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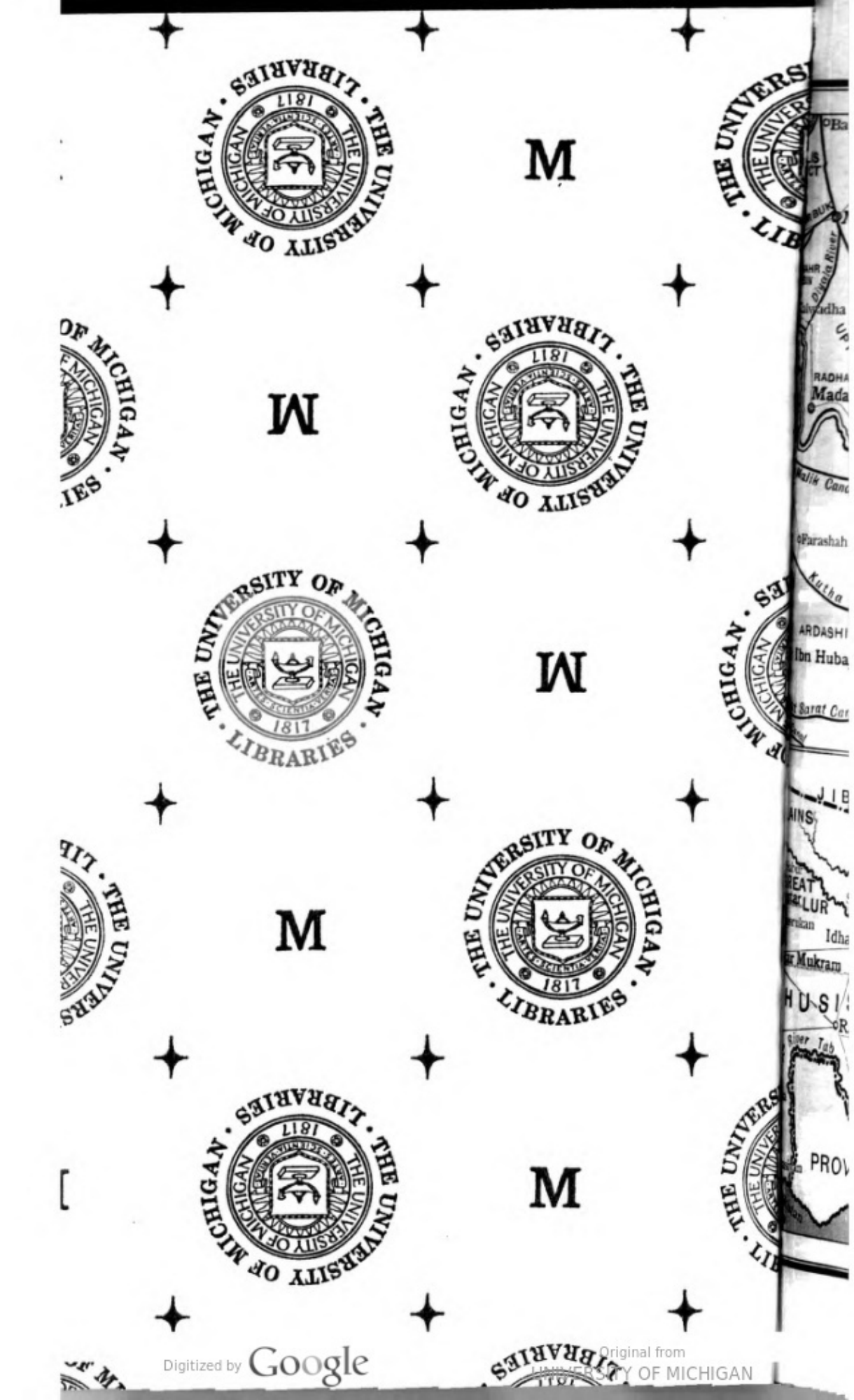

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CAMBRIDGE GEOGRAPHICAL SERIES.

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FORMERLY LECTURER IN GEOGRAPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

THE LANDS OF THE EASTERN CALIPHATE

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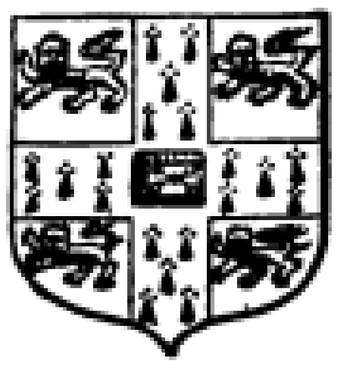
C. F. CLAY, MANAGER.
London: AVE MARIA LANE, E.C.
Glasgow: 50, WELLINGTON STREET.



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New York: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.
Bombay and Calcutta: MACMILLAN AND CO. LTD.

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THE LANDS OF THE EASTERN CALIPHATE

Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia from the Moslem conquest to the time of Timur

by

G. LE STRANGE

Author of *Bagbdad during the Abbasid Caliphate*, *Palestine under the Moslems* etc.

CAMBRIDGE:
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1905

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PREFACE.

IN the following pages an attempt is made to gather within a convenient compass the information scattered through the works of the medieval Arab, Persian, and Turkish geographers, who have described Mesopotamia and Persia, with the nearer parts of Central Asia. The authorities quoted begin with the earlier Moslem writers, and conclude with those who described the settlement of these lands which followed after the death of Tîmûr,—the last great Central Asian wars of conquest,—for with the fifteenth century the medieval period in Asia may be said to come to an end.

The present work is also the complement of *Baghdâd under the Abbasid Caliphate* published in 1900, and carries forward the geographical record which I began in *Palestine under the Moslems*, a work that appeared in 1890.

To keep the volume within moderate compass, the geography of Arabia, with the description of the two Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, though these for the most part were under the dominion of the Abbasids, has been omitted. Perhaps some other scholar may take up the subject, with fuller knowledge than I have, and write the historical geography of Arabia with Egypt across the Red Sea under the Fatimid Caliphs; completing the circuit of Moslem lands by describing the various provinces of North Africa, with the outlying and shortlived, though most splendid, western Caliphate of Spain.

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If Moslem history is ever to be made interesting, and indeed to be rightly understood, the historical geography of the nearer East during the middle-ages must be thoroughly worked out. I have made a first attempt, but how much more needs to be done, and better done than in the present volume, I am the first to recognise. The ground, however, for future work is now cleared; the authorities for each statement are given in the footnotes; some mistakes are corrected of previous writers, and a beginning made of a complete survey for this period of the provinces of the Abbasid Caliphate. But my book is only a summary, and does not pretend to be exhaustive; also to keep down the size, I have been obliged to omit translating in full the Itineraries, which our Moslem authorities give us. In this matter a new edition, duly corrected from recently published texts, is indeed much needed of Sprenger's *Post und Reise Routen des Orients*, though the translation of the Itineraries which Professor De Goeje has appended to his edition of Ibn Khurdâdbih and Ḳudâmah, goes far to supply the lack.

With each province I have given such information as our authorities afford of the trade and manufactures; the record, however, is very fragmentary, and for a general survey of the products of the Moslem east, during the middle-ages, the chapter on the subject (*Handel und Gewerbe)* in A. von Kremer's *Culturgeschichte des Orients* is still the best that I know.

A chronological list of the Moslem geographers referred to in the notes by initial letters is given at the end of the Table of Contents. The fuller titles of other works quoted in the notes are given on the first reference to each author, and the names of their works will easily be recovered, for subsequent references, by consulting the index for the first mention made of the book.

In the introductory chapter a summary description will be found of the works of the Arab geographers;

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but this matter has already been more fully discussed in *Palestine under the Moslems.*

The dates are given according to the years of the Hijrah, with the corresponding year A.D. (in brackets). The method of transcription adopted needs no comment, being that commonly in use; it may be noted that the Arab *w* is usually pronounced *v* in Persian; and that besides the emphatic *ẓ* the Arab *dh* and *ḍ* are both indifferently pronounced *z* in modern Persian, while the *th* has the sound of *s*.

In a work like the present, almost entirely composed from eastern sources, many errors will doubtless be found; also, with the great number of references, mistakes are unavoidable, and I shall feel most grateful for any corrections, or notice of omissions.

My hope is that others may be induced to set to work in this field of historical geography, and if this essāy be soon superseded by a more complete survey of the ground, it will have served its purpose in having prepared the way for better things.

G. LE STRANGE.

3, VIA SAN FRANCESCO POVERINO,
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ABBREVIATIONS AND CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF MOSLEM GEOGRAPHERS.

				A. H.	A. D.
I. K.	...	Ibn Khurdâdbih	...	250	(864)
Kud.	...	Ḳudâmah	...	266	(880)
Ykb.	...	Ya'ḳûbî	...	278	(891)
I. S.	...	Ibn Serapion	...	290	(903)
I. R.	...	Ibn Rustah	...	290	(903)
I. F.	...	Ibn Faḳîh	...	290	(903)
Mas.	...	Mas'ûdî	...	332	(943)
Ist.	...	Iṣṭakhrî	...	340	(951)
I. H.	...	Ibn Ḥawḳal	...	367	(978)
Muk.	...	Muḳaddasî	...	375	(985)
N. K.	...	Nâṣir-i-Khusraw	...	438	(1047)
F. N.	...	*Fârs Nâmah*	...	500	(1107)
Idr.	...	Idrîsî	...	548	(1154)
I. J.	...	Ibn Jubayr	...	580	(1184)
Yak.	...	Yâḳût	...	623	(1225)
Kaz.	...	Ḳazvînî	...	674	(1275)
Mar.	...	*Marâsid*	...	700	(1300)
A. F.	...	Abu-l-Fidâ	...	721	(1321)
Mst.	...	Mustawfî	...	740	(1340)
I. B.	...	Ibn Baṭûṭah	...	756	(1355)
Hfz.	...	Ḥâfiẓ Abrû	...	820	(1417)
A. Y.	...	'Alî of Yazd	...	828	(1425)
J. N.	...	*Jahân Numâ*	...	1010	(1600)
A. G.	...	Abu-l-Ghâzî	...	1014	(1604)

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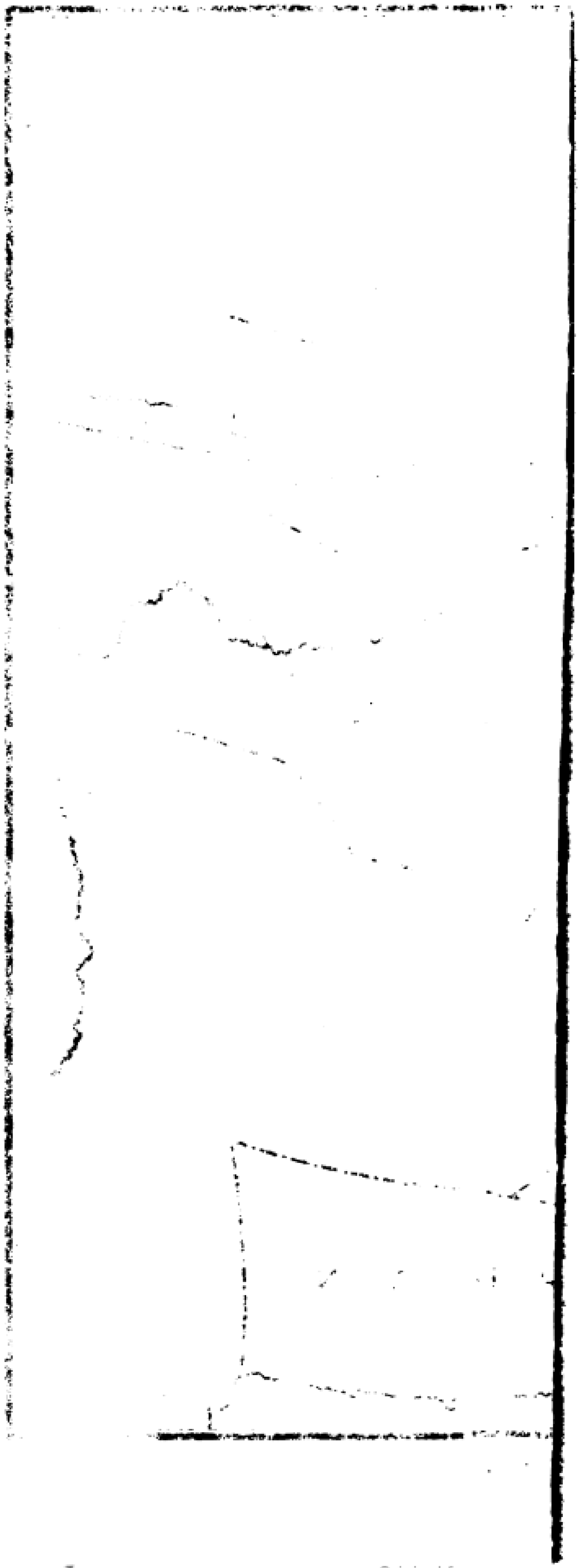

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Mesopotamia and Persia, their provinces under the Abbasid Caliphs. The outlying provinces to the north-west and the north-east. The high roads from Baghdâd to the Moslem frontier. The Moslem geographers, and their works. Other authorities. Place-names in the Arabic, Turkish, and Persian provinces.

Mesopotamia and Persia had formed the kingdom of the Sassanian Chosroes, which the Arabs utterly overthrew when, after the death of Muḥammad, they set forth to convert the world to Islam. Against the Byzantines, the other great power which the Moslems attacked, they achieved only a partial victory, taking possession, here and there, of rich provinces, notably of the coast lands to the south and east of the Mediterranean; but elsewhere the Emperors successfully withstood the Caliphs, and for many centuries continued to do so, the Roman empire in the end surviving the Caliphate by over two hundred years.

The kingdom of the Sassanians, on the other hand, the Arabs completely overran and conquered; Yazdajird, the last of the Chosroes, was hunted down and slain, and the whole land of Îrân passed under the rule of Islam. Then further, and to no inconsiderable extent, the empire of the Caliphs, which had taken over bodily the administration of the older Persian kingdom, came itself to be modelled on the pattern in government which the Chosroes had established; this more especially under the Abbasids, who, rather more than a century after the death of the Prophet, overthrew their rivals the Omayyads, and changing the seat of the Caliphate from Syria to Mesopotamia, founded Baghdâd on the Tigris, a few miles above Ctesiphon, the older winter capital of the Sassanians.

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Baghdâd forthwith became, for the East, the centre of the Moslem empire, but from the time of the first Abbasid Caliph this empire no longer remained, even nominally, undivided. Spain fell off, and before long an Omayyad Caliph at Cordova was the rival of the Abbasid Caliph at Baghdâd. In rather more than a century after their establishment in power, the Abbasids also lost Egypt, which, at about the date when the Omayyad prince at Cordova had recently proclaimed himself Commander of the Faithful, passed into the power of the Fatimids, who likewise took the style of Caliph, and renounced allegiance to Baghdâd. Syria had for the most part followed the fortunes of Egypt; Arabia was the debateable land between the two; in the Further East many provinces became independent of the Abbasid Caliph, but there no permanent rival Caliphate was established; so that in general terms all those broad provinces, which had formed the Sassanian kingdom before the days of Islam, remained to the last nominally, if not really, subject to the Abbasids. This vast stretch of country, bounded to the eastward by the deserts of Central Asia, with the mountains of Afghanistân, and westward by the Byzantine empire, was divided among the many provinces which will be described in detail in the succeeding chapters of the present work. The names of the provinces, and their boundaries, for the most part (and as far as is known), were under the Arabs identical with those that had existed under the Chosroes; indeed the East alters so little that in the majority of cases both names and boundaries have remained almost unchanged to the present day, though, as was to be foreseen, the political state, and especially the economical or material conditions of the country, have varied considerably during the last thirteen hundred years.

It will be convenient, before proceeding further, to give a brief summary of these various provinces, taking them in the order in which they are described in the succeeding chapters.

The great lowland province, which the Greeks called Mesopotamia, is the gift of its two rivers the Euphrates and the Tigris; and the latter in its lower course (as will be more fully explained in Chapter II) did not, in Abbasid times, run in the channel which its waters follow at the present day. A glance at the map shows that the sterile Arabian desert comes close up to the

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western border of the Euphrates, and this river, therefore, has no right bank affluents. With the Tigris, on the other hand, it is different; the highlands of Persia follow a line standing back at a considerable distance from the eastern side of this river, and many streams flow down from the Persian mountains, these forming numerous left bank affluents of the Tigris. The Moslems inherited from the Sassanians a system of irrigation for Mesopotamia which made this province one of the richest in the known world. The system will be more fully explained later; but briefly it may be said that the Arabs effectually watered the country lying between the two rivers by draining the surplus of the Euphrates through a number of transverse canals flowing to the Tigris; while the districts to the eastward of the Tigris, extending up to the foot-hills of the Persian highlands, were watered in part by the streams which flowed down from these mountains, in part by a series of loop canals, taken from the left bank of the Tigris, and returning to it again, which in turn absorbed the flood-waters of the many small rivers rising in the eastern hills.

The Arabs divided Mesopotamia into two provinces, Lower and Upper, of which the Lower comprised the rich alluvial lands known anciently as Babylonia. Lower Mesopotamia was called Al-'Irâḳ, and its northern limit (which, however, varied at different times) was a line going east and west, from points on the Euphrates and Tigris, respectively, where these two rivers first began to flow near each other through the Mesopotamian plain. The largest city of 'Irâḳ, under the Abbasids, was of course Baghdâd; but already a century before that dynasty had come to power, the first Moslems, on conquering this part of Mesopotamia, had founded three great towns, Wâsiṭ, Kûfah, and Baṣrah, which continued to flourish for many centuries; and these, with Anbâr (already a city in Sassanian days) lying on the Euphrates in the latitude of Baghdâd, were the great centres of population in the 'Irâḳ province under the Abbasid Caliphs.

North of the limit of the alluvial lands stretched the hard and somewhat stony plains of Upper Mesopotamia, where had been the kingdom of Nineveh in ancient times. Upper Mesopotamia the Arabs called Al-Jazîrah, 'the island,' or rather 'the peninsula,'

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or partial island, for these great plains were almost enclosed by a ring of waters, formed by the upper courses of the Euphrates and Tigris, and by streams or canals joining the two to the southward of the stony plains. The province of Jazîrah extended north to the mountains in which the two great rivers had their sources; it was divided into three districts, named after the Arab tribes which had settled here in the times of the Chosroes, and its chief towns were Mosul near the ruins of Nineveh, Âmid on the Upper Tigris, and Raḳḳah at the great bend of the Euphrates, near the desert border on the further side of which is Damascus.

The chapter following deals with the mountainous countries in which the twin rivers, which are the head streams of the Euphrates, take their rise. This country formed the debateable land between the Caliphate and the empire. Time and again its towns and fortresses were taken and retaken, by Moslems and Christians, as the tide of war ebbed and flowed. The country was never permanently settled by the Arabs, and detailed description of it is for the most part lacking in our earlier authorities. The same remark, and in a higher degree, applies to the province called Rûm (the Roman Territory) which, till the latter part of the 5th (11th) century, remained an integral part of the Byzantine empire; for between this province and the Caliphate the great rampart of the Taurus chain formed the line of demarcation. Almost yearly the Moslems made incursions through the Taurus passes into Anatolia; more than once they laid ineffectual siege to Constantinople; and at times they garrisoned and occupied divers fortress towns up on the great plateau of Asia Minor. But beyond such temporary occupation the Abbasid Caliphs did not succeed in conquering the upland country; they made many raids through Asia Minor, but they held no land, and Moslem rule was not established there, until in the decline of the Caliphate, the Saljûḳ Turks settled in these highlands which they wrested from the Byzantines, and then finally Asia Minor, or Rûm, came to be counted as Moslem land, in which condition it still remains.

To the east of Jazîrah, or Upper Mesopotamia, came the province of Adharbâyjân, the ancient Atropatene, bounded above and below, respectively, by the Araxes and the White River, the Safîd-

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Rûd, both of which streams flowed into the Caspian. The most notable natural feature of this province was the great salt lake, now known as the lake of Urmîyah, near which stood Tabrîz and Marâghah, the provincial capitals, while Ardabîl, another great town, lay to the eastward nearer the shore of the Caspian. The chapter following describes a number of smaller provinces of the north-western border. First Gîlân, or Jîlân, on the Caspian, where the Safîd-Rûd, breaking through the Alburz range, the mountain barrier of the Persian highlands, flows through an alluvial plain of its own making, pushing out a small delta into the Caspian. Next, the province of Mûghân at the mouth of the combined Araxes and Cyrus rivers; then Arrân lying to the westward between the courses of these two rivers; with Shirvân to the north of the Cyrus, and Gurjistân (Georgia) at its head waters. Lastly we have Moslem Armenia lying at the head waters of the Araxes, which is the mountainous province surrounding the lake of Vân.

South-east of Adharbâyjân spreads the rich province of Media, which the Arabs very appropriately called Al-Jibâl, 'the mountains,' for its mountains overhang the lowlands of Lower Mesopotamia, and, range behind range, stretch across eastward to the border of the Great Desert of Central Persia. The western part of the Jibâl province, in later times, when the Kurds attained fame and power, came to be known as Kurdistân; and in the later middle-ages, but by a misnomer, as will be explained in due course, the province of Al-Jibâl was often called 'Irâḳ 'Ajamî, or *Persian* 'Irâḳ, in contrast to *Arabian* 'Irâḳ, which was Lower Mesopotamia. The Jibâl province included many great cities; in the west Kirmânshâh and Hamadân (the latter the ancient Ecbatana); in the north-east Ray (Rhages), and to the south-east Ispahân. At a later period the Mongols of Persia founded Sulṭânîyah in its northern plains, which for a time taking the place of Baghdâd, became the capital of this portion of their empire, which included both Mesopotamia and Persia under the rule of the Îl-Khân. In the mountains of the Jibâl province many rivers take their rise, among the rest the Kârûn, which the Arabs called Dujayl or Little Tigris, and which after a long and tortuous course flows out at the head of the Persian Gulf, a little

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to the east of the combined mouth of the Euphrates and Tigris.

The province of Khûzistân, lying south of Media and east of Lower Mesopotamia, occupies the lower course of the Kârûn river, or Dujayl, with its numerous affluents. This country was extremely rich; Tustar and Ahwâz were its chief towns; and its lands being plentifully irrigated were most productive. East of Khûzistân, and bordering the Gulf, lay the great province of Fârs, the ancient Persis and the cradle of the Persian monarchy. Under the Abbasids it still kept the division into the five Kûrahs, or districts, which had been organized under the Sassanians, and Fârs was closely studded with towns, great and small, the most important of which were Shîrâz the capital, Iṣṭakhr (Persepolis), Yazd, Arrajân, and Dârâbjird. The islands of the Gulf were counted as of Fârs, and Kays island was an important commercial centre before the rise of Hurmuz. The chief physical feature of Fârs was the great salt lake of Bakhtigân, which with other smaller sheets of water stood in the broad highland valleys, whose mountains were offsets of the ranges in the Jibâl province, already referred to. In Fârs, the Dârâbjird district under the Mongols came to be counted as a separate province, and was in the 7th (13th) century called Shabânkârah; the Yazd district also, in the later middle-ages, was given to the Jibâl province.

To the east of Fârs lay the province of Kirmân, far less fertile, almost lacking in rivers, and bordering on the Great Desert. Of this province there were two capitals in Abbasid times, Sîrjân and Kirmân city; and the two other most important towns of the province were Hurmuz, on the coast; and Jîruft, inland, a centre of much commerce. The Great Desert of Central Persia is the most remarkable physical feature of the high tableland of Îrân. This immense salt waste stretches south-east diagonally across Persia, from Ray, at the base of the mountains which on their northern side overlook the Caspian, spreading in a broad band —or rather, in a dumb-bell-shaped depression—the lower end of which merges into the hills of Makrân, the province bordering on the Indian Ocean. In the Great Desert there are few oases; a salt efflorescence covers much of the barren levels, but the desert in winter time is not difficult to pass, and many well

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marked tracks connect the towns on either side. But on the other hand the Great Desert is a real barrier to any continuous intercourse between the provinces of Fârs and Kirmân, which lie on its south-western side, and the eastern provinces which are beyond its other limit, namely Khurâsân with Sîstân to the south-east, and this desert barrier has played an important part all through the history of Persia. After describing what the Moslem geographers have to say of the Great Desert, the same chapter deals with the Makrân province, which on the east touched India, running up to the highlands overlooking the Indus valley, part of which is now known as Balûchistân. On these regions, however, our authorities are not very fully informed.

North of Makrân, and across the narrow part of the desert opposite Kirmân, lay the province of Sijistân or Sîstân, to the east of the extensive, but very shallow lake of Zarah. Into this lake drained the waters of the Helmund, and numerous other rivers flowing south-west from the high mountains of Afghanistân lying above Kâbul and Ghaznah. Here Kandahâr stood in a plain between two of the affluents of the Helmund, and where this great river flowed into the Zarah lake lay Zaranj, the capital of Sijistân. North-west of the Zarah lake, and on the border of the Great Desert, was the very hilly province aptly called Ḳûhistân (Land of Mountains), the chief towns of which were Tûn and Ḳâyin, well known as the Tunocain of Marco Polo; Sijistân and Ḳûhistân thus forming the southern border of Khurâsân, the great eastern province of Persia.

Before describing this last, however, the three small provinces of Ḳûmis, Ṭabaristân and Jurjân, which form the subject of the succeeding chapter, require notice. Ḳûmis, of which the capital was Dâmghân, lay in length along the north border of the Great Desert eastward of Ray, comprising the southern foot-hills of the mountain chain of Alburz which shuts off the high plateau of Persia from the Caspian Sea. These mountains, and more particularly their northern flank descending to the Caspian, formed the province of Ṭabaristân, otherwise called Mâzandarân, which extended from Gîlân and the delta of the White River (Safîd-Rûd), on the west, to the south-eastern corner of the Caspian. Here Ṭabaristân joined Jurjân, or Gurgân, the ancient

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Hircania, which included the valleys watered by the rivers Atrak and Jurjân, on which last stood Jurjân city. The Jurjân province extended eastward from the Caspian Sea to the desert which separated Khurâsân from the cultivated lands of the Oxus delta, namely the province of Khwârizm.

The modern province of Khurâsân is but a moiety of the great tract of country which, from Abbasid times down to the later middle-ages, was known under this name; for Khurâsân of those days included what is now become the north-western part of Afghanistân. On the east, medieval Khurâsân bordered on Badakhshân, its northern frontier was the Oxus and the desert of Khwârizm. The Moslem geographers divided Khurâsân into four quarters, named after its four capital cities; *viz.* Nîshâpûr, Marv, Herat, and Balkh. From a physical point of view the remarkable feature of Khurâsân consisted in the two great rivers of Herat and of Marv, which rising in the mountains of what is now Afghanistân, turned north and flowed out to waste in the sands of the desert towards Khwârizm, reaching no sea or lake.

The chapter following deals with the upper waters of the Oxus, and a number of small provinces, stretching from Badakhshân westwards, which lie to the north, on the right bank affluents of the great river. Its delta, forming the province of Khwârizm to the south of the Aral Sea, is next described, of which Urganj was the older capital, and in this chapter some pages are devoted to clearing up the much debated subject of the older course of the Oxus to the Caspian. Beyond the great river, and between the Oxus and the Jaxartes, lay the province of Sughd, the ancient Sogdiana, with its two noble cities, Samarḳand and Bukhârâ, both on the Sughd river. This is the penultimate chapter of the present work; and the last chapter deals with the provinces along the Jaxartes, from Farghânah near the borders of the Chinese deserts, of which the capital was Akhsîkath, to Shâsh, modern Tâshkand, with the Isbîjâb province to the north-west, beyond which the Jaxartes flowed out, through the bleak wilderness, into the upper part of the Aral Sea. Of these northern countries of the Further East, however, lying beyond Central Asia, the earlier Arab geographers give but a succinct account. They were the Turk lands, and it was only after the Mongol invasion that they

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rose to importance; of this period unfortunately there is a lack of precise information, the Arab geographers failing us for the most part, and their place being but ill-supplied by the later Persian and Turkish authorities.

The Moslems, by the injunction of their Prophet, were bound each, once in a lifetime, to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Under the Abbasids, when the Moslem empire reached its fullest extent, the pilgrimage was facilitated by the elaborate system of high roads, all made to radiate from Baghdâd, where the Tigris was crossed by those coming from the further east and bound for the Ḥijâz. Of this road system (which the Arabs had inherited from the earlier Persian kingdom) we possess detailed contemporary descriptions; and the chief lines, running through the provinces named in the foregoing paragraphs, may here be summarily described.

The most famous of the trunk roads was the great Khurâsân road, which, going east, united the capital with the frontier towns of the Jaxartes on the borders of China. This, too, is perhaps that which of all the roads is best described. Leaving East Baghdâd by the Khurâsân gate, it went across the plain, passing over numerous streams by well-built bridges, to Ḥulwân at the foot of the pass leading up to the highlands of Persia. Here it entered the Jibâl province and after a steep ascent reached Kirmânshâh, the capital of Kurdistân. Crossing the Jibâl province diagonally, north-east, the road passed through Hamadân to Ray. From Ray onwards it went almost due east through Ḳûmis, having the Ṭabaristân mountains on the left, and the Great Desert on the south, till it entered the province of Khurâsân near the town of Bisṭâm. Continuing onwards it came to Nîshâpûr, then to Ṭûs, and on to Marv, beyond which it crossed the desert to the Oxus bank at Âmul, thence reaching successively Bukhârâ and Samarḳand in the province of Sughd. At Zâmîn a short distance east of Samarḳand, the road bifurcated: on the left hand one road proceeded to Shâsh (Tâshkand) and ultimately to the ford at Utrâr on the lower course of the Jaxartes; the other road, leaving Zâmîn, turned off to the right, towards Farghânah and the Upper Jaxartes, coming to Akhsîkath the capital, and finally to Ûzkand on the borders of the Chinese desert.

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This in its full extent was the great Khurâsân road; and to the present day the post-roads crossing Persia, but centring in Ṭihrân, near the older Ray, follow the same long track which the earlier Arab geographers have described. After the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, the road system was in part altered by the building of Sulṭânîyah, which became the capital of the Mongols. But all that this entailed was a branch road north from Hamadân direct to Sulṭânîyah, which, for a time, took the place of Ray as the centre point of the roads in this quarter.

In earlier days, under the Abbasids, cross-roads had branched off, right and left, to various parts of Persia from the chief towns along the Khurâsân high road. Thus from near Kirmânshâh a road went north to Tabrîz and other towns on the Urmîyah lake, with prolongations to Ardabîl and to places on the Araxes. From Hamadân, going south-east, there was a high road to Isfahân; and from Ray, going north-west, the distances to Zanjân are given, whence a highway led up to Ardabîl. Nîshâpûr in Khurâsân was a centre for many branch roads; southwards one went to Ṭabas on the borders of the Great Desert in Ḳûhistân; another road went to Ḳâyin; while south-east was the highway to Herat, whence Zaranj in Sijistân was reached. From Marv a high road followed up the Marv river to Lesser Marv (Marv-ar-Rûd), where, joining a road coming from Herat, it went on to Balkh and the eastern frontier lands beyond the Oxus. Finally from Bukhârâ there was direct communication, north-west, with Urganj in Khwârizm; and, south-west, with Tirmid on the Oxus opposite Balkh.

This completes the system of the Khurâsân road; and now returning to Baghdâd, the central point, the highways going in other directions must be sketched. Down the Tigris, the distances and stations being given both by land and by water, was the highway through Wâsiṭ to Baṣrah, the great port for the trade of the Persian Gulf. From both Wâsiṭ and Baṣrah, Ahwâz in Khûzistân was reached, and thence the high road went due east to Shîrâz in Fârs. This was a centre of many roads. North was the road to Isfahân and on to Ray; north-east, through Yazd and across the Great Desert Ṭabas was reached, which communicated with Nîshâpûr; eastward by more than one route Sîrjân and

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Kirmân were in communication, and thence eastward across the Great Desert was the way to Zaranj in Sijistân; while south-east and south from Shîrâz two roads branched towards the Persian Gulf ports, one passing through Dârâbjird to Sûrû near Hurmuz, the other to Sîrâf, at one time the chief harbour of Fârs.

Returning once again to Baghdâd, the central point, we find that the great Pilgrim road to Mecca and Medina left West Baghdâd, going south to Kûfah on the border of the Arabian desert, which it crossed almost in a direct line to the Ḥijâz. A second Pilgrim road started from Baṣrah, running at first nearly parallel with the other, which it finally joined two stages north of Mecca. Then from Baghdâd, north-west, a road went to the Euphrates at Anbâr, and thence up that river to Raḳḳah, a centre point for roads across the Syrian desert to Damascus, and for many other highways going north to the Greek frontier towns. Finally from Baghdâd, north, there were high roads up both banks of the Tigris to Mosul, whence Âmid was reached on the one hand, and Ḳirḳîsiyâ on the Euphrates to the south-west. From Âmid there were roads communicating with most of the frontier fortresses towards the Greek country.

This in brief was the road system under the Abbasids, which, centring in Baghdâd, connected the capital by a system of post-stages with the outlying provinces of the empire. The system is very carefully described by the Arab geographers, and for purposes of reference it may be well now to give in chronological order a short account of our contemporary authorities, on whose works we rely for the facts set down in the following chapters[1].

The earlier of our authorities date from the middle of the 3rd (9th) century, and the first geographical treatises of the Arabs take the form of Road Books. These set forth in detail the various itineraries, are interspersed with short accounts of the towns passed through, and give the revenues and products, in turn, of each province. Of these Road Books we possess four, in particular, which are of primary importance, and they complement

[1] For further particulars of the Arab geographers see *Palestine under the Moslems* (London, 1890), the Introductory chapter; also for more detail, the Introduction to the French translation of Abu-l-Fidâ, by M. Reinaud (Paris, 1848).

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each other, for their texts have in many passages come down to us in a mutilated condition. The authors of these Road Books of the 3rd (9th) century are Ibn Khurdâdbih, Ḳudâmah, Ya'ḳûbî and Ibn Rustah.

The first two are almost identical in substance. Ibn Khurdâdbih was post-master of the Jibâl province, Kuḍâmah was a revenue accountant; their itineraries give stage by stage the distances along the great Khurâsân road and the other trunk roads, as sketched in the preceding paragraphs, which radiated from Baghdâd. The work of Ya'ḳûbî has unfortunately not reached us in its entirety; to it we owe the account of Baghdâd which, with the description written by Ibn Serapion, has made it possible to work out in detail the topography of the Abbasid capital. Ya'ḳûbî gives further a number of valuable notes on many other cities, and the details of the high roads traversing the 'Irâḳ province are found fully set forth only in his work. Of Ibn Serapion, his contemporary, only a fragment has reached us; but this, in addition to the account given of Baghdâd, is of capital importance for the river and canal system of Mesopotamia; he gives also shorter descriptions of the rivers in other provinces. Ibn Rustah has written a similar work to Ya'ḳûbî, adding many notices of towns; but above all he has given us a most minute account of the great Khurâsân road as far as Ṭûs, near Mashhad, with some of its branch roads, notably those going to Isfahân, and to Herat; also the road from Baghdâd south to Kûfah, and to Baṣrah, with the continuation eastward to Shîrâz. On all these trunk lines, not only are the distances and stages given, but an exact description is added of the nature of the country passed through; whether the way be hilly, ascending or descending, or whether the road lies in the plain; and this description of Ibn Rustah is naturally of first-rate importance for the exact identification of the line traversed, and for fixing the position of many lost sites. Another authority is Ibn-al-Faḳîh, a contemporary of Ibn Rustah, who wrote a very curious geographical miscellany, of which unfortunately only an abridgment has come down to us. Some of his notices of places, however, are of use in completing or correcting the earlier accounts[1].

[1] The texts of Ibn Khurdâdbih, Ḳudâmah, Ya'ḳûbî, Ibn Rustah and

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The systematic geographers begin with the 4th (10th) century. They describe fully and in turn each province of the Moslem empire, only incidentally giving the high roads, and generally piecemeal for each province. Their works are of course a great advance on the Road Books; to them we owe such fulness of geographical detail as will be found in the following chapters, and the three first names on the list, Iṣṭakhrî, Ibn Ḥawḳal, and Muḳaddasî, are those to whose labours we are most materially indebted. The work of Ibn Ḥawḳal is but a new edition, partly enlarged and emended, of Iṣṭakhrî; on the other hand Iṣṭakhrî, a native of Persepolis, gives the description of his native province, Fârs, in far greater detail than is to be found in Ibn Ḥawḳal, who reduced his chapter on Fârs to the due proportion of the remainder of the book. Muḳaddasî, their contemporary, wrote his geography entirely on independent lines, and chiefly from his personal observations of the divers provinces. His work is probably the greatest, it is certainly the most original, of all those which the Arab geographers composed; his descriptions of places, of manners and customs, of products and manufactures, and his careful summaries of the characteristics of each province in turn, are indeed some of the best written pages to be found in all the range of medieval Arab literature.

It is further to be remarked that to these last three systematic geographers we owe the exact identification of most of the names displayed on the accompanying maps. At the close of each chapter they give a table of 'the distances,' namely the stages or sections of the great high roads, already described, which crossed the province in question, and in addition to the high roads an immense number of cross-distances are added, going between

Ibn-al-Fakîh are edited by Professor De Goeje in volumes V, VI, and VII of his series *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* (Leyden, 1885—1892); further in vol. VI he has added a French translation, with many important notes, of the first two authorities. Of Ibn Serapion the text, describing Mesopotamia, will be found in the *Jour. R. Asiat. Soc.* for 1895, p. 9; and the MS. referred to is that in the British Museum, numbered Add. 23,379. Ya'ḳûbî, in addition to his work on geography, also wrote a history, the text of which has been edited by Professor M. T. Houtsma (*Ibn-Wâdhih, qui dicitur Al-Ja'qubi, Historiae*, Leyden, 1883), and this often contains valuable information in matters of geography.

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neighbouring towns. These distances, plotted out and starting from known points, enable us to cover the map with a system of triangulation, by means of which the positions of some towns, long ruined, and the very vestiges of which have in many cases disappeared, can be approximately laid down; as, for instance, in the case of Tawwaj in Fârs, the ruins of which have not yet been identified, though their situation can now be fixed within narrow limits. Another writer of the 4th (10th) century is Mas'ûdî, who has left two works; the first for the most part historical, and well known under the title of *The Golden Meadows*; the second, a sort of commonplace book, full of curious details and notes, which is called *At-Tanbîh*, '*The Admonishment*[1].'

Coming to the 5th and 6th (11th and 12th) centuries, we have the works of two famous travellers, pilgrims, whose descriptions of the places they passed through are of considerable importance. Nâṣir, son of Khusraw, the Persian, in the middle of the 5th (11th) century went from Khurâsân to Mecca and back, visiting Egypt and Syria on his way out, and crossing Arabia on the homeward journey, and his diary, written in Persian, is one of the earliest works we possess in that language. Ibn Jubayr, the Spanish Arab, a century later made the pilgrimage starting from Granada; and his account of Mesopotamia, particularly of Baghdâd, is one of the most interesting that has come down to us. Dating from the beginning of the 6th (12th) century is another Persian work, called the *Fârs Nâmah* (Book of Fârs), describing most minutely that province, and invaluable as far as it goes. Also dating from the middle of this century we have the systematic geography of Idrîsî, who lived at the court of the Norman king, Roger II of Sicily. He wrote in Arabic, and very inconveniently has composed

[1] The texts of Iṣtakhrî, Ibn Ḥawḳal, and Muḳaddasî form volumes I, II, and III, respectively, of the already-mentioned series of the *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.* (Leyden, 1870—1877). Of Mas'ûdî the text of the *Tanbîh* has been edited by Professor De Goeje in vol. VIII of the same series (Leyden, 1894); and a translation in French of this has been published (Paris, 1896) by Baron Carra de Vaux under the title of *Le Livre de l'Avertissement*. The history, called *The Golden Meadows* (Murûj-adh-Dhahab), was published (Paris, 1861), the Arabic text being given with a French translation, by Messrs Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille; the two last works under the auspices of the French Société Asiatique.

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his description of the known world in 'Climates,' that is according to zones of latitude, whereby the various provinces are often divided up arbitrarily, Mesopotamia, for instance, being partly described in the 3rd Climate, partly in the 4th. He had, unfortunately for our purpose, no personal knowledge of Persia or the regions east of the Mediterranean, but had visited Asia Minor, then still a province of the Roman empire, and his description of this region would be invaluable, but for the fact that the place-names (by reason of incorrect MSS.) are in many cases illegible, or so corrupt as to be at present mostly beyond recognition[1].

Coming to the 7th (13th) century, the period of the Mongol invasion and the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, we have the voluminous *Geographical Dictionary* of Yâḳût, a compilation it is true from earlier writers, but illustrated by the author's own far extended travels, which, when it is used with due criticism, is perfectly invaluable. The articles are arranged in alphabetical order, and Yâḳût quotes freely from almost all his predecessors in Arab geographical literature, some of whose works, as for instance those of the traveller Ibn-al-Muhalhal, who wrote in 330 (942), are only known to us by his excerpts. This great dictionary was epitomised, three-quarters of a century after its appearance, in a work called *Al-Marâṣid*, 'the Observatories,' and the author of this epitome, a native of Mesopotamia, often gives valuable corrections, of first-hand authority, for places in the regions round Baghdâd. Of about the same date is Kazvînî, who wrote a work in two parts on cosmography, which gives interesting notes on the products and the commerce of divers towns and provinces; and in the earlier part of the 8th (14th) century we have the systematic geography of Abu-l-Fidâ, a Syrian prince, who, though he compiled largely from the works of his predecessors, in addition gives

[1] The Persian text of Nâṣir-i-Khusraw, with an annotated French translation, has been brought out by C. Schéfer, in the series of the École des Langues Orientales Vivantes (Paris, 1881). The Arabic text of Ibn Jubayr was well edited by W. Wright (Leyden, 1852). The *Fârs Nâmah* exists only in manuscript: that quoted is in the British Museum, numbered Or. 5983. Idrîsî has been translated into French (indifferently well) by A. Jaubert (Paris, 1836); passages quoted I have verified with the Arabic text, preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, *Manuscrits Arabes*, Nos. 2221 and 2222.

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facts from his own observation of the countries which he had visited[1].

Of the same date, namely the first half of the 8th (14th) century, are the travels of Ibn Baṭûṭah the Berber, who rivalled the Venetian Marco Polo in the extent of his voyages. His book is written in Arabic; his contemporary, Mustawfî, wrote in Persian a description of the Mongol kingdom of Îrân (Mesopotamia with Persia), which shows the condition of the country after the Mongol settlement, when this region was governed by the Îl-Khâns. Mustawfî also wrote an historical work called the *Târîkh-i-Guzîdah*, 'the Select History,' which, besides being of considerable value for Mongol times, often contains geographical notes of great importance[2].

For the time of Tîmûr we have primarily the notices in the historical work of 'Alî of Yazd, then the *Geography* written by Ḥâfiẓ Abrû; both are in Persian, and date from the first half of the 9th (15th) century. Lastly for the settlement after the conquests of Tîmûr, the works of two Turkish authors, one writing in Eastern Turkish, the other in 'Othmanlî, have to be mentioned, both being of the earlier half of the 11th (17th) century. These are the *History of the Turks and Mongols* by the Khwârizm prince Abu-l-Ghâzî, and the *Universal Geography* called the *Jahân Numâ*

[1] The *Mu'jam-al-Buldân*, the great dictionary of Yâḳût, has been edited in Arabic by F. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig, 1866—1873); the articles relating to places in Persia will be found translated into French, with additions from Mustawfî and later authorities, in the *Dictionnaire de la Perse* (Paris, 1861) of M. Barbier de Meynard. The *Marâṣid-al-Iṭṭilâ*, which is the epitome of Yâḳût, has been edited by Juynboll (Leyden, 1852). The two volumes of the *Cosmography* of Ḳazvînî have been edited by Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1848). The text of the *Geography* of Abu-l-Fidâ was edited by Reinaud and De Slane (Paris, 1840), and Reinaud also began (Paris, 1848) a translation of this work in French, prefixing to it a valuable Introduction on the Arab Geographers, which translation S. Guyard afterwards (Paris, 1883) completed.

[2] The Travels of Ibn Baṭûṭah, the Arabic text with a French translation, have been published (Paris, 1874—1879) by Defrémery and Sanguinetti. The Persian Geography of Ḥamd Allah Mustawfî (the text of the *Nuzhat-al-Ḳulûb*) was lithographed at Bombay in 1311 (1894), and the *Guzîdah* is quoted from the British Museum MS. numbered Add. 22,693, MSS. Add. 7630 and Egerton 690 having been collated. Part of the *Guzîdah* has now been printed, with a French translation, by M. J. Gantin (Paris, 1903).

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(World Displayer) by the celebrated bibliographer Ḥâjj Khalfah[1].

For elucidating points of detail the works of many of the Arab historians are of primary importance. By earlier writers history and geography were often treated of in one and the same work. An instance of this is the *Book of the Conquests*, written by Balâdhurî, and dating from the middle of the 3rd (9th) century. It describes in turn, east and west, all the conquests of the Moslems, and is of great interest as showing the state of the country when Islam first became the dominant creed. Of the chronicles, besides the History written by Ya'ḳûbî, already mentioned, there is, dating from the 3rd (9th) century, the work of Ibn Mashkuwayh, of which the Sixth Section only has been printed. The annals of Ḥamzah of Isfahân, written in the middle of the 4th (10th) century, likewise give useful information, and though of course composed in Arabic, the work was evidently based on many Persian books, now lost, and it relates facts of which we should otherwise be ignorant.

The most complete, however, of the Arabic chronicles, down to the beginning of the 4th (10th) century, at which date he flourished, is that of Ṭabarî, and his work is for geography a primary authority. For later Abbasid history Ibn-al-Athîr has to be relied upon; also the entertaining summary of Moslem history generally known by the name of Fakhrî. The *Universal History* of Ibn Khaldûn is often of use to supplement the meagre chronicle of Ibn-al-Athîr; and the great *Biographical Dictionary* of Ibn Khallikân occasionally adds details. These authors all wrote in Arabic. In Persian the two histories called the *Rawḍat-aṣ-Ṣafâ* and the *Ḥabîb-as-Siyâr*, respectively by Mîrkhwând and by Khwândamîr

[1] The Persian text of the history of Tîmûr by 'Alî of Yazd, known as the *Ẓafar Nâmah*, is published in the Bibliotheca Indica (Calcutta, 1887). A French translation called *Histoire de Timour Bec* was published (Paris, 1722), by Petis de la Croix. Ḥâfiẓ Abrû exists only in manuscript; the one quoted is that of the British Museum, numbered Or. 1577. The Turkish text of the *Jahân Numâ* was printed in Constantinople in 1145 (1732) by Ibrâhîm Efendî, and a Latin translation of part of this work was published by M. Norberg (Lund, 1818). The Turkî text, with a French translation, of the History of the Mongols, by Abu-l-Ghâzî, has been published by Baron Desmaisons (St Petersburg, 1871).

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his grandson, must be mentioned, for especially in the Persian provinces both these works give valuable geographical information. Two other Persian chronicles, relating to the Saljûḳ dynasties in Asia Minor and in Kirmân, are likewise of importance, and are more than once quoted in the following pages, being referred to under the names of the chroniclers Ibn Bîbî, and Ibn Ibrâhîm[1].

To complete our survey, a few pages in conclusion of this preliminary chapter may be devoted to some general remarks on the place-names which occur in the following chapters, and are set down on the maps. In the two provinces of Mesopotamia the great majority of the place-names are notably either Arabic or Aramaic, this last having been the common language of the people here, prior to the Moslem conquest. The Arabic names of towns generally have, or had, a meaning, as for instance Al-Kûfah, Al-Baṣrah, and Wâsiṭ. The Aramaic names, as a rule, are easily recognisable by their form, and by the termination in long â, for example Jabultâ; and the meaning of these too is generally not far to seek: e.g. 'Abartâ, 'the passage, or crossing place,' marking a bridge of boats; and Bâjisrâ, which is equivalent

[1] The text of Balâdhurî has been edited by Professor De Goeje (Leyden, 1866). He has also given us Ibn Mashkuwayh, forming the latter part of his *Fragmenta Historicorum Arabicorum* (Leyden, 1871). The History by Hamzah of Isfahân has been edited (with a Latin translation) by I. M. E. Gottwaldt (Leipzig, 1844). The numerous volumes of the great Chronicle of Tabarî have been published, in three series, under the editorship of Professor De Goeje (Leyden, 1879—1901). The Chronicle of Ibn-al-Athîr is edited by Tornberg (Leyden, 1867—1876). Fakhrî, more correctly named Ibn-aṭ-Ṭiḳṭaḳâ, has been edited by Ahlwardt (Gotha, 1860). Of Ibn Khaldûn, the text quoted is that printed at Bulâḳ in 1284 (1867): the text of Ibn Khallikân has been edited by Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1837), and an English translation was made by De Slane, for the Oriental Translation Fund (London, 1843). The references to the Persian texts of the histories by Mîrkhwând (or Amîrkhwând) and by Khwândamîr are to the lithographed editions, published in Bombay, of the *Rawḍat-aṣ-Ṣafâ* in 1266 (1850), and of the *Ḥabîb-as-Siyâr* in 1273 (1857). The two Saljûḳ chronicles are edited by Professor Houtsma in vols. I and IV of his *Recueil de Textes relatifs à l'Histoire des Seljoucides* (Leyden, 1886—1902). The first of these is by Ibn Ibrâhîm (otherwise called Muḥammad Ibrâhîm, or Muḥammad ibn Ibrâhîm), who flourished about the year 1025 (1616); and the second chronicle is by Ibn Bîbî, who wrote about 680 (1281). See also an article by Professor Houtsma in the *Zeit. Deutsch. Morg. Gesell.* 1885, p. 362.

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to the Arabic Bayt-al-Jisr, meaning 'bridge-house.' Older Persian names like Baghdâd, 'the god-given place,' are rare; and here and there a Greek name survives, as for instance Al-Ubullah, representing Apologos.

The Greek province of Asia Minor, as already said, only became Moslem land after the Saljûḳ conquest, in the latter half of the 5th (11th) century; and hence the Greek names are often known to us in two forms, an earlier (Arabic) and a later (Turkish); as, for example, Seleucia given first as Salûḳîyah, later as Selefkeh; and Heraclia which we find at first as Hiraḳlah, and in more modern times as Arâkliyah. After the Saljûḳ occupation of the country and the subsequent Ottoman supremacy, Turkish names naturally come to supplant the earlier Greek nomenclature; but in the matter of orthography it must be remembered that the Arabic alphabet is quite as foreign to Turkish as it is to Greek, hence Turkish words (as every Turkish dictionary shows) often have alternative spellings, and the place-names are in like case. Thus we find both Ḳarâ Ḥiṣâr and Ḳarah Ḥiṣâr; Ḳarah-sî and Ḳarâsî; Ḳaramân and Ḳarâmân, with many other examples.

Looking over the maps of the Persian provinces, it is striking how few names there are of Arabic origin. With the exception of Marâghah in Adharbâyjân, and the hamlet of Bayzâ (Al-Bayḍâ, 'the white town') in Fârs, there is hardly an Arabic town name to be met with. The Moslems indeed changed little or nothing when they took over the Sassanian kingdom[1]. Very often villages and post-stations had names taken from some natural and notable object; as for example Myrtle village, Camel village, and Salt village; which in Persian were called Dih Murd, Dih Ushturân, and Dih Namak. These names the Arab geographers constantly

[1] It has been remarked that in all Moslem Spain, where rich cities abounded, there is only one that bears an Arabic name, to wit the port of Almeria, for Al-Marîyah, 'the Watch Tower.' A place-name like Calatayud, which might be taken for another instance, is not primarily the name given to the *town*, but was only the fortress—*Ḳal'at Ayyûb*, Job's Castle—below which a town afterwards sprang up. In many cases the original Iberian, Roman, or Visigothic name is for lack of documents unknown; as for instance in the case of Granada. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same remarks apply to Persia.

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translate, and in their pages we find the above, for instance, given as Ḳaryat-al-Âs, Ḳaryat-al-Jamâl, and Ḳaryat-al-Milḥ, but there is every reason to believe that in Persia, at all times, the Persian name was in use; in other words it is here, as with us, when we speak of the Black Forest (Schwarz-Wald) or the Cape of Good Hope, such names likewise commonly varying on the maps, and in books, according to the language of the speaker.

It will be observed that we have sometimes in the Arabic lists the name of a post-stage, in Arabic, of which the Persian equivalent has not come down to us; e.g. in the case of Râs-al-Kalb, 'Dog's Head,' possibly the place later called Samnân. Also occasionally the Arabs gave a nickname to a Persian town, and both names continued simultaneously in use; as for instance Kanguvâr, which from the stealing of their mules here the early Moslems had called Ḳaṣr-al-Luṣûṣ, 'Robber Castle'; but Persian Kanguvâr has in the end survived the Arab nickname. Even when the Moslem conquerors founded a new provincial capital, as was the case with Shîrâz, which soon came to eclipse the older Iṣṭakhr (Persepolis), they seem to have taken and perpetuated in the new town the name of the original Persian village. The origin and etymology of the name Shîrâz, like many others, appears to be unattainable, for unfortunately the geography of the old Sassanian kingdom is almost entirely unknown to us.

The pronunciation of names, as is natural, varied with the lapse of time; Ṭuraythîth becomes Turshîz: Hamadhân is in later books spelt Hamadân[1]; further there was evidently an Arabic and a Persian pronunciation (or spelling) of the same name contemporaneously current, thus Arabic Ḳâshân is written Kâshân in Persian, Ṣâhik appears later as Châhik, and Ṣaghâniyân is Chaghâniyân. Then again, as the Arabic grammar demanded tri-consonantal roots, the Persian Bam had to be written in Arabic *Bamm*, and Ḳum *Ḳumm*; but this was merely to suit the rules of Arabic orthography, and the doubled final

[1] It is to be remarked that the *dh*, which the modern Persians pronounce *z* (e.g. Azarbâyjân, written Adharbâyjân), was apparently sometimes not given the *z* sound; thus Hamadhân is now called Hamadân, and never pronounced Hamazân. In Persian the Arabic *w* is generally, but not always, pronounced *v*, e.g. Ḳazwîn or Ḳazvîn.

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consonant was never in use in the Persian. In some cases a name would fall into disuse for some unknown reason, to be replaced by another name, but Persian like the first; an instance occurs in Ḳirmâsîn or Ḳirmîsîn, later known as Kirmânshâhân, shortened to Kirmânshâh at the present day. But we are alike ignorant of the true import of these names, and the cause of the change.

In the matter of the prefixing of the Arabic article *Al* to place-names, the usage appears to be extremely arbitrary. The strict grammatical rule appears to be, that the article is only prefixed to Arabic, not to foreign names. This rule, however, never was kept; for instance in Mesopotamia, where most of the names were of course of Semitic origin, the Tigris is always named Dijlah (without the article), but the Euphrates is Al-Furât, though this last is like the first a foreign word[1]. In the Persian provinces, the tendency was, with the lapse of time, to drop the Arabic article, e.g. (Arabic) As-Sîrajân becomes (Persian) Sîrjân. The usage however is quite arbitrary, for no explanation can be given why the ancient Rhages should be invariably called by the Arabs Ar-Ray, while Jay, the old name for one part of Isfahân, is always given without the article[2].

The Arabs were somewhat poverty-stricken in the matter of their nomenclature, and the lack is cause of much confusion. With them the capital of a province, as a rule, may be called by the name of the province, even when it has a name of its own; thus Damascus still is commonly known as Ash-Shâm, '(the capital of) Syria'; and Zaranj, the chief town of Sijistân, was

[1] Thus we have Al-Ubullah (an original Greek name) with the article, and a number of other instances occur. Purely Arab towns sometimes took the article, sometimes not; e.g. Al-Kûfah, said to mean 'the (city of the) Reed-huts'; but on the other hand, Wâsiṭ, 'the Middle-town,' is always written without the article, though here too it would have seemed equally appropriate.

[2] How little any rule holds is shown by the case of Jiddah, the port of Mecca, given both as Juddah, and as Al-Juddah by all the earlier writers. In the following pages where a place-name commonly occurs in the Arabic authors preceded by the article, this is, on first mention, so given. Subsequently, however, when the name is repeated, for the sake of brevity, and in the maps for distinctness, the article as a general rule is omitted. The use or disuse of the article varies with the different Arab geographers, and like their spelling of foreign names is the reverse of consistent.

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more often known simply as Sijistân, for Madînat-Sijistân, 'the City' of that province. From this usage much confusion naturally arises when the province had two capitals. This for example is the case with the Kirmân province, where the name Kirmân (*scilicet* city) in the earlier books stands for the first capital Sîrjân, and in later times for the present city of Kirmân, a totally different town, which only became the capital when Sîrjân had gone to ruin. Also, on comparing together the maps, as deduced from the statements of the medieval geographers, with the map of the present day, it will often be found that the name of a lost city has been preserved in the modern district; thus of the lost Sîrjân city, for example, the name is still met with in the modern Sîrjân district; the same is the case with both Bardasîr and Jîruft, formerly each the name of an important town, now only preserved in the district. In short the district and its chief city being always, possibly, known by the same name, either one or the other with the lapse of time might become obsolete. Hence, and conversely to the foregoing examples, the name of the older Aradûn district is now given to the little town known as Aradûn, which of old was called Khuvâr (of Ray).

In physical geography the Arab nomenclature was not rich. Single and notable mountain peaks generally had proper names (e.g. Damâvand, Alvand), but as a rule no chain of mountains had any particular designation. The great Taurus range shutting off the Byzantine lands was often (and incorrectly) referred to as the Jabal Lukkâm, but this is properly only one mountain group of the Anti-Taurus; and the very notable range of the Alburz, dividing off the high Persian plateau from the Caspian, has, with the Arab geographers, no common term for its long chain of peaks. The great lakes generally had each its special name (e.g. Mâhâlû, Zarah, and Chîchast), but more commonly the lake was known by the name of the principal town on its shores; as for example the Urmîyah lake, and the lake of Vân also called after Arjîsh. Seas were even less distinctively named, being referred to by a variety of appellations, taken from the provinces or chief towns on their coasts. Thus the Caspian was indifferently termed the Sea of Ṭabaristân, or of Gîlân, or of Jurjân, also of Bâkû, and it was latterly known as the Khazar

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Sea, from the kingdom of the Khazars which in the earlier middle-ages lay to the northward of it. In a similar way the Aral was known as the Sea of Khwârizm, and the Persian Gulf as the Sea of Fârs.

In conclusion it is to be understood that only a selection from our authorities is given in the following chapters; the number of towns and villages, the names of which are reported as being situated in this or that province, is very great, certainly more than double the sum catalogued in the index of the present work. But where the site could not even approximately be fixed, the mere name, one in a list, has been omitted. In regard to the maps, these, it will be noted, are simply diagrams to illustrate the text, and they do not show the country as it was at any one particular epoch. Thus towns, which in fact succeeded one another, are often marked as though existing at one and the same time, but the text will duly explain whether this was, or was not the case[1].

[1] Perhaps some apology is due for the inordinate number of references which crowd the footnotes of the following pages; though doubtless by the student, wishing to verify a fact, this will not be counted as a fault. All, or none, seemed the only course. The Moslem writers, Arabs, Persians and Turks, as is well known, are the greatest plagiarists in all literature, and seldom acknowledge their indebtedness. On the other hand, each geographer or historian generally adds something of his own to what he copies (unacknowledged) from a predecessor, and often by combining many authorities sufficient scraps of information are obtained definitely to substantiate a fact or fix a position. As an instance I may quote the case of the not very important town of Khurḳân, in the Ḳûmis province. Nothing much is known of it, but it seemed not unimportant to mark that this Khurḳân of Ḳûmis, though now disappeared from the map, was to be kept separate from the like-written name (in Arabic) of Kharraḳân in the Jibâl province. All that is known of the Ḳûmis town is its position; but to fix this, (1) Ḳazvînî has to be cited, who says the town stood four leagues from Bisṭâm; to which information (2) Yâḳût adds the fact that it stood on the road going to Astarâbâd; while (3) Mustawfî further tells us that in his day Khurḳân was an important village with a saint's tomb, and plentiful water supply, hence it was not a mere post-station. Yet to record all this, which amounts to so little, three authors have to be quoted, with references to their works, in the footnote.

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CHAPTER II.

'IRÂḲ.

The division of Mesopotamia, Northern and Southern. 'Irâḳ or Babylonia. Change in the courses of the Euphrates and Tigris. The great irrigation canals. Baghdâd. Madâin and the cities on the Tigris thence down to Fam-aṣ-Ṣilḥ.

The great plain of Mesopotamia, through which the Euphrates and the Tigris take their course, is divided by nature into two parts. The northern half (the ancient kingdom of Assyria) consists mostly of pasture lands covering a stony plain; the southern half (the ancient Babylonia) is a rich alluvial country, where the date palm flourishes and the land is watered artificially by irrigation channels, and this for its exceeding fertility was accounted, throughout the East, as one of the four earthly paradises. The Arabs called the northern half of Mesopotamia Al-Jazîrah, 'the Island,' the southern half was known as Al-'Irâḳ, meaning 'the Cliff' or 'Shore,' but it is doubtful how this term came originally to be applied; possibly it represents an older name, now lost, or it was used originally in a different sense. The alluvial plain was also commonly known to the Arabs under the name of As-Sawâd, 'the Black Ground,' and by extension As-Sawâd is frequently used as synonymous with Al-'Irâḳ, thus coming to mean the whole province of Babylonia[1].

The frontier between 'Irâḳ and Jazîrah varied at different epochs. By the earlier Arab geographers the limit generally

[1] In its secondary sense *Sawâd* means 'the District' round a city, hence we have the Sawâd of Baghdâd, of Kûfah, and of Baṣrah frequently employed to designate respectively the environs of these cities.

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coincided with a line going north from Anbâr on the Euphrates to Takrît on the Tigris, both cities being reckoned as of 'Irâḳ. Later authorities make the line go almost due west from Takrît, so as to include in 'Irâḳ many of the towns on the Euphrates to the north of Anbâr; this, physically, is the more natural division between the two provinces, and it crosses the Euphrates below 'Ânah, where the river makes a great bend to the southward. The Euphrates was known to the Arabs as Al-Furât; the Tigris they called Dijlah (without the article), a name which occurs in the Targums as *Diglath*, corresponding to the latter part of *Hiddekel*, the form under which the Tigris is mentioned in the book of Genesis. When the Moslems conquered 'Irâḳ in the middle of the 1st (7th) century Ctesiphon, which they called Madâin, on the Tigris, was the chief city of the province, and the winter capital of the Sassanian kings. The Arabs, however, required cities for their own people, also to serve as standing camps, and three were before long founded, namely, Kûfah, Baṣrah, and Wâsiṭ, which rapidly grew to be the chief towns of the new Moslem province, Kûfah and Baṣrah more particularly being the twin capitals of 'Irâḳ during the Omayyad Caliphate[1].

With the change of dynasty from the Omayyads to the Abbasids a new capital of the empire was required, and the second Abbasid Caliph founded Baghdâd on the Tigris some miles above Ctesiphon (Madâin). Baghdâd soon eclipsed all the recent glories of Damascus under the Omayyads, becoming the metropolis of the Abbasid Caliphate, and naturally also the capital city of 'Irâḳ, which province now rose to be the heart and centre of the Moslem empire in the east.

During the middle-ages the physical conditions in 'Irâḳ were entirely different from what they are now, by reason of the great changes which have come to pass in the courses of the

[1] As such Kûfah and Baṣrah were known as Al-'Irâḳân (vulgarly Al-'Irâḳayn), meaning 'the two capitals of Al-'Irâḳ.' At a later date, however, when Kûfah and Baṣrah had lost their pre-eminence, the name Al-'Irâḳayn or 'the two 'Irâḳs' came to be used incorrectly, as though meaning the two *provinces* of 'Irâḳ, namely Arabian and Persian 'Irâḳ, the latter standing for the province of Al-Jibâl, but this will be more particularly explained in Chapter XIII.

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Euphrates and Tigris, and the consequent ruin of the numerous irrigation canals which, under the earlier Caliphs, made 'Irâḳ a very Garden of Eden for fertility. At the present day, the Tigris, following a winding course in a direction mainly south-east, is joined at a point about 250 miles (as the crow flies) below Baghdâd by the waters of the Euphrates at Ḳurnah. The combined rivers, now known as the Shaṭṭ-al-'Arab (the Arab Stream), thence flow out to the Persian Gulf by a broad channel or tidal estuary measuring in length about a hundred miles in a direct line. This is what the modern map shows; but in early Moslem times, and, as will be demonstrated, in all probability as late as the middle of the 10th (16th) century, the Tigris, when it came about a hundred miles below Baghdâd, turned off south, from what is its present bed, flowing down by the channel now known as the Shaṭṭ-al-Ḥayy (the Snake Stream) to Wâsiṭ. This city occupied both banks of the river, and the Tigris some 60 miles below Wâsiṭ, after expending most of its waters by irrigation channels, finally spread out and became lost in the Great Swamp.

Throughout the middle-ages the Great Swamp, which covered an area 50 miles across, and very nearly 200 miles in length, came down to the immediate neighbourhood of Baṣrah. At its north-western end the swamp received the waters of the Euphrates a few miles to the south of Kûfah; for the main channel of the Euphrates was in those days the Kûfah arm of the river, that which flows by Ḥillah (now the main stream) being then only a great irrigation canal, called the Naḥr Sûrâ. Along the northern edge of the lower part of the Great Swamp a line of lagoons, connected by open channels, made navigation possible; boats passing where the Tigris entered the swamp at Al-Ḳaṭr, to where (near modern Ḳurnah) the swamp surcharged by the waters of both Euphrates and Tigris drained out by the Abu-l-Asad canal into the head of the estuary of the Shaṭṭ-al-'Arab. By this water-way cargo-boats went down without difficulty from Baghdâd to Baṣrah, which last, the seaport of Baghdâd, lay at the end of a short canal, leading west out of the tidal estuary—the Blind Tigris as the Shaṭṭ-al-'Arab was then more commonly called.

The present course of the Tigris, as shown on the modern map, keeps to the eastward of the Shaṭṭ-al-Ḥayy channel, turning

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off at the village now known as Ḳût-al-'Amârah, which stands for the medieval Mâdharâyâ; and this, the present channel down to Ḳurnah, was also apparently that occupied by the river during the period of the Sassanian monarchy, when the Great Swamp, described by the Arab geographers, did not as yet exist. The historian Balâdhurî dates the origin of the swamp as far back as the reign of Ḳubâdh I, the Sassanian king who reigned near the end of the 5th century A.D. In his day the dykes existing along the Tigris channel, as it then ran, having been for many years neglected, the waters suddenly rose, and pouring through a number of breaches, flooded all the low-lying lands to the south and south-west. During the reign of Anûshirwân the Just, son and successor of Ḳubâdh, the dykes were partially repaired and the lands brought back under cultivation; but under Khusraw Parwîz, the contemporary of the prophet Muḥammad, and in about the year 7 or 8 after the Flight (A.D. 629) the Euphrates and the Tigris again rose, and in such flood as had never before been seen. Both rivers burst their dykes in innumerable places, and finally laid all the surrounding country under water. According to Balâdhurî King Parwîz himself, when too late, superintended the re-setting of the dykes, sparing neither treasure nor men's lives, 'indeed he crucified in one day forty dyke-men, at a certain breach (Balâdhurî reports), and yet was unable to master the flood.' The waters could in no wise be got back, and the swamps thus formed became permanent; for during the succeeding years of anarchy and when the Moslem armies began to overrun Mesopotamia and the Sassanian monarchy perished, the dykes, such as still existed, naturally remained uncared for, 'and breaches came in all the embankments, for none gave heed, and the Dihḳâns (namely the Persian nobles, who were the landlords) were powerless to repair the dykes, so that the swamps every way lengthened and widened.'

The above well accounts for the formation of the Great Swamp, and Ibn Rustah refers to this epoch, under the last Sassanians, the first great shifting of the Tigris from the eastern channel, beyond Mâdharâyâ, to the western channel (the Shaṭṭ-al-Ḥayy) which passed down through the site sub-

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sequently occupied by the Moslem city of Wâsiṭ. This change, says Ibn Rustah, had turned all the country bordering the older eastern course into a desert, and so it remained in the 3rd (9th) century when he wrote. He then describes the back-water, six leagues long (above Ḳurnah), which ran up north to 'Abdasî and Madhâr, where the channel was stopped by a dam; this being evidently the last reach of the former, and present, eastern course of the Tigris. Ibn Rustah states that the dam, which in his time stopped all navigation above this point, had not existed in Sassanian days, when the channel was still open north of 'Abdasî and Madhâr right up to where this rejoined the Tigris course (of his day) in the district north of Wâsiṭ (at Mâdharâyâ), whence up stream the river was clear to Madâin. He continues:—'and of old, sea-going ships sailing in from India came up the Tigris (estuary, of the later) Baṣrah, and thence could attain to Madâin (Ctesiphon), for sailing on they came out above (the present) Fam-aṣ-Ṣilḥ into the Tigris reach of (the river below where, in later times, was) Baghdâd.'

The lower Tigris at the present day, therefore, flows in the bed which, in the main, it had followed during Sassanian times. But during all the centuries of the Abbasid Caliphate it poured into the swamps down the western channel past Wâsiṭ, and the question arises—when did the change back to the present eastern channel take place? The answer is that doubtless the change was brought about gradually, and from the silting up of the western arm; in any case, all our Moslem authorities, down to the age of Tîmûr and the beginning of the 9th (15th) century, describe the lower Tigris as still passing through Wâsiṭ, this fact being confirmed by Ḥâfiẓ Abrû writing in 820 (1417). One of the first travellers to speak of the eastern arm as the navigable channel, was John Newberie, who in 1581, after visiting Baghdâd, went down by boat in six days to Baṣrah, passing on the fifth day Ḳurnah, 'a castle which standeth upon the point where the river Furro (Euphrates) and the river of Bagdet (the Tigris) doe meet.' In the following century the Frenchman Tavernier made the same journey down the Tigris. He left Baghdâd in February 1652, and he states that at some considerable distance below this city the Tigris divided into two branches. The western channel (that

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by Wâsiṭ) was in his time no more navigable, but it ran—as he expresses it—'vers la pointe de la Mésopotamie.' The French traveller followed in his boat the present eastern channel, which took its course 'le long de l'ancienne Chaldée,' after leaving (Ḳût-al-)'Amârah; and just before coming to Baṣrah he passed Ḳurnah where, he says, the Tigris and Euphrates joined their streams[1].

The existence of the Great Swamp, and the consequent change in the courses of both Euphrates and Tigris, is the chief matter of note in the physical condition of Lower Mesopotamia during the Caliphate; but of almost equal importance was the system of canalisation inherited by the Arabs when, after the conquest, they took over the country from the Persians. Briefly, as already stated, we find that all 'Irâḳ north of the swamp, and between the two rivers, was then traversed, like the bars of a gridiron, by a succession of canals which drained eastward into the Tigris; while east of the Tigris a canal, 200 miles in length, called the Nahrawân, starting from below Takrît and re-entering the river fifty miles north of Wâsiṭ, effected the irrigation of the lands on the further or Persian side of the Tigris. The details of this great system of waterways will be explained more fully in due course, but a glance at the accompanying map, drawn

[1] Baladhuri, 292. I. R. 94. Yak. i. 669. In 1583 John Eldred went down from Baghdâd to Baṣrah, and also describes how one day's journey before the latter place 'the two rivers of Tigris and Euphrates meet, and there standeth a castle called Curna': see his voyage in Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (Glasgow, 1904), vi. 6; also v. 371, for in 1563 Cæsar Frederick had made the same journey and speaks of 'the castle of Corna' in similar terms. For the voyage of John Newberie, see *Purchas, His Pilgrimes* (folio, 1625—26), v. 1411, 1412; *Six Voyages en Turquie de J. B. Tavernier* (Utrecht, 1712), i. 240. Other travellers do not afford any detailed information. The earliest mention of the western (present) Tigris arm as navigable appears to be the anonymous Portuguese traveller, a copy of whose manuscript is in the possession of Major M. Hume (see *The Athenæum* for March 23rd, 1901, p. 373), who speaks of the castle (of Ḳurnah) six leagues above Baṣrah where the Euphrates and Tigris flowed together. His voyage from internal evidence must have been made in about the year 1555. The conclusion therefore appears to be that, from the time of Muḥammad, and during the nine following centuries, the Tigris took the western arm down to the swamps; afterwards, in the early part of the 16th century A.D., changing back into the eastern channel, which it had followed in Sassanian times before the rise of Islam, and which its main stream now follows at the present day.

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up from the accounts of contemporary authorities, shows how the marvellous fertility of 'Irâḳ during Abbasid times was due to a strict economy of the water supply; and that while nearly all the land between the Euphrates and the Tigris was irrigated by the waters of the Euphrates led off through canals flowing eastward, the lands along the left bank of the Tigris, and towards the foot-hills of the Persian highlands, were made fertile by the canals of the Nahrawân, which economically distributed the surplus waters of the Tigris to the eastward, and caught the flood of the numerous streams flowing down from the mountains of Kurdistân.

The topography of Baghdâd has been dealt with in a previous volume[1], and all that is necessary in this place is to summarise the most important facts, in order to make clear the position of the Abbasid capital among the other cities of 'Irâḳ, and explain the details of the road system (already referred to in Chapter I) of which Baghdâd was the central point.

The first of the great canals which ran from the Euphrates to the Tigris was the Nahr 'Îsâ[2], and just above where its waters flowed out into the latter river, the Caliph Manṣûr about the year 145 (762) built the Round city, which became the nucleus of Baghdâd. The Round city had four equidistant gates lying one Arab mile apart each from the other, and from every gate went a high road. Great suburbs were in time built on these four roads, and these before long came to be incorporated in the circuit of the great metropolis. The four gates of the Round city were (1) the Baṣrah Gate to the S.E. opening on the suburbs along the Tigris bank where the various branches of the 'Îsâ canal flowed out; (2) the Kûfah Gate to the S.W. opening on the high road

[1] *Baghdâd during the Abbasid Caliphate* (Oxford, 1900). It is to be noted that the number of districts, towns, and villages in 'Irâḳ of which information has come down is very great, and a volume would be needed to report all that is known of this, the capital province of the Abbasids. The map constructed for the paper on Ibn Serapion (*Jour. Roy. Asiat. Soc.* 1895, p. 32) gives all the places lying on the rivers and canals, but this does not exhaust the list, and the reader may be referred to the work of Professor M. Streck, *Die alte Landschaft Babylonien* (Leyden, 1901), for fuller details, which it is impossible to find place for in the present chapter.

[2] *Nahr* means both 'canal' and 'river' in Arabic; 'Îsâ was the name of the Abbasid prince who dug the canal.

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going south, which was the Pilgrim road to Mecca; (3) the Syrian Gate to the N.W. where the high road branched left to Anbâr on the Euphrates, and right to the towns on the western Tigris bank north of Baghdâd; and (4) the Khurâsân Gate leading to the main bridge of boats for crossing the river. By this bridge East Baghdâd was reached, at first known as the Camp of Mahdî, son and successor of the Caliph Manṣûr, and Mahdî built his palace here, also founding the great Friday Mosque of East Baghdâd. The settlement on the east side was divided into three quarters, that near the bridge head was known as the Ruṣâfah quarter, the Shammâsîyah quarter lay above it along the river bank, and the Mukharrim quarter below it. These three quarters of East Baghdâd were surrounded by a semicircular wall, going from the river bank above the Shammâsîyah to the river again below the Mukharrim; and across the middle and narrow part of East Baghdâd went the beginning of the great Khurâsân road, starting from the Khurâsân Gate of the Round city, and crossing the main bridge to the (second) Khurâsân Gate of East Baghdâd, whence, as explained in the previous chapter, the trunk road went east to the limits of the Moslem empire.

From the Kûfah Gate of the Round city, as already stated, led the Kûfah or Pilgrim road, going south, and the great suburb which here stretched to a point nearly a league distant from the walls of the Round city was known as Karkh. The suburb of the Muḥawwal Gate lay to the westward of the Round city, being reached from both the Kûfah Gate and the Syrian Gate, where the roads converging fell into the great western high road going through the town of Muḥawwal to Anbâr. North of the Syrian Gate was the Ḥarbîyah quarter (balancing Karkh on the south of the Round city), and beyond the Ḥarbîyah and surrounded on two sides by a bend in the river were the northern cemeteries of West Baghdâd, at a later time famous as the Kâẓimayn, and so named from the tombs of two of the Shî'ah Imâms.

The city of Baghdâd occupied the central point of four districts, two being on either bank of the Tigris. On the western side the Ḳaṭrabbul district was north of the 'Îsâ canal, and Bâdûrayâ lay to the south of the same; while on the eastern bank the Nahr Bûḳ district was to the north of the line of the Khurâsân

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road, and Kalwâdhâ district to the southward; the town of Kalwâdhâ standing on the river bank a short distance below the southernmost gate of East Baghdâd. From Baghdâd, as the central point of the road system of the empire, two roads (as already said), going south and west, bifurcated at the Kûfah Gate of the Round city; and two, going north and east, passed through East Baghdâd, having their starting-point at the further end of the main bridge of boats. The southern road, to Kûfah (and Mecca), after leaving the suburb of Karkh, came before long to the town of Ṣarṣar, on the Nahr Ṣarṣar, the second of the great canals from the Euphrates to the Tigris, which flowed parallel with the Nahr 'Îsâ on the south. The western or Anbâr road turning off at the Kûfah Gate, and passing through the suburb of Barâthâ, came after about a league to the town of Muḥawwal which stood on the 'Îsâ canal. The eastern or Khurâsân road left East Baghdâd (as already said) at the Khurâsân Gate, north of the Mukharrim quarter, and the first town reached was Nahrawân Bridge at the crossing of the great canal of this name. Finally, the northern road passed through the Shammâsîyah quarter to the Baradân Gate of East Baghdâd, and shortly came to the town of Baradân lying on the east bank of the Tigris; whence, keeping along the left bank of the river, the high road reached Sâmarrâ and the towns of northern Mesopotamia.

During the five centuries of the Abbasid Caliphate the plan of Baghdâd with its suburbs changed considerably as the city grew and in parts fell to ruin. What has been sketched in the foregoing paragraphs was the city as it existed in the time of Hârûn-ar-Rashîd. The civil war which broke out after his death brought about the ruin of the Round city. In 221 (836) the seat of the Caliphate was removed to Sâmarrâ, and during the reigns of seven Caliphs Baghdâd was reduced to the condition of a provincial town. When finally in 279 (892) Sâmarrâ was abandoned and the Caliph re-established his court in the old capital, it was East Baghdâd, where many new palaces came to be built, which succeeded to the glories of the Round city, now falling more and more to ruin; and for the next four centuries, down to the invasion of the Mongols, the Caliphs permanently established their residence on the east bank.

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These palaces of the later Caliphs were built on the land to the south of Mukharrim, the lowest of the three quarters included within the wall of East Baghdâd as it had existed in the time of Hârûn-ar-Rashîd. These three quarters, at the date in question, had fallen to ruin, but the new palaces quickly came to be surrounded by new suburbs, which in their turn were before long enclosed by a great semicircular wall. The new wall of East Baghdâd, including in its circuit a part of the older Mukharrim, went from the river bank above the palaces to the river bank below (adjacent to Kalwâdhâ), and it was built by the Caliph Mustaẓhir in 488 (1095). This was the wall, more than once repaired, which finally in 656 (1258) proved impotent to withstand the Mongol attack, and the Abbasid Caliphate fell. At the present day this ruined wall remains, enclosing within its wide circuit the few relics that time has left of the city of the Caliphs, and still protecting modern Baghdâd, which is as heretofore the capital of 'Irâḳ, and the residence of its Turkish Governor.

Seven leagues below Baghdâd, and occupying both banks of the Tigris, lay Al-Madâin, 'the Cities,' as the Arabs called the ruins of the twin capitals, Ctesiphon and Seleucia, which had been founded under the earlier Seleucids three centuries before Christ. Seleucia of the west bank had received its name from Seleucus Nicator. The name of Ctesiphon, which the Arabs give under the shortened form of Ṭaysafûn, is of uncertain etymology; though in appearance it is Greek, it probably is a corruption of the old Persian name of the city, for it is not known to us how the Sassanians called this capital of their empire[1]. In 540 A.D. Anûshirwân the Just had taken Antioch of Syria, with Seleucia on the Orontes, and after the fashion of Persian monarchs had transported the inhabitants of this Seleucia to his capital at Ctesiphon. Here he settled them in a new suburb on the east side of the Tigris, opposite therefore to the site of Seleucia of

[1] It has been plausibly suggested that Ctesiphon is to be identified with Casiphia of the book of Ezra (viii. 17), which lay between Babylon and Jerusalem, and which in the Septuagint version is named 'the Silver City.' *Madâin* is merely the Arabic plural of *Madînah*, 'a city'; and *Casiphia* would be the Chaldee form of the Persian name, now lost, of the capital of the Chosroes.

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Mesopotamia; and this suburb existed when the Arabs conquered the country in the following century, being still known as Rûmîyah, the Roman (or Greek) town, which some report to have been built on the plan of Antioch.

Al-Madâin, according to the Moslem authors, consisted of seven cities, whose names, with divers readings, are duly chronicled; but five cities only appear to have been in existence and inhabited when Ya'ḳûbî wrote in the 3rd (9th) century. These were, on the east bank, Al-Madînah-al-'Atîḳah, 'the Old Town,' corresponding with Ctesiphon, and one mile south of it Asbânbur, adjacent to which lay Rûmîyah. On the opposite bank of the Tigris was Bahurasîr, a corruption of Bih-Ardashîr—'the good town of King Ardashîr'—and one league below it was Sâbâṭ, which according to Yâḳût was called by the Persians Balâsâbâd.

The great Sassanian palace, of which the ruins still exist, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, was known to the Arabs under the name of the Aywân-Kisrâ, 'the Hall of the Chosroes,' and this, according to Ya'ḳûbî, stood in Asbânbur; while another great building known as Al-Ḳaṣr-al-Abyaḍ, 'the White Palace,' was to be seen in the Old Town a mile distant to the north. This last, however, must have disappeared by the beginning of the 4th (10th) century, for all later authorities give the names of 'the White Palace,' and 'the Hall of the Chosroes' indifferently to the great arched building which to the present day exists here as the sole relic of the Sassanian kings. This building had a narrow escape from complete destruction in the middle of the 2nd (8th) century, when Manṣûr was founding Baghdâd; for the Caliph expressed his intention of demolishing the Sassanian palace, and using the materials for his new city. His Persian Wazîr, Khâlid the Barmecide, in vain attempted to dissuade him from this act of barbarity, but the Caliph was obstinate; the Wazîr, however, gained his point for, when the order came to be carried into effect, the demolition was found to be more costly than the materials were worth for the new buildings, and the Arch of the Chosroes, as Yâḳût calls it, was left to stand. At a later period much of its stone work was carried off for the battlements of the new palace of the Tâj in East Baghdâd, which the Caliph 'Alî Muktafî finished building in the year 290 (903).

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In the 4th (10th) century Madâin, which is at the present day a complete ruin, was a small and populous town, with a fine Friday Mosque dating from the days of the Moslem conquest; near which stood the tomb of Salmân the Persian, one of the best known Companions of the prophet Muḥammad. The markets of Madâin were built of burnt brick and were well provided. In the neighbouring Rûmîyah, the Caliph Manṣûr had for a time held his court, while at Sâbâṭ on the opposite bank Mamûn had also resided. The grandeur of the ancient palace of the Chosroes is a theme on which the Arab geographers relate many details. Ya'ḳûbî says that the summit of the great arch is 80 ells in height; Yâḳût refers to the magnificent kiln-burnt bricks, each near an ell in length by somewhat less than a span in width. Mustawfî, who gives the legendary account of Madâin and its palace, reports that in the 8th (14th) century both Madâin and Rûmîyah had come to be uninhabited ruins, though the villages opposite, on the western bank, still retained their inhabitants. Of these, he adds, the most important was Bahurasîr, already mentioned, which Yâḳût, who had been there, calls Ar-Rûmaḳân. To the south of it lay Zarîrân, a stage on the Pilgrim road, and to the west Ṣarṣar, already mentioned, on the Ṣarṣar canal, which last fell into the Tigris a short distance above Madâin. The district round Madâin, which stretched eastward from the Tigris to the Nahrawân canal, was known as Râdhân (Upper and Lower), of which Yâḳût names numerous villages, and Mustawfî praises the magnificent crops harvested here[1].

Dayr-al-'Âḳûl, 'the Convent of the (river) Loop,' is still marked on the map, situate on the east bank 10 leagues below Madâin, and the name is descriptive of the Tigris course at this point. It was a Christian monastery, surrounded by a town of considerable size, the latter being counted as the chief city of the district of Middle Nahrawân. In the town was a Friday Mosque[2], standing

[1] Ykb. 320, 321. I. S. 9. I. H. 167. Muk. 122. Yak. i. 425, 426, 768, 809; ii. 729, 929; iii. 3. Mst. 139, 140.

[2] This convenient, but of course incorrect term translates the Arabic *Masjid-al-Jâmi'*, otherwise rendered a Great Mosque. The Moslems have two categories of mosques. Small mosques (*Masjid*) where any one could pray at any time, often equivalent to a *Maḳâm* or *Mashhad*, the 'shrine' or 'place of

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at some distance from the market place. Ibn Rustah at the close of the 3rd (9th) century describes the toll-barrier which was set across the Tigris here, and kept closed by the officer of the customs. He writes:—'the toll-bar (*Al-Maaṣir*) is the name given to the places on the Tigris where two boats have been moored on the one bank of the river, opposite two other boats on the further bank, which two likewise are firmly moored. Then across the stream they have carried cables, the ends being fastened on either bank to these boats, and thus ships are prevented from passing at night without paying toll.' Muḳaddasî in the 4th (10th) century refers to Dayr-al-'Âḳûl as one of the finest cities of this region of the river bank, but afterwards the bed of the Tigris changed and Yâḳût in the 7th (13th) century says that the great convent then lay a mile distant from the Tigris, standing solitary in the midst of the plain. Mustawfî, however, in the following century still counts Dayr-al-'Âḳûl as a large town, having, he adds, a damp climate on account of its surrounding palm-groves.

Also on the east bank, but lying three leagues above Dayr-al-'Âḳûl, was the small town of As-Sîb, for distinction called Sîb of the Banî Kûmâ, which was noted for its olive-groves, and famous in history for the battle which took place here in 262 (876), when Ya'ḳûb the Saffarid was defeated by the troops of the Caliph Mu'tamid. A short distance below Dayr-al-'Âḳûl stood the monastery of Marmârî, surnamed the Disciple, otherwise called Dayr Ḳunnâ (or Ḳunnah), which lay a mile to the east of the Tigris, and 16 leagues from Baghdâd. The historian Shâbustî in

martyrdom' of a saint. The *Muṣallâ* or 'praying-place' was more especially that used at the services of the great festivals. The Great Mosque, on the other hand, was where weekly the Friday prayers were said, and the sermon (*Khuṭbah*) preached; and it was called Masjid-al-Jâmi', 'the Mosque of the Congregation'—terms often translated by 'the Cathedral,' or 'Congregational Mosque.' The possession of a *Jâmi'* or *Mimbar* (pulpit, for the Friday Sermon) generally is a criterion of the size of a town, or village; and the fact is often mentioned as such by the Arab geographers; Iṣṭakhrî for instance gives a long list of places in Fârs which had, or had not a Mimbar; and this comes to much the same as if it were said that in such and such a village, in a Christian land, stood the parish church. At a later date the term Masjid-al-Jâmi' became changed to Masjid-al-Jum'ah, meaning 'the Friday Mosque,' but this is not the classical usage.

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the 4th (10th) century (quoted by Yâḳût) describes it as a great monastery surrounded by so high and strong a wall as to be like a fortress and impregnable. Within the wall were a hundred cells for the monks, and the right to a cell was only to be bought for a price ranging from two hundred to a thousand dînârs (£100 to £500). Each cell stood in its own garden, watered by a small canal and planted with fruit trees which produced a crop that yearly might be sold for from 50 to 200 dînârs (£25 to £100).

Over against Dayr Ḳunnâ, but on the Tigris bank, was the small town of Aṣ-Ṣâfîyah, which Yâḳût writes was in his day already a ruin; and opposite this on the western side lay Humânîyah (or Humaynîyah) which is still found on the map, two leagues S.E. of Dayr-al-'Âḳûl. In the beginning of the 3rd (9th) century Humânîyah was a place of some importance, for after the death of the Caliph Amîn, his two sons and his mother, Zubaydah, widow of Hârûn-ar-Rashîd, were for a time sent to be kept in prison here by Mamûn; and Yâḳût in the 7th (13th) century describes Humânîyah as a large village surrounded by well cultivated lands[1].

Jarjarâyâ, or Jarjarây, which still exists, lay four leagues S.E. of Dayr-al-'Âḳûl. It is described by Muḳaddasî in the 4th (10th) century as having been a large town, and its Friday Mosque stood close to the Tigris, which surrounded the town on two sides. Ya'ḳûbî writing in the previous century states that its population chiefly consisted of Persian nobles, and it was the capital of the district of Lower Nahrawân. In the 7th (13th) century, according to Yâḳût, it was, like most of the towns of the Nahrawân districts, in a state of complete ruin. On the western bank of the Tigris, four leagues below Jarjarâyâ, at the ruins now called Tall-Nu'mân stood the town of An-Nu'mânîyah, which Yâḳût counts as the half-way stage between Baghdâd and Wâsiṭ. An-Nu'mânîyah was the capital of the Upper Zâb district, its Friday Mosque standing in the market place, and Ya'ḳûbî adds that near by stood the monastery called Dayr Hizḳil, where mad people were looked after by the monks. Nu'mânîyah was celebrated according to Ibn Rustah for its looms, where carpets like those of Ḥîrah were

[1] I. R. 185, 186. Ykb. 321. Kud. 193. Muk. 122. Mas. *Tanbih* 149. Yak. ii. 676, 687; iii. 362; iv. 980. Mst. 139. Ibn-al-Athir, vi. 207.

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manufactured. In the 8th (14th) century Mustawfî still speaks of Nu'mânîyah as a flourishing town surrounded by date-groves. The small town of Jabbul lay on the eastern bank, nine leagues below Jarjarâyâ, where Ibn Rustah in the 3rd (9th) century says that there were government bake-houses. It was then a large hamlet, having a Friday Mosque standing in the market place, and Muḳaddasî describes it as of the size of Dayr-al-'Âḳûl; but when Yâḳût wrote, Jabbul had sunk to the size of a big village[1].

The town of Mâdharâyâ occupied the position where at the present day Ḳût-al-'Amârah stands, namely at the bifurcation of the Shaṭṭ-al-Ḥayy from the eastern, and modern bed of the Tigris, which now goes thence south-eastward down to Ḳurnah. Mâdharâyâ was on the east bank, and in the 3rd (9th) century it was inhabited by Persian nobles. Here the great Nahrawân canal flowed back into the Tigris; and immediately below Mâdharâyâ came Al-Mubârak, a town which lay opposite Nahr Sâbus on the western bank of the Tigris. The town of Nahr Sâbus was at the mouth of the canal of this name, which will be spoken of later, and this was the chief town of the Lower Zâb district; it was counted as five leagues distant from Jabbul. On the opposite bank, and five leagues down stream, was the Ṣilḥ canal with the town called Fam-aṣ-Ṣilḥ at its 'mouth' (*Fam*), or point of origin, which latter lay seven leagues above Wâsiṭ. Fam-aṣ-Ṣilḥ town stood on the Tigris bank, it had fine markets and a Friday Mosque, according to Ibn Rustah. This place was famous in Moslem history for the magnificent palace built here by Ḥasan ibn Sahl, the Wazîr of Mamûn, in which he celebrated the marriage of his daughter Bûrân with the Caliph, spending fabulous sums in banquets and gifts, as will be found chronicled in the pages of Mas'ûdî. Fam-aṣ-Ṣilḥ afterwards fell to ruin, and Yâḳût who visited it in the 7th (13th) century, found the town and neighbouring villages along the canal for the most part uninhabited[2]. From the town of Fam-aṣ-Ṣilḥ the buildings of the Great Mosque in Wâsiṭ were visible on the southern horizon.

[1] Kud. 193. Ykb. 321. I. R. 186, 187. Muk. 122. Yak. ii. 23, 54; iv. 796. A. F. 305. Mst. 141.

[2] Ykb. 321. Kud. 194. I. R. 187. Yak. ii. 903; iii. 917; iv. 381. Mas. vii. 65.

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CHAPTER III.

'IRÂḲ (*continued*).

Wâsiṭ. The Great Swamps. Madhâr and Ḳurnah. The Blind Tigris. Baṣrah and its canals. Ubullah and 'Abbâdân. The Tigris above Baghdâd. Baradân. The Dujayl district. 'Ukbârâ, Ḥarbâ, and Ḳâdisîyah.

Wâsiṭ, the 'middle city,' was so called because it lay equidistant (about 50 leagues) from Kûfah, Baṣrah, and Ahwâz. It was the chief town of the Kaskar district, and before the foundation of Baghdâd, as already said, was one of the three chief Moslem cities of 'Irâḳ.

Wâsiṭ was founded about the year 84 (703) by Ḥajjâj, the famous viceroy of Mesopotamia in the reign of the Omayyad Caliph 'Abd-al-Malik. The city occupied both banks of the Tigris, the two halves being connected by a bridge of boats, and there were two Friday Mosques, one for each half of the city. Ya'ḳûbî states that eastern Wâsiṭ had been a town before the days of Ḥajjâj, and here in the 3rd (9th) century the population was still for the most part Persian. In the western half of the city stood the Green Palace, built by Ḥajjâj, and called Al-Ḳubbat Al-Khaḍrâ, celebrated for its great dome, from the summit of which Fam-aṣ-Ṣilḥ seven leagues distant to the north could be seen. The lands round Wâsiṭ were extremely fertile, and their crops provisioned Baghdâd in time of scarcity; also paying yearly into the treasury a million of dirhams (£40,000) from taxes, as reported by Ibn Ḥawḳal, who was at Wâsiṭ in 358 (969). Muḳaddasî states that the mosque in the eastern half of Wâsiṭ likewise was built by Ḥajjâj. The town markets were magnificent

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and well stocked, also at either end of the bridge of boats were two small harbours where boats moored for convenience of discharging cargo.

During the whole period of the Caliphate Wâsiṭ continued to be one of the most important cities of 'Irâḳ, and apparently the eastern quarter was the first to fall to ruin, for Ḳazwînî, who was Judge at Wâsiṭ in the latter half of the 7th (13th) century, speaks of the town as lying solely on the western Tigris bank. Ibn Baṭûṭah, who was here in the early part of the following century, praises the fine buildings of the city, especially a great Madrasah, or college, with 300 rooms for students, and Mustawfî his contemporary speaks of the immense palm-groves lying round the town which made its climate very damp. At the close of the 8th (14th) century Wâsiṭ is frequently mentioned as a place of importance during the various campaigns of Tîmûr, who kept a strong garrison here; but about a century after this, as already described in the beginning of the last chapter, the Tigris ceased to flow past Wâsiṭ, taking the eastern course down by Ḳurnah, and the city fell to complete ruin. Ḥâjjî Khalfah, writing in the beginning of the 11th (17th) century, speaks of it as then standing in the desert, but the canal was famous for its reeds from which pens were made[1].

Below Wâsiṭ, according to Yâḳût, the Tigris flowed out into the Great Swamp by five navigable waterways, the names of which he gives, and this statement is corroborated by the accounts of earlier writers. Ibn Serapion mentions a number of towns lying on the main arm of the river below Wâsiṭ, and above Al-Ḳaṭr, where in the 4th (10th) century the swamp began. The first of these towns was Ar-Ruṣâfah, 'the Causeway,' lying on the left bank, ten leagues from Wâsiṭ, and near it flowing eastward into the swamp was the canal called Nahr Bân, with the town of the same name,

[1] Ykb. 322. I. R. 187. Ist. 82. I. H. 162. Muk. 118. Kaz. ii. 320. I. B. ii. 2. Mst. 141. A. Y. i. 640, 657; ii. 517. J. N. 463. The ruins of Wâsiṭ do not appear to have been examined by any recent explorer. Their position on the Shaṭṭ-al-Ḥayy is fixed within narrow limits by the Arab itineraries. Chesney (*Report of the Euphrates and Tigris Expedition*, i. 37) states that these ruins were visited by Ormsby and Elliott in 1831—2, but he does not mark their position.

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also spelt Nahr Abân, at its exit. Below this came Al-Fârûth and then Dayr-al-'Ummâl, 'the Convent of the Governors.' These were on the eastern bank, opposite to which and flowing west into the swamp were three canals, first the Nahr Ḳuraysh with a great village on it of the same name; then Nahr-as-Sîb, on which stood the towns of Al-Jawâmid, 'the Dried-lands,' and Al-'Uḳr; finally, the Nahr Bardûdâ on which lay the town of Ash-Shadîdîyah. All these were important towns lying in the swamp, round and about Al-Jâmidah, otherwise called (in the plural) Al-Jawâmid; further, Muḳaddasî describes a large town in this region called Aṣ-Ṣalîḳ, standing on an open lagoon which was surrounded by farmsteads and well cultivated lands. Over against these places and on the eastern bank of the main arm of the Tigris was Al-Ḥawânît, 'the Taverns,' where there was a toll-bar moored across the river, like the one already described at Dayr-al-'Âḳûl (p. 36), and this was close to Al-Ḳaṭr, 12 leagues below Ruṣâfah, where, according to Ibn Rustah, the Tigris in the 3rd (9th) century dividing into three arms finally entered the swamp[1].

The Swamps were called Al-Baṭâiḥ (the plural form of *Al-Baṭîḥah*, signifying a 'lagoon') and their history has been already described (p. 26). The whole area covered by them was dotted with towns and villages, each standing on its canal, and though the climate was very feverish the soil, when drained, was most fertile. Ibn Rustah writing at the close of the 3rd (9th) century describes the Great Swamp as everywhere covered by reed-beds, intersected by water channels, where immense quantities of fish were caught, which, after being salted, were despatched to all the neighbouring provinces. In regard to the Tigris waters, it appears that from Ḳaṭr eastward—and probably following, approximately, the line of the present channel of the Euphrates—the waterway led through a succession of open lagoons to the Abu-l-Asad canal, by which the waters of the swamp drained out to the Baṣrah estuary. These lagoons of open water, clear of reeds, were called *Hawr* or *Hawl* by the Arabs, and the lagoons were connected by channels navigable for small boats. The great river barges,

[1] I. S. 9, 20. Kud. 194. I. R. 184, 185. Muk. 119. Yak. ii. 10, 553; iii. 209, 415, 840; iv. 217, 758.

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according to Ibn Rustah, did not pass below Ḳaṭr, but here transferred their cargoes to wherries, so light of draught as to pass through the channels threading the lagoons. All along these channels, stations on platforms had been made, where in huts built of reeds, and thus raised above the plague of gnats, guards were posted to keep the course clear and to protect wayfarers, for the recesses of the Great Swamp were the natural hiding-place of outlaws.

Ibn Serapion gives the names of four of the great lagoons (Hawr, or Hawl) through which the waterway went towards Baṣrah. The first was called Baḥaṣṣâ, the second was the Bakamṣî lagoon, then the Baṣrayâthâ, and the fourth was the Ḥawr-al-Muḥammadîyah, the largest of all, on which stood the tower called Minârah Ḥassân, after Ḥassân the Nabathæan who had been employed by the Omayyad viceroy Ḥajjâj to drain and reclaim lands in the Great Swamp. Beyond this last lagoon came the channel passing the villages of Al-Ḥâlah and Al-Kawânîn, and ending in the canal of Abu-l-Asad, which finally carried the waters of the swamp to the head of the Tigris estuary. This Abu-l-Asad, whose canal roughly corresponds with the last reach of the present course of the Euphrates above Ḳurnah, had been a freedman of the Caliph Manṣûr, and when in command of troops at Baṣrah he dug, or more probably widened, the boat channel which, as Yâḳût remarks, had doubtless existed here from Sassanian times. Ḳurnah, at the present point of junction of the Euphrates and Tigris, is not mentioned by any of the Arab geographers, and the first notice of this castle appears in the Turkish *Jahân Numâ* at the beginning of the 11th (17th) century.

The last reach of the eastern course of the Tigris—that of Sassanian times, as also of the present day—existed, as already said, in the middle-ages as a back-water, stopped at its northern end by a dam. This back-water, called the Nahr-al-Madhâr, was six leagues in length, and led to the two cities of 'Abdasî (or 'Abdâsî) and Al-Madhâr; the exact sites of which are unknown. The surrounding district—along the then desiccated eastern bed of the Tigris—was called Jûkhâ, and it stretched north-westward to Kaskar, the district of Wâsiṭ. Madhâr had been a city of much importance at the time of the Moslem conquest, and was then

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the capital of the district of Maysân, otherwise called Dasti-Maysân. Madhâr is described as lying four days' journey from Baṣrah, and was celebrated for its beautiful mosque and the much venerated tomb of 'Abd-Allah, son of the Caliph 'Alî. The neighbouring town of 'Abdasî, according to Yâḳût, was of Persian origin, that name being the Arabic form of the older Afdâsahî, which had been a hamlet of the Kaskar district before the conquest. Kaskar and Maysân were the two districts of the eastern part of the Great Swamp, and Kaskar, according to Ḳazwînî, produced much excellent rice which was exported. On its pastures buffaloes, oxen, and goats were fattened; the reed-beds sheltered ducks and water-fowl that were snared and sent in to the markets of the surrounding towns, while in its canals the shad-fish (called *Shabbût*) was caught in great numbers, salted and exported. Further, in Maysân might be seen the tomb of the prophet 'Uzayr, otherwise Ezra, which Ḳazwînî says was at a place settled entirely by Jews, who served the shrine. This was renowned throughout the countryside as a spot where prayers were answered, and in consequence the shrine was made rich by votive offerings[1].

The broad estuary formed by the combined Tigris and Euphrates waters, nearly a hundred miles in length, began at the exit of the Abu-l-Asad canal, and flowed out to the Persian Gulf at 'Abbâdân. This estuary was variously known as the Blind Tigris (Dijlah-al-'Awrâ), or the Fayḍ (the estuary) of Baṣrah, and the Persians named it Bahmanshîr; at the present day it is generally known as the Shaṭṭ-al-'Arab, 'the Arab River.' The tide from the Persian Gulf came up it, reaching as far north as the head of the channel at Madhâr and 'Abdasî, also filling and emptying the numerous canals of Baṣrah, and those irrigating the lands east and west of the estuary. Baṣrah, the great commercial port of 'Irâḳ, lay close to the border of the desert, at some distance to the west of the estuary, with which it was in water communication by means of two canals. Both north and south of Baṣrah numerous canals drained the lower waters of the Great Swamp

[1] I. R. 94, 185. I. S. 28. Kud. 240. Baladhuri, 293, 342. Kaz. ii. 297, 310. Yak. i. 669; iii. 603; iv. 468, 830. J. N. 455.

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into the Blind Tigris, and on the east side of the estuary several other canals came in, while a broad artificial channel called the Nahr Bayân, at a point about 30 miles above 'Abbâdân, joined the estuary of the Tigris with that of the Dujayl (the Kârûn river), which flows down from the Khûzistân province into the Persian Gulf at Sulaymânân[1].

Al-Baṣrah—the name is said to mean 'the Black Pebbles'—was founded in the reign of 'Omar in the year 17 (638), and its lands were divided among the Arab tribes who were then in garrison here after the conquest of the Sassanian empire. The city grew quickly to be, with Kûfah, one of the new capitals of 'Irâḳ; and in the year 36 (656) near Baṣrah 'Alî gained the barren victory, the famous Battle of the Camel, over those who were responsible for the death of the Caliph 'Othmân; in which battle Ṭalḥah and Zubayr, two well-known Companions of the Prophet, were slain. Baṣrah lay about 12 miles in a direct line from the Tigris estuary, being reached by two great canals, the Nahr Ma'ḳil from the N.E. down which ships came from Baghdâd, and the Nahr-al-Ubullah by which the traffic passed from Baṣrah going S.E. to the Persian Gulf at 'Abbâdân. These two canals, with the waters of the estuary to the east for the third side, formed the Great Island as it was called; and the city of Ubullah stood at its S.E. angle, above where the Ubullah canal joined the estuary.

Baṣrah city had its greatest length along the junction canal, of the two arms just named, and its houses extending westward in a semicircle reached the border of the desert, where a single gate called Bâb-al-Bâdiyah (the Desert Gate) gave egress. The width of the city, from the canal bank to this gate, was in the 4th (10th) century three miles, but its length greatly exceeded this measurement. The houses of the town were for the most part of kiln-burnt bricks, the walls were surrounded by rich pasture lands,

[1] I. S. 28. The word *'Awrâ*, meaning 'blind of an eye,' is applied to rivers that have silted up, and to roads along which there is no thoroughfare. At first the name of the Blind Tigris appears to have been given to the 'Abdasî channel; and only at a later date to the lower estuary. Mas. *Tanbih* 52. Yak. i. 770. J. N. 454. This last gives the Tigris estuary under the name of the Shaṭṭ-al-'Arab.

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