

ARABIC BOOKS AND LIBRARIES IN THE UMAIYAD PERIOD—*Concluded*

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Moslems of the Umayyad period also turned to literature of the pre-Islamic days in the desert. As mentioned above, Wahb prepared collections of wise sayings and the *Fihrist* credited ʿUbaid with having written a book of proverbs. The same book⁹¹ mentions another work on the same subject (*Kitāb al-Amthāl*), by one ʿIkāla ibn Karīm al-Kilābī, written in the days of Yazīd son of Muʿāwīya (caliph 60–64/679–83). The author of the *Fihrist*, writing at the end of the fourth century after the Hijra, adds, "It is about fifty pages and I have seen it." The oldest collection of proverbs which survives is that of al-Mufaḍḍal al-Dabbī (d. 170/876, published at Stamboul in 1300). These fragments of the homely wisdom of the Bedawis appealed both to the general interest in the past and to the special interest of philologists, who found in them valuable sources for their minute linguistic studies, as well as legendary and historical material.⁹²

Even more enthusiastic was the gathering and study of ancient poetry. Although the formal collecting of it was the special province of the philologists, poetry also had a popular appeal. Accordingly, Hammād al-Rāwīya received a present of 100,000 dirhems from the caliph Walīd ibn Yazīd for his recital in one sitting of twenty-nine hundred odes composed before Mohammed.⁹³ This reciter is remembered chiefly for his collection, known as the *Muʿallaqāt*. His ability to judge poetry and poets, to detect plagiarisms and borrowings, was highly respected. Although a contemporary, al-Mufaḍḍal al-Dabbī, accused him of introducing his own verses into ancient poems, none possessed the critical ability to detect forgeries.⁹⁴ Unfortunately, many others succumbed to the same temptation, the

⁹¹ *Fihrist*, p. 90.

⁹² *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Mathāl"; Brockelmann, *op. cit.*, I, 67; Goldziher, *op. cit.*, II, 204.

⁹³ Ibn Khallikān (De S.), I, 470.

⁹⁴ *Aghānī*, V, 172, ll. 16 ff.; see art. on him in *Encyc. Islam*, and Nicholson, pp. 132–34.

recognition of which fact has thrown suspicion of late on the authenticity of all poetry purporting to come from the early days.⁹⁵

The cultivation and study of pre-Islamic as well as contemporary verse during the Umayyad period is so well known and has been treated so frequently by modern scholars that I shall restrict myself here chiefly to indications of the existence of poetry in writing. Sir Charles Lyall, whom few have equaled in appreciation and knowledge of ancient Arabic poetry, said:

It seems probable that the greater part, at any rate of pre-Islamic verse which has survived to us, was already in writing by the middle of the 4th century: either in the shape of *ḍiẓwān*'s, or collections consisting entirely of pieces by the same author, or of tribal aggregates, containing all the occasional pieces composed by members of one tribe or family, perhaps with the addition of the traditions which link them together, and grouped about the occasions which called them forth.⁹⁶

In the same article Lyall refers to *ḍiẓwān*'s as "a sort of library," that is, they represent efforts to collect, arrange, and preserve hitherto stray and scattered verses in a permanent form. Whether kept in the memory or in writing, these collections were the means whereby the old poetry passed on to later generations. Undoubtedly much was lost as the Arabs spread from the confines of their peninsula, but it is due to these early attempts at collecting that anything at all survives. Yunus the *kātib*, a singer of Persian origin whom Walid ibn Yazid brought to court from Medina, in 742 A.D. composed a *Book of Song* which served as a model for the more famous one (*Kitāb al-Aghānī*) of Abū'l-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 967 A.D.)⁹⁷

Al-Farazdak (b. 20, d. 110 or 114 A.H.), in a poem belonging to the famous exchange of satires (*naḡā'id*), between himself and Jarir lists twenty-two poets, most of whom flourished before Mohammed, whom he claims as masters in his art, and speaks of their verses as in writing.⁹⁸ He mentions owning a complete edition of the odes of Labid, the latter years of whose life were spent under Islam.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ For instance, see Tāḥā Ḥusain, *Al-Shi'r al-Jāhili* (Cairo, 1926), and *Al-Adab al-Jāhili* (Cairo, 1927); Margoliouth, "The Origins of Arabic Poetry," *JRAS*, 1925, pp. 417-49, from whom the Arabic scholar drew his theory.

⁹⁶ *Some Aspects of Ancient Arabic Poetry*, reprinted from the *Proceedings of the British Academy* (Oxford, 1918), VIII, 10.

⁹⁷ Huart, *op. cit.*, pp. 47 f.

⁹⁸ *The Naḡā'id of Jarir and al-Farazdak*, ed. A. A. Bevan (Leyden, 1905-7), I, Part II, 200 f., with reference to the writing of the poems in vs. 61.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, vs. 57.

Dhū'l-Rumma (78–117 A.H.), a Bedawi poet of the same period, although able to write, considered it unbecoming (ʿaib) a nomad.¹⁰⁰ However, he dictated his composition to his *rāwīs*, who wrote them down, for he said, “A book does not forget or alter words or phrases which have taken the poet a long time to compose.”¹⁰¹

The poetess Lailā al-Akhyaliyyā and the poet al-Nābigha engaged in a poetic quarrel of the usual sort, in which each lampooned the tribe of his rival. The tribe of al-Nābigha took offense at some of Lailā's verses and lodged a complaint with the ruler of Medina, by whom ʿUmar I or ʿUthmān is probably meant. The intrepid poetess, hearing of their plan, added further fuel to the fire by appending the following verses to her satire.

News has reached me that a tribe at Shaurān is urging forward
jaded riding camels.
Night and morning is their embassy journeying with a sheet
of writing to get me flogged,
What a bad piece of work [on their part]!

Professor Krenkow points out that the people who were to lodge the complaint brought the offending piece of poetry to the arbitrator in writing.¹⁰²

Al-Ṭabarī quotes a certain ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī as saying he had collected the *ḍiẓān*'s of the Banū Marwān (the Marwānid branch of the Umayyad house), and adds that no *ḍiẓān* more complete or authoritative than that of Hishām is to be seen.¹⁰³ Several members of the royal house displayed poetic talents; outstanding among them were Yazīd (caliph 680–83 A.D.), son of Muʿāwīya and his mother Maisūn, who at Damascus sang of her longing for the freedom of desert life.¹⁰⁴ The greatest of them all was al-Walīd II (caliph 743–44 A.D.), a poet probably of equal rank with the famous Abū Nuwās (d. ca. 810 A.D.).

A son of Jamʿa, the daughter of the poet al-Kuthayyir (d. 723 A.D.), is cited as authority for the statement that among the books of his father, containing the verses of al-Kuthayyir, a certain poem was

¹⁰⁰ *Aghānī*, XVI, 121, l. 9.

¹⁰¹ Krenkow, “The Use of Writing for the Preservation of Ancient Arabic Poetry,” in *A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to E. G. Browne* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 266.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 263; the verses and episodes are given in *Aghānī*, IV, 134, ll. 7–11.

¹⁰³ Al-Ṭabarī, II, 1732, under the year 125. ¹⁰⁴ Nicholson, *op. cit.*, pp. 195 f.

found.¹⁰⁶ Probably many families prized little libraries of songs, and it is more than likely that the royal family owned a considerable quantity of poetry, both from the bygone days which they admired so greatly and the products of the numerous singers who flocked to their court and enjoyed their patronage. Most famous of these were Jarīr and al-Farazdak, whose poetic scolding match (as Nicholson aptly translates *muhājāt*) lasted for years and excited the enthusiasm of all classes of society. The verses which each flung at his rival were caught up by their respective partisans, who disputed endlessly about their merits. The court and even the army, according to a picturesque story in the *Aghānī*, entered the fray with zest.¹⁰⁶ A third poet, al-Akhtāl, who had come from Hira to Damascus, where he was a great favorite, sided with al-Farazdak and also engaged in *naḳā'id* with Jarīr.¹⁰⁷

Although the court of the caliphs drew most of the best-esteemed bards of the day, poetry also flourished in the Hijāz. A distorted picture of the times ensues if one presses too far the contrast between the free and easy life of the Umayyads and their followers and the stern Puritanism of the faithful of Medina. With all their preoccupation with matters religious, the inhabitants of that sacred city had their lighter moments, or perhaps more accurately one should say that Medinese society was of two kinds: one seriously devout and the other frivolous and luxury-loving. As elsewhere it is likely that some individuals enjoyed moments of gaiety as well as others of religious zeal. Mālik ibn Anas seems to have once had ambitions as a poet, but because of his lack of personal beauty, turned to law. The oft married Sukaina (d. 117/735), a great granddaughter of the Prophet, was a leader of fashion; a hairdress she affected was copied by those who wished to dress *à la Sukaina*. She was easily one of the most outstanding women of her time. Her personal courage, chastity, fastidiousness, and dignity, as well as her pride in her own beauty, her

¹⁰⁶ Krenkow, *op. cit.*, p. 266, from *Aghānī*, VIII, 30.

¹⁰⁶ *Aghānī*, VII, 55, ll. 12 ff.; see Nicholson, pp. 239 f. Professor D. B. Macdonald draws my attention to the Scotch expression "flying" as the equivalent of *muhājāt*.

¹⁰⁷ In one of the Akhtāl's poems he refers to ancient manuscripts in the simile, "Just as if they were, through the length of time which has passed, decayed leaves of a book which are spread out" (*Diwān*, p. 156, l. 4, quoted by Krenkow, "The Use of Writing, etc.," *op. cit.*, p. 264). On the poets of the Umayyad period see Nicholson, pp. 235 ff., and Huart, pp. 46 ff.

daughter whom she decked with jewels, and her ancestry are elaborated by numerous writers. Anecdotes are related to illustrate her wit and fondness for perpetrating jokes and hoaxes.¹⁰⁸ As the daughter of the gifted poetess Rahab bint ʿImr al-Ḳais ibn ʿAdī, she was devoted to poetry, and her good taste and judgment brought the best poets of the day to her door. Ibn Khallikān preserves a story of how she pointed out the artificiality of the sentiments expressed in the verses of ʿUrwa ibn Uzaina, a poet and traditionalist of the tribe of Laith (d. 118/736). Meeting him one day, she asked him if he were the author of the verses

When I feel in my heart the flames of love, I try to cool its ardor
by draughts of water. Could I ever succeed in cooling with
water the exterior of my heart, how should I extinguish the
fire which rages in its interior?

He admitted they were his, and she asked him again if he had composed the following:

When I revealed to her the secret of my love, she replied, "You used to desire [secrecy and] concealment when with me; be veiled then [as to your passion]: see you not how many are around us?" To this I answered, "The love I bear you and [the pains] I feel have already cast a veil over my sight."

The poet acknowledged these also as his, on which the lady said to the slave girls standing around her, "You are free, if such verses ever came from a heart wounded by love!"¹⁰⁹ So great was the esteem in which Sukaina was held, her burial was delayed several hours, the governor having sent word that it be postponed until his arrival.¹¹⁰

Her character and activities are typical of one aspect of the life of those who found or were forced to accept Medina as a pleasant place of retirement from the political turmoil of the Syrian capital. It must be admitted that for many, including even members of the Umayyad house, this retirement to Medina was far from voluntary. A considerable group who for various reasons were unwelcome at the caliph's court in Damascus sought to make their practical exile as pleasant as possible, at the same time being conscious that Medina was no longer the center of the Moslem world. The more active and politically

¹⁰⁸ See *Aghānī*, XVII, 94, 97, 101; Ibn Khallikān (*De S.*), I, 581 ff.

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Khallikān, *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Sukaina bint al-Ḥusain."

ambitious considered a life of gaiety and ease in the "provinces" a sorry substitute for participation in the affairs of state. Men of the caliber of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and ʿAbd al-Mālik frankly chafed at their confinement and sought means to end it. At any rate, they had the good fortune to possess the means of passing their time agreeably, for the booty which fell to their lot from the wars of conquest enriched many families who lived in a luxury unknown in pre-Islamic days, except to those Arabs who had come in contact with Persia and Byzantium. They owned beautiful palaces, gardens, and rich meadows in and near the city. Part of the population consisted of the devout, who were drawn to make Medina their home because of its sacred memories. Happy in the comparative quiet and seclusion of the sacred city, they devoted themselves to the study of tradition, upon which they built an elaborate legal and ritual system. Honored by this group, but not necessarily always an integral part of it, were numerous descendants of Mohammed. The career of Sukaina is evidence that at least some members of the family of the Prophet participated in the social life of Medina, the luxury of which became notorious.¹¹¹ This was the golden age of Medina, sung by poets who passed back and forth between the Hijāz and Syria.¹¹² ʿUrwa, whose encounter with Sukaina has just been related, in the company of several other poets once paid a visit to the court of Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Mālik. ʿUrwa, a placid soul, whose poems on contentment circulated widely, was recognized by the caliph, who quoted some of his verses, and said, "I do not see that you act in conformity to your words, for you have now come from Hijāz to Syria in search of favors."

"Commander of the Faithful!" replied the poet, "You have given me a good lesson and reminded me of that which the lapse of time has caused me to forget."

He left at once and, mounting his camel, set off for Medina. That night Hishām noticed his absence and realized the probable consequences. "That man is a member of the tribe of ʿQuraish and his words are wisdom; he came to see me, but I repulsed him and refused to grant him what he required; he is also a poet and I shall be exposed to his satires."

¹¹¹ *Aghānī*, XXI, 197, l. 19; al-Ṭabarī, II, 1910.

¹¹² *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Madīna."

He sent off at once a messenger after ʿUrwa with a present of two thousand dinars, who overtook the poet at his house. ʿUrwa received him and the gift and said, "Give my salutation to the Commander of the Faithful, and ask him what he now thinks of my verses: I toiled for favors and was called a liar; I then returned home and they came to me."¹¹³

Although poetry enjoyed a tremendous popularity in Umayyad days, it was also put to practical use by the philologists, who found in the ancient lines the material for their studies. The invention of Arabic grammar is traditionally assigned to Abū'l-Aswad al-Duʿalī (d. ca. 69/688–89), of Baṣra, who is said to have received his original idea from the caliph ʿAlī. It is more likely that other reports which trace the suggestion to Ziyād ibn Abīhī are more dependable though less devout. Various stories are told to account for the need of this science; the element of truth in them seems to be that Persian converts, of whom there were many in Baṣra, so mutilated their newly adopted language that it was necessary to introduce a formal study of Arabic grammar. The tradition further credits Abū'l-Aswad with having composed a grammatical treatise, and this is confirmed by that careful scholar al-Nadīm, who says in the *Fihrist*, describing a most unusual library he was once privileged to examine:

I discovered also in these papers a proof that grammar was invented by Abū'l-Aswad; it was a document of four sheets on Chinese paper, I believe, and bearing this title, "Discourse on the Governing and the Governed Parts of Speech, by Abū'l-Aswad, in the Handwriting of Yahya ibn Yaʿmar" (one of the grammarian's disciples); underneath were inscribed in old characters (*bi khaṭṭ ʿatik*) these words, "This is the handwriting of such a one, the grammarian." Then followed a note by al-Naḍar ibn Shumail.¹¹⁴

The school of grammarians thus started at Baṣra continued to flourish and was, from the end of the eighth century on, in constant rivalry with the school of Kūfa. Scholars of both places, however finessed their theories and distinctions, ultimately referred to

¹¹³ Ibn Khallikān (De S.), I, 582 f.

¹¹⁴ P. 41. This same library prized autographs of several early grammarians and philologists, among them one by Abū ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlā; see *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Abū'l-Aswad"; art. on "Abū'l-Aswad" by Ibn Khallikān (De S.), I, 662 ff., and notes. Note here how the traditions of ʿAlī's and Ziyād's connections with the beginnings of the science are combined.

pre-Islamic usage as preserved in poetry for their proofs and sanctions. From the beginning at Baṣra,¹¹⁵ philologists busied themselves with collecting and writing down the verses still to be heard on the lips of the Bedawis of the desert, who spoke the purest Arabic. The collection of poetry owned by one of the founders of the schools of Baṣra, Abū'l-ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ al-Māzinī, has been referred to before.¹¹⁶ He was unusually conscientious in his methods, although he confessed forging at least one verse.¹¹⁷ Ibn Khallikān has several delightful anecdotes about him, one to the effect that each day he spent a coin for a new water-pitcher and another for a fresh nosegay. At evening he gave the latter to a maid, who tore the flowers to bits to perfume the water used by the household.¹¹⁸ His candor and sense of humor concerning his studies are well illustrated. One said to him, "Tell me of the work you composed on the subject which you call *Arabism*; does it contain all the language of the desert Arabs?" Abū'l-ʿAmr answered that it did not, and his questioner then asked, "How do you manage when the Arabs furnish you with examples contrary to your own rules?" To this Abū'l-ʿAmr replied, "I follow the majority of the cases and call the rest dialects."¹¹⁹

It appears from this conversation that he wrote some sort of treatise, based on his collection of sayings and poems.¹²⁰ The commentary of al-Sukkarī on the *ḏiẓwān* of Zuhair ibn Abī Sulma says that in addition to books Abū'l-ʿAmr also collected ancient coins which had been found.¹²¹

The activities of Arabic philologists were but one aspect of the study and elucidation of the Koran which paralleled the study and collecting of traditions. The father of Koranic exegesis was ʿAbd

¹¹⁵ Lyall was of the opinion that the search for poetry was more active at Kūfa, which was near Hīra, where Arabic writing and literature were cultivated in pre-Islamic times. Kūfa was also the headquarters of ʿAlī. See Lyall's edition of the *Mufaḍḍalīyāt* (Oxford, 1918), II, xii f.

¹¹⁶ See above.

¹¹⁷ *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Abū'l-ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ."

¹¹⁸ Ibn Khallikān (De S.), II, 401.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

¹²⁰ See also *Fihrist*, pp. 28 and 41 l. 2.

¹²¹ Manuscript of the German Oriental Society, information from a personal communication from Professor Krenkow. On his library see also J. Zaidan, *History of Islamic Civilization* (Cairo, 1922), III, 47, as from Ḥājji Khalīfa. On the schools of Baṣra and Kūfa see Nicholson, *op. cit.*, pp. 342 ff.

Allāh ibn ʿAbbās, Mohammed's cousin. The date of his death is given variously as 68/687-8 or 69 or 70. Once governor of Baṣra under ʿAlī, he proved unscrupulous, and, following the assassination of the latter, he found it advisable and agreeable to attach himself to Muʿāwīya. Thereafter he devoted himself to literary pursuits. Politically an opportunist, he was hardly more dependable as a scholar. He and a much-quoted traditionalist, Abū Huraira (d. 57, 8 or 9 A.H.) fabricated so many tales to suit their several purposes that even their contemporaries could not have failed to recognize them as little better than audacious, though pious, liars. In spite of the fact that the Koran is said to contain all knowledge needful to mankind, Ibn ʿAbbās, like many others, drew on Jewish and Christian traditions and scriptures, although gathered secondhand. A South Arabian Jew, Kaʿb ibn Mātī, furnished him with much of his information. According to Barhebraeus, the gospels had been translated into Arabic for the Amīr ʿAmr ibn Saʿd, by John I, patriarch of Antioch, known as John of Sedras, who came to the archepiscopal throne in A.D. 631 and died in 648.¹²² Ibn ʿAbbās is one of the few Meccans reputed to have been able to write before the days of Islam. His library of notes as we have seen, was drawn upon by several scholars.¹²³ Whether or not the commentary attributed to him in al-Kalbī's redaction and presumably quoted by al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1036), of which several manuscripts exist,¹²⁴ actually goes back to him, it is likely that he made some sort of compilation. Fr. Buhl, in an article on him in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, says, "He did not however confine himself to relating occasional traditions and to answering questions put to him; he welded his tales into a great system which took into account the creation, the history of mankind, and the pre-Islamic times."¹²⁵ A commentary is also ascribed to Saʿīd ibn Jubair (d. 95/714), who was noted for his piety and learning.¹²⁶ The writings of the earliest Koranic

¹²² *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, ed. Abbeloos and Lamy (Paris, 1872-77), I, 275. Is the Amīr referred to ʿAmr ibn Saʿīd al-Ashdaq, a nephew of Marwān who was put to death 70/689-90 because of his ambitions for the caliphate? See the *Encyc. Islam* art. on him; also *Encyc. Brit.* (9th ed.), art. "Syriac Literature," by Wright, p. 839.

¹²³ See above; Sprenger, *Das Leben*, I, xciv.

¹²⁴ Printed in Bombay, 1302 A.H.

¹²⁵ See also Nicholson, pp. 144 f.; Brockelmann, I, 90, Sprenger, *Das Leben*, etc., pp. cvi-cxv. On the undependability of Ibn ʿAbbās and Abū Huraira see also III, lxxii ff., and Caetani, *Annali dell'Islām* (Milan, 1905), I, 47-51.

¹²⁶ *Fihrist*, p. 34, ll. 6-7.

exegetes have not come down intact, but are incorporated in the enormous commentary of al-Ṭabarī (d. 922 A.D.).

At Damascus especially Moslems came into contact with Christian learning, and the beginnings of Moslem theology and philosophy are doubtless due, at least in part, to this influence. The simple faith of early Islam became self-conscious when brought up against another religion possessed of an elaborate system of doctrine and ritual, as well as a scripture collected in a real book, giving a biography of its founder. Christians were employed regularly by Mu'āwiya and succeeding caliphs of his house, and not a few rose to positions of influence at court. Sergius, the father of John of Damascus, the last great theologian of the Greek church, for a long time served them as treasurer. Later his son became *wazīr*—a position he held until he withdrew from active affairs to a life of contemplation. John's writings and those of his pupil, Theodorus Abucara, contained treatises on Islam in the form of debates between Christians and Moslems. A common introduction, "When the Saracen says to you such and such, then you will reply . . . , " would indicate that discussion between exponents of the two religions was common at Damascus.¹²⁷ Professor Arnold said, "The very form and arrangement of the oldest rule of faith in the Arabic language suggest a comparison with similar treatises of St. John of Damascus and other Christian fathers."¹²⁸

Two of the earliest sects of Islam arose in Syria, the Ḳadarites and the Murjites. The latter are so called because they postpone or defer judgment against sinful Moslems until the day of final reckoning, and in fact this sect denied the orthodox doctrine of eternal punishment and emphasized the goodness of Allah and his love for mankind. This position agrees with the teaching of the Eastern church as formulated by John of Damascus. The Ḳadarites on their part dissented from the predestinarianism which characterized Mohammed's teaching in the latter part of his life and which was accepted by most of his followers, and preached instead the doctrine of free will. Once more the influence of Eastern Christianity is evident. Eventually the Ḳadarite position merged with that of the Mu'tazilites.¹²⁹ How much

¹²⁷ Macdonald, *op. cit.*, pp. 131 f.

¹²⁸ *The Preaching of Islam* (New York, 1913), p. 74; see also von Kremer, *Kultur-geschichtliche Streifzüge auf dem Gebiete des Islams* (Leipzig, 1873), p. 8.

¹²⁹ Macdonald, *op. cit.*, pp. 131 ff., and arts. Ḳadar and Ḳadariya in *Encyc. Islam*; Arnold, *op. cit.*; Nallino, "Sul nome di Qadariti," in *Rivista degli studi orient.*, VII, 461 ff.;

actual writing was done by these early theologians is questionable. Whatever was done probably took the form of short treatises, of which the religious exhortation written by al-Ḥasan of Baṣra (d. 110/728–9)¹³⁰ to the caliph ʿUmar II may be regarded as typical. The versatile Wahb ibn Munabbih is said to have written on *Ḳadar*. Krenkow suggests that part of this work may be preserved in the *Ṭijān*, of which the earlier portions in their present form are full of discussions on *Ḳadar*.¹³¹

Of course it must not be forgotten that several Arab tribes had accepted Christianity before the time of Mohammed, as in the case of the Lakhmids and Ghassanids, and part of the influence of Christian thought may perhaps be traced to them. Most of the Christian Arabs eventually accepted Islam, but even those who remained loyal to their old faith lived in contact with Moslems, as did the poet Akhtal, of Hira, who flourished at the court of Damascus. Moslem mysticism also developed from contacts with Christian hermits and monks who were scattered throughout Arabia, Syria, and Iraq.¹³² Some of the Christian Arabs had come in contact with Greek thought, as is to be seen in the case of George, who was ordained bishop of the Monophysite Arabs in Iraq in A.D. 686. He lived at ʿĀḳōlā—that is, Kūfa—and died in 724. He wrote extensively on theology and philosophy, his main work being a version of the *Organon* of Aristotle, with commentary.¹³³

The precise degree and nature of Christian influence on Moslem thought at Damascus of course cannot be ascertained. Professor MacDonald has said, "We are not to think of the Moslem divines as studying the writings of the Greek fathers, but as picking up ideas from them in practical intercourse and controversy."¹³⁴

Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 51 f. A modern Moslem reviewing this last work disagrees with this position and suggests rather that John of Damascus was influenced by Islam (review in *Islamic Culture*, April, 1933, p. 337).

¹³⁰ For the text of this treatise see von Kremer, *Geschichte der herrschenden Ideen des Islams* (Leipzig, 1868), p. 22.

¹³¹ Krenkow, "The Two Oldest Books . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 232.

¹³² See my art., "Background of the History of Moslem Libraries," in *AJSL*, LII, No. 2 (January, 1936), p. 106.

¹³³ Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science* (Baltimore, 1927–31), I, 493; Wright, art. "Syriac Literature," *Encyc. Brit.* (9th), p. 841.

¹³⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

A most vexed and probably never to be settled question is that of the transmission of Greek philosophy and science, much of which was in the hands of the Christians of Syria and Egypt, to the Arabs during the Umayyad period. This centers about the problem of the dependability of several statements to the effect that the prince Khālid ibn Yazīd (665–704 or 8 A.D.), a grandson of Mu‘āwīya, caused translations to be made of Greek books on alchemy, medicine, and astronomy (or astrology). According to the *Fihrist* (written 987, author d. 995 A.D.), the first translations made under Islam from one language to another were the work of a group of Greek philosophers of Egypt who translated from Greek and Coptic for Khālid, “the philosopher of the family of Marwān who was a lover of the sciences.”¹³⁵ On page 244 of the same work a certain Stephen the Elder, who has not been identified with any certainty, is said to have translated for the prince. Khālid was the first to investigate the books of the ancients on alchemy. He was an eloquent orator, a poet, a man of enthusiasm and judgment. He caused books on medicine, astrology, and alchemy to be translated, and was himself the author of several books and treatises and verses on alchemical matters. Al-Nadīm, the author of the *Fihrist*, says he saw three works of Khālid’s, one book in long and short recensions, in all, about five hundred pages of his compositions. Having been deprived of the hope of the caliphate, his art became his solace, in which some say he was successful; “Allah knows best whether it is true!” Nevertheless his undertakings were not due to selfish motives but for the benefit of his brethren and companions.¹³⁶ Among the writings of al-Madā’inī (d. 225 A.H.) there was one commenting on an ode by Khālid.¹³⁷

Earlier writers knew something of Khālid’s studies. Ibn Kutaiba (d. probably 276/889 or a few years earlier) refers to him as the most learned among the Kuraish in the various sciences, and as a poet.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ *Fihrist*, p. 242.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 354; on p. 353 he is listed among the philosophers. Contrary to this representation of him as living in retirement, numerous references in Arabic histories indicate that he continued to have some interests in public affairs. According to one account, it was he who advised ‘Abd al-Mālik to forbid the use of Greek coins and to mint money bearing the name of Allah. As a result, this caliph began to coin dinars and dirhems in 76 A.H. See Ibn al-Athīr under the year 76 (Tornberg ed.; Leyden, 1851–76), p. 337.

¹³⁷ *Fihrist*, p. 104, ll. 5–6.

¹³⁸ *Ibn Coteiba*, “Handbuch der Geschichte, etc.,” ed. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1850), p. 179.

Abū'l-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 967 A.D.) speaks of his devotion to alchemy and quotes some verses presumably by him.¹³⁹ Al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956 A.D.) gives three verses consisting of a recipe for making gold.¹⁴⁰ According to a late writer, Ḥājjī Khalifa (d. 1656 A.D.), these are from an alchemical poem of some 2,315 verses, called *The Paradise of Wisdom on the Science of Alchemy*.¹⁴¹

After the publication of the *Fihrist*, writers continued to mention the scientific or pseudo-scientific and poetic gifts of the young prince; some barely refer to him, others give fairly long biographical sketches. Yāqūt (d. 1229 A.D.)¹⁴² says he recited traditions on the authority of his father, al-Zuhri and others, but adds no new information on his medical, alchemical, or poetical writings. The same may be said of the notices of Ibn al-Ṭiḡṭaḡā,¹⁴³ writing in A.D. 1300, and Ibn Taghribirdī (probably d. 874/1469). The latter mentions a report that he composed *Ḥadīth al-Sufyānī*.¹⁴⁴ Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282 A.D.) praises his scientific skill and knowledge, which are exemplified by the quality of his writings. This author also tells us that Khālīd studied alchemy with a Greek monk named Marianos.¹⁴⁵ Ḥājjī Khalifa (seventeenth century) refers to Khālīd frequently, noticing the translations made for him and his writings, and links his name with that of Geber.¹⁴⁶ Ibn al-Ḳiftī (d. 1248 A.D.) does not list him among the philosophers and scientists, but quotes one Ibn al-Sinbādī, a scientist, as seeing in the royal library of the Fatimids of Cairo in 435/1044 a bronze globe made by Ptolemy, which bore an inscription to the effect that it had been in the possession of Khālīd ibn Yazīd ibn Mu'āwīya.¹⁴⁷

No Arabic writer except Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406 A.D.) has anything except words of praise for Khālīd. Ibn Khaldūn, however, questions these favorable reports of his abilities, doubting whether a prince of

¹³⁹ *Aghānī*, XVI, 88 f.; XVIII, 89.

¹⁴¹ IV, 413, § 9016.

¹⁴⁰ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Les prairies d'or*, VIII, 176.

¹⁴² *Op. cit.*, IV, 165–69.

¹⁴³ *Al-Fakhri*, ed. Ahlwardt (Gotha, 1860), p. 164.

¹⁴⁴ *Annales*, ed. Juynboll and Matthes (Leyden, 1851), I, 245 f. and 554. The supplanting of the Sufyānid branch of the Umayyad house by the Marwānids on the accession of Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam appears to have given rise to an Imāmīte party expressing its hopes in a sort of *Mahdī*, al-Sufyānī. The *Aghānī* (XVI, 88) says that Khālīd was the first to start this. See *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Al-Mahdī," by Macdonald, p. 114.

¹⁴⁵ Ibn Khallikān (De S.), I, 481 ff.

¹⁴⁶ Ḥājjī Khalifa, III, 94–95, 97, 592, § 7114; IV, 413, § 9016; V, 87, 280; VI, 53, § 12698.

¹⁴⁷ *Ta'rikh al-Hukamā'*, ed. Lippert (Leipzig, 1903), p. 440.

the Umayyad house could have comprehended the theoretical and practical aspects of subjects, which presuppose much knowledge and study.¹⁴⁸

Most Western scholars, until very recently, have accepted the more favorable reports, seemingly ignoring Ibn Khaldūn's criticism.¹⁴⁹ In part they may have been influenced by a Latin treatise on alchemy, *Liber de compositione alchemiae*, translated from Arabic by Robert of Chester in A.D. 1144. It purports to be the work of Khālid (*Calid, King of the Egyptians*), edited by Morienus Romanus, a hermit of Jerusalem. However, the work actually belongs to a much later period than that of Khālid.¹⁵⁰ His name is also connected with the *Book of Crates*, which is said to have been translated for or under him, but this Arabic rendering of a Greek work can be no earlier than the end of the eighth century, and probably belongs to the ninth.¹⁵¹

Julius Ruska, in his detailed study of all the reports of Khālid's scientific activities and the extant works purporting to come from his hand, has rejected the whole as a legend. He points to the fact that later writers—for instance, Ibn Khallikān and Ḥājjī Khalifa—knew many more details about him than did the earlier al-Mas'ūdī and al-Nadīm, although even in the *Fihrist* one finds the legend-building tendency at work. Ruska concludes that although it is possible that Khālid employed Egyptian scholars, there is no positive evidence of his scientific activity, and his connection with the Greek monk Morianus is entirely unwarranted.¹⁵² Ruska's study has served to clear away the mass of legend which has long surrounded the memory of the young Umayyad prince. Obviously there was a tendency to attach his name to anything which hinted of learning in the Umayyad

¹⁴⁸ *Prolegomena*, Arabic text (Bulaq, 1274/1857), p. 261, ll. 11 ff.; Quatremere's text in *Notices et extraits*, XVIII, 193 = De Slane's French translation, XXI, 209.

¹⁴⁹ M. Bertholet, *La chimie au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1893), III, 2 ff.; Le Clerc, *Histoire de la médecine arabe* (Paris, 1876), I, 61 ff.

¹⁵⁰ See Sarton, *op. cit.*, II, 176; J. Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten*, I: *Chālid Ibn Yazid Ibn Mu'āwiya* (Heidelberg, 1924), pp. 31 ff.

¹⁵¹ Bertholet (*op. cit.*) gives the text and translation of the *Book of Crates*; see Sarton, I, 495; Ruska, *op. cit.*, pp. 12 ff.

¹⁵² See Ruska's entire study, especially conclusions; also Sarton, I, 495; L. Thorndike, *Magic and Experimental Science* (New York, 1923), pp. 214 ff. E. J. Holmyard (*Makers of Chemistry* [Oxford, 1931], pp. 43 ff.), points out that the story of Khālid is valuable as showing what Mohammedan chemists believed about the origin of alchemy in Islam.

period. As illustrative, one may quote from Krenkow's article on Arabic libraries in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*:

The earliest record of anything like a public library is connected with the name of Khālīd ibn Yazīd ibn Mu'āwīya, who devoted his life to the study of Greek sciences, particularly alchemy and medicine. We are told that he caused such books to be translated, and when an epidemic occurred at the beginning of the reign of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, he commanded the books to be fetched out of the library [*Khizāna*] to be made available for the people.¹⁵³

Khālīd, according to most authorities, died 85/704 and certainly not later than 90/708-9, whereas 'Umar II was caliph 99/717 to 101/720.

It appears, however, that Ruska, like Ibn Khaldūn, is reluctant to attribute learning to an Umayyad. The Arabic historian obviously admired the early Abbasids and their efforts in behalf of scholarship and regarded their predecessors as little better than ignorant Bedawis; Khālīd was a prince of the Umayyad house, therefore he could not possibly have had any intellectual interests. Granted that much which has been attributed to Khālīd is absolutely unfounded, the question remains, How did the legend arise? We know that the Abbasids did all in their power to blot out the memory of the Umayyads, and when that failed, to falsify their memory. Accordingly, writers of that period, and subsequently, seldom attribute any virtue to the members of the previous dynasty. Hence, unless there was some element of truth to the stories of Khālīd's activity, some genuine tradition of scholarly interest, including the beginning of translations from Greek works, too well known and persistent to be ignored, it is difficult to see why the reputation of the prince did not suffer with the rest of his family. The fact that the author of the *Fihrist*, on the whole a sober and careful investigator of the history of Arabic literature and scholarship, gives Khālīd a place among the learned men of Islam, is greatly in favor of believing that there was something to the tradition. Al-Nadīm's details, doubtless as Ruska suggests, belong to popular legend. Whether they were genuine or not, we must accept his word for the existence at his time of writings purporting to come from Khālīd.

It is of course possible that the fact that he never attained the

¹⁵³ Art. "Kitāb-khāna," p. 1045, Arabic source not given.

coveted caliphate prejudiced the Abbasids in his favor, so that he became in their eyes one like themselves, a philosopher-prince and a patron of learning. However, for their purposes it would have been far better to have represented all the Umayyads as entirely unlearned and indifferent to scholarly matters. Ibn Khaldūn, a late historian, agreed with the attitude of the Abbasid writers, and saw no reason to exempt Khālīd from his general condemnation of the Umayyads.

Khālīd probably was not much of a scientist, for his interest in alchemy is the most persistent part of the tradition, but it is certainly not impossible that an Umayyad prince, deprived of political aspirations, may have turned to the Greek studies current among the non-Moslem residents of Damascus and Egypt. We have seen that intercourse between Moslems and Christians was very free in the days of the Umayyads. Others of the dynasty were devoted to poetry and to secular history. Khālīd, having once been accepted as exceptional among the Umayyads, his reputation grew by leaps and bounds.

Arabic historians preserve a few other hints that this period was not entirely devoid of a knowledge of foreign literature and learning. We have noticed this in the case of historical, biblical, and legendary lore. Barhebraeus says of Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Mālik (caliph 705–15 A.D.); "This Khalifah was well versed in outside [i.e., alien or profane] learning."¹⁵⁴ The *Fihrist* mentions a medical work, the *Pandects* (*Kitāb al-Kunnāsh*), written in Syriac by a certain Aaron (*Ahrun*) the priest, consisting of thirty discourses, which was translated by a physician Māsīrjīs, who added two more chapters.¹⁵⁵ The latter is listed as a translator from Syriac to Arabic and the author of two books. Al-Nadīm gives no indication of dates except that Aaron lived at the beginning of the Moslem era. Barhebraeus adds that Aaron, a contemporary of the Prophet, was an Alexandrian, whose *Kunnāsha fī l-Ṭibb* ("Principles of Medicine") is "found with us in Syriac."¹⁵⁶ In this place Barhebraeus calls the man who added to the work Sirjīs, but later¹⁵⁷ refers to him as Māsīrjiwaih, a physician of Baṣra, a Syrian as to language and a Jew by religion, who translated Aaron's work in the days of Marwān I (64/683–65/685) and adds an anecdote on him

¹⁵⁴ *Chronography, etc.*, p. 106.

¹⁵⁵ *Fihrist*, p. 297.

¹⁵⁶ *Chronicles* (Beirut ed.), p. 157; Pococke ed. (text), p. 159; (trans.), p. 99.

¹⁵⁷ Beirut ed., p. 192; Pococke (text), p. 198; (trans.), p. 127.

from a contemporary. This historian took his information from Ibn Juljul al-Andalusī, whom Ibn al-Ḳiftī and Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a quote more fully.¹⁵⁸ They have substantially the same information on Aaron¹⁵⁹ as does the *Fihrist*. Both have fairly long sketches on the translator, which differ but slightly. Ibn al-Ḳiftī calls him Māsirjiwaih, with the alternative Māsirjīs, and says he was a Jew of Baṣra, living in the time of ʿUmar II,¹⁶⁰ learned in medicine, who translated for this caliph Aaron's medical work, the *Pandects*, "the most excellent of ancient books of the time." Then he follows with a quotation from Ibn Juljul which says that Māsirjīs made the translation in the days of Marwān, which was found by ʿUmar in the royal library (*khazā'in al-kutub*). The caliph ordered the book brought out and placed it in his place of prayer (*muṣallā*) after which he consulted Allah as to the desirability of bringing it out to the Moslems (to publish it, one manuscript, instead of *Moslems*, has "concerning its being brought out in Arabic"). After forty days had elapsed, apparently the verdict was favorable, for he caused it to be brought out to the people and published. Ibn Juljul says that Abū Bakr Mohammed ibn ʿAmr related this story to him in the Ḳarmūni Mosque in the year 359.¹⁶¹

This story of ʿUmar bringing out a medical book from the royal collections to the people, which amounts to publishing the work, bears some resemblances to that quoted above about Khālid bringing out books from the library (*khizāna*) to make them available to the people. Both events are placed in the reign of ʿUmar II. Are they two versions of the same affair, and is there some hint of supposed magical efficacy in a book on medicine?

Professor H. G. Farmer, of Glasgow, says that the manuscript of the *ʿArḍ Miṣṭaḥ al-Nujūm*, of Hermes, in the Ambrosian Library is dated 743 (A.D.); of it I have been unable to locate any more information.¹⁶² If the date is genuine (is it the equivalent in the Arabic era to 743?),

¹⁵⁸ Ibn al-Ḳiftī, *op. cit.*, pp. 324 ff.; Ibn Abī ʿUṣaibi'a, *ʿUyūn al-Anbā fī Tabāḳāt al-Aʿtibā*, compiled A.D. 1245 (Cairo, 1882), I, 163 f.

¹⁵⁹ Ibn al-Ḳiftī, p. 80; Ibn Abī ʿUṣaibi'a, I, 109, l. 15.

¹⁶⁰ Ibn Abī ʿUṣaibi'a simply places him in the Umayyad period, I, 163, l. 26, and lists a work by his son ʿIsā (*ibid.*, I, 204).

¹⁶¹ Ibn Abī ʿUṣaibi'a has Tarmudhī mosque. Ibn al-Ḳiftī adds two anecdotes on Māsirjīs found also in Ibn Abī ʿUṣaibi'a, I, 163, ll. 31 f., and 164, ll. 11 f.

¹⁶² H. G. Farmer, *Historical Facts for Arabian Musical Influence* (London, 1930), p. 273; this title is mentioned in the *Fihrist*, p. 267, and Ibn al-Ḳiftī, p. 403.

it means that this manuscript of an astrological work is a century older than the Heidelberg papyrus mentioned above (229/844) and is valuable evidence for the beginnings of translations from Greek. These various indications of the first use of foreign literatures seem to suggest that the Arabs first interested themselves in what must have appeared to them as the practical sciences: medicine, astrology, and alchemy, and only later (and perhaps thereby) were attracted to the more abstract sciences and philosophy. Barhebraeus quotes the Ẹādī Ṣāʿd ibn Aḥmad al-Andalusī (d 462–1070) to the effect that during the Umayyad period the only science (other than their own language and law) which attracted the attention of the Arabs was medicine. Although cultivated only by certain individuals, it was generally approved because of its universal utility.¹⁶³ Muʿāwiya's study of history was also motivated by considerations of practicality, for he was especially devoted to accounts of the military tactics and state craft of rulers of the past.

As one reviews the various types of literature which were cultivated in the Umayyad period, it becomes apparent that it was not, as is so often supposed, one characterized by the dearth of literary activity, except for poetry. The cultivation of poetry, both ancient and contemporary, was most characteristic of the age, but several types of prose writings also had their beginnings. Much was done under royal patronage, but Medina was also a center for the poets of the Hijāz and students of religious matters. In Iraq, Baṣra and later Kūfa were the homes of scholars and poets, and from Ṣanaʿāʾ in the Yemen came men versed in ancient lore. The question of the beginnings of Arabic literature in Egypt also requires investigation, but, as Becker points out, they are quite obscure. It is most unlikely that all remnants of interest in Greek studies should have vanished when Egypt became a Moslem province. If there is anything to the Khālīd tradition, it points to Egypt as the source of his study and one of the sources for the knowledge of Greek works in general. The Hermes text points in the same direction. ʿAbd Allāh, son of the conqueror of Egypt, Laith ibn Saʿd and Ibn Lahīʿa, are names connected intimately with the propagation of Moslem traditions, especially of an eschatological tinge. A papyrus page (*ṣaḥīfa*) of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr, dealing with

¹⁶³ Probably from his "History of the Learned etc.," Pococke ed. (text) p. 246; (trans.), p. 160.

the final judgment, has survived, passing under the name of Ibn Lahī'a.¹⁶⁴ Egypt therefore appears to have shared with the rest of the Umayyad empire a growing interest in both religious and foreign studies and literature. However, these were not isolated centers, for, as in later times, singers, story-tellers, and scholars passed to and fro. Caliphs called them to the courts of Damascus or wrote them requesting information. Much was still passed on by word of mouth, but there was a real beginning in the preservation of literature by means of writing. One finds at once serious attempts to preserve the old, and real creative activity. Whether the early books were merely collections of students' notes and little treatises in the form of letters or more formal books, of which there were at least a few, the collecting of them, the recognition that such materials were worth keeping, can legitimately be considered the beginning of Moslem libraries. One may therefore speak of the libraries, even though few, of the caliphs and private individuals. The preservation of source materials is as truly a function of a library as is the treasuring of formally published books. If anything, at this stage of Arabic literary history the source material, consisting of the notes of scholars, taken from the lips of a few surviving companions, and the jotting-down of poetry from those who still remembered the ancient songs, are of greater importance than the actual books written at the time. Subsequent generations used and re-used the old material. But of books in our sense there were probably more than the fragmentary records and the exceedingly few survivals would suggest. A great age of intellectual and literary activity such as the early Abbasid period does not burst full blown without some earlier preparation. The Umayyad caliphs are said to have owned a volume of poetry composed in honor of the Lakhmid kings of the Christian Arabs of Hira, which had been put into writing for al-Nu'mān III (d. 605 or 7 A.D.), the last ruler of this pre-Moslem dynasty. It was written on boards and buried in his palace, where it was found by Mukhtār ibn Abī 'Ubad in 65 A.H. when he was hunting for concealed treasure.¹⁶⁵ This book and the Persian history, alluded

¹⁶⁴ See *Encyc. Islam*, art. of L. H. Becker, "Egypt," pp. 19-20; Becker, *Papyri Schott-Reinhardt*, I, 9.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Suyūṭī *Muzhir fī 'ulūm al-luġha* (Cairo, 1282), I, 121; II, 237; al-Jumāhī *Ṭabaḳāt*, ed. Hell, p. 10, ll. 13 ff.; Ibn Jinnī *Khaṣā'is* (Cairo, 1914), I, 393. Margoliouth doubts the historicity of this report, and suggests that if it really goes back to Hammād al-Rāwīya, to whom it is accredited, it was intended to account for his immense knowledge of pre-Islamic verse (see "The Origins of Arabic Poetry," *JRAS*, 1925, p. 428).

to by Mas'ūdī, suggest that books may have been, not infrequently, found in and preserved from the loot of the early wars of conquest.

In the *Kitāb al-Jumahir fī Ma'rifat al-Jawahir* ("Book of Precious Stones"), by al-Bīrūnī, the manuscript of which Krenkow is preparing for publication, this versatile scholar, writing in the first half of the fifth century (early eleventh), mentions a book on jewels, written in the time of 'Abd al-Mālik (685-705 A.D.) which had fallen into his hands. This book actually gave prices of precious stones which al-Bīrūnī cites on occasions.¹⁶⁶ The writing of such a book in the Umayyad period is most significant evidence for the state of literature at the time, for it is not the sort of thing likely to be produced when the writing of books was in its infancy and uncommon. It bespeaks a fairly advanced state of literary activity and furnishes one more bit of proof that religious studies and poetry were not the sole preoccupations of the writing and reading world.

One must be ever on guard lest he accept uncritically the estimate of the Umayyads foisted upon the world by their successors, the brilliant but often unscrupulous Abbasids. Without any desire to whiten the reputation of the caliphs at Damascus, who undoubtedly deserve many of the harsh accusations hurled at them both by their contemporaries and by succeeding generations, it is well to recognize that they were not utterly unworthy.

Mu'āwīya, the founder of the dynasty, was as astute a political and military leader as any in Moslem annals, and he was not devoid of an appreciation for literature. Susceptible to the charms of poetry, he knew how to utilize poets to further his own designs. By his patronage he won the support of the poets whom Lammens refers to as the journalists of the period. "To win them over was to have a good press and at the same time gained their tribes to the cause of order, for the tribes usually agreed with the ideas spread by their bards."¹⁶⁷ Part of his purpose was to swing public opinion in favor of his intention to name his son Yazīd as his successor, thereby making the caliphate hereditary. Yazīd was himself a poet and the friend of poets, and his father did not hesitate to exploit this bond of loyalty. In utilizing the

¹⁶⁶ Private communication from Professor Krenkow. He utilizes al-Bīrūnī's book in his article, "The Oldest Western Account of Chinese Porcelain," in *Islamic Culture*, July, 1933, pp. 464 ff.

¹⁶⁷ *Encyc. Islam*, art. "Mu'āwīya," pp. 619-20.

poets as agents of propaganda, Mu^cāwīya anticipated the common practice of later caliphs and lesser princelings and imitated the example of the Prophet. Mohammed, although avowedly the enemy of many singers of his day and objecting violently to any implication that he was himself merely another poet, found in Ḥassān ibn Thābit an invaluable ally. Ḥassān frequented the courts of the Ghassānid and Lakhmid kings and the fair at ʿUkāz in the days before Mohammed came to the front. After the Prophet's repeated successes marked him as the coming leader of the Arabs, Ḥassān threw in his lot with the new cause. He readily answered the lampoons of unbelieving poets and brought about the conversion of the tribe of Tamīm, after defeating its champions in a poetic contest. He continued to support the cause of the first three caliphs and is the founder of Moslem religious verse.¹⁶⁸ Margoliouth says that a copy of the poems of Ḥassān was kept at Medina and was regularly renewed whenever the writing showed signs of fading.¹⁶⁹

Although these considerations have led us far afield from the precise history of Moslem libraries, it is hoped they have made clear how these libraries, which rapidly became a characteristic institution in the intellectual and cultural life of Islam, grew from two roots. They are based in part on the example of the libraries of the world into which Islam spread, and are at the same time the natural outgrowth of the method by which their own literature was collected. The Koran resulted from the desire to preserve the revelations received by Mohammed from on high, and the great *dīwān*'s from the gathering of poetic fragments of pre-Islamic days, and traditions, history, and law from the collecting of records of the words and deeds of the Prophet.¹⁷⁰

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, art. "Ḥassān ibn Thābit"; Hirschfeld's Introduction to his edition of the *Dīwān of Ḥassān ibn Thābit* ("Gibb Series" [Leyden, 1910]).

¹⁶⁹ *Early Development*, p. 89; no Arabic authority cited. For estimates of the intellectual life and the state of education in the Umayyad period see H. Lammens, *La Syrie* (Beirut, 1921), chap. vi; *Encyc. Islam*, arts. "Masdjid" sect. "Mosque as an Educational Center," p. 351, "Umayyads," and "Mu^cāwīya"; Muir, *Annals of the Early Caliphate* (London, 1883), p. 46.

¹⁷⁰ Since this article was accepted for publication the literature on the subject has increased considerably. The article will be brought up to date in a short note at a future time.

[Concluded]