tendencies cannot be sound in view of the fact that Shi'ism did not prevail in Persia to the extent of becoming the state religion until the establishment of the Šafawid dynasty in 1502.

Since early antiquity the Persians have proved themselves masters of decorative design and colour. Through their efforts the industrial arts of Islam attained a high degree of excellence. Carpet-weaving, as old as Pharaonic Egypt, was especially developed. Hunting and garden scenes were favoured in rug designs, and alum was used in the dye to render the many colours

fast. Decorated silk fabrics, the product of Moslem hand-loom in Egypt and Syria, were so highly prized in Europe that they were chosen by Crusaders and other Westerners, above all textiles, as wrappings for relics of saints.

In ceramics, another art as ancient as Egypt and Susa, the reproduction of the human form and of animals and plants, as well as geometric and epigraphic figures, attained a beauty of decorative style unsurpassed in any other Moslem art.¹ In spite of the prejudicial attitude of legists, which crystallized in the second and third Moslem centuries against plastic as well as pictorial art, pottery and metal-work continued to produce distinctive pieces second to none in the Middle Ages. Qāshāni tile, decorated with conventional flowers, which was introduced from Persia to Damascus, found great vogue, together with mosaic work, in exterior and interior decoration of buildings. Better than any others, Arabic characters lent themselves to decorative designs and became a powerful motif in Islamic art. They even became religious symbols. Particularly in Antioch, Aleppo, Damascus and such ancient Phoenician towns as Tyre were the processes of enamelling and gilding glass perfected. Among the treasures of the Louvre, the British Museum and the Arab Museum of Cairo are exquisite pieces from Sāmarra and al-Fustāṭ, including plates, cups, vases, ewers and lamps for home and mosque use, painted with brilliant radiant lustres and acquiring through the ages metallic glazes of changing rainbow hue.

The art of calligraphy, which drew its prestige from its object to perpetuate the word of God, and enjoyed the approval of the Koran (68 : 1, 96 : 4), arose in the second or third Moslem century and soon became the most highly prized art.² It was entirely Islamic and its influence on painting was appreciable. Through it the Moslem sought a channel for his esthetic nature, which could not express itself through the representation of animate objects. The calligrapher held a position of dignity and honour far above the painter. Even rulers sought to win religious merit by copying the Koran. Arabic books of history and literature have preserved for us with honourable mention the names of several calligraphers, but kept their silence in the case of architects, painters and metal-workers. Among the founders of Arabic

¹ Gaston Migeon, *Les arts musulmans* (Paris, 1926), pp. 36-7.

² See Qalqashandī, vol. iii, pp. 5 seq., vol. ii, pp. 430 seq.

calligraphy were al-Rayḥānī¹ (Riḥānī, † 834), who flourished under al-Ma'mūn and perfected the style named after him; ibn-Muqlah (886-940), the 'Abbāsīd vizir whose hand was cut off by the Caliph al-Rāḍī and who could still write elegantly with his left hand and even by attaching a pen to the stump of his right one;² and ibn-al-Bawwāb³ († 1022 or 1032), the son of a porter of the audience chamber of Baghdād and inventor of the *muḥaqqaq* style. The last penman of the 'Abbāsīd period to achieve distinction was Yāqūt al-Musta'īmi, the court calligraphist of the last 'Abbāsīd caliph, from whose name the Yāqūti style derives its designation. Judging by the surviving specimens of the penmanship of Yāqūt⁴ and other renowned calligraphers of yore the artistic merits cannot be placed high. Calligraphy is perhaps the only Arab art which today has Christian and Moslem representatives in Constantinople, Cairo, Beirut and Damascus whose productions excel in elegance and beauty any masterpieces that the ancients ever produced.

Not only calligraphy but its associate arts, colour decoration, illumination, and the whole craft of bookbinding, owed their genesis and bloom to their relation to the sacred book. Under the late 'Abbāsīds began the art of book-decoration and Koran illumination which reached its highest development in the Saljūq and Mamlūk periods. Here again the pictorial art of the Nestorians and Jacobites was evidently the main influencing factor. The Moslem *gilder* (*mudhakhib*), who thus arose after the calligrapher, ranked second to him in importance. After the Koran the art was extended to include profane manuscripts.

The legists' disapproval of music was no more effective in Baghdād than it had been before in Damascus. The 'Abbāsīd al-Mahdī began where the last Umayyads ended. He invited and patronized Siyāḥ⁵ of Makkah (739-85), "whose song warmed the chilled more than a hot bath",⁶ and his pupil Ibrāhīm al-Mawsilī (742-804), who after his master became the patriarch of classical music. When young, Ibrāhīm, a descendant of a noble Persian family,⁷ was kidnapped outside al-Mawsil and during

¹ *Fihrist*, p. 119; Yāqūt, *Udaba'*, vol. v, pp. 268 *seq.*

² Ibn-Khallikān, vol. ii, p. 472; *Fakhrī*, pp. 368, 370-71; Yāqūt, vol. iii, p. 150. ll. 8-10

³ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. ii, pp. 31 *seq.*; Nuwayrī, vol. vii, pp. 3-4.

⁴ See B. Moritz, *Arabic Palaeography* (Cairo, 1905), pl. 89.

⁵ 'Abdullāh ibn-Wahb, a freedman of Khuzā'ah; *Aghāni*, vol. vi, p. 7.

⁶ *Aghāni*, vol. vi, p. 8, ll. 4-5, quoted by Nuwayrī, vol. iv, p. 259.

⁷ *Fihrist*, p. 140; Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 14; Nuwayrī, vol. iv, p. 320.

his detention learned some of the brigands' songs. He was the first to beat the rhythm with a wand¹ and could detect one girl among thirty lute-players and ask her to tighten the second string of her ill-tuned instrument.² Later, al-Rashīd took Ibrāhīm into his service as boon companion, bestowed on him 150,000 dirhams and assigned him a monthly salary of 10,000 dirhams. From his patron the artist received occasional presents, one of which is said to have amounted to 100,000 dirhams for a single song. Ibrāhīm had an inferior rival in ibn-Jāmi', a Qurayshite and stepson of Siyāf. In the judgment of the 'Iqd "Ibrāhīm was the greatest of the musicians in versatility, but ibn-Jāmi' had the sweetest note".³ When a favoured court minstrel was asked by Hārūn for his opinion of ibn-Jāmi', his reply was: "How can I describe honey, which is sweet however you taste it?"⁴

The refined and dazzling court of al-Rashīd patronized music and singing, as it did science and art, to the extent of becoming the centre of a galaxy of musical stars.⁵ Salaried musicians accompanied by men and women slave singers thrived in it and furnished the theme for numberless fantastic anecdotes immortalized in the pages of the *Aghāni*,⁶ 'Iqd, *Fihrist*, *Nihāyah*, and, above all, the *Arabian Nights*. Two thousand such singers took part in a musical festival under the caliph's patronage. His son al-Amīn held a similar night entertainment in which the personnel of the palace, both male and female, danced till dawn.⁷ While the army of al-Ma'mūn was investing Baghdād al-Amīn sat pathetically in his palace on the bank of the Tigris listening to his favourite singing girls.⁸

Another protégé of al-Rashīd was Mukhāriq († ca. 845), a pupil of Ibrāhīm. When young, Mukhāriq was bought by a woman singer who heard him in his father's butcher shop crying in his beautiful and powerful voice his father's meats. He later passed into the possession of Hārūn, who freed him, rewarded him with 100,000 dinars⁹ and honoured him with a seat by the caliph's side. One evening he went out on the Tigris and

¹ 'Iqd, vol. iii, p. 240, l. 4. Cf. above, p. 275.

² *Aghāni*, vol. v, p. 41.

³ Vol. iii, p. 239.

⁴ *Lec. cit.* Cf. *Aghāni*, vol. vi, p. 12.

⁵ 'Iqd, vol. iii, pp. 239 seq.

⁶ Besides being a treasure-house of information on almost every phase of Arab social life, this "book of songs" is also a history of music from pre-Islamic days to the time of the author, al-Isfahāni (897-967), the greatest music historian the Arabs produced.

⁷ Above, p. 303.

⁸ Mas'ūdi, vol. vi, pp. 425-30.

⁹ *Aghāni* vol. xxi, p. 226, vol. viii, p. 20.

started to sing. Immediately torches began to move to and fro in the streets of Baghdād in the hands of people anxious to hear the master-singer.¹

Al-Ma'mūn and al-Mutawakkil had as a cup companion Ishāq ibn-Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣili (767-850), dean of the musicians of his age.² After his father, Ishāq personified the spirit of classical Arabic music. As an all-round musician he was "the greatest that Islām had produced".³ He claimed, as did also his father and Ziryāb, that it was the *jinn* who prompted his melodies.

These and other *virtuosi* of the halcyon days who won undying fame as companions to the caliphs were more than musicians; they were endowed with keen wits and retentive memories well stocked with choice verses of poetry and delightful anecdotes. They were singers, composers, poets and scholars well versed in the scientific lore of the day. Under them stood the instrumentalists (sing. *qārīb*), among whom the lute was generally most favoured; the viol (*rabāb*) was used by inferior performers. Then came the singing girls (sing. *qaynah*), who as a rule performed while concealed behind curtains. Such girls came to be a necessary adornment of the harem and their keeping and training developed into an important industry. For one educated by Ishāq, a messenger of the governor of Egypt offered 30,000 dīnars, which sum was matched by an envoy of the Byzantine emperor and increased to 40,000 by a messenger of the ruler of Khurāsān. Ishāq solved the problem by freeing the girl and marrying her.⁴

The caliphal house in Baghdād, more than that of Damascus, developed several distinguished lutanists, singers and composers. Of all the 'Abbāsīds Ibrāhīm ibn-al-Mabdi, brother of Hārūn and in 817 rival caliph of al-Ma'mūn, acquired the greatest fame as musician-singer.⁵ Al-Wāthiq (842-7), who performed on the lute and composed a hundred melodies,⁶ was the first caliph musician. After him both al-Muntaṣir (861-2) and al-Mu'tazz (866-9) showed some poetical and musical talent.⁷ But the only real caliph musician was al-Mu'tamid (870-92), in whose

¹ *Aghāni*, vol. xxi, pp. 237-8. Cf. Nuwayri, *Nihāyah*, vol. iv, p. 307.

² See Ibn-Khallikān, vol. 1, pp. 114 *seq.*; *Fihrist*, pp. 140-41; *Aghāni*, vol. v, pp. 52 *seq.*; Nuwayri, vol. v, pp. 1 *seq.*

³ Farmer, *Arabic Music*, p. 125.

⁴ *Fakhri*, pp. 276-9.

⁵ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. 1, pp. 12 *seq.*; Ṭabari, vol. iii, pp. 1030 *seq.*

⁶ *Aghāni*, vol. viii, p. 163, quoted by Nuwayri, vol. iv, p. 195.

⁷ Nuwayri, vol. iv, p. 199.

presence the geographer ibn-Khurdādhbih delivered his oration on music and dance, a notable contribution to our knowledge of their state at that time.¹

Among the many Greek works translated in the golden age of the 'Abbāsids were a few dealing with the speculative theory of music. Two such Aristotelian works were done into Arabic under the titles *Kitāb al-Masā'il* (*Problemata*) and *Kitāb fi al-Nafs* (*De anima*)² by the famous Nestorian physician Hunayn ibn-Ishāq (809-73), who also translated a work by Galen under the title *Kitāb al-Ṣawt* (*De voce*). Euclid had two titles ascribed to him in Arabic, *Kitāb al-Naḡham* (book of melody), a pseudo-Euclidian work, and *Kitāb al-Qānūn* (canon).³ Aristoxenus, of the fourth century B.C., was known chiefly by his *Kitāb al-Īqā'* (rhythm)⁴ and Nicomachus, Aristotle's son, through *Kitāb al-Mūsīqi al-Kabīr* (opus major on music).⁵ The Brethren of Sincerity (tenth century), some of whom were evidently musical theorists, classified music as a branch of mathematics and venerated Pythagoras as the founder of its theory.⁶ It was from these and other Greek works that the Arab authors acquired their first scientific ideas on music and became schooled in the physical and physiological aspects of the theory of sound. The scientific-mathematical side of Arab music was therefore derived from the Greek, but the practical side, as the researches of Farmer⁷ have shown, had purely Arabian models. About this time the word *mūsīqi*, later *mūsīqa* (music), was borrowed from the Greek and applied to the theoretical aspects of the science, leaving the older Arabic term *ghinā'*, used hitherto for both song and music, to the practical art. *Qitār* (guitar) and *urghun* (organ), as names of instruments, and other technical terms of Greek origin now appear in Arabic. The organ was clearly an importation from the Byzantines. Two organ constructors flourished in the twelfth century, abu-al-Majd ibn-abi-al-Ḥakam († 1180) of Damascus and abu-Zakarīyā' Yahya al-Bayāsī, who was attached to the service of Ṣalāḥ-al-Dīn.⁸

¹ *Mas'ūdi*, vol. viii, pp. 88-103.

² Possibly translated by Hunayn's son Ishāq († 910).

³ *Fihrist*, p. 266; Qūṣṭī, p. 65.

⁴ *Fihrist*, p. 270.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

⁶ *Rasā'il*, vol. i, p. 153.

⁷ *Arabian Music*, pp. 200-201; "Music" in *The Legacy of Islam*, ed. Thomas Arnold and Alfred Guillaume (Oxford, 1931), pp. 356 *seq.*

⁸ *Ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah*, vol. ii, pp. 155, 163.

Musical writers after the Greek school were led by the philosopher al-Kindi, who flourished in the second half of the ninth century and whose works, as noted before, bear the earliest traces of Greek influence. Al-Kindi is credited with six works, in one of which we find the first definite use of notation among the Arabs. Not only al-Kindi but several of the leading Moslem philosophers and physicians were musical theorists as well. Al-Rāzi (865-925) composed at least one such work, cited by ibn-abi-Uṣaybi'ah.¹ Al-Fārābi († 950), himself an accomplished lute performer, was the greatest writer on the theory of music during the Middle Ages. Besides writing commentaries on various lost works of Euclid he produced three original works. Of these *Kitāb al-Mūsīqī al-Kabīr*² was the most authoritative in the East. In the West his compendium of sciences, *Iḥṣā' al-'Ulūm*³ (*De scientiis*), being the earliest and best known of the works dealing with music to be rendered into Latin, exerted powerful influence. Besides the writings of al-Fārābi those of ibn-Sīna († 1037), who abridged earlier works and included in his *al-Shifā'* a study of music, and of ibn-Rushd († 1198) were translated into Latin and became text-books in Western Europe. As for al-Ghazzālī († 1111), it was his defence of *al-samā'* (music and song)⁴ that caused music to play such an important part in the ritual of the Sufi fraternities.

Most of these technical treatises unhappily have been lost in the original. Arabic music, with its notation and its two constituent elements of *nagham* (melodic modes) and *iqā'* (rhythmic modes), has been therefore transmitted by word of mouth only and has been finally lost. Arabic chants today are scant in melody but strong in rhythm, and no modern person can interpret properly the few surviving works on classical music or understand fully the meaning of their ancient designations of rhythm and their scientific terminology. Many such terms may be traced to Persian and Indian origins.

¹ Vol. i, p. 320, l. 26.

² See above, p. 372, n. 1.

³ Ed. 'Uthmān Muḥammad Amin (Cairo, 1931)

⁴ *Iḥyā'*, vol. II, pp. 238 seq.

CHAPTER XXX

MOSLEM SECTS

WE have dwelt at some length on the first two and a half centuries of the 'Abbāsid period (750-1000) because this was a formative period during which Moslem civilization received that distinctive stamp which it has retained down to our time. In theology and law, in science and philosophy, in literature and the humanities, Islam is today virtually what it was nine centuries ago. Its schools of thought, developed then, have persisted in some form to the present day. Among those schools the sects are the most important.

The Mu'tazilah started as a rigid puritanical movement asserting that the doctrine that the Koran was the uncreated word of God and eternal would compromise His unity, but developed later a rationalist wing which accorded the products of human reason an absolute value above the Koran. Prompted by his Mu'tazilite judge ibn-abi-Duwād,¹ al-Ma'mūn, whose philosophical interests raised the new creed to a state religion, issued in 827 a momentous proclamation declaring the dogma of "the creation [*khalq*] of the Koran", in opposition to the orthodox view that in its actual form, in its Arabic language, the Koran is the identical reproduction of a celestial original.² This new dogma of "the creation of the Koran" soon became the touchstone of Moslem belief. Even judges had to pass its test. In 833 the caliph issued his infamous edict that no qāḍī who did not subscribe to the view of the creation of the Koran could hold his office or be appointed to one. At the same time he instituted the *miḥnah*, an inquisitorial tribunal for the trial and conviction of those who denied his dogma.³ Thus by a strange irony of fate did the movement which had a party standing for free-thought become a deadly instrument for suppressing thought.

¹ See ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, pp. 38-45; Tabarī, vol. iii, pp. 1139 seq.

² See above, pp. 123-4.

³ A copy of his orders is preserved in Tabarī, vol. iii, pp. 1112-16.

Moslem
inquisition

This was not the first time Islam persecuted heresy. The Umayyad Hishām (724-43) had ordered the execution of al-Ja'd ibn-Dirham for teaching that the Koran was created¹ and had put to death Ghaylān al-Dimashqi (the Damascene) for maintaining the doctrine of free will;² and both al-Mahdi and al-Hādi had crucified a number of *ẓindāqs*.³ But this *miṣnah* of al-Ma'mūn was the first systematic inquisition into heresy and the earliest formal attempt to stamp it out.

The leading victim of the *miṣnah* was Ahmad ibn-Ḥanbal,⁴ whose bold and stubborn championship of the cause of conservative orthodoxy constitutes one of the glamorous pages in its history. The persecution of the orthodox continued under al-Ma'mūn's two successors. But in the second year of his reign, 848, al-Mutawakkil turned the tables on the Mu'tazilites and restored the old dogma.

Among the leaders of the Mu'tazilite school of this period was al-Nazzām († ca. 845). This "sheikh of the Mu'tazilites" endeavoured to check the Persian dualistic tendencies in Islam and proclaimed that doubt was the first absolute requirement of knowledge.⁵ His system recalls in the main Anaxagoras. Al-Nazzām counted among his pupils the encyclopædist al-Jāhiz of al-Basrah († 868-9).⁶ Another early leader was Mu'ammār ibn-'Abbād al-Sulamī⁷ († ca. 835), a Qadarite who entertained Indian ideas.

The
Ash'arite
system
prevails

On the theological side the man credited with exploding the Mu'tazilite theories and re-establishing the orthodox creed which has since become the heritage of Sunni Islam was abu-al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Ash'ari of Baghdād († 935-6),⁸ a descendant of the arbitrator abu-Mūsa. "Al-Mu'tazilah", in the words of a pious Moslem, "carried their heads high, but their dominion ended when God sent al-Ash'ari." Starting as a pupil of the Mu'tazilite theologian al-Jubbā'i⁹ († 915-16), al-Ash'ari later in life changed

¹ Ibn al-Athīr, vol. v, pp. 196-7.

² *Ibid.* p. 197; Tabarī, vol. II, p. 1733.

³ See above, p. 359.

⁴ Tabarī, vol. III, pp. 1131 *seq.*

⁵ For his "heresies" see Shahrastāni, pp. 37-42, Baghdādī, ed. Hitti, pp. 102-9.

⁶ Ibn-Hazm, vol. IV, p. 148, al-Khayy'ī, *Kitāb al-Intiqād*, ed. H. S. Nyberg (Cairo, 1925), index.

⁷ Consult Shahrastāni, pp. 46-8, Baghdādī, pp. 109-10.

⁸ See his *Maqūlāt al-Islāmīyīn*, ed. H. Ritter (Constantinople, 1929), pp. 155-278; Shahrastāni, pp. 65-75.

⁹ See Shahrastāni, pp. 54 *seq.*, Baghdādī, p. 121.

fronts¹ and used in his polemics against his former masters the same weapons of logical and philosophical argumentation which they had introduced and developed. Thus he became, in addition to his other achievements, the founder of scholastic theology in Islam (*kalām*). After him the scholastic attempt to reconcile religious doctrine with Greek thought became the supreme feature of Moslem intellectual life as it was of medieval Christian life. To al-Ash'ari is also attributed the introduction of the formula *bila kayf* (without modality), according to which one is expected to accept the anthropomorphic expressions in the Koran without any explanation demanded or given. This new principle served as a damper on free-thought and research. It was with a view to propagating the Ash'ari system of theology that the famous Nizāmiyah seminary was established by the Saljūq vizir.

Al-Ash'ari was followed by al-Ghazzālī² (L. Algazel), unquestionably the greatest theologian of Islam and one of its noblest and most original thinkers. It was al-Ghazzālī who fixed the ultimate form of the Ash'ariyah and established its dicta as the universal creed of Islam. This "father of the church in Islam" has since become the final authority for Sunnite orthodoxy. Moslems say that if there could have been a prophet after Muḥammad, al-Ghazzālī would have been the man.

Abu-Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī was born in 1058 at Ṭūs, Khurāsān, where he died in 1111. He reproduced in his religious experience all the spiritual phases developed by Islam. Here are his own words:

Ever since I was under twenty (now I am over fifty) . . . I have not ceased to investigate every dogma or belief. No Bāṭinite did I come across without desiring to investigate his esotericism; no Zāhirite, without wishing to acquire the gist of his literalism; no philosopher,³ without wanting to learn the essence of his philosophy; no dialectical theologian [*mutakallim*], without striving to ascertain the object of his dialectics and theology; no Sufi, without coveting to probe the secret of his Sufism; no ascetic, without trying to delve into the origin of his asceticism; no atheistic *sindiq*, without groping for the causes of his bold atheism and *sindiqism*. Such was the unquenchable thirst of my soul for investigation from the early days of my youth, an

¹ *Fihrist*, p. 181.

² From *ghazzālī* (spinner), less correctly al-Ghazālī; Muḥammad ibn-abi-Shanab in *Mafāḥiṣ al-Mafāḥim*, vol. vii (1927), pp. 224-6. Cf. Duncan B. Macdonald in *Journal Royal Asiatic Society* (1902), pp. 18-22.

³ Neo-Platonist.

instinct and a temperament implanted in me by God through no choice of mine.¹

Starting his religious life as orthodox, al-Ghazzālī soon turned Sufi, and when still under twenty he had broken with all the past. In 1091 he was appointed lecturer at the Nizāmīyah in Baghdād, where he became a sceptic. Four years later he returned to Sufism after a terrific spiritual struggle that left him a physical and moral wreck. Intellectualism had failed him. As a dervish he roamed from place to place enjoying peace of soul and acquiescence of mind. After about twelve years of retirement in various places, including two years of retreat in Syria and a holy pilgrimage, he returned to Baghdād to preach and teach. There he composed his masterpiece *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*² (the revivification of the sciences of religion). The mysticism of this work vitalized the law, its orthodoxy leavened the doctrine of Islam. In it and in such other works of his as *Fatāḥat al-'Ulūm*,³ *Tahāfut al-Falāsifah*,⁴ *al-Iqtisād fī al-'Itiqād*,⁵ orthodox speculation reached its culminating point. These works deposed fiqh from the high rank it had usurped, employed Greek dialectic to found a pragmatic system and made philosophy palatable to the orthodox school of theologians. Partly translated into Latin before 1150, they exerted marked influence on Jewish and Christian scholasticism. Thomas Aquinas, one of the greatest theologians of Christianity, and later Pascal were indirectly affected by the ideas of al-Ghazzālī, who of all Moslem thinkers came nearest to subscribing to Christian views. The scholastic shell constructed by al-Ash'arī and al-Ghazzālī has held Islam to the present day, but Christendom succeeded in breaking through its scholasticism, particularly at the time of the Protestant Revolt. Since then the West and the East have parted company, the former progressing while the latter stood still.

Sufism

Sufism⁶ is the form which mysticism has taken in Islam. It is

¹ *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl*, ed. A. Schmolders (Paris, 1842), pp. 4-5; cf. C. Field, *The Confessions of Al Ghazzali* (London, 1909), pp. 12-13. The autobiographical part of this work runs almost parallel with the experience of St. Augustine

² 4 vols (Cairo, 1334). There are several other editions.

³ (Cairo, 1322.) ⁴ Ed. M. Bouyges (Beirut, 1927). ⁵ 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1327).

⁶ From Ar. *sūf*, wool, to denote the practice of assuming a woollen robe on entering the mystic life. Theodor Noldeke in *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 48 (1894), pp. 45-8.

not so much a set of doctrines as it is a mode of thinking and feeling in the religious domain. Moslem mysticism represents a reaction against the intellectualism of Islam and the Koran and the formalism which developed as a consequence. Psychologically its basis should be sought in the human aspiration to a personal, direct approach to, and a more intense experience of, the deity and religious truth. Like other Islamic movements Sufism traces its origin to the Koran and the hadith. Such verses as 4 : 96; 9 : 113; 33 : 47, condemning "greed after the chance good things of this present life", commending "those who turn to God" and emphasizing "trust in God, for God is a sufficient guardian", are not lacking in the Koran. Muḥammad's own relation to God had a mystical aspect, namely, a direct consciousness of divine presence, and the Sufis came to consider themselves the true interpreters of the esoteric teaching of the Prophet as preserved in the hadith.

Beginning simply as an ascetic life, mainly contemplative, such as was commonly practised by Christian monks, Sufism during and after the second Islamic century developed into a syncretic movement, absorbing many elements from Christianity, Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism and Buddhism, and passing through mystical, theosophical and pantheistic stages. Wool (*ṣūf*) was adopted as a dress in imitation of Christian monks, from whom was also borrowed the ideal of celibacy which orthodox Islam never encouraged. The practice of solitary meditations and prolonged vigils likewise show Syrian monastic influence. The Sufi fraternity (*ṭarīqah*,¹ right way), which developed in the thirteenth century, with its master (*shaykh*) and novice (*murīd*), corresponding to the Christian relation of clergy and beginner, approaches the monastic orders, notwithstanding the apocryphal tradition "no monasticism [*rahbānīyah*] in Islam". The fraternity's religious service called *dhikr*² is the only elaborate ritual in Islam and betrays Christian litanies as a source.³ The Sufi eschatological traditions with their Antichrist⁴ suggest that the fraternities found many recruits among those newly converted to Islam from the older forms of monotheism.

The term Sufi appears first in Arabic literature in the middle of the ninth century applied to a certain class of ascetics.⁵ The

¹ Sūr. 46 : 29 seq. ² Remembrance and mention of God's name, sūr. 33 : 41.

³ Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London, 1914), p. 10.

⁴ *Al-Maṣṭh al-Dayḍī*, from Aramaic *Meshiḥa Daggāla*. Cf. Matt. 24 : 24, Rev. 13 : 1-18, Dan. 11 : 36.

⁵ Jūluz, *Beyān*, vol. 1, p. 233.

first individual on whom the name Sufi was bestowed, and that by later tradition, was the famous occultist Jābir ibn-Ḥayyān (fl. ca. 776), who professed an ascetic doctrine of his own. His contemporary Ibrāhīm ibn-Adham of Balkh († ca. 777) may be taken as a type of this early quietist asceticism (*zuhd*). In the Sufi legend of his conversion, evidently modelled upon the story of Buddha,¹ Ibrāhīm appears as a king's son who, while hunting, heard some mysterious voice warning him that he was not created for such a purpose. Thereupon the princely sportsman dismounted and for ever abandoned the path of worldly pomp for that of asceticism and piety. According to another legend his conversion came as a result of having observed from the window of his palace a beggar contentedly enjoying a meal of stale bread soaked in water and seasoned with coarse salt. When assured by the beggar that he was fully satisfied, Ibrāhīm put on hair-cloth and took to a wandering life.² After his Sufi conversion, Ibrāhīm migrated to Syria, where Sufism had its earliest organization, and lived by his own labour.

Mysticism

Under the stimulus of Christian as well as Hellenistic ideas Moslem asceticism became mystical in the second Moslem century; that is, it began to be regarded by its devotees as an emotional means of purifying the human soul, so that it may know and love God and be united with Him, rather than as a means for winning His reward in a future world. This Sufi knowledge (*ma'rifah*) of God is a form of *gnosis* achieved by the inner light of the individual soul, in contrast to the knowledge (*ilm*) of Him by the intellect or through acquiescence in the accepted tradition. The doctrine of *gnosis* was developed by abu-Sulaymān al-Dārānī († 849-50), whose tomb in Dārayya near Damascus was still an object of pilgrimage in the days of Yāqūt.³ But the first Sufi of the mystic, as opposed to the ascetic, school was Ma'rūf al-Karkhi, of the Baghdād school, who died in 815. Originally a Christian, or possibly a Ṣābian,⁴ Ma'rūf was described as a God-intoxicated man and venerated as a saint. His tomb at Baghdād on the west bank of the Tigris is still a great resort for pilgrims and at the time of al-Qushayri⁵ († 1074)

¹ T. Duka in *Journal Royal Asiatic Society* (1904), pp. 132 seq.

² See Ibn 'Asākir, vol. II, pp. 167-96; Kuntā, vol. I, pp. 3-5; al-Qushayri, *al-Risālah* (Cairo, 1284), pp. 9-10

³ *Buldān*, vol. II, p. 536.

⁴ Cf. al-Hujwīnī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, tr. R. A. Nicholson (Leyden, 1911), p. 114

⁵ *Risālah*, p. 12.

prayer at it was considered a sure remedy for the sick. According to the mystic principle nothing really exists but God, God is eternal beauty, and the path leading to Him is love. Love thus becomes the essence of mysticism.

From speculative mysticism, Sufism advanced to theosophy. In effecting this transition, which took place during the period of translation from Greek, Hellenistic influence was paramount. The exponent of Sufi theosophy was dhu-al-Nūn¹ al-Miṣri (i.e. the Egyptian), of Nubian parents,² who died at al-Jizah (Gizah) in 860. Sufis in general consider this ascetic the originator of their doctrine. They number him among their first *quṭbs* (pivots of the universe) and follow the mention of his name by the invocation "May God sanctify his inmost soul [*sirr*]!" It was dhu-al-Nūn who gave Sufism its permanent shape. He introduced the idea that the true knowledge of God is attained by one means only, ecstasy (*wajd*). Al-Mas'ūdi³ tells us that dhu-al-Nūn was wont to wander amid the ruined monuments of his native Egypt endeavouring to decipher their mysterious figures as a key to the lost sciences of antiquity.

The step from theosophy to pantheism was not difficult and was made chiefly under Indo-Iranian influences. The *Aghāni*⁴ has preserved for us at least one portrayal of an unmistakable Buddhistic view of life, and the *sindiq* monks described by al-Jāhiz⁵ were either Indian sadhus, Buddhist monks or their imitators.⁶ A Persian, Bāyazīd⁷ al-Bistāmī († ca. 875), whose grandfather was a Magian, probably introduced the doctrine of *fanā'*, self-annihilation, possibly a reflection of Buddhist Nirvana. Another Persian, al-Ḥallāj (the carder), was in 922 flogged, exposed on a gibbet, then decapitated and burned by the 'Abbāsid inquisition for having declared, "I am the Truth" (i.e. God). His "crucifixion" made him the great Sufi martyr. His mystic theory is made clear in these verses:

¹ "The man of the fish", applied to Jonah in Koran 21 : 87. Dhu al-Nūn's real name was Thawbān abu-al-Fayḍ ibn-Ibrāhīm.

² Qushayrī, p. 10, Hujwiri, p. 100.

³ Vol. ii, pp. 401-2.

⁴ Vol. iii, p. 24, ll. 27-8.

⁵ *Hayawān*, vol. iv, pp. 146-7.

⁶ Ignaz Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, ed. F. Babinger (Heidelberg, 1925), p. 163.

⁷ Tur, pronunciation of Ar. abu-Yazīd. See Qushayrī, pp. 17-18, ibn-Khalikān, vol. i, p. 429.

I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I.
 We are two souls dwelling in one body.
 When thou seest me, thou seest Him:
 And when thou seest Him, thou seest us both.¹

Al-Hallāj's tomb in west Baghdād stands till now as that of a saint. But the greatest monist and pantheist Sufi was Muḥyi-al-Dīn ibn-'Arabi (1165-1240) of Spain, whose tomb at the foot of Mt. Qāsiyūn in Damascus is today enclosed in a large mosque bearing his name. Unlike such orthodox Sufis as al-Ghazzālī and al-Junayd of Baghdād († 910),² ibn-'Arabi endeavoured to reduce Sufism to a science which he intended to have reserved for circles of initiates. The development of the pantheistic idea that all is God was due to him.

Mystic
poetry and
philosophy

In the field of mystic poetry the Arabs produced only one great name, that of the Egyptian ibn-al-Fārīd, 1181-1235, whose masterpiece is a long ode (rhyming in *ʾ*)³ forming an exquisite hymn of divine love. On the other hand, almost all Persian poets of the first order, e.g. Sa'di, Ḥāfiẓ and al-Rūmī, were mystics. But in the field of philosophic Sufism the Arabic-writing world can claim two of the greatest intellects Islam ever produced, al-Fārābī and al-Ghazzālī. It was the latter who reconciled Sufism, with its many unorthodox practices, with Islam and grafted mysticism upon its intellectualism.

Fraternal
orders

For the first five Islamic centuries, that form of religious experience termed Sufism stood almost entirely on an individual basis. Small circles of disciples and followers did cluster round the personality or memory of some inspiring teacher, as in the case of al-Hallāj, but such organized bodies were local in provenience and not of permanent character. Before the close of the twelfth Christian century self-perpetuating corporations began to appear. The first fraternity (*ṭarīqah*) established on such a principle was the Qādirite, so named after the Persian 'Abd-al-Qādir al-Jīlānī or al-Jīlī (1077-1166),⁴ who flourished in

¹ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 261. Cf. R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge, 1921), p. 80; Louis Massignon, *La Passion d'al-Hallāj: martyr mystique de l'Islam* (Paris, 1922), vol. ii, p. 518.

² Qushayrī, pp. 24-5; Hujwiri, pp. 128-30.

³ *Diwān*, ed. Amīn Khūrī, 3rd ed. (Beirut, 1894), pp. 65-132; tr. almost entirely by Nicholson, *Studies*, pp. 199-266.

⁴ The best extant biography is in al-Dhahabi, "Ta'rīkh al-Islām", D. S. Margoliouth in *Journal Royal Asiatic Society* (1907), pp. 267-310. On his miracles see Shaṣṭānawī, *Bahjat al-Asrār* (Cairo, 1304), which has on its margin 78 sermons of al-Jīlānī entitled *Futūḥ al-Ghayb*.

Baghdād. The order, one of the most tolerant and charitable, now claims followers throughout the whole Moslem world, including Algeria, Java and Guinea. The second fraternity in order of antiquity was the Rifā'ite, founded by an 'Irāqi, Ahmad al-Rifā'i († 1183), whose members, like those of other fraternities, can perform strange feats, such as swallowing glowing embers, live serpents and glass, or passing needles and knives through their bodies. The Mawlawite order, commonly known as the whirling dervishes, centres upon the great Persian poet Jalāl-al-Dīn al-Rūmi, who died in Qūniyah (Konieh, classical Iconium) in 1273. In opposition to the general Moslem practice al-Rūmi gave an important place to music in the ceremonies of his order. The order has always had as its superior one of his descendants who lived in Qūniyah. The superior enjoyed the privilege of girding the new sultan-caliph of Turkey with his sword.

Various other independent fraternities developed in various countries at different times, ranging in their Sufism from ascetic quietism to pantheistic antinomianism. In most instances the founder of the order became himself the centre of a cult, invested with divine or quasi-divine powers, and the headquarters of his order developed into a foyer of saint-worship. In Africa the strongest religious brotherhood is the Shādhilite,¹ founded by 'Alī al-Shādhilī († 1258), which is especially strong in Morocco and Tunisia and has sub-orders under special names. Islam in Morocco is characterized by saint-worship to a greater degree than perhaps in any other country. The modern Sanūsi brotherhood, with headquarters in the oasis of Kufra and formerly in Jaghbūb, was founded in 1837 by the Algerian Shaykh al-Sanūsi and is clearly distinguishable from the preceding orders in being a congregation-state with political and military as well as religious aims. The leading native fraternity of Egypt is the Ahmadiyah, after Ahmad-al-Badawī († 1276), whose centre is at Tanṭa. In Turkey one of the strongest orders is the Baktāshi, noted for its connection with the Janissaries. This order, which became firmly established about 1500, encourages celibacy, reveres 'Alī and shows traces of Christian influence in its theology. It seems to represent a sect rather than a Sufi fraternity. Besides inheriting the old religions of Asia Minor the dervish orders of that country

¹ On this see Abu al-Mawāhib al-Shādhilī, *Qawānīn Hikmah al-Ishrāq* (Damascus, 1509); tr. Edward J. Jurj, *Illumination in Islamic Mysticism* (Princeton, 1938).

have preserved traces of shamanism, which the early Turks brought with them from Central Asia.

The Sufi orders represent the only ecclesiastical organization in Islam. The members, commonly called dervishes,¹ live in special quarters, termed *takīyah*, *zāwiyah* or *ribāt*, which at the same time serve as social centres, a function which the mosque fails to perform. The fraternity may have, in addition to the masters and neophytes, a third class of affiliated lay members who are subject to the guidance of the superior of the order.

The rosary

Besides introducing a form of monasticism and ritual² the Sufis made other contributions to Islam. They were evidently responsible for the diffusion of the rosary (*subḥāh*) among Moslems.³ Today only the puritanical Wahhābis eschew the rosary, regarding it as an innovation (*bid'ah*). Of Hindu origin, this instrument of devotion was probably borrowed by the Sufis from the Eastern Christian churches and not directly from India. During the Crusades the rosary found its way into the Roman Catholic West. The first mention of the rosary in Arabic literature was made by the poet laureate abu-Nuwās († ca. 810).⁴ The celebrated mystic al-Junayd († 910) of Baghdād used it as a means of attaining a state of ecstasy, and when once a critic remonstrated with him for the use of such an innovation despite his reputation for sanctity, al-Junayd replied: "I will not renounce a path that has led me to God".⁵

The cult of saints

Moreover, Sufism founded and popularized the cult of sainthood. Veneration of saints finds no sanction in the Koran. It sprang up, following the Christian practice, in response to the mystic call and to meet the need of bridging the gap between man and God in Islamic theology. While there is no formal canonization in Islam, popular acclaim based upon the performance of miracles (*karāmāt*) constitutes a saint (*walī*, friend of God). By the twelfth century the original feeling common to both Sunnites and Shī'ites that the invocation of saints was an idolatrous form of worship had been dissipated by a philosophical reconciliation of sainthood with orthodox principles, effected mainly through Sufi influence. When it came to the

¹ Ar. *darwish*, from Pers., commonly explained as poor, needy, a mendicant.

² For a criticism by an orthodox Moslem see ibn-al-Jawzi, *Nagā*, pp. 262 seq.

³ Ignaz Goldziher in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, vol. xxi (1890), pp. 295-300 *Verlesungen*, p. 164.

⁴ *Diwān* p. 108 l. 18. Cf. ibn-Qutaybah, *al-Shī'r*, p. 508, l. 2 Qushayri, p. 25.

question of rank among "the friends of Allah", the chivalrous Sufis maintained the principle of complete equality between the sexes.¹ They, for instance, accorded Rābi'ah al-'Adawiyah (ca. 717-801) of al-Baṣrah, a mystic woman of noble life and lovely character, first place in the list of saints. Since then Rābi'ah has become "the saint par excellence of the Sunnite hagiology". When young she was sold as a slave, but on seeing a radiance round her while she prayed her master freed her. She refused to marry and lived a life of extreme asceticism and other-worldliness. She soon became a revered guide along "the mystic way", inculcating penitence, patience, gratitude, holy fear, voluntary poverty and utter dependence (*tawakkul*) upon God. Asked whether she hated Satan, Rābi'ah replied: "My love for God leaves no room for hating Satan". When in a dream the Prophet asked her whether she loved him, her reply was: "My love for God has so possessed me that no place remains for hating aught or loving any save Him".² On another occasion she declared: "I have not served God from fear of God . . . or love of Paradise . . . but only for the love of Him and the desire for Him"³

An impassioned prayer by one of those lovers of God, al-Suhrawardi, who at the age of thirty-six (A.D. 1191) was executed as a heretic at Aleppo by order of the viceroy al-Malik al-Zāhir and his father, Ṣalāḥ-al-Dīn, makes plain the indebtedness of Sufi theosophy to Neo-Platonism as well as to Christianity.⁴

Another religious movement that took its final form under the 'Abbāsids and developed offshoots that played decisive rôles in the history of Islam and the caliphate was the Shī'ah. The partisans of 'Alī fared no better under the 'Abbāsīd régime than under the Umayyad, and that in spite of the fact that they had been an important factor in establishing the former at the expense of the latter. The smiles of al-Ma'mūn, who even went so far as to don their colour, green, and proclaim as heir apparent one of their imāms, 'Alī al-Riḍā,⁵ proved of no permanent

¹ Abu Nu'aym († 1038) devotes a section of his voluminous *Ḥilyat al-'Awliyā'* wa-*Tabaqāt al-Aṣfiyā'*, vol. II (Cairo, 1933), pp. 39-70, to women Sufis and saints.

² Farīd-al-Dīn 'Aṣṣār, *Tadhkirat al-'Awliyā'*, ed. R. A. Nicholson, vol. I (Leyden, 1905), p. 67.

³ Abu-Tālib (al-Makki), *Qūt al-Qulūb* (Cairo, 1932), vol. III, p. 83. For more on Rābi'ah consult Margaret Smith, *Rābi'a the Mystic and her Fellow-Saints in Islām* (Cambridge, 1928).

⁴ Louis Massignon, *Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islām* (Paris, 1929), pp. 111-12. See below, p. 586.

⁵ Ya'qūbi, vol. II, pp. 544-5

avail. Soon came al-Mutawakkil, who in 850 resumed the early practice of persecuting the Shī'ah; he destroyed the tomb of 'Ali at al-Najaf and the more venerated one of al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā',¹ thereby earning the everlasting hatred of all Shī'ites. In 1029 the Caliph al-Qādir drove a Shī'ite leader out of his Baghdād mosque and installed in his place a Sunnite.² This general hostility led the Shī'ites to the adoption of the principle of dissimulation (*taqīyah*³), i.e. dispensation from the requirements of religion under compulsion or threat of injury. The legitimacy of dissimulation as an ethical principle had already been recognized by some Khārijites,⁴ but the Shī'ites made it a fundamental tenet. They contributed to it the further point that when a believer finds himself in a position where his adversaries are in the ascendancy, not only may he profess outwardly the form of the prevailing religion but he must do so as a measure of protection for himself and his co-religionists.⁵

Although a suppressed minority and perpetrators of unsuccessful, though not always unheroic, rebellions against the established order, the non-conformist Shī'ites persisted openly and under cover of *taqīyah* in according their allegiance to whom rightful allegiance (*walāyah*) was due, namely, an imām descended from 'Ali. Unlike the Sunnite caliph the Shī'ite imām had inherited from Muḥammad not only his temporal sovereignty but the prerogative of interpreting the law. In that capacity he was an infallible teacher and to his infallibility (*iṣmah*)⁶ he added the divine gift of impeccability.⁷ Contrary to the Sunnite and the Sufi doctrine the Shī'ites maintained that religious certainty could be gained only from the instruction of such an imām divinely protected against error and sin. 'Ali, their first imām, was succeeded by his son al-Ḥasan and then by his other son, al-Ḥusayn,⁸ whose line is the more celebrated one. The last nine of the twelve imāms to whom the Twelvers

¹ *Fakhrī*, p. 325; Mas'ūdi, vol. vii, pp. 302-3.

² Ibn-al-Atṭār, vol. ix, p. 278.

³ Literally "caution", "fear". Koran, 3: 27.

⁴ Shahrastāni, p. 92, l. 15, p. 93, l. 6.

⁵ Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, p. 203.

⁶ See above, p. 248. Baghdādi, *Usūl*, vol. i, pp. 277-9.

⁷ Shahrastāni, pp. 108-9; Ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, pp. 164-5.

⁸ The numberless descendants of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn are distinguished from other Moslems by the titles *sharīf* (noble) and *sayyid* (lord) respectively and by the right to wear green turbans. The Sharīfs of Makkah, whose scion was the Sunnite King Fayṣal of al-'Irāq, as well as the Sharīfs of Morocco, represent the line of the eldest son of Fāṭimah.

(*Ithna 'Ashariyah*), the main body of the Shi'ah, swore allegiance, were descendants of al-Ḥusayn. Of these nine, four are said to have met death successively by poison: Ja'far (765) in al-Madīnah, Mūsa¹ (799) in Baghdād, 'Alī al-Riḍa² (818) in Ṭūs and Muḥammad al-Jawād (835) in Baghdād. Others fell fighting against the authority of the caliphs or at the hands of executioners. Since the youthful twelfth imām, Muḥammad, "disappeared" (264/878) in the cave of the great mosque at Sāmarrā without leaving offspring, he became "the hidden [*muṭatir*]" or "the expected [*muntazar*] imām".³ As such he is considered immune from death and in a temporary state of occultation (*ghaybah*). In due time he will appear as the Mahdi (divinely guided one) to restore true Islam, conquer the whole world and usher in a short millennium before the end of all things. Though hidden, this twelfth imām has always been "the master of the time" (*qā'im al-zamān*). In Persia the Twelver Shi'ah was established in 1502 by the Ṣafawids, who claimed descent from the seventh imām, Mūsa al-Kāzim. Since then the shah has been considered as simply the *locum tenens* of the hidden imām and the *mujtahids* (higher theologians) as his spokesmen and intermediaries with men.

Thus did the imām-mahdi dogma become an essential part of Shi'ite creed. Even today it forms the main line of demarcation between Shi'ite and Sunnite Islam. While the Sunnites do look forward to a future restorer of the faith, they neither emphasize his importance in their eschatology nor call him mahdi.⁴

The Shi'ah soil proved most fertile for the development of heterodoxies. According to a tradition Muḥammad once said, "The Israelites have been divided into seventy-one or -two sects, and so have the Christians, but my community shall be divided into seventy-three".⁵ Of these sects many were offshoots from the Shi'ah.

The Twelvers were not the only group among the imāmite

¹ Cf. Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 499.

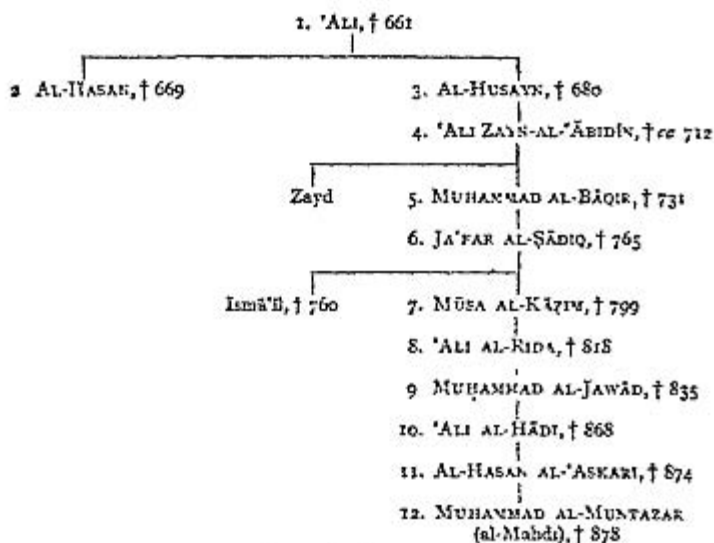
² Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 551; Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 577.

³ Shahrastāni, p. 126; Baghdādī, ed. Hitti, pp. 60-61; Ibn-Ḥazm, vol. iv, p. 138; al-Nawbakhtī, *Firag al-Shi'ah*, ed. Hellmut Ritter (Constantinople, 1931), pp. 84-5. Cf. Ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, p. 166. The cave (*sirdāb*) is still shown among the ruins of Sāmarrā.

⁴ See genealogical tree on next page. The belief in the return of the Mahdi lent itself to imposture and produced many pretenders in all periods of Moslem history.

⁵ Ibn-al-Jawzi, *Nuḥḥ*, pp. 19-20. Cf. Baghdādī, ed. Hitti, p. 15.

Shī'ah. Another group agreed with the Twelvers as to the succession down to the sixth imām, Ja'far al-Şādiq, but at this point diverged, making Ja'far's eldest son, Ismā'il († 760), in preference to his brother Mūsa, the seventh and last imām. This sect restricted the number of visible imāms to seven and were therefore called Seveners (*Sab'īyah*). Ja'far had designated Ismā'il as his successor, but having learned of Ismā'il's intemperance



Tree showing the Relationship of the Twelve Imāms

changed his decision in favour of his second son, Mūsa. The majority of the Shī'ah acquiesced in the change and continued the imāmate in Mūsa al-Kāzīm, who thus became number seven in the series of the twelve visible imāms. But others, claiming that the imām as an infallible being could not prejudice his case by such a thing as drinking wine, remained loyal to Ismā'il, who predeceased his father by five years. To these Seveners, also called Ismā'ilites, Ismā'il became the hidden Mahdī.¹

In the Ismā'ilīyah system, as in the Pythagorean system of old, the number seven assumed sacred importance. The Seveners

¹ Nawbakhti, pp. 57-8; Baghdādī, ed. Hitti, p. 58; Ibn-Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, pp. 167-8.

"periodicated" all cosmic and historical happenings by this number. In their gnostic cosmogony, partly based on Neo-Platonism, the steps of emanation were seven: (1) God; (2) the universal mind (*aql*); (3) the universal soul (*nafs*); (4) primeval matter; (5) space; (6) time; (7) the world of earth and man. This world was favoured with seven legislating prophets (sing. *nāṭiq*): Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus (*Isa*), Muḥammad and Muḥammad al-Tāmm, son of Ismā'il. In between each two of these legislating prophets they inserted seven silent ones (sing. *ṣāmī*), of whom the first was the "foundation" (*asās*). The silent prophets included such men as Ishmael, Aaron, Peter and 'Ali. Parallel to them ran another lower hierarchy, arranged in sevens or twelves, of propaganda leaders (sing. *ḥujjah*) and simple missionaries (sing. *dā'i*).¹

The Ismā'ilites organized one of the most subtle and effective means of politico-religious propaganda that the world of Islam ever experienced. From their places of retreat they began to send out missionaries to traverse the Moslem world preaching the doctrine known as *bāṭin*² (inner, esoteric). According to the unorganized schools of thought, called Bāṭinites by the orthodox, the Koran should be interpreted allegorically and religious truth could be ascertained by the discovery of an inner meaning of which the outer form (*ṣāḥir*) was but a veil intended to keep that truth from the eyes of the uninitiate. Quietly and cautiously the novice was initiated under oath of secrecy in the esoteric doctrines, including such recondite ones as the formation of the universe by emanation from the divine essence, transmigration of souls, the immanence of the Divinity in Ismā'il and the expectation of his early return (*raḥā*) as the Mahdi. Initiation is said to have involved seven to nine graded stages³ which recall modern Freemasonry.

This esoteric system found an able enthusiast in one 'Abdullāh, whose father, Maymūn al-Qaddāh, of obscure origin, had practised as an oculist (*qaddāh*) in al-Ahwāz before moving to Jerusalem. It was 'Abdullāh who perfected the religio-political system of the Ismā'ilites just delineated. From his headquarters,

¹ Shahrastāni, pp. 145-7; al-Jī, *al-Mawāḍiḥ*, vol. viii (Cairo, 1327), pp. 388-9. Consult W. Ivanow, *A Guide to Ismaili Literature* (London, 1933).

² Baghdādī, *Uṣūl*, pp. 329-30; Shahrastāni, pp. 147 seq.; ibn-al-Jawzi, p. 108.

³ Initiatory illumination transmitted to the adept by degrees was practised before this time by the Manichaeans and certain Greek schools of thought.

first at al-Baṣrah and later at Salamiyah¹ in northern Syria, he and his successors sent secret missionaries who systematically made their starting-point the arousing of scepticism in the would-be follower. They would then direct his attention to the great Mahdī soon to make his public appearance. Taking advantage of the growing enmity between Arab and Persian Moslems, this son of a humble Persian oculist conceived the audacious project of uniting in a secret society, with grades of initiation, both conquered and conquerors, who as free-thinkers would use religion as a scheme to destroy the caliphate and give 'Abdullāh or his descendants the throne—a project as astounding in its conception as it was rapid in its execution and certain in its partial success. For it was this scheme that culminated in the rise of the Fāṭimid dynasty in Tunisia and Egypt.

Qarma-
ṭiāna

Before his death, about 874,² 'Abdullāh had found a most zealous pupil and proselytizer in Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ,³ an 'Irāqī peasant who had read in the stars that the Iranians were going to regain the empire of the Arabs.⁴ Ḥamdān became the founder of the Bāṭini sect known after him as the Qarmaṭian. In this movement the ancient feud between the native peasantry and the sons of the desert evidently found expression. About 890 the founder built himself, near al-Kūfah, an official residence, Dār al-Hijrah⁵ (refuge for emigrants), which became the headquarters of the new movement. Active propaganda among the native masses, especially the so-called Nabataean peasants and artisans, as well as among the Arabs themselves, swelled the number of members in the new sect. Fundamentally the organization was a secret society based on a system of communism. Initiation was necessary for admission. The new community supported itself from a common fund created through contributions which were seemingly voluntary but in reality a series of taxes, each heavier than the preceding. Qarmaṭ even went so far as to prescribe community of wives and property (*ulfaḥ*).⁶ In their theology these "Bolsheviks of Islam", as they are called by

¹ See Isṭakhri, p. 61; ibn-al-Faqih, p. 110, Yāqūt, vol. iii, p. 123. The less authentic and modern form is Salamiyah; Maqdisi, p. 190, ibn-Khurādadhbih, pp. 76, 98.

² A century earlier according to a note in al-Juwayni, *Ta'rikh-i-Jahan-Gushd*, ed. Mirza M. al-Qazwini, pt. 3 (Leyden, 1937), p. 315.

³ Etymology of this word doubtful; probably not Arabic (Baghdādi, ed. Hitti, p. 171; *Fihrist*, p. 187, l. 9; Sam'āni, *Ansāb*, fol. 448b) but Aramaic for "secret teacher"; Ṭabarī, vol. iii, pp. 2125, 2127; ibn-al-Jawzi, p. 110.

⁴ *Fihrist*, p. 188.

⁵ Cf. ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, p. 136.

⁶ For other sects with same views see ibn Hazm, vol. iv, p. 143, ll. 13-14.

some modern writers, used an allegorical catechism based on the Koran and supposedly adapted to all creeds, all races and all castes. They stressed tolerance and equality, organized workers and artisans into guilds (sing. *ṣinf*) and in their ceremonial had the ritual of a guild. The earliest sketch of the organization of Moslem guilds occurs in the eighth epistle of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', themselves probably Qarmatians. This trade guild movement, in the opinion of Massignon, reached the West and influenced the formation of European guilds and Freemasonry.¹

The Qarmatian movement with its communistic, revolutionary tendencies developed into a most malignant growth in the body politic of Islam. To shed the blood of their opponents, even if Moslem, the Qarmatians considered legitimate. Before they were fully organized they had a hand in the servile war of the Zanj (negroes) at al-Basrah which between 868 and 883 shook the caliphate to its very foundation. Under the leadership of abu-Sa'id al-Hasan al-Jannābī,² originally a missionary of Qarmaṭ,³ they succeeded in founding (899) an independent state on the western shore of the Persian Gulf with al-Aḥsā'⁴ for their capital. Soon this state became at once the bulwark of their power and the terror of the caliphate in Baghdād. From their new headquarters they conducted a series of terrible raids on the neighbouring lands. Al-Jannābī himself subjected al-Yamāmah about 903 and invaded 'Umān. His son and successor, abu-Ṭāhir Sulaymān, laid waste most of lower al-'Irāq and cut the pilgrim routes.⁵ His atrocities culminated in 930 in the seizure of Makkah and the carrying off of the Black Stone.⁶ After an absence of some twenty years this most sacred relic of Islam was returned (951) to al-Ka'bah by order of the Fātimid Caliph al-Manṣūr.⁷ Between the tenth and eleventh centuries the followers of Qarmaṭ and al-Jannābī from their headquarters at Salamiyah kept Syria and al-'Irāq drenched in blood.⁸ Even distant Khurāsān

¹ Art. "Qarmatians", *Encyclopædia of Islam*.

² Jannāb was a town in Fūris near the mouth of a river emptying into the Persian Gulf, Iṣṭakhri, p. 34.

³ Ibn-Hawqal, p. 210

⁴ Modern al-Hufuf. Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, p. 63.

⁵ *Ibid.* vol. viii, pp. 124-5, 132-3, 158-9, 232.

⁶ Miskawayh, *Tajārīb al-Umam*, ed. H. F. Amedroz, vol. I (Oxford, 1920), p. 201; Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, pp. 153-4.

⁷ Cf. Baghdādi, ed. Hitti, pp. 176-7; Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, pp. 153-4

⁸ Tabari, vol. iii, pp. 2217 seq., Mas'ūdi, *Tanbih*, no. 371-6, Miskawayh, vol. ii, pp. 108-9.

and al-Yaman, because of the Qarmaṭian activity, formed lasting hotbeds of discontent.

The
Assassins

The Qarmaṭian state fell but its Ismā'īli doctrine passed on to the Fāṭimids of Egypt, from one of whom Druzism sprang, and later to the Neo-Ismā'īlites or Assassins¹ of Alamūt and Syria. The Assassin movement, called the "new propaganda"² by its members, was inaugurated by al-Ḥasan ibn-al-Ṣabbāḥ († 1124), probably a Persian from Ṭūs, who claimed descent from the Ḥimyarite kings of South Arabia. The motives were evidently personal ambition and desire for vengeance on the part of the heresiarch. As a young man in al-Rayy,³ al-Ḥasan received instruction in the Bāṭinite system, and after spending a year and a half in Egypt returned to his native land as a Fāṭimid missionary.⁴ Here in 1090 he gained possession of the strong mountain fortress Alamūt, north-west of Qazwīn. Strategically situated on an extension of the Alburz chain, 10,200 feet above sea-level, and on the difficult but shortest road between the shores of the Caspian and the Persian highlands, this "eagle's nest", as the name probably means, gave ibn-al-Ṣabbāḥ and his successors a central stronghold of primary importance. Its possession was the first historical fact in the life of the new order.

From Alamūt the grand master (*ḍā'i al-du'āh*) with his disciples made surprise raids in various directions which netted other fortresses. In pursuit of their ends they made free and treacherous use of the dagger, reducing assassination to an art. Their secret organization, based on Ismā'īlite antecedents, developed an agnosticism which aimed to emancipate the initiate from the trammels of doctrine, enlightened him as to the superfluity of prophets and encouraged him to believe nothing and dare all. Below the grand master stood the grand priors (sing. *al-ḍā'i al-kabīr*) each in charge of a particular district. After these came the ordinary propagandists. The lowest degree of the order comprised the *fidā'is*,⁵ who stood ready to execute whatever orders the grand master issued. A graphic, though late

¹ From Ar. *ḥashshāshūn*, those addicted to the use of *ḥashsh*, a stupefying hemp.

² *Al-da'wah al-jadīdah*; Shahrastāni, p. 150.

³ Hence his surname al-Rāzi; ibn-al-Athīr, vol. x, p. 369.

⁴ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. ix, p. 304, vol. x, p. 161.

⁵ Variant *fidāwn*, one ready to offer his life for a cause. Cf. ibn-Dajjūṭah, vol. i, pp. 166-7.

and second-hand, description of the method by which the master of Alamūt is said to have hypnotized his "self-sacrificing ones" with the use of *hashish* has come down to us from Marco Polo, who passed in that neighbourhood in 1271 or 1272. After describing in glowing terms the magnificent garden surrounding the elegant pavilions and palaces built by the grand master at Alamūt, Polo proceeds:

Now no man was allowed to enter the Garden save those whom he intended to be his *ASHISHIN*. There was a fortress at the entrance to the Garden, strong enough to resist all the world, and there was no other way to get in. He kept at his Court a number of the youths of the country, from 12 to 20 years of age, such as had a taste for soldiering. . . . Then he would introduce them into his Garden, some four, or six, or ten at a time, having first made them drink a certain potion which cast them into a deep sleep, and then causing them to be lifted and carried in. So when they awoke they found themselves in the Garden.

When therefore they awoke, and found themselves in a place so charming, they deemed that it was Paradise in very truth. And the ladies and damsels dallied with them to their hearts' content. . . .

So when the Old Man would have any Prince slain, he would say to such a youth: "Go thou and slay So and So; and when thou returnest my Angels shall bear thee into Paradise. And shouldst thou die, nevertheless even so will I send my Angels to carry thee back into Paradise."¹

The assassination in 1092 of the illustrious vizir of the Saljūq sultanate, Niẓām-al-Mulk, by a *fidā'i* disguised as a Sufi,² was the first of a series of mysterious murders which plunged the Moslem world into terror. When in the same year the Saljūq Sultan Malikshāh bestirred himself and sent a disciplinary force against the fortress, its garrison made a night sortie and repelled the besieging army. Other attempts by caliphs and sultans proved equally futile until finally the Mongolian Hūiāgu, who destroyed the caliphate, seized the fortress in 1256 together with its subsidiary castles in Persia.³

As early as the last years of the eleventh century the Assassins had succeeded in setting firm foot in Syria and winning as convert the Saljūq prince of Aleppo, Riḍwān ibn-Tutush († 1113). By

¹ *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian*, tr. Henry Yule, 2nd ed. (London, 1875), vol. i, pp. 146-9. Cf. a strikingly similar description of a corresponding ceremony at Maṣyād ascribed to ibn-Khallikān in *Fundgruben des Orients*, vol. iii (Vienna, 1813), ed. and tr. Hammer, pp. 201-6.

² Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 256; see below, p. 478.

³ Since the Assassin books and records were then destroyed, our information about this strange and spectacular order is derived mainly from hostile sources.

1140 they had captured the hill fortress of Maşyād¹ and many others in northern Syria, including al-Kahf, al-Qadmūs and al-'Ullayqah.² Even Shayzar (modern Sayjar) on the Orontes was temporarily occupied by the Assassins, whom Usāmā³ calls Ismā'ilītes. One of their most famous masters in Syria was Rāshid-al-Dīn Sinān († 1192), who resided at Maşyād and bore the title *shaykh al-jabal*, translated by the Crusades' chroniclers as "le vieux de la montagne"⁴ (the old man of the mountain). It was Rashid's henchmen who struck awe and terror into the hearts of the Crusaders. After the capture of Maşyād in 1260 by the Mongols, the Mamlūk Sultan Baybars in 1272 dealt the Syrian Assassins the final blow. Since then the Assassins have been sparsely scattered through northern Syria, Persia, 'Umān, Zanzibar and especially India, where they number about a hundred and fifty thousand and go by the name of Khojas or Mawlas.⁵ They all acknowledge as titular head the Āgha Khān of Bombay, who claims descent through the last grand master of Alamūt from Ismā'il, the seventh imām, receives over a tenth of the revenues of his followers, even in Syria, and spends most of his time as a sportsman between Paris and London.

The Nuşayris of northern Syria, who antedate the Druzes of Lebanon, form another of the surviving Ismā'ilīte sects. They are so named after Muḥammad ibn-Nuşayr, of the end of the ninth century, a partisan of the eleventh 'Alid imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askari († 874).⁶ According to Dussaud⁷ the followers of ibn-Nuşayr present a remarkable example of a group passing directly from paganism to Ismā'ilism. This explains the points of marked difference between them and the main body of Ismā'ilītes.

The Nuşayris, in company with other sects of extreme Shi'ites but unlike the Ismā'ilītes, consider 'Ali the incarnation

¹ Variants Maşyāf, Maşyāth. It still stands on the eastern side of the Nuşayrīyah Mountain. Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. xi, p. 52; abu-al-Fidā', vol. iii, p. 16.

² Ibn-Battūṭah, vol. i, p. 166.

³ *Kitāb al-I'tibār*, ed. Hitti, pp. 159-60 = *Arab-Syrian Gentleman*, p. 190.

⁴ Cf. William of Tyre, "Historia rerum" in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux*, vol. i (Paris, 1844), p. 996.

⁵ Other than these the Dāwūdīs of Gujarāt in India, who number over a hundred thousand, are likewise Ismā'ilītes, but are not followers of the Āgha Khān. On the Dāwūdīs see D. Menant in *Revue du monde musulman*, vol. x (1910), pp. 472 seq.

⁶ The first important references to ibn-Nuşayr and his followers occur in the manuscripts of Ḥamzah and other Druze polemicalists of the early eleventh century.

⁷ René Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Nuşayris* (Paris, 1900), p. 51.

of the deity.¹ Hence the name 'Alawites given them since the French mandate was established in their territory. Unlike the Druzes and other Moslem sects they possess a liturgy and have adopted a number of Christian festivals, including Christmas and Easter. Some of them bear Christian names such as Matta (Matthew), Yūḥanna (John) and Hīlānah (Helen). In addition to these borrowings from Christian sources their religion, which they practise with even greater secrecy than the Druzes, has retained clear remnants of their former pagan beliefs. Today some three hundred thousand adepts of this system, mostly peasants, inhabit the mountainous region of northern and central Syria and are scattered as far as Turkish Cilicia.

The Nuṣayris, Assassins, Druzes, Qarmaṭians and similar Ismā'ilite sects are considered even by the Shī'ites themselves, that is by the Twelvers, who form the bulk of the Shī'ite group, as extremists (*ghulāh*), mainly because they compromise the divinity of God and disregard the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood.² Among the *ghulāh* is a sect which has gone so far as to declare that Gabriel mistook Muḥammad for 'Alī when he called him to his prophetic mission.³ Of the ultra-Shī'ite sects which had a late development may be mentioned the Takhtajis (woodcutters) of western Anatolia, the 'Alī-Ilāhis ('Alī-deifiers) of Persia and Turkestan, their close of kin the Qizil-bāsh (red-heads) of the east of Anatolia and the Baktāshis of Turkey and Albania.

On the opposite wing stand the Zaydis of al-Yaman, the partisans of Zayd,⁴ grandson of al-Ḥusayn, whom they regard as the founder of their sect. Of all the Shī'ite sects this is the nearest akin to the Sunnites and in some respects the most tolerant. Between the *ghulāh* on the one hand and the Zaydis on the other the Twelvers occupy the middle ground of Shī'ism. Contrary to other Shī'ite groups the Zaydis believe in no hidden imām, practise no temporary marriage (*mut'ah*) and allow no dissimulation (*taqīyah*). But they share with all other Shī'ite groups hostility to Sufism. In all, the Shī'ites with their sub-sects do not form more than sixty million people or fourteen per cent. of the body of Islam.⁵

¹ Shahrastāni, pp. 143-5.

² For other extremists consult Baghdādi, ed. Hitti, pp. 145 *seq.*; Shahrastāni, pp. 132 *seq.*; ibn-Ḥazm, vol. iv, pp. 140 *seq.*; Ash'ari, *Maqālāt*, vol. i, pp. 5-16

³ Baghdādi, p. 157.

⁴ Consult the genealogical tree above, p. 442.

⁵ Cf. above, p. 249, n. 2.



From Stanley Lane-Poole, "History of Egypt" (Methuen & Co. Ltd.)
 DINAR OF AHMAD IBN-TŪLŪN, MIṢR, A.D. 884

CHAPTER XXXI

THE CALIPHATE DISMEMBERED: PETTY DYNASTIES IN THE WEST

1. In
 Spain

FIVE years after the foundation of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate the youthful 'Abd-al-Raḥmān, sole distinguished scion of the Umayyads to escape the general massacre which signalized the accession of the new régime, reached Cordova in far-off Spain. A year later, in 756, he established there a brilliant dynasty. The first province was thereby for ever stripped off the 'Abbāsīd empire, still in its infancy. Others were soon to follow.

2 The
 Idrīsids

In 785 Idrīs ibn-'Abdullāh, a great-grandson of al-Ḥasan, participated in one of those recurring 'Alīd revolts in al-Madinah. The insurrection was suppressed and he fled to Morocco (al-Maghrib),¹ where he succeeded in founding a kingdom bearing his name that lasted for almost two centuries (788-974). The Idrīsids,² whose principal capital was Fās (Fez),³ were the first Shī'ite dynasty in history. They drew their strength from the

¹ Ya'qūbī, vol. ii, p. 488; Ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iv, pp. 12-14; Ibn-'Idhārī, *Bayān*, vol. i, pp. 72 *seq.*, 217 *seq.*; tr. E. Fagnan, vol. i (Algier, 1901), pp. 96 *seq.*, 303 *seq.*

² Consult Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Mohammedan Dynasties* (London, 1893, reproduced 1925), p. 35; E. de Zambaur, *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de l'Islam* (Hanover, 1927), p. 65.

³ The city was built by Idrīs. Ibn-abī-Zar' (al-Fāsi), *Rawḍ al-Qirtās fī Akhbār Mulūk al-Maghrib*, ed. J. H. Tornberg (Upsala, 1843), p. 15; tr. Tornberg, *Annales regum Mauritaniae* (Upsala, 1845), pp. 21 *seq.*

Berbers, who though Sunnite were ever ready to espouse a schismatic cause. Hemmed in between the Fāṭimids of Egypt and the Umayyads of Spain, their dynasty finally succumbed under the fatal blows of a general of the Caliph al-Ḥakam II (961-76) of Cordova.¹

As the Shī'ite Idrīsids were carving for themselves a domain in the western part of North Africa, the Sunnite Aghlabids were doing likewise to the east. Over the territory called Ifrīqiyah (Africa Minor, i.e. mainly Tunisia), a corruption of Latin "Africa", Hārūn al-Rashīd had appointed in 800 Ibrāhīm ibn-al-Aghlab as governor.² Ibn-al-Aghlab (800-811) ruled as an independent sovereign, and after the year of his appointment no Abbāsīd caliph exercised authority beyond the western frontier of Egypt. The Aghlabids contented themselves with the title *amīr*, but seldom bothered to inscribe the caliph's name on their coinage even as a token of his spiritual suzerainty. From their capital, al-Qayrawān, heir to Carthage, they dominated in their century of power (800-909) the mid-Mediterranean.

Many of Ibrāhīm's successors proved as energetic as he. The dynasty became one of the pivotal points of history in the long conflict between Asia and Europe. With their well-equipped fleet they harried the coasts of Italy, France, Corsica and Sardinia. One of them, Ziyādat-Allāh I (817-38), sent against Byzantine Sicily in 827 an expedition which had been preceded by many piratical raids. This and succeeding expeditions resulted in the complete conquest of the island by 902.³ Sicily, as we shall see, became an advantageous base for operations against the mainland, particularly Italy. Besides Sicily, Malta and Sardinia were seized, mainly by pirates whose raids extended as far as Rome. At the same time Moslem pirates from Crete were repeatedly raiding the isles of the Aegean Sea and by the middle of the tenth century were harassing the coasts of Greece. Three Kufic inscriptions lately discovered in Athens reveal the existence of an Arab settlement there which may have survived until the early tenth century.⁴

¹ Ibn-abi-Zar', pp. 56-7.

² Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vi, pp. 106 seq.; ibn-'Idhār, vol. i, p. 83.

³ See Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vi, pp. 235 seq.; Ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iv, pp. 198-204.

⁴ D. G. Kampouroglous, "The Saracens in Athens", *Social Science Abstracts*, vol. ii (1930), no. 273; G. Soteriou, "Arabic Remains in Athens in Byzantine Times", *ibid.* no. 2360.

The great Mosque of al-Qayrawān, still standing as a rival to the famous mosques of the East, was begun under this Ziyādat-Allāh and completed by Ibrāhīm II (874-902). The site was that on which the primitive edifice of 'Uqbah, founder of al-Qayrawān, had stood. 'Uqbah's mosque had been adorned by one of his successors with pillars of marble from the ruins of Carthage, which were again utilized in the Aghlabid structure. The square minaret of this mosque, also a relic of the earlier structure of Umayyad days and therefore the oldest surviving in Africa, introduced into north-western Africa the Syrian form which was never displaced by the slighter and more fantastic forms of Persian ancestry and Egyptian development. In the Syrian type stone was used as against brick in the other. Thanks to this mosque, al-Qayrawān became to the Western Moslems the fourth holy city, ranking after Makkah, al-Madīnah and Jerusalem—one of the four gates of Paradise.

It was under the Aghlabids that the final transformation of Ifriqiyah from an outwardly Latin-speaking, Christianity-professing land to an Arabic-speaking, Islam-professing region took place. Like a house of cards Latin North Africa, which supplied St. Augustine with his cultural environment, collapsed never to rise again. The transformation was perhaps more complete than in any other region thus far reduced by Moslem arms. Such opposition as was raised later came from unsubdued Berber tribes and took the form of schismatic and heretical Moslem sectarianism.

The last Aghlabid was Ziyādat-Allāh III (903-9),¹ who in 909 took to flight before the Fātimid advance without offering any resistance.² The story of the Fātimids, who in 909 succeeded the Aghlabids in North Africa and in 969 displaced the Ikhshīdids in Egypt and southern Syria, belongs to a later chapter. The Ikhshīdids, whose history we shall soon sketch, were preceded by the Tūlūnid dynasty.

The founder of the short-lived Tūlūnid dynasty (*dawlah*, 868-905) in Egypt and Syria was Ahmad ibn-Tūlūn, whose father, a Turk from Farghānah, was sent in 817 by the Sāmānid ruler of Bukhāra as a present to al-Ma'mūn.³ In 868 Ahmad went

¹ For other Aghlabids see Lane-Poole, p. 37, Zambaur, pp. 67, 68.

² Ibn-'Idhārī, vol. 1, pp. 142-6; Ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iv, pp. 205-7; Ibn-abi-Zar', p. 61.

³ Ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iii, p. 295, vol. iv, p. 297.

to Egypt as lieutenant to its governor. Here he soon made himself independent.¹ When hard pressed for money by the Zanj rebellion, the Caliph al-Mu'tamid (870-92) demanded but did not receive financial aid from his Egyptian lieutenant. This event was a turning-point in the life of Egypt. It marked the emergence in the Nile valley of an independent state which maintained its sovereignty throughout the Middle Ages. Heretofore Egypt's rich revenues went partly into Baghdād and partly into the pockets of successive governors, who were primarily tax-farmers. Now money remained in the country and was spent in glorifying the reigning house. Down to the time of ibn-Ṭūlūn as many as a hundred different Moslem governors, with an average of about two years and a quarter of incumbency,² had succeeded one another in the exploitation of the land. Egypt profited by the Ṭūlūnid régime and entered upon an era of comparative prosperity.

Ibn-Ṭūlūn (868-84) gave his new state a rigid military organization. For the maintenance of authority he depended upon an army of a hundred thousand whose core consisted of a bodyguard of Turkish and negro slaves. From his troops, as well as from his slaves and subjects, he exacted an oath of personal allegiance.³ When in 877 the governor of Syria died Aḥmad occupied the neighbouring country without much opposition.⁴ For the first time since Ptolemaic days Egypt had become a sovereign state, and for the first time since Pharaonic days it ruled Syria. To maintain his hold on Syria Aḥmad developed a naval base at 'Akka (Acre).⁵ For many centuries to come Syria continued to be ruled from the valley of the Nile.

The Ṭūlūnid régime interested itself in irrigation, the most vital factor in the economic life of the land. Aḥmad improved the Nilometer on the isle of al-Rawḍah, near Cairo. This measuring instrument was first built by an Umayyad governor in 716 superseding the more ancient one of Memphis.⁶ The régime was the first since the Arab conquest to make Moslem Egypt famed as a centre of art and as a seat of a splendid court. Al-Qaṭā'ir⁷ (the wards), the new quarter of al-Fuṣṭāṭ, the capital,

¹ Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, pp. 615 *seq.*; Ṭabarī, vol. iii, p. 1697.

² Cf. lists in Kindī, ed. Guest, pp. 6-212; Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, vol. ii, pp. 2-10; de Zambaur, pp. 25-7.

³ Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 624.

⁴ Ibn Khaldūn, vol. iv, pp. 300-301; Kindī, pp. 219 *seq.*

⁵ Yāqūt, vol. iii, pp. 707-8.

⁶ Maqrīzī, ed. Wiet, vol. i, pp. 247-50.

⁷ Maqrīzī (Būliq), vol. i, pp. 313 *seq.*

was adorned with magnificent buildings. One of them was the sixty-thousand-dinar hospital (*ḥimārīstān*) built by Aḥmad.¹ The mosque that still bears the name of Aḥmad ibn-Tūlūn is one of the principal religious monuments of Islam. It shows, especially in its minaret—the oldest in Egypt—the architectural influence of the school of Sāmarrā, where Aḥmad had spent his youth. The structure cost 120,000 dinars² and is remarkable for the use of brick piers and for the early use of the pointed arch (above, p. 417). About one-seventeenth of the Koran is inscribed in beautiful Kufic characters on the wooden frieze round the inside of the building just below the flat timbered roof.³

The palace of Khumārawayh (884–95), Aḥmad's extravagant son⁴ and successor, with its "golden hall", whose walls were covered with gold and decorated with bas-reliefs of himself, his wives and his songstresses,⁵ was one of the most remarkable Islamic structures. The figures of Khumārawayh and his wives, wearing gold crowns, were life-size and carved in wood. Such representation of living persons is exceedingly rare in Islamic art. The palace stood amidst a garden rich in sweet-smelling flowers planted in beds which were shaped to spell Arabic words, and in exotic trees growing round gilded water tanks.⁶ Other outstanding features were an aviary⁷ and a zoological garden,⁸ but the chief wonder of the palace was a pool of quicksilver in its courtyard. Leather cushions inflated with air were moored on the surface of this pool by silken cords fastened to silver columns; on these the dynast used to lie, rocking agreeably to alleviate insomnia and induce slumber. Traces of the quicksilver were found in later years on the site.⁹ Shortly before his violent death Khumārawayh gave his daughter Qatr-al-Nada (dewdrop) in marriage to the Caliph al-Mu'taḍid, settled on her a dowry of a million dirhams and presented her with one thousand mortars of gold and other objects "the like of which

¹ Ibn-Taghri-Birdī, *al-Nuḥūm al-Zāhirah fi Mulūk Miṣr w-al-Qāhirah*, ed. T. G. J. Juynboll, vol. ii (Leyden, 1855), p. 11; Kindī, p. 216.

² Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 97; Ibn-Taghri-Birdī, vol. ii, p. 8.

³ The best description of this mosque was written about 1420 by Maqrīzī (*Dūlāq*), vol. ii, pp. 265 seq.; utilized by Suyūṭī, *Ḥuṣn*, vol. ii, pp. 152-4.

⁴ One of seventeen sons and thirty-three children; Ibn-Taghri-Birdī, vol. ii, p. 21; Suyūṭī, *Ḥuṣn*, vol. ii, p. 11.

⁵ Ibn-Taghri-Birdī, vol. ii, pp. 57-8; Maqrīzī, vol. i, pp. 316-17.

⁶ Ibn-Taghri-Birdī, vol. ii, p. 56.

⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 56-7.

⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 60-61.

⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 58-9; Maqrīzī, vol. i, p. 317.

had never been given before".¹ On account of his extravagance and luxuries Khumārawayh was held impious by the orthodox. He could, it is claimed, drink four rotls of Egyptian wine at one sitting.² It is related that as his body was being lowered into its grave the seven Koran readers appointed to recite the sacred book on the adjacent tomb of his father happened to be chanting: "Seize ye him and drag him into the mid-fire of hell".³

The Ṭūlūnid dynasty was the earliest manifestation of a political crystallization in the unruly and heretofore inarticulate Turkish element in the heart of the caliphate. Other and more important Turkish dynasties were soon to follow. The case of Aḥmad ibn-Ṭūlūn was typical of the founders of the many states on the ruins of the caliphate. These states broke off entirely from the central government or remained only nominally dependent upon the caliph in Baghdād. Aḥmad served as an example of what could be done in the matter of achieving military and political power at the expense of a bulky and unwieldy caliphate through the strong-handed and confident ambition of a subject soldier and his slave satellites. But the Ṭūlūnid, as well as the Ikhshidid and most of the other dynasties, had no national basis in the lands over which they ruled and therefore were short-lived. Their weakness consisted in the absence of a strong coherent body of supporters of their own race. The rulers were themselves intruders who were obliged to recruit their bodyguards, which were their armies, from various alien sources. Such a rule can only be maintained by men of outstanding personal influence, and no sooner does the mighty arm of the founder relax or pass away than disintegration sets in. No wonder that we find the state founded by ibn-Ṭūlūn reverting to the 'Abbāsids under his son and fourth successor, Shaybān (904-5).⁴

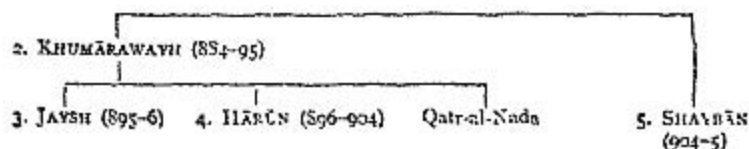
¹ Ibn-Khalikān, vol 1, p 310 Cf ibn-Khaldūn, vol iv, pp. 307-8, Tabari, vol. iii, pp 2145-6; ibn-Taḡhri-Birdi, vol ii, p 55.

² Tanūkhī, *Jāri' al-Tawārīkh*, ed D. S. Margolouth, vol. i (London, 1921), p. 261.

³ Sūr 44:47.

⁴ *Kuḍī*, pp. 247-8. Subjoined is a Ṭūlūnid tree:

I. AHMAD IBN-ṬŪLŪN (868-84)



5. The
Ikhshīdids

After a brief interval of precarious 'Abbāsīd sway in Egypt and Syria, another Turkish dynasty of Farghānah origin,¹ the Ikhshīdīd (935-69), was established at al-Fuṣṭāṭ. The founder, Muḥammad ibn-Ṭughj (935-46), after arranging the disorganized affairs of Egypt,² received in 939 from the Caliph al-Rādi the old Iranian princely title *ikhshīd*. In the next two years al-Ikhshīd, following the Ṭūlūnīd precedent, added Syria-Palestine to his quasi-independent state. In the following year both Makkah and al-Madīnah were incorporated. Henceforth the fate of al-Hijāz, a debatable land between east and west, was for several centuries linked with that of Egypt.

A negro
eunuch

The two sons who succeeded Muḥammad al-Ikhshīd ruled only in name, the reins of the government being held by the able Abyssinian eunuch abu-al-Misk Kāfūr (musky camphor). Originally purchased by al-Ikhshīd from an oil merchant for the equivalent of about eight pounds, Kāfūr became the sole ruler from 966 to 968.³ He successfully defended Egypt and Syria against the rising power of another petty dynasty in the north, the Ḥamdānīd. His name has been immortalized in the verses first sung in praise of him, later in ridicule, by the greatest poet of his age, al-Mutanabbi,⁴ the panegyrist of Kāfūr's adversary, Sayf-al-Dawlah al-Ḥamdānī. The case of this black slave rising from the humblest origin to wield absolute power was the first but not the last in Islamic history. Like other dynasts the Ikhshīdīds, and especially their founder, made lavish use of state moneys to curry favour with their subjects. The daily provision for Muḥammad's kitchen included, we are told, a hundred sheep, a hundred lambs, two hundred and fifty geese, five hundred fowls, a thousand pigeons and a hundred jars of sweets. When it was poetically explained to Kāfūr that the recurrent earthquakes of that time were due to Egypt's dancing with joy at his excellences the proud Abyssinian rewarded the would-be seismographer with a thousand dinars. Otherwise the Ikhshīdīds made no contribution to the artistic and literary life of their domain and

¹ Ibn-Sa'īd, *al-Mughrib fi Hula al-Maghrib*, ed. K. L. Tallqvist (Leyden, 1899), p. 5.

² Kindī, p. 288; Miskawayh, vol. i, pp. 332, 366, n.; ibn-Taghri-Birdī, vol. ii, p. 270.

³ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. ii, pp. 185-9; ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iv, pp. 314-15; ibn-Taghri-Birdī, vol. ii, p. 373.

⁴ *Dīwan*, ed. Fr. Dieterici (Berlin, 1861), pp. 623-732; ibn-Sa'īd, pp. 45-6.

no public works have been left by them. The last representative of this dynasty was an eleven-year-old boy, abu-al-Fawāris Aḥmad, who in 969 lost the country to the illustrious Fāṭimid general, Jawhar.¹

The Ikhshīdids of Egypt had strong rivals in the Shi'ite Ḥamdānids to the north. Originally established in northern Mesopotamia with al-Mawṣil for their capital (929-91), the Ḥamdānids, who were descendants of Ḥamdān ibn-Ḥamdūn² of the Taghlib tribe, advanced in 944 into northern Syria and under the leadership of the future Sayf-al-Dawlah (the sword of the dynasty) wrested Aleppo (Ḥalab) and Ḥimṣ from the Ikhshīdid lieutenant in charge. Syria, which never forgot its past glory under the Umayyads, had ever been a hotbed of dissatisfaction and rebellion against the 'Abbāsīd régime. Sayf-al-Dawlah (944-67) of Aleppo became the founder of a north Syrian dynasty which lasted until 1003. His second successor, Sa'id-al-Dawlah (991-1001), however, was a vassal of the Fāṭimids of Egypt. Hard pressed between the Byzantines and the Fāṭimids, the Ḥamdānids³ in that year gave way in favour of the latter.

Sayf-al-Dawlah owes his fame in Arab annals primarily to his munificent patronage of learning and, in a smaller measure,

¹ Tughj

I. MUḤAMMAD AL-ĪKHSĪD (935-46)

2. ABU-AL-QĀSIM UNŪJŪR
(946-60)

3. 'ALI
(960-66)

4. ABU-AL-MISK KĀFŪR
(966-8)

5. AḤMAD
(968-9)

The stars indicate a master-slave relationship.

"Unūjūr" is transmitted in several variants. Cf. ibn-Taghri-Birdi, vol. ii, p. 315; Kindi, p. 294; ibn-Khaldūn, vol. iv, p. 314; ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, p. 343; Miskawayh, vol. ii, p. 104. See also F. Wüstenfeld, *Die Statthalter von Ägypten zur Zeit der Chalifen*, pt. iv (Göttingen, 1876), p. 37.

² Ṭabarī, vol. iii, p. 2141.

³ 1. Sayf-al-Dawlah abu-al-Ḥasan 'Ali (944-67)

2. Sa'id-al-Dawlah abu-al-Ma'ālī Sharīf (967-91)

3. Sa'id-al-Dawlah abu-al-Faḍāl Sa'id (991-1001)

4a. Abu-al-Ḥasan 'Ali (1001-3)

4b. Abu-al-Ma'ālī Sharīf (1001-3)

to his taking up the cudgels against the Christian enemies of Islam after those cudgels had been laid down by other Moslem hands. The literary circle of this Ḥamdānid, himself a poet,¹ recalls the days of al-Rashīd and al-Ma'mūn. It included the celebrated philosopher-musician al-Fārābī, whose modest daily needs were met by a pension of four dirhams from the state treasury; the distinguished historian of literature and music, al-Ḥṣbahānī, who presented to his patron the autograph manuscript of his monumental *Aghānī* and received in reward a thousand pieces of gold; the eloquent court preacher ibn-Nubātah († 984), whose elegant sermons² in rhymed prose fired the zeal of his hearers for prosecuting the holy war against Byzantium; and above all the poet laureate al-Mutanabbī' (915-65), whose bombastic and ornate style with its flowery rhetoric and improbable metaphors renders him to the present day the most popular and most widely quoted poet in the Moslem world.³ An early authority calls his poetry "the height of perfection".⁴ Al-Mutanabbī'⁵ (prophecy claimant), son of a water-carrier in al-Kūfah, was so named because in his youth he claimed the gift of prophecy among the Bedouins of Syria. His poetical rival in Aleppo was a cousin of Sayf-al-Dawlah, abu-Firās al-Ḥamdānī.⁶ Estranged for a time from his Ḥamdānid patron, al-Mutanabbī' sought and received the protection of the Ikhshīdīd Kāfūr, in whom he was later disappointed.

As a late product of this ephemeral renaissance in northern Syria we may count the "philosopher of poets and poet of philosophers" abu-al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī (973-1057), who expressed the sceptical and pessimistic sentiments of an age of social decay and political anarchy in Islam. A descendant of the Tanūkh, abu-al-'Alā' was born and died in Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, whence his surname. His tomb was renovated in 1944 on the occasion of his thousandth anniversary. When four years old he was stricken with

¹ Ibn-Khalīkān, vol. ii, pp. 66-8; Tanūkhī, p. 134.

² *Kṭubāh*, which have appeared in several Cairo and Beirut editions.

³ His *Diwān* was edited by Dieterici and later by Nāsif al-Yāziji (Beirut, 1882). The thousandth anniversary of his death (A.H. 354) was commemorated in 1935 in Syria, Lebanon and other lands.

⁴ Ibn-Khalīkān, vol. i, p. 63. For an early critical view see Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmah*, vol. i, pp. 78-164.

⁵ Properly abu-al-Tayyīb Ahmad ibn-Husayn.

⁶ *Diwān*, ed. Nakhlah Qalīfāt (Beirut, 1900); tr. in part, Rudolph Dvofák as *Abū Firās: ein arabischer Dichter und Held* (Leyden, 1895). See also Tha'ālibī, vol. i, pp. 22-62.

smallpox, which cost him his sight, but for which compensation was made by the development of a prodigious memory. In 1009 abu-al-'Alā' went to Baghdād, where he spent about a year and seven months and became inoculated with the ideas of Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' as well as with others of Indian origin. On his return home he adopted a vegetarian diet and a life of comparative seclusion. His late works, particularly his *Luzūmiyyāt*¹ and *Risālat al-Ghufrān*² (treatise on forgiveness) reveal him as one who took reason for his guide and pessimistic scepticism for his philosophy. It was this *Risālah* that is claimed to have exercised a determining influence over Dante in his *Divine Comedy*.³ His quatrains⁴ have been partly done into English. Parallels have repeatedly been drawn between this Syrian poet and the Persian 'Umar al-Khayyām, who died about sixty years after him and shows decided marks of having been influenced by his predecessor. Al-Mutannabi' and al-Ma'arri close the period of great Arab poetry. Since that day hardly any Arab poet has been able to achieve more than local eminence.

After making his position secure in northern Syria, "the sword of the Ḥamdānīd dynasty", beginning in 947, conducted annual campaigns into Asia Minor. Until his death twenty years later not a year passed without some engagement with the Greeks.⁵ At first fortune smiled on Sayf's efforts. He seized Mar'ash among other border towns. But the brilliant leadership of Nicephorus Phocas and John Tzimiscēs,⁶ both future emperors, saved the day for Byzantium. In 961 Nicephorus captured the capital, Aleppo, with the exception of the citadel, put over ten thousand of its youth and all the captives to the sword and destroyed the palace of Sayf-al-Dawlah. But after eight or nine days he retired.⁷ After he became emperor (963-9) his troops wrested Cyprus from the Arabs and occupied Cilicia.⁸ Thus was the road

¹ *Al-Luzūmiyyāt aw Luzūm Ma la Yalcam*, ed. 'Azīz Zand, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1891, 1895); tr. (in part) Ameen Rihani (New York, 1918).

² Ed. Kāmil Kīlānī, 2 pts. (Cairo, 1923); partially translated by R. A. Nicholson in *Journal Royal Asiatic Society* (1900), pp. 637-720; (1902), pp. 75-101, 337-62, 513-47.

³ *Asia, Islam and the Divine Comedy*, tr. Sunderland.

⁴ *Rubā'iyyāt*, stanzas of four lines in which first, second and fourth rhyme; originally a Persian form of composition.

⁵ See Yahya ibn-Sa'īd al-Anṭākī, "Ta'rikh", ed. and tr. (Fr.) I. Kratchkovsky and A. Vasiliev in *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. xviii, pp. 768 seq.

⁶ "Ibn-Shamshāqīq" of Arab chronicles; ibn-al-Āthīr, vol. viii, p. 407, abu-al-Fidā', vol. ii, p. 110, l. 20.

⁷ Miskawayh, vol. ii, pp. 102-4; Yahya, pp. 786-7

⁸ Yūqūt, vol. iii, p. 327.

open again to Syria. In the last year of his reign his army seized Antioch, long coveted as a city of patriarchs, saints and councils and as a religious peer of Byzantium itself. The city remained in Byzantine hands from 969 till 1084. Soon after the occupation of Antioch, Nicephorus' general entered Aleppo and exacted from Sayf's son and successor, Sa'd-al-Dawlah (967-91), a humiliating treaty.¹ The Emperor John Tzimisce (969-76) adopted the policy of consolidating and insuring the conquests in Cilicia and northern Syria, and set for his final goal the freeing of Jerusalem. To this end he started from Antioch on a real crusade, entered Damascus, but did not penetrate far into Palestine. Early in his reign the refractory banu-Ḥabīb of Nasībīn, cousins of the Ḥamdānids, 12,000 strong, left their homes on account of the high taxes, embraced Christianity and joined the Byzantines in their attacks on Moslem lands.² Tzimisce's successor, Basil II (976-1025), though troubled by the Arabs of North Africa, who at this time were in possession of Sicily and many Aegean islands, took the field in person to defend the Syrian possessions now threatened by the Fātimids of Egypt. But at the outset of the eleventh century he signed a treaty of peace with the Fātimid al-Ḥākīm and no further serious collision took place. The efforts of Basil II, preceded by those of Nicephorus and Tzimisce, extended the eastern boundary of the Byzantine empire at the expense of Islam as far as the Euphrates and into the heart of northern Syria.³ Their reigns covered "the most brilliant period in the history of Byzantine relations with the eastern Muslims".⁴

¹ Yahya, pp. 823-4.

² Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vii, pp. 440-41.

³ Vasiliev, *Byzantine Empire*, vol. i, p. 381.

⁴ Ibn-Hawqal, pp. 140-41.

CHAPTER XXXII

SUNDRY DYNASTIES IN THE EAST

WHILE petty dynasties, mostly of Arab origin, were parcelling out the domains of the caliph in the west, the same process was being carried forward by others, chiefly Turkish or Persian, in the east.

The first to establish a quasi-independent state east of Baghdād was the once trusted general of al-Ma'mūn, Tāhir ibn-*al-*Ḥusayn of Khurāsān, who had victoriously led his master's army against al-Amīn. In this war the one-eyed Tāhir is said to have used the sword so effectively with both hands that al-Ma'mūn¹ nicknamed him *dhu-al-Yamīnayn* (ambidextrous) and a poet described him as the warrior "minus one eye, plus an extra right arm".² The descendant of a Persian slave, Tāhir was rewarded in 820 by al-Ma'mūn with the governorship of all lands east of Baghdād, with the centre of his power in Khurāsān. Before his death two years later in his capital, Marw, Tāhir had omitted mention of the caliph's name in the Friday prayer.³ Though nominally vassals of the caliph, Tāhir's successors extended their dominion as far as the Indian frontier. They moved the seat of government to Naysābūr, where they remained in power till 872,⁴ when they were superseded by the Saffārids.

The Saffārid dynasty, which originated in Sijistān and reigned in Persia for forty-one years (867-908), owes its foundation to one Ya'qūb ibn-*al-*Layth *al-*Ṣaffār (867-78). *Al-*Ṣaffār (coppersmith) was a coppersmith by profession and a brigand by avocation. His chivalrous and efficient conduct as head of a band of outlaws attracted the favourable attention of the caliph's governor over Sijistān, who thereupon entrusted him with the

¹ Tabari, vol. III, p. 829; Ibn-Khallikān, vol. I, p. 424. Cf. Mas'ūdi, vol. VI, p. 423.

² Ibn-Khallikān, vol. I, p. 422; Ibn al-Athīr, vol. VI, p. 270.

³ Ibn al-Athīr, vol. VI, pp. 255, 270.

⁴ Mas'ūdi, vol. VIII, p. 42; Tabari, vol. III, p. 1880.

command of his troops.¹ Al-Šaffār eventually succeeded his benefactor and added to his domains almost all Persia and the outskirts of India, even threatening Baghdād itself under the Caliph al-Mu'tamid.² The Sāmānids fell heir to a large portion of the Šaffārīd state.³

The Sāmānids of Transoxiana and Persia (874-999) were descended from Sāmān, a Zoroastrian noble of Balkh. The founder of the dynasty was Našr ibn-Aḥmad (874-92), a great-grandson of Sāmān, but the one who established its power was Našr's brother Ismā'il (892-907), who in 900 wrested Khurāsān from the Šaffārīds.⁴ Starting as Moslem sub-governors under the Ṭāhirīds, the Sāmānids under Našr II ibn-Aḥmad⁵ (913-43), fourth in the line, extended their kingdom to its greatest limits, including under their sceptre Sijistān, Karmān, Jurjān, al-Rayy and Ṭabaristān, in addition to Transoxiana and Khurāsān. Though outwardly professing loyalty to the 'Abbāsīds, the dynasty was virtually independent. In the eyes of the Baghdād caliph its members were *amīrs* (governors) or even *'amils* (tax collectors), but within their own territory their authority was undisputed.

It was under the Sāmānids that the final subjugation of Transoxiana to Moslem rule was effected. Their capital, Bukhāra, and their leading city, Samarqand, almost eclipsed Baghdād as centres of learning and art. Not only Arabic but Persian scholarship was protected and fostered. It was to a Sāmānid prince, abu-Šāliḥ Mansūr ibn-Išḥāq of Sijistān, a nephew of the second ruler, that the illustrious al-Rāzi dedicated his book on medicine entitled *al-Manšūrī* in honour of his patron. It was in response to a summons from the Sāmānid ruler Nūḥ II (976-97)⁶ that young ibn-Sīna, then living in Bukhāra and still in his teens, was accorded free access to the rich royal library,⁷ where he acquired that seemingly inexhaustible fund of knowledge. From this

¹ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vi, pp. 124-5; Ibn-Khalikān, vol. iii, pp. 350-51; Ya'qūbi, vol. ii, p. 605; Mustawfi-i-Qazwīnī, *Tarīkh-i-Guzida*, ed. E. G. Browne, vol. i (Leyden, 1910), p. 373; tr. (abr.) Browne, vol. ii (Leyden, 1913), p. 72.

² Ištākhrī, pp. 245-7.

³ Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, pp. 41-5; Ṭabari, vol. iii, pp. 1698-1706, 1880-87.

⁴ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vii, pp. 192-5, 346-7, vol. viii, pp. 4-6; Ištākhrī, ed. Gottwaldt, pp. 236-7; Ṭabari, vol. iii, p. 2194; *Tarīkh-i-Sistan*, ed. Bahār (Tehran, 1935), p. 256.

⁵ Consult Mustawfi-i-Qazwīnī, vol. i, pp. 381-3 = vol. ii, p. 74; Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, pp. 58-60, 154-6.

⁶ Consult Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. ix, pp. 69 *seq.*

⁷ Ibn-abi-Ušaybi'ah, vol. ii, p. 4.

epoch modern Persian literature takes its rise. Suffice it to recall that Firdawsi (ca. 934-1020) wrote his first poetry in this period and that Bal'ami, the vizir of Manšūr I¹ (961-76), translated an abridgment of al-Ṭabari's history² and thus produced one of the oldest extant prose works in Persian. Ever since the Moslem conquest Persians had used Arabic as the medium of literary expression, but with these writers the brilliant Moslem literature of Persia began its development.

Though one of the most enlightened of the Iranian dynasties, the Sāmānid was not free from those elements which proved fatal to others of the same period. To the usual problems presented by a turbulent military aristocracy and a precarious dynastic succession was now added a new danger, that of the Turkish nomads to the north. Even within the state power was gradually slipping into the hands of Turkish slaves with whom the Sāmānids had filled their court. The Sāmānid territory south of the Oxus was absorbed in 994 by the Ghaznawids, who rose to power under one of these slaves. The territory north of the river was seized by the so-called İlek (İlāq) Khāns of Turkestan, who in 992 captured Bukhāra and seven years later gave the *coup de grâce* to the expiring Sāmānid dynasty. Thus for the first but not the last time we note Turanian hordes of Central Asia thrusting themselves to the forefront of Islamic affairs. The struggle between Iranians and Turanians for the mastery of the borderland of Islam in the fourth Moslem century was but a prelude to graver developments. We shall hereafter see these Turks play an increasingly important rôle in world affairs until they finally absorb most of the powers of the caliph of Baghdād, in fact until they establish their own caliphate, the Ottoman, in "Baghdād on the Bosphorus".

Among the Turkish slaves whom the Sāmānids delighted to honour with high governmental posts was one Alptigīn, who³ started his career as a member of the bodyguard. Soon he rose to the headship of the guard⁴ and thence was promoted in 961 to the governorship of Khurāsān. Shortly afterwards, however, he fell out of favour with the new Sāmānid ruler and betook himself to the eastern border of the kingdom. Here in 962 he captured

¹ A flattering description of the internal conditions under him has been left by an eye-witness, ibn-Hawqal, pp. 341-2, 344-5.

² Mustawfi-i-Qazwīni, vol. i, p. 385—vol. ii, p. 75.

³ Ibn-Hawqal, pp. 13, 14, refers to him as *Alptekin, khatib jahid Khurāsān*.

Ghaznah, in Afghanistan, from its native rulers and established an independent realm¹ which developed into the Ghaznawid empire of Afghanistan and Panjāb (962-1186). The real founder of the Ghaznawid dynasty, however, was Subuktigīn (976-97), a slave and son-in-law of Alptigīn. The sixteen Ghaznawids who succeeded him were his lineal descendants. Subuktigīn widened his territory to include Peshāwar in India and also Khurāsān in Persia, which he first held under the Sāmānids.

Maḥmūd
of
Ghaznah

The most distinguished member of the dynasty was Subuktigīn's son Maḥmūd (999-1030). The location of his capital, Ghaznah, on the crest of a high plateau overlooking the plains of northern India, into which it possessed easy access through the valley of Kābul, gave him an advantageous position for a series of campaigns eastward. Between 1001 and 1024 Maḥmūd conducted no less than seventeen campaigns into India, which resulted in the annexation of the Panjāb, with its centre, Lahore, of Multān and of part of Sind.² In the Panjāb Moslem influence was now permanently established. From these raids Maḥmūd returned with fabulously rich spoils from the Hindu temples and won an enviable distinction among his contemporaries as the idol-breaker and champion of orthodox iconoclastic Islam. He was one of the first in Moslem history to receive, and that about 1001, the title *al-ghāzī*, bestowed on him who distinguished himself in war against unbelievers.

Maḥmūd likewise extended the western borders of his domains. Here he wrested the Persian 'Irāq, including al-Rayy and Iṣbahān, from the Shī'ite Buwayhids, who at the time had the caliph under their control. As a Sunnite, Maḥmūd had from the time of his accession acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of the Caliph al-Qādir (991-1031),³ from whom he later received the title Yamīn-al-Dawlah (the right arm of the state).⁴ On their coins he and his immediate successors satisfied themselves with the title *amīr* (governor) or *sayyid* (chief). Though Maḥmūd is credited with being the first in Islam to be designated *sulṭān*,⁵ evidence from coins shows that this high designation was first

¹ Mustawfī-i-Qazwīnī, vol. i, p. 393 = vol. ii, p. 78.

² *Ibid.* vol. i, pp. 395 *seq.*; Wīrūnī, *Tahqīq*, p. 11; M. Nūzīm, *The Life and Times of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna* (Cambridge, 1931), pp. 86 *seq.*

³ See Hūlāl al-Ṣābi', *Tārīkh al-Wusarā'* (supplement to Miskawayh, *Tajārīb*, vol. iii), ed. Amedroz, pp. 341-5.

⁴ Mustawfī-i-Qazwīnī, vol. i, p. 395.

⁵ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. ix, p. 92.

officially borne by the Saljūq rulers.¹ At their greatest extent Mahmūd's dominions, besides northern India in the east and the Persian 'Irāq in the west, included all Khurāsān, Ṭukhāristān with its centre Balkh, part of Transoxiana in the north and Sijistān in the south.² He adorned his capital with magnificent buildings,³ founded and endowed a large academy and made his munificent court the chief resort of poets and men of learning. His assemblage of literary genius included the Arab historian al-'Utbi⁴ († 1036), the celebrated scientific and historical author al-Bīrūnī and the illustrious Persian poet Firdawsi, the millennial anniversary of whose birth was celebrated in 1934-5 in Asia Europe and America. On dedicating his great epic, the *Shāh-nāmāh*, to Mahmūd and receiving only 60,000 dirhams instead of dinars for its 60,000 verses, Firdawsi denounced his patron in a scathing satire and had to flee for his life.

The rise of the Ghaznawid dynasty represents the first victory of the Turkish element in its struggle against the Iranian element for ultimate mastery in Islam. Yet the Ghaznawid state did not differ radically from the Sāmānid or the Ṣaffārid state. It was loosely held by force of arms, and as soon as the powerful hand wielding the sword relaxed the component parts were certain to fall away. This is what happened after Mahmūd's death. The provinces of the east gradually separated themselves from the capital in the highlands, thus beginning the series of independent Moslem dynasties of India. In the north and west the Khāns of Turkestan and the Great Saljūqs of Persia parcelled out the Ghaznawid domain. In the centre the hardy Ghūrīds of Afghanistan dealt the final blows and in 1186 destroyed the last Ghaznawids in Lahore.

While the wings of the 'Abbāsīd eagle were being clipped at both extremities, a dagger clutched in Perso-Turkish hands was pointed at its heart. Under the domination of the Shī'ite Persian Buwayhids, and after them of the Sunnite Turkish Saljūqs, the caliph had little left except the capital and even there his authority was shadowy. The rise of an unruly imperial guard, followed by a revolt of negro slaves, undermined the central

¹ See below, p. 474.

² *Ḥilāl al-Ṣābir*, pp. 340, 386.

³ See S. Flury in *Syria*, vol. vi (1925), pp. 61-90.

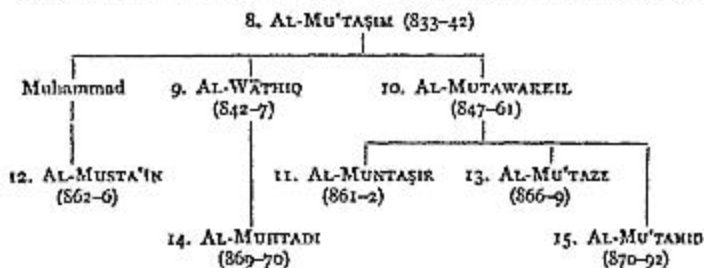
⁴ His *Kitaḥ 1-Yamīn*, tr. James Reynolds (London, 1858), originally in Arabic, extols the glorious reign of Mahmūd.

authority and paved the way for the advent of the Buwayhid régime.

It was the eighth 'Abbāsīd caliph, al-Mu'taṣim (833-42), son of Hārūn by a Turkish slave, who first surrounded himself with a bodyguard of Turkish recruits from Transoxiana. The guard numbered four thousand. Originally brought in to counter-balance the influence of the soldiers from Khurāsān, to whom the 'Abbāsīds owed the caliphate, the yearly import of Turks became an even greater menace to its integrity. Al-Manṣūr's "city of peace" became a city of turmoil. Facing the danger of a native uprising in Baghdād against the haughty and oppressive conduct of his guard, the caliph in 836 removed his seat of government sixty miles farther up the Tigris to Sāmarrā.¹ Originally Assyrian, the name was changed by him to Surra Man Ra'a (pleased is he who sees it) under which name it appears as a mint city on 'Abbāsīd coins. It was wittily whispered at the time that what the new name really meant was "he who sees it (with the Turks settled therein) is pleased (with Baghdād well rid of them)".

Sāmarrā was beautified by palaces and mosques erected mainly by al-Mu'taṣim and his son al-Mutawakkil (847-61). It remained the capital for fifty-six years (836-92), during the reigns of eight successive caliphs, and its ruins are the most imposing 'Abbāsīd monuments extant.²

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE 'ABBĀSĪD CALIPHS AT SĀMARRĀ



The rise of this body of predominantly Turkish soldiery, which played a part in the caliphate not unlike that of the

¹ Tabari, vol. iii, pp. 1179-81; Mas'ūdi, vol. vii, pp. 118 seq.; Yāqūt, *Buldan*, vol. iii, pp. 16-17.

² Maqqīsi, pp. 122-3; Ernst Herzfeld, *Der Wanderschnitt der Bauten von Samarra* (Berlin, 1923).

prætorian guard in Rome and the Janissaries in Turkey, marked the beginning of the end of caliphal power. The caliph lived in his new capital almost as their prisoner. The murder of al-Mutawakkil by them in December 861, at the instigation of his son,¹ was the first in a series of events in the course of which the mighty structure of the 'Abbāsid dynasty—already shaken—stood face to face with imminent collapse. Al-Mutawakkil was the first caliph in the period of decline. After him we find caliphs made and unmade by troops, chiefly Turkish, under generals mostly slaves, striving for mastery. Through their influence over these slaves the women of the court came to play an important political rôle and thus added to the confusion. In the case of the weak and vacillating al-Musta'in (862-6), who eventually fled to Baghdād pursued by his guard after he had been besieged and forced to abdicate, his slave-mother shared with two Turkish generals the supreme power.² The mother of his successor al-Mu'tazz (866-9) refused to pay out the 50,000 dinars which might have saved the life of her caliph son, though she kept in a subterranean cellar a cache of 1,000,000 dinars in addition to priceless jewellery.³ For two centuries the history of the disintegrating caliphate presents a confused picture of nominal rulers ascending the throne with no power and descending to the grave unregretted. Peace and security, if anywhere, were enjoyed only in those outlying provinces where a governor, practically independent, held the reins with an iron hand.

One of the most spectacular and sanguinary episodes of the period was the rebellion of the Zanj⁴ slaves. These were negroes^w imported from East Africa and employed in the saltpetre mines on the lower Euphrates. The leader (*sāhib al-Zanj*) was one 'Alī ibn-Muḥammad, a wily pretender, probably of Arab origin. Taking advantage of disturbed conditions in the capital and the uprising of the discontented and wretched miners, he claimed in September 869 that he was an 'Alid called to their deliverance by visions and occult science. One band of slaves after another rallied under the banner of the new Messiah—"the rogue" and "Allah's enemy" of our main informant, al-Ṭabari.⁵ Army after

¹ Ṭabari, vol. iii, pp. 1452-65; abbr. ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vii, pp. 60-64.

² Ṭabari, vol. iii, pp. 1512-13, copied by ibn-al-Athīr, vol. vii, pp. 80-81.

³ Ṭabari, vol. iii, pp. 1718-19.

⁴ From Pers. Zang (Ethiopia), whence Zanghār, Ar. Zanjabār, corrupted to Zanzibar.

⁵ Vol. iii, pp. 1755, 1786.

army was sent to suppress the strange rebellion, but being on favourable and familiar territory, a patchwork of marshes intersected with canals, the negroes overcame them all and, in accordance with a Khārijite doctrine now adopted by their leader, mercilessly put all prisoners and non-combatants to the sword.¹ During fourteen years (870-83) of the reign of al-Mu'tamid (870-92) this servile war raged. The estimates of those who perished vary, some exceeding half a million. After one engagement the unclaimed heads of Moslems were so numerous that the negroes dumped them into a canal which carried them into al-Basrah, where they could be identified by relatives and friends.² Al-Basrah, Wāsiṭ, al-Ahwāz and al-Ubullah lay desolate. Not until the caliph's brother al-Muwaffaq had taken personal charge of the operations was the backbone of opposition broken. In 883 al-Mukhtārāh, the fortress built by the leader, was stormed and he himself slain. "Thus ended one of the bloodiest and most destructive rebellions which the history of Western Asia records."³ It was in the course of this war that Egypt, one of the first and fairest provinces, fell away from the caliphate under the rule of ibn-Ṭūlūn.

The amīr
al-umayyād
in power

The restoration of Baghdād as capital under al-Mu'taḍid (892-902), after ephemeral Sāmarrā had functioned as such for over half a century, changed the scene but not the current of events. The real power continued to slip from caliphal to military hands. The period saw the rise of 'Abdullāh ibn-al-Mu'tazz, who after contesting the caliphate with his second cousin al-Muqtadir had the unique distinction of holding office under the title al-Murtaḍa for one day only (December 17, 908), after which he was deposed and killed. The one-day caliph was more of a poet and belletrist than a politician. Of his many works cited by *al-Fihrist*⁴ and ibn-Khalīkān⁵ only a few have survived.

The twenty-four years of al-Muqtadir's reign (908-32) were marked by the rise and fall of thirteen vizirs, some of whom were put to death.⁶ To add to the confusion the caliph's Turkish mother constantly interfered in state affairs. One of these vizirs was ibn-Muqlah, a founder of Arabic calligraphy.⁷ Another was

¹ Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, pp. 31, 58-61.

² Tabari, vol. iii, pp. 1785-6.

³ Nöldeke, *Sketches from Eastern History*, tr. J. S. Black (London, 1892), p. 174.

⁴ P. 116

⁵ Vol i, p. 462.

⁶ *Fakhrī*, pp. 360 seq.

⁷ Miskawayh, vol. i, pp. 185 seq.; Sābi', *H'uzarā'*, ed. Amedroz, pp. 109, 326, 359-60.

'Ali ibn-'Isa, who in an age of corruption and oppression under a régime of cruelty and torture stands alone in his integrity and ability. In the two vizirates of 'Ali, which lasted five years, he materially improved the finances of the state by rigid economy and set an example of high efficiency which found no imitators.¹ It was during the caliphate of al-Muqtadir that both the Fāṭimid 'Ubaydullāh (909) in North Africa and the Umayyad 'Abd-al-Rahmān III (929) in Spain assumed the dignity and insignia of the caliphate, thus creating the unusual phenomenon of three recognized rival caliphs in the Moslem world at the same time. The weak and incapable al-Muqtadir (lit. the mighty [by the help of God]) left the affairs of the state in the hands of his chief of bodyguard Mu'nis al-Muzaffar,² a eunuch on whom he bestowed a newly created title, *amīr al-umarā'* (the commander of the commanders). Mu'nis soon became the real ruler. He dethroned al-Muqtadir and appointed his half-brother al-Qāhir.³ After a brief restoration al-Muqtadir met his death at the hands of Berber soldiers who carried his head in triumph to their leader, Mu'nis.⁴ Al-Qāhir (932-4) fared no better than his predecessor. When deposed the second time he was blinded and was last seen begging for alms in the streets of Baghdād.⁵ Two of his successors, al-Muttaqi (940-44) and al-Mustakfi (944-6), followed him through the same process into the realm of darkness—all through the influence of the *amīr al-umarā'*.⁶ At one time Baghdād presented the spectacle of three personages who had once held the highest office in Islam but were now deposed, blinded and objects of public charity. The *amīr al-umarā'* of al-Rādi (934-40) went so far as to have his name joined with the caliph's in the Friday prayer—a novel procedure in Islamic history.⁷ Al-Rādi was one of the few caliphs of the period to escape deposition, but he did not escape death at the hands of the soldiery. By the Arab annalists he was considered "the last of the real caliphs", by which they meant the last to deliver the

¹ See Harold Bowen, *The Life and Times of 'Ali Ibn 'Isa, "the Good Vizier"* (Cambridge, 1928)

² "The victorious" Miskawayh, vol. i, p. 76, Tabari, vol. iii, p. 2199.

³ Miskawayh, vol. i, p. 193, ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, pp. 147-8.

⁴ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, p. 179

⁵ Miskawayh, vol. i, pp. 291-2, ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, pp. 209, 211, 332-3; *Fakhrī*, p. 375, Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, pp. 287 *seq.*

⁶ Miskawayh, vol. ii, p. 72; Mas'ūdi, vol. viii, p. 409.

⁷ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, p. 241.

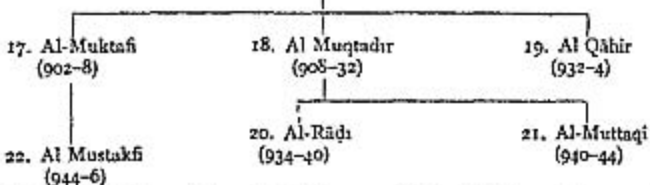
Friday oration and conduct certain affairs of state.¹ He was also the last whose poetry has been preserved. With him vanished the last vestiges of power and dignity that were left to his office. The generalissimo, *amīr al-umarā'*, was now well established as the actual ruler of the Moslem state.²

An even darker chapter in the history of the caliphate was opened in December 945, when the Caliph al-Mustakfi (944-6) received in Baghdād the victorious Ahmad ibn-Buwayh and made him his *amīr al-umarā'* with the honorific title of Mu'izz-al-Dawlah (he who renders the state mighty). Ahmad's father, abu-Shujā' Buwayh, claimed descent from the ancient Sāsānid kings, probably, as in most such cases, to bolster up dynastic prestige.³ He was the chief of a warlike horde consisting mainly of Daylamite highlanders from the mountainous region on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea and had been for some time in the service of the Sāmānids. His three sons, including Ahmad, gradually worked their way southward, occupying Işbahān, then Shīrāz with its province (934) and in the following two years the provinces of al-Ahwāz (present-day Khūzistān) and Karmān. Shīrāz was chosen as capital of the new dynasty. At the advance of Ahmad into Baghdād (945) the Turkish guard fled, but the lot of the caliph did not improve under the tutelage of his new masters, the Shi'ite Persians. Though his official position was simply that of *amīr al-umarā'*, Mu'izz-al-Dawlah insisted that he be mentioned along with the caliph in the *khutbah*. He even had his name stamped on the coinage.⁴

¹ *Fakhrī*, p. 380, Tanūkhī, p. 146.

² A genealogical table of Baghdād caliphs under the military régime:

16. Al-Mu'taḍid (892-902)



³ Cf. ibn Khallikān, vol. i, p. 98, *Fakhrī*, p. 376, ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, p. 197; Niustawh-i-Qazwīnī, vol. i, pp. 413-14; Friedrich Wilken, *Mirchond's Geschichte der Sultane aus dem Geschlechte Buyeh* (Berlin, 1835), p. 13 (Pers. text), p. 58 (tr.) (extract from Mirkhwānd, *Rawḍat al-Safā*).

⁴ Miskawayh, vol. ii, p. 158, ibn-al-Athīr, vol. viii, p. 337; Wilken, p. 21 (text), p. 66 (tr.) C. Miskawayh, vol. ii, p. 396, ibn-Khallikān, vol. ii, p. 159.

In January 946, the unfortunate al-Mustakfi was blinded and deposed by Mu'izz-al-Dawlah, who chose as the new caliph al-Muṭī' (946-74). Shī'ah festivals were now established, particularly the public mourning on the anniversary of al-Ḥusayn's death (tenth of Muḥarram) and the rejoicing on that of the Prophet's alleged appointment of 'Ali as his successor at Ghadir al-Khumm.¹ The caliphate now passed through the period of its deepest humiliation with the commander of the believers a mere puppet in the hands of a schismatic commander of the commanders. The Buwayhids, however, were not the first in the history of Islam to assume the title of sultan, as is sometimes claimed.² They satisfied themselves, according to the testimony of their coins, with *amīr* or *malik* affixed to such honorific surnames as Mu'izz-al-Dawlah, 'Imād-al-Dawlah (prop of the state) and Rukn-al-Dawlah (pillar of the state), appellations which were simultaneously bestowed on the three sons of Buwayh by the caliph. After them similar pompous surnames became the fashion. The dignity of *amīr al-umarā'* was also held by several of Mu'izz' Buwayhid successors, even though it had become nothing more than an honorific fiction.

Throughout their century or so of supremacy (945-1055) the Buwayhids made and unmade caliphs at will. Al-'Irāq was governed as a province from the Buwayhid capital, Shīrāz in Fāris. In Baghdād they maintained several magnificent palaces under the collective name *dār al-mamlakah* (the abode of the kingdom).³ Baghdād was no longer the hub of the Moslem world, for not only Shīrāz but Ghaznah, Cairo and Cordova were now sharing its international pre-eminence.

The Buwayhid power reached its zenith under 'Aḍud-al-Dawlah (the supporting arm of the state, 949-83), a son of Rukn. 'Aḍud was not only the greatest Buwayhid but also the most illustrious ruler of his time. Under his sceptre he united in 977 the several petty kingdoms that had risen under Buwayhid rulers in Persia and al-'Irāq, creating a state that approached in size an empire. 'Aḍud-al-Dawlah married the daughter of the Caliph al-Ṭā'ī and had the caliph marry his daughter (980),

¹ A spring between Makkah and al-Madinah where Shī'ite tradition asserts the Prophet declared, "Whomsoever I am lord of, his lord is 'Ali also". Ibn-Sa'd, vol. v, p. 235; Mas'ūdi, *Tanbih*, pp. 355-6. In memory of this declaration the Shī'ites observed a feast on the 18th of ḥu al-11yjah.

² Cf. above, p. 464; below, p. 474.

³ Khaṭīb, vol. i, pp. 105-7.

hoping thereby to have a descendant of his assume the caliphate.¹ 'Adud was the first ruler in Islam to bear the title *shāhanshāh*.² Although he kept his court in Shirāz he beautified Baghdād, repaired canals which had become filled up and erected in several other cities mosques, hospitals and public buildings, as reported by the meritorious historian Miskawayh,³ 'Adud's treasurer.⁴ For his charitable enterprises 'Adud appropriated funds from his state treasury. One interesting building of his was the shrine (*mashhad*) on the presumed tomb of 'Ali. But the most significant was the famous hospital in Baghdād, al-Bimāristān al-'Adudī, which he completed in 978-9 and endowed with 100,000 dinars. The hospital had a staff of twenty-four physicians who also functioned as a medical faculty.⁵ Poets such as al-Mutanabbī sang 'Adud's glory and authors, including the grammarian abu-'Alī al-Fārisī, who wrote for him the *Kitāb al-Idāh* (book of explanation), dedicated to him their works.⁶ In his cultivation of the arts of peace 'Adud found an able collaborator in his Christian vizir Nasr ibn-Hārūn, who with the caliph's authorization erected and repaired churches and monasteries.⁷

The precedent for literary and scientific patronage set by 'Adud-al-Dawlah was followed by his son Sharaf-al-Dawlah⁸ (983-89). In imitation of al-Ma'mūn, Sharaf constructed one year before his death a famous observatory. Another son of 'Adud, his second successor, Bahā'-al-Dawlah⁹ (989-1012), who in 991 deposed the Caliph al-Tā'i whose vast wealth he coveted, had an enlightened Persian vizir in the person of Sābūr ibn-Ardashīr. Sābūr built in 993 at Baghdād an academy with a library of 10,000 books,¹⁰ which the Syrian poet al-Ma'arri used when a student in that city. The Ikhwān al-Safā', be it also remembered, flourished under the Buwayhid régime. But the state itself was on

¹ Miskawayh, vol. II, p. 414; Yāqūt, *Udāhā'*, vol. VI, p. 266.

² Shortening of *shāhanshāh*, Pers. for king of kings, modelled after the ancient Iranian title of royalty. The Arabic correspondent, *malik al-mulūk*, was perhaps first assumed by 'Adud's son Bahā'-al-Dawlah and was especially favoured by the later dynasties of Turkish origin.

³ Vol. II, pp. 404-8. See Ibn al-Athīr, vol. IX, p. 16.

⁴ Qūfī, p. 331.

⁵ Ibn-abī-Uṣaybi'ah, vol. I, pp. 310, 238, 244; Qūfī, pp. 235-6, 337-8, 438.

⁶ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. II, p. 159.

⁷ Miskawayh, vol. II, p. 408.

⁸ "The honour of the state." Ibn al-Athīr, vol. IX, pp. 16-17; Rūdhrawānī, *Dhayl* (supplement to Miskawayh, *Tajdīd*, vol. III), ed. Amedroz, pp. 136 seq.

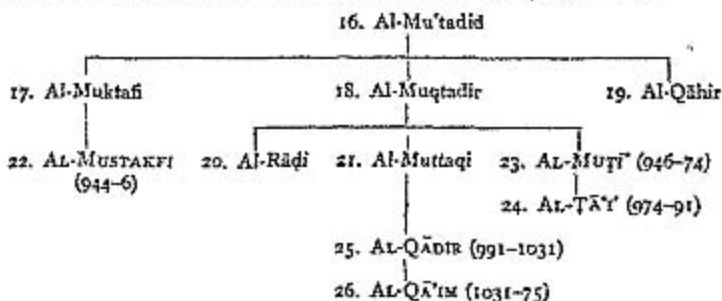
⁹ "The splendour of the state." Ibn al-Athīr, vol. IX, pp. 42 seq.; Rūdhrawānī,

pp. 153 seq.

¹⁰ Ibn al-Athīr, vol. IX, p. 71; Ibn-Khallikān, vol. I, p. 356.

its downward course. The wars between Bahā³, Sharaf and their third brother, Şamsām-al-Dawlah,¹ the dynastic and family quarrels carried on among their successors and the Buwayhid Shi'ite proclivities, which were deeply resented in Sunnite Baghdād, led to the fall of the dynasty. In 1055 the Saljūq Tughril Beg entered Baghdād and put an end to Buwayhid rule. The last of the dynasty in al-'Irāq, al-Malik al-Rahīm (the merciful king, 1048-55), ended his days in confinement.

The subjoined tree shows the genealogical relationship of the 'Abbāsīd caliphs under Buwayhid supremacy (945-1055):



The advent of the Saljūq Turks ushers in a new and notable era in the history of Islam and the caliphate. At their appearance from the east in the early part of the eleventh century the caliph held but a shadow of his former power and his empire had been almost entirely dismembered. The Umayyads in Spain and the Shi'ite Fāṭimids in Egypt and North Africa were established beyond any hope of displacement from Baghdād. North Syria and upper Mesopotamia, as noted before, were in the hands of turbulent Arab chieftains, some of whom had succeeded in founding dynasties. Persia, Transoxiana and the lands to the east and south were parcelled among Buwayhid and Ghaznawid princes or held by sundry petty dynasts, each waiting for an opportunity to fly at the throat of the other. Political and military anarchy prevailed everywhere. Shi'ite-Sunnite confusion was the order of the day. Islam seemed crushed to the ground.

Into this distracted realm a chieftain named Saljūq had entered about 956 at the head of his clan of Turkoman Ghuzz (or Oghuz). Coming from the Kirghiz steppes of Turkestan,

¹ "The sword of the state." Ibn-al-Atlūr, vol. ix, pp. 16-19, 32-5; Rūdhrawārī, pp. 184, 200.

these nomads settled in the region of Bukhāra, where they fervently embraced Sunnite Islam. Slowly but surely Saljūq and after him his sons fought their way through the realms of the Īlek Khāns and Sāmānids.¹ A grandson of Saljūq, Ṭughril,² ventured with his brother as far as Khurāsān. In 1037 the two brothers wrested Marw and Naysābūr from Ghaznawid hands. Balkh, Jurjān, Ṭabaristān and Khwārizm, as well as Hamadhān, al-Rayy and Iṣbahān were speedily added. The Buwayhid house tumbled before them. On December 18, 1055, Ṭughril Beg at the head of his wild Turkoman tribes stood at the gate of Baghdād. Al-Basāsiri, the Turkish general and military governor of Baghdād under the last Buwayhids, left the capital³ and the Caliph al-Qā'im (1031-1075) hastened to receive the Saljūq invader as a deliverer.

Ṭughril in
power

After an absence of a year Ṭughril returned to Baghdād and was received with elaborate ceremonies. Wearing the mantle and holding the cane of the Prophet, the caliph took his seat on a platform behind a curtain which was lifted at the approach of the conqueror. Ṭughril sat on an adjoining platform and communicated with the caliph through an interpreter. The conqueror was made regent of the empire and hailed as "king of the East and of the West".⁴ His official title was to be *al-sulṭān* (he with authority, sultan).⁵ The caliphate now passed under a new and more benevolent tutelage.

Taking advantage of the temporary absence of Ṭughril on an expedition to the north, al-Basāsiri, who had in the meantime espoused the Fātimid cause, returned in 1058 at the head of his Daylamite and other troops and reoccupied the capital. The Caliph al-Qā'im was forced to sign a document renouncing his rights and the rights of all other 'Abbāsīds in favour of the rival Fātimid al-Mustansir (1035-94) in Cairo, to whom he now sent

¹ Mustawfi-i-Qazwini, pp. 434-6, tr. pp. 93-4; Joannes A. Vullers, *Merchandi historia Seldschukidarum* (Giessen, 1837), pp. 1 seq. (ext. from *Rawdat al-Jafa'*).

² His father's name was Mikā'il, his brother's Dāwūd (David) and his uncle's Mūsa, ibn-al-Athir, vol. iv, p. 322. Such names, noticeable among early Saljūqs, show Christian, probably Nestorian, influence. See Qazwini, *Athar*, p. 394.

³ Ibn-Khalkān, vol. i, pp. 107-8, ibn-Faghrī-Birdī, ed. Popper, vol. ii, pt. 2, p. 225.

⁴ Ibn-al-Athir, vol. ix, p. 436, ibn-Faghrī-Birdī, *op. cit.* p. 233, 'Imād al-Dīn (al-Iṣfahāni), abr. al-Bundāri, *Tawārikh Al Saljūq*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma (Leyden, 1899), p. 14.

⁵ Al-Rūwandi, *Rāhat al-Sudūr*, ed. Muhammad Iqbal (London, 1921), p. 105. Ṭughril was the first Moslem ruler whose coins bore this title. Stanley Lane-Poole, *Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum*, ed. R. S. Poole, vol. iii (London, 1877), pp. 28-9. With the Saljūqs "sultan" became a regular sovereign title.

the emblems of the caliphate, including the mantle and other sacred relics. Al-Qā'im's turban and a beautiful window from his palace were also sent as trophies to Cairo.¹ On his return, however, Tughril reinstated al-Qā'im and made al-Basāsiri pay for his disloyalty with his life (1060). The Daylamite troops were disbanded and the Buwayhid power was for ever crushed.

The reigns of Tughril (1037-63), his nephew and successor Alp Arslān (1063-72) and the latter's son Malikshāh (1072-92) cover the most brilliant period of Saljūq ascendancy over the Moslem East. As fresh Turkish tribesmen swelled their armies the Saljūqs extended their conquests in all directions until once more Western Asia was united into one Moslem kingdom and the fading glory of Moslem arms revived. A new race from Central Asia was now pouring its blood into the struggle of Islam for world supremacy. The story of these barbarian infidels, setting their feet on the necks of the followers of the Prophet and at the same time accepting the religion of the conquered and becoming its ardent champions, was not a unique instance in the chequered annals of that religion. Their cousins the Mongols of the thirteenth century, as well as their other kinsmen the Ottoman Turks of the early fourteenth century, repeated the same process. In the darkest hour of political Islam religious Islam has been able to achieve some of its most brilliant victories.

In the second year of his reign Alp Arslān (hero-lion) captured Āni, the capital of Christian Armenia, then a Byzantine province.² Soon after that he resumed hostilities with the everlasting Byzantine foe. In 1071 Alp won the decisive battle of Manzikart (Malāzkird, Malāsīrd), north of Lake Van in Armenia, and took the Emperor Romanus Diogenes prisoner.³ Saljūq nomadic tribes, the first Moslems to gain a permanent footing in "the land of the Romans", began now to settle in the plateau regions of Asia Minor, which henceforth became part and parcel of *dār al-Islām* (abode of Islam). These Saljūq nomads laid the basis of the Turkification of Asia Minor. It was a cousin of Alp, Sulaymān ibn-Qutlumish by name, who was later put in charge of this new territory, where he established (1077) the sultanate of the Rūm⁴ Saljūqs. Far-off Nicæa (Nīqiyah, Tur. Iznīq) was

¹ See below, p. 622.

² Ibn al-Athīr, vol. x, pp. 25 seq.

³ *Ibid* pp. 44 seq.; 'Imād al-Dīn, pp. 38 seq.; Vasiliev, *Byzantine Empire*, vol. i, p. 431.

⁴ *Ar. rūm* is the equivalent of "Romans". See above, p. 199.

first made the capital, and it was from that city that Qilij Arslān, son and successor of Sulaymān, was driven by the hordes of the first Crusade. After 1084 Iconium (Qūniyah, Konieh), the richest and most beautiful Byzantine city in Asia Minor, became the Saljūq capital in that land. In the meantime the Saljūq dynasty of Syria (1094-1117), founded by Tutush, son of Alp, in 1094, was contributing its share towards checking the advance of the first Crusade. Aleppo had been held since 1070 by Alp.¹ There he had checked the advance of the Fātimid power, from which he also recovered Makkah and al-Madīnah.

The first two Saljūq sultans did not live in Baghdād but exercised their authority through a military resident. Alp never visited or saw the caliph's capital.² His seat of government was Işbahān; Marw and al-Rayy were seats of his predecessor. It was not until the winter of 1091, shortly before the end of Malikshāh's reign, that the Saljūq seat of government was moved to the capital of the caliphs. The caliph became more than ever a puppet who moved at the will of the sultan, a puppet bedecked in all the regalia of high office and propped on the imperial throne by foreign hands. The name of the sultan was mentioned with that of the caliph in the Friday sermon. In 1087 the Caliph al-Muqtadī (1075-94) married the daughter of Sultan Malikshāh, and when a son was born Malikshāh planned, but unsuccessfully, to combine in his grandson the caliphate and the sultanate on a common throne.³

It was Malikshāh (1072-92) under whom Saljūq power reached its meridian. "His domain extended in length from Kāshghar, a town at the extreme end of the land of the Turks, to Jerusalem, and in width from Constantinople to the Caspian Sea."⁴ In paying boatmen who once ferried him across the Oxus he issued drafts on his agent in Antioch.⁵ But Malikshāh was more than a ruler of an extensive empire. He built roads and mosques, repaired walls, dug canals and spent large sums on the caravanserais dotting the pilgrimage route to Makkah. According to his biographer all the roads of the great empire were safe—safe enough for caravans, even for one or two men, to travel peacefully and without special protection from Transoxiana to Syria.⁶

¹ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. x, pp. 43-4.

² *Ibid.* pp. 589-90.

³ *Ibid.* p. 589.

⁴ Ibn-Khallikān, vol. ii, p. 443.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 587.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 587.

The sanitary measures introduced into Baghdād at this time and credited by *ibn-al-Athīr*¹ to the Caliph *al-Muqtadī* were more likely initiated by this *Saljūq* sultan. These measures included the diversion of the dirty water of the public baths from the *Tigris* into special cesspools and the allotment of special places for cleaning and curing fish. An anecdote preserved in *ibn-Khallikān*² throws light on *Malikshāh's* character. On visiting a mosque in *Ṭūs* the sultan asked his vizir, *Nizām-al-Mulk*, who was in his company, what it was that he had prayed for while in the mosque. The latter replied that he had prayed God to grant the sultan victory over his brother, with whom he was then at war. "As for me", remarked *Malikshāh*, "that was not what I prayed for. I only asked God to give victory to him of the two better fitted to rule the Moslems and more beneficial to his subjects."

The guiding hand throughout the administration of *Alp Arslān* and *Malikshāh* was that of their illustrious Persian vizir, *Nizām-al-Mulk* (the organization of the kingdom), one of the ornaments of the political history of Islam. If we are to believe *ibn-Khallikān*, "for the twenty years covering the reign of *Malikshāh*, *Nizām-al-Mulk* had all the power concentrated in his hand, whilst the sultan had nothing to do but sit on the throne or enjoy the chase."³

Although untutored and probably illiterate like his father and grand-uncle, *Malikshāh* at the suggestion of *Nizām-al-Mulk* called in 1074-5 a conference of astronomers at his newly erected observatory and commissioned them to reform the Persian calendar.⁴ The result was the remarkable *Jalāli* calendar (*ta'rīkh*), so styled after *Malikshāh*, whose full name included *Jalāl-al-Dīn* (the majesty of religion) *abu-al-Fath*. This calendar, in the judgment of a modern scholar, is "somewhat more accurate than ours".

Nizām-al-Mulk was himself a cultured and learned man.⁵ From his pen we have one of the most remarkable Moslem treatises on the art of government, the *Siyāsat-nāmah*,⁶ which he composed as a result of a competition suggested by *Malikshāh*.

¹ Vol. x, p. 156.

² Vol. ii, p. 588.

³ Vol. i, p. 255.

⁴ *Ibn-al-Athīr*, vol. x, pp. 67-8. Site of observatory uncertain, possibly in *Iṣbahān*, *al-Rayy* or *Naysābūt*. See above, p. 377.

⁵ *Ibn-al-Athīr*, vol. x, p. 104; *ʿImād-al-Dīn*, p. 30.

⁶ Ed. Charles Schefer (Paris, 1891), tr. Schefer (Paris, 1893).

The sultan requested his statesmen to give him in written form the benefit of their opinions as to the nature of good government. Among other notable works in Persian produced during this period were those of Nāṣir-i-Khusraw († *ca.* 1074), the celebrated traveller and Ismā'ili propagandist, and of 'Umar al-Khayyām († 1123-4), the great astronomer-poet who enjoyed the patronage of Nizām and collaborated in the revision of the calendar. But the basis of this Persian vizir's glory is his establishment of the first well-organized academies for higher learning in Islam.¹ Particularly renowned was his Nizāmiyah, founded 1065-7 at Baghdād. One of its chairs was once adorned by al-Ghazzālī.

The aged Nizām, as we learned before, was one of the earliest prominent victims of an Ismā'ili Assassin. With his death in 1092 the period of glory that covered the reigns of the first three Saljūqs ended. For a brief but brilliant span these three sultans had brought together most of the far-flung lands that had once formed the Islamic state. But the season of glory that Baghdād and Islam enjoyed under them was only an Indian summer. After the death of Malikshāh civil wars among his sons and subsequent disturbances weakened the central Saljūq authority and led to the break-up of the house. The Saljūq empire, built on a tribal basis by a people nomadic in their habits and form of organization, could be held together only by some dominant personality. The system of military fiefs regularized in 1087 by Nizām-al-Mulk, according to which grants became and remained hereditary, led to the immediate establishment of semi-independent states. These separate subdivisions attained virtual independence in different parts of the wide kingdom, while the main line, the Great Saljūqs of Persia, maintained a nominal suzerainty down to 1157. One of the chief subdivisions of the family was that of the Persian 'Irāq (1117-94). The Saljūqs of al-Rūm in Iconium were superseded after 1300 by the Ottoman Turks—last great representatives of militant Islam—whose tradition relates their origin to the Ghuzz tribe, to which the Saljūqs also belonged. After penetrating into Europe as far as Vienna (1529) and establishing an empire almost as extensive as that of the Arab caliphs, the Ottoman Turks have since the first World War confined their authority to Asia Minor or Anatolia.

Disintegration
of the
Saljūq
realm

¹ See above, p. 410.

The one permanent contribution of the Saljūq and Ottoman Turks to Islamic religion was a mystic colouring. This is well represented by the several dervish orders which flourished on Turkish soil and maintained ideas of early shamanistic origin with an admixture of indigenous beliefs of Asia Minor and schismatic Christian doctrines. The *ḡutūwah*¹ organizations in which Moslem Arab chivalry sought to express itself took among the Turks a new form, that of the *akhi*s. Originally these *akhi* organizations may have been economic guilds. It was in *akhi* hospices that ibn-Battūṭah² was entertained while travelling in Asia Minor.

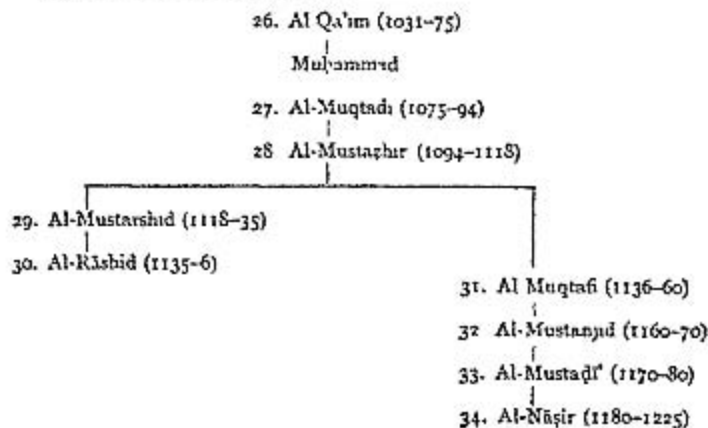
It may be of interest in this connection to note that the double-headed eagle which originated in the brain of some ancient Sumerian priest and passed on very early to the Babylonians and Hittites was some three thousand years later adopted as an emblem by the Saljūq Turks who settled in Hittiteland (Asia Minor). From the Saljūqs it passed on to Byzantium, whence it reached Austria, Prussia and Russia.

The Saljūq domination over the caliphate, which began with al-Qā'im in 1055, lasted till 1194 in the reign of al-Nāsir.³ Throughout the greater part of this period the Crusades dragged

¹ See below, p. 481

² Vol. II, pp. 260, 318. *Akhi* is not Ar. for "brother" as ibn-Battūṭah explained but Tur. for "knightly" or "noble." Consult Franz Tieschener in *Islamica*, vol. IV (1929), pp. 1-47, vol. V, pp. 285-333, J. Deny in *Journal asiatique*, ser. II, vol. XVI (1920), pp. 182-3.

³ Caliphs under Saljūq domination.



wearily in Syria-Palestine, but neither Saljūqs nor 'Abbāsids interested themselves in the distant affair. To the main body of the Moslem community the Crusades, viewed from headquarters, were but an insignificant episode. When on the fall of Jerusalem (1099) a Moslem delegation arrived in Baghdād to seek aid against the invading Christians tears were shed and kind sympathy was expressed, but no action was taken.¹ The caliph al-Mustazhir (1094-1118) referred the delegation to Sultan Barkī-yāruq (1094-1104), Malikshāh's second successor and drunkard son,² with whom the decline of the sultanate started, and the negotiations ended there. In 1108 a second appeal came, now from Tripoli beset by the Crusaders. The delegation was headed by the chief of the beleaguered city, but its mission was as futile as the preceding one. Three years later, when the Franks captured certain vessels from Egypt carrying goods consigned to merchants in Aleppo, al-Mustazhir, on the urgent request of an Aleppine delegation, which smashed the pulpit and interfered with the conduct of prayer in the mosque which the sultan was attending, bestirred himself and sent a handful of troops which, of course, accomplished nothing.³ Thus did "the commander of the believers" and his Saljūq sultan stand passively by while the most spectacular drama in the history of Christian-Islamic relations was being enacted.

Later, during the caliphate of al-Muqtafi (1136-60), when the Crusades raged furiously, the hard-pressed Moslem leader Zangi⁴ made urgent appeals to Baghdād, which in response to popular demand yielded a few thousand recruits. Meanwhile Zangi's warlike son Nūr-al-Dīn and the famous Ṣalāh-al-Dīn (Saladin) were turning their arms successfully not only against the Christians but also against the schismatic Fātimids in Egypt. By 1171 Ṣalāh-al-Dīn had put an end to the Fātimid dynasty and, as a loyal Sunnite, substituted the name of the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Mustadī' in the *khutbah* in Egypt and Syria. Thereby was the nominal supremacy of the 'Abbāsīd caliph once more recognized in these lands.

¹ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. x, p. 192[4].

² Ibn-Khallikān, vol. i, p. 154.

³ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. x, pp. 338-9, Ibn al-Qalānisi, *Dhahī*, p. 173.

⁴ Founder of the Atābeg dynasty of al-Mawṣil and Syria. The *atābegs* (Tur. *ata*, "father" + *beg*, "prince") were originally guardians or tutors of the young Saljūq princes and finally replaced them in supreme power. Abu Shūmah, *al-Rawdatayn fī Akhbār al-Dawlatayn*, vol. 1 (Cairo, 1287), p. 24.

To the successor of al-Mustaḍī', al-Nāṣir, Ṣalāḥ-al-Dīn sent after the decisive battle of Ḥittīn (1187) several Frankish prisoners and a part of the booty, including a bronze cross overlaid with gold said to contain some of the wood of the true cross. The caliph buried this cross in Baghdād.¹

Al-Nāṣir, whose rule from 1180 to 1225 was the longest in 'Abbāsīd annals,² made a faint and final attempt to restore the caliphate to something like its ancient self. The endless internal broils among the Saljūq princes and the fresh recognition accorded the 'Abbāsīd caliphate by the hero Ṣalāḥ-al-Dīn gave al-Nāṣir the semblance of an opportunity. He proceeded to impose his will on the capital, making a display of high living and sponsoring a programme of lavish building. Under his patronage flourished a special order of sworn brotherhood, *futūwah*, a sort of knighthood of chivalry, whose organization he reformed. The brotherhood traced its origin to 'Alī and comprised men of birth and distinction, mostly descendants of the Prophet's son-in-law. Members (*fityān*) were initiated in a special ceremony and wore distinctive garments.³ Yazīd ibn-Mu'āwiyah was one of the first in Islam to win the title *fata al-'Arab*, the paladin of the Arabs, which at that time had no technical significance.

Al-Nāṣir's attempts, however, were but the flicker of an expiring flame. His first serious mistake was made when he instigated Takash, ruler of Khwārizm (1172-1200) and member of the Turkish dynasty of the Khwārizm Shāhs,⁴ to attack the Saljūqs of the Persian 'Irāq,⁵ who had succeeded the Great Saljūqs of Persia in ruling Baghdād. The battle between Takash and the Saljūq Sultan Ṭughril (1177-94) was fought in 1194 and

¹ Ibn-al-Athīr, vol. xi, p. 353; abu-Shūmah, vol. ii, pp. 76, 139.

² Cf. Mustawfī-i-Qawwīnī, vol. i, p. 369. The caliphate of al-Qā'im (1031-75) was the second longest among the 'Abbāsīds. The Fāṭimid al-Mustansīr (1035-94) nominally holds the record in Moslem annals, but as ibn-al-Athīr (vol. xii, p. 286) points out this caliph was only seven years old when he was installed. As for 'Alī al-Raḥmān III (912-61), of Cordova, he did not proclaim himself caliph until 929.

³ *Fakhrī*, p. 434; ibn-al-Athīr, vol. xii, p. 268; ibn-Jubayr, p. 280. See Hermann Thörning, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des islamischen Vereinswesens auf Grund von Basij Madad et-Taufiq* (Berlin, 1913); H. Ritter in *Der Islam*, vol. x (1920), pp. 244-50.

⁴ The founder of this dynasty, destined for over a hundred years to play the leading rôle in the history of Middle Asia, was a slave from Ghaznah who served as cup-bearer for the Saljūq Malikshāh and was appointed by him to the governorship of Khwārizm. Juwaynī, pt. 2 (Leyden, 1916), p. 3; ibn-al-Athīr, vol. x, pp. 182-3.

⁵ Al-'Irāq al-'Ajamī (i.e. Media), so called under the Saljūqs to distinguish it from al-'Irāq al-'Arabi. See above, p. 330, n. 2.

resulted in the defeat of Ṭughril. With him the Saljūq line in al-'Irāq and Kurdistān came to an end. Al-Nāṣir expected the victorious shah to vacate the conquered territory, but Takash schemed differently. After the Saljūq fashion he issued coins bearing his name as sultan and proposed to hold the secular power in Baghdād itself, leaving to the caliph only nominal sovereignty. The dispute continued under his energetic son 'Alā'-al-Dīn Muḥammad (1200-1220). Having reduced (1210) the greater part of Persia, subdued Bukhāra with its sister Samarqand and seized Ghaznah (1214), this Khwārizm Shāh resolved to put an end to the 'Abbāsīd caliphate. He planned to install in its place an 'Alid one. In his consternation al-Nāṣir (the defender [of the faith]) is said to have sought in 1216 the aid of a new ally whose star was just rising over the distant east, Chingīz Khān (1155-*ca.* 1227), redoubtable head of pagan Mongolian hordes.¹ Before this appalling swarm of some sixty thousand² barbarians, augmented by levies from peoples subjected en route, 'Alā'-al-Dīn had no recourse but flight. His place of refuge was an island in the Caspian Sea, where he died in despair in 1220.³

In the meantime the Mongols, riding fleet horses and armed with strange bows, were spreading havoc and destruction wherever they went.⁴ Before them the cultural centres of eastern Islam were practically wiped out of existence, leaving bare deserts or shapeless ruins where formerly stately palaces and libraries had lifted their heads. A crimson stream marked their trail. Out of a population of 100,000 Harāt (Herat) was left with 40,000.⁵ The mosques of Bukhāra, famed for piety and learning, served as stables for Mongolian horses. Many of the inhabitants of Samarqand and Balkh were either butchered or carried into captivity. Khwārizm was utterly devastated. At the capture of Bukhāra (1220) Chingīz (Genghis) is reported by a late tradition

¹ See W. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 2nd ed., tr. H. A. R. Gibb (Oxford, 1928), pp. 399-400. Chingīz had two Moslems on his staff as he advanced westward. Long before his time Moslem merchants had carried on trade with the nomadic tribes of eastern Mongolia. See above, pp. 343-4.

² The estimates, all probably exaggerated, vary from 60,000 to 70,000.

³ Mustawfi-i-Qazwini, vol. i, p. 498.

⁴ Juwayni, pt. 1, pp. 17 *seq.*; ibn-al-Athīr, vol. xii, pp. 234 *seq.*

⁵ Cf. Yūqūt, *Buldān*, vol. iv, p. 958. In 1220, about a year before the disastrous event, Yūqūt visited Harāt, which he described as the largest and richest city he had ever seen.

to have described himself as "the scourge of God sent to men as a punishment for their sins".¹ Ibn-al-Athīr,² a contemporary authority, shudders at the narration of these horrors and wishes his mother had not borne him. Even a century later, when ibn-Battūṭah³ visited Bukhāra, Samarqand, Balkh and other Transoxianan cities he found them still largely in ruins. As for Baghdād, its turn was soon to come.

Thus did the invincible founder of the largest empire the world has ever seen make his sweep across the realm of Islam. The people he led had by the first half of the thirteenth century shaken every kingdom from China to the Adriatic. Russia was in part overrun and central Europe penetrated as far as eastern Prussia. It was only the death of Chingiz' son and successor in 1241 that saved Western Europe from these Mongolian hordes.⁴

The Caliph al-Nāsir spent the few remaining years of his long reign, as did his son al-Zāhir (1225-6) and grandson al-Mustanşir (1226-42), in a state of constant alarm. On one occasion these Mongols, or *Tatar* as they are called in the contemporary sources, advanced as far as Sāmarra. This made the terror-stricken population of Baghdād scramble to their defences. But the danger passed for the moment. This was only a lull before the fatal storm.

¹ Juwayni, pt. 1, p. 81.

² Vol. xii, p. 233.

³ Vol. iii, pp. 25-7, 52, 58-9.

⁴ Confused with the Kalmucks, of whose descendants 175,000 were deported to Siberia by the Soviet Union and 600 were found in 1949 in a displaced persons' camp in Western Germany. Of these 250 were permitted two years later to settle on a farm land in New Jersey, where they converted a garage into a Buddhist temple. Cf. below, p. 676, n. 1.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE COLLAPSE OF THE 'ABBĀSĪD CALIPHATE

IF anything parallels the astounding rapidity with which the sons of the Arabian desert conquered in the first Islamic century most of the civilized world, it is the swift decadence of their descendants' domination between the middle of the third and the middle of the fourth centuries. About 820 more extensive authority was concentrated in the hands of one man, the caliph in Baghdād, than in those of any other living person; by 920 the power of his successor had so diminished that it was hardly felt even in his capital city. By 1258 that city itself lay in ruins. With its fall Arab hegemony was lost for ever and the history of the real caliphate closed.

Among the external factors the barbarian (in this case Mongol or Tartar) onslaughts, though spectacular in themselves, were in reality only contributory to the final downfall. Even the rise, mushroom-like, of the numberless dynasties and quasi-dynasties in the heart of the caliphate and on its periphery was in itself a symptom of the disease rather than the cause of it. As in the analogous case of the Roman Empire of the West, the sick man was already on his deathbed when the burglars burst open the doors and snatched their share of the imperial heritage.

More important than the external factors in bringing about the dissolution of the caliphate were the internal ones. The reader who has followed the preceding chapters with care has doubtless already discerned those factors and noticed their operation throughout several centuries. Many of the original conquests were only nominal. The possibility of decentralization and dismemberment always lurked in the nature of those hasty and incomplete conquests. The method of administration was not conducive to stability and continuity. Exploitation and over-taxation were recognized policies, not the exception but the rule. Lines of cleavage between Arabs and non-Arabs, between Arab Moslems and Neo-Moslems, between Moslems and dhimmis, re-

mained sharply marked. Among the Arabians themselves the old divisive feeling between north and south persisted. Neither the Iranian Persians, nor the Turanian Turks, nor the Hamitic Berbers were ever welded into a homogeneous whole with the Semitic Arabs. No consciousness of kind knit these diverse elements closely together. The sons of Iran were ever mindful of their ancient national glory and never reconciled themselves entirely to the new régime. The Berbers vaguely expressed their tribal feeling and sense of difference by their readiness to embrace any schismatic movement. The people of Syria long expected the rise of a Sufyāni to deliver them from the 'Abbāsīd yoke.¹ Within the fold of religion itself centrifugal forces, no less potent than the political and military, were active, producing Shī'ites, Qarmaṭians, Ismā'īlites, Assassins and the like. Several of these groupings represented more than religious sects; the Qarmaṭians staggered the eastern part of the empire with their blows, and soon afterward the Fāṭimids seized the west. Islam was no more able to unite its devotees into a corporate whole than was the caliphate to incorporate the lands of the Mediterranean with those of Central Asia into a stable unit.

Then there were the social and moral forces of disintegration. The blood of the conquering element became in course of centuries diluted with that of the conquered, with a subsequent loss of their dominating position and qualities. With the decay of the Arab national life, Arab stamina and morale broke down. Gradually the empire developed into an empire of the conquered. The large harems, made possible by the countless number of eunuchs; the girl and the boy slaves (*ghilmān*), who contributed most to the degradation of womanhood and the degeneration of manhood; the unlimited concubines and the numberless half-brothers and half-sisters in the imperial household with their unavoidable jealousies and intrigues; the luxurious scale of high living with the emphasis on wine and song—all these and other similar forces sapped the vitality of family life and inevitably produced the persistently feeble heirs to the throne. The position of these heirs was rendered still more feeble by their interminable disputes over a right of succession which was never definitely determined.

Nor should the economic factors be ignored or underrated.

¹ Above, p. 286.

The imposition of taxes and the government of the provinces for the benefit of the ruling class discouraged farming and industry. As the rulers grew rich the people grew proportionately poor. Within the states grew statelets whose lords habitually fleeced their serfs. The depletion of man-power by the recurring bloody strife left many a cultivated farm desolate. Inundations in lower Mesopotamia periodically wrought havoc, and famines in various parts of the empire added their quota of disaster. The frequent spread of epidemics—plague, smallpox, malaria and other fevers—before which medieval man stood powerless, decimated the population in large areas. No less than forty major epidemics are recorded in the Arabic annals of the first four centuries after the conquest. National economic decay naturally resulted in the curtailment of intellectual development and in the stifling of creative thought.

Hūlāgu in
Baghdād

In 1253 Hūlāgu, a grandson of Chingīz Khān, left Mongolia at the head of a huge army intent upon the destruction of the Assassins and the caliphate. The second wave of Mongol hordes was on. It swept before it all those petty principedoms which were striving to grow on the ruins of the empire of the Khwārizm Shāhs. Hūlāgu sent an invitation to the Caliph al-Musta'ṣim¹ (1242–58) to join in the campaign against the Ismā'īlī Assassins. The invitation received no response. By 1256 the greater number of the Assassin strongholds, including the "mother convent" Alamūt, had been captured without difficulty and the power of that dreaded order crushed to the ground.² Even the babes were ruthlessly slaughtered. In September of the following year, as he was winding his way down the famous Khurāsān highway, the conquering invader sent an ultimatum to the caliph demanding his surrender and the demolition of the outer city wall. The reply was evasive. In January 1258 the mangonels of Hūlāgu were in effective operation against the walls of the capital. Soon a

¹ "He who holds fast" to God. The last caliph:

34. Al-Nāṣir (1180–1225)

35. Al-Zāhir (1225–6)

36. Al-Mustansir (1226–42)

37. Al-Musta'ṣim (1242–58)

² Rashīd-al-Dīn, *Jami'*, ed. and tr. Quatremère, vol. i, pp. 166 seq.

breach was effected in one of the towers.¹ The Vizir ibn-al-'Al-qami accompanied by the Nestorian catholicos—Hūlāgu had a Christian wife—appeared to ask for terms. But Hūlāgu refused to receive them. Equally ineffective were warnings citing the fate of others who had dared violate "the city of peace" or undo the 'Abbāsid caliphate. Hūlāgu was told that "if the caliph is killed the whole universe is disorganized, the sun hides its face, rain ceases and plants grow no more".² But he knew better, thanks to the advice of his astrologers. By the tenth of February his hordes had swarmed into the city and the unfortunate caliph with his three hundred³ officials and qādīs rushed to offer an unconditional surrender. Ten days later they were all put to death. The city itself was given over to plunder and flames; the majority of its population, including the family of the caliph, were wiped out of existence. Pestilential odours emitted by corpses strewn unburied in the streets compelled Hūlāgu to withdraw from the town for a few days. Perhaps he intended to retain Baghdād for his residence and, therefore, the devastation was not as thorough as in other towns. The Nestorian patriarch received special favours. Certain schools and mosques were spared or rebuilt. For the first time in its history the Moslem world was left without a caliph whose name could be cited in the Friday prayers.

In 1260 Hūlāgu was threatening northern Syria. Here he captured in addition to Aleppo, where he put to the sword some fifty thousand people, Ḥamāh and Ḥārim. After dispatching a general to the siege of Damascus he felt himself constrained by the death of his brother, the Great Khān, to return to Persia.⁴ The army left behind, after subjugating Syria, was destroyed in 1260 at 'Ayn Jālūt (Goliath's spring) near Nazareth by Baybars, the distinguished general of the Egyptian Mamlūk Quṭuz.⁵ The whole of Syria was now reoccupied by the Mamlūks and the westward advance of the Mongols was definitely checked.

¹ *Fakhri*, p. 454; Rashid-al-Dīn, vol. i, pp. 284-5.

² *Fakhri*, p. 190, Rashid-al-Dīn, vol. i, p. 260. *Fakhri*, written in 1301 and dedicated to Fakhr-al-Dīn 'Isa, governor of al-Mawṣil under the Mongols, contains eye-witness material on the fall of Baghdād.

³ Three thousand in Rashid-al-Dīn, vol. i, p. 298.

⁴ The Great Khān of Marco Polo was another brother, Qūbilāy († 1294), the Kubla Khan of Coleridge. It was Qūbilāy who transferred the capital from Qarā-qorum in Mongolia to Peking. Consult Rashid-al-Dīn, vol. i, p. 128, vol. ii, ed. E. Blochet (Leyden, 1911), pp. 350 seq.

⁵ Abu-al-Fidā', vol. iii, pp. 209-14; Rashid-al-Dīn, vol. i, pp. 326-49; Maqrizi, *Sulūk*, tr. Quatremère as *Sultans mamlouks*, vol. i (pt. 2), pp. 96 seq.

Later, Hūlāgu returned and attempted to make an alliance with the Franks for the conquest of Syria but he failed in his purpose.

As founder of the Mongol kingdom of Persia, which extended from the Āmu Darya to the borders of Syria and from the Caucasus Mountains to the Indian Ocean, Hūlāgu was the first to assume the title *Īl-Khān*.¹ This title was borne by his successors down to the seventh, Ghāzān Mahmūd (1295-1304), under whom Islam, with Shī'ite proclivities, became the state religion. Under the *Īl-Khāns* or Hūlāguīds Baghdād was reduced to the position of capital of the province called al-'Irāq al-'Arabi. The great *Īl-Khān*, as Hūlāgu was often entitled, favoured the Christian element among his subjects. In times of peace he delighted to make his home at Marāghah, east of the salt Lake Urmīyah, where many edifices, including the famous library and observatory, were built by him. There Hūlāgu died in 1265 and with him were buried, in accordance with Mongol custom, beautiful young maidens. He and his successors, like the Saljūqs before them, were quick to appreciate and utilize the administrative genius of the Persians and to surround themselves with such cultivated savants as al-Juwaynī († 1283) and Rashīd-al-Dīn († 1318), the historians of the period. The seventy-five years of *Īl-Khānīd* rule in Persia were rich in literary achievement.

Hard pressed between the mounted archers of the wild Mongols in the east and the mailed knights of the Crusaders on the west, Islam in the early part of the thirteenth century seemed for ever lost. How different was the situation in the last part of the same century! The last Crusader had by that time been driven into the sea. The seventh of the *Īl-Khāns*, many of whom had been flirting with Christianity, had finally recognized Islam as the state religion—a dazzling victory for the faith of Muḥammad. Just as in the case of the Saljūqs, the religion of the Moslems had conquered where their arms had failed. Less than half a century after Hūlāgu's merciless attempt at the destruction of Islamic culture, his great-grandson Ghāzān, as a devout Moslem, was consecrating much time and energy to the revivification of that same culture.

¹ Tur *il*, "tribe" + Tur *khān*, "lord" = lord of the tribe, subordinate chief, indicating the feudal homage owed to the Khāqān (Great Khān) in remote Mongolia, north of the Gobi Desert, later in Peking

It was not the Mongols, however, who were destined to restore the military glory of Islam and unfurl its banner triumphantly over new and vast territories. This was left to their kinsmen, the Ottoman Turks,¹ the last champions of the religion of Arabia. Their empire under Sulaymān (1520-66) stretched from Baghdād on the Tigris to Budapest on the Danube, and from Aswān, near the first cataract of the Nile, almost to the Strait of Gibraltar. When in January 1516 Sulaymān's father, Salīm, destroyed the Mamlūk army in North Syria,² he took among his prisoners a nonentity who under the name al-Mutawakkil represented a line of nominal 'Abbāsīd caliphs who for about two and a half centuries had been maintained there as puppets of the Mamlūk sultans. The line was begun in 1261 by an uncle of al-Musta'ṣim, who had evidently escaped the massacre at Baghdād and was installed in Cairo by the fourth Mamlūk ruler, Baybars (1260-1277), with great pomp as caliph under the name al-Mustanṣir.³ Al-Mustanṣir was soon after killed in a rash attempt on behalf of Baybars to recover Baghdād. He was followed by another scion of the 'Abbāsīd house, who in 1262 was installed with similar ceremony. Sultan Salīm carried the Caliph al-Mutawakkil with him to Constantinople but allowed him to return to Cairo, where he died in 1543. With him the shadowy 'Abbāsīd caliphate of Egypt may be said to have ended. There is nothing in the contemporary sources to support the claim, often advanced, that the last 'Abbāsīd surrendered his title of caliph with all rights and privileges pertaining thereto to the Ottoman conqueror or to his successor in Constantinople.⁴

¹ So called after their eponymous founder, 'Uthmān, born ca. 1258.

² See below, pp. 677, 705.

³ Abu-al-Fidā', vol. iii, p. 222. See below, p. 676.

⁴ See above, p. 186; below, p. 705.