The ‘Abbasids and their residence in Humeima

by Rebecca Foote

The village of Humeima (Humayma) is located in the south of present-day Jordan, some forty kilometers south of Petra and about fifty-five kilometers northeast of the Red Sea port of ‘Aqaba. As Robert Schick reported in UW 5.1 (Spring 1993), Humeima is a multi-period site with architectural and occupational remains from the Nabatean, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic periods.

Humeima is not discussed in accounts of the Islamic conquests of the 630s C.E.; the Arab geographers only considered Humeima noteworthy as a headquarters from which, in the mid-eighth century, the ‘Abbasid overthrow of the Umayyad regime was orchestrated.

The ‘Abbasid family moved from the Hijaz to Syria sometime between 687 and 705. ‘Abd Allah, son of ‘Ali, the ‘Abbasid clan’s sacred uncle of the prophet Muhammad, had died in 68/687-8, and had expressed a wish that the family move to the Levant. This wish was carried out by his youngest son, ‘Ali; the ‘Abbasid clan may have remained in al-Ta’if for some time, but certainly had left the Hijaz by the beginning of the eighth century. ‘Abd al-Malik, caliph until 705, welcomed ‘Ali b. ‘Abd Allah and his family to Syria, and offered to settle them wherever they chose in the region. After considering many possi-

Fig. 1. Humeima. Plan of qasr and mosque.

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HUMEIMA, FROM PAGE 1.

bilities, ‘Ali decided to purchase Humeima, described as a remote garyya (village); here the ‘Abbasids settled until their relocation to ‘Iraq upon assuming control of the Caliphate in 750.

Why did ‘Ali choose to settle in such a remote place? Humeima did have some arable soil and existing water resources, but we know from archaeological evidence that all of southern Jordan would have been an uninviting place in the late sixth and seventh centuries. The answer seems to lie in price, power, and proximity to the Hijaz, rather than the ‘prophecy’ related in the sources. Although they were from a landed family of Mecca, the ‘Abbasids seem to have become impoverished aristocrats by the late seventh and early eighth centuries. Humeima’s purchase price must have been cheap, which suited the ‘Abbasids’ needs—they did not have much ready cash at this time, and in fact family members sought funds at court on occasion to pay off debts. If there had been someone more powerful already entrenched in Humeima, they would probably neither have been allowed to buy the place nor have wanted to settle there. The remaining inhabitants were probably few in number, and probably none were Muslims; there is, at any rate, no evidence from recent excavations that any of the three Byzantine churches were either converted into a congregational mosque, or that a new congregational mosque was ever built at Humeima. As for location, the ‘Abbasids still had ties with the peninsula and went on the pilgrimage annually, so Humeima’s proximity to the Hijaz would likely have been appealing.

At first ‘Ali did not spend much time in Humeima, but rather stayed at the court of Damascus as an intimate of ‘Abd al-Malik, even marrying one of the caliph’s former wives. When al-Walid b. ‘Abd al-Malik came to power in 86/705, however, he went so far as to banish ‘Ali for this and other intrigues. ‘Ali probably settled back in Humeima only after 715 when the new caliph, Sulayman b. ‘Abd al-Malik, allowed him to return. Positive relations with subsequent caliphs are attested until Ali’s death in 118/736-37. In short, it appears that ‘Ali never had any aspirations to overthrow the Umayyads.

According to the geographer al-Bakri and the anonymous chronicle Akhbār ad-dawla al-‘Abbasiyya (for references to which I thank Dr. Robert Schick), ‘Ali built an estate [qasr] with a garden at Humeima. This qasr consisted of the patriarch’s manzil (residence), surrounding a spacious court and other manzil. Baladhuri tells us that ‘Ali was noted for his piety and that he prayed five hundred rak‘as each day in his mosque. Whether other members of the family stayed at Humeima and managed the estate while ‘Ali was in Damascus or in exile is un-

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**Fig. 2. Site map.**

- rock-cut cistern
- built cistern
- structures
- main datum
from the wadi, and may have been the site of ‘Ali’s olive groves described in several accounts. Archaeobotany tests for tree roots await a future season.

Before excavation in 1992, the structure now identifiable as the ‘Abbasid qasr had been labeled both a military castellum (garrison camp) and a caravanserai due to both its general plan, a roughly rectangular building divided into “cells” surrounding a court, and its location at the eastern outskirts of the settlement, providing easy access for travelers to the Via Nova Traiana (fig. 2; the Via Nova is thought to have run along or near the path of the aqueduct, at least within the settlement itself). However, the eighth century qasr’s complex plan, evidence of high ornamentation, and luxury items—fragments of an ivory casket—cast doubt upon the initial assessment of the building as primarily commercial in function. F103’s rectangular plan with cells surrounding a courtyard invites comparison with other so-called early Islamic qasur and palaces in Bilad al-Sham: ‘Amman (citadel), ‘Anjar, Burqo’, al-Hallabat, Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, Jebel Seis, Jerusalem (al-Haram al-Sharif), Kharana, al-Minya, Mshatta, al-Qastal, al-Risha, al-Tuba, Umm al-Walid, al-Zabib, and (although not a qasr) Hammam al-Sarakh. Among these qasur, extramural mosques were found at al-Hallabat, Jebel Seis, al-Qastal, al-Risha, Umm al-Walid, and al-Zabib. While the mosque at Humeima is less than half the size, it shares close formal/typological comparison with Jebel Seis (fig. 3): square shape, exterior mihrab articulation, single arched vaulting (though Jebel Seis is wide enough to have a relieving pier), and entry opposite the qibla (though Jebel Seis also has an entry on the east).

Frescoes have been discovered in a central room in the western part of the qasr (in probe 02). The entire room was originally decorated with a fresco secco, probably a dadoe, with solid red wash below and patterning above. Though fragmented and damaged by fire, patterns, mostly floral, set within rectangular bands, have been partially reconstructed (figs. 4 and 5) to form a diaper pattern. Work is in progress to find more joins and reconstruct the total fresco cycle. The original range of colors is somewhat difficult to determine because changes caused by the heat-of fire; but black, gray, rust, orange, mauve, salmon, yellowish-green and white were surely part of the original color scheme. Only a 1.75 × 1.75 m area of the room (which measures over 6 × 5 m) has been excavated to floor level, so another season will be necessary to make greater sense of it all.

The qasr at Humeima could broaden our thinking about other eighth-century qasur of Bilad al-Sham in at least two key respects. First, it may help us understand similarities and differences in intra-regional building techniques and models, as all other early Islamic qasur are in northern parts of the region: for example, the spatial arrangement of byats so far discernible at the Humeima qasr does not parallel any of the qasur excavated elsewhere, and, perhaps most importantly, there are no towers in the perimeter wall—a consistent feature in all other early Islamic examples of manor estates set in rural or semi-rural contexts (except Burqo’, which does have a watchtower). These key differences may reflect Hijazi building styles rather than the adoption of Byzantine prototypes, usually the case further north. Second, issues of patronage and taste could be addressed. The ruling Umayyads, also immigrants from the Hijaz, sponsored the building campaigns in the north of Bilad al-Sham. The qasr at Humeima is the earliest known building attributable to the ‘Abbasids, and was built before they came to power; it can be compared not only to Umayyad constructions, but also to late eighth-century palaces built

**Fig. 3. Comparison of mosques at Jebel Seis and Humeima.**

known, but it seems plausible that ‘Ali did not begin construction of his qasr until he returned from exile in 715.

During the 1992 and 1993 seasons, excavation at the area labeled F103 (not C103, as stated by Schick), uncovered an early Islamic qasr measuring 61 x 50 meters (not 61 x 467 as earlier reported), with up to six courses of masonry walls still intact, and a small adjacent mosque (fig 1). Ceramic evidence culled from foundation trenches, a wall, and initial occupational deposits indicate that the qasr and mosque were erected in the early eighth century. The date of foundation and the discovery of lavish decoration and fragments of luxury objects from the original phase of occupation suggests correlation of these structures with the qasr/mosque complex established by ‘Ali. Architectural remodeling and upper level occupational remains indicate reuse later in the Abbasid period as well as in the Ayyubid/Mamluk and Ottoman periods. Other buildings in other fields at Humeima which were earlier believed to fit descriptions of the ‘Abbasid residence have proven to be of Byzantine foundation, not Islamic.

The principal wadi of Humeima runs about 60 meters east of the qasr/mosque complex; the area in between would have been provided with excellent runoff...
The "Militarization" of Architectural Expression in the Medieval Middle East (11th-14th Century): An Outline

by Nasser Rabbat

The immense historical importance of the encounter between Christian Europe and the Muslim East during the Crusades has somewhat overshadowed another pivotal civilizational exchange that occurred at the same time and in the same area, and which also resulted in lasting transformations in the cultural, social, political, religious, and ethnic make-up of the Middle East. This was the coming of the Turks from Central Asia via Iran to Anatolia and Syria in the late eleventh century C.E., and their creation of a new polity that was soon to dominate the entire region. From the empire of the Great Seljuks in the eleventh century to the many post-Seljukid states in Anatolia, Syria, Jazira and Egypt in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, a Turkish-speaking, Islamized military class arose to rule over the indigenous populations of the Near East.

Several attributes characterized the political structure evolved by the new ruling class and distinguished it from those of earlier Islamic regimes. The first was the strict military hierarchy, closed to all but the newcomers, which represented the only path to political power. The second was the fortress mentality initially caused by the newcomers' linguistic and ethnic differences from the ruling elite; this was ultimately embedded in a system that stressed exclusion and segregation as means of control, as represented by the Mamluks who ruled Syria and Egypt from 1250 until 1517. The third was almost a corollary of the second, though opposite in effect: it was the rulers' search for acceptance by, and perhaps popularity among, the subjects. To this end, Seljukid and post-Seljukid rulers, such as the Artuqids, Zengids, Ayubids and Mamluks, emphasized their role as defenders and supporters of Islam by patronizing and endowing religious structures, by publicizing their enactment of religious regulations regarding social organization, and by distinguishing themselves in jihad against a host of enemies: the Byzantines, splinter Shi'ite groups, the Crusaders, and, later, the Mongols.

One aspect of the transformation brought about by this new ruling class which has hardly been noticed was the "militarization" of architectural expression. The new rulers introduced for their residences structures previously uncommon in the Middle East: citadels that stood on the edge of the city and enclosed their palaces, their audience halls, and barracks for their armies, while they had their hippodromes (mayadin) for parades, military exercises, and polo games established nearby on the periphery of their citadels. Citadels were built in cities such as Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Hama in today's Syria; Mosul, Irbil and Sinjar in Iraq; Tabriz and Ardabil in Iran (Azerbaijan); Diyarbakr (Amid), Urfa (Edessa), Mayyafariqin, Konya, and Dikrlik in Anatolia; and Cairo in Egypt—which is the most brilliant, most comprehensive, and the last one constructed (Fig. 1). All of these cities were capitals of more or less independent principalities during the twelfth and thirteenth century.

The construction of citadels in them heralded the new regimes, whose roots were foreign and whose preferences were military. The founders of these new structures were almost all non-Arab, Sunni Muslim amirs who came to the region with or after the Seljukid expansion into Anatolia during the eleventh century. They led armies made of non-Arab, mostly Turkish and Kurdish, free and manumitted cavalry, and expanded their principalities through war and conquest. Their citadels were built to be a refuge against attack, a barrier against the ruled, and a symbol of their image as the fighters for Islam.

Other aspects of the militarization of architecture went beyond the types of buildings constructed to the styles of surface articulation applied to them. Some of the new rulers decorated the walls and towers of their citadels and cities with stone reliefs depicting cavalry, lions, eagles, and mythical creatures. Examples are still visible on the walls of the citadels in Konya, Aleppo (Fig. 2), Diyarbakr and Cairo. Some had adorned the interiors of their palaces.
with images of battles and victories, of themselves and their amirs in full military regalia, and of the cities and fortresses they had conquered, as reported in the written sources for the citadels of Aleppo, Mosul, and Cairo. Most rulers also inscribed the walls of their citadels, palaces, and audience halls with the titulatures they had elaborated to proclaim their prowess as fighters, their dedication to the Islamic cause, and their symbolic links with legendary heroes of the past. Even princes adopted the same techniques in the architecture and decoration of both their country and city residences. Furthermore, sultans and princes alike favored austere and military-like monumental facades for the charitable buildings they endowed: madrasas to educate a new class of jurists, ribats and khaniqahs to lodge militant ascetics and sufis, and mausolea to commemorate themselves and to glorify their deeds.

The ruling elite also appreciated objects decorated with representations of military themes. They acquired metalwork and pottery bowls, jars, ewers and urns on whose surfaces are prominently represented armed princes and courtiers, campaigns, parades, and hunt excursions, and they had their names and titles inscribed on them as a sign of their admiration of these objects. They elevated the manufacture of weapons to an art form by prizing highly and richly ornamented helmets, swords, shields, and saddles. They established a system of emblems, called ranks, the equivalent to coats-of-arms in Europe, which were adopted by sultans, amirs, and perhaps other high officials and carved on buildings, painted on glass, wood, and pottery, engraved on metalwork, and embroidered or dyed on textiles. For these ranks, they sometimes used representations of animals that may have implied power and courage, such as the feline motif of al-Zahir Baybars (658-76/1260-77)—which may also have illustrated his own name baybars, meaning “chief panther” in Turkish (Fig. 3). In other instances, they codified many of the images they had created to represent the attributes of their offices, positions, and ideals (Fig. 4). Sultans sometimes ordered similar images representing military valor and mythical heroes struck on their coins.

The pieces of this overall transformation of architectural expression in the medieval Middle East could fit into a wider framework of change which reflect the mentality of the new ruling elite, and which can be explained as a search for appropriate and accessible ways to express their needs, intentions, and tastes. The same explanation applies to other material, artistic, and literary innovations of the time which may be seen as manifestations of the same cultural shift. They include the production of amusing mechanical devices that delighted kings and amirs, such as those illustrated in the famous Kitab al-Hiyal of al-Jazari (ca. 1210); the revival of the use of Iranian, Turkish, and antique mythical and heroic images in architecture, coinage, textiles, and miniature paintings; the rediscoveries of royal themes in the pre-Islamic literary traditions that served as models for the panegyrics composed by court poets for the new rulers, such as the Shahnameh of Firdawsi, which was dedicated to Mahmud of Ghazna; the developments in royal and princely titulatures by introducing new attributes to them and by exploiting both the
Iranian and Arabic repertoires of heroism and heroes; the profusion of "mirrors for princes" books, such as Siyastannameh of Nizam al-Mulk, which he offered to Malik-Shah at the end of the eleventh century; and Athar al-Uwal fi Tarhib al-Duwal of al-Hasan al-Abbasi, which he presented to the Mamluk sultan Baybars al-Jashnakir in 1308; and the prevalence of historical chronicles and *Masalik* (geography) compendia, such as Abu Shama’s *Al-A’laq al-khatira bi-dhikr umara’ al-Sham wa l-Jazira*, and al-‘Umari’s *Masalik al-Ahsar fi Mamalik al-Amsar*, some of which were sponsored by the rulers and may have reflected their pride in their campaigns and their territorial possessions.

When the Turkish dynasties in the Middle East became established, and both external and internal threats were eliminated, the emphasis of the rulers on their roles as defenders of Islam lessened, and their military image softened. Consequently, the once fiercely and strictly segregated Turkish-speaking elites began to fraternize with the local upper class through marriage and business partnerships. They were slowly adopting their subjects’ urban culture, and by the end of the fourteenth century their acculturation was discernible in their habits, tastes, and preferences. This period marks the end of the age that glorified military attributes in art and architecture. The shift is best illustrated by an anecdote attributed to the Ottoman Sultan Selim I, who conquered Egypt and ended the Mamluk sultanate in 1517. During his stay in Cairo he inspected the city’s monuments. Stopping in front of the marvelous Madrasa of Sultan Hasan (1357-62), he exclaimed, “This is a great hisar (citadel).” But when he saw the Madrasa of Sultan al-Ghuri (1510), his opponent who had died a year earlier fighting him in the battle of Marj Dabiq north of Aleppo, he said, “This is the qa’a (hall) of a merchant.”

**HUMEIMA, FROM PAGE 3.**

by the ‘Abbasids after their seizure of the caliphate, for example in Baghdad (known in detail from texts) or Raqqa. In the latter cases, the interaction of memory and taste with the building traditions the ‘Abbasids encountered in ‘Iraq might be perceptible.

‘Ali’s son Muhammad is the family member who instigated the ‘Abbasid movement and centered his clandestine political activities at Humeima—but only after ‘Ali’s death in 118/736-37. Five years later, Muhammad died and his son Ibrahim continued the revolutionary efforts, which were eventually discovered by the Umayyads in the late 740’s. The family, including thirteen men, fled Humeima for Kufa in 749 to meet the victorious ‘Abbasid armies advancing from the east. Among them were two of the first ‘Abbasid caliphs, Abu 1-‘Abbas and al-Mansur, and perhaps also al-Mahdi. It should be remembered that they were born and reared at Humeima, probably in the chambers of the qaṣr now being uncovered there.
UPCOMING SYMPOSIA AND CONFERENCES

CALL FOR PAPERS

THE CULTURE OF MEMORY IN THE MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN AND ISLAMIC WORLDS

The Medieval Academy of America will hold its 1995 annual meeting in Boston on 30 March-1 April. Boston College, Boston University, Tufts University, and Wellesley College are the host institutions. One panel will be entitled The Culture of Memory in the Medieval European and Islamic Worlds. Possibilities: the faculty of memory, both physical and philosophical; arts of memory; the relationship of memory to medieval conceptions of mind, personality, collective identity, and historical narrative. For information or to submit a paper proposal for this panel, contact Michael Chamberlain, Department of History, University of Wisconsin, 455 N. Park St. #4118, Madison, WI 53706. Office: (608) 265-2673; E-Mail: mchamber@facstaff.wisc.edu.

Any scholar may submit a proposal, except those who read a paper at the annual meeting of the Academy in 1993 or 1994. Sessions usually consist of three thirty minute papers. The title of the proposed paper and a one page abstract (250 words) should be submitted by 15 May 1994.

An exhibition at Boston College entitled “Memory and the Middle Ages” is being planned to coincide with this meeting.

COLLOQUIUM ON BYZANTINE / ISLAMIC CERAMICS

The British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History, along with the Institut Francais d’Archeologie du Proche-Orient, Damascus, is sponsoring an International Colloquium on the topic of “Byzantine/Early Islamic Ceramics in Syria-Jordan (IV-VIII centuries A.D.)” to be held in Amman from December 3-5, 1994. For information, contact the British Institute at Amman, P.O. Box 925071, Amman 11110, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Fax (06) 837-197. Telephone (06) 841-317.

CALL FOR PAPERS

WOMEN IN JUDAISM AND ISLAM

The Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies, University of Denver, will sponsor a conference on Women in Judaism and Islam, to be held October 23-25, 1994. The conference welcomes proposals for scholarly papers dealing with aspects of women’s status, rights, or parquisites; marriage, including intermarriage and multiple marriage (polygamy, remarriage, etc.); education; status of children; individual status within families and society; and related issues. Papers may reflect research or fieldwork involving any historical period (e.g. ancient, pre-Islamic, medieval, or modern), including the history of Jews of Islamic lands. Papers relevant to contemporary issues and to Muslims and Jews in North America are also welcome. Papers may be comparative or contrastive, or focus primarily on one tradition. A broad interdisciplinary approach is anticipated, with papers approaching the subject from a number of disciplines, including history, sociology, religious studies, literature, and public policy. A limited number of travel subsidies will be available. The conference will provide meals (koshert/hallal) and lodging for participants during the conference.

One-page abstracts are due in Denver by May 1, 1994. Abstracts should include presenter’s name, address, academic affiliation, E-mail, telephones and fax. Papers are due in Denver three weeks before the first day of the conference in order to distribute them to participants and discussants. Abstracts should be sent to: Professor Seth Ward, Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies, University of Denver, Denver CO 80208. Submissions and comments may also be sent via FAX, 303-871-3037, Telephone, 303-871-3020, E-mail, SWARD@DUCAIR (bitnet) or SWARD@CIRCE.CAIR.DU.EDU (Internet).

CALL FOR PAPERS

SYRIAC SYMPOSIUM II

Syria at the Crossroads: Cultural Interchange in Late Antiquity and First Forum on Syriac Computing

JOINT CONFERENCE

Syriac Symposium II, “Syria at the Crossroads: Cultural Interchange in Late Antiquity” will be held from June 8-10, 1995 at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Papers are solicited. Send inquiries to: Sidney H. Griffith or Robin Darling Young, Institute of Christian Oriental Research, Mullen Library, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. 20064, U.S.A. Tel. (202) 319-5084; Fax: (202) 319-5579.

The First Forum on Syriac Computing will be held June 9, 1995, at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with Syriac Symposium II. The Forum seeks to provide an opportunity for scholars working on computational projects to meet and share their work, and to provide Syriac scholars and computer users with presentations designed to help in user-oriented applications, such as word-processing, fonts, desktop publishing, and computer aided learning/teaching. Papers are solicited; please send a 1/2 page typed abstract to: George A. Kiraz (SyrCOM), St. John’s College, Cambridge CB2 1TP, U.K.; e-mail: george.kiraz@c1.cam.ac.uk.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Seventh Annual Klotzkin Symposium PILGRIMS AND TRAVELERS IN THE HOLY LAND

Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, will hold the Seventh Annual Klotzkin Symposium on Pilgrims and Travelers in the Holy Land, October 2-3, 1994. The symposium will be sponsored by the Klotzkin Chair in Jewish Civilization and Department of Religion, Creighton University.

Throughout the ages, travelers
UPCOMING SYMPOSIA AND CONFERENCES

from many cultures, for many reasons, have been drawn to and through the geographical area known as “The Holy Land”, the land sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims has been a crossroads or a destination for soldiers, scholars, and plain simple people. The Seventh Symposium will survey the major sites, consider the character of pilgrimages and rituals, and explore the concept and geographical definition of “The Holy Land” as it applies to each of the three religions. Other topics will relate to the literature of this extended hégira and community of explorers, travelers and traders, as well as to the art and sciences influenced by their experiences.

Those chosen to be presenters will have twenty minutes to deliver their papers. Subsidies for the cost of transportation and accommodations of the presenters will be arranged. It is expected that the proceedings will be published in book form. For further information, contact either (1) Prof. Bryan Le Beau, Director, Center for the Study of Religion and Society, Creighton University, 2500 California Plaza, Omaha, Nebraska 68178, U.S.A.; tel. (402) 280-2652; e-mail blibeau@creighton.edu, or (2) Prof. Menachim Mor, Klutznik Chair in Jewish Civilization, Creighton University, 2500 California Plaza, Omaha, Nebraska 68178, U.S.A.; tel. (402) 280-2303 or 2304; e-mail mmoe@creighton.edu, fax (402) 280-4731.

PATTERNS OF COMMUNAL IDENTITY in the Late Antique and Early Islamic Near East

The Late Antiquity and Early Islam Project will sponsor its fourth workshop on 5-7 May, 1994, at University College, London. The topic will be “Patterns of Communal Identity.”

The following speakers are provisionally scheduled to make presentations: Averil Cameron, Mark Cohen, Lawrence Conrad, Nicholas De Lange, Fred Donner, Sidney Griffith, John Haldon, Robert Hillenbrand, Hugh Kennedy, Tarif Khalidi, Geoffrey King, Michael Maas, Gerrit Reinkink, Chase Robinson, and Shaul Shaked.

For further information, contact Lawrence J. Conrad, The Wellcome Institute, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE. Tel. 071-611-8560. Fax 071-611-8562.

RECENT SYMPOSIUM

COINAGE AND MONETARY CIRCULATION DURING THE PRE-ISLAMIC/ISLAMIC TRANSITION PERIOD


For further information, contact Dr. Lutz Illich, Forschungsstelle für islamische Numismatik, Wilhelmsstraße 26, 7400 Tübingen, Germany.

MEM SCHOLAR PROFILE CANDIDATES NEEDED

One of the columns in each issue of Al-'Usur al-Wusta to which I attach special importance is the "MEM Scholar Profile," which presents a sketch of the career and scholarship of a colleague in the Middle East who, because he or she publishes primarily or exclusively in the local vernacular (Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish), may not be widely known among Western scholars. It is important that all of us who study the medieval Middle East become familiar with the work of serious, active colleagues, wherever they may be.

If you know of a scholar in the Middle East who would be a suitable candidate for a "Profile," I urgently request that you send me his or her name, mailing address, and specialty; a telephone or fax number, and a c.v., would also be a great help. Please let me know also if you would be willing to contact the scholar on my behalf, as I have found that my mail inquiries to Profile candidates whom I do not know personally often go unanswered.

-Fred M. Donner, Editor, UW The Oriental Institute 1155 East 58th Street Chicago, IL 60637, U.S.A.
MEM Professional Seminar Questionnaire

A small committee headed by MEM Board member Michael G. Morony has been asked to explore the feasibility of organizing a series of "MEM Summer Seminars," to explore the costs of doing so, and to make a proposal to the MEM Board on whether and how to implement (and finance) such a program. The MEM Summer Seminars would have the general goal of offering intensive training in specialized disciplines and techniques for historians and others interested in the medieval Middle East.

MEM members are asked to read the statement below and to respond to the questionnaire that follows it. Your responses will be invaluable to the committee in estimating which options are viable for MEM to pursue. Please send your responses to the questions posed, or your comments on any aspect of this initiative, directly to Prof. Michael G. Morony, Department of History, UCLA, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024; on Internet, Morony@histr.sscnet.ucla.edu.

At present, the committee's thoughts run along these lines:

• MEM should begin with one seminar, to be held each summer for four to six weeks.

• A variety of topics might be suitable for a seminar; different topics might be offered in successive years, depending upon demand. Possible topics could include Arabic papyrology; Islamic-period archaeology for historians; Judeo-Arabic/Geniza documents; editing Arabic/Persian texts; Pahlavi (Middle Persian) language; Arabic palaeography; etc.

• The seminar should be sponsored by a university or college, and organized and headed by a faculty member there. MEM's role should be that of support and encouragement. The possibility of the seminar earning credit at the sponsoring institution, perhaps transferable to the students' home institutions, should be explored, although many students would not need credit.

• The primary audience for the seminar would be advanced graduate students and recent Ph.D.s, but any qualified scholar would be welcome. Depending on the topic of the seminar, appropriate prerequisite(s) would be demanded for participation (e.g., advanced knowledge of Arabic for a seminar on Arabic papyrology).

• The faculty for the seminar could include members of the host institution, visiting faculty, or guest scholars invited for particular presentations.

• Fellowship funding should be sought to cover students' expenses, and faculty should be adequately paid.

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These thoughts are preliminary. What do you think?

1. TOPICS: indicate (with "1", "2", etc.) the proposed seminar topics you would most like to see:
   Arabic Papyrology    Arabic for historians: the medieval Middle East
   Judeo-Arabic/Geniza   Editing Arabic Texts    Editing Persian Texts
   Pahlavi     Arabic Palaeography    Other Topics?

2. How many students or colleagues from your institution might attend a seminar?
   One per year          One every two or three years       More than one per year       None

3. Would the seminars be practical if there were only partial financial support, or no support, for students? If students had to pay tuition? Yes _____     No _____

4. Is the length (4-6 weeks) proposed for the seminar appropriate? Yes _____     No; how long? ______

5. Where should the seminar(s) be held? What institution(s) might host them? ____________________________

Please photocopy this questionnaire and return to:
Prof. Michael G. Morony
Department of History, UCLA
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024
POVERTY

I have become interested in the problem of poverty in the early Islamic world. I am currently working through hadith works and chronicles for information on this theme. I would appreciate hearing from anyone who encounters interesting information on this theme in sources of whatever kind.

-Michael Bonner, Department of Near Eastern Studies, The University of Michigan, 4076 Frieze Building, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, USA.

IBN WASIF’S SOURCES

One of the sources used by Alfonso el Sabio, King of Castile and Leon (1252-1284), in writing his General Estoria (History of the World) was the Kitab jawahir al-buhur of the Egyptian historian Ibn Wasif. We are interested in the way Alfonso used this source to describe Nebuchadnezzar’s supposed invasion of Egypt. Unfortunately, all manuscripts available to us which are cited by that name in GAL (S) are late abridgments, and do not contain the relevant passages.

We would very much like to hear from anyone who has further information about Ibn Wasif and his sources.

-John Hayes (Department of Near Eastern Studies) or Jerry Craddock (Department of Spanish & Portuguese), University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA.
MEM Scholar Profile

Sa‘id ‘Abd al-Fattah ‘Ashur
HISTORIAN, CAIRO UNIVERSITY

He acknowledged dean of medieval historians in Egypt, Sa‘id ‘Ashur was born in the al-Rawda district of Cairo in 1922, and has spent almost all of his life in Egypt. He began his primary education at age six at one of the eight public schools then in existence in Cairo. Upon completion of his secondary education in 1939, he entered the Department of History in the Faculty of Letters of Fu‘ad I University (now Cairo University), where he studied with the great historians of that time such as Muhammad Mustafa Ziyada, ‘Aziz Suryal ‘Atiyya, Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, and others, as well as European orientalists like Jouget and Dayton.

Dr. ‘Ashur obtained his License in 1944. While he was encouraged by some of his professors to continue his studies in modern history, Dr. ‘Ashur stayed with his first love, medieval history. In 1946, he was one of six students chosen to travel with their professors to assist in the establishment of the first university in Iraq. He obtained his Master’s degree in 1949, with a thesis entitled “Qubrus wa al-hurub al-salibiyya” (“Cyprus and the Crusades”) under the supervision of Dr. Muhammad Mustafa Ziyada, and later published as a monograph [Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1957]. He continued with his graduate studies and obtained his Doctorate in 1955 with a dissertation entitled “al-Hayat al ijtim’aa’iyya fi ‘asr al-salatin al-mamalik” (“Social Life in the Age of the Mamluk Sultans”). This was the nucleus of his now-classic study, al-Mu’itama’ al-misri fi ‘asr al-salatin al-mamalik [Cairo: Dar al-Nahda al-’Arabiyya, 1962, rev. ed. 1993].

In the same year, Dr. ‘Ashur was appointed Lecturer in Medieval History at Cairo University (formerly his alma mater Fu‘ad I). In 1956, he was among a number of professors who assisted in opening a branch of Cairo University in Khartoum, where he taught for one academic year. He was appointed Assistant Professor at Cairo University in 1960, Professor in 1967, and held the Chair of Medieval History after 1969. In addition to teaching in Egypt and the Sudan, Dr. ‘Ashur has taught as a visiting professor at the University of Riyadh, the University of Algiers, the Arab University of Beirut, the University of Kuwait, and also assisted in the establishment of Sultan Qabus University in Oman.

In the field of medieval history, Dr. ‘Ashur is known as a scholar who generally shuns traditional narrative history, preferring instead a synchronic, topical structure to his studies. Of his nineteen monographs, many deal with Mamluk history, including ‘Asr al-mamalik fi misr wa al-sham (“The Age of the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria”) [Cairo: Dar al-Nahda al-‘Arabiyya, 1965, rev. ed. 1994] and al-Zahir Baybars [Cairo: Mu‘assasat Sijill al-‘Arab, 1964]). He has also written extensively on Ayyubid history, notably his books al-Nasir Salah al-Din [Cairo: Mu‘assasat Sijill al-‘Arab, 1965] and al-Ayyubiyun wa al-mamalik fi misr wa al-sham (“The Ayyubids and Mamluks in Egypt and Syria”) [Cairo: Dar al-Nahda al-‘Arabiyya, 1970)].

A further topic of special interest to Professor ‘Ashur is relations between Europe and the Islamic world, on different aspects of which he has written several books: al-Madina al-islamiyya wa athrha fi al-hadara al-urabiyya (“The Islamic City and its Influence in European Civilization”) [Cairo: Dar al-Nahda al-‘Arabiyya, 1982]; al-Jami‘at al-urabiyya fi al-usur al-vusta (“European Universities in the Middle Ages”) [Cairo: Dar al-Nahda al-‘Arabiyya, 1959]; and al-Harakat al-salibiyya (“The Crusading Movement”) [Cairo: Anglo-Egyptian Library, 1963]). Dr. ‘Ashur has also edited a number of medieval Arabic texts, such as Ibn Dujmaq’s al-Jawhar al-thamin [Mecca: Jami‘at Umm al-Qura, 1982], and sections of al-Maqrizi’s Kitab al-suluk, al-Nuwayri’s Nihayat al-arab, and Ibn Aybak al-Dawwari’s Kanz al-durar. He is also the author of over forty articles and short pieces on a variety of topics.

In addition to his many other administrative duties and positions in university and scholarly organizations, Dr. ‘Ashur was unanimously elected as President of the Arab Historians’ Union in Cairo in December, 1991.

Dr. Sa‘id ‘Abd al-Fattah ‘Ashur can be reached at the Department of Medieval History, Cairo University, Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt.
# ANNUAL MEETINGS

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<td>Middle East Studies Association (1995 Meeting)</td>
<td>Dec. 6-10, 1995 Washington, D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Oriental Society</td>
<td>March 24-29, 1995 Salt Lake City, Utah</td>
<td>American Oriental Society Hatcher Graduate Library University of Michigan Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1205</td>
<td>(313)-747-4760 <a href="mailto:Jonathan_Rodgers@ub.cc.umich.edu">Jonathan_Rodgers@ub.cc.umich.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>American Oriental Society--Midwest Branch</td>
<td>Feb. 19-21, 1995 (tentative) Grand Rapids, Michigan</td>
<td>Mark W. Chavalas Dept. of History Univ. of Wisconsin-LaCrosse LaCrosse, WI 54061</td>
<td>(608)-782-8804</td>
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<td>American Historical Association (1995 Meeting)</td>
<td>Jan. 5-8, 1995 Cincinnati, Ohio</td>
<td>American Historical Assn. 400 A Street, S. E. Washington, DC 20003</td>
<td>(202)-544-2422</td>
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<td>American Historical Association (1996 Meeting)</td>
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<td>May 4-7, 1995 Kalamazoo, Michigan</td>
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(Paper Deadline: Past) | Ralph W. Mathiesen Dept. of History  
Univ. of South Carolina  
Columbia, S.C. 29208 | (803) 777-5195  
Fax: (803) 777-4494 |
| Byzantine Studies Conference (1995 Meeting)      | Fall, 1995 Location to be arranged  
(Paper Deadline: March 15, 1995) | see preceding                   | see preceding   |
Papers by invitation only | Dumbarton Oaks  
1703 32nd Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20007 | (202) 342-3245 |
Papers by invitation only | see preceding                   | see preceding   |
| Texas Association of Middle East Scholars (TAMES) | late February, 1995 Forth Worth, Texas  
(Paper Deadline: Nov. 15, 1994) | Deborah Littrell  
Ctr. for Middle Eastern Studies  
Univ. of Texas-Austin  
Austin, TX 78712 | (512)-471-3881  
FAX:(512)-471-7834 |

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MEM's new Secretary-Treasurer:
Matthew S. Gordon

At the MEM business meeting held in Research Triangle Park, N.C., in association with the 1993 annual conference of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, Matthew S. Gordon was selected as the Secretary-Treasurer of MEM, to replace retiring Secretary-Treasurer, Paul E. Chevedden, whose term has expired. Dr. Gordon will serve a three-year term as Secretary-Treasurer, running from January 1, 1994 to December 31, 1996. He recently received his Ph.D. from Columbia University.

Dr. Gordon's scholarship focuses on the 'Abbasid period. His doctoral dissertation, "The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: A History of the Turkish Community of Samarra (212-264 A.H./833-877 C.E.)," was awarded the 1993 Malcolm Kerr Dissertation Award in Humanities by the Middle East Studies Association. The Dissertation Award Committee found it "a thoughtful and detailed portrait of the Turks who inhabited the Abbasid capital of Samarra in the middle decades of the ninth century, showing how they varied in their origins, their mode of entry into the Islamic world, and their roles in the political life of the empire. By a careful reading of the Arabic sources. [Dr. Gordon] is able not only to put a human face on figures often imagined stereotypically as slave warriors and hired hands, but also to raise questions about our understanding of the slave military system in its early phases."

Dr. Gordon is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of Theology at Boston College, and a lecturer at the Rhode Island School of Design; in July, he will assume a position as Assistant Professor of History at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

MEM at Kalamazoo

The Medieval Institute Conference--May 5-8, 1994

MEM will sponsor two panels at the next Medieval Institute Conference, to be held May 5-8, 1994 at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The Social Context of Warfare and Armies in Medieval Islam I (Panel 236), will be held Saturday, May 7, 1994, at 10:00 A.M. in room 1320 Haworth. The panelists and their papers are: Michael Bonner (University of Michigan), "Aristocratic Violence and Holy War in Early Islam;" Paul E. Walker (University of Chicago), "Ideology and Armies: The Conflict between Religious Institutions and the Professional Military in the Fatimid State;" and John E. Woods (University of Chicago), "International Relations of the Il-Khanid Empire." The panel will be chaired by Paul E. Chevedden (Salem State College).

The Social Context of Warfare and Armies in Medieval Islam II (Panel 336) will be held Saturday, May 7, 1994, at 1:30 P.M., also in room 1320 Haworth. The panelists and their papers are: Maya Shatzmiller (University of Western Ontario), "Cultural Integration and Socialization of the Soldier in Medieval Islam;" Carl F. Petry (Northwestern University), "The Military Innovations of Qansuh al-Ghawri: Reform or Expediency;" and W. W. Clifford (The University of Chicago), "The Mamlukes: A Military Elite No Longer." The panel will be chaired by Paul E. Walker (University of Chicago).

MEMBER NEWS

Editors's Note: space allows us to print here news of only part of MEM's current membership. Those whose membership forms were received earliest appear here. The remainder will appear in the next issue.

Camilla P. Adang (Tel Aviv Univ.) recently completed her doctoral thesis for the University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands, entitled Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible. From Ibn Rabbah to Ibn Hazm; a revised version will be published
by E.J. Brill, Leiden. A second monograph, Islam frente al judaismo. La polémica de Ibn Hazm de Córdoba (Madrid: Aben Ezra Ediciones) is in press. She is now working on the position of dhimmis as reflected in Zahiri and Maliki legal works from al-Andalus.

Stephen M. Album has recently completed A Checklist of Popular Islamic Coins (published by the author, 1993).

Adel Allouche has written a book entitled Mamlik Economics: A Study and Translation of al-Maqrizi’s Ighathah, which should appear shortly from the Univ. of Utah Press. He is now preparing an annotated edition of Mirza Makhduhm’s Nawaqid.

Reuven Amitai-Preiss (Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem) recently published “Mamluk Perceptions of the Mongol-Frankish Rapprochement,” Mediterranean Historical Review 7 (1992). His book Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ikhshidid War, 1260-1281, will be published by Cambridge Univ. Press. He is working on an article on “Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition,” and has begun research on the social history of the early Mamluk officer class, particularly the Mansuriyya Regiment.

Said A. Arjomand (State Univ. of New York at Stony Brook) recently edited the volume The Political Dimensions of Religion (1993), and is now preparing a book for Oxford Univ. Press entitled Revolution, Millenarianism and Tradition in Islam.

Jere L. Bachrach (Univ. of Washington) has recently edited the forthcoming work The Conservation and Restoration of Islamic Monuments in Egypt and is currently researching Marwanid building activities.

Shahzad Bashir is currently researching his Yale University dissertation “From Mysticism to Messianic Revolt: The Life and Works of Muhammad Nurbakhsh (d. 1464).”

Michael L. Bates (American Numismatic Society) is preparing a work concerning the coinage of 1st/7th century Iran, and has a monograph, ‘Abbasid Sovereignty, 218-334/833-946 currently under review at the Univ. of Washington Press. His current research concerns mines and mints, and from October-November, 1994 he will be the Samir Shamma Visiting Lecturer in Islamic Numismatics at Oxford University.


Ibrahim Ali Beydoon (Lebanese Univ.) has recently published the work Al-Ansar wa ar-Rasul (Beirut, 1989) and is currently engaged in research for the monograph, Lebanon in Umayyad and Abbasid Eras (Paris: Hariri Center).


Ralph W. Brauer (Institute for Research on the Interrelation of Science and Culture) has recently completed The Camel and its Role in Shaping Mideastern Nomad Societies and is doing research on boundaries and frontiers in medieval Muslim geography.


Richard W. Bulliet (Columbia Univ.) has recently published Islam: The View from the Edge (Columbia UP, 1993).


Paul E. Chevedden (Salem State College) recently published “Artillery in Late Antiquity: Prelude to the Middle Ages,” in Ivy Corfis and Michael Wolfe (eds.), The Medieval City under Siege (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell & Brewer, 1994).

Vassilios Christides (Univ. of Athens) recently coordinated the Fifth International Congress on Greek, Oriental and African Studies (Delphi, June 1993) and organized Volume Five of Graeco-Arabica (1993). His most recent published work includes the contributions "Naft" and "Nuba" for The Encyclopaedia of Islam as well as

**Jamsheed K. Choksy** (Indiana Univ.) has recently completed *Conflict and Cooperation: Muslims and Zoroastrians in Medieval Iran* (Stanford UP, forthcoming) as well as the article “Women in Early Islamic Iran” for *Women in Iran from Medieval Times to the Islamic Republic*, ed. G. Nashat (forthcoming). He is currently preparing *An Introduction to Zoroastrianism* for publication by Yale University Press. He presently holds a 1993-4 NEH Fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton University and will assume his position as Assistant Professor at Indiana University in July, 1994.

**Winslow W. Clifford** (Univ. of Chicago) has recently published “Some Observations on the Course of Mamluk-Safavi Relations (1502-1516/908-922),” *Der Islam* 70 (1994). He will shortly complete his dissertation for the University of Chicago, entitled *Warrior Republic: The Structure of Politics and State Formation in Mamluk Syro-Egypt, 1250-1340*. He is preparing articles on ‘Ayn Jalut and on Kinship and the Structure of Politics in the Early Mamluk State, and will present a paper on “The Mamluk Elite: Military or Militaristic?” at the Medieval Institute Conference at Kalamazoo, Michigan in May.

**Eleanor A. Congdon** (Cambridge Univ.) is currently engaged in research for a dissertation on the economic conditions in the Levant between 1381 and 1421, from the perspective of Italian merchants. As part of her work she will be researching in the archives of Prato and Venice during 1994-5. At present she is preparing for publication an article entitled “Venetian Traders in Aleppo in the 1480s”.

**Michael A. Cook** (Princeton Univ.) has recently published the article “An Early Islamic Apocalyptic Chronicle,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 52 (1993) and is currently researching the concept of amr bi l-ma’raf for a monograph.

**Vincent J. Cornell** (Duke Univ.) has recently completed the monograph *The Way of Abu Madyan: Doctrinal and Poetic Works of Abu Madyan Shu’ayb ibn al-Husayn al-Ansari* (509/115-6/594/1198), (Cambridge UP, forthcoming). He is presently translating for publication Ahmad Ibn al-‘Arif’s Miftath as-Sa’ada wa Tahqiq Tariq al-Ifrada (E.J. Brill, forthcoming) and currently shares a two-year grant with Dr. Georges Sabagh (UCLA) for the project, “A Comparative Study of Islamic Reform Movements and Organizations in Indonesia and Malaysia.”

**Barbara E. Croken** completed her dissertation for Harvard University entitled *Zabid under the Rasulids of Yemen*. She is now researching the role of women in Rasulid Yemen.

**Hans Daiber** (Free University, Amsterdam) has recently edited *Naturwissenschaft bei den Arabern im 10. Jahrhundert n.Chr. Briefe des Abu l-Fadl ibn al-‘Amid* (gest.360/970) in *Adudaddaulla* (Leiden, 1993). He is also currently preparing a Bibliography of Islamic Philosophy and *Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, for publication by E.J. Brill.

**Ahmad S. Dallal** (Smith College) has recently completed *The Astronomical Work of Sadr al-Shari‘ah: An Islamic Response to Greek Astronomy*, to be published by E.J. Brill (1995).

**Elton L. Daniel** (Univ. of Hawaii) has recently authored the articles “Encyclopedia of Islam” and “Encyclopedia Iranica for Encyclopaedia Iranica.” He is currently working on an article entitled “The Merv Oasis and the ‘Abbasid Da’wa” as well as the monograph, *Transcaucasia under the Caliphs*.


**Andrew S. Ehrenkreutz** (Univ. of Melbourne) has recently completed the article “Crusader Imitation Dinars—Once Again,” for *Itinéraires d’Orient. Hommages à Claude Cahen, Res Orientalies VI* (forthcoming). He also presented the paper “The Role of Crusaders’ Imitation Dinars in the Reemergence of European Gold Coinage” at the February, 1994 conference of Australasian Historians of Medieval and Early Modern Europe.


**Ghida G. El-Osman** (Univ. of Chicago) continues her work in Islamic Archaeology at the University of Chicago, and is presently preparing a paper concerning the Karramiyya for presentation at the 1994 Middle East Studies Association conference. In the summer of 1994 she will travel to Jordan to excavate a Byzantine site at Aqaba.

**Muhammad al-Faruque** recently completed his doctoral dissertation for the Univ. of Toronto, entitled *Some Aspects of Economic History of Iraq during the early 4th/10th century (295-334/908-945): The role of trade in the economy*. He is now engaged in research on “The leniency of Hanafi law towards merchants: the case of mudaraba.”

**Maribel Fierro** (Consejo Superior de Investigacion Científicas, Madrid) has recently published the articles “Al-Asfar” in *Studia Islamica* 77 (1993) and “Religious Beliefs and Practices in al-Andalus in the 3rd/9th Century” in *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 66 (1993). She is now preparing for publication *Historia de los
Autors y Transrises Andalusies. In addition, she is currently researching the religious beliefs and practices of al-Andalus as well as its judicial system.

Michael Fishbein (UCLA) has recently translated and edited The History of Al-Tabari both vol. XXI: The Victory of the Marwändis (SUNY Press, 1990) and vol. XXXI: The War Between Brothers (SUNY Press, 1992). For the same series he is currently preparing vol. VIII: The Victory of Islam - Muhammad at Medina (SUNY Press, 1995).

Madeleine deG. Fletcher (Tufts Univ.) has recently composed the article “The Almohad Creed: A Missing Link in the History of Western Theology” for The Muslim World as well as “Al-Andalus and North Africa in Almohad Ideology” for The Legacy of Muslim Spain (E.J. Brill, 1992). She is currently preparing a monograph entitled Western Islam: The Almohad Renaissance of the Twelfth Century in Spain and the Maghrib.

Clive Foss (Univ. of Massachusetts, Boston) has recently completed “The Near East in Transition: A Review Article,” Journal of Roman Archaeology (forthcoming), which surveys recent works on Syria and the Negev, 6th-8th centuries C.E. He is currently engaged in research for a monograph on City and Country in Syria, 550-750, based largely on archaeological evidence.

Sam I. Gellens is currently researching the history of medieval Yemen’s intellectual elites.

Matthew S. Gordon (Boston College) has completed his Columbia University dissertation, “The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: A History of the Turkish Community of Samarra (218-264/833-877)” and is currently revising it for publication.

Oleg Grabar (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton Univ.) has recently published the work The Mediation of Ornament (Princeton UP, 1992) and has completed the forthcoming Jerusalem 600-1100. His current research concerns the reconstruction of Islamic Jerusalem, using computer imaging.


Sebastian E. Günther (Institut für Orientalistik, Halle) has recently completed the article “Maqātil-literature in Medieval Islam” for the Journal of Arabic Literature (forthcoming, 1993). He is presently researching Hadith literature in early Islam as well as the medieval system of transmission.

Ulrich W. Haarmann (Univ. of Kiel) has recently published Das Pyramidenbuch des Abû Ga’far al-Idrîsî (1991) and completed Abû Hâmid al-Qudîs Traktat über die Segnungen die die Türen dem Lande Ägypten beschert haben (Bibliotheca Islamica, forthcoming). He is currently working on separate monographs concerning Mamluk sons, medieval Muslim attitudes towards Ancient Egypt, and the Histoire de Mentalité of the Sahara in the 19th century.

Jessica Rachel Hallett continues work on her Oxford D. Phil. dissertation entitled: “Early Islamic Basra: A Port of the Sea, an Emporium of the Land, and a Place of Manufacture.” In February, 1994 she traveled to Fuzhou, P.R.C. both to participate in a conference concerning the Islamic contribution to the Maritime Silk Route as well as to join in a three week expedition to South Chinese port sites.


Axel Havemann (Freie Univ. Berlin) has recently completed the entries “Ra’is” and “Nakib al-ashrâf” for the new edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam. He is researching a planned monograph on historiography in Lebanon (19th-20th centuries).

Stefan Heidemann (Free University, Berlin) has recently completed Das aleppinéer Kalifat (A.D. 1261). Vom Ende des Kalifates in Bagdad üppre alleko zu den Restaurationen in Kairo (E.J. Brill, forthcoming). His present research concerns money circulation in the ‘Abbásid city of al-Raqa, and he is also involved in preparing for publication the German Archeological Institute’s excavation field reports of the site.

Wolfhart P. Heinrichs (Harvard Univ.) has recently published “The Modern Assyrians - Name and Nation” in Festschrift K. Tsereteli (Torino, 1993). He also has completed for publication the forthcoming articles: “Takhyil and Its Traditions” for Festschrift A. Schimmel (Bern) and “Mushin b. al-Walid and badi” for Festschrift E. Wagner. He is currently composing a monograph concerning the use of metaphor in Classical Arabic culture.

R. Stephen Humphreys (UCSB) has recently completed “The Odd Couple: Tabari and Sayf ibn ‘Umar” for the forthcoming Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam as well as the article “Women as Patrons of Religious Architecture in Ayyubid Damascus” for Mugarnas, vol. II (forthcoming). He is presently composing a monograph concerning the evolution of Arab-Muslim society in Damascus and Aleppo during the period 635-1260.

Mahmood A. Ibrahim (California State Polytechnic Univ.) recently completed “The Inquisition as Social Policy,” Arab Studies Quarterly (forthcoming). He is engaged in research for a monograph ten-

**Peter Jeffery** (Princeton Univ.) is currently researching liturgical chant in the Eastern Churches as well as Christian liturgical music in Jerusalem prior to the Crusades.

**Wadad A. Kadi (al-Qadi)** (Univ. of Chicago) recently published "The Earliest Nabiya and the Paradigmatic Nawabit," *Studia Islamica* 78 (1993). She is editing volume 6 of al-Baladhi’s *Ansab al-ashrab* and is preparing a book on early Islamic state ideology. She was awarded the King Faisal International Prize for Arabic Literature (Ancient Prose) for 1994.

**Walter E. Kaegi** (Univ. of Chicago) has recently published "Byzantine Military Logistics" in *Feeding Mars*, ed. John Lynn (Westview Press, 1993) as well as the articles "The Controversy About Bureaucratic and Military Fractions" and "Sklerosis and Flexibility," both in *Byzantinische Forschungen*, vol. 19 (1993). His current research interests include the variety of interactions between Byzantium and Islam, and Byzantine-Persian warfare.

**H. Edmund Lagro** (Netherlands Historical Archaeological Institute) has recently published in the newsletter of the Dept. of Pottery Technology, Univ. of Leiden (1992), the article "Syrup Jars and Sugar Pots: A Preliminary Study of a Class of Medieval Industrial Pottery from Tell Abu Sarbot." He continues to be involved in the publication of the medieval pottery from Tell Abu Sarbot in Jordan.

**William O. Lancaster** (British Institute of Archaeology and History, Amman) has recently published "Tribal Formations in the Arabian Peninsula," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 3 (1992); "Graves and Funerary Monuments of the Ahl al-Gebel, Jordan," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 3 (1993); and "Tribal Formations and the Conceptual Infrastructure," *Man* (forthcoming). He is engaged in fieldwork on land use and water storage in the eastern Harra (Hamad) of Jordan, and on ethnoarchaeology of Khirbet Faris (Kerak project).

**Ella Landau-Tasseron** (Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem) recently completed a translation and annotation of al-Tabar’s *Dhayl al-mudhawayyil*.

**Katherine Howe Lang** continues work on her University of Chicago dissertation "Awa’il in Early Arabic Historiography: First Inventions in Early Islamic History." She will conduct further research in Yemen in June-July, 1994 courtesy the American Institute for Yemeni Studies.

**Gary L. Leiser** has recently translated and edited *The Veltula River: The Memoirs of a Turkish Prisoner of War in Czarist Russia 1916-18*, (Univ. of Florida Press, forthcoming) as well as four works by M.F. Köprüli: *Origins of the Ottoman Empire* (SUNY Press, 1992), *The Seljuks of Anatolia* (Univ. of Utah Press, 1992), *Islam in Anatolia after the Turkish Invasion* (Univ. of Utah Press, 1993) and some observations on the Influence of Byzantine Institutions on Ottoman Institutions* (Turkish Historical Society Press, forthcoming). He has also composed the forthcoming article "Travellers’ Accounts of Mohair Production in Ankara from the Fifteenth through the Nineteenth Century" for the *Textile Museum Journal*, as well as co-authored with Toni Cross the monograph *A Brief History of Anarka* (Black Bear Press, forthcoming). At present, he and Noury al-Khaled are collaborating to translate and edit al-Sulaimi’s *Imithan al-alibba’ il kaffatal-atibba’,* the oldest known Islamic medical examination.


**Mubsin S. Mahdi** (Harvard Univ.) recently completed *The Thousand and One Nights*, vol. 3 (E.J. Brill). He is working on *Al-Farabi and the Classical Tradition*.


**Julie S. Meisami** (Univ. of Oxford) is the editor of *Edebiyat: the Journal of Middle Eastern Literatures*. She is working on *Structure and Meaning in Arabo-Persian Lyric Poetry and Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*.

**Christopher Melchert** (Southwest Missouri State Univ.) is working on "The Opponents of Ahmad Ibn Hanbel," "Imamiyah Between Rationalism and Traditionalism," "The Shafi‘i School of Law and Theology," and "Dawud al-Zahiri, Semi-Rationalist."

**John L. Meloy** (Univ. of Chicago) is working on his Ph.D. dissertation on "Mamluk Commercial Policy and Red Se Merchants, 1422-1517," as well as an article on "Copper Coinage of Late Mamluk Cairo, 1468-1517."

**Vera B. Moreen** (Swarthmore College) is still working on the *Anthology of Judeo-Persian Literature* for Yale Univ. Press.

**Michael G. Morony** (UCLA) recently published "Commerce in Early Islamic Iraq," *Asien Afrika Latinamerika* 20 (1993). He is currently preparing a monograph on early Islamic economic history.

**John A. Nawas** (Univ. of Utrecht, The Netherlands) recently completed his dissertation "Al-Ma‘mun: Mihna and Caliphate," as well as articles on "Theoretical Underpinnings of the Constuct of Absolutism: A Contribution to the Comparative Study of History," *Middle East Research Associated Occasional Paper* no. 19, and "Towards fresh directions in historical research: an experiment in methodology using the putative ‘absolutism’ of Harun al-
Rashid as a test case," Der Islam 70: 1-51.


Norman D. Nicol has worked for a number of years on a corpus of Fatimid coinage and will complete his research this summer at the British Museum and the Asmolean Museum, Oxford. He hopes to have his research ready for press in two years’ time.


Linda S. Northrup (Univ. of Toronto) is preparing a book length history of Qalawun (Mamluk Sultan) and his times. Also forthcoming in Arabic, “Life in Medieval Jerusalem Based on the Documents of al-Haram al-Sharif” in Aspects of Life in Palestine from the 11th to the End of the 13th Centuries, eds. H. Dajani-Shakeel and B. Dajani (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies). She is currently working on rural landholding patterns in the early Mamluk period based on documents from the Cairo archives.

Lisa R. Perfetti (Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) completed an article entitled “The Dialogue of Laughter: Bakhtin’s Theory of Carnival and The Charroi de Nimes,” Olifant (Fall 1992). She is exploring various traditions in medieval Arabic literature which have been seen as parodies of other literary genres in hopes of adding a chapter to her dissertation on the comic literature of medieval Europe.

Carl F. Petry (Northwestern Univ.) published Twilight of Majesty: The Reigns of the Mamluk Sultans al-Qaysibay and Qansuh al-Ghawri in Egypt (U of Washington, 1993) and Protectors or Praxitians: The Last Mamluk Sultans and the waning of Egypt as a Great Power (SUNY, forthcoming 1994). He made research trips to Cairo in 1985 and Istanbul in 1988. He is working on an analysis of the waqf institution under the Mamluks as an aspect of estate preservation. He is also the volume editor for Volume 1 of the Cambridge History of Egypt, 640-1517, which is projected to appear in late 1996.

Beth E. Phillips (Univ. of Utah) is preparing “Inquiry into the Effect of Iqa’ on Power Structures of Ruling Mamluk Households - Circassian Sultanate, Egypt 1382-1517.”

Lawrence G. Potter (Tufis Univ.) recently completed “Sufis and Sultans in Post-Mongol Iran,” Iranian Studies, forthcoming, as well as “Islam and Politics: Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia,” Great Discoveries 1994. He is preparing an article on the demographic history of Herat.


Antonie D. van Reenen (Netherlands Institute for Scientific Research) continues work on his dissertation, “The Prohibition against Making Images; Early Islamic Traditions as Literature and as a Historical Source of Early Islam”.


Chase F. Robinson (Oxford Univ.) has completed several articles on the social history of Northern Mesopotamia in the 7th-9th centuries and is preparing a monograph on the historiography of early Islamic Northern Mesopotamia.

Everett K. Rowson (Univ. of Pennsylvania) translated “Memories of a Street Tough” in Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East, ed. D.L. Bowen & E.A. Early (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1993), 38-46. He is preparing an edition and translation of al-`Ubi‘i’s al-Yamani, and an article, “Homosexuality in Medieval Arabic Legal and Literary Texts”.

Abdelhamid I. Sabra (Harvard Univ.) is preparing an edition and translation of Ibn al-Haytham’s Optics. He continues his research on aspects of the history of Arabic science in the context of Islamic civilization.

Mamoun Sakkal (Univ. of Washington) has recently completed a booklet in Arabic and English, “Principles of Square Kufic Design”, to be submitted to a publisher for review.

Paula Sanders (Rice Univ.) published Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo (SUNY, 1994) and A Mediterranean Society, vol VI (with S.D. Goitein) (U of Calif., 1993). She continues research.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22.
The Petra Church Project, 1992-1993

by

Robert Schick, Zbigniew T. Fiema, and Khairieh 'Amr

Between May 1992 and March 1993 excavations were conducted at a Byzantine church in Petra, Jordan. The project was funded by a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), organized by the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman, and supported by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan. Work continued on the consolidation of the mosaic floor through the summer of 1993, and excavations resumed in the fall of 1993 to be followed by the construction of a permanent shelter over the church. The site should be open to the public in late 1994.

The director of the project, Dr. Kenneth W. Russell, died tragically in May 1992, just before the excavation was to begin. Dr. Pierre Bikai, the director of ACOR, then became the overall project director, while Drs. Zbigniew Fiema and Robert Schick of ACOR, and Dr. Khairieh 'Amr of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan co-directed the work in the field.

The Church

The church is located in the heart of Petra on the north ridge above the Roman road. The building is a standard basilica with three aisles divided by two east-west rows of eight columns. At the east end of the north and south aisles are semicircular apses, while the nave ends in an elevated bema and a larger semicircular apse. The church building proper is about 25 meters long and 16 meters wide. An atrium, only partially excavated, is to the west of the church, and a room, probably three-stories high, at the southwest corner of the atrium was also excavated.

Three doors lead into the church from the atrium. The door into the nave is decorated with finely carved door jambs, reused from an earlier building. Two doors in the north wall of the church, and a third door in the northeast corner of the atrium, lead to a series of rooms adjoining the church on the north.

The bema is raised two steps above the aisles and nave and projects westward into the nave as far as the second columns from the east. The bema is a second-phase feature, while a later remodelling of the central apse involved the addition of four rows of a synthonron and a new higher marble pavement. On the northwest corner of the bema are the remains of the ambo.

The atrium has the standard form of an open-air courtyard with a flagstone pavement, surrounded on all sides by a portico. The southwest room adjoining the atrium reveals evidence for different phases of building. In later phases, the upper courses of the walls were rebuilt, the door in its north wall was blocked, and two column drums were brought in for use as tables in conjunction with benches along the north and east walls.

Almost all the soil excavated from the church was sifted, so near complete recovery of a wide variety of objects was achieved. Particularly abundant were the structural elements of the building, such as brackets, door hinges, and sockets, and roof nails, all of which provide an unusually clear picture of the doors and other constructional details. Thousands of pieces of marble from chancel screen panels and posts, columns and altar tables were recovered, including the complete furnishings of the south apse, which have been restored and returned to their original positions. Of special interest is a large footed marble basin with two lion-shaped handles. Sherds of 21 large storage vessels were found along the south wall of the church.

The church suffered a major fire shortly after it was abandoned. Both aisles were strewn with burnt wooden beams and planks from the ceiling and clerestory. In those layers iron nails and ceramic roof tiles were abundant. A cooking/food processing and storage installation in the southwest corner of the atrium points to later occupation.

Although no dedicatory inscriptions were found, and the coins and ceramics provide only very general dating for the church, it may have been constructed in the later fifth century, and continued in use throughout the first half of the sixth century. The initial structural collapse may have been due to an earthquake, and the
one in 551 A.D. seems a likely candidate. The later occupation may have continued into the seventh century, or perhaps early eighth century A.D.

The Mosaics

The major art historical find of the church is the mosaic floors in the north and south aisles. The mosaic in the north aisle consists of rows of circular medallions formed by vine scrolls. The central vertical row of medallions depicts objects such as amphorae, vases, goblets, candle sticks, baskets, etc. The rows on either side contain flanking pairs of birds, other animals, and people. At the western end two peacocks flank an amphora from which the vine scrolls emanate. The background outside the medallions is yellow, while white marble cubes are used within the medallions; the contrast in color is particularly pleasing.

The south aisle has a central row of rectangular medallions with images of people, some of which are identified by short Greek inscriptions as personifications of the four seasons, Ocean, Earth, and Wisdom. Flanking the central row are square and circular medallions depicting fish and other animals. Glass cubes are liberally used in the floor, especially for details.

The nave, bema, and central apse were paved with an opus sectile pavement of marble and purple sandstone, which was mostly robbed out.

The two east-west rows of arches and the walls of the apse semidomes were decorated with mosaics. Many small fragments survived the structural collapse of the church. Parts of the border design and a portion of a human face can be ascertained. The wall mosaic tesserae were mostly glass, but small marble and other stone tesserae were used as well.

Conclusions

Petra was the capital of the Byzantine province of Third Palestine and as such was also the see of the metropolitan bishop of the province; bishops are attested from the early fourth through the late sixth centuries. The church, one of only three churches identified so far in Petra, may have been the cathedral of the city, but that remains unconfirmed. It certainly was one of the more elaborately decorated churches of the province.

The Petra church project has provided some information about the state of urbanism in Petra in the later Byzantine period. The excavation revealed that the city, although reduced in size, was still able to support a finely decorated church in the sixth century, and that there was at least limited occupation of Petra around the time of the Islamic conquest and beyond.

Commission on the History of Science and Technology in Islamic Civilization (CHISTIC)

The Commission on the History of Science and Technology in Islamic Civilization was founded at the XVIIIth International Congress on History and Science (Hamburg / Munich, 1989). Its main purpose is to give formal status to a group of scholars who work on the history of Islamic sciences within the International Union of the History of Philosophy and Science. The commission shall publish a newsletter annually, which will include information on activities in the field occurring during the preceding year (such as seminars, conferences, meetings; new organizations, networks, groups; journals, newsletters, published books; teaching, defended theses) as well as forthcoming activities (planned seminars, conferences, meetings; work in progress such as theses and other research projects). The newsletter will introduce the various activities briefly by summarizing the subject, goals or contents (maximum length, 10 lines). The languages of the newsletter are English and French; information must be sent in one of these two languages. Every colleague working in the field is requested to participate actively in the preparation of the newsletter and the biographical survey by sending his or her information to the secretary of the commission. Secretary of CHISTIC for 1994 is Dr. Sonja Brentjes, Institute for Advanced Study, Mathematical School, Princeton, NJ 08540 U.S.A., e-mail: Sonja@math.ias.edu. For support of national activities by the commission please contact the President or the Vice-President: President is Prof. S.M.R. Ansari, Aligarh Muslim University, Dept. of Physics, Aligarh 202002, India; tel. 0571-29001, telex 564 230 AMU IN; Vice-President is Prof. E. Ihsanoglu, TBTK, P.O. Box 234, 80692 Besiktas, Istanbul, Turkey, fax 0090-212-2584365.
for a book on Fatimid historiography from medieval to modern times.


Stuart Sears has recently completed the articles, "A Late Umayyad Hoard from Nippur," The Numismatic Chronicle (forthcoming 1994), and "The Coins of ‘Muhammad’ and Some Related Coins," Yarmouk Numismatics, (forthcoming). He presented a paper entitled, "The Anomalous and Barbarous Sasanian Style Coinage of Sjistan" at a symposium entitled, "Coinage and Monetary Circulation during the pre-Islamic/ Islamic Transition Period," at the Forschungsstelle für islamische Numismatik, Tübingen, Germany, 20-22 September, 1993. This summer, he plans to continue research for his Univ. of Chicago Ph.D. dissertation, "A Monetary History of Iraq and Iran, 590-720 CE," at the British and Ashmolean Museums, where he will examine late Sasanian and early Islamic coin collections.

Thomas A. Sinclair (Univ. of Cyprus) completed his Ph.D. dissertation, "The Government of the Lake Van Region under the Kara Koyunlu" at Birmingham Univ. in 1993, and submitted an article, "The Diar Bakr," for the Encyclopædia Iranica. He is preparing a three-part article, "The Site of Tigranocerta," which contains a history of the city of Arzan in Diyar Bakr for submission to Revue des Études Arméniennes.

Maria Eva Subtelny (Univ. of Toronto) published "A Medieval Persian Agricultural Manual in Context: The Irshad al-zira’a in Late Timurid and Early Safavid Khorasan," Studia Iranica 22 (1993). She has completed "The Cult of ‘Abdullah Ansari under the Timurids," in God is Beautiful and He Loves Beauty, ed. A. Giese & J.C. Bürgel (Bern, forthcoming), and "The Symbiosis of Turk and Tajik in Central Asia," in Contemporary Central Asia in Historical Perspective, ed. B. Manz & A. Varcroux (Boulder, forthcoming). She spent the summer of 1993 researching Timurid coins at the Forschungsstelle für islamische Numismatik, Tübingen, Germany. She delivered lectures at Kyoto Univ. and Toyo Bunku, Japan in August and September of 1993. She continues research for a monograph on landholding and waqf under the Timurids and is also working on an article under review on a family of Timurid landscape architects and agronomists.


William F. Tucker (Univ. of Arkansas) wrote the introduction to Robert Olsen’s The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism, 1880-1925 (Austin, 1991), and is currently conducting research for a monograph, Mahdis and Millennials: Shi’ite Extremists in Iraq and a catalogue of natural disasters in the Middle East, 600-1500.


Paul E. Walker (Univ. of Michigan) has recently completed the monographs, Early Philosophical Shiism (Cambridge, 1993), The Wellsprings of Wisdom (Utah, forthcoming summer 1994) and the article, "Isma’i’i Da’wa in the Reign of the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim," JARCE 30 (1993). He continues his research for a monographic edition and study, A New Islamic Heresiography: The Bab al-Shaytan from the Kitab al-Shajara.

Seth Ward (Univ. of Denver) has recently completed a work on churches and synagogues in Islamic law, and will soon begin work on Jews and Judaism in Islamic legal literature.

Donald S. Whitcomb (Univ. of Chicago) recently conducted archaeological excavations focused on the early Islamic period in Aqaba, Jordan.

Caroline H. Williams (College of William & Mary) published Islamic Monuments in Cairo (Cairo, 1993). She has conducted research in northern Syria during the summers of 1992 and 1993 and plans to return this summer. She is researching the role of women as artistic patrons in medieval Islam.

John A. Williams (College of William & Mary) published The World of Islam (Austin, 1994). He has conducted research in northern Syria during the summers of 1992 and 1993 and plans to return this summer. He continues work on his monograph, History of Muslim Political Theory.

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.


The economic history of the medieval Islamic caliphate continues to languish in the shadow of other areas, political and religious. The scarce and fragmented nature of the material for economic history, combined with the difficulty of analyzing the meaning of price and salary figures or tax revenue fluctuations are only some of the obstacles slowing down research. This book does not attempt a commentary on the business cycle of the caliphal economy or the wisdom of supply-side economics under Harun al-Rashid — fortunately. It does enough by describing the various expenditures of the caliphate (personal and institutional). Al-Zahrani organizes all the numerical information in chronological charts according to headings inspired by the sources. The headings include: Abbasid dispensations and gifts to members of the royal household, Banu Hashim, Banu Talib, poets, fujaha, judges, physicians, entertainers, viziers, commanders, and concubines. In addition, the author presents the figures of Abbasid expenditures in specific sectors such as: ige, agriculture, education, construction, and restoration of al-haramayn. Although in a separate introductory chapter the author makes some observations on the definition of expenditure, Abbasid surplus, the organization of departments (divans) and the relation between center and province, it is clear that his primary intention was to allow the reader to formulate his or her own judgement on these figures. Compiled from a massive body of medieval sources, and hard-to-come by articles from Arabic periodicals, this work represents a valuable reference tool that will be indispensable for historians of the early and middle Abbasid period.

-Ihsan El-Hibri


The present work, written in the context of the recently-held Bilad al-Sham Conference on the Abbasid period, is one of the two monographs in existence devoted to Abbasid Syria as a whole, the other being Ahmad Isma’il ‘Ali’s work of the same title, published in Damascus in 1983 [reviewed in UW 5.1: 20-21]. Readers will find ‘Abbas’s work far superior to that of ‘Ali, flourishing in areas where the latter seemed lacking. This should not surprise us, coming as it does from one of the field’s leading senior scholars.

‘Abbas’s work is divided into four books. Book 1 deals with the submission and supposed devastation of al-Sham and al-Jazira by the Abbasids following their seizure of power in 132/749, and analyzes briefly the revolt of ‘Abd Allah al-‘Ali after the death of al-Saffah. Book 2 concerns itself with military matters: Kharjiji rebellions in al-Jazira, the seemingly impervious chain of uprisings in al-Sham, and frontier warfare with the Byzantine Empire. Book 3 turns to administrative and social life, discussing the Umayyad heritage in general, land-use, administration, building programs, population, economy and society. Book 4, on cultural life, completes the work discussing some of the intellectual trends and men-of-letters of the time. A series of very useful appendices follows.

There are some aspects of the work to be wary of: the assumption that events in al-Sham following the revolution of 132/749 were analogous to events in al-Jazira, and the use of later geographers like al-Maqdisi and Ibn Hawqal for economic information, for example. And one wishes that more of the results presented by the other participants in the Conference could have been integrated into this volume as well: recent archaeological and numismatic discoveries, for example, might have proven very illuminating.

However, except for points such as these, students of the period will find this a much-welcome addition to the literature on Syria and the Abbasids. Ihsan ‘Abbas brings us valuable information from newly-exploited sources such as Ibn ‘Asakir, and even alerts us to some altogether new sources: Appendix 1 is a compilation of the remains of the jurist al-Awza’i’s letters, edited and presented together for the first time. Unlike his predecessor ‘Ali, Prof. ‘Abbas has made use of some translated non-Arabic sources, such as Theophanes Confessor and pilgrims’ accounts, and he has utilized some modern secondary literature as well. He is thus able to present a multi-faceted, synthetic history of the Abbasid province of al-Sham, rather than merely a chain of events and personalities. In the end, Prof. ‘Abbas’s own insights and unassailable knowledge of the Arabic sources leave previous studies of this obscure period far behind and advance our understanding of it significantly.

-Paul M. Cobb


As the title of this book suggests, it is both a biography of Ibn Rushd al-Jadd
(Abu I-Walid Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Rushd, d. 520/1126), and an analysis of one of his most important legal treatises, al-Mugaddimât which is a commentary on the Mudawwana of Malik. At the same time, however, it is also a history of the Banu Rushd. Thus, the author provides us with biographies of Ibn Rushd's father, son, and grandson, the celebrated Averroes. (The latter is known in Arabic sources as Ibn Rushd al-Hafid to distinguish him from his grandfather, Ibn Rushd al-Jadd). In the course of these biographies, the author provides us with a synopsis of their educational background, their teachers, their students, their books, and their professional career as members of the Cordovan legal class during first the period of the Party Kings, then the Murabitun (Almoravids), and finally the Muwahhidun (Almohads).

Of course, the bulk of the history of the Banu Rushd is devoted to the life and accomplishments of Ibn Rushd the Grandfather. We are given a detailed account of Ibn Rushd's training, teaching, and writing. The author was concerned to establish the following points about Ibn Rushd's intellectual training: (1) although many of his biographers said that he was more given to interpretation than to transmission (kanat al-diraya aghlab alayhi min al-riwaya), Ibn Rushd was an accomplished muhaddith as well; and (2) he was not only aware of the science of kalam, but was well trained in it as well, and defended Ashârî arisim against traditionalist critics. The author also has a chapter discussing Ibn Rushd's role as a politician in his native city of Cordova, and how he intervened to protect the populace against reprisals for rioting after the Muwahhidun had taken control of Cordova from the Murabitun. Finally, the author establishes that Ibn Rushd was more than just the pre-eminent jurist of Cordova or Andalusia; rather, in his lifetime he was the pre-eminent jurist of the entire Maliki school, in North Africa as well as Spain.

Al-Talîlî's analysis of the book al-Mugaddimât, however, is a bit disappointing. Although he provides a comparison between the styles of Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani's Mukhtasar of the Mudawwana, and the Muqaddimât, it is not a very profound analysis. However, the author does us an invaluable service by providing a bibliography of the commentaries and abridgements written on the Mudawwana. This will be very useful to anyone interested in the development of the Malikî positive law. In the course of this presentation, he often gives interesting information regarding the development and the institutionalization of the Maliki school in the Maghrib culled from the biographical sources of the Maliki school. The most important conclusion of his analysis, however, is that the published version of the Muqaddimât is hopelessly inadequate. Indeed, he has shown that more than half of the book is missing from the published editions. (The first edition is published along with the al-Mudawwana al-Kubra, 4 vols., Cairo: al-Matba'a al-Khayriyya, 1324. The second edition appeared in 2 vols., Cairo: Matba'at al-Sa'ada, 1325). He also points out many errors in the published text.

This book, then, is a good account of the historical and political context within which 6th century Malikiism flourished. It also provides a good history of the Maliki school up to the 6th century, something which all students of Islamic law in particular will find helpful.

Mohammad Fadel


As the name suggests, this book grew out of an undergraduate course given by the author to students of fiqh and usul al-fiqh (jurisprudence and fundamentals of jurisprudence) in their first year at Dar al-Hadith al-Hasaniyya. It is not surprising, then, that it is somewhat simplified. Nevertheless, it is a very useful introduction to the history of the Maliki school in the Maghrib. Needless to say, the book has nothing to say about Malikis in Egypt or in 'Iraq.

The book consists of 12 chapters, i.e. lectures. The first chapter is an attempt to define the concept of madhab or "law school" in Islamic law, and a short biogra-

phy of Imam Malik. The second chapter is an attempt to explain the popularity of the Maliki school in North Africa. The third chapter is a discussion of the oppression that Malikis suffered at the hands of rulers, e.g. the Aghlabids, the Fatimids, the Muwahhidun, and other jurists, e.g. the Hanafis. This is obviously an attempt to counter Ibn Hazm's charge that the Maliki school spread only because of its closeness to the state. The fourth chapter is a clear and valuable discussion of the methods and the principles of the Maliki school. He also gives a very valuable discussion of the difference between asl and qa'id. The fifth chapter is a history of usul al-fiqh in the Maghrib. The sixth chapter considers the role of the mufti in the exposition of Islamic law, and the types of opinions from which the mufti can legitimately use in issuing a response to a question. The seventh chapter gives a good history of the science of document writing "ilm al-tawthiq" and the eighth regards the rise of the epitome, the mukhtasar, or short compendium, as a genre of legal writing in the Maliki school. While it is a useful presentation, the author is obviously biased against mukhtasars and finds in them nothing useful, considering them to represent the "dark ages" of Maliki law. The ninth chapter is devoted to a discussion of the important role of circumstantial evidence (qara'în) in the application of Maliki law. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth chapters each deal with important works in Maliki jurisprudence: the Muwatta', the Mudawwana, and the Risala of Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani.

The reader will find especially useful the bibliographies provided by the author at the end of Chapters 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, and 12. While many of the titles provided by the author are probably lost, many more exist in manuscript. Indeed, the author has provided many citations to the libraries in which manuscripts for the mentioned works exist.

In general, anyone interested in the Maliki school in the Maghrib will find this book to be an invaluable introduction to the topic. However, the author is a bit Malikicentric, especially when comparing the virtues and accomplishments of the Malikis to other legal schools. A good example of
this occurs in his discussion of the role of qawa'id (sing. qa'id) or "principles" of legal deduction in Maliki jurisprudence, where the author states, "As for the Maliki school, there is no doubt that of all these schools, it has the most principles. Therefore, one should be cautious of his remarks made in any comparative context."
-Muhammed Fadel


Al-Mariyya ("The Lookout"), today Almeria, is a strategic port city in the southeastern corner of the Iberian Peninsula. It was founded by the caliph 'Abd al-Rahman III in 955, rivaling its neighboring city Bajana (Pechina). The latter had been founded by 'Abd al-Rahman II, but it all but disappeared after the establishment of al-Mariyya. The present work deals with the history of al-Mariyya from its foundation until the Almoravid invasion in 1091.

We may classify this work along with those which deal with local history. However, the treatment here goes well beyond mere local history, since al-Mariyya played an important role in the history of al-Andalus as a whole. It also served the Mediterranean basin as a key trading port and naval base. In recent years, the subject of trade and maritime power in the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages finally has received from scholars the attention it deserves; for example, Dr. J. Lirola's Poder naval en el Mediterraneo (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1993). Studies devoted to Islamic cities are more frequent, particularly for the cities of al-Andalus, and yet still not sufficient. Take, for example, Dr. L. Torres Balbas "Almeria Islamica," Al-Andalus 22 (1957), or Dr. J. Zenon's Topografia de Cordoba almohade (Madrid: CSIC, 1990).

In this present work, Abu I-Fadel gives an account of the Arabic sources upon which he based his study of al-Mariyya—historical, geographical, adab collections, biographical dictionaries, and travel books. None of these sources are new to us, but the author explores them fully and with good results.

The author divides his work into two parts: the first historical, the second cultural. The first part deals with the history of the city from its foundation until the Almoravid invasion in 1091. The introduction discusses the origins of the city, mentioning its Phoenician and Roman origins as well as the history of Bajana (Pechina). Then the author turns to the chronicle of al-Mariyya under the viziers Jayran and the Banu Sumadih, who held power until they were deposed by the Almoravids the year they invaded. This chronicle presents a dense account of facts and personalities, and is very detailed and complete. It enriches our knowledge of the history of the city, particularly our still incomplete understanding of the Taifas Kingdoms.

The second part of the work is concerned with cultural aspects of al-Mariyya. Following the lead of L. Torres Balbas, the author presents archaeological data on Islamic al-Mariyya: its gates, mosques, and castle. This serves well as a description of the planning and development of the city during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The author also includes a chapter on economic life, but it is more than an analysis of the city's economy. Rather, it is a description of the main economic sources of the province of al-Mariyya, including agriculture, handicrafts, ship construction and trade. The book then ends with a chapter on the scholars of al-Mariyya, and their contribution to the sciences of adab, grammar, geography, and the religious sciences. It is a comprehensive compilation of these scholars, who together helped to create a flourishing cultural life in al-Andalus during and after the Golden Age under the Caliph 'Abd al-Rahman III.

Without any doubt, this work is an important contribution to the history and topography of al-Andalus during the caliphal and Taifa period, as well as to the history of Mediterranean trade and of the Islamic navy. There is an impressive amount of detail given by the author, be it geographical, political, biographical, or scenic. Along with the vivid narrative, this detail makes it possible for anyone reading the book to become familiar with the Islamic city of al-Mariyya, its region, and its epoch.

-Rocio Daga Portoillo


Medieval Islamic historiography has long suffered from a dearth of monography of individual chroniclers and biographers. Especially in comparison to medieval European history, there are very few works that attempt to understand the social, political, and cultural milieu in which the authors of our sources operated. Scholars have been obliged to rely on short entries in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, on general surveys such as those published by Salah al-Din al-Munajjir, or on articles published in Lewis and Holt's Historians of the Middle East (London, 1962) and similar works. A welcome attempt to fill this long-standing gap is Dr. Husayn 'Asi's study of 'Abd al-Rahman al-Magdisi, better known as Abu Shama.

Abu Shama was one of the most interesting representatives of the school of Syrian historians that flourished between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. A product of this school, and a model for some of its later members, he nonetheless comes across as a unique figure. Refreshingly free of the over-arching moral vision of Birzali or Ibn Kathir, unburdened by Jazari's intelligence or Dhahabi's productivity, Abu Shama poked into corners of Damascene society that would otherwise be unknown to us. Moreover, and most unusually for a scholar of the period, he revealed numerous and often touching details about his family and inner life. He was also innovative in his use of sources. Ibn al-Qalanisi and Ibn al-Athir, to mention just two examples, are known to have had access to original documents, yet they rarely
quoted from them; Abu Shama made greater and more explicit use of original documents than any other chronicler of the period. Even more impressive was his use of poetry as a source. Where others writers quoted poetry to illustrate a point, or to demonstrate the skill of their subjects in it, Abu Shama used poetry to demonstrate and to prove. For his curiosity, innovation, and idiosyncrasy it is hard to contest Ayalon’s judgment that Abu Shama was one of the finest historians of any area of the Middle Ages.

Dr. ‘Asi’s study focuses on two major themes. The first, occupying slightly over one-third of the book, is Abu Shama’s life, work, and times. On the first two of these topics Dr. ‘Asi has pulled together more material than any scholar before him and often presented it clearly. The remainder of the book deals with the famous Kitab al-rawdatayn fi ahkbar al-dawlatayn, including a discussion of extant manuscripts, the work’s contents and sources, and a few selections from the text itself. As the Kitab al-rawdatayn is one of the most important sources on the Crusades and the life of Saladin, it has long deserved close analysis, and we may hope that this work will encourage others to follow in Dr. ‘Asi’s footsteps.

Finally we must turn to the inevitable reservations, of which this reviewer has several. Dr. ‘Asi did not seek to conform to contemporary western standards of historical research. The bibliography is skimpy; the introduction succeeds better at setting the scene that advancing an argument; and the book as a whole enlists Abu Shama in an Arab national struggle. The anachronism is of course not unique to Dr. ‘Asi’s book, and in fairness it must be said it is the dominant perspective in Syria and a number of other countries. However, working backwards from outcomes is a serious problem in any work that seeks to relate the work of an individual chronicler to the larger political context. The reader would be ill-advised to expect anything similar to the work of Ahmad Duri, Haarmann, or Little, to take some of the best recent scholars in the field. Nonetheless, this book is a welcome treatment of the life and work of a chronicler whom so many modern readers have admired. We can only hope for more.

-Michael Chamberlain


Amman’s phases of urban expansion have historically followed moments of crisis in the Arab world: the 1967 war, the Lebaneese war and, most recently, the Gulf war. Each expansion contributed new suburbs and new architectural forms, yet in none of these cases has Amman found an architectural style to call its own. This is somewhat belied in the most recent phase whereby buildings attempt to conform to some notion of an ‘Islamic’ architectural idiom. Arches and courtyards abound, in rare cases with quietly elegant results, in most with blatantly unsubtle ones. Ironically, a comparison between the new villas and high-rises (architectural anomalies in this context) with Amman’s old houses and neighborhoods demonstrates that traditional forms have been largely abandoned. Yet it is these old houses that define the local typology of forms.

The architectural language of Amman is one of cut stone houses that grow almost organically out of its hills, here and there connected by steep long staircases that wind their way into the valleys below. It is to some of these houses that Buyut Amman al-‘ula is devoted, presenting specimens from the 1923-1942 era, roughly the time of the foundation of the Hashemite Kingdom and the beginnings of Amman’s modern history. As Dr. al-Rifa’i explains in the brief introduction, the 1903 construction of the Hijaz railroad effected profound changes in Amman, transforming its agricultural character and paving the way for its adoption as capital. The 1920’s and 1930’s saw the rise of a mercantile class that constructed its villas on the slopes close to the city’s business districts. As such, these houses are valuable documents of Amman’s history and architectural heritage, one reason that the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Division of Architecture, chose to publish this selection on the occasion of the University of Jordan’s Silver Jubilee.

As is evident from the limited text, this book is a visual presentation of nine houses (manzil) accompanied by site plans, layouts, elevations, selections of interior and exterior details, and renderings of decorative paving tiles with distribution charts. These houses, mostly in the Jabal Amman district, are considered variations on the traditional courtyard (hawsh) theme; with an idealized plan consisting of three sections (bahr): an entrance-reception-garden unit in the center with two side wings. The results are the squarish houses open on at least one side to afford a view of the wadi’s below. While it speaks to the need for appreciating and preserving Amman’s architectural heritage, the book’s telescoping of the characteristics of the traditional house and its execution by about a 100 of the Division’s students make it a bundle of contradictions. At best, this is an exercise book, at worst, it is a selection of design patterns for the convenience of future and present architects who can pick indiscriminately from among its patterns to ‘Islamize’ their designs.

To historians concerned with Islamic architecture this book reiterates a critical question: does one appreciate it for what it is, or condemn it as following in the footsteps of turn-of-the-century pattern books that, by deconstructing designs, rendered them meaningless? Perhaps the real value of this work is in forcing us to contemplate the fate of our architectural past, to ponder whether architecture is most appreciated at those moments when it is dead or dying, or whether we, in making icons of its forms, have a hand in its demise.

-Nuha N. Khoury
EXHIBITS

Yemen:
A Culture of Builders

Textiles of Egypt:
Witnesses of the Arab World, Eighth to Fifteenth Centuries.

The Maritime Silk Route
Oceanic trade routes and the Middle Eastern, European, and Asian attitudes toward their trading partners. The exhibit is part of the UNESCO Festival of the Silk Roads. Musée de la Marine, Paris, France. March 18 to June 15, 1994.

Treasures in Heaven:
Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts

A Stitch Through Time:
The Journey of an Islamic Embroidery Technique to Europe and the New World

The Grace of White

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GRAPHICS CREDITS

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