

I

ARAB CULTURE

IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY

This study of Arab culture in the twelfth century is limited to those areas in the Arab world in which the events of the crusades unfolded, and where east and west, Islam and Christendom, Arab and Frank met face to face. These areas comprise Egypt and the lands of the Fertile Crescent, although the eastern part of the Crescent remained for the most part peripheral.¹ Most of the drama was enacted on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, from Antioch in the north to Damietta in the south. The crusaders' early thrust into the interior as far as the Tigris river was permanently arrested and pushed back before the middle of the century.

At the outbreak of the crusades, eastern Islam was divided in loyalty between the 'Abbāsīd caliphate in Baghdad and the Fāṭimid imamate in Cairo. The 'Abbāsīds of Baghdad were virtual prisoners of the Selchūkids (Seljuks), who had, some five decades earlier, readily responded to the appeals of al-Qā'im (1031-1075) to save the caliphate from the pro-Shī'ite Buwaihids. Indeed, the Selchūkids had in 1055 supplanted the Buwaihids and saved the caliphal throne; they had given the state a new lease on life, particularly during the reign of the first three Great Selchūkids, Tughrul-Beg (1038-1063), Alp Arslan (1063-1072), and Malik-Shah (1072-1092).² The Selchūkids had come as rescuers, but, as often happens, had remained as conquerors. Their domination over the caliphate continued to the last decade of the twelfth century, and their endless strife weakened the caliphate and facilitated the success of the Christian invaders. When, after the fall of Jerusalem in 1099, a Moslem delegation arrived in Baghdad

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1. Nabih A. Faris, *The Book of Knowledge, Being a Translation with Notes of the Kitāb al-'ilm of al-Ghazzālī's "Ihyā' ulūm al-dīn"* (Lahore, 1962), p. 109.

2. See Claude Cahen, "The Turkish Invasion: The Selchūkids," in volume I of the present work, pp. 140-154.

to seek the aid of the central government, all it received was words of sympathy from the caliph al-Mustazhir (1094–1118) and tears from the outraged populace. The sultan Berkyaruk (1094–1105), to whom the matter was referred by the caliph, had nothing to offer. Nine years later, in 1108, a second delegation, now from beleaguered Tripoli, appeared at the capital, but its mission fared no better than that of the first. When, at long last, sultan Muḥammad (1105–1118) bestirred himself and led an expedition against the Franks in 1111, his troops, in the words of a Moslem chronicler, “spread havoc and destruction throughout the land, far exceeding anything which the Franks were wont to do.”³

Not only the eclipse of the power of the caliphate by the Selchūkid sultans and the constant struggle among the Selchūkid princes, especially after the death of Malik-Shāh in 1092, but also the deep-rooted enmity between the Sunnite ‘Abbāsids of Baghdad and the Shī‘ite Fāṭimids of Cairo plagued Arab society and sapped a great deal of its ability both to defend itself against the invaders and to maintain the stability necessary for development and progress. To the Sunnite ‘Abbāsids it seemed more urgent to deal with the threat raised by the schismatic Fāṭimids than to face the dangers to the entire region implicit in the Christian invasion. In fact, it was not until this rival schismatic caliphate was finally liquidated in 1171 that the defenders were able to concentrate all their energies against the invaders.

Politically, the twelfth century witnessed struggles between Moslems and Franks, between Sunnites and Shī‘ites, between Sunnite caliph and Sunnite sultan, between Sunnite princes in the various urban centers and those in outlying districts, between ambitious dynasts and predatory vizirs, and between the mass of the population, mostly Arabs, and the foreign elements, mostly Turks. Each of these struggles was sufficient to disrupt the normal course of life and to ravage the general good of society. Together, they wrought havoc throughout the empire, rendered communications unsafe, increased lawlessness, and gave rise to various forms of brigandage. The memoirs of Usāmah, one of the best sources of information available, abound with references to highway robbers infesting the vicinities of urban centers, such as Mosul,⁴ Baalbek, Shaizar, and Nablus.⁵

Perhaps the most terrifying form of lawlessness, however, was the rise of the Ismā‘īlī Assassins, whose “new mission” or “new dispensa-

3. Sibṭ Ibn-al-Jauzī, *Mir‘āt az-zamān fī ta’rīkh al-aiyām* (Hyderabad, 1951), p. 3.

4. Usāmah Ibn-Munqidh, *Kitāb al-i’tibār*, ed. Philip K. Hitti (Princeton, 1930), pp. 71–72.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

tion”⁶ terrorized both invaders and defenders alike throughout the greater part of the century, and whose agents made two attempts on the life of Saladin himself.⁷

When treating of the crusades, it has been easy to make sweeping generalizations. More often than not the dichotomy of invaders and defenders, Christians and Moslems, has obscured the heterogeneous nature of each of the two groups. Actually, the crusaders, in spite of their various origins, were more homogeneous than the defenders, who were deeply divided racially, linguistically, and culturally. Within the Islamic community (*al-jamā'ah*) itself, the Arab elements, though always a majority in the area, had already lost their hegemony, and were bitterly pitted against such neo-Moslems as the Turks, the Persians, and the Kurds. Arab feelings, against the first two in particular, were marked by the growing resentment of the Arabs against the loss of their hegemony in the *jamā'ah*. Arabic literary sources invariably speak of the heretical (*malāhidah*) Persians and the uncouth (*ulūj*) Turks. A Damascene poet, living at the time of the first four Aiyūbids, hesitates to say anything in praise of the dynasty for fear of its being lost on “mean and petty non-Arabs.”⁸ Another poet wonders how he could possibly eulogize any of the Turks, who are incapable of appreciating any poetry and therefore continue to neglect it.⁹

While they had their detractors, the Turks also had their defenders. According to one poet they were responsible for the glory of Islam. Another speaks of “bands of Turkish soldiers whose forays against the enemy would make the sound and fury of thunder seem like child’s play. In looks, they resemble the angels; in valor and battle they match the supernatural power of the *jinn*.”¹⁰

This tension runs through the course of Arab history. In the twelfth century, it seems to have gained in intensity, because of a soldiery whose debauchery and rapacity preyed upon the populace and whose leaders were unwilling or unable to curb the excesses of their followers. Except for the periods of Nūr-ad-Dīn (1146–1174) and Saladin (1169–1193), when the authority of the sultan was too strong to be contested, conflicts among the different dynasts, on the one hand,

6. *Ad-da'wah al-jadīdah*.

7. See Bernard Lewis, “The Ismā'īlites and the Assassins,” in volume I of the present work, chapter IV.

8. Ibn-'Unain (1154–1232); see his *Dīwān*, ed. Khalil Mardam (Damascus, 1946), p. 33.

9. See Abū-Shāmah, *Kitāb ar-rauḍatain fī akhbār ad-daulatain* (Cairo, A.H. 1287 [1870/1]), I, 240.

10. See Ibn-Kathīr, *Al-bidāyah wa-n-nihāyah fī-t-ta'rikh*, ed. 'Abd-al-Ḥafīz Sa'd 'Aṭīyah (Cairo, A.H. 1358 [1939/40]), II, 201.

and with the invaders, on the other, plunged the entire area into a state of near-chaos. To establish their authority over the various dynasts and adventurers, both Nūr-ad-Dīn and Saladin spent the greater part of their reigns in active combat against enemies both Moslem and Frank.

The constant warfare was disruptive, not only politically, but also socially and economically. Manpower was depleted, farmers left their land uncultivated rather than have their crops pillaged, public security all but collapsed, and in the face of a rising wave of brigandage and crime the populace often took the law into its own hands, organizing itself into special units for self-defense. These "youth units" (*al-aḥdāth*) were at times enlisted by the caliph himself, who issued arms to them whenever he found himself faced with danger.¹¹ The breakdown in security and the inability of rulers to cope with the situation threatened to disrupt the annual pilgrimage, which, as one of the divinely ordained pillars of Islam, was obligatory for every Moslem.¹² Furthermore, the frequent epidemics of plague and smallpox, and the recurrent outbreak of endemic diseases like malaria, decimated large areas. Famines of major proportion, in part caused by the forced neglect of the land, led to widespread dislocation in the population centers of the area. In 1117/1118 drought hit many areas; people left their homes and roamed the countryside in search of food, and whole villages lay desolate. To avoid starvation, people ate the flesh of dogs and cats.¹³ In 1200 famine in Egypt was so severe that people were reported to have fed on dead animals and even on human flesh, only to be destroyed by the "resulting" pestilence.¹⁴ For three years, beginning in 1178 and continuing through 1181, rain did not fall in either Iraq or Syria.¹⁵ Prices rose abnormally, and a general famine, extending to Egypt, ravaged the entire area.¹⁶ On top of all these catas-

11. (Abū-l-Farāj) Ibn-al-Jauzī, *Al-muntaẓam fī ta'rikh al-mulūk*, X (Hyderabad, A.H. 1358 [1939/40]), 133; Ibn-al-Athīr, *Al-kāmil fī-t-ta'rikh*, ed. Carl J. Tornberg, X (Leyden, 1864), 441.

12. In 1150 beduins attacked the pilgrim caravans between Mecca and Medina and slaughtered most of them (Abū-l-Fidā', *Al-mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar*, Cairo, n.d., III, 23); in 1162 and 1166 the pilgrims found it necessary to change their return route in order to avoid beduin attacks (Ibn-al-Athīr, *Al-kāmil*, XI, Leyden, 1851, 189-190; Ibn-al-Jauzī, *Al-muntaẓam*, X, 218). In 1168 the Banū-Khafājah attacked and looted the pilgrim caravans, with the result that the Egyptians did not go on pilgrimage (*Al-muntaẓam*, X, 222).

13. Šibt Ibn-al-Jauzī, *Mir'āt az-zamān*, p. 68.

14. Ibn-al-Athīr, *Al-kāmil*, XII, 112.

15. "Syria" denotes not the present-day Syrian Arab Republic but Barr ash-Sha'm, the area extending from the Taurus mountains in the north to the Sinai desert in the south, and from the Mediterranean in the west to the Syrian desert in the east.

16. Ibn-al-Jauzī, *Al-muntaẓam*, X, 285; Ibn-al-Athīr, *Al-kāmil*, XI, 299; Abū-Shāmah, *op. cit.*, II, 5-6.

trophes, an earthquake hit the region in 1157, devastating "Aleppo, Hamah, Shaizar, and most of Syria and the east."¹⁷

In spite of these misfortunes life went on, its pleasures undiminished and its vices unchecked, as we are often reminded by the moralists. One poet, reviewing the mores of his time as reflected in the conduct of the judges of Damascus, summed up the situation in the following words:

To drink wine in Ramadan, to play the lute
at the call for prayer,
To omit prayer and to neglect the reading of the
Koran,
Adultery and sodomy in the sacred house of God—
All these are now deemed lawful and in good taste.
You upright people of Damascus, the judge has now
given permission to his friends to do what they please.
Therefore, gamble, drink, and procure,
Pederasty practise and narcotics inhale,
And God himself deny—
All these you may do with impunity.¹⁸

In a community where heresy and treason were considered one and the same thing, it was only natural that anyone who questioned a single tenet of Islam was pronounced at once a heretic and a traitor, and that anyone who rose up against the state was declared at once a traitor and a heretic. The Islamic community was, of course, facing invasion by foreign adherents of a rival religion which Islam had from the beginning recognized as being of divine origin. The conflicts between the rising Arab state and the Byzantine empire deepened the cleavage between the two faiths and accentuated the hostility between their respective adherents. Islam had been on the offensive from the seventh century to the end of the eleventh, not only in Syria and Anatolia but also in Sicily and Spain. The reconquest of Sicily and northern Spain in the west, and the crusade in the east, represented the first successful Christian reaction against Islam. Even so, Islam could not, at least in theory, wage a holy war against Christianity as such, but only against Christians who had allegedly "ignored the teachings of their own divine dispensation."

It is this kind of distinction which explains in part the uncompromising and intense hatred which Islam reserved for its own schismatic groups, particularly the Shī'ites, who, considered at once heretics and

17. Ibn-Taghrībirdī, *An-nujūm az-zāhirah fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhirah* (Cairo, 1935), V, 325.

18. Al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī-d-Dīn 'Abd-al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1951), I, 123.

traitors, never ceased to be a thorn in the side of Sunnite Islam and authority. Suppression of Shī'ism, therefore, always commanded wide popular support. The spread of Fāṭimid power to Egypt and Syria in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and the rise of the neo-Ismā'īlite terror in the twelfth century, made holy war against all forms of Shī'ism one of the most urgent preoccupations of the Sunnite community. The neo-Ismā'īlites, for their part, hit back against the Sunnites by launching a series of raids on Sunnite strongholds, inaugurating a wave of assassinations, and even inviting the Franks to come to Damascus.¹⁹

Sectarian feuding among the Moslems was not limited to Sunnite-Shī'ite strife; it often flared up among adherents of the various Sunnite rites or juridical schools (*madhāhib*).²⁰ One of the more serious clashes took place in Baghdad in 1177–1178 between the Ḥanbalites and the Ḥanafites.²¹ To reduce friction and control the feuding jurists, the caliph found himself, in 1210, compelled to license the official representatives of the four rites.²² Besides these religious disputes, regional conflicts were not uncommon, and at times led to violence, even during the pilgrimage, the sacredness of which could not, in 1227, avert an open clash between pilgrims from Iraq and those from Egypt.²³

Because of the incessant conflicts which rendered the twelfth century one of dissension and violence, and because of the serious setbacks to the temporal fortunes of Islam which established foreign and non-Moslem states in Moslem lands and subjected, for the first time in half a millennium, great numbers of the "faithful" to the rule of the "infidels," Moslems have seen this century as the beginning of the period of decline in Arab civilization. It is unfortunate that a number of modern scholars, both Moslem and non-Moslem, have succumbed to this oversimplification. If by "decline" is meant the drying up of the wells of creativity in Arab society, the beginnings should be pushed back at least two and a half centuries to the time of the suppression of the Mu'tazilites by the caliph al-Mutawakkil (847–861). In the tenth century, too, al-Ash'arī (d. 935/936) had established the hegemony of his scholastic theology over the dead body of Mu'tazilite thinking.

Another setback to free thought had occurred in 1017, when be-

19. Ibn-al-Qalānīsī, *Dhail ta'rikh Dimashq*, ed. Henry F. Amedroz (Beirut, 1908), p. 221.

20. These are the Ḥanafite, Shāfi'ite, Ḥanbalite, and Mālikite.

21. Ibn-Taghrībirdī, *An-nujūm*, VI, 83.

22. Abū-Shāmāh, *Dhail ar-rauḍatain* (Cairo, A.H. 1366 [1946/7]), p. 69.

23. Sibṭ Ibn-al-Jauzī, *Mir'āt az-zamān*, p. 624.

cause of the growing intensity of the polemical controversy between Sunnite and Shī'ite Islam, often leading to conflict and strife, the caliph al-Qādir (991–1031) issued an edict against Shī'ites and Mu'tazilites alike, and forced their leaders to recant and return to the narrow path of Moslem orthodoxy.²⁴ Not long after, in 1041, al-Qā'im published in Baghdad the so-called Qādirī creed (*al-i'tiqād al-Qādirī*),²⁵ the first official statement of doctrine issued by a caliph, to which all were required to subscribe and conform. By the beginning of the twelfth century Moslem orthodoxy was already established and Moslem conformity (*ittibā'*) was no longer challenged or contested.

In fact, except for a decline in intellectual creativity which had begun much earlier, the twelfth century was in many ways a period of revival resulting from the militant confrontation of two cultures. Indeed, the crusades seem to have delayed, for a while at least, the impending stagnation of Arab life and vigor.

As a result of the Christian-Moslem encounters of the twelfth century, the commercial activities of Italian cities — notably Venice, Genoa, and Pisa — were greatly stimulated, and the east-west trade between the ports of Syria and those of Italy enjoyed a great revival. From the point of view of the Arab east, the resulting benefits were indeed timely, for Arab trade with the Far East had already come to a standstill, primarily because of the prevailing internal unrest, which disrupted trade routes and strangled commercial enterprise. In the eleventh century, too, trade with Russia and the north had gradually diminished and all but disappeared. Therefore the revival of Mediterranean commerce, as a result of the crusades, partially compensated the Arab area for commerce lost elsewhere.

As commerce expanded, agriculture and industry shared the benefits. Furthermore, throughout the ascendancy of the two Zengid sultans, 'Imād-ad-Dīn Zengi and Nūr-ad-Dīn Maḥmūd (1127–1174), and the first Aiyūbid, Saladin (1169–1193), special attention was paid to agriculture, which had always been the main industry of the area. Ibn-Jubair (b. 1145, d. 1217), while on pilgrimage, visited Egypt, Syria, and Iraq between the years 1183 and 1185, and has left us a vivid description of life and conditions in these areas in his famous *Riḥlah*.²⁶ "Damascus was adorned with the bright blossoms of fruit trees and flowers, and resplendent in the glittering green of its gardens and or-

24. Ibn-al-Jauzī, *Al-muntaẓam*, VII, 287.

25. *Ibid.*, VIII, 109–111.

26. Ibn-Jubair, *Riḥlah*, ed. William Wright (E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, 5; London, 1852); rev. Martin J. de Goeje (Leyden, 1907).

chards.”²⁷ As he crossed through Iraq toward Baghdad, he noted the country’s “thriving villages and fertile lands, abounding with rich crops and palm groves.”²⁸ He expected to find Mecca, which the Koran describes as “a valley unfit for cultivation”,²⁹ a place devoid of everything, but instead found its markets teeming with all manner of goods and fruits, such as figs, grapes, pomegranates, quinces, plums, lemons, walnuts, watermelons, cucumbers, and all kinds of herbs and vegetables such as eggplants, pumpkins, turnips, carrots, beets, and cabbages.³⁰ Although these were probably not grown in Mecca itself, but in nearby Ta’if, the account reflects a flourishing agriculture. Other travelers were impressed by the prosperity of Tripoli. Nāsir-i-Khusrau describes its “suburbs which consisted of vast stretches of fields covered with billowing ears of wheat, vineyards bursting with their luscious clusters of grapes, farms crowded with sugar cane, vast orchards of trees heavily laden with oranges, and lemons and other fruits.”³¹ William of Tyre (d. about 1187) mentions the sugar-cane plantations and the sugar industry in and around his native town. Syria paid special attention to the olive tree, the fruit of which has always been part of the staple fare of the area, and its oil the principal fat for eating and cooking. It was also the mainstay of the flourishing soap industry in towns like Tripoli and Nablus.³²

The revival of trade led to a revival of industry. The major cities of Iraq—Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul—continued to excel in weaving. Syria produced, in addition to woven fabrics, stained glass, sugar, and paper, while Egypt’s leading manufactures were cotton, woolen, and silk fabrics, silk brocades, mattress beds, rugs, tents, sails, saddles, metalwork, gold and silver jewelry, pottery, glassware, and woodcarvings. The exigencies of war also gave impetus to shipbuilding and the manufacture of weapons.

In spite of the disruptive effects of war and political instability, the area retained a measure of prosperity. How widespread this was is difficult to determine with any degree of certainty, since sources for the most part ignore rural areas and concentrate their attention on urban centers. The majority of the population, however, did not live in cities; being largely peasants or seminomadic, they dwelt in scattered villages, farms, and constantly changing campgrounds. It

27. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 215–216.

29. Sūrah XIV:40.

30. Ibn-Jubair, *Rihlah*, pp. 119–120.

31. Cf. Nāsir-i-Khusrau, *Sefer nāmeḥ*, Arabic tr. Yahyā al-Khashāb (Cairo, 1945), p. 13.

32. See below, chapter VI.

is difficult, therefore, to generalize about their condition. Furthermore, Arab culture in general was a "palace culture." Its ramifications were not widespread, and rarely reached those segments of the population which did not reside in urban centers.

Eyewitness reports of contemporary travelers preserve a clear picture of prevailing conditions in cities like Baghdad, Damascus, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Cairo. Baghdad of the twelfth century had two parts, one on each side of the Tigris. The older part, on the west bank, was in ruins; the newer, on the east bank, consisted of seventeen quarters (sing., *maḥallah*), each of which formed an independent unit. Though considerably run down and neglected, each quarter had its own quota of public baths and a number of mosques. There were thirty schools, each housed in an imposing building and supported by its own separate endowment (*waqf*).³³ Baghdad also had its own great hospital, which Ibn-Jubair visited. Physicians made regular calls every Monday and Thursday, and prescribed the necessary medical treatment, prepared and administered to the patients by regular hospital attendants.³⁴

Notwithstanding civil wars and preoccupation with the holy war against the Franks, Syria during the greater part of the twelfth century enjoyed the most brilliant period of its Moslem history since the Umayyad age. Under the Zengids and the Aiyūbids, particularly under Nūr-ad-Dīn and Saladin, its principal cities — especially Damascus, Aleppo, and to a certain extent Jerusalem after its recovery from the crusaders — underwent a spectacular revival. Damascus still shows evidence of the architectural and educational activities of these two rulers. Nūr-ad-Dīn rebuilt the walls of the city, established the first school exclusively devoted to the study of Moslem tradition, built the celebrated hospital bearing his name,³⁵ and introduced the first of a number of schools modeled after the famous Nizāmīyah of Baghdad. This enlightened patronage of learning was continued, with added zeal, by the great Saladin, who seems to have transformed Damascus into a school city. Ibn-Jubair, who visited the city in 1184, enumerates in it twenty *madrasahs*, two hospitals, many inns, and numerous centers of Sūfī fraternal orders.³⁶

33. Ibn-Jubair, *Riḥlah*, p. 229.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 283; Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' az-zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Mu'yī-d-Dīn 'Abd-al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1948), IV, 272; Ibn-abī-Uṣāibī'ah, *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-a'ṭibbā'* (Cairo, 1882), II, 192.

36. Ibn-Jubair, *Riḥlah*, p. 283; Cf. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 10th ed. (New York and London, 1970), pp. 659-662.

Saladin introduced the *madrasah* type of school into Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Cairo, where they became known as Ṣalāḥīyahs or Nāṣirīyahs. Under him, too, Egypt witnessed a general revival. Both Alexandria and Cairo became beneficiaries of his enlightened and energetic rule. Ibn-Jubair was especially impressed by the apparent prosperity of Alexandria, its public buildings, marble colonnades, and wide streets, and by the various *madrasahs* and the philanthropic institutions set aside for the benefit of strangers.³⁷

Cairo was specially favored by the first Aiyūbid. Besides the two hospitals which he maintained in the city, he established the Cairo Ṣalāḥīyah and several similar *madrasahs*, restored the citadel and strengthened its fortifications along Norman lines, using prisoners of war in its construction, and began building aqueducts to tap the waters of the Nile for irrigation. Above all, he patronized the arts and surrounded himself with men of talent, including his two learned vizirs al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil (d. 1200) and 'Imād-ad-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1201), the great Jewish philosopher-physician Maimonides, and the historian-physician 'Abd-al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 1231).

Saladin's educational activities in Damascus, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Cairo not only continued Nūr-ad-Dīn's educational reforms in Damascus and other Syrian cities, such as Aleppo, Homs, Hamah, and Baalbek, but also revived the practical policies of the great Selchūkid vizir Niẓām-al-Mulk (d. 1092), whose main interests were to supply the rising Selchūkid empire with civil servants and to combat Shī'ite teachings and propaganda emanating from the Azhar. The Niẓāmīyah type of school or academy launched by Niẓām-al-Mulk in 1065-1067 became a model for later institutions of higher learning, and the Ṣalāḥīyah type inaugurated by Saladin served the same purpose. Both were instruments of the state, but both also brought progress throughout the land.

In spite of the heroic efforts of the two Zengids and of Saladin to weld the population into one harmonious society dedicated to the task of repelling the invader and restoring Islamic solidarity, twelfth-century Arab society still lacked the attributes of a united people. Made up of heterogeneous ethnic elements not yet fused together in the crucible of time, it was further divided by its social stratifications. There were extreme contrasts of wealth and poverty, enlightenment and ignorance, comfort and squalor, refinement and crudeness. At the top of the social scale stood the caliph and his immediate family and relatives, who, being denied actual authority by the ruling sul-

37. Ibn-Jubair, *Rihlah*, pp. 40-45.

tans, with few exceptions took to a life of indulgence. The court of al-Muqtafi (1136–1160) required eighty mules to carry its daily supply of drinking water, which the sultan was only too willing to provide in order to divert the caliph from affairs of state toward those of his harem, where his concubines, young male slaves (*ghilmān*), and eunuchs left him little time for public affairs.³⁸ The personal fortune of the caliph al-Mustaḍī (1170–1180), excluding precious articles and clothes, took 170 mules to carry.³⁹ The relatives of the caliph “were comfortably confined in sumptuous homes from which they were not allowed to emerge or make a public appearance, but they enjoyed handsome emoluments.”⁴⁰

Next to the caliph stood the sultans and vizirs, who sometimes surpassed him in extravagance and pomp. Ibn-Jubair tells of watching the military chief of the caliph an-Nāṣir (1180–1225) emerge from the palace, “surrounded by his Turkish and Dailamite officers and escorted by about fifty men with drawn swords.”⁴¹ The predatory behavior of vizirs, who usually amassed great personal fortunes, remained unchecked except by the occasional confiscation (*muṣādarah*) of their ill-gotten property by caliph or sultan. In fact, the *muṣādarah* became a common practice during the twelfth century.⁴²

Next came the learned men (*al-‘ulamā’*) and religious leaders (*al-fuqahā*) who enjoyed great repute and special privileges primarily because they were the servants of the state and the defenders of religious orthodoxy. From the late eleventh century, under the auspices of the great Selchūkid vizir Niẓām-al-Mulk, their aid was enlisted in combatting the Shī‘ite “heresy” and in providing the state with its much-needed corps of civil servants. They filled teaching posts in the various Niẓāmīyah schools and academies. These functions continued to attract men of learning during the twelfth century, especially because of the surge of Bāṭinite teachings and Ismā‘īlī propaganda.

The incursion of militant Christianity placed an added burden on these scholars. They had to combat not only Moslem heterodoxy but also Christian inroads, and to exhort the believers and arouse their zeal for the defense of the faith. Both the Zengids and the Aiyūbids leaned heavily on this class and exploited their talents in various activities. From their ranks came vizirs, judges, and lecturers in the new schools. Furthermore, the state often cultivated members of the class

38. Ibn-aṭ-Ṭiḡṭāqā, *Al-Fakhrī fī-l-ādāb as-sultānīyah* (Cairo, 1945), p. 276.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

40. Ibn-Jubair, *Riḥlah*, p. 227.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Ibn-aṭ-Ṭiḡṭāqā, *Al-Fakhrī*, pp. 284–285, 287.

because of their inordinate influence on the populace. Even discerning individuals like Ibn-Jubair, who criticized the people of Baghdad for their hypocrisy and deceit, exempted from this harsh judgment "their religious leaders, who were versed in the science of tradition, and their preachers, who ceaselessly admonished their followers to do right. Indeed, in the pursuit of preaching and admonishing, in warning and reprimanding, in constantly forewarning and reproving, they have attained such high stations as would win for them enough of the mercy of God to decrease their burden of sin."⁴³ Nevertheless, it would seem that the ranks of the learned were not infrequently infiltrated by unscrupulous men who exploited their position for material gain, and made a mockery of their calling, transforming their religious circles into meetings for illicit revels and mirth by men and women, thereby making it necessary for the *muhtasib* to intervene and lay down rules for the profession of preaching.⁴⁴

The general public, consisting of small merchants, artisans, farmers, peasants, nomads, and slaves, shared a common adversity. Oppressed by their rulers, exploited by the wealthy few, and impoverished by war levies and marauding soldiery, they developed an attitude of callous indifference and apathy to the vicissitudes of life. Their principal interest was to ward off hunger and to survive. They were suspicious of all outsiders, whom they cheated in business dealings, or fawned over in order to gull them whenever possible.⁴⁵ Nor were the beduins better than their urban neighbors. Their much-trumpeted pride was nothing but a myth. They might feed on carrion, and still brag that they were the noblest Arabs.⁴⁶ Slavery was rampant, and traffic in slaves and concubines was popular and profitable. To forestall possible abuse, the *muhtasib* was entrusted with the task of supervising the slave market and requiring slave merchants to adhere to a strict trade code.⁴⁷

As usual, non-Moslems continued, for the most part, to occupy a peripheral place in Arab society, and formed a distinct social group which lived in its separate quarters (sing. *ḥārah*). They were governed through their religious leaders, who were responsible to the authorities for regulating the affairs of their followers, supervising their pious

43. Ibn-Jubair, *Riḥlah*, pp. 218-219.

44. Ibn-al-Ukhūwah, *Ma'ālim al-qurbah fī aḥkām al-ḥisbah*, ed. Reuben Levy (Cambridge, Eng., 1937), pp. 179-180.

45. Ibn-Jubair, *Riḥlah*, p. 218.

46. Usāmah Ibn-Munqidh, *Al-i'tibār*, p. 12.

47. Ash-Shaizarī, *Nihāyat ar-rutbah fī ṭalab al-ḥisbah* (Cairo, 1946), p. 107; Ibn-al-Ukhūwah, *Ma'ālim*, pp. 152-153.

foundations, and adjudicating their differences in all matters of personal status. The advent of the Franks led to the tightening of governmental supervision over these *dhimmī* communities, to forestall possible collaboration with the invaders; necessary powers to carry out this supervision were granted to the *muhtasib*. Strangely enough, however, the twelfth century witnessed little increase in Moslem hostility toward native non-Moslems, partly because of Moslem preoccupation with the struggle against Bāḥinite and Ismāʿīlī activities. In spite of the state of war existing between Moslems and Franks, some friendly relations existed between them, especially between Moslems and those Franks who had spent some time in the east and had become "domesticated."⁴⁸

Nevertheless, as time went on intolerance grew, and expressed itself in popular uprisings against the continued employment of *dhimmīs* in government offices.⁴⁹ In 1184 an-Nāṣir ordered all non-Moslem employees removed and forbade their future employment,⁵⁰ and in 1196, while in Damascus, the Aiyūbid al-ʿAzīz (1193–1198) decreed that no *dhimmī* should be given employment in the royal service, and required that they revert to wearing distinctive garments (*ghiyār*).⁵¹ Though these laws were directed against all *dhimmīs*, Jews and Christians alike, the Christians bore the brunt of the discriminatory treatment. They constituted a greater danger than Jews, because of their larger numbers and their obvious sympathies with their coreligionists, the Franks, to whom they extended help whenever possible. This explains why the Aiyūbids, for example, made greater use of Jewish medical talent. Saladin himself was served by three Jewish physicians, Ibn-Jamīʿ al-Isrāʾīlī,⁵² Ibn-al-Mudauwar,⁵³ and the great Maimonides.⁵⁴ Both Jews and Christians, however, continued to play an important role as merchants, money-changers and lenders, and jewelers. Both had to pay the poll-tax (*jizyah*), each adult male appearing in person before the officer in charge and paying the tribute in the manner mentioned in the Koran.⁵⁵

48. Usāmah Ibn-Munqidh, *Al-iʿtibār*, p. 140.

49. Abū-l-Fidāʾ, *Al-mukhtaṣar*, III, 12.

50. Sibṭ Ibn-al-Jauzī, *Mirʾāt az-zamān*, p. 378.

51. Distinctive dress which non-Moslem subjects were forced to wear. It was first imposed by the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar II (717–720). Among the ʿAbbāsids, Hārūn ar-Rashīd was in 807 the first to reënact some of the old discriminatory measures, which reached their culmination under al-Mutawakkil (847–861): al-Maqrīzī, *As-sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Mustafa M. Ziada, I (Cairo, 1956), 136.

52. Ibn-abī-Uṣaibiʿah, *ʿUyūn*, II, 112–115.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 117–118.

55. Sūrah IX:29.

It has already been suggested that Arab culture was a palace culture, flourishing under the patronage of caliph, sultan, or prince, its benefits rarely reaching beyond the confines of the royal or princely court. It should be added, too, that Arab culture has been, for the most part, a masculine culture, in which women played a very minor role. By the end of the tenth Christian century Arab women had lost the greater part of their freedom and dignity. Under the Buwaihids, the system of total segregation of the sexes and stringent seclusion of women had become general. Coupled with concubinage, moral laxity, and sensual indulgence, these practices had so undermined the position of women that they had come to be looked upon as the source of all base sentiments.

Conditions in the twelfth century brought no radical change, although several unusual cases command special notice: an old woman who drew a sword and joined the men in battle;⁵⁶ another who drowned herself in a river to avoid capture by the enemy;⁵⁷ still another who killed her own husband because he collaborated with the Franks;⁵⁸ and one from Shaizar who, single-handed, captured three Frankish warriors and led them home as prisoners of war.⁵⁹ These and similar exceptions elicited from the twelfth-century Arab-Syrian gentleman and warrior who recorded them in his memoirs the observation that "it is undeniable that noble women do possess pride, courage, and good judgment."⁶⁰ Otherwise, women seem to have excelled in palace intrigues and harem diplomacy, which were to reach their climax in the middle of the following century, when Shajar-ad-Durr, widow of the last Aiyūbid, aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Aiyūb (1240-1249), assumed sovereign power and for eighty days maintained her position as sole ruler of the entire kingdom, before being forced to marry the first Mamluk sultan, Aybeg (1250-1257). The fact that a few women distinguished themselves in the field of poetry, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and tradition was the exception rather than the rule. Arab literature, too, continued to be a masculine literature, not usually suitable for mixed company.

In art and architecture, the twelfth century was no more than a continuation of the achievements of the Fāṭimid period in Egypt and those of the Selchūkids in the Arab countries of western Asia. The return to the use of stone instead of brick in monumental structures belongs to the late Fāṭimid age, and the Zengids and Aiyūbids did

56. Usāmah Ibn-Munqidh, *Al-i'tibār*, p. 125.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

no more than perpetuate the restored tradition, adding to it what they had learned of military masonry from the Franks. This influence can be discerned in the citadel of Aleppo, restored by Nūr-ad-Dīn, and the citadel of Cairo, for which Saladin was responsible. The several crusader castles and churches which still dot the length of Syria from Mt. Casius in the north to Gaza in the south, such as the Krak des Chevaliers, Belfort, the church of Notre Dame at Tortosa, and the church of St. John (now the 'Umarī mosque) in Beirut, are all of Frankish workmanship and therefore cannot be described as part of the indigenous culture.

Under the Zengids and Aiyūbids, too, the achievements of the Fāṭimids and the Selchūkids in decorative art and industry were continued and in some cases refined, as in wood-, ivory-, and bone-carving, metalwork, ceramics, glassware, stained glass, and enamel. Similarly, the arts of bookbinding and illumination received great impetus, and Arabic calligraphy was fast breaking away from the angular Kūfī in favor of the cursive *naskhī*, which was to reach its finest artistic development during the Mamluk period.

It is, however, in its intellectual life and activity that the real nature of Arab culture in the twelfth century is best revealed; there its main features are best portrayed, its special characteristics depicted, and its spirit and breadth reflected. It has already been mentioned that intellectual activity lacked the luster of earlier achievements, being more concerned with preserving a glorious heritage than with adding to it. There was no real sign of creativity. Causes for this are not far to seek: the community was on the defensive, especially against persistent Shī'ite assaults, which had already become serious enough in the eleventh century to demand special refutation by al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111), whose book *Al-Mustazhiri fī faḍā'iḥ al-Bāṭiniyah*⁶¹ (On the shameful actions of the Bāṭinites) represents the classic Sunnite argument and position. It did little, however, to stem the Bāṭinite movement, the "new dispensation" of which was to be pushed forward with added vigor and violence by al-Ḥasan ibn-aṣ-Ṣabbāḥ (d. 1124) and his marauding followers, the Ismā'īlī Assassins, who terrorized the world of Islam for the greater part of the twelfth century.

The Moslem community was also on the defensive against the Franks and their church militant, not so much out of fear that Islam would lose some adherents to Christianity—actually there was little to fear in that respect—but rather because of a habit of thinking character-

61. Dedicated to and named after the reigning caliph al-Mustazhir (1094–1118); ed. Ignace Goldziher (Leyden, 1916).

istic of all Moslems, who, in accordance with the religio-political nature of Islam, were unwilling and unable to separate the spiritual from the temporal, the sacred from the profane. Any setback to the temporal fortunes of the community, therefore, was seen as a setback to the spiritual fortunes of Islam. This had been true of Moslem thinking since the battle of Badr (624), in which the Prophet, with about four hundred followers, had routed some four thousand Meccans and inflicted on them heavy losses, which was interpreted as a divine sanction of the new faith.

In the eleventh century the Selchükids had rescued a dying state and given it a new lease on life. But by the beginning of the twelfth century the unity they had forged was already shattered. In spite of the efforts of the Zengids and the first Aiyübid, the community remained religiously divided and politically splintered. Not only did the community have to face religious schism, but it also had the task of delivering its holy places from "infidel" control and restoring Moslem rule over enemy-occupied territory. The community was almost completely preoccupied with survival, politically, philosophically, and religiously. The walls of Moslem orthodoxy had to be repaired and reinforced. Conformity in thought, belief, and conduct to the exemplary lives of the righteous fathers (sing., *as-salaf aṣ-ṣāliḥ*) became mandatory for all believers. Consequently, intellectual activity turned from innovation to compilation, from speculation to systematization. Except for al-Ghazzālī and Maimonides, the twelfth century produced no first-class thinker, theologian, or philosopher.

Al-Ghazzālī set the pattern for the religious and philosophical activities of the century. He viewed with horror the unbridled speculations of both the Mu'tazilites and the Bāṭinites, disdained the intellectual prostitution and sophistry of scholastic theologians, and distrusted the collective bent of popular thinking. He dedicated his life to the task of refuting the first, castigating the second while debunking their "concatenations of proofs and arguments," and shielding the third from the snares of error by urging orthodoxy upon the people. He attached to philosophers the stigma of infidelity, pronounced scholastic theologians two-faced fakers and their discipline of little value in healing the malady of unbelief, and consigned the general public to the fetters of conformity and the chains of authority.⁶² More serious still, al-Ghazzālī relegated reason to a limited role, asserting that its function was "to bear witness to the trustworthiness of prophecy and

62. Al-Ghazzālī, *Al-munqidh min aḍ-ḍalāl* (Cairo, 1938), tr. Claude Field, *The Confessions of Al-Ghazzali* (London, 1909); see also *Tahāfut al-falāsifah*, ed. Maurice Bouyges (Beirut, 1927).

to confess its own inability.”⁶³ Similarly, “it does not point the way to that which is useful [or warn against] that which is harmful in words, works, ethics, and doctrines. It does not distinguish between the propitious and the baneful. . . . When it is, however, informed, it comprehends and believes.”⁶⁴

In spite of his importance, al-Ghazzālī should not be considered a philosopher but rather a student of philosophy who used his talents to destroy philosophy. His contribution was in the field of mysticism, which he grafted onto Islam, establishing its orthodoxy. Through it he vitalized the law by making personal religion and individual experience a part of Islam. His orthodoxy safeguarded the faith against unbridled emotionalism, and his writings led Moslems back from scholastic labors upon theological dogma and minutiae to a living contact with the Koran. He freed Islam from the dead formalism of scholastic literalism, and quickened it by the warmth of the living spirit. And it was exactly this warmth for which Islam was groping. Though cursed as a heretic in Baghdad, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo, and North Africa, al-Ghazzālī later became “the authority of Islam” (*ḥujjat al-Islām*).

His most popular, though not his most important, work was the *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm ad-dīn* (The revival of the sciences of religion), in which he preserved a summation of medieval Moslem thought. For this reason the work occupies a unique position throughout the Moslem world. In the words of an-Nawawī (d. 1272), a famous thirteenth-century Moslem scholar, “Should all other Moslem writings be destroyed, the *Iḥyā’*, if spared, would make up for all the loss.”⁶⁵ Al-Ghazzālī set the pattern for the intellectual activities of the twelfth century: preservation rather than innovation, compilation rather than creation. This trend continued throughout the century, spreading to the various intellectual endeavors of the Arabs, and would reach its climax by the middle of the fourteenth century in the encyclopedic compilations of an-Nuwairī (d. 1332) and Ibn-Faḍl-Allāh al-‘Umarī (d. 1349).

Maimonides (d. 1204) was, next to Averroës (Ibn-Rushd), the greatest philosopher of his time. Averroës belonged completely to western Islam, however, where he flourished and died (1198). Maimonides, though Jewish by faith, belonged to the Arab world of both the west and the east. He was born in Cordova in 1135. His family left the city after its conquest by the fanatical Muwahḥids (Almohads) in 1148,

63. *Al-munqidh min aḍ-ḍalāl*, p. 174.

64. Al-Ghazzālī, *Al-iqtisād fī-l-‘itiqād* (Cairo, A.H. 1327 [1909/10]), pp. 80–81.

65. See N. A. Faris, ed., *The Arab Heritage* (Princeton, 1946), pp. 142–158.

and for twelve years lived in various places in Spain. In 1160 the family settled in Fez, but was soon obliged to move eastward, arriving in 1165 in Cairo, where Maimonides spent the remaining thirty-nine years of his life, and where he wrote, in Arabic, all but one of his works. His intellectual endeavors, unlike those of al-Ghazzālī, were not directed toward either preserving medieval thought or refuting earlier philosophers, but rather toward reconciling Jewish theology with Moslem Aristotelianism, in other words faith with reason, which Averroës too had successfully undertaken on behalf of Islam. In this both were in line with earlier Arab philosophers such as al-Fārābī (d. 950) and Avicenna (Ibn-Sīnā, d. 1037), both of whom were pronounced heretical by al-Ghazzālī. In spite of the fact that Maimonides' concern was with Judaism rather than Islam, his place in Arab philosophical thought has remained secure, not only because he wrote in Arabic, but also because he was an heir to Arab philosophical thought, a product of Arab society, and a beneficiary of Arab patronage.

Between al-Ghazzālī and Maimonides no Arab philosopher of note can be cited, perhaps because the main concern of the century was not in speculation but rather in systematization, as evidenced in the works of Fakhr-ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī (d. 1209) and Najm-ad-Dīn an-Nasafī (d. 1142), whose *'Aqā'id* (Articles of faith) became the most popular statement of the Moslem creed, the nearest thing to a Moslem catechism, forming the basis for innumerable commentaries and glosses. The trend toward systematization is further seen in the intellectual activities of ash-Shahrastānī (d. 1153), whose *Kitāb al-milal w-an-Niḥal*⁶⁶ (Book of religions and sects) presents a complete and detailed statement of the various philosophical opinions and religious sects, Moslem and non-Moslem alike. Two thirds of the work is devoted to non-Moslem sects. Though not the first work of its kind in Arabic, it is far more objective than that of Ibn-Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 1037),⁶⁷ though less so than that of the Cordovan scholar Ibn-Ḥazm (d. 1064).⁶⁸ The importance of ash-Shahrastānī's work, however, rests on its being, after that of Ibn-Ḥazm, the earliest attempt in any language in the field of the history of religion.⁶⁹

With the community thrown on the defensive by pressures from within exerted by the Bāṭinites, and pressures from without exerted by the Franks, measures to organize the faithful in face of the grow-

66. Cairo, A.H. 1263, 1317-1320 (1847/8, 1899/1900-1902/3).

67. *Al-farq bain al-firaq* (Cairo, A.H. 1328 [1910/11]).

68. *Al-faṣl fi-l-milal wa-l-ahwā' wa-n-niḥal* (Cairo, A.H. 1317-1320 [1899/1900-1902/3]).

69. George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, II-1 (Baltimore, 1931), 249.

ing danger had to be taken not only in the field of religious thought but also in that of religious organization. Inspired partly by Christian monasticism and partly by the two great military religious orders of the crusades, the Templars and the Hospitallers, Islam, which had no priesthood and no monasticism, forged their counterparts in self-perpetuating corporations organized by prominent Sūfis. The first fraternal order (*ṭarīqah*) to be established on a permanent basis was the Qādirīyah order, so named after its founder ‘Abd-al-Qādir al-Gilani (1077–1166); the second was the Rifā‘ī order, named after its founder, Aḥmad ar-Rifā‘ī (d. 1183) of Baghdad. Both orders still exist and claim followers in all parts of the Moslem world.

“At the beginning of the twelfth century it was impossible to become a full-fledged mathematician and astronomer without a good knowledge of Arabic.”⁷⁰ This, of course, refers to Arabic mathematical and astronomical achievement in the period which began about the middle of the tenth century and had ended by the middle of the eleventh. Although the intellectual activity which produced this rich heritage had continued unabated through the eleventh century, the Arabs seem to have reached the end of their effort by the beginning of the twelfth century. While Europeans were busy translating Arabic mathematical and astronomical works — people like Adelard of Bath, Robert of Chester, Michael Scot, John of Seville, Hugh of Santalla, and, most important of all, Gerard of Cremona — the Arabs themselves were content to rest on their oars. In fact, the Arab east in the twelfth century produced no first-class mathematician and astronomer except ‘Umar al-Khaiyāmī (d. 1123/4), whose main contribution really belonged to the previous century, and whose death marked the end of the golden age of Arab scientific creativity.⁷¹ Other mathematicians and astronomers, though often cited, were either compilers and redactors, depending on earlier Arab works, such as al-Kharaqī (d. 1138/1139),⁷² who leaned heavily on Ibn-al-Haitham (d. about 1039),⁷³ or technicians skilled in the construction of astronomical instruments, such as al-Badī‘ al-Aṣṭurlābī (d. 1139/1140),⁷⁴ or mere summarizers who abridged earlier masterpieces, such as ‘Abd-al-Malik ash-Shīrāzī (d. about 1203),⁷⁵ who wrote in Arabic a summary of the

70. *Ibid.*, II-1, 7.

71. *Ibid.*, I (Baltimore, 1927), 738.

72. *Ibid.*, II-1, 204–205.

73. Ibn-abī-Uṣaibi‘ah, *‘Uyūn*, II, 90–98.

74. Sarton, *op. cit.*, II-1, 204.

75. *Ibid.*, II-1, 296, 400–401.

treatise of Apollonius on conics, based on the ninth-century translation of the work by Thābit ibn-Qurrah (d. 901).

In physics and technology the twelfth century was not lacking in skill. Abū-l-Faṭḥ 'Abd-ar-Raḥmān al-Khāzinī, who flourished during the first quarter of the century, was the author of the Sinjārī astronomical tables, which gave the positions of the stars for the year 1115–1116, and the latitude of the city of Merv. He also wrote a remarkable book on mechanics, hydrostatics, and physics, dealing with the specific gravities of many liquids and solids, leaning largely on the works of al-Bīrunī (d. 1048). He discussed the history of the theory of gravity, the universal force directed toward "the center of the universe," that is, the center of the earth, and made some observations on capillary attraction and on the use of an aerometer to measure densities and the temperature of liquids. He also discussed the theory of the lever and the application of the balance to leveling and to the measurement of time.⁷⁶ In these things, however, al-Khāzinī was drawing on earlier Arabic translations of some of the works of Pappos, a Greek mathematician who flourished in the latter part of the third and the early part of the fourth centuries.⁷⁷

Another technician worthy of note, illustrating Arab interest in the construction of automata and other contrivances, is Muḥammad ibn-'Alī ibn-Rustam al-Khurāsānī as-Sā'ātī (d. about 1185),⁷⁸ who constructed an elaborate clock which was placed in the Bāb Jairūn of Damascus. Ibn-Jubair mentions seeing it in his *Riḥlah*.⁷⁹ Riḍwān, the son of Muḥammad, repaired and improved the clock, and in 1203 wrote a book to explain its construction and use. Next to the work of his contemporary al-Jazarī on mechanical contrivances (*Al-ḥiyal al-handasīyah*), Riḍwān's work is the most important source on early Arab clocks.⁸⁰

In the field of alchemy, which might be called proto-chemistry, the Arabs of the twelfth century added nothing basic to their lore, but continued the tradition of Jābir ibn-Ḥaiyān (Geber) of the second half of the eighth century, and persisted in their quest for the two alchemical will-o'-the-wisps, the "philosopher's stone" by which base metals could be transmuted into gold or silver, and the "elixir of life" by which life could be indefinitely prolonged. The most important

76. *Ibid.*, II-1, 216.

77. Cf. *ibid.*, I, 337–338.

78. *Ibid.*, II-1, 298; II-2 (Baltimore, 1931), 632.

79. Ibn-Jubair, *Riḥlah*, pp. 270–271.

80. Sarton, *op. cit.*, II-2, 631–632.

figure in this field in the twelfth century was aṭ-Ṭuḡhrā'ī,⁸¹ who was put to death about 1121 on a charge of atheism.

Several factors spurred Arab interest in geography. There was the need of Moslem communities to determine the direction of the Ka'bah both for orienting mosques toward it and for the individual faithful to face it at the time of prayer; the interest in establishing correct latitudes and longitudes for astrological purposes and practice; the practical problems of pilgrims from the whole eastern hemisphere, traveling to Medina and Mecca; and the normal demands of commerce and trade by land and sea. Nevertheless, no important additions to geographical knowledge, descriptive or astronomical, were made during the twelfth century. The works of the literary geographers of the tenth century continued to embody the bulk of geographical knowledge at the disposal of the Arabs until the end of the first quarter of the thirteenth century, when Yāqūt (d. 1229) completed, in 1228, the final draft of his monumental geographical dictionary.

The advent of the crusades increased opportunities for travel, especially for the Christians of Europe. Like their Moslem adversaries they too had their Holy Land and holy cities, notably Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth, pilgrimage to which, though not obligatory, was considered extremely meritorious. Inevitably, the appearance of crusaders and pilgrims among the peoples of the Arab east broadened the geographical horizons of the native inhabitants. But Arab interest in lands beyond the Dār al-Islām remained limited, and whatever contribution Arab geographers and travelers made during this period was almost exclusively the work of western Arabs, such as az-Zuhrī (flourished about 1140), al-Idrīsī (d. 1166), al-Māzinī (d. 1169/1170), and Ibn-Jubair (d. 1217). One should not, however, overlook 'Alī ibn-Abī-Bakr ibn-'Alī al-Harawī (d. 1215),⁸² who wrote an excellent guidebook for pilgrims entitled *Kitāb al-ishārāt ilā ma'rifat az-ziyārāt* (Instructions for the knowledge of places of pilgrimage),⁸³ which deals successively with Syria, Palestine, Egypt, the Byzantine empire, Iraq, India, the Arabian peninsula, the Maghrib, and Abyssinia. Except for the last two, the information he gives, though brief, is first-hand.⁸⁴

81. Yāqūt, *Irshād al-arīb ilā ma'rifat al-adīb* (Cairo, 1936), X, 58-79; Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, I, 438-442.

82. *Ibid.*, III, 31-33.

83. Ed. Janine Sourdel-Thomine (Damascus, 1953).

84. Sarton, *op. cit.*, II-1, 413-414.

In natural history, Arab fondness for precious stones and interest in the occult qualities of minerals prompted the production of many lapidaries. Their scientists' best efforts, however, were devoted to the study of plants for medicinal purposes. Their interest in antidotes remained undiminished, and in this they were able to make a definite contribution to knowledge during the twelfth century. Ibn-Sarāfiyūn (or Ibn-Sarābī),⁸⁵ who probably flourished during the first half of the twelfth century,⁸⁶ wrote *Kitāb al-adwiyah al-mufradah* (Book of simple drugs), which was based on Byzantine and Arab sources. Another who contributed in the field of antidotes was Ibn-at-Tilmīdh (d. 1165),⁸⁷ whose *Aqrābādihīn* (Book on simples) superseded earlier Arab works on the subject. In this field, too, as in astronomy, mathematics, and geography, the contribution of western Arabs was more considerable than that of their eastern brethren.

Commerce in precious stones, drugs, and perfumes gave rise to special works or handbooks to prevent frauds and to regulate transactions. These handbooks were sometimes specially written for the benefit of the *muḥtasib*, the official in charge of the supervision of markets, in which case they might be loosely described as manuals for the bureau of standards. In fact, literature on rules to govern the regulation of market practices and public morals increased, probably because of the breakdown of public morals as a result of the political and social instability characterizing the century. To this category belongs the unusual work of Ja'far ibn-'Alī ad-Dimashqī, who flourished in the second half of the twelfth century, on commerce and trade, entitled *Al-ishārah ilā maḥāsin at-tijārah wa ma'rifat al-jaiyid al-a'rāḍ wa radīhā wa ghushūsh al-mudallisīn fihā* (On the benefit of commerce and on knowing the good and bad qualities [of wares] and the fraudulent practices of counterfeiterers). The work, however, is more than a practical manual for market inspectors. It treats of other questions such as the true meaning of wealth (*ḥaqīqat al-māl*), kinds of possessions, the origin of money, how to preserve goods, how to determine their average prices, and how to protect

85. He should not be confused with Yaḥyā ibn-Sarāfiyūn, who flourished during the second half of the ninth century.

86. Ibn-Sarāfiyūn quotes Ibn-al-Wāfid, who flourished during the middle of the eleventh century, and is himself quoted by the Hispano-Arab herbalist Ibn-al-Baiṭār (d. 1248). Cf. Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Supplementband I (Leyden, 1937), p. 887 ("um 1070"); Sarton, *op. cit.*, II-1, 229. Arab biographies make no mention of this twelfth-century Ibn-Sarāfiyūn.

87. Ibn-abī-Uṣaibi'ah, *Uyūn*, I, 259; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XIX, 276-282; al-Qiftī, *Ta'rikh al-ḥukamā'*, ed. Julius Lippert (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 340-342.

property.⁸⁸ In this respect the work may be considered among the earliest Arabic treatises on economics, although it draws on the *ʿIlm tadbīr al-manzil*, the Arabic version of a Greek work on domestic economy, ascribed to the Pythagorean Bryson.

Although the illustrious names of Arab medical lore belong to an earlier period, the Arabs of the twelfth century retained their interest in the art of medicine (*ṣanāʿah*) and maintained their superiority over others in its practice. This is well demonstrated by the contemporary reports of Usāmah Ibn-Munqidh, who devotes a number of pages in his memoirs to this subject.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, no great medical contribution was made during the century. Furthermore, while the art remained a near monopoly of *dhimmī* physicians, those who distinguished themselves in its practice were, for the most part, Jews. The Frankish-Moslem struggle was already bearing its poisonous fruits of fanaticism, which destroyed the confidence of the public in Christian practitioners and helped make Arab medicine, from the late twelfth century through the thirteenth, largely Jewish. With the exception of Ibn-at-Tilmidh,⁹⁰ who was a Christian, all the first-class physicians of the century were Jews: Ibn-Jamīʿ al-Isrāʾīlī (d. 1193),⁹¹ who served as a personal physician to Saladin; Ibn-al-Mudauwar (d. 1193),⁹² who served both the last Fātimid caliph and then Saladin as court physician; Ibn-an-Nāqid (d. 1188/1189),⁹³ and abū-l-Maʿālī ibn-Hibat-Allāh al-Yahūdī (d. 1222),⁹⁴ who served Saladin and later the fourth Aiyūbid sultan, al-ʿĀdil (1199–1218).

While these and many others of lesser stature made no significant contribution to Arab medical lore, as practitioners they observed high standards of ethics and skill. Furthermore, stringent rules governed the profession. No person was permitted to practise the "art" unless he was first licensed by a well-known authority. He also had to take the oath of Hippocrates, and to bind himself to pay the bloodwit of any patient who might die as a result of his treatment, if it were established that it was not in accordance with the best medical practice, or that he himself had been negligent in his care for the patient. He had to be well acquainted with the anatomy and the cardinal hu-

88. Sarton, *op. cit.*, II-1, 462–463; for analysis of the work see Hellmut Ritter, in *Der Islam*, VII (1917), 1–91.

89. Usāmah Ibn-Munqidh, *Al-iʿtibār*, pp. 132–134, 137–138.

90. See above, p. 24.

91. Ibn-abī-Uṣaibiʿah, *ʿUyūn*, II, 112.

92. Sarton, *op. cit.*, II-1, 432.

93. Ibn-abī-Uṣaibiʿah, *ʿUyūn*, II, 115–116.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

mors of the body, and familiar with the various diseases to which man is susceptible and with the medicines which should be prescribed for each. Similar conditions were required of oculists (sing. *kaḥḥāl*), who were expected to know the treatise on ophthalmology *Al-‘ashr maqālāt fī-l-‘ain* (The ten treatises on the eye), commonly ascribed to Ḥunain ibn-Ishāq (d. 873). Bone-setters were required to know the exact number of bones in the human body and the shape and form of each. Surgeons were expected to know Galen’s works on anatomy and physiology and to be familiar with all the members of the body and all its veins, arteries, and sinews.⁹⁵

The tradition of caring for the sick in hospitals supported by endowments, which goes back to the ninth century, was continued, especially by the two Zengids and Saladin.⁹⁶ Almost every large urban center, such as Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Cairo, had its own hospital. Usually the building had two pavilions, one for men and one for women. One of the Cairo hospitals visited by Ibn-Jubair had a third pavilion for the insane.⁹⁷ Some of these hospitals functioned also as schools of medicine.

As the religious and political unity of the Islamic community had already been shattered long before the twelfth century, it was natural for Arab historiography to reflect this breakdown by becoming increasingly provincial, turning its attention to local and dynastic histories, biographies, and biographical dictionaries. This trend, which would increase during the thirteenth century and reach its greatest development in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, reflects not only the breakdown of the political unity of the Arab and Moslem world, but also an increased tendency to look backward as an escape from the painful realities of the present. Of particular interest among the historians who flourished during this period is ash-Shahrastānī (d. 1153), whose main contribution was in the field of the history of religion;⁹⁸ he also wrote a history of philosophers (*Ta’rīkh al-ḥukamā’*). Another author exemplifying the same trend is ‘Abd-al-Karīm as-Sam‘ānī (d. 1167), whose *Kitāb al-ansāb* (The book of genealogies) preserves a vast number of Arabic patronymics but is chiefly valuable for what it contains about the history and proper names of Persia, Transoxiana, and Central Asia, although it seems to depend very much on the narratives of the *Ta’rīkh Iṣbahān* of Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī (d.

95. Ibn-al-Ukhūwah, *Ma‘ālim*, pp. 165–169.

96. See above, pp. 11–12.

97. Ibn-Jubair, *Riḥlah*, p. 51.

98. See above, p. 20; Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, III, 403–404.

970), the *Ta'rikh Nisābūr* of al-Ḥakīm an-Nisābūrī (d. 1014), and, in particular, the *Ta'rikh Baghdād* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 1071). With as-Sam'ānī, the age of compilation began, an age which was to reach its fullest development in the fourteenth century in works like those of an-Nuwairī (d. 1332) and Ibn-Faḍl-Allāh al-'Umarī (d. 1349). While such works preserved the Arab cultural heritage and were therefore extremely valuable, they reveal little originality or creativity.

Another compiler reflecting the same trend is 'Alī ibn-Zaid al-Baihaqī (d. 1169),⁹⁹ who is chiefly known for his biographical dictionary, entitled *Ta'rikh ḥukamā' al-Islām* (The history of the learned men of Islam), which was a supplement to an earlier biographical dictionary of learned men, the *Ṣiwān al-ḥikmah* of Muḥammad as-Sijistānī of the second half of the tenth century. Al-Baihaqī also wrote, in Persian, a history of his birthplace, Baihaq, which he completed a year before his death.

The shift in emphasis from general to local histories is likewise demonstrated by the work of 'Umārah ibn-'Alī al-Yamanī (d. 1174),¹⁰⁰ who wrote the *Ta'rikh al-Yaman* (The history of Yemen).¹⁰¹ For his part in a plot to restore the Fāṭimid imamate to power with the help of Amalric, the Frankish king of Jerusalem, 'Umārah was executed on the order of Saladin.

By far the greatest Arab historian in the twelfth century, however, was abū-l-Qāsim 'Alī ibn-al-Ḥasan Ibn-'Asākir (d. 1176),¹⁰² whose *Ta'rikh Dimashq* (The history of Damascus) was patterned after al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's history of Baghdad. In eighty volumes, the work deals casually with the history of the city, but records the biographies of celebrated learned men who either were born in Damascus or spent part of their lives there. Though abridged later by various scholars, the work, of which a complete copy is preserved in the Zāhirīyah library in Damascus, has never been published. Ibn-'Asākir was so esteemed by his contemporaries that, on his death, Saladin himself attended his funeral.

The trend toward dynastic histories is represented by 'Imād-ad-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1201).¹⁰³ Persian by birth, he studied in Baghdad and wrote his works in Arabic. His best-known historical contribution is the *Kiṭāb al-faṭḥ al-qussī fī-l-faṭḥ al-Qudsī* (The Qussian interpreta-

99. Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XIII, 219-240.

100. Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, III, 107-111.

101. Ed. & tr. H. Cassels Kay (London, 1892).

102. Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XIII, 73-87; Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, II, 471-473.

103. Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XIX, 11-28; Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 233-238.

tion of the conquest of Jerusalem),¹⁰⁴ which is an account of Saladin's conquest of Syria and Palestine. He also wrote the *Nuṣrat al-fiṭrah wa 'uṣrat al-qaṭrah* (The victory of the true faith [of Islam] and the haven of the wayfarer), a history of the Selchūkids and their vizirs based on a Persian original by Sharaf-ad-Dīn Anūsharwān (d. 1137). Another of his works is a seven-volume history of his own times, including his autobiography, *Al-barq ash-sha'mī* (The Syrian lightning); only one of the seven volumes, dealing with the years 1182–1184, is now extant. Al-'Imād, as al-Iṣfahānī is commonly known, was a stylist of the first order, whose literary remains are esteemed by modern critics.

An exception to the general trend toward local and dynastic histories was the work of one of the most versatile and prolific authors in Islam, the renowned abū-l-Faraj 'Abd-ar-Raḥmān Ibn-al-Jauzī (d. 1201).¹⁰⁵ Though he wrote many works on diverse subjects, such as biography, tradition, jurisprudence, ethics, medicine, geography, and Koranic studies, his most important contribution was a history of the world from its creation to 1180, entitled *Al-kitāb al-muntaẓam wa multaḡat al-multazam*¹⁰⁶ (The well-arranged book of selected essentials). In spite of its comprehensive scope it contributes little new to Arab historiography. It does, however, demonstrate that the community could still produce, in times of crisis and amidst the splinter movements afflicting it, a personality capable of transcending provincial barriers and of relating his subject to the general current of Arab and Moslem history.

Though he was not a historian in the strict sense of the word, mention should be made of Usāmah ibn-Murshid, better known as Usāmah Ibn-Munqidh (d. 1188), perhaps the first Arab to produce an autobiography. In his memoirs, entitled the *Kitāb al-i'tibār* (The book of example [and reflection]),¹⁰⁷ he has included the earliest Arabic treatise on falconry and the chase, of which he himself was a master. The book preserves eyewitness reports and observations on Fāṭimid Egypt and Zengid and Aiyūbid Syria, as well as many details about Moslem-Frankish relations during the second half of the twelfth century.

Mention should also be made of Bahā'-ad-Dīn Yūsuf ibn-Rafī' Ibn-Shaddād (d. 1234),¹⁰⁸ who had a distinguished career as a teacher

104. Ed. Carlo von Landberg (Leyden, 1888).

105. Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, II, 323–324.

106. Vols. V-2, VI-X (no more published), Hyderabad, A.H. 1357–1362 [1938–1943].

107. Ed. Hitti (Princeton, 1930); tr. Hitti, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades* (CURC, 10; New York, 1929; repr. Beirut, 1964).

108. Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, VI, 81–98.

at the Nizāmīyah of Baghdad, as a military judge of Jerusalem under Saladin, and as the founder of two *madrāsah*-type schools at Aleppo. As a historian he turned his attention to biography and local history, writing the life of his patron and hero Saladin, entitled *An-nawādir as-sultānīyah wa-l-mahāsīn al-Yūsufīyah*¹⁰⁹ (The celebrated words of the sultan and his distinguished works), and the history of his adopted city, Aleppo.

In Arab historiography, Ibn-Shaddād belongs to both the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and exemplifies, perhaps more than any other, the main characteristics of Arab historiography during the period under consideration, with its emphasis not on universal or general but on local and dynastic history as well as on biography.

The twelfth century, unlike the eleventh, was strikingly poor in legal studies both quantitatively and qualitatively, and those few works which come down from the period were more concerned with practice than with theory. Here again the absence of creativity is conspicuous. The sterility of the century in this vital field is exemplified by what might be called reference manuals on the conduct of state and administration. One comes from the pen of Abū-Bakr Muḥammad ibn-al-Walīd aṭ-Ṭurṭūshī (d. 1131),¹¹⁰ who was by birth an Andalusian from Tortosa and by education a Hispano-Arab educated in Saragossa and Seville. After performing the pilgrimage in 1083–1084 and traveling extensively in the Near East, he settled in Alexandria, where he died. While in Egypt he wrote the *Sirāj al-mulūk*¹¹¹ (The torch of kings), a guide to royal conduct, which he completed in 1122 at Fustat and dedicated to the Fāṭimid vizir al-Ma'mūn. Another comes from the pen of Muḥammad ibn-ʿAlī Ibn-ad-Dahhān (d. 1194),¹¹² who was born in Baghdad but whose career carried him also to Syria and Egypt. Being also an astronomer, he seems to have modeled his legal work on the popular astronomical tables and called it the *Taqwīm an-naẓar fī-l-masā'il al-khilāfīyah* (The legal tables on disputed problems). The tables, preceded by an introduction, contained ten columns which gave for each question the views of the four orthodox schools of Islamic law, the principles involved, and other observations. A third work, intended as a handbook for the benefit of market officers charged with the task of verifying weights and measures and testing wares and products, comes from the pen of ʿAbd-ar-Raḥ-

109. Ed. Albert Schultens (Leyden, 1732, 1755); tr. Charles W. Wilson and Claude R. Conder, *The Life of Saladin by Behā ed-Dīn* (PPTS, XIII; London, 1897).

110. Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, III, 393–395.

111. Printed in Cairo, A.H. 1289 (1872/3).

112. Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 105–106.

mān ibn-Naṣrallāh ash-Shīrāzī,¹¹³ a contemporary of Saladin. The most interesting of this group of works, however, is that of Ja'far ibn-'Alī ad-Dimashqī, already mentioned under natural history and commercial activities in connection with precious stones.¹¹⁴ In general the value of these works lies not in their contribution to the subject matter discussed but in the light they shed on the life of the times.

Language and literature have always occupied a preëminent place in the Arab mind and, together with calligraphy, have continued to be the main instrument of artistic expression. Arabic belles-lettres (*al-adab*), which began with al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 868/869) in the ninth century, reached its highest level of development in the twelfth. A trend away from the simple expression of earlier days and toward a more ornate one was already discernible in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries in such works as those of Abū-Bakr al-Khwārizmī (d. about 993) and Badī' az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 1008). It reached its full development during the twelfth century and became, next to the Koran, the norm for literary excellence for all succeeding generations; its elegant style, polished expression, elaborate similes, and rhymed couplets still captivate its Arab readers and listeners even today. The style pervaded all subsequent prose writing whether belles-lettres, governmental correspondence, or even historical writings, as the *Fath al-qussī* of 'Imād-ad-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī clearly reveals.¹¹⁵

The greatest of all Arab belles-lettrists was abū-Muḥammad al-Qāsim al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1122),¹¹⁶ with whom the *Maqāmāt* (assemblies), initiated by al-Hamadhānī at the end of the tenth century, reached their fullest development. Fifty picaresque stories, recounting the adventures of an amiable rascal, provided the device through which the author exhibited his mastery of the Arabic language and displayed his sophisticated literary culture. Their profound influence on Arabic letters and thought has never diminished, and a literary revival in the nineteenth century was launched with an excellent imitation of their form and style by the shaikh Nāṣīf al-Yāziǰī (d. 1871).

Al-Ḥarīrī also wrote on grammar, treating in particular of linguistic mistakes which educated persons make in their writings. His work in this field was carried on by a younger contemporary, abū-Manṣūr Mauḥūb ibn-Aḥmad Ibn-al-Jawālīqī (d. 1144),¹¹⁷ who wrote on incorrect expressions current in the vernacular. Both men seem to have

113. Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, I (Leyden, 1943), 603 (no. 13).

114. See above, p. 24.

115. See above, note 104.

116. Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XVI, 261-293.

117. Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 424-426; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XIX, 205-207.

been increasingly aware of the dangers confronting Arabic as a result of the influx of foreign elements, particularly Turkish, which came with the Selchūkids. Ibn-al-Jawāliqī also compiled a list of the foreign words introduced into the Arabic language.

The influx of foreign elements into the Arab world and the transfer of authority from Arab to non-Arab dynasts whose mother tongue was either Persian, like the Buwaihids, or Turkish, like the Selchūkids, or Kurdish, like the Aiyūbids, had a depressing effect on Arabic poetry. These new overlords, as Ibn-ʿUnain remonstrated, were incapable of appreciating poetry.¹¹⁸ Indeed, the twelfth century produced few first-class poets. But the trend, which seems to have started with the Buwaihids of the tenth century, encouraged the growth of a new class of prose writers, known as court secretaries (sing. *kātib*), who displaced the court poets, and whose services gave rise to a special type of court correspondence (*rasāʾil*) which, according to a favorite Arabic saying, "began with ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd¹¹⁹ and reached maturity with Ibn-al-ʿAmīd."¹²⁰ Its full development into a flowery branch of belles-lettres, however, came in the writings of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil (d. 1200),¹²¹ the famous vizir of Saladin. These *rasāʾil* are characterized by verbosity and profuseness, excessive quotations, lavish use of simile and metaphor, word-play, balanced rhymed phrases, unusual words, and grandiloquent expression. In the hands of a lesser master, the style was stilted and artificial, but in the hands of the Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, the execution has the touch of a consummate artist, and the result, though formal, is nevertheless pleasing. It won considerable following, and still enjoys an eminent place in Arabic letters as the Fāḍilī style. Its genius, however, remained confined to form: a sort of literary gymnastics, displaying skill and agility, but lacking in spirit and creativity. This type of development reflects the spirit of a civilization which has reached its limit and settled down to live on its intellectual capital.

Perhaps the best embodiment of this trend toward collection rather than invention is to be found in the works of abū-l-Faḍl al-Maidānī (d. 1124),¹²² whose *Majmaʿ al-amthāl*¹²³ (Collection of proverbs) re-

118. See above p. 5.

119. Died 750; secretary of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān II (744-750); see Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, II, 394-397.

120. Vizir of the Buwaihid Rukn-ad-Daulah (932-976); see Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 189-197.

121. *Ibid.*, II, 333-337.

122. *Ibid.*, I, 130-131.

123. Georg W. Freytag, ed. and tr. (into Latin), *Arabum proverbialia* (4 vols. in 2, Bonn, 1838-1843), I, II.

mains one of the most delightful and useful anthologies of Arabic folklore and fables. A more profound contribution to Arabic letters in the twelfth century was made by abū-l-Qāsim Maḥmud ibn-ʿUmar az-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144).¹²⁴ A Persian by birth, he devoted his varied talents to the service of Arabic and Islam, defending both against the Arabophobes among his countrymen. In this respect, he represents a reaction against the Shuʿūbī movement, for which the disparagement of Arabic and Islam was the main pastime. In his attitude toward Arabic he stands in striking contrast to Firdausī (d. 1021), the Dante of the Persians. Both as a lexicographer and as a grammarian az-Zamakhsharī rendered a great service to his adopted language, but his greater contribution was made as a Muʿtazilite theologian and Koran commentator. In spite of his heterodox Muʿtazilite beliefs, his commentary on the Koran, entitled the *Kitāb al-kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq at-tanzīl* (The revealer of the truths of revelation), still commands respect and acceptance among Moslems. Through it and through the *Asās al-balāghah* (The foundation of eloquence), he sought to resolve the problems of the matchless and miraculous (*iʿjāz*) nature of the Koran, which he believed, as a good Muʿtazilite, to be not eternal but created. Although his systematic method in dealing with the subject and his positive conclusions with regard to the matchlessness of the Koran have been accepted by Moslems, his premise that it was a created Koran has been rejected. Withal, he was the last great Muʿtazilite to leave an indelible mark on Koranic studies, and all systematic studies of this problem start with the standards which he set.

Arab intellectual activity during the twelfth century shows no decline in output and productivity. In volume, the results of the intellectual activity of the Arabs remained impressive, and a goodly portion of the Arabic library has come down to us from that period. In quality, the works are less impressive, and offer little originality. Except for this slackening of intellectual creativity there were no signs of real decay. Conflict and war seem to have acted as a stimulant. The Moslem-Christian confrontation gave a petrifying culture new vigor and postponed its final hardening. Heirs of a great heritage, the Arabs focused all their efforts on the task of preserving what they had, and paid little attention to the challenge of new ideas.

124. Ibn-Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 254-260.