

# YAMAN

*ITS EARLY MEDIÆVAL HISTORY*

BY

NAJM AD-DIN 'OMĀRAH AL-ḤAKAMI

ALSO THE ABRIDGED HISTORY OF ITS DYNASTIES

BY

IBN KHALDŪN

ПОГАШЕНО

AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE KARMATHIANS OF YAMAN

BY

ABU 'ABD ALLAH BAHA AD-DIN AL-JANADI

THE ORIGINAL TEXTS, WITH TRANSLATION AND NOTES

BY

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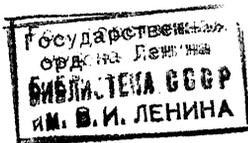
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## INTRODUCTION

ПОГЛАВНО

THE history of the Arabs of Yaman under Islām has, as it seems to me, hitherto received less attention from Western scholars than it may fairly be said to deserve; and hence it no doubt arises that readers desirous of information on the subject, find their endeavours to obtain it attended with almost insuperable difficulty. Lists of the dynasties have been included by Mr. S. Lane-Poole in his Catalogue of Coins at the British Museum, and he has added such brief explanations as the special purpose of his work would permit; but, with that exception, the subject is in English literature simply a blank. And the labours of continental scholars, it must be added, are in this particular case, of less assistance than might be expected.

The only book that treats, in a European language, of the Muhammadan history of Yaman, is a small volume by C. T. Johannsen, written in Latin and published at Bonn in 1828. It is an abstract of the history of Zabīd by the Arab author Dayba', itself an abridgment, but one that supplies a historical sketch of the dynasties into whose possession the city successively passed, from the date of its foundation down to the tenth century of the Hijrah. Johannsen's work affords, therefore, a brief account of the leading families that ruled over Yaman previous to the sixteenth century of the Christian era. But some, to whom Zabīd never belonged, such for instance as the Zuray'ite Princes of Aden, are necessarily excluded. Johannsen's book is, moreover, at the present day somewhat rare.

A certain lack of interest in the fortunes of the petty states and dynasties of a country so slightly connected with the great streams of Muhammadan history, can without much difficulty be accounted for. It is no more than natural also, that the attention of scholars should be mainly attracted to the country as the ancient seat of an extinct and as yet little known civilization. But its history under Muhammadan influences is nevertheless

neither destitute of interest, nor altogether uninteresting. Yaman, moreover, borders at the present day upon one of the great highways of the world. Its principal seaport has for more than half a century been in the possession of England, whose influence over the adjoining districts is willingly acknowledged by the inhabitants. A contribution to its past history may therefore, not unreasonably be expected to prove acceptable to English readers.

Of the not inconsiderable number of native writers by whom the history of Muhammadan Yaman has been treated, the earliest in date, and in certain respects the most important, is 'Omārah "the Yamanite." His reputation among his countrymen rests perhaps somewhat too exclusively upon his merits as a poet, but he is held in remembrance also as the leading historian of his native country, and as the writer to whom almost all is due that can be learnt of its history over a period of at least two centuries and a half. 'Omārah's successors have freely acknowledged the debt they owe him, and indeed, for the period in question, they have done little or nothing more than reproduce what he has written, in a more or less abridged form, whilst very generally retaining his actual words.

Whatever, therefore, the deficiencies in 'Omārah's work, it was to be expected that it would be carefully preserved. But so far is this from being the case, that until quite recently, no copy was known to exist. None has been included in the important collections of MSS. that have come of late years from Yaman, and, so far as I am aware, a general belief has prevailed that the recovery of 'Omārah's History was all but hopeless. The event has happily turned out otherwise, and a copy of the book is actually in the possession of the British Museum library, acquired in 1886, according to a note on the fly-leaf of the volume.

It is somewhat remarkable to find that the book has evidently been owned by a European. Not only is the binding of Western fashion, but other signs, pencil marks and the label on the back of the volume—*Documents relatifs au Yemen*—put the matter beyond all doubt. Another and indeed more singular circumstance is that the portion of the volume consisting of 'Omārah's History, is to all appearance a modern transcript, dating, so far as I can judge from the description of paper and from the style of writing, no further back than last century, or perhaps the early part of the present.

The volume (Or. 3265) is a small quarto. It comprises three separate parts. The first, of 85 folios, is Daybā's History of Zabīd. The third, 102 pages (52 folios), contains an account of events in Yaman from A.H. 1215 to A.H. 1258 (A.D. 1800 to 1842). The second part, consisting of 84 folios or 166 pages, is 'Omārah's history. Neither the name of the transcriber nor the date of the copy is given. The handwriting is not that of an accomplished penman, and the copyist, it may readily be perceived, could make no claim to scholarship. Errors, both of commission and of omission, are indeed numerous.

Even for the sole purpose of translation, the book, it was evident, would offer difficulty. But I had reason to believe that many deficiencies in the MS. would be supplied by the works of the author's successors. My expectations, it will be seen, have been amply fulfilled, and I have found it possible to print the original text, as well as to translate it, a task which without that assistance, I could hardly have ventured to undertake.

A life of 'Omārah is included in the Biographies of Ibn Khallikān (de Slane, vol. ii. p. 367). For his account of our author's earlier years, down, that is to say, to the time of his final departure for Egypt, the biographer seems to have drawn most of his material from the History of Yaman, in which 'Omārah touches upon sundry events in his own life. He was born, he tells us, at az-Zarā'ib, a town on or near the coast of northern Yaman, in the district of the Banu Ḥakam, the tribe of which he was a member, as shown by his denomination, the Ḥakamite.\* His name and designations seem to have been Najm ad-dīn 'Omārah ibn Abi 'l-Ḥasan 'Aly ibn Ahmad ibn Muḥammad Zaydān. On the title-page of the British Museum copy of his History, he is styled the Kāḍī; but there is nothing to show that he ever exercised the office of Judge, and we find him invariably spoken of under the title of *Fakīh*, the Jurist. He became a student at the College of Zabīd, as he himself tells us, in A.H. 530, and he was probably born not earlier than A.H. 515, the year mentioned by Suyūṭī (i. 238).

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\* Ibn Khallikān says, according to de Slane, that 'Omārah was born in the city of Martān, in the valley of Wasā', a place I am not able to identify. It will be seen that we have mention of *Maṭrān* (p. 68 etc.), but it is evidently not the place here in question.