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Piri Reis, the famous Ottoman navigator and cartographer was born in Gelibolu (Gallipoli) between 1456 and 1470. He was named Muhyiddin Piri ibn Haci Mehmed. His uncle was the famous admiral of the period Kemal Reis. When he was twelve years old, he joined the crew of his uncle, Kemal Reis. He started his career under the vigilance of his uncle, and took part in all kinds of naval activities for fourteen uninterrupted years.

They launched massive attacks on the Aegean Islands, Spain, France, and south and west Italy. They also transported Muslims of Andalusia to Africa. From 1487 to 1493 Piri participated in various activities on Aegean and Mediterranean under the supervision of his uncle.

In 1511 Kemal Reis sailed out with an unseaworthy vessel that broke into pieces in a storm and was drowned near the island of Naxos. For some reason unknown to us, Piri had not taken part in that battle. Piri Reis showed deep sorrow because of the loss of his uncle. Shortly after this tragedy Piri started working on his first map of the world at Gelibolu.

The First World Map

Piri realized the necessity for a map of the world that would help seamen in their voyages on the high seas. In drawing this map, as a sailor devoted to this profession, he applied all the resources then available. He relied on thirty-four oriental and western maps and he also benefited from an Arabic map, four Portuguese maps and one map of Christopher Columbus. The knowledge of the Americas came from a captive of his uncle Kemal Reis who carried out raids in the Western Mediterranean. In 1501 he captured seven Spanish sailing ships near Valencia that had returned from newly discovered America. He finished drawing this map in 1513 and he presented it to the Sultan Selim I in Egypt in 1517. Piri later recounted in his Kirab-ı Bahriye that Sultan Selim much admired the map.

Although Piri had drawn a map of the whole world, the portion we now have of it is only of the western coasts of Europe and Africa, the Atlantic Ocean, Central and South America.

The map is drawn on a roe-skin in various colours. Like other contemporary maps, it has no lines of longitude or latitude. Nevertheless, we can see two rose-compasses one in the north and the other in the south. Each of the roses is divided into thirty-two parts and the division lines are extended beyond the rose frames. Each rose is equal to one sea mile, as is shown in the measurements on the areas near the wind-roses. The map is 90 x 65 centimetres in size.

The map is painted in various colours and is decorated with numerous illustrations. In the capitals of Portugal, Marrakesh and Guinea, there are pictures of their respective sovereigns. Besides these, on the continent of Africa there are pictures of an elephant and an ostrich, and on South America there are pictures of llamas and pumas. On the oceans and along the coasts we see illustrations of ships. On both the land areas and the seas, there are entries, some of them relevant to the illustrations. They are all written in Ottoman Turkish, and are also be found in his book "Kitab-ı Bahriye".

The most important note reads:

حرره الفتح بره بن حاجي محمد المحروق
براد زاده كمال ريس على الله عنهما
جميع في مدينة غاليبولى في شهر عرفة
الحرم سنة 919

"This map was drawn by Piri ibn Haci Mehmed, known as the nephew of Kemal Reis, in Gelibolu (Gallipoli), in the month of Muharram in the year 919 (AD 1513)."

Kitab-ı Bahriye (The Book of Navigation)

This book provides information on the life of Piri Reis. Piri had sailed along almost all the Aegean and the Mediterranean coasts, had found opportunity to study the ports of the Adriatic, Italy, France, Spain, and Tunisia collecting his notes in a book. Piri wrote his book by collecting information of the historical, geographical, and naval aspects of these areas.
He also had maps for each section of his book. We understand that even before his notes were collected in book form, sailors of his age made use of some of his material.

The book has over 400 large pages and a section all in verse form, consisting of seventy-eight pages; the latter is divided into twenty-three chapters, 1,107 couplets in all. In this work Piri has put all that he learned and observed as well as information indirectly acquired on the seas of the world, in a style easy to remember and memorize. The main theme in the book is the Aegean and Mediterranean coastlines and islands. We can summarize its contents as follows:

In Chapters I and II he explains his aim in writing the book and his life at sea with Kemal Reis. He also points to the significance of observation and experiments at sea. He mentions with deep sorrow how his uncle, Kemal Reis, lost his life. In chapters III, IV and V he gives information about storms, winds and the compass. Chapters VI-VII (pp. 23-28) he studies the maps and the pictures on the maps and ship compasses. In chapter VIII he says that one fourth of the seas that cover the earth have continents on them, and proceeds to name them. These are in his own language; "Cin", "Hin", "Pan", "Zene" (near Ethiopia), "Magrip", "Rum", and "Bahr-i Külzüm". Chapter IX is devoted to the geographic discoveries of the Portuguese.

The main body of the text is written in prose, the aim being to make it easily accessible to every sailor. It begins with the Straits of Çanakkale (Dardanelles), then goes on to the coastline and the islands of the Aegean Sea to Athens. Then to the Adriatic Sea and the coasts along Western Italy, Southern France and Eastern Spain; geographic and historical information about the islands there are given and then along the Straits of Gibraltar to the African coast as far as Egypt, then to the shores of Palestine and Syria, to Cyprus and then the Anatolian coastline up to Marmara. At the end of this section, he studies Crete and other islands which he had not previously mentioned. He finishes the book with a description of the Gulf of Saros.

In composing the work, Piri first gives historical and geographical information and then he discusses the necessary practical knowledge of navigation. Each chapter contains detailed charts in colour.

On many points the accuracy of his statements are indisputable and corroborates with what we know today. The work, must therefore, be regarded as very important to the science of navigation.

In 1517 Piri was given command of several vessels taking part in the Ottoman campaign against Egypt. Under the command of Cafer Bey (Jafer Bey) the fleet took Alexandria. With a part of this fleet Piri sailed to Cairo through the Nile. Later Piri Reis drew a map and made notes giving detailed information about this area too.

After Egypt was joined to the growing Empire, Piri had a chance to meet Selim I Yavuz, during the battle of
Alexandria. This is the occasion when he presented the map he had previously drawn to the Sultan. After the Egyptian campaign, during a period of relaxation at Gelibolu, he put his notes on "Bahriye" into book form.

The reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, who ascended the throne in 1520, is a history of successive victories. Piri's taking part in the Turkish fleet going to the campaign on Rhodes in 1523 is to be regarded as only natural. Piri commemorates the royal command of Sultan Süleyman to him to act as a guide to İbrahim Paşa (Pasha), the Great Vizier (Sadrazam).

When the expedition could not continue on its way owing to storms, they were compelled to take refuge at Rhodes. Piri Reis had the opportunity of getting to know İbrahim Paşa on this trip. The Vizier noticed Piri often consulting his notes.

During this trip İbrahim Paşa understood the significance of the book. He therefore advised Piri Reis to rearrange his notes. Encouraged by his words Piri rearranged the book upon his return to Gelibolu and copied it all out, and with the help of İbrahim Paşa presented it to the Sultan. The date of the book is given in verse in the traditional way.

We have reached our desired end and written this couplet. From the final couplet one makes the date to be AH 923 (AD 1520).

**The Second World Map AH 935/AD 1528**

Fifteen years after his first map, Piri Reis drew a second one again at Gelibolu. Like the previous map it bears his signature. Unfortunately, today we have only a small portion. It is 68 x 69 centimetres in size. There we find the northern part of the Atlantic Ocean and the newly discovered regions of North and Central America. There are four wind-roses on it.

On this map, as on the previous one, there are some explanatory notes, but they are recorded more briefly. The note on the left-hand corner of the map gives the signature of the author as well as the date, AH 935 (AD 1528).

After the publication of this map Piri Reis disappeared from all records for twenty years and we know nothing of him until he appears again in Ottoman sources in 1547.

**The Re-conquest of Aden**

In 1546 Ali bin Sulaiman, a local Arab Amir, succeeded in taking Aden from the Ottoman forces. The Ottoman authorities appointed Piri Reis as the captain of India and he was ordered to capture Aden. A fleet consisting of sixty ships sailed from Suez in October 1547 under the command of Piri Reis. When he reached Aden he bombarded the city and was able to capture three Portuguese ships carrying forty soldiers on each. Ali bin Sulaiman was killed during a skirmish between the two sides. His son Muhammad was chosen to replace him and sought Portuguese help against the Ottomans. Some Portuguese ships came to the aid of Aden, but when they saw the size of the Ottoman fleet, they retired. The Ottomans besieged Aden by land and sea continuing to bombard the city. After twenty days the Ottomans launched a general attack on the citadel of Aden and were able to raise the Ottoman flag on Aden’s towers on 3rd February 1549. The Ottoman Porte was pleased with this conquest and promoted Piri Reis and his troops.
Piri Reis in the Arabian Gulf

The Ottomans were able to establish themselves in the Arabian Gulf by the middle of the sixteenth century. They then came face to face with the Portuguese who had been there since the first decade of the century. The Portuguese were very active in the Gulf and made efforts to stop Ottoman penetration in the region and expel them from the places they had already reached. The Portuguese took al-Qtiff and Larack Island in 957/1550 - 958/1551. They also attacked Basra, but in vain. They also established relations with the Arab tribes in the surrounding parts of Basra province and incited them to rebel against the Ottomans.

All these factors induced the Ottomans to dispatch an expedition against the Portuguese. Therefore, in 959/1552, Piri Reis sailed from Suez with thirty ships and around 850 men. He had been given orders to take Hūrmūz (Hormuz) and, if successful, to proceed and take Bahreyn. He was then to go to Basra and settle the continuous disturbances caused by Arab rebels and to winter there. As it would be necessary for some ships to remain in Basra, he was permitted to leave ten vessels and to return with the rest.

Piri Reis sailed through the strait of Bab al-Mandab to the coast of ash-Shihr where he lost some vessels due to bad weather. Meanwhile, the Portuguese became aware of the Ottoman preparations. In August, Piri Reis sent out five ships under the command of his son Mehmed, who advanced in the Gulf of Oman and arrived at Muscat, a town that had been held by the Portuguese since 1507. Mehmed Reis bombarded the town for six days and, on the seventh day after the arrival of Piri Reis at Muscat, João de Lisboa, who had been sent there to build a fortress and who was the commander of the Portuguese garrison there, surrendered to the Ottomans, who took 120 Portuguese prisoners who were pressed into labour as oarsmen. Piri Reis did not garrison Muscat because he did not have enough men to spare for the task. Besides, it was too far from the Ottoman base in Basra for support, while at the same time it was very close to the Portuguese bases on the Omani coast and at Hūrmūz (Hormuz). Therefore, he removed what was useful and destroyed the town, sailing away to Hūrmūz.

Piri Reis arrived at Hūrmūz in September. Álvaro de Noronha, the governor of Hūrmūz, was well informed about the activities of the Ottoman fleet and had made all necessary preparations for resistance. He had with him 900 men and ammunition sufficient for a long siege. Piri Reis arrived at Hūrmūz with twenty-eight ships and 850 men and besieged the city. Álvaro de Noronha immediately informed the Viceroy of India of this event and sought to defend the city against the heavy bombardment from the Ottomans. The siege continued for about twenty days, at the end of which the Ottomans failed to take Hūrmūz. Piri Reis feared a Portuguese fleet might come and attack him while he was still besieging the fort. His money supply had also become insufficient to pay the salaries (‘uluf) of his troops. Consequently, he withdrew to Basra in October 1552.

When the viceroy of India heard about the danger threatening their position in the Gulf, he wasted no time in fitting out a large fleet.

On Piri's arrival at Basra, he learnt that the Portuguese fleet had arrived at Hūrmūz, which meant that his withdrawal had been made just at the right time.

Piri Reis feared that the Portuguese might blockade his return route to Suez making it difficult for his fleet to return to its base. Piri Reis discussed the situation with Qubad Pasa, the Beglerbegi (Governor-General) of Basra, and decided to take only three ships and return to Suez. With these, he just managed to evade the Portuguese. One of his ships was wrecked near Bahreyn and he arrived at Suez with just two ships, having left the rest of his fleet in Basra.

David Paşa, the Beglerbegi of Egypt seized and imprisoned Piri Reis on his arrival in Cairo. Doubledes, David Paşa surmised that, although the fleet of India was under Piri's command and responsibility, Piri, the Flag Officer of the fleet, had escaped from the battle leaving the rest of the fleet behind. David Paşa then informed Istanbul of this and later receiving orders from the enraged Sultan Süleyman to execute him. Piri Reis was then beheaded in Cairo in 961/1554.
THE IMPORTANCE OF CASTLES IN THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF OMAN

ABRIDGED FROM A LECTURE BY FARIS GLUBB

Perhaps the most striking first impression for a visitor to Oman is the profound influence of castles on architecture in that country, even in purely civilian buildings. Houses, hotels, office buildings frequently have battlement-style roofs, and even water tanks are made to look like small turrets. This arch is a modern one based on traditional castle architecture. There are in fact more than five hundred castles in the Sultanate of Oman, of varying sizes ranging from small watchtowers to massive fortresses that are cities within walls. Many of these are in an excellent state of preservation or restoration, thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture.

When we study the history of Oman, we can understand why castles played such an important part and made such a deep cultural impression on the Omanis. In the Muslim world in general, fortifications were built in the eighth century along frontiers and in regions that might be exposed to attack. The system of defence was based on fortified cities. In some cases the whole city was built within walls and designed to withstand a siege, in others a large fort was located separate from the residential area. Watchtowers were often used as an outer line of defence, which gave warning of approaching enemies and delayed their advance, giving the city time to prepare resistance. Smaller villages in flat areas would have aswar, walled enclosures where the villagers could group for safety and hold off attackers until hopefully reinforcements arrived. Initially these fortifications were to defend the Muslim world from outside enemies.

Later, as the territories of the ‘Abbasid state fragmented and local dynasties arose, the fortifications were used in conflicts between rival dynasties, and military architecture became more widespread. When the Crusaders from Europe invaded, they learned the techniques of military architecture that had been developed in the Muslim world, and imported them to Europe.

The golden age of castle building in Oman came several centuries later. Between July 1497 and September 1498, Vasco da Gama sailed from Lisbon to Calcutta and back. He is said to have used the help of the famous Omani navigator Ahmad Ibn Majid. By discovering this quicker route to India, da Gama placed Portugal in a dominant position over East-West trade for the next 150 years, thus making his country the superpower of that age which colonized territories in Africa and Asia, as well as Brazil. The Portuguese conquerors behaved with extreme cruelty, even by the standards of European colonialism. There were at least two occasions when Vasco da Gama captured civilian ships off the coast of Calcutta and set them on fire, burning the passengers to death, after torturing and mutilating them. They had not resisted him or posed any danger to him, it was just wanton killing for the fun of it.

Portugal appointed Alfonso d’Albuquerque Viceroy of India who conquered the East African coast committing a number of atrocities. For example, in 1505 his forces captured Mombasa and massacred the inhabitants, men, women and children. In 1507 he seized the Omani coastal town of Muscat, which he almost totally destroyed. The Portuguese forces made a point of pursuing and killing any women or children who fled from Muscat, as well as many who remained in the town.

In order to ensure control of the trade route to India, the Portuguese captured other towns along the Omani coast, including Matrah adjoining Muscat, Sur, and Barka. They also captured Bahrain and Hormuz, thus effectively dominating navigation in the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, and the east-west trade routes passing through the region.

The Portuguese owed much of their maritime success to their ability to absorb the knowledge of navigation, geography, and mathematics that had been developed by Islamic civilization. The military superiority of the Portuguese over countries of Africa and Asia that they invaded was assured by the arquebus, a hand-held gun which could be used by infantry. But the technology of these new weapons could quickly be mastered, and muskets of Omani manufacture soon appeared on the battlefield.

The invention of artillery led to new developments in military architecture, including the building of towers as fortified artillery platforms, and the strengthening of castle walls to withstand artillery bombardment. Towers were built round instead of square, in order better to deflect cannonballs. Floors in general were built much stronger with thicker walls, to withstand artillery bombardment. The central rectangular part of a fort was used for housing the commander and the garrison. The towers were built higher to give the artillery on them greater range, and enable the defenders to bombard the attackers before the latter could bring their artillery within range. Cannons were difficult to move across the countryside before the invention of mechanized transport, so artillery in that age was more useful for defence than attack. It was also impossible for the attackers to hit gun positions on top of a high tower, because the gunpowder was not powerful enough to lift the cannonballs high in the air. Towers were also convenient points to assemble the defenders to make a sortie. There were loopholes to enable musketeers to fire down on enemy soldiers who approached too close for artillery to be effective.
Now it was the Arabs' turn to learn from Europe: the Omanis' conflict with the Portuguese taught them new techniques of military architecture that had been developed particularly by Italian renaissance architects.

The Portuguese built the two forts of Jalali and Mirani on commanding rocky outcrops in order to maintain their foothold in Muscat. The rocky mountains around Muscat provide excellent natural defences, and the Portuguese strengthened their position further with these two forts, harbour fortifications, a mud brick wall around the town, and watchtowers as an outer line of defence. Two of these watchtowers were later incorporated into the fort of Matrah. This was not typical of Portuguese military architecture. In Africa, they often brought building materials for their castles by ship from Portugal and assembled them on the spot. But in Oman, they took advantage of the local terrain to build strong fortifications. The castles and forts built in Oman during this period can be divided into two categories. The castles on the coast were mainly built by the Portuguese in order to withstand both naval attacks and attacks by Omani ground forces. They were not however, typically Portuguese in design; rather they were an adaptation of Portuguese architecture to suit their local needs and take advantage of local features of terrain. After the Portuguese had been expelled from them, they were used by the Omanis to help defend their country from outside attack. On occasion the Omanis modified or added to them to suit their own purposes. The seaside fort of Barka is a fairly typical example of this. Whereas the castles and forts in the interior were entirely Oman built, initially to defend the country against invasion by Portugal or any other enemy, they were also used to help maintain government control, and in internal power struggles that developed later.

The Portuguese used Muscat as a naval base to control the trade route to India. They never tried to conquer the mountainous interior of Oman, which would probably have been impossible for them. The main route for an invading army to reach the interior of Oman from the coast is the Wadi Samail, a fine area for guerrilla warfare and a very nasty place for a regular army to be trapped in. The Omanis fortified this and other areas very effectively with a number of large forts, smaller castles and watchtowers.

The Imam, Sultan Ibn Saif and his successors, after expelling the Portuguese completely from Oman territory in 1650, built up an impregnable defence system to protect the country from invasion by Portugal or any other power of that age. One of the castles in the age of artillery that includes all the features described, is Al-Hazem Fort, built in the first half of the eighteenth century by Imam Sultan Ibn Saif’s grandson, Sultan II. The centre-piece of this defence system was the city of Sur, whose citadel was also built by Sultan Ibn Saif.

The Portuguese invaders had to face the hostility not only of the Omani people, but also Persia, and their emerging rivals for trade with the East, Holland and England, with which Persia at times co-operated. The Ottoman admirals Piri Reis in 1551, and Mir Ali Bey in 1581, attacked and sacked Muscat. But the Ottomans were never able to consolidate their victories, either to establish a strong presence in the Gulf or drive the Portuguese out. Their main problem was logistical, as their nearest naval base was Suez, north west of the Arabian Peninsula and they never succeeded in establishing a naval base in Basra. After the 1581 Ottoman attack, the Portuguese called in the Italian architect Cairare in 1586 to rebuild the Muscat fortifications. Among other things, he added artillery batteries at sea level. Possibly this was an indication of the Portuguese fear of Oman’s growing naval strength. The existing Fort Mirani is Cairare’s work, since the Ottomans completely destroyed the earlier fort.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century it was
Persia, led by Shah Abbas, which put up the main resistance to the Portuguese. It drove them out of Bahrain in 1601, and fought a long, fierce war that resulted in the liberation of Hormuz in 1622. There are historical accounts that Omanis and other Arabs helped the Persians in the battle for Hormuz, probably as individual volunteers. Shah Abbas used his diplomacy to win the military support of the East India Company as well, this support, however, aroused the anger of the British Government which fined the Company 20,000 pounds Sterling. The loss of Hormuz weakened the Portuguese, but it also meant that the importance of the Oman coastal areas they occupied increased. They strengthened the fortifications around Muscat and built watchtowers, including the two around which Matrah Fort was later constructed.

It took the Omanis more than a century to effectively resist the Portuguese after Muscat was captured. The reason for this delay was that the country was then divided between rival tribal groupings and failed for a long time to unite against the invasion. Indeed, the Portuguese were able to exploit these divisions, and sometimes use the treachery of local Omanis rulers to ally themselves with the invaders against their rivals. For example, the coastal town of Surah at the beginning of the seventeenth century was a prosperous port that rivaled the Portuguese occupied Muscat and Hormuz, although it had been under Portuguese occupation for a time during the sixteenth century. Amir ‘Umair Ibn Himmir, who was a rival of the ruler of Surah, Muhammad Ibn Muhanna, asked the Portuguese for help against him. The Portuguese sent a force that helped him to capture Surah. The town was completely destroyed, but the fort remained, and was occupied by the Portuguese. The existing fort is typical of forts with which the Portuguese held these coastal towns. But the remains of an earlier fort built of baked bricks were discovered under it in 1980 by a French archaeological team. When the Portuguese occupied Surah for the first time they replaced the bricks with stone and built two towers, which were later destroyed.

The majority of Omanis belong to the Ibadi madhab, one of the seven schools of Islamic law recognized by al-Azhari, who believe in electing an imam as leader of the community and head of state. For many centuries the Ibadi maintained the tradition of electing an Imam to govern Oman, on the basis of merit and irrespective of family descent. In the early seventeenth century there was a religious revival in Oman, and on many occasions in history, a renewal of religious devotion has enabled Muslims to defend their faith and their homeland against an invader. The war of liberation against the Portuguese invaders began in 1624, when forty Islamic religious scholars, led by the eminent thinker, Khamis Ibn Said al-Shaqqi, assembled in Rustaq in central Oman, and proclaimed the revival of the Imamate. They elected as Imam, Nasir Ibn Murshid Al-Yarubi, a capable and inspiring military commander as well as a man of good moral character. He personified the most essential qualities in a Muslim leader, particularly in the circumstances Oman was facing. Some of the religious scholars who elected him, like Mas’ud Ibn Ramadan, served as military commanders in the war against the Portuguese occupation.

Nasir Ibn Murshid took possession of the castle of Rustaq, and then waged a campaign to reunify the country and subdue the petty chieftains who had set themselves up as independent rulers. Indeed his campaign for national unity led directly to conflict with Portugal. The local ruler of Samail, Mani’ Ibn Sinan al-‘Umar, tried to preserve his independence from Oman central government control by asking for help from the Portuguese who were occupying Surah. Mani’ Ibn Sinan thus became a traitor to both his country and his religion. Imam Nasir sent a force under the command of Mas’ud Ibn Ramdan that defeated the Portuguese at Surah. The Portuguese were forced to give up all the territory they occupied around Surah, pay tribute to the Oman Imamate and promise not to ill-treat Muslims in Muscat and Surah, which they still occupied. These conditions symbolized important political and legal gains: they were the de facto Portuguese recognition that Nasir Ibn Murshid’s Imamate was the legitimate government of Oman, and the lawful and sovereign protector of all the Oman people, even those still living under Portuguese occupation.

Imam Nasir’s campaign won wide support among ordinary people. The inhabitants of the strategic city of Nizwa in central Oman invited him to take over the city, and this put him in a very strong position. Once he had united Oman under a strong central government, he had enough resources to proclaim a jihad to liberate Oman territory from Portuguese occupation.

This victory at Surah encouraged Imam Nasir to pursue his campaign to expel the Portuguese from other places they occupied along the coast. Essentially this was a campaign to capture the fortresses that the Portuguese had built in these coastal areas. It was not an easy campaign, as the Portuguese made full use of artillery to defend their positions, placing their guns on high towers to give them maximum range over the nearby countryside. In 1633 Nasir Ibn Murshid expelled the Portuguese from Julfar (present-day Ras al-Khaimah). The Portuguese historian of that time, Antonio Bocarro, wrote that Imam Nasir “made himself the most powerful lord in the whole of Arabia by being a champion of Islamic law, of which he showed himself to be a very strict observer... This Imam commands some 14,000 or 15,000 Arab musketeers who are very expert.” After mentioning the Omani cavalry and the soldiers mounted on camels, Bocarro said that these mounted men formed no threat to Portuguese control of Muscat, “because of its steep and impassable cliffs. The danger comes from the foot soldiers, as they are very agile, being used to climbing mountains and rocks, which they do with ease”.

The Omanis, under the command of Sultan Ibn Saif Al-Yarubi, a cousin of Imam Nasir, recaptured the coastal towns of Sur and Qurayt in 1640. People in Muscat, who had been under Portuguese occupation for more than 130 years, wrote to Nasir Ibn Murshid urging him to send forces to liberate them. He sent a force that captured the fort of Kuwi outside Muscat. Later the Omanis captured Matrah Fort, and the Portuguese had to conclude a peace on even more disadvantageous terms. Nasir Ibn Murshid died before he could complete the liberation of all Oman territory. The Portuguese unwisely thought they could take advantage of his death by violating the peace, but his successor proved just as tough and competent a military commander, namely Sultan Ibn Saif Al-Yarubi, who was elected Imam on the
day that Imam Nasir died. He completed the work of expelling the Portuguese completely by capturing Muscat in 1650.

It is related that the Portuguese governor of Muscat, Pacheco, tried to force an Indian girl to marry him. The girl’s father was opposed to the marriage but pretended to agree, and said a great celebration should be held. He urged the governor to clean the water tanks and replace the maggot-ridden provisions and dirty gunpowder in the city. The governor agreed, and the girl’s father informed the Omani when the city’s water tanks, stores and armories were empty that it was a good time to attack. This may have been some help to the Omani, although it took fierce fighting for them to capture Jalali and Mirani Forts. According to the official Omani government account in the book Oman fil-Tarikh, the Imam Sultan received important intelligence information from Arab inhabitants of Muscat. But the main credit for the victory must probably go to Oman’s agile infantry soldiers who climbed the mountains and rocks to attack, many of whom gave their lives to liberate Muscat.

Like his predecessor, Sultan Ibn Saif was chosen because of his competence as a military commander and his good moral character. He was described as a humble man, easily accessible to ordinary people, and he used to walk in the streets without any bodyguard, sit and talk with people and greet them regardless of their social status. He was also the first international leader in history to apply in practice the concept of Afro-Asian solidarity against Western colonialism, some 300 years before it became a fact of international politics in the twentieth century. In addition to building up a system of castles and fortifications to defend Oman from outside attack, Sultan Ibn Saif realized that the conflict with Portugal was essentially a naval one, and he had to build up Omani naval power if he was to attack the Portuguese in their colonies. Both he and his successors gave priority to this aim, so that Oman became the leading naval power in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf and was able to intervene effectively throughout most of the Indian Ocean.

The Swahili History of Mombasa, by an anonymous author, records that the inhabitants of that city sent a delegation to Sultan Ibn Saif appealing for his help to liberate themselves from Portuguese occupation. In 1652, the Imam Sultan sent a fleet, which attacked the Portuguese in Zanzibar and destroyed their settlement there. The Queen of Zanzibar and her son swore allegiance and paid tribute to the Imam of Oman in gratitude. In 1655, Sultan Ibn Saif sent a fleet to attack the Portuguese in Bombay, and then in Mombasa, where it captured three Portuguese ships. He liberated many other places in East Africa from the Portuguese occupation, including Mombasa in 1698.

Apart from the solidarity aspect, Sultan Ibn Saif believed that the best means of defence is attack. Not content with expelling the Portuguese occupation from Oman, he attacked it in its other colonies in India and Africa. According to Tuhfat Al-A’yan by Abdullah Ibn Humaid Al-Salini, one of the most authoritative books on the history of Oman, Sultan Ibn Saif “fought them wherever he found them, by land and sea”. He financed the building of Nizwa Fort around 1660 from booty captured from the Portuguese in India. Nizwa was the capital of Oman for much of its history. In addition to being the seat of the Imamate, it was also the centre of the country’s system of defences. Among its
other claims to fame, it was visited by Ibn Batutah, who wrote about its beautiful bazaars.

It is believed that stones from earlier forts were used by Sultan Ibqn Saif in the construction of the present fort around the 1670s. Its main feature is a massive round tower, some thirty metres high and thirty-six metres in diameter, which is a platform for heavy artillery giving 360 degree coverage of the surrounding countryside. It can defend against attackers who might come along Wadi Samail from the east, Wadi Tanuf from the west and the desert route from the south. On the northern side Nitwa is protected by the Jabal Al-Akhdar mountain range. This tower, known as the citadel, is filled with earth to a level of fourteen metres. On top of this were placed cannons, which fired from loopholes in the wall around the tower. At the top of the wall is a circular walk from which musketeers could shoot from behind cremnialations.

The platform is reached by a narrow zigzag stairway, with doors at each turn that can be locked to delay the progress of any enemies who may force their way in. Inner defences of this sort are a common feature in Omanite military architecture. Such stairways often contain what are known as “murder holes” from which the defenders can shoot or throw things at enemies trying to enter. In Europe the defenders often used to pour boiling oil on the attackers. The Omanis used boiling dubs (date molasses).

Nasir Ibn Munshid had relied on tribal volunteers for his soldiers. Sultan Ibn Saif raised a regular standing army and built a powerful navy, and so his state was much stronger and less likely to be threatened by tribal rebellions. Boorly captured from the Portuguese brought in much economic wealth. Oman’s merchant navy also expanded and prosperity from trade increased.

Sultan Ibn Saif died in 1680. He was succeeded by his son, Ba’urab. Although the formality of an election was observed, in effect the Ya’rubis state was turning into a hereditary monarchy, and the traditional Ibadite principle of opposition to hereditary was being undermining. In 1675, before becoming Imam, Ba’urab had built Jhirau Castle and he moved his residence and capital there from Nizwa. In fact he added a palace wing to an existing fort, thus turning what had previously been a military stronghold into his palace residence. It is architecturally beautiful and elaborately decorated, with fine painted ceilings. Among other things it contained a religious college. Ba’urab was an amateur dietician, who selected special foods for the students that would “help them increase their mental abilities”.

While Ba’urab’s legitimacy was questionable according to Ibadite principles because he inherited the position from his father, he weakened his position further by signing an agreement with the Portuguese allowing them to open a factory and appoint an agent in Muscat, and build a fort in northern Oman. Many leading Omanis ("most of the people of Oman", according to al-Salimi), thus considered him totally unsuitable, and elected his brother Saif Iman instead. However, opinion was divided on this, and many religious scholars withheld allegiance from him. A war ensued, in which Saif captured all the forts in Oman except Jibrin, where Ba’urab was besieged and died in AD 1692/AH 1104.

Saif resumed his father’s policy of fighting the Portuguese. Internally his policies brought economic prosperity. He dug seventeen water channels, known as aljil (singular jilaj), introduced new crops and other improvements in agriculture, encouraged commerce and maintained a strong fleet for both naval and commercial purposes. The jilaj are a remarkable feature of Oman. They are a network of underground water channels, most of which were dug centuries ago. Indeed, there is a story that they were first dug in the time of the Prophet David and his son Solomon. Not only are they very old, they are also remarkable feats of engineering, ensuring that a large proportion of Oman’s rainfall is preserved from waste and evaporation and conveyed to the fields where it is used for irrigation. The jilaj also provided a safe underground water supply for many castles, enabling their defenders to withstand a siege more effectively as in the case of the castle at Birkat al-Mawz. In addition to supplying the castle’s water supply, the water from this jilaj irrigates the surrounding farmland, where one of the crops is bananas, as the name ‘al-Mawz’ indicates. In addition to a jilaj, castles generally had wells, to ensure that the defenders were not endangered by thirst.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, according to al-Salimi, Saif assembled an army of 96,000 horsemen to attack the Portuguese in India. He also drove the Portuguese out of several areas of East Africa. He died in Rustaq after leading the country for nineteen years.

Saif was succeeded by his son Sultan II in 1711 — for in fact the Ya’rubis imams had become a royal dynasty, whatever pretenses might still be maintained of election or the bay’a, the Islamic oath of allegiance. Nevertheless Sultan II followed the military traditions of his father and grandfather, and fought the Portuguese. He also fought the Persians and captured Bahrain from them. He moved his residence and the seat of his government from Rustaq Fort to a new fort he built at al-Hazmi, which was nearer to the coast, and which he regarded as a front line of defence in case of any attempt to invade the interior of Oman. Sultan built al-Hazmi partly “with money he had inherited from his father”, according to al-Salimi, but he also supplemented this by borrowing large sums from mosques and wealthy religious endowments. He died and was buried in al-Hazmi Fort in AD 1718/AH 1131.

A problem arose that the ruling family and a number of tribal leaders wanted the succession to be according to primogeniture, although Sultan’s eldest son, Saif, was still only twelve years old. The religious and legal scholars wanted to choose the most suitable relative as Imam: Muhanna Ibn Sultan Ibn Majid, the husband of the late Imam’s sister. The scholars took Muhanna into Rustaq Castle and proclaimed him Imam, while the people in the city of Rustaq outside
regarded Saif as Imam.

The following year Ya’rub, the son of Bal’urab who had died under siege in Jibrin Castle, led a revolt against Imam Muhamma on the pretext of installing the child Saif in power, overthrowing and killing him. After a brief pretense at being regent on Saif’s behalf, Ya’rub persuaded the religious and legal scholars to pledge allegiance to him as Imam. The inhabitants of Rustaq again opposed this and persuaded another Ya’rub, Bal’urab Ibn Nasir, to overthrow him and take power, also as regent on behalf of the child Saif. The situation deteriorated because of the squabbles for power between these decadent princes. These events led to the emergence of two tribal confederations, the Haimi and the Ghaffari, and a civil war broke out. The principles of the elected Imame had by now been completely undermined.

After he came of age, the Imam Saif ibn Sultan II tried to strengthen his weak position by appealing to Nadir Shah of Persia, who sent forces. Oman collapsed for a while into the sort of chaos that had existed when the Portuguese invaded. Saif was replaced as Imam in 1741 by Sultan Ibn Murshid, who joined forces with the Governor of Sohar Ahmad Ibn Said to resist the Persians. Sultan Ibn Murshid died from wounds he received in battle against the Persians, and the deposed Imam Ibn Sultan II died shortly afterwards. Ahmad Ibn Said held out in Sohar for nine months under siege by the Persians, at the end of which he signed a truce, which gave him a breathing space to reorganize his forces, reunite the country and assume the leadership of a liberation movement to expel the Persian invaders. After an abortive attempt to revive the Ya’rub state, Ahmad Ibn Said was elected Imam of Oman in 1744. He successfully led the struggle to expel the Persians, and was the ancestor of the al-Bu Said dynasty that rules Oman today.

Nasir Ibn Murshid, Sultan Ibn Saif I and his son Saif had provided fine religious, political and military leadership for Oman during a critical and dangerous period of its history. They had inspired the Omani people to an outstanding heroic effort, which inflicted defeat on what was probably the strongest colonial power of its time. This led to the whole of the East African coast north of Mozambique being freed from Portuguese colonialism.

Most of Oman’s greatest castles remain as a tribute to the greatest achievements of the Ya’rub Imams – or the Ya’rub dynasty as many historians call it, since it ended up becoming a dynasty. There were castles in Oman since the most ancient times, some of which were incorporated into more recent buildings, like the pre-Islamic Burj al-Shayatin or Devil’s Tower that now forms part of Rustaq Castle. And there were also more recent castles built after the Ya’rub period. But as I said, the golden age of castle building was the heroic age of resistance to the Portuguese invasion. The greatest Ya’rub achievements were not only military but also cultural. In addition to giving inspiration to Omani civilian architects up to this day, many of the great castles were also centres of culture and learning. Jibrin Castle has fine painted ceilings similar to the castles of Birkat al-Mawz, Barka and Rustaq. Many castles were not purely military buildings or palaces for rulers, but also contained schools and colleges, law courts and government administrative offices. Inside their walls there were often features of great architectural beauty. Some castles have a museum-like function, as ancient weapons or traditional handicrafts are exhibited. Several castles also contain fine examples of traditional Arab woodcarving, notably in their doors. It is thus clear that castles have been a major factor influencing the history and culture of the people of Oman.
Ancient Monuments in Islamic Egypt between Spoliation and Reuse

Abridged from a lecture by Doris Behrens-Abouseif

The Arab conquest brought under Muslim control the architectural heritage of the major ancient civilizations. Moreover, the Arabs inherited from their predecessors a geographic and cosmological literature which dealt with the cultures of the past, and which they cultivated and elaborated. In this literature the fascination with Ancient Egypt, notwithstanding its pagan associations, occupied an important place. Ulrich Haarmann has investigated medieval Arabic texts dealing with ancient Egypt. A look at the practice of how the mediaeval Egyptians dealt with the vestiges of the past reveals quite a variety of attitudes.

Although some Arab authors criticised the unnecessary demolition of ancient monuments, the rulers often used them as quarries for their own constructions. A major interest for the architecture of the past was motivated by the belief – occasionally justified – that the monuments hid treasures. This had of course fatal consequences for the buildings. The result was that a kind of mediaeval "Egyptology" developed, to guide treasure hunters to the Pharaonic sites and to teach them the proper excavation techniques.

Ancient religious monuments were sometimes Islamised by acquiring mosques added to them, such as the temple of Luxor or the Serapeum of Alexandria, as early mediaeval sources report. Demolitions guided by fanatic religious zeal were only the exception to the rule.

There was also another way of appropriating the architectural heritage of the ancients, which was to perpetuate their use. This happened with Alexandria, the glorious foundation of Alexander, the Dhimmi Qarnayn of the Qur'an, which continued to flourish under Roman and Byzantine rule until it fell, with all its cultural heritage and its architectural marvels, in Arab hands. The conquest of Alexandria was one of the most stunning moments of early Islamic history. The city did not change abruptly after the Arab conquest. Having lost the status of capital, it received little attention and experienced no major urban modifications. It only declined slowly to the advantage of Fustat-Cairo. Among the many architectural marvels of Alexandria was the famous lighthouse, acknowledged as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and known as the Pharos, the name of the site on which it stood.

The lighthouse was continuously described in Arabic geographic literature in a mixture of documentary and mythical terms.

After the monumental and still valid study of Hermann Thiersch at the beginning of this century, the Pharos has no longer been discussed by modern scholars. Recent publications of travellers' accounts, especially by North African and Andalusian authors, as well as a compilation of scattered material in the chronicles, indicate that since the early Islamic history, Egypt's rulers have continuously restored and rebuilt the lighthouse in order to use it in its original function. Already in the eighth century the lighthouse had lost its two upper stories. Arab historians attribute this demolition to the greed of the Umayyad caliph al-Walid in search of a hidden treasure. However, the repeated restorations and reconstructions works ever since have given the Pharos an Islamic appearance, its style changing according to the period. It was natural that the Pharos would be treated architecturally in a manner analogous to that of contemporary minarets.

The Pharos functioned as a watchtower and a beacon to protect the harbour against the repeated crusader raids that harassed it throughout the mediaeval period. With the domed mosque at its summit, it became at the same time a symbol of Islam to signal from afar the Muslim city of Alexandria to the approaching foreign vessels.

Centuries after its final collapse in the mid fourteenth century, it continued to be remembered and celebrated in popular art and poetry as a symbol of Alexandria's resistance to Christian raids.
The Splendour of Spanish Islamic Gardens

ABRIDGED FROM A LECTURE BY MANUEL GÓMEZ ANUARBE

The garden is a complex and ambiguous concept. Under this apparent simplicity, garden analysis requires a good knowledge of the most varied subjects: botany, architecture, engineering, art, philosophy... even psychoanalysis, since gardens are so much related to memory. Gardens have been, and they still are, the most exclusive subject of very cultivated people throughout history.

The word garden comes from *garden* in Old French, *garten* in German or *yard* in English and it refers to something enclosed.

Primitive man used to live in a magical world and it seems obvious that he was very surprised, as we still are today, at the passage of time between night and day, of the different seasons and generally, of the mystery of the world.

We do not know when the first gardens appeared but they probably were linked to agricultural practice and the first fences were to protect crops. The mystical and aesthetic idea of an orchard probably issues from this primitive world immersed in a conglomerate of tradition, religion, superstition and pre-science. It may have been the man in the desert who most intensely felt the need of a protected space from the pitiless sun and lack of water. It was a dream site, totally opposite to his real and difficult world.

Gardens are something creative, something different from nature; they are works of art. The materials used in gardens come from nature, the four original elements: earth, air, water and fire. However, the result is not physical but something related to the human creative process.

Gardens are different to plantations. Plants are parts of gardens but gardens are another entity. Plants are very important in gardens but no more than a pool, a staircase, a pergola, a grotto or a pavilion. A nursery can be a fascinating botanical display but it is not a garden. In fact there are gardens with no plants whatsoever, or their presence is hardly perceptible as in the Zen gardens of China and Japan.

Gardens are changing all the time since they are something alive and therefore they suffer from constant transformation. Gardens are different all the year round, even in Kuwait where the seasonal climate is intensely different to that of Canada or Sweden.

Water Wheel, Cordoba.
Because of the light, every moment is unique. Sizes, colours and textures are different all the time and therefore light becomes a basic compositional element in gardens.

To appreciate gardens as works of art, we need our five senses. Of sight; to see seeds and plant flowers, besides playing with light and shade; of smell, to appreciate the perfume of flowers or the humid earth; taste to give a zest to the fruits; hearing, to enjoy the sound of water or wind and touch; to get in contact with plant stems, tree trunks or earth.

Spain is a country situated at the extreme end of the Mediterranean Sea. People from other countries were in contact with Spaniards since ancient times. Greeks, Phoenicians and Romans played a significant role in Spanish history, but with regard to gardens, the Romans were undoubtedly the main ancestors. When Spain became part of the Roman Empire, the gardens, both civic and private echoed this influence.

In Merida, for example, we can see a criptoporicus, a kind of covered walk by a courtyard that is a garden. There we can still see an oediclus or altar dedicated to a god, since gods were part of gardens following Greek and Etruscan tradition. In the House of the Amphitheatre, also in Merida, we find a main courtyard of a villa, the peristylium with water pools surrounding the open space. In Italicca, Seville, the House of Birds and the House of the Labyrinth have pretty gardens surrounding the dining rooms (triclinium).

These peristyliums were borrowed from the Greeks and Romans and were spaces where plants were cultivated in terracotta containers. This is the origin of Spanish Patios, decorated as they are by plenty of plants and flowers.

Spanish gardens are however, usually associated with the Arabs. The Arabs invaded Spain in the eighth century AD, after conquering a great number of countries in the East, Persia among them. The Arab settlement in the Iberian Peninsula meant a complete change in culture and way of life, not only for the local population, but also for the Western world. Agriculture was transformed by new means of irrigation and working the land, new seeds and plants and a new concept in gardens. Thanks to the Arabs, Spain became a unique Oriental and Western hybrid culture, which sets it apart from the rest of Europe. The Arabs developed both orchards and enclosed gardens in courtyards, following Persian designs. Their gardens were divided into four parts by four small channels, following the chahar bagh (lit. four gardens) concept. The channels represented the four rivers of life as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and was thus a representation of paradise. The monotheist Zoroastrian religion of old Persia, with its beliefs in good and bad, represented the universe through the garden's composition: a space divided in four parts, by water channels or paths, with a pool in the centre. This centre represented the union of man with God, the union of the microcosm of the earth with the macrocosm of the sky. It was the union of two opposite and complimentary elements, fire and water. The Arabs saw in this layout a map of their promised paradise. For them, these gardens were religious as well as pleasure gardens, made not only for contemplation in the
Medina-Azahara.

Persian tradition, but also as an enjoyment by being part of them. Water was brought through underground channels by *qanats*, a means devised by ancient Persians, and adding water wheels or channels for surface irrigation. The water flowed gently through channels to the water tanks where the surface reflected the sky and surrounding pleasure pavilions. The plantation beds were sunk so the effect of the colourful flowers could be perceived as a carpet, while reclining or being seated.

Andrea Navagero, an Ambassador sent by Venice in 1526, speaks of orchards and gardens by the river in Toledo and mentioned the still standing Palace of Galiana, which dates from the ninth century AD. This palace and its gardens were reconstructed around fifty years ago, showing their Eastern influence in the pools, almond trees, cypress plantations and pavilions that overlook the water.

The oldest Islamic garden space in Spain is the courtyard of the Mosque in Cordoba. In the eighth century AD Imam Salam planted trees in this courtyard for shade. This simple action aroused much discussion, since not everyone agreed as to whether this was lawful or not.

At the present time, shade is provided by palms and orange trees which are irrigated by small channels that divide the space in squares. Next to the Mosque, in the courtyard of a palace built later, we can find a sculpture that formerly decorated another Islamic garden.

In the Palace of Medina-Azahara, near Cordoba, situated near the slopes of 'Djebel el-Arusa', the Umayyads built gardens with Sassanian designs. These gardens were built on platforms overlooking the 'Wadi el-Kabir' (Guadalquivir) river valley and orchards. These orchards were planted with fruit trees and vines, also there were cages with exotic animals among them. These gardens are now being excavated, but we know their layout. There were two garden spaces, 'The Garden of the Majlis al-Sharqi' ('The Diwan' or 'The Rich Room') where the Eid festivals were celebrated. It had two axes with a pavilion in the North-South direction, facing the Majlis al-Sharqi pavilion. This pavilion is the centre of a *chaabar bagh* formed by the four pools surrounding it. The layout is reminiscent of Islamic Mughal gardens in India and Pakistan. There is also a *quiba* (dome) with a fountain on the wall, situated at the end of the transverse axis and a balcony overlooking the second garden. The second garden is 'The Garden of the Majlis al-Garbi', still waiting to be excavated. Besides the *quiba* on the transverse axis, there is a large pool in the garden's centre, facing the Majlis al-Garbi. The two axes again form a *chaabar bagh* reminding one of the remains of the old Pasargad garden in Persia.

Other buildings in Medina-Azahara had gardens too like 'Dar al-Vizir', with a pool in the centre and a lion as a fountain, also 'Dar al-Jund' with *as-sath al-mamarrad* garden (shining terrace garden) as a souvenir of Solomon's palace with shining marbles that reflected the legs of the Queen of Sheba.

The Palace of Aljaferia in Zaragoza, clearly shows Islamic influence in its design. It has two different levels of plantation, with channels for irrigation and a pool divided in three parts echoing ancient Persian tradition.

In Seville, in one of the patios of the old palace of Mubarak, currently called 'The House of
Transaction', there is a garden of clear Islamic design, reminiscent of many other gardens in the Arab world, the Mughal gardens in India and Pakistan as well as the sunken Roman villas of Tunisia. In the actual al-Qasr of Seville, several Islamic gardens have survived the passage of time. The ‘Garden of the Prince’ was next to the qubba and it is a crossing garden with paths on a higher level than the plants. In the same way the ‘Courtyard Crossing Garden’ next to ‘Dar el-Imara’, ‘El Patio del Yeso’ or ‘Jardín de las Damas’ are all crossing gardens with sunken beds and planted with orange trees. The garden dedicated to the god Mercury is Renaissance, but the pool dates from Islamic times (twelfth century AD). The ‘Patio de los Leones’ was designed in the seventeenth century, keeping the pool of an old water wheel. Finally the ‘Poet’s Garden’ is a modern Islamic version, created by the poet Moreno Murube only a few years ago. Near the al-Qasr gardens’ complex, the ‘Patio de los Naranjos’ of the old Mosque is the oldest garden in Seville. Here again, the trees are watered by small channels, which divide the space into squares.

Recently the Municipality of Seville ordered the reconstruction of the gardens of La Buhaira Palace, next to the River Tarajerote. The gardens are geometrically planted with olive, orange and lemon trees. A pavilion in the centre of the garden is reflected in the large pool situated in front of it, while the water refreshes the air.

In Murcia, ‘Qasr Ibn Saad’ in the village of Castillejo de Monte Agudo still has an Islamic garden consisting of a cross path with a pavilion in the centre and two pools. The garden is enclosed within a courtyard with iwans around. The two iwans situated on the longer axis have balconies overlooking the landscape as in the case of the Alhambra Palace. The gardens of Alhambra are the best known. They clearly show Islamic influence. The view of the city and of the snow-capped mountains nearby, remind us of many other Islamic gardens elsewhere in the Arab world, for example, Turkey, India and Pakistan. ‘El Patio de los Arrayanes’ (The Courtyard Garden of the Myrtles) consists of a long pool that reflects the pavilion, tower and sky. Two fountains at the edge of the pool give the gentle flow of water a lovely whisper. Inscriptions on the arch inside the tower of the pavilion express references to paradise.

The ‘Patio de los Leones’ belongs even more clearly to the tradition of paradise gardens. Four small channels form a chahar bagh with a fountain in the middle. The four plantation beds used to be planted with flowers of many colours, unfortunately now substituted with gravel due to the number of tourists visiting the place. Even the fountain in the middle, at least the lower part with the twelve lions, has an oriental flavour, probably Persian. The four rivers make the water flow gently to the four rooms of the pavilions. Similar to ‘El Patio de los Arrayanes’ there are inscriptions and poems of deep symbolism relating to the garden, the cosmos and paradise.

The ‘Paradise’, ‘Jannat al-Arif’ in Arabic, the ‘Paradise of the One Who Knows’ is probably the
“El Carmen de los Mártires” (The Stroll of the Martyrs). A garden near the Alhambra in the south of Spain.
most original of them all. Designed as a chahtar bagh of paths, it is crossed by a long pool between two pavilions. Apparently it used to have a small pavilion for prayer in the centre of the paths. However, the Generalife Garden starts a little higher up, at the water staircase where the River Darro’s water precipitates over its balustrade before reaching the pool.

The Christian Kings of Spain continued the Islamic tradition of gardens. King Pedro I, ‘The Cruel’, made a garden of oriental design in his palace in Cordoba, in the old al-Qasr. The two pools are connected by a chahtar bagh of paths with a low fountain in the middle.

The Palace of Dueñas of the Dukes of Alba in Seville also shows the oriental influence of the chahtar bagh in its main courtyard as well as in its back yard. Islamic influence shows in the design of the pools and fountains and ceramic tiles.

During the Renaissance, at the same time as the Indian Emperor Babur was building gardens, Emperor Charles I retired to a monastery at Yuste, in western Spain. He had a garden with a pool in the traditional oriental manner. He also made a pool at Fresdelval, a monastery where he stayed, near Burgos. His son, Philippe II, partially continued the tradition in his palaces at Aranjuez, El Escorial and La Fresnedilla, all near Madrid. The orchards of Aranjuez remain, irrigated by water channels. At El Escorial he made a chahtar bagh of four pools, while at La Fresnedilla, his use of basins with islands and pavilions echo the work of the Mughals.

Even at the famous Palace of La Granja, heavily influenced by French and Italian styles, Philippe V of Spain made a large pool in the garden, on which to sail for recreation. In Mallorca the Raixa gardens were built with several pools to irrigate orchard and plants, besides being used for sailing. Alfabia and Sa Forreta Gardens, also in Mallorca, have kept their Islamic heritage to the present day.

In the nineteenth century we have many examples. At the country house of Doña María, in Seville, Arab influence is everywhere, in the architecture, the plantations and the watering system. Nearby, ‘La Noria’, the country house garden of the poet Joaquín Murube, shows the influence of Generalife.

The Islamic tradition is still followed in contemporary times with many fine examples. The garden made by the artist Sorolla for his Madrid residence, the garden of the Electricity Company in Seville designed by the painter and landscape architect, Winthuysen and the garden of Ben Azuza Hotel, also in Seville, designed by Subirana.

In Segovia, near Madrid, one of the finest landscape architects, the late Leandro Silva, made his own garden, ‘The Romeral of San Marcos’ in the most pure Arabic way. Even Fernando Caruncho, one of the international stars in landscape architecture who is also a philosopher gets his inspiration from traditional Islamic gardens, revising the concepts in a modern way.
Arches are omnipresent in the Islamic architecture of Iran. They constitute not only an essential element of the structure, but also the basic element of the decorative order. This is obtained essentially by the geometric quality of curves. Muqarnas; this remarkable composition of vaulted cells plays a similar role. Understanding the old methods of construction and models of conceptual design of these elements is a hard task because of the scarcity of documents. While observing the masterpieces of Islamic architecture, questions arise about the development of traditional architectural styles. We wish to understand the role of geometry and mathematics and to verify the existence of preliminary designs or models. We need to know the various constraints inherent in the construction process in general and in the art of building arches in particular.

Two types of investigation should be conducted: the analysis of information on building craft from the scarce historical textual or graphical sources, and the analysis of monuments themselves. Selçuk monuments of the fifth and sixth centuries in Iran constitute a particularly appropriate architectural source in this research. This is because arches are the essential feature of both the structure and decoration of this period. As a matter of fact, the study of the geometric design of these elements inform us, not only of the role of applied geometry in the craftsmanship we see, but also the way in which architects had taken into account the specifications of materials employed and the technology available to them.

We have a few items of graphic evidence dealing with the art of building as well as a greater quantity of textual material available to us for research that provide us with important references. These sources encompass histories, geographical treatises, literary works, texts relating to the history of science, encyclopaedias, mathematical studies, plans and models. The terms used to designate various professionals of architectural activities in antique texts such as mi‘mar—muhandiz (architect-geometer/architect-engineer), mu‘mar (architect), uthal (master), bāna (mason), san‘ā‘gar (craftsman), anfāl (workman) etc. are not always accurate and do not provide a precise terminology. Nevertheless, they do have the advantage of revealing the existence of different categories of professionals working on a given project. Amongst all these, the most important role was always played by the muhandiz.

It was the importance of the ambitious architectural projects undertaken by sovereigns or high-ranking civil servants that prompted historians and chroniclers to report and praise these admirable achievements. While speaking of such buildings as the Great Mosques or palaces, gardens or mausoleums they almost always remind us of the important role played by the mu‘mar—muhandiz or “geometer-architect” with his considerable knowledge in science and geometry. These sources often describe these professionals by the terms that demonstrate their mastery in geometry and mathematical science. Muhandizoon are even ranked by some historians among the asirf al-nas or nobles.

Scientific sources such as encyclopaedias, books on classification of sciences and mathematical treatises also deal with the building craft and speak of theoretical geometry and applied geometry, the latter being used mainly by craftsmen. Irš al-Ukhr al-dunyiyya was considered as a branch of science that enabled one to evaluate different aspects of the building including aesthetic problems. On the other hand, practical needs of applied geometry in craftsmanship motivated the mathematicians to describe, in their manuals on mathematical sciences, the scientific principles on which the technique of implementation should be based. Kitab fi ma‘alim al-dhābi‘ah al-sā‘ī ‘al-ma‘ālum (The Book on Geometrical Constructions Necessary to the Craftsman), the work of the fourth century Iranian mathematician Abu al-Wafā‘ al-Buzjani is important on what concerns various problems of applied geometry. In its scientific scope, Buzjani’s work is closely akin to that of another Iranian scholar, Ghazālī al-Din Jamshīd Khāshānī. A well-known ninth century astronomer and mathematician Khāshānī, has left us a work entitled MJigh-al-Hisb (The Key to Arithmetic). According to the author, this book was conceived as a manual of the solution to mathematical and geometrical problems. Under the title Fī masā‘ul al-ahbā‘a wa‘l-tamir (On the Metrology of the Monuments and Constructions), included in the chapter on the Metrology of the Geometrical Figures (Masā‘il), Khāshānī offers a theoretical and practical approach to the problems arising from the construction of arched elements. For arches and vaults, domes, and muqarnas the author provides first a definition, then a description of technique of designs, of construction and finally of metrology. This unique treatise was aimed at a public knowledgeable about mathematics and geometry. Buzjani and Khāshānī were not the only mathematicians to concern themselves with the fundamentals of applied building geometry. Further clues — although rare — can be found in other mathematical treatises. These sources tell us how to evaluate the metrology of the monuments or to assess the required quantity of materials, bricks in particular. The few surviving architectural precepts that are invariably included in these mathematical books reveal a high level of scientific knowledge amongst the builders.

With regard to the existence of visual evidence such as preliminary drawings on paper or panels our main source of information is gathered from the accounts of historians.
Mostly, we have to rely on miniatures as existing architectural documents are rare. These drawings, however, provide only a general idea of the subject as these documents fail to inform us of the nature of the plans or the construction techniques in any detail. Historians and chroniclers, while describing construction methods, mention drawings of new projects sent to the capital in order to obtain the sovereign’s endorsement. Reports by historians of the ambitious architectural projects prompted also the artists to illustrate them in manuscripts. Although the miniatures show the workmen on the building site they fail nevertheless, to provide details about the methods of planning. In addition to these references, there are some rare architectonic graphical sources of plans of monuments, or designs of monumental decorations. These constitute the most important evidence of the preliminary studies preceding construction. The oldest surviving graphic evidence from the Islamic period is a plaster panel showing a small-scale plan of a quarter of a lot of muqarnas vault that once decorated the palace of the Ilkhani sovereign Abakhun at Takh-i Suleyman. This site is situated in the present-day Azerbaijan Province of Iran. The design probably served as a guide for constructing the vault. A few other Persian architectural plans of unidentified monuments and miscellaneous decoration dating from the ninth to the thirteenth century are preserved in a handful of libraries and museums around the world. The collection of the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan in Tashkent, a long scroll of 114 drawings in the Topkapı Sarayı Library and a set of designs in the Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum, constitute the most important known documents. The highly evolved techniques employed in these drawings prove a long tradition in architectural development.

A brief review of some early documents reveals that scientific knowledge of applied geometry existed and that actual construction departed from theoretical design studies by master builders. However, none of these documents provides us with an overview about the principles through which construction was achieved. Kashani’s treatise is in this regard an exceptional masterpiece. This treatise allows us to confirm that the conception and the construction of an arch, a vault, a dome and a muqarnas always needed an absolute mastery of those engineering principles on which their realization depended; it is because in building geometry arched elements cannot be calculated without taking into consideration the loads they bear, the materials which they are made of and the span they cover.

Concerning the monuments themselves, the analysis of arches and muqarnases in the Seljuk dome chambers of the Friday mosque of Isfahan: Gumbad-i Nizam al-Mulk, AH 477 and Gumbad-i Taj al-Mulk, AH 481, in the mosque of Bazar near Isfahan (AH 491), in the Friday mosque (between AH 500 and 509) and in the Haidaria mosque both in Kazvin (AH 513), allows us to discover the principles of their design and structure which are closely akin to those described by Kashani three hundred years later. In these buildings the arches are of pointed form composed of four segments of a circle calculated from three or four centres. They belong to the type that Kashani considers as “perfect” (hakiki). The pointed arches in these dome chambers can be classified in two groups: the first, mostly from the Isfahan region, is laid out from three centres; the second, from Kazvin, by four. Pointed arches with four segments of a circle are of a type that had long been adopted in Mesopotamia and Persian Muslim architecture and has never been abandoned since. This type of arch offers a solution to the problems arising, in part, from the use of square bricks and from the method of building arches and vaults by superimposing bricks laid edgewise which causes rather large gaps in the joints of the bricks, thus weakening the arch. The great variety of curves that can be obtained through forms derived from segments of circle remedies, partly at least, this difficulty. On the other hand, this layout offers numerous possibilities for varying the rise of the arch and facilitates the choice of an adequate curve from both structural and decorative points of view. In fact, the latitude in positioning the two centres from which the upper segments are drawn enables a vast range of pointed arches ranging from a very high rise to a medium rise and then to a very low rise. The architect could thus easily adapt them to different spaces, whatever their dimension may have been. Once the place and the span of an arch was determined, its curve and dimensions could have been drawn following specific rules of design, a design most appropriate to the purpose. Among the early muqarnas, in Persian architecture those of the minbar of the mosque in Bazar and of several niches in the Haidaria mosque in Kazvin are outstanding. In the first monument the muqarnas of three rows of cells, are built in rectangular niches and conceived according to an orthogonal system. The construction of both these types is based on the same principle. This is formulated on a modular division of the plan of the niche according to two main data: the number of the cells of the lowermost row, and the dimension of the principal cells of the composition in relation to the brick size. It is interesting to note that this modular principle is almost exactly the same that Kashani describes for the muqarnases of his time.

In sum, geometrical organization of arched elements reveals the dominant role of a subtly conceived geometry that has always remained faithful to a logical practicality when applied to architecture and decoration. The traditional know-how of the builders certainly played a highly important role but, alone, it could not cope with technical problems that often result from the characteristics of the material and the available means. Knowledge of applied geometry and mastery of the principles of project construction were the foundations of architectural and decorative creativity. Architectural patrimonies constitute the best material for analyzing the methods of construction. The study of buildings certainly enables us to discover their underlying geometric concepts. Nevertheless, it may take us away from our main objectives, which is to understand the practical reality of the processes of architectural creation. We usually begin our investigation from a reverse direction, going from the conclusion to the starting point. The master builders however, worked in the opposite way. It is therefore inevitable to confront two types of investigation, that of the written sources, even if they are scarce, with the study of the monuments themselves. As a result, monuments would be considered not only as intellectual realizations but also as structures that arose according to specific technological contexts.
THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN TURKEY

ABRIDGED FROM A LECTURE BY EMEL DOĞREMACI

To appreciate and evaluate the present status of women in Turkey, it would be essential to consider their position in four parts: according to the Orkhun inscriptions of the eighth century and the literary works of the time, women in the Turkish tribes in Central Asia, their original location, enjoyed exactly equal rights with men. Their religion (Shamanism) and practices were as such that both men and women had to take equal share of responsibility at home and in the administration of the country. In the Turkish legend, it is stated that God is personified as omnipotent and sympathising and that he has been inspired by Ak-Ana (white mother) to create the universe. Again, in this legend, it is pointed out that honour and worth are the qualities learned from women. The Orkhun inscriptions also refer to the social and political activities of the Oghuz princesses.

The birth of a baby girl was not considered a dreadful or dishonourable event as it was among some other peoples. There were even people who appealed to the mediators of the princesses for the gift of a baby girl. Again in the same inscription the following phrases always went together: “The Sovereign, who continues the State” and “The Queen who knows the State.” An order beginning with the words “The King orders…” was not binding; it had to begin with “The King and the Queen order…” Foreign diplomatic envoys were not ushered in if the king was alone; they were introduced to the royal couple with the king standing on the right. Women performed the same services as men: in time of war, in political meetings, and in social activities women always stood beside their husbands. Guardianship in the family was not reserved for the father alone, the mother also participated; and a widow was the only guardian of her young children and the sole manager of her house. Polygamy was foreign to them. In matters of inheritance, both males and females received equal shares. In addition, in marriage and divorce both had equal rights. Married women were considered sacred and those assaulting them were condemned to death. Law endorsed young ladies’ security and those assaulting them were severely punished. Girls used to engage in duels with men who wished to marry them and would not marry any man defeated in such a contest. This custom proves that women were well trained to use sword and shield and could fight competently with men.

The patriarchal system was unknown to them. Their family existence was based on a system similar to the “paternal system” of the old Germanic tribes, where mother and father had equal share of responsibility for the family.

Turkish women after embracing Islam

Due to geological and other factors, the nomadic Turkish tribes began to leave Central Asia and those who migrated to the Arab Peninsula in early centuries first began to convert to Islam individually and then as of the ninth century, in masses. Even after embracing the Muslim religion, the Turkish people retained their old well-established customs. Outstanding women contributed to philanthropic activities such as building hospitals. One of these women was Gawhar Nesibe who started Darulshifa in Kayseri. However, along with Islam, they were obliged to accept Islamic laws. Due to the influence of the customs and traditions of other nations who adopted Islam before the Turks, women lost many of their old traditions and customs. The Persians accepted Islam well before the Turkish people, and their influence on the Muslim woman’s way of life was as great as that of Greece or Rome on the European way of life. In the Persian civilisation, the family was based on a patriarchal system and this found its way into other Muslim societies including the Turkish.

According to Zoroastrianism, Persia’s national religion, woman was a symbol of filth and evil, and all wicked deities were represented as females. During this epoch in which women were deprived of all rights, Islam’s attempts to liberate them from this shameful position were expressed in Prophet Mohammed’s (PBUH) own words. These words are, “Woman is the equal of Man and the other half of the society,” “He who respects his wife’s rights is a good Muslim,” and “Paradise lies under the feet of mothers.”

The patriarchal family of the Persians, which was then followed by the Turkish people, is, in fact, main-
Ulku, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s adopted daughter, presenting flowers to her father, the founder of the Turkish Republic.

Painting by Emel Cemçoğ-Korutürk, widow of the late President Fahri Korutürk.
ly responsible for the secluded life of Modern women. As a result, while the situation of men improved, within the framework of the aforesaid intercultural influence, Turkish women lost most of what their ancestors had possessed. The question of veiling, which until then was unknown to the Turks, may be given as an instance of this influence.

During the Ottoman Period

The arrival in Anatolia of great numbers of Turkish Muslims began in the tenth century and their men and women were equally active. Muslim Turkish women of this period were not confined to their homes or harem. The Seljuk Turks came from Central Asia and set up Muslim States in Persia and the Middle East. In Anatolia, they began by setting up small principalities, later formed one large state and, finally, split again into small principalities from among which emerged the Ottoman State in 1299 A.D. The Seljuk women, although under different legal systems and under various outside influences, always preserved most of their old Turkish customs.

From the beginning of the fourteenth century until early in the twentieth century (1918) Turkish women were subjects of a Muslim Empire. The Ottoman State expanded rapidly into a powerful empire, but while the theocratic state was extending its boundaries, the position of women deteriorated.

As the expansion of the Ottoman Empire introduced the influence of Persia and also of Byzantium, old Turkish customs were slowly forgotten. During this period, new distinctions between the sexes were accepted. Especially in the cities, women were subjected to strict living conditions as a separate group. The harem life of Persia and Byzantium was introduced into the Turkish palace, and in the fifteenth century, on order from the Sultan, the palace was divided into the Haremlik (Women's section) and the Selamlik (Men's section). The 'vissers and boys' were not slow in introducing this system into their own homes. Thus, it took but a short time for harem life and polygamy to spread among a certain class of people and to develop into a custom.

Islam accepts polygamy provided absolute equality among the wives is maintained and the number of wives any one can marry be restricted to four. However, as it is obviously extremely difficult to ensure absolute equality, polygamy was practised by only a very limited number of wealthy persons. Laws of Islam in fact valued women more and conceded them more rights than did the old Arabic, Persian and even Roman laws. Nevertheless, it was the misinterpretation and misapplication of these laws that misled people.

The Islamic family laws adopted by the Ottomans were related to marriage, inheritance and minorities. The Turkish family of the Ottoman period began to have the characteristics of a patriarchal family system with the man as its sole head. The family consisted of grandparents, wife, children's spouses, grandchildren and some close relatives. They were expected to accept the absolute authority of the head of the family. In matters of inheritance, women always received half of what men did. Architecture reflected the Ottoman way of life and houses were built in two sections namely the Haremlik and Selamlik. The only men allowed into the Harem were the husband and very close relatives of the women who they could not marry by Islamic law, such as uncles and brothers.

In this era, the seclusion of women from social life went so far to the extent that certain decrees during the reign of certain Sultans almost imprisoned women in their Harem. For instance while Osman III decreed that women can go out of their homes only four days a week, Mustafa IV banned it completely. In 1603 women were not allowed to do any shopping at all, in 1610 they were not allowed to ride carts driven by horses in company of any man including their husbands and in 1787 they were banned from going even on picnics. When in 1882 there was a census, with the exception of Istanbul, women were not counted at all. The Turkish women of the Ottoman Era, especially in the cities, spent their lives in complete seclusion. The literature of the time reflected this situation and associated women with scorpion, snake, and devil incarnate. Moreover, they were modified with such adjectives as disloyal, cunning, deceitful, treacherous and were even considered "long of hair but short of wit". When the Ottoman Empire was still holding its glorious place in the world, Fuzuli was writing of women as the disturbers of peace because of their sole interest in the destruction of their husbands for their own survival. It is in this period that Turkish women suffered from being considered as inferior in the eye of the society. Even literature regarded it as a disgrace to refer to women and, interestingly enough, women themselves accepted this position and were satisfied with their function within the walls of the Haremlik.

Later on towards the end of the nineteenth century, owing to the penetration of Western ideas into Ottoman society, the status of women in some measure began to improve. The seeds of this recognition had in fact been sown earlier with the Tanzimat (Reorganisation) of 1839 the aim of which was to make vital and essential reforms in the whole country, taking the West as a model. The "Reorganisation" or "Westernisation" movement of Turkey was in fact initiated by Selim III (1789-1808) and fostered by Mahmud (1808-1839) and his son Abdülmezig (1839-1861). In the beginning, the movement affected external matters only, modifying the machinery of the administration and revolutionising titles and costumes as a result of political and commercial relations and greater facilities of communication with Western States. Gradually its influence penetrated the thick walls of the Sultans' palaces and other homes. European fashions of dressing, manners and customs received a warm welcome, especially from the Turkish women, who having for centuries lived modestly between the four walls of their houses, began to
imitate the European women in their outlook and ways. This imitation of the West had first started among men and only later affected the world of women in Harems. Then the Tanzimat leaders recognised that to save the Empire from its external foes, reforms had to be introduced in the military organisation, judicial systems, economic structure and methods of education.

In line with these initiatives, in 1908 women’s education was given a legal basis for the first time and considered necessary, and a group of women tried to enter the Parliament building as observers. The reaction to this venture was reported in the foreign press. A further step towards recognition of their status came in 1916, when their position with regard to marriage, polygamy and divorce was seriously discussed in the parliament, though no vital remedy was found to raise them from their inferior status. Their problem was discussed, however, among other social problems in some periodicals of the time and their position was compared disadvantageously with that of women in European society.

After the Establishment of the Republic

Nevertheless, in the First World War, disregarding every artificial social law set around them from ancient past, Turkish women played their part, and in Turkey’s War of Independence (1919-1923) they founded their own units and some even fought in the ranks. As an acknowledgement to their bravery, courage, devotion to their national cause, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic decided to restore women to their old national high status that their ancestors had once occupied. He never refrained from putting forth frequently his high opinion of and esteem for the Turkish women in various speeches and comments he made at different times.

Setting the goals for the reforms he was envisaging, Atatürk started with the Act of Unification of Education in 1924 (Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu), whereby coeducation was introduced and primary education became compulsory for both girls and boys. This law was followed by the Civil Law of 1926, which was based on the Swiss Civil Code. Accordingly, the structure of the family was reorganised. Polygamy was prohibited. Marriage and divorce became a matter for the civil court. A woman was granted the right to divorce her husband and become the guardian of her children. In matters of inheritance, women were granted equal rights with men. In bearing testimony in a law court discrimination was abolished. Following this law there were others, which brought women on a par with men. In 1934, women were granted the right to be elected, and in the 1935 general election eighteen women entered Parliament when the population of Turkey was about eleven million and the total number of the MPs was 395, (in other words 4.6%). Today Turkey’s population is about sixty-eight million, but until the last general election of 1959, due to various reasons, this percentage has never been equalled.

Today in education, especially in tertiary education, girls are doing far better than boys at the entrance exams. At universities, women form about 50% of the total teaching staff members. Statistics reveal that 49.33% of the female population in Turkey is economically active. Yet 85.6% of this percentage pertains to women working in rural areas, that is to women with little or no education. Rural women are generally unaware of their rights before the law. Even if they were aware of them, they lack the means and the knowledge to claim them.

In the urban society, which is undergoing a process of rapid change, substantial progress has undoubtedly already been made. New developments in technology, as in most countries, have influenced the lifestyles, the family structure, the relationship of the individual, the society and the demands and the goals of people. The number of women working in public offices is highest in the Ministry of Education (as school teachers) and Health Ministry (as midwives and nurses). In private sectors, women occupy a high percentage of administrative and secretarial jobs in big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir and Adana. Jobs for women at public and private TV channels are abundant. It is true that the role pattern of most of the urban families is changing towards one of sharing between men and women and the idea of shared roles and responsibilities is being widely accepted, though this pattern mostly prevails among the young generation. The mentality of the old generation is tightly tied up with traditional characteristics. The traditional household tasks such as caring for young children, taking care of the household and the husband and bringing up children, the support of the husband in his career, the taking care of older parents or relatives if they are in need, are still regarded as a woman’s responsibility. Women who work have to carry a dual load. They carry out household tasks at the cost of their time for rest and social activities, and/or at the cost of their professional or political life. Time becomes much compressed if child caring services are not adequate. Many women either interrupt their professional life because of childcare, or get part time help for household duties.

Finally, as can be deduced from what has already been stated, theoretically women are endorsed with all equal legal rights with men, but in practice, most of these rights remain on paper. In some cases, women themselves prefer to retain their subjugated and sheltered life inherited from old traditions and values. Yet the younger generation wholeheartedly wish to preserve the fine traditions and values inherited from Islam and synthetically merge them with contemporary modern frontiers.

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MAWIYA: AN ARAB DESERT QUEEN OF THE
FOURTH CENTURY AD

ABRIDGED FROM A LECTURE BY NICOLA A. ZIADEH

The wide eastern stretches of Syria are loosely known as Badiyat al-Sham (the Syrian Desert). Its geographical and historical role has always been that of providing a link between the Arabian Gulf to the southwest with the Hijaz and the Red Sea to the southeast. The Arab tribes that wandered there, especially in the period between the third century BC and the fifth century AD lived mainly as traders or caravan protectors; the more loosely organized often plundered those caravans and on many occasions ravaged the more settled countryside in search of booty.

Two tribes, however, found it more advantageous to protect such caravans and provide the merchants with accommodation, storehouses and markets; thus a great deal of transactions were conducted on the spot. The first tribe included the Nabateans who established themselves at Petra, which was for over three hundred years (between about BC 225 and AD 100) the emporium for traders from the Yemen to Syria, Gaza in Palestine and Egypt via the Sinai.

The second group comprised the Palmyrian Arabs who did the same in Palmyra (Tadmur), and thus goods reached it from as far away as China, including the most exclusive merchandise – silk.

In BC 63 the Romans entered Syria, and went on establishing their authority in the region. This demanded administrative and military adjustments on the eastern frontiers of the newly occupied territories especially in the adjacent arid areas, which were exposed to Rome's most challenging force in the area to the east, the Parthian empire.

The emperor Trajan (AD 98-117), in AD 106 occupied Petra, brought the Nabatean Kingdom to an end and created what came to be known as Provincia Arabia, which comprised present day Jordan, southern Palestine, parts of the Sinai and parts of Syria to the south of Damascus. He constructed a road, the VIA NOVA TRAJANA, between Aqaba (Ayla) on the Red Sea and Damascus, through Busra (Bosra), the capital of the new province.

The VIA NOVA TRAJANA was not just a means of transport: it was incorporated with the lines (the frontier defensive positions), complete with watchtowers and forts. For not only the warring Parthians, but also the tribes ravaging the area and sometimes even plundering the countryside had to be contained. In AD 226 the aging Parthian Empire came to an end and was succeeded by a new Persian monarchy, the Sassanians.

Palmyra lasted longer, but eventually, in AD 273, Aurelian (reigned AD 270-275) destroyed it, and a most fascinating chapter in history came to an end.

Late in the third century AD Emperor Diocletian (AD 284-304), himself a seasoned soldier and officer, saw that, as the eastern danger had been growing more seriously, that the strengthening of the lines was of importance.

The STRATA DIIOCLETIANIA began at Sura on the Euphrates, passed by Palmyra that was by now only a frontier post and came close to Damascus, but not through it, then south along the edge of the steppe to al-Jaaf (Dawmat al-Jandal). The route was lined with a whole series of forts. Roman legions were stationed at some cardinal points, but local auxilia were recruited to line the lines. Gradually the system of engaging tribes living within the Syrian desert was introduced. The smaller tribes had their heads designated as 'pibyantus' (Sheikhs), but the larger tribes or the alliances of tribes, had a 'basilias' (king) at the head.

Constantine the Great (AD 312-337), the first Byzantine emperor was the first to convert to Christianity. He and his immediate successors inherited the organization and arrangements already developed by their predecessors.

In the area known as Safa, to the east of Damascus there roamed a tribe which carried the same name and seems to have been very active as far as the Euphrates and the northern reaches of the Hijaz. The area of Safa is covered with rock inscriptions, which have been seriously studied and have revealed family relations, prayers, religious chants and even texts of treaties and agreements between the tribes.

An inscription, which is in fact an epigraph was found at al-Namara, some forty kilometres southeast of Damascus; it reads (in translation) 'This is the tomb of Imru'l-‘qas, son of 'Amr, King of all the Arabs'. The date is AD 325.

It is surprising by scholars who have studied it that 'all the Arabs' meant a number of lesser Arab tribes that might have been ruled by his sons. One may pose a question: were those tribes branches or sub-branches of his own tribe or were they only allies?

Imru'l-‘qas was designated king; he was bound to the authorities by a treaty.

The real person on whom we shall concentrate now, Queen Mawiya, was a widow of an anonymous king who had died about AD 375, after ruling the tribe of the Tanukh (and possibly the Lakham also) for some twenty years. On his death, Mawiya assumed the leadership of the alliance.

Such rulers were known as treaty-kings. By this time the system had developed, and certain terms governing the relationship between the emperor and those kings were fairly well established. The best available information about such treaties is that the treaty remained in force as long as the contracting parties (emperor and king) were alive; the death of either party brought the treaty to an end, and subsequently had to be renewed. Secondly, treaty holders were not citizens of the Empire; although they may have lived within its boundaries, such as was case with Imru'l-‘qas and the unknown king. Thirdly, treaties differed according to the status of the kings; thus no uniform standard could have
Christianity had been already well established in most parts of Egypt, Syria, parts of Mesopotamia, and the desert areas by the third century, principally through the work of ascetics who roamed throughout the land.

The faithful had been on the whole following the Orthodox teachings that became the accepted creed by the Council of Nicaea (AD 325). And this was the kind of faith accepted by the main tribes such as Tanukh and Lakhm, our immediate concern. Constantine was the first emperor to be converted and to officially recognize Christianity as a religion of the empire.

In the pagan days of the Roman Empire the Emperor was considered the Pontifex Maximus (High Priest) of every religion practiced in the Empire. Constantine was thus the 'High Priest' of the pagan religions. When he converted to Christianity, he assumed the position of 'Guardian' of the Church. His successors followed suit; and they expected the people of the empire to accept the views they followed.

Early in the fourth century a Christian leader, called Arius (AD 250–336), separated himself from Orthodoxy and started his own doctrine known as Arianism, in which he differed from Orthodoxy on the relations between the Father and Son.

Arius had many followers amongst whom was the Emperor Valens (AD 364–378). He, in his capacity as guardian of the church expected all Christians to accept Arianism. He imprisoned many of the Orthodox bishops, who were the only church dignitaries who could ordain priests for church service. This would, in his view, force people to follow Arianism, because only those priests would be available to lead the followers in prayer, and perform other religious functions.

As was stated earlier, Mawiya (and her late husband) were Orthodox, and Mawiya, as well as her people, stubbornly held to that faith. Their bishop died about the same time she had lost her husband, an event Valens made use of, as he was determined to force those Arabs to accept Arianism through appointing an Arian bishop. This Mawiya resolutely refused, which amounted to an open revolt against the Emperor.

To sum up the situation before proceeding to the battlefield: when Mawiya's husband died, the treaty between the emperor and herself came naturally to an end. The Emperor Valens would not renew the treaty with her unless she and her people accepted Arianism. Mawiya, in refusing to comply with the wishes of the Emperor, was from his point of view, a rebel, but she, however, was trying to protect her people and their solid faith and convictions; in essence she revolted against oppression. The Emperor did not resort to force against her, but he refused to renew the treaty causing Mawiya to rebel and resort to arms.

Mawiya was apparently a queen in her own right. In this capacity she headed a very powerful alliance of the Tanukh and Lakhm, most likely similar in nature to that held by the former Arab king, Imru l-Qais. Mawiya was prepared for war, she had the necessary forces at her disposal and she had the full support of her people. She began with raids against the cities and towns adjacent to the abode of her Arabs. Almost all historians agree that her raids were not for booty; she probably meant to arouse the attention of
SYRIA in the time of Queen Mawiya
neighbouring people to the injustice the Emperor was imposing on the whole area.

Next Mawiyah withdrew to areas outside the *lines* in preparation for her major attack. Historians of the period, both ecclesiastical and military alike, did not give a precise description of the battlefield, nor did they give exact dates. However, some modern scholars, in particular Irfan Shahid, of Georgetown University, have reached some plausible conclusions. Mawiyah, who was well acquainted with the area, chose a point where crossing the *lines* could be easily achieved by her cavalry, after which, she could manoeuvre more freely. The point she chose for the crossing seems to have been just outside the southern edges of Jebal Al-Shaikh (Mount Hermon) and landed her forces into an opening where enemies could be taken by surprise. Mawiyah's strategy worked and she won the battle.

The Byzantine forces, led by the officer in charge of the territory, were thus defeated. The man in charge then sought the help of the *Dux* (the Commander-in-Chief) of the province of the Orions, called Julius. Desiring to have the honour of defeating the Arab queen single-handed, he set his subordinate officer aside and led the battle against Mawiyah in person. However, he was also defeated, his life saved by the very officer he set aside. Byzantine historians referred to this defeat as a calamity.

The Byzantine authorities sued for peace. Moses, the Orthodox hermit was ordained Bishop of the Arabs; the ordination carried out by Orthodox bishops who had been exiled by Emperor Valens to the Sinai. The treaty was renewed and Mawiyah supplied the Emperor with a cavalry contingent that she sent to Constantinople in AD 378 to help in its defence against German Gothic marauders from the Balkans.

It may be worth explaining a few points concerning the difference between a bishop (or even a priest) and a hermit or an ascetic vis-à-vis church ceremonials and their performance. A hermit or an ascetic may preach the faith and teach the tenants of Christianity. However, for a person to exercise the church rituals, such as baptism, marriage and prayers for the dead, he must have been ordained by a bishop for the priesthood and by a patriarch (or a group of bishops) for a bishopric. So when the Emperor Valens exiled the Orthodox bishops, the community found itself at a loss: if church rituals were to be performed, only Asian bishops and priests were available. Mawiyah and her people, being ardently Orthodox, did not take this state of affairs kindly. Mawiyah's victory was considered not only a military success, but a real triumph of the Orthodox faith as well. Moses, the preferred candidate seems virtually unknown. There is much speculation concerning him; but it is certain that as a hermit he was sincerely devoted to spreading the faith among bedouin Arabs, especially those of the Tanukh-Lakhm alliance - the Mawiyah group. Hence the revolt of Mawiyah must be considered a religious-political rising. Valens initially sought to have Moses ordained by the Patriarch of Alexandria, himself a follower of Arius. Moses categorically refused. So he had to be sent to a 'college' of Orthodox bishops, i.e. men of equal rank. As these happenings were taking place the Goths were pressing hard on the Balkan frontiers of the empire, threatening even Constantinople itself. This quite possibly forced the hand of Emperor Valens to soften his position and comply with the consecration of Moses as Bishop.

Valens died in AD 378. He was succeeded by Theodosius the First (378 to 395) who bailed from Spain, with neither an understanding nor an interest in the affairs of the East. The German (Gothic) elements were predominant at the Court and even in various provincial positions, to the extent that the *Dux* (senior military officer) of the Orions, Rolchheimer, was himself a German and a pagan.

The rule of the game demanded that the treaty between the new Emperor, Theodosius, and Mawiyah should be renewed. The Emperor and men at the Court were unsympathetic to the Arabs, while the Gothic Germans, who had caused the empire suffering and defeat were treated more generously. High government posts went to them, while the Arabs received none. The financial allocations to the Arabs were decreased; a matter of vital importance. Socially, the Gothic Germans were placed in a higher echelon than the Arabs.

The atmosphere demanded a protest by Queen Mawiyah and she resorted to arms. The military situation, on the eastern front was quiet as peace had been concluded between the two formerly fighting empires - the Byzantine and the Sasanian. The Balkan front of the empire was also quiet.

Theodosius's forces under Rolchheimer crushed Mawiyah and her allies in 382. One may add that as the Dux was himself a pagan he probably fought the Christian Arabs more ferociously. This defeat sealed the fate of the Tanukh-Lakhm alliance. Both groups seem to have sought other places; the Tanukhs returned to the realm of the Persian empire, whereas they had come, while the Lakhmids became the masters of Hin, as subordinates of the Sasanians. The Banu Salih became the new allies of the Byzantine Empire. However, the leaders of the Empire, having suffered at the hands of a strong alliance in the case of Mawiyah's first revolt, saw to it not to allow Arab alliances of such magnitude. Thus, the Banu Salih and later allies were kept within smaller areas and were allowed less connections with other Arab tribes.

Mawiyah seems thereafter to have abandoned public life; it is thought that she probably joined one or another of the Christian charitable organizations, devoting her time to worship and caring for the poor. A Greek inscription, dated 425 was discovered in the neighbourhood of Khumsar, in Northern Syria. It mentions a 'Mawiyah' who had helped greatly in the building of the Monastery of St. Thomas. It is possible, 'Irфан Shahid argues, that Queen Mawiyah had enjoyed a long life and was instrumental in the erection of this edifice. Mawiyah was the second Arab woman leader who fought an empire and defeated it: the first was Zenobia of Palmyra who fought the Romans in the sixth decade of the third century AD, and who was probably an inspiration to Mawiyah. Some historians, who wrote about her revolt sometime later, said that people still remembered Mawiyah's victories and sang verses which had been written in her praise as a great queen.
IN MEMORY OF KUWAIT MASTS AND SAILS

( THE EAST AFRICAN VOYAGE )

ABRIDGED FROM A LECTURE BY YACOUB YUSUF AL-HIJJI

Many people, Arabs and non-Arabs, never seem to ask the basic question regarding the evolution of Kuwait as a small state: how did the people of Kuwait live for three centuries without oil? A lot of them still believe that Kuwait was a barren piece of desert with no inhabitants; then oil was discovered and people started to gather on its land, thus the State of Kuwait came into existence. But how did the people of Kuwait live for three hundred years without oil? The answer is simple: they were a small maritime nation that built ships sailing them to South Africa, to the west coast of India, and to the east African coast. In summer, the mariners of Kuwait went on pearl-diving trips, and the pearl merchants of Kuwait sold their catch in the pearl markets of India. Kuwait was also an entrepôt for goods destined for North-east Arabia, and the desert caravans used to gather in its market place.

I was a young boy when oil began to dominate the economy of Kuwait in the early 1950s, playing with other boys near the waterfront, jumping into the water from dhows that were still a common sight. I never thought those dhows would disappear forever.

Prior to the discovery of oil, the sea was the main source of living for Kuwaitis as it provided their food as well as pearls that they used to trade for other commodities such as wood, which was necessary for building their dhows. The route the mariners took depended on the season of the year. In September the dhows would sail to Shat Al-Arab to bring dates in order to sell them to India and Arabia, passing through Mukalla, Aden, Somalia, Mombasa, Zanzibar (basically to exchange their money for the Maria Teresa dollar which is the only way to do trade in those areas), Muscat and other African ports.

In summer, pearl diving, a necessary pillar in the economy of Kuwait, was the main occupation of these mariners. Kuwait’s economy also thrived from its location as a main transit station for North-East Arabia. In winter, caravans would come to Kuwait to buy their needed goods from the Kuwaiti merchants. Though a shortage of fresh water made life in those early days difficult and though Iraq in the north was seen as a paradise in comparison to Kuwait – as was the coast of India, people always came back to Kuwait. Kuwaitis accepted the challenge of living in Kuwait for more than 300 years prior to the discovery of oil.

At school, we were taught all kinds of subjects, including history lessons – not the three hundred years maritime history of Kuwait, but the history of French and American revolutions instead. The pre-oil maritime history of Kuwait was not worth studying, according to education officials in Kuwait at that time. In 1976, I returned from USA after finishing my studies. Then, I learned for the first time to appreciate my history and culture. Once in Kuwait, I rushed to visit the great dhow master and builder Ali Abdul-Rassoul, I knew that the craft practiced by this master was worth studying and I immediately fell in love with this type of art, produced by those who never learned to read or write, but were nonetheless able to produce a high level of craftsmanship. I also knew Captain Ali al-Najdi and read about his African voyage in his dhow in 1939 in Captain Allan Villier’s book ‘Sons of Sinbad’. I began to research the maritime history of Kuwait and write books about it. I am still writing about it. These captains attracted me with their experience to such an extent that I became interested in following their footsteps and going on my own African voyage.

In 1983, I joined a group of young men from Kuwait and sailed in a deep-sea dhow (al-Ghazer) from India to Kuwait. It was a much needed experience for me. During my research, I visited most of the sea ports frequented by Kuwaiti mariners in India, East Africa, South Arabia and the Gulf. Then I decided to make a documentary film about the Kuwaiti African voyage that used to take nine months from Kuwait to as far south as the Rufiji Delta in what is known now as Tanzania. Discussing the subject with Dr. A. al-Ghounaim, chairman of the Centre for Research and Studies on Kuwait (CRSK), he encouraged me and supported this project.

I left for Zanzibar in the company of a friend and a cameraman and filmed some East African ports and other ports in South Arabia such as Aden, Mukalla, and Shihor. The most difficult part was reaching the delta of the Rufiji River in Tanzania.

To give you an idea of how this delta used to be for the mariners of Kuwait and other mariners of Arabia and the Gulf let me read you a few paragraph of how Allan
Villiers described it in his book ‘Sons of Sinbad’. He called it ‘The Delta of Misery’ and wrote the following:

“The Ruffji is an impetuous African river flowing from the heights of Tanganyika eastward towards the Indian Ocean... The sea outside is littered with banks, shoals, and coral reefs, which the wind swept down from the river makes it impossible to see. The entrances to the Ruffji are a rain-swept, trenched maze, as though designed by nature to make the passage of vessels as difficult as possible. Breezes, banks, shoals, tidal rips, eddies, unpredictable sets, rapidly changing channels, combine to provoke a round um of navigational difficulties which would cause nightmares to any mariner.

...Miasmic vapours, steaming swamps, rotting jungles, and pestilences of all kinds abound. The river is never stable, never sure even of its own channels from one day to the next, changing them with bewildering rapidity and without reason... A mariner who knows the delta one year may return the next and not know it at all. It has defied all attempts at control... Forever changing, it is never still. Always deceiving, it is never safe. The whole delta is gloomy, morose, and depressing almost beyond endurance. It rains almost daily, in heavy squalls which beat down like punishment, and leave clouds of steam in an atmosphere like a Turkish bath... The mangrove swamps and all the trees are a dark, dank green; the banks are muddy so that
one sinks to the thighs in them at every landing; the whole place is tormented by the most savage, fearless, and horrible mosquitoes in the world.

"If in all this world there is a worse place than the Rufiji Delta, I hope I may never find it.

"The list of its enormities is not yet complete, for the murderous crocodile and the clumsy hippopotamus lurk in the stream, ready to capsize a frail canoe and make short work of the occupants. In the jungle, monkeys clatter and scream, and kingfishers and herons, a splash of gay colour, fly by the water's edge. In the high trees eagles perch, watching; and in the jungle there are snakes—boa constrictors, and small venomous things. The poisonous mud of the mangrove swamps abounds in leeches and ticks, ready to attach themselves to the foot; creepers beset the way, and thorns tear at the leg. Here only jungle beasts live, and there is no food. There are no gardens; for there is hardly a piece of dry land fit to put a hut upon, away from Salala and the few other villages... The surf sets in the river pull at the moorings of ships with dangerous strength, and bring down great tree trunks from islands to hurl upon them. Pilotage in such a place is a nightmare; the whole delta is a bad dream. There is nothing to eat, and all food must be brought there...."

When I travelled to the Delta last year, it was impossible for my crew to arrive at Rufiji Delta by ship. No matter how much money we offered the natives; they refused to pilot any boat there since they regarded the Delta area as too dangerous. We therefore chartered a helicopter to take us there. When we made enquiries in the area, we found that many people still remembered some Kuwaiti merchants and captains who used to trade there. Among the names mentioned was a man who until his recent death, used to reside in the Delta area with his family. We were even told that his daughter still survives, though we were not ourselves able to locate her. Overall, even though my own personal experience of the Rufiji Delta was not a comfortable one, there was no doubt that it was not as bad as that of Villiers.