

Foundations of Umayyad Economy: Jerash, a Case in Study¹

by F. Bessard

During the seventh century CE, new migrants from Arabia associated with the rise of Islam settled progressively in Syria and Iraq, which were densely urbanised but unequally prosperous. For instance, the Decapolis cities declined for several reasons, including the earthquakes of 551, 633 and 659 CE, the plague epidemic and the Persian and Islamic invasions. After several years of adaptation, by the beginning of the eighth century the first faltering steps of the Umayyad state in the Middle East brought with them an Arabization and Islamization of antique institutions and a considerable development of urban economy. Thus, centers of production, trade and exchange, the exist-

ence of which we know through archeological excavations, were permanently established in the new garrison cities, such as Kufa, as well as in public spaces in the former Sassanid and Byzantine cities. However, archaeological evidence shows that considerable economic vitality continued in many centers right up until the rise of Islam, and that the process of using public spaces for utilitarian purposes, once considered a feature of the early Islamic transformation, had started already in the antique cities well before the foundation of the Umayyad state. It is now clear, moreover, that under the Umayyads coordinated efforts were made to enhance even further this ongoing economic activity.

The town of Jerash, in particular its hippodrome, offers evidence of the economic prosperity of urbanized areas in the eighth century CE. Its hippodrome (Fig. 3) which dates back to the second half of the second century CE², was excavated in the 1930's by E. B. Müller, G. Horsfield and C. H. Kraeling³, and also in the 1980-1990's by 'Abd al-Majid al-Mujalli, Director of

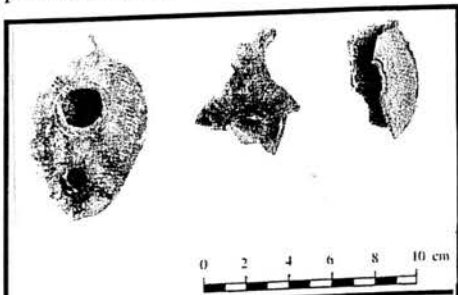
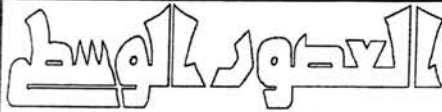


Figure 1. Zoomorphic mould-made lamps.

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JERASH, FROM PAGE 1.

the Jerash Archaeological Project, I. Kehrberg and A. Ostrasz. They mainly focused on the restoration of the site but also carried out excavations in the *cavea*, the *carceres*, the *arena*⁴ and the basements of the northern and eastern terraces which contained two mass graves⁵ and some Byzantine potters' workshops.⁶ They also cursorily cleared the remains in the basements of the western terraces of the rubble caused by the earthquake of 131 H./748 CE,⁷ but did not study in depth the layers under the rubble. However, new clearing in these western terraces, carried out by the author in April, 2007, uncovered a group of workshops. Chambers W6, W9, W11, W14, and W15 contained five identical workshops, which all featured basins and vats having the main characteristics of the Byzantine and Umayyad dyers' workshops found in nearby Gaza⁸, Baysan⁹, and the Macellum of Jerash.¹⁰ Moreover, the workshops in the hippodrome of Jerash also

contained Umayyad coins and ceramics, dated to the first half of the 8th century CE, that is, before Jerash's destruction by the earthquake of 131 H./748 CE.

Let us take the example of chamber W9, whose two trapezoidal layouts are 9.70 m in length east-west and 4.30 m in width to the east and 3.50 m to the west (Fig. 4). The remains of dyeing facilities form two distinct units. The western area is raised while the eastern one is level. The central aisle of the western work area, whose floor is wholly paved, is surrounded by two large circular vats and four rectangular basins, three of which have worktops. The basins (maximum length: 1.68 m, maximum width: 0.95 m, maximum depth: 0.50) are built equally of rubble-stones, used blocks and paving stones. All of them have a duct for evacuating waste water which then runs through a drainage pipe along the central aisle and then out under the door of the chamber. An example of this can be clearly seen in chamber W11 (Fig. 5). Moreover, earthenware slabs were

applied to the inner walls and the bottom of the basins to prevent leakage. Opposite the basins are the circular vats (maximum diameter: 0.82 m, maximum depth: 0.60 m), embedded in a cluster of rubble-stones and mortar. One of them is built up while the other is more of an earthenware jar. Both have a small cup-like depression in the center to facilitate removal of the last liquid. The fibres and fabrics treated in such dye shops were first cleaned in the vats and the basins of this western workspace. The paved floor, the waste water evacuation pipe and the precautions against loss of water suggest the extensive use of water, which was stored in an open cistern (length: 1.90 m, width: 0.80 m) outside the room. Thus, the circular vats must have been used as soap baths in which the fibres were dipped in order to clean them of sandstone, greasy deposits or dye resistant pectins. The rectangular basins were presumably used to rinse the fibres.

The central aisle of the eastern area of the chamber has a simple earthenware floor. It is surrounded by three deep rectangular basins and

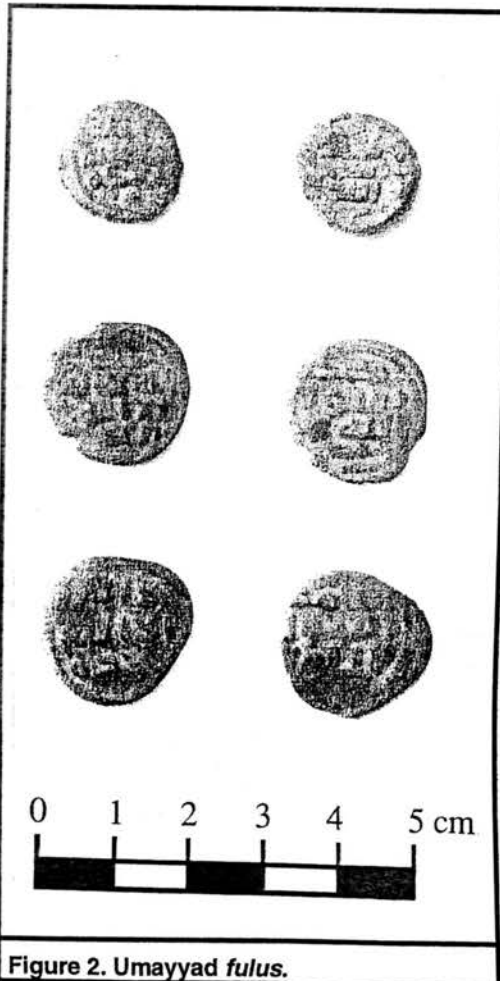


Figure 2. Umayyad fulus.

their worktops and a circular vat embedded in the ground (see Fig. 4). The basins (maximum length: 1.68 m, maximum width: 0.95, depth: 0.75 m) have no drainage holes and are built with blocks or stone slabs. Their worktops are covered with a heavy lime coating. The vat (diameter: 0.77 m, depth: 0.60 m) is set in a block of mortar and rubble-stones. Despite its poor state, remains of the lime coating are still visible. The dyeing of the fibres was carried out in this eastern work area. Since there is no hearth we can assume that the dyes used must have been vat dyes, in particular indigo, traces of which were recovered. Also found were traces of red ochre, the use for which remains unclear. As vat dyes are insoluble in water and need a reducing agent like alkaline and low temperatures (less than 122 degrees F) to become soluble, the dyers presumably combined quicklime (traces of which were also found) and water in dyeing vats to produce heat and an alkaline-rich environment. The earthenware jars--built up and embedded in a cluster of rubble stones--therefore must have been macerating vats. The dyestuffs

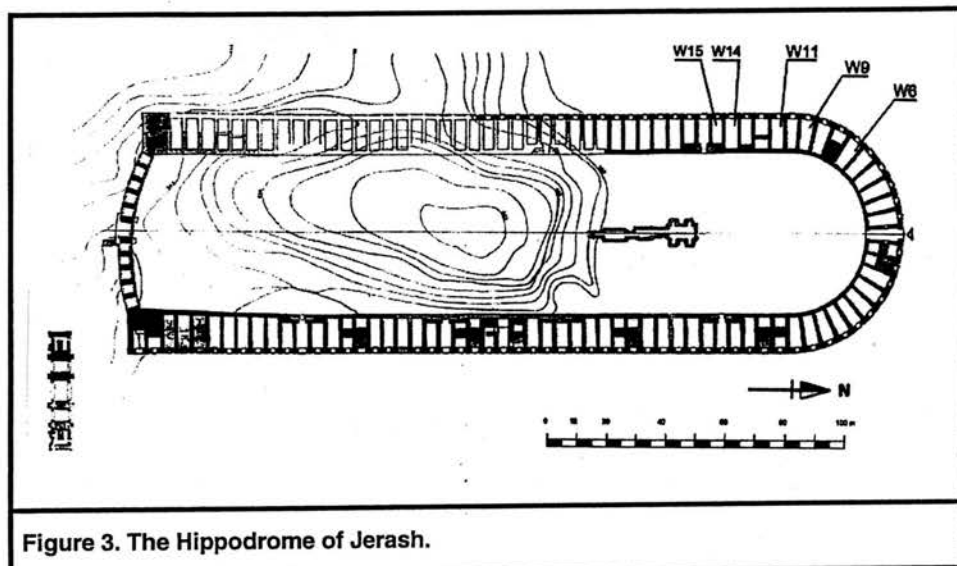


Figure 3. The Hippodrome of Jerash.

were ground and immersed in water. The craftsmen then dyed the fibres or the fabrics in the worktop basins.

Dating these dyeing workshops is possible thanks to ceramic and numismatic finds. First, three Umayyad bronze coins¹¹ struck after the reform of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān in 80 H./696 CE were recovered on the paved floor in chambers W11 and W14 of the hippodrome (Fig. 2).

Second, three moulded, zoomorphic-handle type lamps, of oblong form, were recovered while excavating chambers W6 and W14 (Fig. 1). They can also be dated to the Umayyad era.¹² Moreover, several fragments of jugs and red and dark clay gargolettes, decorated with sinusoidal patterns in white paint, typical of the ceramic works of Umayyad Jerash,¹³ are further strong evidence of the Umayyad origins of

the workshops (Fig. 6). In addition, fragments of large jars and craters, decorated on the top of the body or the rim with typical incisions (wavy or wheat motifs) of Middle-Eastern ceramic of the beginning of the eighth century A. D.¹⁴, are additional criteria testifying to the Umayyad dating of the site (Fig. 6). Finally, the absence of refurbishing works in the dyers' workshops suggest that their operating lifespan did not exceed fifty years. Thanks to this evidence, we can safely say that the dyeing workshops operated continuously from their foundation, perhaps in 'Abd al-Malik's caliphate, up to the earthquake that destroyed the city of Jerash in 131 H./748 CE. Given the high similarity of the five dyeing workshops in the hippodrome of Jerash, it seems

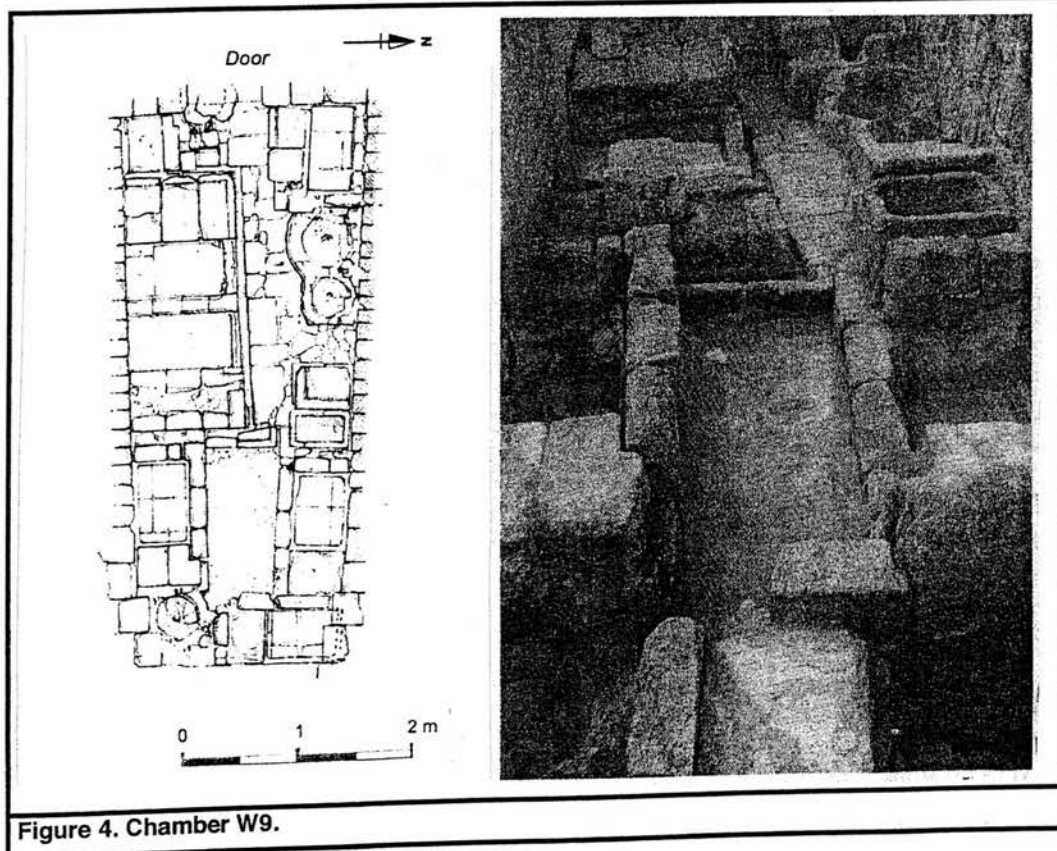


Figure 4. Chamber W9.

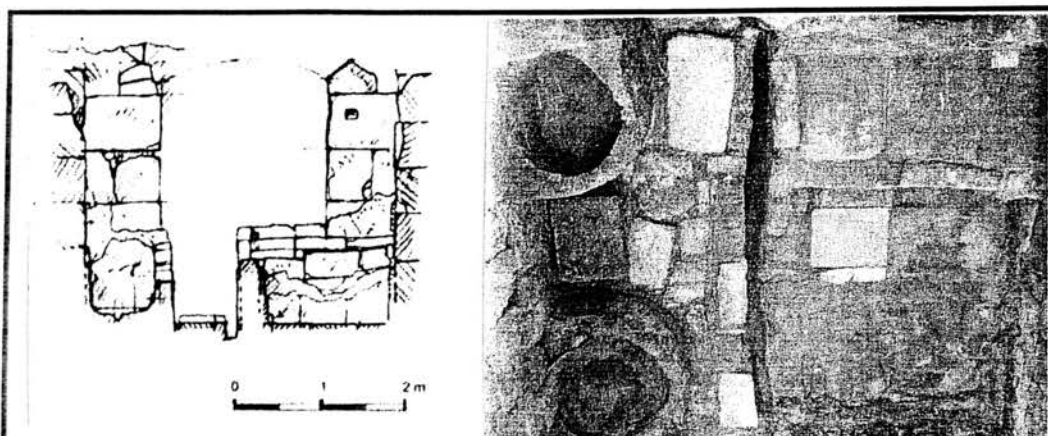


Figure 5. Evacuation pipe of Chamber W11.

likely that they were the product of a coordinated effort by the state or by local authorities, rather than being merely the result of individual plans.

Narrative sources, in particular Arabic and non-Arabic annals and chronicles, legal writings on the theories of fiscal policies, and literary works of *adab*, testify indeed to the significant role played by the state in shaping and encouraging the hegemonic economy of the Umayyad and first Abbasid cities of Syria and Iraq. Besides the Arabization of the monetary system, the state's intervention in fiscal and agricultural policies may have been among the factors that led to an increase in trade exchange and a prosperous urban economy in the first centuries of the Middle Ages.

First of all, narrative sources attest that in the eighth and the beginning of the ninth centuries CE, provinces devoted tax revenues to the development of mosques, in particular the Mosque of the Umayyads in Damascus,¹⁵ and to the building of centres of production and trade in many cities. Ibn Bahshal's *History of Wāsiṭ* describes the foundation of markets, dyers workshops and laundries in the city by the Umayyad governor Yazid b. Abi Muslim.¹⁶ According to the Bar Hebraeus chronicle, Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik collected taxes

to construct buildings with commercial functions.¹⁷ Al-Balādhurī describes how Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik established the house of dyers in Ramla.¹⁸ However, these developments were short-lived. Actually, it seems that the fiscal system was once again centralised by the Abbasid caliphs and their Barmakid administrators by the middle of the ninth century.¹⁹ This deprived the provinces of tax revenues they had formerly used to promote the urban economy. The Barmakids Khālid and Yaḥyā b. Barmak, natives of northern Afghanistan and heirs to the Sassanids' administrative legacies, tried energetically to reintroduce the fiscally centralised model of the King Khusraw II Parviz (590-628). Moreover, according to narrative sources, tax revenues were also used to pay for supplies of raw materials intended for urban production and trade centres. Citizens could pay their taxes either in cash or in

agricultural goods. However, local authorities represented by *ṣāhib al-kharāj* or the aristocracy, encouraged peasants to pay for their land tax in wood, textiles, metals, ores, or corvée labour, in order to guarantee an uninterrupted supply for urban businesses and industries.²⁰

Finally, textual sources assert that the authorities stimulated agricultural output in order to boost urban trade and industry. In the *Kutub al-Futūḥ*, for instance, the authors claim that the Umayyad authorities, namely the caliph and the military elite, put in place a dual policy. On the one hand, they promoted the cultivation of barren lands in the newly conquered territories and secularized ecclesiastical estates, in particular along the Syrian coast²¹ -- Sidon, Beirut, 'Arqaq, Jabala --, in the Jazīra,²² and in the alluvial flat open country in lower Mesopotamia, in new cities like Basra, Wāsiṭ, and Kufa.²³ On the other hand, they introduced new seeds and investment resources to enhance the agricultural sector of Syria and Iraq. For instance, the introduction of indigo and cotton in the Jordan Valley favoured the expansion of a local dyeing industry. The Palestinian geographer al-Muqaddasī asserts that the cultivation of the indigo plant, of Far Eastern origin, was widespread in the alluvial Jordan valley by the seventh and eighth centuries, near Aqaba, Ṣuḡhar, Jerusalem,

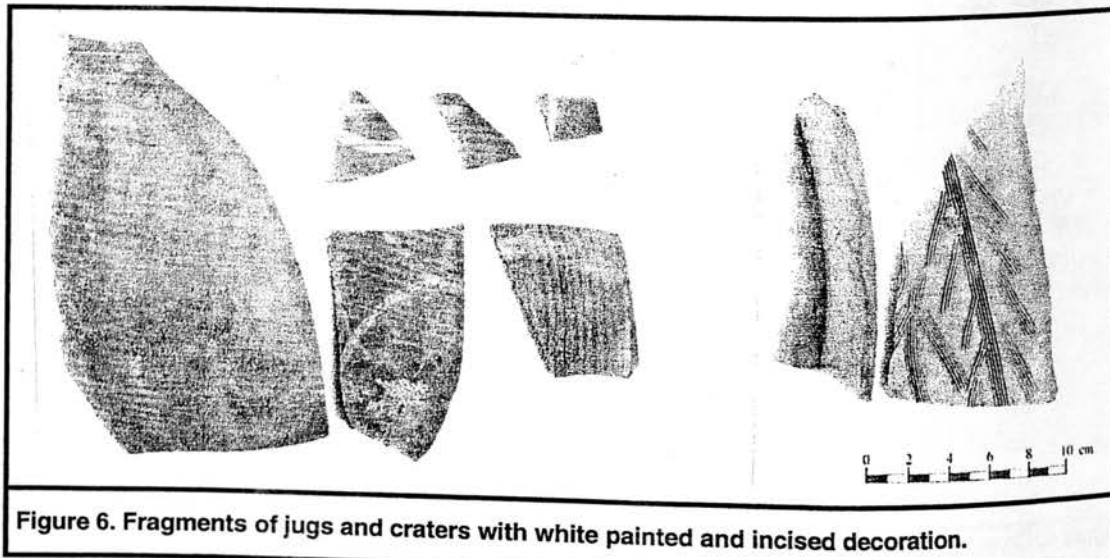


Figure 6. Fragments of jugs and craters with white painted and incised decoration.

Jericho, Tiberias and Baniyas²⁴ (Fig. 7). Thanks to Arab geographers and to the research of R. Serjeant and A. Watson, we can trace the route of the indigo plant from northern India into the Middle-East. In much the same way, cotton reached the alluvial flatland of the Jordan valley through the plateaux of the Jazira, the Orontes valley and the Syrian coast. Cotton was recommended in medieval medical treatises for clothing.

One can draw the following conclusions. On the one hand, the analysis of the remains of the hippodrome's dyeing workshops has yielded new and worthy information about the artisanal techniques used in textile dyeing in the East. On the other hand, the homogeneous numismatic and ceramic evidence testify to the thriving activities in the hippodrome in the eighth century CE, up to the earthquake of 131 H./ 748 CE. It was prosperous during the Umayyad period thanks to the development of the textile industry, which was probably the result of coordinated efforts by the local authorities. These findings, as well as narrative sources, highlight indeed the crucial role played by the state and local authorities in enhancing urban and rural economies between the seventh and the ninth centuries CE. The political and religious authorities encouraged the development of the urban economy in Umayyad Syria and Iraq, though calling the faithful to respect the ethics of Islam and give away a certain amount of their profits to the poor. The Umayyad caliphs and governors do not seem to have adopted the prophet Muhammad's liberal system (in Medina, according to al-Samhūdi's *Wafā' al-wafā' bi-akhbār dār al-muṣṭafā*, they controlled prices and imposed taxes on merchants and craftsmen for the use of shops or workshops). Nonetheless, the development of the urban economy in the first centuries of Islam is mainly due to their efforts.

During excavations projected for the spring of 2008, the author plans to carry out a more detailed analysis of the pottery in order to establish its main characteristics, its numbers, and its features. Further study will be devoted to the workshops' water supplies, as well as to the dyeing activities in each single basin. Moreover, it is projected that archeological excavation will be continued down to strata dating to the Roman period.

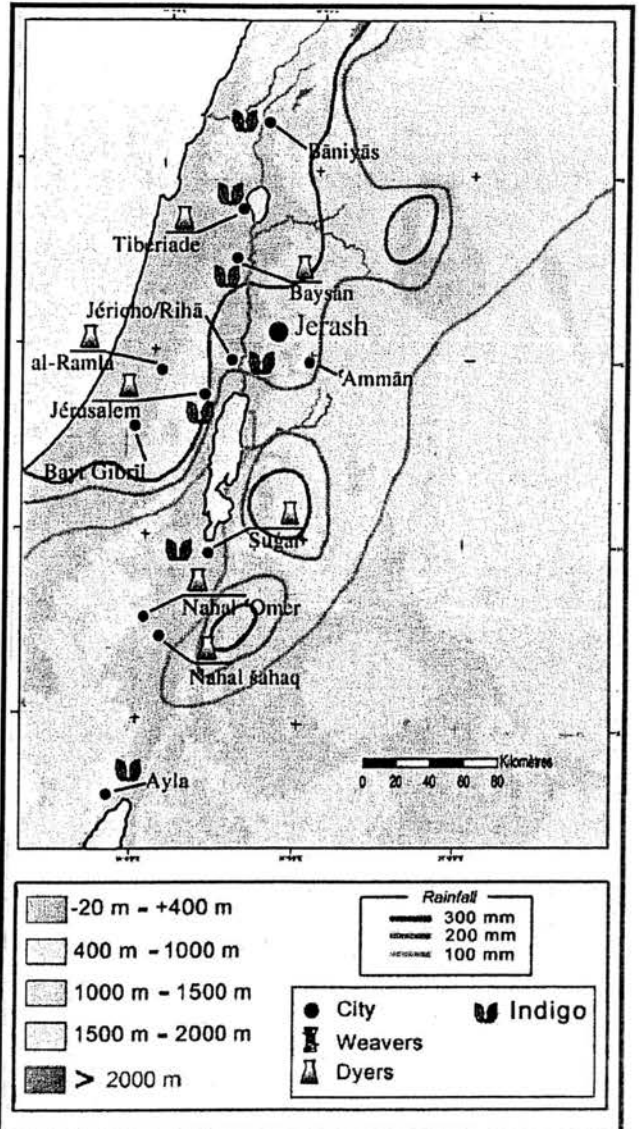


Fig. 7. The introduction of the indigo plant, *indigofera tinctoria* or *al-nil*, in the Jordan valley according to al-Muqaddasi.

Notes:

- 1 The plans of the chambers were drawn by Dr. Olivier Callot (CNRS). I wish to thank him very sincerely for his efforts and help during the excavations. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Department of Antiquities of Jordan and Dr. 'Abd al-Majid Mujalli, Director of the Jerash Archaeological Project, for permission to excavate, and to Dr. Jacques Seigne (CNRS) and the Institut Français du Proche-Orient for their support. Finally, I thank my talented staff -- 'Abd al-Rahman, Ishaq, Lu'ay, and Salih -- without whom the project could not have been carried out.
- 2 A. Ostrasz, "The Hippodrome of Gerasa: A Report on Excavations and Research 1982-1987," *Jerash Archaeological Project 2* (1989), 51-77.
- 3 See C. H. Kraeling (ed.), *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis* (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1938), 50-51, 85-102.
- 4 See in particular A. Ostrasz, *ibid*.
- 5 I. Kehrberg and A. Ostrasz, "Hippodrome, Jerash: Reports on Unfired Ceramics and the Mass Burial of the 7th Century Plague Victims," *American Journal of Archaeology* 98/3 (1994), 546-547.

Fig.

SEE JERASH, PAGE 10.

Announcement June 2007

The Princeton Geniza Project (PGP)

The Princeton Geniza Project's website is open for public use. Founded in 1986 in the Department of Near Eastern Studies by Professors Mark Cohen and Avrom Udovitch, the PGP now contains nearly 4000 historical documents from the "classical" Geniza period, ca. 1000-1250, including about 2000 that have been keyboarded by the Princeton team from Professor Goitein's files, called "typed texts," most of them unpublished. These were completed by the team over the past seven years with funding from the Friedberg Geniza Project and will appear in their own union database. Texts published by Goitein in journals and other collections were keyboarded from his own offprints, incorporating changes he made by hand. The Goitein typed texts currently do not include the India Book documents, except insofar as they have been published. In agreement with Professor Mordechai Friedman, they are being withheld pending the publication of the documents in Goitein's posthumous India Book, which Professor Friedman is editing. (Brill has announced that it will publish Part One of this work.)

The URL is <http://gravitas.princeton.edu/tg/tt/>. This generation of the site was developed by Rafael Alvarado. The site is managed by the Educational Technologies Center at Princeton.

The site displays documents in both Hebrew and Arabic script and can be searched in both languages, as well as using English keywords, which appear in the document headers that were composed by the Princeton Geniza Project staff. The user enters the site according to the instructions on the main page, using "guest" as both username and password. The first page describes the site, the history of the project, and information about the transcriptions. Users should read all the explanatory material carefully in order to understand the features of the database. The menu at the left includes a link to a "**Help**" with information about installing the fonts necessary for entering Hebrew and Arabic characters. Other especially important sections of the site are "**Documents**," the main search engine, and "**Transcriptions Index**," a concordance of every word in the database, which can also be searched. Also very useful are "**Folio Genres**," another means of accessing material, and "**Libraries**," listing all the collections represented in the database.

The site is continually being refined, and many errors still need to be corrected. The database is currently in a "clean-up" phase, and emails pointing out errors are encouraged. Send these to the Project Director, Mark Cohen, at mrcohen@princeton.edu, and the errors will be corrected. The Project Director wishes to emphasize, especially regarding the unpublished texts, that these should be considered provisional editions. As more and more Geniza fragments come on-line in the form of digitized images, scholars will be able to check the editions for themselves. PGP will soon add links to images of documents housed in the libraries of the Jewish Theological Seminary (the Elkan Nathan Adler Collection) and the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania (the Dropsie Collection).

The database is an extremely useful research tool for scholars of Jewish history as well as Islamic history, and also for students of Judeo-Arabic, the history of the Arabic language, and Arabic papyrology. The database has proved particularly useful for corpus linguistics work and for deciphering texts having lacunae, by searching for parallels in the database.

The site is dedicated to the memory of our teacher, Professor S. D. Goitein (1900-1985).

Users are requested to acknowledge use of the site (with the URL) in their publications.

Mark R. Cohen is Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University and the author of many studies based on the Geniza. His most recent is the article "Geniza for Islamicists, Islamic Geniza, and the "New Cairo Geniza,"" in the *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 7 (2006).

Nationalism, Historiography, and the Use and Perception of the Greek Language Among the Copts in Post-Conquest Egypt

by Maged S.A. Mikhail

Egyptian historiography in general, but particularly that concerned with the seventh through the ninth centuries CE, is handicapped by a persistent nationalist paradigm that skews the reading of primary sources and has left a discernable impression on modern scholarship. Without exception, all related branches of study--from the historiography of the Arab conquest to that of Coptic literature¹ and the Melkite community²--have been affected by this distorted reading, which persistently highlights an impervious "Egyptian" identity that shuns foreign influence or control. Of the various tendencies of this reading, two are most pressing for the present discussion. The first is an affinity to depict society in terms of antagonistic polarities that are assumed to relate to one another (and to various historical developments) in a predictable manner. Such a premise underlies much of the historiography of Coptic/Byzantine and Muslim/*dhimmi* relations. A second facet of this ideology is the organic association between creed, language, and "ethnicity." The anachronistic nature of this paradigm has not gone unnoticed by modern scholars, who are cautious of the use of "nationalism" in a pre-modern context. Yet they have not been altogether successful in purging their scholarship of the nationalist-based or inspired conclusions of their predecessors. Old paradigms are tenacious. In general, ideology--nationalism being but one manifestation--is difficult to undermine. It provides a seemingly logical, solid foundation that, through sleight of hand,

masks (modern) socio-political concepts of how the past should have unfolded for a contextual historical analysis.

Thus, the dominant historical presuppositions for the study of early "medieval" Egypt may be summarized in a series of dichotomies: the Christian population was divided between Copts (anti-Chalcedonians) and Melkites (pro-Chalcedonians); Copts were Egyptians while Melkites were Byzantines (Ar. *Rūm*); Copts espoused their language as an expression of a national identity while the Melkites were the guardians of the Greek language, the hallmark of their more ecumenical outlook; in conflicts, the Copts were possibly neutral, but probably favored secession (hence the historiographies of the Persian invasion and the Arab conquest) while the Melkites were Byzantine patriots. In my study of this transitional period, though not by design, I have undermined the validity of these dichotomies. Here I wish to briefly focus on a singular aspect, namely the use and perception of the Greek language by the Coptic hierarchy.³

An excellent summary of the consensus opinion regarding this topic is encapsulated in a survey of Coptic literature. In the article, the author maintains that the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) resulted in the "detachment of most of the Egyptian church from the 'international' Christianity supported by the emperors of Byzantium" and that by the beginning of the sixth century, "Greek began to be perceived as the language of the oppressors and the patristic Greek ('international')

culture was looked upon with suspicion as the vehicle of false dogmas and misleading historical information."⁴ Thus, on the eve of the Arab conquest, the Copts are believed to have been distrustful of the Greek language.⁵ The comments reflect the prevalent interpretive framework for this period, which contrasts "monophysite"/Coptic-speaking Egyptians with "orthodox"/Greek-speaking Byzantines (*Rūm*). Despite its tidiness, however, this paradigm is in need of radical revision.

One of the foundations of the nationalist paradigm is the premise that the Council of Chalcedon initiated a religious-cultural chasm that resulted in the abandonment of the Greek language among the anti-Chalcedonian population. This is supported by various means, but one of the more frequent, and conceivably most persuasive, arguments is based on Coptic literature. Simply stated, the bulk of Egyptian manuscripts from the fifth century onward are Coptic, not Greek. At first glance, this evidence would seem to corroborate the perspective forwarded in the survey of Coptic literature. Historical evidence, however, often testifies to the contrary.

First, with regard to anti-Chalcedonian literature (which is at the heart of the argument), it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, given the current state of the manuscript evidence, to ascertain the original language of composition for the bulk of this genre.⁶ And indeed, despite the survival of an important number of such texts in Coptic, scholarly consensus is that the majority of this

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polemical literature was initially composed in Greek.⁷ It should also be noted that throughout the post-Chalcedonian period Coptic prose continued to be saturated with Greek loanwords despite the existence of common Coptic equivalents. At the very least, anti-Chalcedonian authors and translators were not hypersensitive to the Greek language as such.

Fundamentally, the argument from Coptic literature is only as effective as it is selective. If the sum total of Egyptian anti-Chalcedonian literature is surveyed, there is no doubt that the majority was originally composed in the learned language of the empire. The thirty-third (anti-Chalcedonian) Patriarch of Alexandria, Theodosius I (535-567), may serve as a passing example. After the death of Severus of Antioch (465-538), Theodosius became the theological voice of the anti-Chalcedonian movement. And, as was the case with Severus, he composed his theological treatises in Greek.⁸ In fact, similar to many of his Alexandrian predecessors, such as Cyril I and Dioscorus I, Theodosius demonstrates no competence in the Coptic language.

Patriarch Theodosius may have been exceptional in his theological acumen, but he was typical in his Hellenistic leanings. Damian I (569-605 CE) was an Alexandrian whose lost writings were originally composed in Greek.⁹ Patriarchs Anastasius (605-616 CE) and Andronicus (616-622 CE) similarly had strong ties to Alexandria and were fluent in Greek.¹⁰ In the post-conquest period, the *Life* of Isaac I (686-89 CE) recounts that as a young man, Isaac secured an appointment as a government secretary--an occupation that demanded a high degree of Greek literacy at that time.¹¹ The *Life* also affirms that prior to his consecration as patriarch, Isaac composed the Paschal Letters of his immediate predecessor, Patriarch John of Samannūd (677-686 CE); such letters were issued in Greek through at least the Umayyad period.¹²

In the wake of Chalcedon and well into the post-conquest era, the theology of the anti-Chalcedonians of Egypt continued to be articulated and expressed in the Greek language. And over the centu-

ries, as the use of Greek declined, the theological writings of Christian Egypt (both Coptic and Melkite) were then composed in Arabic. Unlike Syriac, Coptic was never a language in which theological treatises of any weight were composed or translated.¹³ It functioned mainly as a *koine* for the Christian scriptures along with homiletic, hagiographical, and apocalyptic texts.

Turning to the second feature of the nationalist reading--the association between creed, language, and "ethnicity"--it is possible to assert the nondenominational nature of the Greek language a full century after the Arab conquest. Two eighth-century public texts are definitive in this regard. The first is the Greek Paschal (or Festal) Letter of Patriarch Alexander II (705-30),¹⁴ which is a Greek profession of anti-Chalcedonian theology. Minimally, it demonstrates that by the eighth century CE, official church documents were still issued in Greek. The second text is the Greek inscription in the Church of al-Mu'allāqa, which has been definitively dated to 735 CE.¹⁵ Use of Greek as the sole language for the dedication of such a prominent church speaks volumes as to the official use and perception of the language by elites (and, arguably, the laity). By the first half of the eighth century, the Coptic church did not view the Greek language as the distinctive marker of a specific community or creed--much less a language tainted by "heresy." To the contrary, the evidence suggests that Greek was the official language of the Coptic church through the ninth century CE.

The use of Greek by the Coptic hierarchy was intentional and enduring. Upon his ordination, Patriarch Mark III (799-819) sent his synodal letter along with a Coptic delegation to Syria. The group was chiefly composed of two bishops, Mark of Tinnis and Mark of al-Faramā, along with deacon George--all of whom were chosen for their fluency in Greek, the language of the missive.¹⁶ As may be inferred, throughout the first centuries under Islamic rule, synodal letters (and presumably other official correspondences) exchanged between the various anti-Chalcedonian patriarchates circulated in Greek--not Coptic, Syriac, or Arabic.

Another ninth-century patriarch, Joseph I (830-849), provides intriguing evidence.¹⁷ As a youth, Joseph--along with his peers, the so-called "Children of the [Patriarchal] Cell"--was instructed in the Greek language by a deacon described in the *History of the Patriarchs* as a "learned man."¹⁸ Joseph's biography demonstrates that proficiency in the Greek language was a quality cultivated among individuals groomed for the higher clergy of the Coptic church well into the ninth century.¹⁹ It is also noteworthy that the distinguishing mark of a "learned man" in ninth-century anti-Chalcedonian Egypt was still knowledge of the Greek language, much as it had been throughout the preceding millennium. Unmistakably, comprehension of the language and the ability to teach it were skills of sustained value within Coptic/anti-Chalcedonian ranks.

It is probable that Patriarch Joseph was also fluent in Arabic.²⁰ Such a conclusion stems from an incident in which he freely conversed with a Muslim *qādi* without the assistance of an interpreter.²¹ It is here, in the mid-ninth century, that the three languages converge. The patriarch's mother tongue was Coptic, yet the importance of the Arabic and Greek languages was pressing. Ordained patriarch at the beginning of the third century of Islamic rule, Joseph had to learn Arabic, the official language of Egypt, and he could not avoid learning Greek, the language of theology and the elite of the hierarchy.²²

Patriarch Joseph may serve as an important historical marker. He provides a nuanced reflection of his time; he is a hybrid. Submerged in three languages and cultures, in his personal transactions he spoke Coptic.²³ His successors, even those with comparable linguistic credentials, were part of a decidedly Arabic milieu and literary culture.

Although abridged, the above discussion has several ramifications. Primarily, it demonstrates the elevated status and longevity which the "imperial" Greek language enjoyed among the "native" Coptic clergy centuries after the Chalcedonian schism and the Arab conquest. Clearly, the language enjoyed a prestige, which according to the nationalist reading, could

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not have existed. More broadly, it highlights the inadequacy and corrosive nature of nationalism as a premise for the study of pre-modern history. In that vein, it demonstrates both the lingering effects of a paradigm that is readily dismissed as an historiographic relic, and the importance of reassessing historical evidence apart from ideological presuppositions. In doing so, this investigation has yielded conclusions

that are diametrically opposed to what has been deemed self-evident by earlier scholarship.

Finally, the failure of nationalism as an historical lens for the study of pre-modern history is a commentary on the inadequacy of ideology as a methodological tool. Ideology of any sort forwards answers that seem correct in light of the socio-political environment from which it

stems. It provides a selective vision of how the past should or ought to have been; thus, turning the historical enterprise into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Rather than ideology, historians are better served by hypotheses, which are by nature tentative and open to verification in light of historical evidence and, if necessary, can be adjusted or discarded as the evidence demands.

Notes:

1 T. Orlandi, "Literature, Coptic," *The Coptic Encyclopedia* 5: 1450-60; S. Maher, *al-Adab al-qibṭī* (Cairo, 1998), 75-76; idem, "The Evolution of the Coptic Language," *Coptologia* 16 (2000), 61-62. Orlandi presents Egyptian nationalism as the impetus for Coptic literature (see pg. 1451).

2 S.H. Skreslet II, "The Greeks in Medieval Islamic Egypt: A Melkite Dhimmi Community under the patriarch of Alexandria (640-1095)" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1987), 49, 82, 221, 265. Although a valuable contribution, the work is fully enveloped by the nationalist paradigm. Note particularly the analysis of the Arab conquest (pgs. 53-55, 78-79). Furthermore, throughout the dissertation, there is a manifest link between ethnicity, language, and creed.

3 I have limited the scope of the topic and number of footnotes. A fuller version of this analysis is in chapter four of my Ph.D. dissertation, which I am preparing for publication: Maged S.A. Mikhail, "Egypt from Late Antiquity to Early Islam: Copts, Melkites, and Muslims Shaping a New Society" (Ph.D. diss., University of California Los Angeles, 2004).

4 Orlandi, "Literature, Coptic," 5: 1453 and 1454. Such sentiments are ubiquitous, e.g. C. Steed, *History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 22.

5 Some trace such sentiments back to the second half of the fifth century CE.

6 On these texts, see D.W. Johnson, "Anti-Chalcedonian Polemics in Coptic Texts 451-641," in *Roots of Egyptian Christianity*, eds. B. Pearson and J.E. Goehring (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 216-34.

7 Johnson, "Anti-Chalcedonian," 226-28.

8 As with Severus, most of Theodosius's theological writings are extant only in Syriac: see A. van Roey and P. Allen, eds., *Monophysite Texts of the Sixth Century*. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 56 (Leuven: Peeters, 1994). The only Theodosian texts that survive in Coptic are popular sermons: K.H. Kuhn, ed./trans. *A Panegyric on John the Baptist Attributed to Theodosius Archbishop of Alexandria*. CSCO 268, 269; scrip. copticus 33, 34 (Leuven: Peeters, 1966); "A Homily on the Virgin by Theodosius Archbishop of Alexandria" in *The Coptic Manuscripts in the Freer Collection*, ed. William H. Worrell (London: Macmillan, 1923; repr. New York/London: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1972).

9 *History of the Patriarchs* [HP], *Patrologia Orientalis* [PO] 1.4:209-13; E.R. Hardy, "Damian," *CoptEncyc* 3: 688-89. For the surviving texts attributed to Patriarch Damian, see H.E. Winlock and W.E. Crum. *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes*. 2 vols. (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1926), II: 148-52, 331-37.

10 HPPO 1.4: 214-19, 220-22; A.S. Atiya, "Anastasius," *CoptEncyc* 1: 125-26; idem, "Andronicus," *CoptEncyc* 1: 131-32. Anastasius was at one time appointed to the city council, while Andronicus was a scribe prior to becoming patriarch and a deacon in the Angelion church in Alexandria.

11 E. Porcher, *Vie d'Isaac, Patriarche d'Alexandrie de 686 à 689*. PO IX.3 (Paris, 1914; repr. 1974); Eng. trans. David N. Bell, *The Life of Isaac of Alexandria and The Martyrdom of Saint Macrobios* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1988). Porcher 8, 28; Bell 44, 52, my translation. On the dominance of Greek scribes in the Egyptian bureaucracy of the time, see Kosei Morimoto, "The *Diwāns* as Registers of the Arab Stipendiaries in Early Islamic Egypt," *Itinéraires d'Orient. Hommages à Claude Cahen*. Res Orientales 6 (1994), 353-365.

12 *Life of Isaac*, Porcher 36; Bell, 55. Also see note 15 below.

13 There are some exceptions, usually compilations of patristic excerpts. See Paul de Lagarde, *Catena in Evangelia Aegyptiacae quae Supersunt* (Göttingen: Dietrich, 1886; repr. Osnabrück: Zeller, 1871). Such texts were at times translated into Arabic, such as *I'tirāf al-abā'* (*Faith of the Fathers*); Anonymus (A monk from Dayr al-Muharraḡ), *I'tirāfāt [sic] al-abā'* (Cairo: M.D. Graphics, 2002).

14 L.S.B. MacCoull, "The Paschal Letter of Alexander II, Patriarch of Alexandria; a Greek Defense of Coptic Theology under Arab Rule," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990), 27-40; repr. in *Coptic Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (Brookfield: Variorum, 1993), XIX;

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- C. Schmidt and W. Schubart, *Altchristliche Texte* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1910), ch. V. The letter may be dated to 94/713, 100/719, or 105/724.
- 15 Charalambia Coquin, "Church of al-Mu'allaqah," *CoptEncyc* 3: 557-560; L.S.B. MacCoull, "Redating the Inscription of El-Moallaqa," *ZPE* 64 (1986), 230-34.
- 16 HP PO 10.5: 523.
- 17 HP PO 10.5: 590-665; S.Y. Labib, "Yusab I," *CoptEncyc* 7: 2362-63.
- 18 HP PO 10.5: 597. The thoroughness of his Greek education may be deduced from the fact that he was taught to write in the language, not simply to read it. Patriarch Mark II (799-819 CE) may have also been part of this group (see HP PO 10.5: 597).
- 19 School exercises and bilingual (Coptic/Greek) wordlists demonstrate that learning Greek was still (at least for some) a priority throughout the eighth to eleventh centuries CE. See M.R.M. Hasitzka, *Neue Texte und Dokumentation zum Koptisch-Unterricht*. Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer XVIII (Wien: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 1990), esp. texts 119, 124, 132, 133, 228, 229; cf. 232, 236, 237, 238, 247. Text 260, dated 10-11th c. CE, is a long bilingual Greek/Sahidic wordlist; cf. 261, 263, 264.
- 20 HP PO 10.5: 639.
- 21 Earlier, interpreters were needed to communicate with Arab officials (e.g. HP PO 5.1: 386).
- 22 As discussed above, very few theological texts were translated into Coptic, and Christian-Arabic writings would not emerge for another century after his death.
- 23 When angered, the patriarch lashed out at Zacharias, bishop of al-Buhairah, in Coptic (HP PO 10.5: 639).

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- 6 I. Kehrberg and A. Ostrasz, "A History of Occupational Changes at the Site of the Hippodrome of Gerasa," *Studies on the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 6 (1997), 167-173.
- 7 K. W. Russel, "The Earthquake Chronology of Palestine and Northwest Arabia from the 2nd through the Mid-8th Century CE," *BASOR* 260 (1985) 37-59.
- 8 A. Ovadia, "Excavations in the Area of the Ancient Synagogue at Gaza (Preliminary Report)," *Israel Exploration Journal* 19/4 (1969), 193-199.
- 9 R. Bar-Nathan and G. Mazor, "The Bet She'an Excavation Project, 1989-1991, City Center South," *Exploration and Surveys in Israel* 11 (1993), 37-38.
- 10 M. Martin-Bueno and A. Uscatescu, "The Macellum of Gerasa (Jerash, Jordan): From a Market Place to an Industrial Area," *BASOR* 307 (1997), 67-88.
- 11 J. Walker, *A Catalogue of the Arab-Byzantine and Post-Reform Umayyad Coins in the British Museum* (London, 1956).
- 12 Th. Scholl, "The Chronology of Jerash Lamps," *Jerash Archaeological Project* 1 (1986), 163-166.
- 13 Similar ceramics were uncovered in a residential area by the south decumanus and in the church of the bishop Marianos. See M. Gawlikowski, "A Residential Area by the South Decumanus," *Jerash Archaeological Project* 1 (1986), 107-136.
- 14 Fragments of Umayyad craters decorated on the top of the body with wheat motifs were uncovered at Khirbet al-Samra. See A. Desreumaux, *La Voie Royale, 9000 ans d'art au royaume du Jordanie* (Paris, 1986), n°359, p. 271.
- 15 Ibn al-Faqih, *Kitāb al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir), 107.
- 16 Ibn Baḥshal, *Ta'rikh Wāsiṭ* (ed. Kurkīs 'Awwād, Baghdad, 1967), 43, 119.
- 17 E. W. Budge (ed.), *The Chronography of Bar Hebraeus* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 109.
- 18 Al-Balādhurī, *The Origins of the Islamic State. Being a Translation of Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān*, transl. P. K. Hitti (London: Gorgias Press, 2002), 220-221.
- 19 H. Kennedy, "The Barmakid Revolution in Islamic Government," *Pembroke Papers* 1 (1990) 89-98.
- 20 F. G. Kenyon & H. I. Bell (eds.), *Greek Papyri in the British Museum* (London, 1893-1917), IV, nos. 1338-1339.
- 21 Al-Balādhurī, *op. cit.*, 194.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 278, 280.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 453.
- 24 Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan at-taqāsīm*, transl. A. Miquel (Damascus, Institut Français d'Études Arabes de Damas, 1969), 218, 232.

Lessons in Frank Speech: Re-reading Stories from *Kalila wa Dimna*¹

by Jennifer London

Despite the commonly accepted notion that being frank in politics involves being direct, it is in fact possible to share our genuine political perspectives with others in subtler ways. Perhaps the eighth-century Persian secretary Ibn al-Muqaffa' (757/140) appreciated this fact, and therefore translated a collection of fables from Middle Persian into Arabic to express to elites in the 'Abbasid caliphate how he thought Princes ought to act. While we cannot ask Ibn al-Muqaffa' why he translated these fables, known by the title *Kalila wa Dimna*, lingering on this subject allows us to recognize both the contemporary limits of our scholarly understanding of frank speech and the possibility that Ibn al-Muqaffa' might have "translated" his ideals into an 'Abbasid context through his compilation of stories. Such observations illustrate the fruitful dialogue that can begin between medieval historians and political theorists when contemporary scholars of political theory pick up medieval Arabic texts.

I do not suggest that Ibn al-Muqaffa' was never direct in communicating his views. In the *Risālah fi al-ṣaḥābah*, Ibn al-Muqaffa' offered advice to the 'Abbasid caliph in his own narrative voice. Moreover, historians suggest that the secretary was quite free with his words. The fourteenth-century scholar Dhahabī (1348/749), for example, writes that Ibn al-Muqaffa' was considered thoughtless.² There is also a rumor that he referred to the governor of Basra as *ibn al-mughṭalimah*, alluding to his mother's promiscuity.³ According to J.D. Latham, "his wit could be

caustic, his tongue sarcastic, his manner arrogant and his air superior."⁴ If these allegations are true, why would such a person, who was evidently comfortable with direct speech, have chosen to present his views through translating the fables of *Kalila wa Dimna*? Is there something about speaking through the voices of imaginary characters that enabled Ibn al-Muqaffa' to accomplish things that he could not with direct speech?

In the story of "the King and His Eight Dreams" from *Kalila wa Dimna*,⁵ we can see that Ibn al-Muqaffa' not only was able to communicate his views about how princes ought to govern, through his telling of this story, but also that he constructed a dialogue in this story that allowed the reader to experience literally what he sought to convey. Moreover, in this story Ibn al-Muqaffa' revealed that a speaker can be frank about his political views (e.g., how he believes a ruler ought to act, etc.) without being direct. A review of the story⁶ will help clarify these points.

Though "the King and his Eight Dreams" is a Buddhist legend,⁷ it relates to an important subject in the history of Arabic political thought and Islamic ethics: the kingly virtue of patience or *ḥilm*.⁸ Often associated with the caliph Mu'āwiyah (680), *ḥilm* represents an integral trait for kingly success. Goldziher argues that the meaning of *ḥilm* changed with the onset of Islam. He implies that it became associated with being a good Muslim. He writes,

What Islam attempted to achieve was, after all, nothing but a *ḥilm*

of higher nature than that taught by the code of virtues of pagan days. Many a virtue of Arab paganism was reduced to the level of vice by Muhammad, and on the other hand many a social act, considered dishonourable by Arabs, was now elevated to the status of a virtue. He is fond of calling people *ḥalīm* who practice forgiveness and leniency. With this in mind he often calls Allah *ḥalīm*, a title which he gives with preference to Ibrāhīm amongst the prophets.⁹

In Ibn al-Muqaffa''s story, *ḥilm* connotes the patience that a king must possess when he orders that someone be executed. When a king must make such an order, it is best that he wait until he is certain that he will not regret his decision. The characters in this story are Indian, as the story is of Indian origin. The narrator in this story argues that it is *ḥilm* that leads a king to be "honored by his subjects, make peace reign in his army and overcome the malevolence of his generals and prevent his kingdom from being rent and given to others."¹⁰ Like the other stories in *Kalila wa Dimna*, the Indian King in this story learns about the meaning of this kingly virtue through hearing a tale that his advisor tells him. In this tale, another king, named Dēvaçarman, is instructed in the meaning of *ḥilm* by his sage, Bilār. The sage, however, does not define this concept for the king directly. Rather, Bilār makes Dēvaçarman learn how to be patient

by forcing him to listen to his prosaic remarks on a variety of unrelated subjects, without giving the king the information he seeks. Dēvaçarman tells his sage to kill his own favorite wife, the mother of Gōbar. But Bilār does not do as he is told; rather, he hides the mother of Gōbar, anticipating that the king would eventually come to regret his decision to kill her. As expected, the king grieves over the loss of his wife, and asks Bilār if he has killed her. The sage refuses to answer him, but instead waxes prosaic about the human condition for many pages. Even when the king becomes angry and dares his sage to continue, Bilār rattles on and refuses to answer. Only after the king announces that the sage has "wearied (him) sorely"¹¹ does Bilār finally reveal the truth: that the king's favorite wife is still alive, and this conversation was a test to evaluate whether Dēvaçarman had come to appreciate the meaning and significance of *hilm*. Bilār explains:

O King, live for ever! Among kings there is none equal to you, either among those who have passed away or those who reign now; because that anger has not overcome you, nor has the severity of clumsy words moved the tower of your endurance. You, in spite of your royalty, have not been wroth with me, as might befit your Excellency; because your soul is full of peace and overflowing with tranquility, versed in gentleness and adorned with intelligence, girt about with integrity and far from oppression. You have endured my words. You were reviled and did not become angry, you were abused and took no offense. Now let your soul rejoice and your mind exult; let your emotions subside and your perturbation cease; let your eye be bright and your heart glad; for the mother of Gōbar has been kept alive.¹²

The king is so appreciative that his sage

saved the mother of Gōbar, thereby teaching him an important lesson, that he allows Bilār to live. The sage constructs a dialogue that forces the king not only to understand the meaning of *hilm*, but to possess it as well.

In effect, Bilār creates a situation in which the king could not kill him without losing access to information he wanted about his wife. From this standpoint, the information the sage possesses allows the king and Bilār to swap power roles. There is something about possessing information required by the king that elevates the traditional status of the sage. The same could be said of Ibn al-Muqaffa's role as a translator, because he disseminated ancient wisdom from another cultural context. Had he simply defined *hilm* in his own narrative voice, he might have been viewed as just another bureaucrat at court. The telling of these stories confers upon both the sage within them and the man portraying the sage in his translation (Ibn al-Muqaffa' in this instance) an elevated status in relation to the holders of power, teaching them things that they might not attend to with such care otherwise.

This fable, and Ibn al-Muqaffa's narration of it, reveal that the telling of these stories can help readers learn to experience the kingly virtues that the author wishes to convey. The reader, as well as the character of Dēvaçarman in this tale, must bear with the narrator's prose in order to reach the punch line. In doing so, the reader, too, must develop the virtue of patience, just as the protagonist did. In this way, Ibn al-Muqaffa' produces common experiences that the reader and the protagonist share. This commonality could help readers empathize with the protagonist in these stories, and enhances the likelihood that they would integrate the protagonist's lessons into their own lives.

To a student of political theory, Ibn al-Muqaffa's story challenges the way that one thinks about frank speech: it presents a way to share one's genuine political perspectives with others, namely to be frank with them, without being direct. It suggests

that we can instruct others in how to act politically, without being explicit. This indirect and effective mode of communicating, which may enable listeners to experience what we seek to convey, challenges also the general ways scholars think about communication in a democratic public sphere.¹³ Leading scholars of democratic theory, such as Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas, presented democratic public spheres as places where individuals speak to one another directly, to share their political views.¹⁴ They did not take up the possibility of indirect expression. Even post-modern scholars such as Foucault and Butler,¹⁵ who analyze how minorities and subalterns might vocalize their political perspectives against conventional systems of power, do not explore how people might choose to speak indirectly to express their views. From this standpoint, Ibn al-Muqaffa' can help contemporary students of democratic theory who are interested in how to bring new public voices to the fore. He helps us to realize how different narrative forms (e.g., fables) might extend the boundaries of who gets to engage in political speech. Perhaps if minorities were able to offer narrative testimony or introduce expertise from another cultural and temporal contexts, they might be able to elevate their social standing in the eyes of political elites, much in the way that storytellers may have in other cultural contexts.¹⁶ Ibn al-Muqaffa' teaches the contemporary student of political theory that we need not be direct to be frank with one another; indeed, it may even be the case that being indirect could broaden the scope of the current public sphere we inhabit, transforming traditional power roles between citizens and engendering greater empathy between speakers and listeners -- which is, after all, what democracy should be all about. Though he wrote not in a democratic context but rather in the realm of 'Abbasid autocracy, more than a thousand years ago, Ibn al-Muqaffa' raises issues that are relevant to modern speculations on the theory of democracy.

Notes:

- 1 This article is a concise version of a chapter of my dissertation. For this reason many dates and historical facts are omitted here. The longer version may be requested from the author at jlondon@uchicago.edu by any reader who may be interested.
- 2 Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 209. Full citations of all works are found in the accompanying bibliography.
- 3 Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 209; *Ta'rikh al-Islām*, 199.
- 4 Latham in Ashtiany, et al., 1989, 49.
- 5 For close readings of this story, I consult Keith-Falconer's English translation of the text (Ibn al-Muqaffa' in Keith-Falconer tr., 1885), as it is apparently closest to the Syriac version of these fables, which is nearest to Ibn al-Muqaffa''s Arabic translation which has been lost. "The King and His Eight Dreams" is found on pp. 219-47. I also consult an Arabic version edited by 'Azzām and Ḥusayn ('Azzām and Ḥusayn, eds., 1973) which is based on later Arabic manuscripts.
- 6 In Keith-Falconer's translation, this fable is called "the story of the wise Bilār." However, translators refer to this story as "the King and his Eight Dreams."
- 7 This story is a Buddhist legend, while most of the stories in *Kalīla wa Dimna* are not from a Buddhist tradition. For more information on the stories in Ibn al Muqaffa''s collection of fables see De Blois' book on the subject (De Blois, 1990).
- 8 For an introduction to the subject of *ḥilm* in Islamic ethics and politics, see the article entitled "*ḥilm*" in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* on-line by Ch. Pellat and an article by Goldziher on the subject (Goldziher, 1967).
- 9 Goldziher (1967), 207.
- 10 Ibn al-Muqaffa' in Keith-Falconer tr., 219.
- 11 Ibn al-Muqaffa' in Keith-Falconer tr., 244.
- 12 Ibn al-Muqaffa' in Keith-Falconer tr., 245.
- 13 We can define a public sphere as a public forum where individuals can share their genuine views about politics with one another in order to influence positively the political decisions they make.
- 14 In particular, Arendt (1958) and Habermas (1959).
- 15 Notably Foucault (1975) and Butler (1997).
- 16 Perhaps Ibn al-Muqaffa''s use of indirect speech can serve as a potential method for contemporary minorities to use in contemporary public-spheres. I do not wish to suggest, however, that Ibn al-Muqaffa' and a contemporary minority share a common social status. Ibn al-Muqaffa' was part of an elite class of secretaries in his own context, which was not a democracy. He was a Persian in an Arab court, but his class of secretaries had great social power that many Arabs in this context did not possess. This notwithstanding, Ibn al-Muqaffa' presents techniques, such as vocalizing political perspective through the narrative form of the fable, that minorities in other social contexts (such as contemporary democracies) may be able to use to vocalize their perspectives in politics.

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ANNUAL MEETINGS

Organization	When and Where	Information	Telephone/Fax/Email/Web
Middle East Studies Association (2007 Meeting)	Nov. 17-20, 2007 Montréal, Canada	MESA Secretariat University of Arizona 1232 N. Cherry Ave. Tucson, AZ 85721	(520)-621-5850 mesa@ccit.arizona.edu www.mesa.arizona.edu
Middle East Studies Association (2008 Meeting)	Nov. 22-25, 2008 Washington, DC	see preceding	see preceding
Middle East Studies Association (2009 Meeting)	Nov. 21-24, 2009 Boston, MA	see preceding	see preceding
American Oriental Society (2008 Meeting)	Mar. 14-17, 2008 Chicago, IL	American Oriental Society Hatcher Graduate Library University of Michigan Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1205	(734)-764-7555 www.umich.edu/~aos
American Oriental Society (2009 Meeting)	Mar. 13-15, 2009 Albuquerque, NM	see preceding	see preceding
American Historical Association (2008 Meeting)	Jan. 3-6, 2008 Washington, DC	American Historical Assn. 400 A Street, S. E. Washington, DC 20003	(202)-544-2422 www.historians.org
American Historical Association (2009 Meeting)	Jan. 2-5, 2009 New York, NY	see preceding	see preceding
The Medieval Institute (2007 Meeting)	May 10-13, 2007 Kalamazoo, MI	The Medieval Institute Western Michigan Univ. 1903 W. Michigan Avenue Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5432	Tel.: (269)-387-8745 Fax: (269)-387-8750 mdvl_congres@wmich.edu www.wmich.edu/medieval
The Medieval Institute (2008 Meeting)	May 8-11, 2008 Kalamazoo, MI	see preceding	see preceding
Seminar for Arabian Studies (2007 Meeting)	July 19-21, 2007 London, UK	Dr. Ardle MacMahon Seminar for Arabian Studies The British Museum c/o Asia Department Great Russell Street London WC1B 3DG, UK	Fax: 44-(0)208-985-3561 seminar.arab@durham.ac.uk www.arabianseminar.org.uk

ANNUAL MEETINGS

Organization	When and Where	Information	Telephone/Fax/Email/Web
College Art Association (2008 Meeting)	Feb. 20-23, 2008 Dallas-Fort Worth, TX	Suzanne Schanzer 275 Seventh Ave. New York, NY 10001	(212)-691-1051 ext13 www.collegeart.org
College Art Association (2009 Meeting)	Feb. 25-28, 2009 Los Angeles, CA	see preceding	see preceding
International Medieval Congress (2007 Meeting) "Medieval Cities"	July 9-12, 2007 Leeds, UK	Axel E.W. Müller IMC, Parkinson 1.03 University of Leeds Leeds LS2 9JT, UK	Tel.: +44 (113) 343-3614 Fax: +44 (113) 343-3616 imc@leeds.ac.uk www.leeds.ac.uk/ims
International Medieval Congress (2008 Meeting) "The Natural World"	July 7-10, 2008 Leeds, UK	see preceding	see preceding
Dumbarton Oaks Conference (2007 Meeting) "From Enrico to Andrea Dandolo: Imitation, Appropriation and Meaning at San Marco in Venice"	Apr. 28, 2007 Washington, DC	Dumbarton Oaks 1703 32nd St., N. W. Washington, DC 20007	(202)-339-6940 www.doaks.org
ARAM International Conference (2007 Meeting)	July 6-7, 2007 Oxford, UK	ARAM The Oriental Institute Oxford University Pusey Lane Oxford OX1 2LE, UK	Tel.: 44-1865-514041 Fax: 44-1865-516824 aram@ermine.ox.ac.uk users.ox.ac.uk/~aram
American Academy of Religion (2007 Meeting)	Nov. 17-20, 2007 San Diego, CA	American Academy of Religion 1703 Clifton Rd., Suite G-5 Atlanta, GA 30329-4019	(404)-727-7920 aar@emory.edu www.aarweb.org
American Academy of Religion (2008 Meeting)	Nov. 1-4, 2008 Chicago, IL	see preceding	see preceding
American Academy of Religion (2009 Meeting)	Nov. 7-10, 2009 Montréal, Canada	see preceding	see preceding

REVIEWS • OF • BOOKS

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REVIEW POLICY

Members of MEM are invited to submit reviews of recent books in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, or other Middle Eastern languages that they have read and that deal with subjects of interest to MEM's membership. In exceptional cases, reviews of books in English or other European languages will be printed, but the main focus will be books in Middle Eastern languages, because generally these are not reviewed in Western journals. *Al-'Usur al-Wusta* relies on the voluntary submission of reviews because review copies of books in Middle Eastern languages are not usually made available.

Reviews should be brief, 250 words or, if possible, fewer. A short note is sufficient in many cases, as it serves the main purpose of bringing a worthwhile work of scholarship to the attention of MEM members who may be interested in the subject it treats. Be sure to include full bibliographical information: full name of author, full title, place and date of publication, publisher, and number of pages. Send reviews directly to the editor.

Al-Bātili, Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh. *Al-Imām al-Khaṭṭābī wa-āthāruhu al-ḥadīthīya wa-manhajuhu fihā*. [The imam al-Khaṭṭābī, his works concerning ḥadīth, and his method in them] Silsilat al-Rasā'il al-Jāmi'iyah 45. 2 vols. (Riyadh: Wizārat al-Ta'lim al-'Āli, Jāmi'at al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd al-Islāmiya, 'Imādat al-Baḥṭh al-'Ilmī, 1426/2005). 1345 pp. (continuous pagination).

On Abū Sulaymān Ḥamd ibn Muḥammad al-Khaṭṭābī (d. Bust, 388/988?), philologist, theologian, traditionist, and Shāfi'i jurist, v. GAS 1:210-11, 8:208, with further references. He has been the subject of two significant articles: Sebastian Günther, "Der šafi'itische Traditionalist Abū Sulaimān al-Khaṭṭābī und die Situation der religiösen Wissenschaften im 10. Jahrhundert," *ZDMG* 146 (1996): 61-91, and Vardit Tokatly, "The *A'lām al-ḥadīth* of al-Khaṭṭābī: A Commentary on al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* or a Polemical Treatise?" *Studia Islamica* 92 (2001), 53-91. He also comes up often in Daniel Gimaret, *Dieu à l'image de l'homme: Les anthropomorphismes de la sunna et leur interprétation par les théologiens*, Patrimoines Islam (Paris: Cerf, 1997). Bātili pays attention only to Arabophone scholarship, but many of his observations are relevant to current discussions in Europe and North America.

The man's name is sometimes given as Aḥmad, sometimes as Ḥamd; e.g., separate entries in Kahhāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin* 2:61, 4:74. Bātili comes down for Ḥamd (84). He likes to think of Khaṭṭābī as a strict traditionalist, and Khaṭṭābī certainly presents himself as a strict adherent of *ahl al-sunna wa-al-jamā'a*, disparaging *kalām*. However, Bātili finds a number of quotations that indicate divergence from strictly Sunni views; for example, glossing God's laughter as "mercy" (148-50). I would classify him with the middle party variously called the semi-rationalists, *ahl al-ithbāt*, or *mutakillimī ahl al-sunna* (with Gimaret and Tokatly *contra* Günther).

Bātili says as much as he can about Khaṭṭābī's lost works but he gives over most of the book to studies of the six extant works having the most to do with ḥadīth (i.e., all except *Bayān i'jāz al-Qur'ān*). *Sha'n al-du'ā'* is mostly a commentary on a collection of ḥadīth (not extant) by Ibn Khuzayma (d. Nishapur, 311/924). Bātili does not compare it with other works on prayer. I would classify it with *adab* works on renunciation (earlier examples would be the *zuhd* section of Ibn Qutayba, *Uyūn al-akhbār*, and most of the works of Ibn Abī al-Dunyā) rather than with nascent Sufi literature -- this on such evidence as Khaṭṭābī's warning not to pray without the proper case endings.

Al-'Uzla al-ṣaghīr (a long version is not extant) relates ḥadīth in favour of withdrawal from society. Again, there is no comparison with other works on the subject, although Bātili sufficiently indicates his own uneasiness with the idea of withdrawal and more usefully reports that Khaṭṭābī's sources are here unusually difficult to make out. My own cursory review indicates that Khaṭṭābī omitted more ex-

treme examples of withdrawal such as occasionally come up in Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*. His polemical purpose was presumably to reinforce the Malāmati-Sufi tendency of Khūrasani renunciation as opposed to the Kirāmī.

Gharīb al-ḥadīth is mainly about philological curiosities, in the tradition of Abū 'Ubayd's famous book on the topic (which Khaṭṭābī often quotes). It overlaps considerably with *Iṣlāḥ ghalāṭ al-muḥaddithīn*.

Bātili devotes over 200 pages to *Ma'ālim al-sunan*, Khaṭṭābī's commentary (the earliest known) on the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd. He comments on about a third of the ḥadīth in the *Sunan*, with stress on points of law, Khaṭṭābī continually defending the position of al-Shāfi'i in particular. Bātili is especially interested in his ḥadīth criticism but points out philological and other comments as well. Khaṭṭābī seems to have used the recension of Ibn Dāsa, with a rather different order of books from that in the version in circulation today, evidently based on the recension of al-Lu'lu'i; however, the order of sections within books seems to be the same (570-1).

Bātili devotes equal space to *A'lām al-sunan*, the commentary on Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* (the earliest extant but the fourth known) to which Khaṭṭābī turned after writing the *Ma'ālim*. There has been some disagreement over the title, Sezgin listing it as *I'lām al-ḥadīth*. Bātili considers that *a'lām* and *ma'ālim* both refer to *al-umūr al-bāriza*, "salient matters," and comes down for *a'lām* (788). Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* comprises somewhere between 2,600 and 7,760 ḥadīth reports, depending on how ruthlessly one excludes variants and ḥadīth mentioned only in topic headings. Khaṭṭābī addresses 1,238 of them, somewhere between 16 and 48 percent. Anticipating Tokatly, Bātili considers the *A'lām* mainly an answer to heretics (specifically anti-Sunni rationalists, presumably Mu'tazilah and the like). However, he also shows that Khaṭṭābī spends a great deal more time on points of law (including Bukhārī's topic headings), piety, philology, and ḥadīth criticism than Tokatly allows. He seems to have used the recensions

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of both Nasafī and Firabī without preference between them (805).

This was originally a dissertation submitted by Bātīlī to Kulliyat Uṣūl al-Dīn, Riyadh, in 1408/1987. The bibliography mentions no works later than 1408, including Bātīlī's second biography of Khaṭṭābī, *Al-Imām al-Khaṭṭābī: al-muḥaddith wa-al-adīb wa-al-shā'ir*, A'lām al-muslimīn 63 (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1996), only 263 small pages according to several online library catalogs. There is evidently no copy in any of the Oxford, Cambridge, SOAS, or British Libraries, so I have been unable to compare the two versions. Presumably, the short one represents Bātīlī's later views as to Khaṭṭābī's theological position and other questions. However, anyone interested in the six books described in the long version, likewise the *ḥadīth* collections of Abū Dāwūd and Bukhārī, is urged to look at the long version, which includes a great deal of useful information.

- Christopher Melchert

'Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Ḥabashī. *Jāmi' al-shurūḥ wa-al-ḥawāshī: Mu'jam shāmil li-asmā' al-kutub al-mashrūḥa fī al-turāth al-islāmī wa-bayān shurūḥihā* ["The collection of commentaries and supercommentaries: A comprehensive encyclopedia of the names of commented books in the Islamic heritage and a list of their commentaries"]. 3 vols. (Abu Dhabi: al-Majma' al-Thaqāfī, 1425/2004). 2,176 pp.

Ḥabashī alphabetically lists over 1,300 pre-modern works in Arabic that attracted commentaries. Under each one, then, he lists authors of commentaries with their dates of death (usually but regrettably not always in chronological order), the titles of their commentaries, then place and date of publication, the libraries where manuscripts are to be found, or at least literary references to such works as are not known to be extant. "Commentary" is de-

finied to include re-arrangements and abridgements. Regrettably, there are no indices or even a table of contents.

I have tested Ḥabashī's investigations against some of my own. In my dissertation and first book, I at one point listed 34 commentaries on al-Shaybānī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaghīr*, from authors who died in the sixth century H. or earlier. Ḥabashī seems to have overlooked three to which I found references but also lists three that I overlooked in either *Hadīyat al-'arīfīn* or *Tāj al-tarājīm*. After the standard Istanbul edition of *Kashf al-zunūn*, he calls one commentator "al-Ghazzī" more correctly identified in the Ḥulw edition of Ibn Abī al-Wafā', *al-Jawāhir al-muḍīyah*, as "al-Fuzzī," confirmed by al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, and Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr al-muntabih*. In an article of a few years ago, I reviewed commentaries on Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*. I came up with the same list as Ḥabashī; however, he mentions al-Ḥusaynī, *al-Ikmāl*, without observing that it was published in Egypt, 1409/1989. In short, then, this is evidently not a perfect guide to medieval commentaries. Nevertheless, I wish such a work had been available before now. I expect to consult it often to spare myself trouble and help avoid mistakes of omission.

- Christopher Melchert

Yumnā Riḍwān, *Al-Dawla al-Jalā'iriyya wa-ahamm mazāhir al-ḥadāra fī-'l-'Irāq wa-Adharbayjān khilāl al-qarnayn al-thāmin wa-'l-tāsi' ba'd al-hijra* [The Jalayrid State and the Most Important Aspects of Civilization in Iraq and Azerbaijan during the Eighth and Ninth Centuries after the Hijra] (Cairo: s.n., 1414/1993). 195 pp.

This short book provides a history of the Jalā'irid state that ruled in Iraq and Azerbaijan from around 1339 to 1411. The Jalā'irids are one of the major successor states to the Ilkhanate, and, as the author notes, have rarely been studied. A new account of the Jalā'irids should then

be a very welcome event, but unfortunately this work is marred by its exclusive reliance on Arabic language sources. In reality, Persian primary sources contain much more valuable evidence for the dynasty than the Mamluk chronicles Riḍwān is forced to rely on. The only Persian source consulted is a sixteenth century work, Bitlīsī's *Sharafnāma*, presumably due to the availability of an Arabic translation. The author's attempts to record the chronology of the dynasty without any reference to such key Persian sources as the *Ta'rikh-i Shaykh Uways* are thus, unsurprisingly, not always convincing. There are many other historical misrepresentations, such as the author's statement that the Mongols converted to Shi'ism (p. 117). Most of the book is devoted to political history, with the first three chapters covering the rise, golden age and decline of the dynasty. A further chapter deals with the Jalā'irids' relations with the Chohanids, the Muzaffarids, the Mamluks and the Karakoyunlu. The final chapter deals with administration, coinage and culture under the Jalā'irids. Although the lack of Persian sources means this work is too severely flawed to constitute an adequate account of the Jalā'irids, the citation of a wide range of Arabic chronicles mentioning the dynasty may be useful to future researchers.

- A.C.S. Peacock

Muḥammad Suhayl Ṭaqqūsh, *Ta'rikh Salājiqat al-Rūm fī Āsiyā al-ṣughrā (470-704/1077-1304)* [History of the Seljuks of Rum in Asia Minor (470-704/1077-1304)] (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 2002). 400 pp.

Dr. Muḥammad Suhayl Ṭaqqūsh, a Lebanese historian of renown, has published extensively on most periods of classical Islamic history (from the «Well-guided caliphs» to the Ottomans!). As a complement to his book on the Seljuks in Syria (*Ta'rikh al-Salājiqa fī Bilād al-Shām*, Beirut 2002), he addresses here one of the

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most neglected dynasties of the Middle Ages: the Seljuks of Rūm, so-called because of their early independence from the founders of the dynasty. As a consequence of Dr. Ṭaqqūsh's wide scholarship, his knowledge of the primary sources is rather impressive. The ten-page bibliography gives Arabic, but also Turkish and Persian source-books, as well as an exhaustive collection of the Latin, Greek, Armenian, Georgian and Syriac sources in their French, Latin, or English translation. The secondary literature may be at first sight limited, but a better appreciation shows that most of the works written by the mostly late multilingual Orientalists are listed (Cahen, Grousset, Spuler, Vasiliev) in addition to the specialized works of Rice and Wittek, and that indeed not much has been produced on the subject since them (the bibliography in EI2 goes back to EI1 and adds a few works written from the point of view of the Byzantinists): Dr. Ṭaqqūsh does not follow his sources slavishly, as one can see from his better reading of the name Athanasius as the patriarch of Constantinople from 1289 to 1293 and from 1303 to 1310 (p. 296) while Rice gave 'Anthemius' (T. T. Rice, *The Seljuks in Asia Minor*, London 1961, p. 76, p. 144).

The book is organized in 14 chapters and many sub-chapters which are all detailed in the table of contents. Ch. 1 addresses 'The Seljuks, their origins and the foundation of their state in Khorasan'; ch. 2, 'The early relations between Seljuks and Byzantines', then follow ten chapters on the main rulers of the dynasty, until the triumvirate of 'Izz al-Dīn Kay Kāwūs (Kay Kāwūs II), Rukn al-Dīn Qalj Arslān (Qalj Arslān IV) and 'Alā' al-Dīn Kay Qobād (Kay Qobād II). The two last chapters are devoted to 'The last years of the sultanate (1265-1304)' and 'Reasons for the fall of the Seljuks of Rum sultanate'.

In addition to detailed notes regularly giving references and some explanations of some titles or functions, the author provides maps, dynastic tables, and a list of the velayets in both their ancient Greek and their Turkish/Arabic name.

The author gives a clear and detailed picture of the relations between Mongols and Seljuks of Rum, without fall-

ing into simplifications when the matters remain obscure in the sources themselves (e.g., the treason of Perveneh in 1277). Ṭaqqūsh also brings some new perspective on the foundation of the Ottoman state, which he considers to be the result of the policy of division implemented by the Mongols among the representatives of the dynasty. In the state of anarchy that characterized the end of the Seljuks of Rum's dynasty, the Mongols divided Asia Minor into ten emirates, giving one of them to the future founder of the Ottoman state, Othman Ghazī (p. 336-337).

The only regret a non-specialist can express is the lack of an index and the little use of the Western sources for the Mongol era, especially the Latin ones. Both are certainly due to some technical problems encountered by many scholars in the Middle East.

The book is well written and gives a vivid picture of the daily politics in Konya, Siwas or Tabriz. For the historian, but also for the student of Persian literature, Arabic philosophy under the Mongol era, or Turkish sufism, Ṭaqqūsh's work will offer a long-awaited representation supported by his in-depth understanding of both the chronicles and the movements of the societies. As a dynasty situated on such a sensitive border, the Seljuks of Rum were in contact with most of the contemporary dynasties: Ghaznavids, Zengids, Ayyubids, Mamluks, Mongols, as well as the kingdoms of Armenia and Georgia, not to mention the Byzantines and the Crusaders' principalities. In this regard, the book brings a unique perspective to some events of decisive importance for the following history of the Middle East. As the author remarks in his introduction, this is the first comprehensive study of the subject. Considering the number of primary sources in use, it will certainly remain a pioneering work of first importance and will stimulate future Western scholarship.

- Emily Cottrell

Muḥammad Suhayl Ṭaqqūsh.
Ta'riḫ al-Ayyūbiyīn fī Miṣr wa-

Bilād al-Shām wa-Iqlīm al-Jazīra, 569-661H./1174-1263M. [History of the Ayyubids in Egypt, Bilād al-Shām and al-Jazira Region, 569-661 AH/ 1174-1263 CE] (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 1420/1999). 440 pp.

The author, Muḥammad Suhayl Ṭaqqūsh, has published several books on the history of medieval Middle East, such as *Ta'riḫ al-Dawla al-'Abbāsiya* (Beirut, 1996) and *Ta'riḫ al-Mamālik fī Miṣr wa-Bilād al-Shām* (Beirut, 1997). In the book under review the author sets out to investigate the political, military, and diplomatic events in the Ayyubid period, while leaving aside intellectual, social, and economic events. Ṭaqqūsh divides his book into two parts: "The Ayyubids in the Period of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, 569-589 AH/1174-1193 CE", and "The Ayyubid Successors of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, 589-661 AH/ 1193-1263 CE". The chapters are organised chronologically.

Although this study is dedicated to "every warrior (*mujāhid*) [fighting] for the liberation of the Holy Land" (p. 5), Ṭaqqūsh writes in a moderate tone, and almost nowhere gives a modern interpretation to the conflict between the Ayyubids and the Crusaders. *Prima facie*, he allows his sources to speak for themselves. Even when the "Islamic front" is mentioned (e.g., p. 231), the readers are well-informed of the rivalries inside the Ayyubid dynasty, or the relations of the latter with other Muslim dynasties (i.e., the Zengids and the Seljuks).

Ṭaqqūsh relies heavily on Arab historians who were close to the events described, such as 'Imād al-Dīn (d. 597/1201), and Ibn Shaddād (d. 632/1234), as well as later (Mamluk) historians. However, the secondary literature he uses in Western languages is largely old-fashioned, and it stops with A.S. Ehrenkreutz's *Saladin* (Albany, 1972). Ṭaqqūsh uses some later studies translated into Arabic, but in a limited scale.

In sum, even though this book is not a scholarly contribution to Ayyubid history, it is neatly organised and well-written, and might be useful as a textbook for students of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and his successors.

- Liran Yadgar

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Page 5, figure 7: Picture from Michel Garcia in D. Cardon, *Le monde des teintures naturelles*, ed. Belin (Paris, 2003), p. 274.

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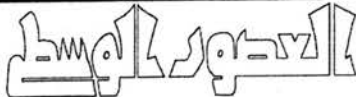
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