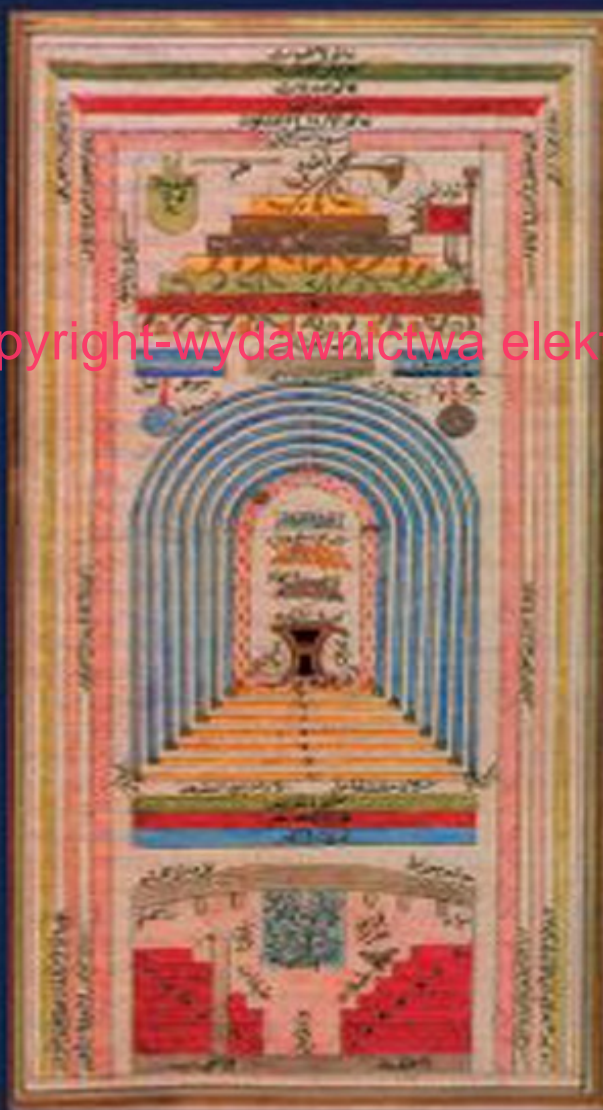


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Ahmad Nazmi

The Muslim Geographical Image
of the World
in the Middle Ages



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DIALOG 

A Source Study

Ahmad Nazmi

**THE MUSLIM GEOGRAPHICAL
IMAGE OF THE WORLD
IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

A SOURCE STUDY



Academic Publishing House DIALOG
Warsaw

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The picture on the cover of the book is from the work of *Ma'arifatnāme (The book of the Gnosis)* written by the Turk Ibrāhīm Haqqī. It contains two main diagrams, one representing Judgment day and the second representing the religious cosmos. In this second diagram the cosmos is enveloped by the world of absolute divine transcendence (Lāhūt), of divine omnipotence (Jabarūt), and of divine sovereignty (malakūt). On the top is paradise and Sidrat al-Muntaha, in the middle is the earth surrounded by the seven heavenly celestial spheres inside which the seven earths one over the other, the inner one being earth where the holy Ka'ba appears in the middle and around which is the legendary encircling mountain of Qāf. In the bottom is the hill.

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Reference Works and Research Tools:

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Before the rise of Islam, Arabs had no great interest in geography. Arabs left nothing in this concern except what is mentioned in Arabic poetry about the environmental conditions of the Arabian Peninsula. Ancient Arabic poetry includes scant geographical references and is generally connected with descriptions of natural surroundings, including innocent geographical references to valleys, wells, hills, mountains, and other landmarks. As with most subject matter in Arabic poetry, most of this data was full of mythological notions.

Although Arabs knew a great deal about the stars and planets to which they turned for guidance in the desert, they had very little geographical information about their neighbors to the north such as the Byzantines, except the adjacent provinces, and the Persians in the east. Some information about India and the Eastern African shores were also known to Arabs due to their trade activities with these places.

After the rise of Islam, the interest of Arabs in geography was due, largely, not to the provinces of which the Muslim Caliphate consisted, but also to the world around them. This forced Arabs to become acquainted with geography. They would have been unable to carry out their military ventures or to mobilize their army in these vast areas without knowing a great deal about the routes connecting the various parts of these states, the distances between different places and the environmental conditions of the various states and nations inhabited throughout this vast empire. It became crucial that Muslims get acquainted with the conditions of the new countries they had conquered. The establishment of the postal route system by the Umayyads also played a very important role in increasing the interest of the Arabs in geography as a science. Some of Muslim geographers who left us their geographical texts were officials who held the post of chief master of the postal route in the Muslim Caliphate.

Thus it is no coincidence that geography is foremost among those sciences that drew the attention of Arabs and Muslims. Their abundant literature and books written on the subject, the instruments invented, and the maps they drew, which still represent an important stage in the development of geographical literature of human thought, of course testify to this. Muslims left a great number of books in the fields of geography, cosmography, itinerary, and astronomy. Most of

this material preserved the ancient cultural heritage of such civilizations as the Greek, Roman, Persian, and Indian civilizations. Thus the universal importance of studying Muslim geography results from the fact that it combined the ancient knowledge from the East and the West, contributing to its own and exposing Muslim geography to certain significant maturing and developing processes.

Recent scholars have done many studies on this material during the last three centuries. Obviously, these studies deal with aspects of the subject, which so far have been subjected either to academic research or to sufficiently practical analysis. Earlier studies undertaken by scholars concentrated on Muslim geography and Muslim geographers in general. Some of these studies since the time of the Polish orientalist J. Lelewel^[1], De Goje, and Renault continuing with I. Kračkovskij up to the recent time when André Miquel published his work entitled *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du 11^e siècle*^[2]. Many other scholars to a broad extent utilized the Muslim geographical sources available from their time to write a special study and monographs dealing with history, economy, trade and navigation. For instance, George Jacob in the year 1887 devoted his work entitled *Nordisch-baltischer Handel der Araber* to the topic of Muslim trade with Europe in general and the Germanic sphere in particular, utilizing on a great scale the Muslim geographical sources which relate to the early Middle Ages. His second book *Arabische Berichte von Gesandten an germanische Fürstenhöfe aus dem 9. und 10. Jahrhundert* deals with the Arabic sources spoken about the German nation issued in 1927. Similarly, at the beginning of the 20th century, A. Szelagowski published his work *Drogi z Polski na Wschód*, which deals with the trade routes between Poland and Eastern countries during the Middle Ages. Tadeusz Lewicki after World War II published a series of studies based on Muslim geographical materials which served as very significant sources in the history of the Slavic people entitled *Źródła arabskie do dziejów słowiańszczyzny*. Many other works and monographs based on similar sources were authored by T. Lewicki.

Accordingly, there are several major areas in which much work remains to be done. Foremost among these is the Muslim geographical literature of the Middle Ages. The idea of this work arose from the abundance of information that I faced during my last studies on the subject^[3]. I have gathered much data concerning how the Muslim geographers formed and crystallized their concepts of the world from a geographical, as well as cosmographical, point of view.

A book of this kind might be expected to include an integrated introductory chapter giving a connected account of the Muslim geographical image of the world during the mediaeval period. Therefore, in this work I am going to present the Islamic world and the thought throughout the area of the Eastern and Western Caliphate excluding regional dynasties and political divisions.

In the Middle Ages Arabs generally knew the regions and countries that spread from the western extremity of Africa and its southern east coast, through the vast extent of the Russian steppe to the eastern limits of China. In addition, any neighboring tracts, seas, or islands with nations inhabiting them were familiar to Arabs. To the northwest of the Muslim Caliphate lay the former country of Christians (the Byzantine and Frank Empires) comprising many other European nations, Gog and

Magog in the northeast, Asia and Europe to the eastern north, and Sūdān and Zang̃ to the south, all surrounded by the Circumambient Ocean.

The scope of the present study is limited to an investigation of the Muslim geographical literature written in the Middle Ages and covers the concepts of the Muslim image of the world. This does not mean that I'm going to restrict my work only to the material written during that period. It will be also appropriate to include sources that were written in the 15th, 16th and even 17th centuries. The materials which I shall use here are numerous and varied. Large amounts of information contained in them come from different periods. Most of these contain similar or lost information wrote earlier. Additionally, there is not much variation between the main concepts of the early Muslim writers and the later ones. The sources are spread amongst a great number of various works, which are not only geographical but historical, and include belles-lettres as well. Some of the works that I have used in this study are still out of print.

Muslim geographical works are extraordinarily rich in facts, which makes them more attractive for students of the medieval Islamic World.

In fact, a large amount of information on the subject exists. Some of the material is brief and casual, while other materials are quite detailed and exhaustive and dispersed throughout travelers' reports, geographical and historical works, annals, cosmographies and encyclopedias. The real problem is to use this patrimony effectively. It is necessary to add that during such research, instead of complaining about the state of some of these materials, one should surmount the difficulties arising from the many circumstances that in one way or another damaged the materials thus making them almost impossible to decipher.

Wherever possible I have used existing translations of Arabic texts translated by recent scholars into European languages, like that of V.Minorsky, G. Le Strange, S. Maqbul Ahmad, E. Sachau, Gaston Wiet, Lévi-Provençal, and others. Elsewhere I've translated many Arabic fragments on the subject. One can agree with R. S. Humphreys that to a large degree it is a matter of asking good questions, but good questions in turn depend on understanding not only the character of Islamic geographical writings in the Middle Ages, but also on its epoch and place^[4].

Accordingly, it seems that Islam has enhanced Muslim interest in geography. Many scholars maintain that the establishment of Muslim Geography and subsequently the picture of the world has had religious motives. The Islamic Holy scripture, the Qur'ān commanded the Muslims to cross the earth in search of God's patterns in nature and in the affairs of men and women. In the Qur'ān we read: *He it is who hath made the earth subservient unto you, so walk in the paths thereof and eat of His providence. And unto Him will be the resurrection*^[5]. Islamic tradition also prescribed that each Muslim should find the Qiblah (orientation toward Makkah) for the performance of rituals, which necessitates some knowledge of geography. is also prescribed Travel to Mecca for the pilgrimage^[6]. In addition, medieval Muslims were great travelers due to the fact that the Holy Pilgrimage, one of the five pillars of Islam, was very important for each Muslim. The institution of the holy pilgrimage, the position of all mosques toward Mecca, and the need for determining the direction of the *Qibla* at the time of prayer gave religious impetus to the Muslim study of geography. This

also brought pilgrims every year who traveled great distances from all the lands of Islam, from China in the east the, from the Atlantic Ocean in the west, from the Volga River in the north and from Africa south of the Sahara. The Muslims were avid traders and travelers, undaunted by the usual perils and risks of long trips. The keen international trade done by Muslims, either by sea or by land, was also connected with travel and geography. They were encouraged by the worldwide spread of Islam, by the Arabic language as an important medium of communication, and by Islamic ethics, which placed a great premium on hospitality and the welfare of the wayfarer^[7]. In the framework of geography, determining the latitude and longitude of the places inside and outside Dār al-Islām throughout the known world of that time for political and economical trade purposes was also necessary. With these general perspectives in mind, one can make good use of the available material to get a comprehensive concept of the issue. One of the Muslim geographers expresses his view on the importance of geography for human beings. He says,

Geography is an absolute prerequisite for traders, travelers, kings, governors, judges and jurists, and common people. Politics, administration and commerce required precise description of provinces and a detailed account of the prevailing conditions in the various countries either in Dār al-Islām (The Muslim Land) or Dār al-Harb (The land of the Enemy)^[8].

The Holy Pilgrimage is widely recognized as one of the five pillars of Islam. Its institution was one of the major elements that brought more impetus to overall geographical research as well as the determination in setting the right direction of newly constructed mosques. Analyzing the matter more thoroughly, it is worthwhile to add that mosques are oriented toward Mecca, and while praying Muslims must face *Ka'ba*. Trade played an important role in enhancing geographical studies because trade conducted by means of land or maritime transport was constantly expanding.

According to V. V. Barthold, it is a well-established fact that Muslim geographical and astronomical materials were founded on Ptolemy's works. It is generally accepted that the world of Islam inherited mathematical geography from the Greeks through Ptolemy. It seems that the work of Ptolemy was translated into Arabic several times.

According to Ibn an-Nadīm, there are two main translations: the first translation was done by Ya'qūb Ibn Ishāq Al-Kindī and yet the worst and the second by Tābit Ibn Qurra^[9]. Ibn an-Nadīm adds that there is another translation of *Geography* of Ptolemy but in the Syriac language^[10]. A third translation into Arabic was done by Ibn Hurradābeh, who was a Muslim geographer of the third/ninth century. He claims that he translated Ptolemy's *Geography* for his own purposes, and he apparently used the geographical heritage of the Greeks, but unfortunately we know nothing about this version^[11]. Perhaps this former translation was not full and was only used by its interpreter and therefore it never became known to the wider public^[12]. In addition to Ptolemy's work *Geography*, there were many translations or versions of translations of Ptolemy's other works mentioned in Muslim sources^[13]. Although Muslim records tell us that many works of Ptolemy were translated into Arabic, there is no literal rendering of these texts in Arabic except of the work of *Geography*; but it seems that from the outset, Muslim scholars treated this text much more independently^[14]. For example in Al-Hūwārizmī's work *Ṣurāt al-ard* (*The Picture of the World*), we find a new version

of Ptolemy, partly corrected and completed, with other fragments partly distorted^[15].

It also seems that Muslim geographers, when lacking contemporary information on particular areas or regions, often had recourse to the information presented by Greeks, adopting their nomenclature and data of the unknown origin. It was proved that sometimes Muslim authors repeated erroneous Greek assertions on some information. Considering these errors, one can argue that in Muslim geography there was no firm and definite starting point for scientific thought and no possibility of discriminating between facts borrowed from different sources. Even in the tenth century, Muslim geographers did not know what was authentically from Ptolemy and what had been added by Muslim authors. It could be said that there are many technical problems to overcome in a general reference book on Muslim geography based on Muslim Islamic materials including those written in Persian^[16].

Reference Works and Research Tools

1. The Scriptures of Islam: Qur'ān and the Islamic Tradition

Ibn Haldūn expresses his view on the division of knowledge into two types. The first type is that of religions and the second type is that of knowledge of bodies, both of which generally consist of many branches of actual sciences^[17].

Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a similarly divided knowledge into 'Ilm al-adyān (the science of religions) and 'Ilm al-abdān (the science of bodies) and the two sciences are very important and closely related^[18]. In general, the Arabs distinguished between creed and learning on the assumption that creed is for God and knowledge is a common heritage for all humanity. In this way they approached the Greek and other cultures, assimilating what suited their new civilization and what did not run contrary to the canons and the fundamental principles of Islam^[19]. The Qur'ānic commandments prepared Muslims for exploring the world and for ascertaining geographical realities for the benefit of mankind. It is obvious that the contribution of the Muslim scriptures and Islamic tradition played an enormous role in the forming of the Islamic mind and in ideological development. This role is comparable to the role of the Old Testament in the Jewish and Christian mind of the Middle Ages. The Qur'ān has become a primary source of many of the sciences, not only for religious and linguistic sciences, but also for scientific disciplines like history, medicine, astronomy, cosmography, and geography. Although the primary concern of geographical studies has been to elucidate geography and cosmography by shedding light upon the scientific concepts, scholars always returned to the religious and legal content of the Qur'ān. Muslim scientists have also interpreted and reconciled their science in a way which coincided with the Qur'ān. Any kind of contradiction or any conflict between science and religion was not accepted fairly.

It is difficult to give here a survey of all verses that might prove relevant to the notion of the Muslim image of the world. But generally, it could be said that most of the cosmic verses in the Qur'ān are usually interpolated in the introductory chapters of the greater part of Muslim geographical sources. Although the twin foundations of Islam, the Qur'ān and tradition, deeply pervade those books, the Scriptures always have the upper hand in the texts and are commonly cited in every branch of knowledge. For purely practical reasons, any competent geographer has to be able to identify such citations^[20]. Obviously, the good writer will, from the outset, try to mention many of the verses that support his writings, for he must know the values and attitudes of the *ayāt* (verses) to make his work acceptable to Muslims.

Next in importance to the Qur'ān as a source for Muslim belief, practice, and knowledge is the corpus of tradition. The tradition means the utterances, sayings, and every action of the prophet Muḥammad who served as a model for human action and rule of behavior. In my study the term "Muslim tradition" could be broadened to also include some other native Islamic sciences such as Qur'ānic exegesis, Qur'ānic criticism, jurisprudence, and scholastic theology^[21].

In the beginning, the recording and gathering of the prophet Muḥammad's tradition was forbidden by Muḥammad himself. By the end of the second Muslim century and the beginning of the third century, it was deemed necessary to establish the principle that law, custom, and belief should rest upon the practice of the prophet, his companions and followers^[22].

Every sect and every system under Islam defended itself by an appeal to the authority of Prophet Muḥammad. Moreover, if an individual group or sect wanted to establish its right to its beliefs, practices or even sympathize with an idea, it had to furnish proof that the prophet had authorized its course of action or its attitude. Hence, many of these traditions, if not the majority, were subject to doubt^[23].

An enormous number of the ḥadīth in favor of the image of the world geography and cosmography - countries, cities, mountains, seas, and places, etc. - soon found their way into circulation, and thus it became apparent that forgery of the ḥadīth on a large scale was at work everywhere. Moreover, many of those traditions are obviously of foreign origin, particularly of Jewish origin, and to a lesser degree of Christian origin. Some even ultimately owe their origin to the philosophers of Greece^[24].

The Islamic tradition also explains and throws light on certain particulars or verses of the Qur'ān. As concerns our topics, Muslim writers utilized many of the so-called cosmic verses. Muslims in many cases were obliged to find clarification of those in traditions of Biblical origin rather than from the Old Testament or Jewish tradition. One popular form of devotional literature from the Muslim world is the book known as *Qaṣaṣ al-Anbyā'* (The Stories of the Apostles).

Many of these stories are mentioned in the Qur'ān in a symbolic sense. Those authors who wrote on the subject exerted great effort in writing the complete accounts.

The second group, the foreign sciences, includes, among others, philosophy, geometry, mathematics, arithmetic, mechanics, geography, astronomy, music, medicine and alchemy. Iḥwān aṣ-ṣafā, Miṣr, pp. 23-24. Hassan Ibrahim Hassan, *Islamic History and Culture*, pp. 632, 1068. Józef

In order to obtain a good view of the scope of these stories, Muslim writers made use of the Jewish and the Christian traditions. It is well known that the Qur'ān incorporates the stories of the Bible along with religious tenets and many of the concepts of the Ahl al-Kitāb (the possessors of the Book). Needless to say, most of these stories are set in many geographical regions, some of which were known, while many other stories were not known because of their ambiguity. These are the stories of the journey of Dū al-Qarnayn, the building of the wall of *Ġūğ and Māğūğ*, the story of Al-Hiḍr's search for the Fountain of Life, the localization of Mağma' al-Baḥrayn, the anchorage place of Noah's Ark, and many others.

In general, the traditions serve together with the Qur'ān itself, as one of the major bases for religious practices and ritual observance as well as a primary source of all kinds of knowledge.

2. The Mu'tazilite and the Al-Ma'mūn's School of Thought

An important change which had taken place in Islamic thought during the early 'Abbasīde period was certainly the establishment of the *Mu'tazilite* school whose members were considered free thinkers^[25]. It seems that they sought to base their faith on rational thought. They had taken a keen interest in the rational interpretation of the Islamic Scriptures and did not abide by traditional commentaries. To support their views, they relied on the mind and interpreted Qur'ānic verses in a way that coincided with their views as derived from the Qur'ān^[26].

The other view connected with human knowledge was also expressed by Ibn Ṣā'id Al-Andalusī, who claims that nations are divided into two groups, those that have concerned themselves with knowledge and learning and those that have not. The nations that have contributed to the advancement of knowledge are the Indians, Persians, Chaldees, Greeks, *Rūm*, Egyptians, Arabs, and Jews.

The Chinese were respected because of their skill in handicrafts and pictorial arts, and the Turks because of their skill in warfare. The rest of mankind was not familiar with knowledge and the sciences^[27]. Many of the primary sciences were transferred mainly from the Greeks, Indians, and Persians to the Arabs.

The epoch of Al-Ma'mūn (813-833 A.D.) constitutes the most glorious age of the Muslim Caliphate. The twenty years of Al-Ma'mūn's reign had left enduring monuments of the intellectual development of the Muslims in all areas of thought. The translation movement grew in scope under this Caliph. The great bulk of the translations were of Greek origin, particularly in philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy and geography. Muslim sources speak of the delegations sent by the Caliph Al-Ma'mūn to the Byzantine Empire to acquire books in the various branches of sciences^[28]. The achievements of Muslim scholars during that time were not restricted to any particular branch of science or literature, but ranged over the whole course of the domain of intellect. Mathematics, astronomy and geography were among the sciences which abundantly

reached the Caliphate^[29].

Under Al-Ma'mūn, the tolerance of other non-Muslims and other groups of thinkers was generous and exemplary^[30]. During his reign a group of eminent learned men and theologians who dealt with the origins of religion and doctrines appeared who adopted liberal views in research through the study of Greek philosophy.

Caliph Al-Ma'mūn himself was inclined to adopt the Mu'tazilite doctrine due to its more liberal and rationalistic views. Therefore, he attracted the followers of this group, who stood high in his favor and exercised great authority in his court in Baġdād, where he was keenly interested in holding meetings and where he allowed debates on various subjects^[31].

Al-Ma'mūn applied himself vigorously during the last four years of his reign, according to Reuben Levy to the task of secularizing the state and of emancipating the human intellect from the shackles which doctors and jurists were beginning to place upon it, by adopting the Mu'tazilite doctrines, and he tried to introduce this in his dominions^[32]. His knowledge of tradition and jurisprudence on one hand, and philosophy and science on the other, won him the reputation of having a freethinking, tolerant and liberated mind.

Generally, it could be said that Mu'tazilite ideology rejected all notions which seemed irrational and not yielding to logical explanation. Under their influence not only the religious texts, but also all the branches of science, should agree with the judgments of reason. The popularity of the idea of the Mu'tazilites reached its height during Al-Ma'mūn's reign. The rationalistic tendencies of this caliph and his successors' espousal of the Mu'tazilites contributed to one of the greatest scientific revolutions in the history of culture. The study and cultivation of the science of humanities from everywhere is the best indication of the caliphate's development^[33]. Generally, it could be said that 'Abbasīd from the middle of the 9th century established an empire within which a rich flowering of science, astronomy, geography, medicine, mathematics, chemistry, and philosophy resulted.

This theological school of the Muslim rationalists and free thinkers very soon spread and gained numerous disciples and was by degrees more fully worked out especially later in the works of the Greek philosophers and thinkers in all fields. According to F. A. Klein, their system was so construed as to be in harmony with the demands of sound reason and the principles of philosophy^[34].

Libraries, academies, translation offices, observatories, educational institutions, and many books brought from abroad, from Persia, India, and particularly from Greek sources in the major branches of knowledge found their way into the Muslim mind. The 'Abbasid era of translation lasted about a century, during which many Greek works were translated either into Aramaic (Syriac) or into Arabic. The Greek philosophical works of Aristotle, and Plato and the great astronomical and geographical works were translated during this period^[35]. In astronomy an early translation of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, completed as early as 212/827-8 A.D., and his second work *Geography* were translated into Arabic either directly or from Syriac several times^[36]. Those translations served as a basis for later works stimulated geographical studies, and even became

a model followed by Muslim authors^[37].

Astronomical observatories were connected to the institution of Bayt al-Ḥikma. The first observatory was established during the reign of Al-Ma'mūn at Aš-Šammāsyā on the plains of Tadmur (Palmyra). Afterwards several other observatories were built at such places as Wāsiṭ, Afāmyā (Apamea). The main function of the observatories for Muslim scholars was to serve as instruments particularly in setting new tables and to a lesser extent to serve as instruments in determining the astronomical calendar, correcting the ancient table of Ptolemy, and enhancing astrological knowledge.

Unfortunately, the Mu'tazilites, after experiencing a time of success and power, gradually lost their influence over the Muslim mind when Abū Mūsa Al-Aš'arī turned against them. In order to make his expostulation clear, he adopted formerly well-established scholastic methods. Caliph Al-Mutawkkil put an end to the Mu'tazilites^[38]. His actions lead to the triumph of orthodox doctrine and to the decline and fall of the more liberal and rational school of the Mu'tazila from which the Muslims have never recovered^[39].

Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā'

Phenomenal activities of an eclectic scientific group known by the name of Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā', (the Brethren of Sincerity or Purity) flourished at the end of the tenth century in Baghdad and Basra under the Buwayhid regime. They formed not only a philosophical but also a religious-political association, based on the Shī'ite school and are considered by recent scholars as free thinkers^[40].

Opponents such as contemporary scholars vigorously attacked the compilation of writings of Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā' which were accused by contemporary scholars of being a kind of superficial writing. Abū Ḥayyān At-Tawḥīdī presents a complete and thorough criticism based on material gathered by him and expresses a common opinion of the intellectuals of his time. We understand from this criticism that this group did not specialize in one branch of knowledge. Their writings are empty of real value, and their intention is unknown and untrustworthy^[41].

In their *rasā'il* (treatises) the Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā' assert that they built up their methodology of research on the basis of the Aristotelian philosophical system, and in the name of philosophy they attacked Islamic traditions, maintaining that their main aim was to find a compromise between philosophy and religion at all costs^[42].

The most important material for our study is the collection of their epistles entitled *Rasā'il Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā' wa hullan al-wafā'* (the treatises of Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā' wa hullān al-waf'), which are arranged in encyclopedic fashion and cover the main branches of knowledge known at that time. According to Ameer Ali, their system was eclectic in the highest and truest sense of the word, and their views on social and political problems were practical and intensely humane. Their tracts or treatises range over every subject of human studies, including mathematics, astronomy, physical geography, music, mechanics, physics, chemistry, meteorology, and geology^[43].

Epistle number five from part II, which interests us, deals with geography. The Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā'

presented their concept of the world from a geographical and cosmographical point of view in a scientific approach almost exempt of any kind of fantasy. Their geographical treatise is written in an abridged form. This diminishes its value, but allows the reader to gain a general picture of the world as seen by them in that time^[44]. According to Ph. Hitti, the *Ihwān aṣ-Ṣafā'*, in the mineralogical part of their epistles elaborated a theory of cosmic cycles by which cultivated lands become deserts, desert lands become cultivated, steppes change into seas and seas change into steppes or mountains^[45].

Generally, the fourth century was the turning point in the history of the spirit of Islam and the establishment of Islamic orthodox thought. That period had a great influence on the independent research of Muslim compilers for a long time thereafter. Much space in Muslim sources is devoted to what some scholars call religious geography^[46]. I need hardly point out that defining and interpreting jurisprudence on geographical grounds can seem awkward. In our present period and in our recent researches the secular and juristic data are always crossed and never concurrent. According to Kenneth Cragg, to diverge from established interpreters is, no doubt, to risk disallowing whole stretches of Muslim thinking through the centuries^[47]. But the vast bulk of what was written, in fact, expresses more or less a part of the Muslim geographical heritage. Quite apart from such consideration the Qur'ān and Islamic tradition during the period occupied a position of central importance.

The question of the interpretation of Qur'ānic verses is well known, especially in relation to the explanation of some geographic and cosmographic notions. Then there are difficulties caused by genres of Islamic tradition, which we meet in the categories of the *fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, and interpretation of the Qur'ān and Prophet Muḥammad's biography. It remains true that the nature of those materials in the individual tradition differs very widely, and that it is difficult to get a clear impression of those differences even from a reference source arranged alphabetically. Nevertheless, the consultation of these sources is very difficult.

Zapraszamy do zakupu pełnej wersji książki

Footnotes

Introductory Chapter

- [1] This work is considered one of the early scientific studies on the Islamic geographical sources, including also Latin geography. See J. Lelewel, *Géographie du Moyen Age*.
- [2] See the full list of works in bibliography.
- [3] A. Nazmi, *Commercial Relations between Arabs and Slavs (9th–11th centuries)*.
- [4] R. S. Humphreys, *Islamic History a Framework for Inquiry*, p. 16.
- [5] *The Qurʾān*, 67:15 See also 4:100, 6:11, 7:137, 20:53, 29:20, 43:10, 62:10, 73:20.
- [6] I. Kračkovskij, *Arabskaja geografičeskaja literatura*, pp. 19, 20, 45. R. Ismaʿīl Al-Fārūqī and Lois Lamyā Al-Fārūqī, *The Cultural Atlas of Islam*, p. 333.
- [7] I. Kračkovskij, op. cit., pp. 19–20.
- [8] Al-Muqaddasī, *Ahsan at-Taqaṣīm fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm*, p. 2.
- [9] J. Lelewel, op. cit., p. 26. R. Blachère et H. Darmaun, *Extracts des principaux géographes arabes du Moyen Age*, p. 13. I. Kračkovskij, op. cit., p. 79. S. Maqbul Ahmad, article: *Djuhrafiya in Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. II, 1965.
- [10] Ibn an-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrast*, p. 374. About the works of Ptolemy which were known to the Arabs see Ibn Šāʿid al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, pp. 88–90.
- [11] Ibn Ḥurrādābeh, *Al-Masālik wa al-mamālik*, p. 2.
- [12] Ibid.
- [13] Many works such as *Almagest*, *Geographiki yphesis of Claudius Ptolemy* and other Hellenistic works brought into Latin from Arabic by Adelard of Bath in 1126, for example the trigonometrical tables of Al-Ḥuwarizmī. Arabic versions by Gerard of Cremona and his pupils in the twelve century, Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and Mediaeval Europe*, pp. 276–277. According to the author of Kašf az-ẓunūn the work *Almagest* means assortment, and is derived from the Greek word *Magistūs*. It is the best work of the science of Hayʾa, and was translated twice into Arabic by Ḥunayn Ibn Ishaq and Ṭābit Ibn Qurra during the reign of Caliph Al-Maʾmūn and later summarised by Al-Bīrūnī. Ar-Rūmī, *Kašf az-ẓunūn*, vol. II, p. 1594.
- [14] Although many recent sources refer to the fact that the three translated verses made by the Arabs for the Ptolemy's *Geography* had been lost, F. Sezgin found a manuscript copy of a translation of *Geography's* and reprinted it in 1986. Klaudios Ptolemaios *Geography*, Arabic Translation, Reprint of Faksimile-Edition of the MS. Ayasofya 2610. Edited by F. Sezgin, see his comments, p. 14.
- [15] V. V. Barthold, The Introduction Chapter in *Ḥudūd al-ʿAlam*, p. 10.
- [16] For instance Anonymous, *Ḥudūd al-ʿAlam* and Mustawfī, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*.
- [17] Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Al-Muqaddima*, pp. 779–782.
- [18] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-ambāʾ*, vol. I, p. 7.
- [19] M. M. Aṣ-Ṣayyād, *Geography*, in *Islamic and Arab contribution to the European Renaissance*, p. 237.
- [20] The best example is Ibn Rustah who started his work with a long preamble comprised mostly of the major verses connected with geographical science. Ibn Rustah, *Al-Aʿlāq an-nafīsa*, pp. 3–12.
- [21] The Arabs usually distinguish between sciences which are connected with the Qurʾān and Islamic religion and those which the Arab learned from foreign people. Accordingly they divided it into two main groups. The first group, the native sciences includes Qurʾānic exegesis, Qurʾānic criticism, jurisprudence, scholastic theology, the science of Apostolic tradition (ʿIlm al-ḥadīth), grammar, lexicography, rhetoric, and literature.

[22] A. Jeffery, *A Reader on Islam*, pp. 79–80. R. Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam*, pp. 173–174.

[23] A. Guillaume, *Islam*, pp. 90–91. Janusz Danecki, *Podstawowe wiadomości o islamie*, pp. 91–92. About the fabricated Ḥadīṭ, see As-Suyūṭī, *Taḥḍīr al-ḥawāṣ min akāḍīb al-quṣṣās*, pp. 142–147, 162–163.

[24] A. Guillaume, op. cit., p. 91.

[25] The founder of the famous school of rationalism termed Mu'tazilah was a certain Wāṣil Ibn 'Aṭā' a disciple of Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī. The Mu'tazilites (seceders, schismatics) were so called because of their major doctrine that he, who commits a mortal sin secedes from the ranks of the believers but does not become an unbeliever; he occupies a medial position between the two. F. A. Klein, *The Religion of Islam*, p. 229. Ph. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 245. J. Bielawski, *Historia literatury arabskiej*, p. 100. 'Alī Fahmī Ḥaṣīm, *An-naz'ā al-aqlyya fī tafkīr al-Mu'tazala*, pp. 27, 38–39.

[26] J. Danecki, *Podstawowe wiadomości o islamie*, op. cit., Ph. Hitti, *ibid.*, p. 245. R. Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam*, p. 460.

[27] Ibn Ṣā'id Al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, pp. 39–41.

[28] According to Ibn an-Nadīm, the chiefs of this delegation were a certain Al-Ḥaḡāḡ Ibn Maṭar and Ibn Al-Baṭrīq. Other sources also refer to Ḥunayn Ibn Ishaq as one of those messengers sent by Al-Ma'mūn for the same purpose. Ibn an-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, pp. 15, 154, 174. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, op. cit., pp. vol. I, p. 260. Ar-Rūmī, *Kaṣf az-ẓunūn*, vol. I, p. 681. Al-Qunnūḡī, *Abḡad al-'Ulūm*, vol. II, pp. 252–253.

[29] Ph. Hitti, op. cit., p. 310. Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens*, pp. 274–276. R. Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam*, pp. 466–467.

[30] Ameer Ali, op. cit., p. 275. J. Bielawski, *Islam*, pp. 136–137. 'Alī Fahmī Ḥaṣīm, *ibid.*

[31] R. Levy, op. cit., pp. 464–465.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] J. Bielawski, *Islam*, op. cit. 'Alī Fahmī Ḥaṣīm, op. cit., p. 39. R. Levy, op. cit., pp. 464–465.

[34] F. A. Klein, op. cit., pp. 46–47.

[35] Ibn an-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, p. 374. Ibn Ṣā'id Al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, pp. 90–91. Ibn Al-'ibrī *Tārīḥ muḥtaṣar ad-dūwal*, p. 73. 'Alī Fahmī Ḥaṣīm, op. cit., pp. 98–100.

[36] Ibn an-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist*, *ibid.* Ibn Ṣā'id Al-Andalusī, op. cit., p. 91. Ibn Ḥurradāḡbeh, *Al-Masālik wa al-mamālik*, p. 2.

[37] With this as a model Al-Ḥuwārizmī composed his work *Ṣurat al-arḍ* (*The Picture of the Earth*) and Suhrāb composed 'Aḡā'ib al-aqālīm as-sab'a (*The Wonders of the Seven Climes*).

[38] The Mu'tazilites were originally a religious school but soon participated in Muslim politics. Although they started as a religious group or party depending upon free thinking, they soon began to indulge in politics and to persecute their opponents. They proclaimed the doctrine that the Qur'ān was created as an indispensable truth. During the last year of Al-Ma'mūn's reign and through his support, the Mu'tazilites began to test the Muslim believers on the new doctrine to investigate their views about the Qur'ān's creation. Al-Ma'mūn also ordered the judges to accept the testimony of anyone who would not declare his adherence to this doctrine, and to punish those who declared the Qur'ān to be created. This crisis continued during Al-Ma'mūn's two immediate successors reign until the time of Al-Mutawakkil. The historians called this period the period of the ordeal of the creation of the Qur'ān As-Suyūṭī, *Tārīḥ al-ḥulafā'*, pp. 93–99. Ibn Ṭīqtaqī, *Al-Faḥrī fī al-adāb as-sulṭānyya*, p. 175.

[39] J. Danecki, *Podstawowe wiadomości o islamie*, vol. I, p. 202.

[40] Deep obscurity surrounding Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā'. Actually we have no clear information about this school of thought. The range of their political and scientific activities, their members and history due to their principal of secrecy remain obscure. Only a scattering of information can be found in a small number of Arabic sources. Ph. Hitti, op. cit., pp. 372–373. Ameer Ali, op. cit., p. 472.

[41] Abū Ḥayyān at-Tawḥīdī, *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa al-mu'ānasa*, pp. 3–14. See also Al-Qifṭī, *Tārīḥ al-ḥukamā'*, pp. 82–88.

[42] Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā', *Rasā'il Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā' wa ḥullān al-wafā'*, Miṣr, pp. 6–7, 48–49.

[43] Ameer Ali, op. cit., p. 472.

[44] I. Kračkovskij; op. cit., p. 232.

[45] Ph. Hitti, op. cit., p. 386. I. Kračkovskij, op. cit.

[46] X. de Planhol, *Le Monde Islamique. Essai de Géographie Religieuse*, pp. 1–3.

[47] K. Cragg, *The Mind of the Qur'ān*, p. 22.

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Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūm, Warszawa 2000.

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Ewa Machut-Mendecka, *Studies in Arabic Theatre and Literature*, Warszawa 2000.

This is a pioneer book devoted to rich literature of the contemporary Arab world, dealing with prose and drama. This literary output abounds in tens of important names of writers and hundreds of interesting works. The book correctly reveals the most important literary phenomena as well as most interesting concepts and topics of this immense output. It outlines a colorful and exciting, even though frequently dramatic, picture of life of the contemporary Arabs. The author gives a thorough presentation of the contemporary Arabic literature and she succeeds in this difficult task by reaching its deepest meanings. The author proves that the essence of this literature consists in a never-ending search for cultural identity of the writers as well as for an uncompromising settling of accounts with own history, which is not only a medium of the flourishing civilization of Islam but also a source of the most serious problems today.

Zofia Podobińska, *Politesse dans les Actes Pragmatiques en swahili*, Warszawa 2001.

This work reveals important rules of the language use by the Swahili speakers. From the theoretical and methodological points of view it has been inspired by the recent research on verbal behavior in the aspect of politeness phenomena. The author analyses the realization patterns of direct speech acts regarding three levels of languages: syntactic, semantic and pragmatic. The data source consists of theatre plays by various authors from Tanzania and Kenya, mainly realistic works dealing with contemporary subject matter. The present study is an original and important contribution to the research on communication competence in the Swahili language.

Danuta Madeyska, *Poetics of the Sirah. A Study of the Arabic Chivalrous Romance*, Warszawa 2001.

The book is devoted to the formal aspects of the early sirahs, i.e. Arabic chivalrous romances which were already well known as large works in the 12th century prior to their writing down in the 14-16 centuries. An attempt was made to find out and determine the principles of the organisation of verbal material into content entities called “themes”, as well as the rules of constructing the largest composition units in sirah, i.e. tales.

Nina Pawlak, *Hausa outside the mother area. Plateau variety*, Warszawa 2002.

The description of Hausa spoken outside the mother area has two main issues in view. Firstly, it is to document the variety of language, which is known mainly from its use in the Hausaland proper. Secondly, it is to add some more factors to the ongoing discussion on the mechanisms of language change and development. Hausa spoken in Jos, as exemplified by individual variants recorded in 1999, documents the language distinguished by the peculiar features, different from the language of the mother area. The Plateau norm is characterized by some changes, which are influenced by contact with other languages of the area. The collected materials allow distinguishing two distinct levels, representing two classes of language-development patterns. It is the modification of the language from the Hausaland proper on one hand, and the varieties termed often as simplified or pidginized languages on the other. The first variety integrates the features of native and non-native forms; the second variety relies on new grammatical systems, referring to the indigenous languages and to universal grammar patterns.