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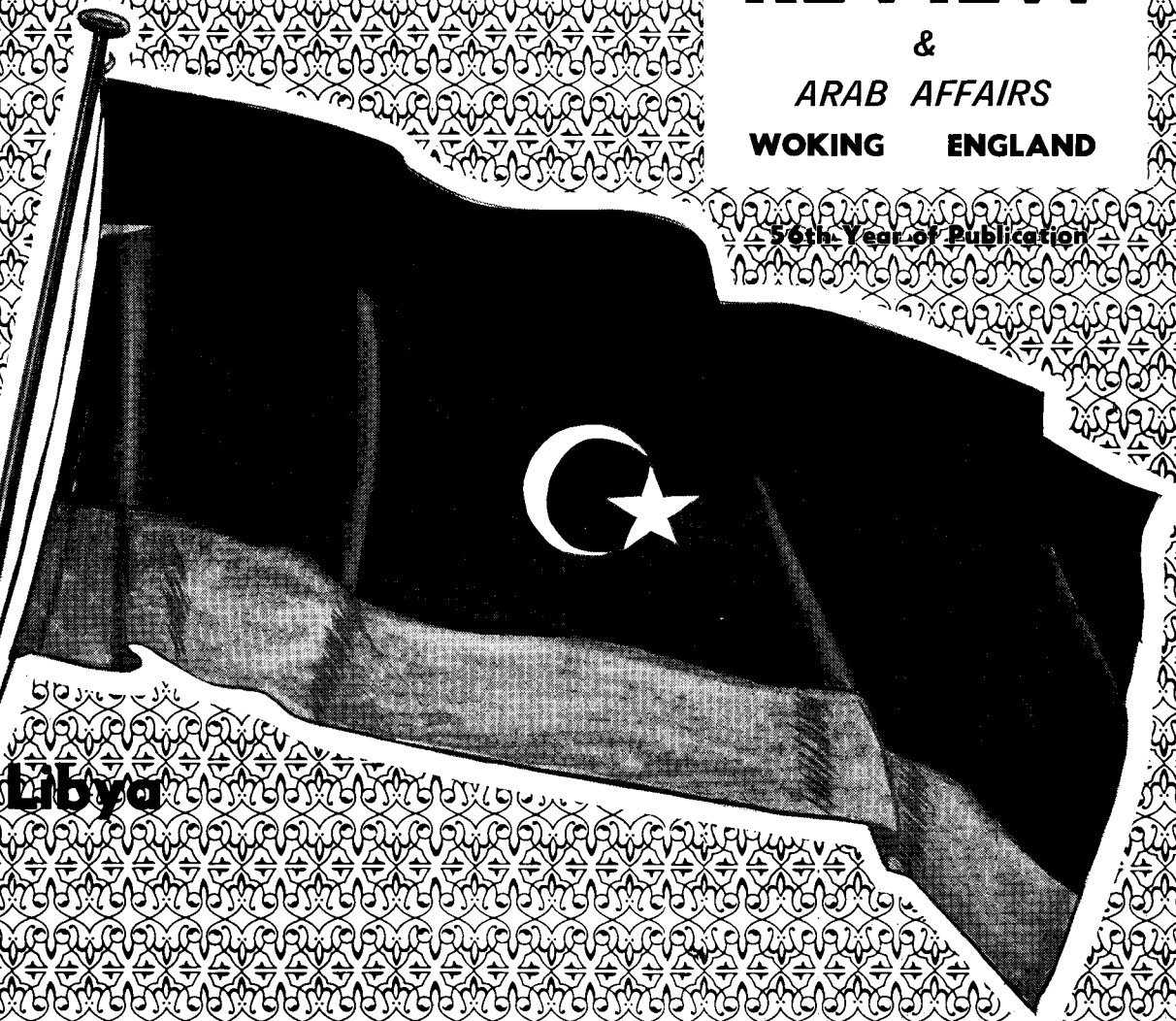

Libya

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

"(O ye who believe!)...and hold fast to the pact of God all together, and split not"
(The Qur'an 3:103)

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1968

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Between Ourselves

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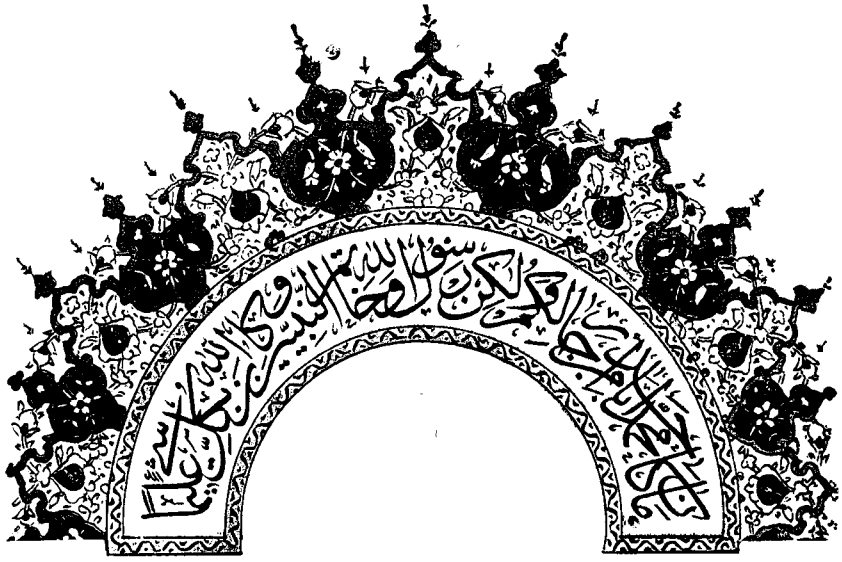


"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of God and the last of the Prophets. And God has full knowledge of all things"
(The Qur'án, 33 : 40)

"There is no prophet after me" (The Prophet Muhammad)

VOL. 56 Nos. 8-9 AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1968 C.E. Jumada al-thaniyah–Rajab 1388 A.H.

The Twisted Conscience of the West

Russia — Czechoslovakia; Israel — Palestine

A CONTRAST

"The moral of recent events for the Muslims and the Arabs is simple and straightforward. If they want justice for themselves they must go all out to get it. If they want the Israelis to resist from their aggression they must develop sufficient strength to strike against the Israelis. The Arabs and the Muslims must rely on themselves only, and must forever remain suspicious about the motives and intentions of the big powers, for these are only interested in themselves and will sacrifice everything for the realization of their own selfish designs. To sum up, the road to justice for the Muslims is none other than the road to strength and self-reliance. Those Muslim countries which are developing themselves on modern and enlightened lines, and thereby acquiring strength, are helping to bring about a recognition of justice not only for themselves but for all their fellow Muslims."

The attitude of the West to the plight of the Arabs of Palestine

When reports came in the middle of August about moves by the Soviet Union against Czechoslovakia there was a tremendous uproar in the Western world. Statesmen in most of the Western countries condemned the Russians for "brutal aggression". People in almost all walks of life said they were indignant. There were demonstrations and public rallies, and the Soviet Union was branded with all conceivable bad qualities. It was urged that the Soviet Union should be left in no doubt about the feelings of people throughout the world regarding its acts against Czechoslovakia. It was repeatedly said that the Russian "outrage" should not go unpunished, and that all governments must give effect to the dictates of their conscience on this matter and take whatever steps were deemed necessary to ensure that the Russians desist from their misdeeds. It was repeatedly proclaimed that unless the world rose to this challenge and taught the culprits a lesson the values of Western civilization would be undermined and the world would lapse into anarchy and become a victim of the law of the jungle.

Whether or not the entry of Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia was an act of blatant aggression is a subject which we need not consider at any great length here. It may be that right is not entirely on one side here, and wrong not altogether on the other. The simple deduction that where a big power and a small power are involved in a dispute right is always on the side of the small power is not a very safe formula. There is more to the entry of Russian troops into Czechoslovakia than the West would like to admit.

But while it is not our intention on this occasion to pro-

nounce judgments on the rights and wrongs of the Soviet Union's actions against Czechoslovakia, we find it strange that the effervescent eruption of sympathy for the under-dog, and the clamour for upholding the principles of justice and morality, should have been confined solely to the Czechoslovak crisis. If the conscience of the West is indeed alive and pure, we cannot understand how it has failed to be moved by much greater misdeeds committed elsewhere against innocent nations and people not long ago. There are many wrongs still unrectified against many peoples throughout the world which seem to have eluded the notice and the conscience of the West, although they stare the world and the West in the face.

The attitude of the West to the plight of the Arabs of Palestine, and its faliure to condemn in categoric terms the wrongs committed by Zionism against the Palestinians and the entire Arab nation, shows that the West is rather selective and moody in its morals. In Palestine the Arabs, who comprised 92 per cent of the country's population in 1918, have been turned against their will into a minority in their own homeland. The Palestinian Arabs are now either refugees outside Palestine or labouring under the yoke of military occupation by the Zionists. Large areas of neighbouring Arab countries are being occupied by the Zionists. In these areas the Arabs are ill-treated and humiliated — and impartial observers have testified to that. Jerusalem has been occupied by the Zionists and they have declared its annexation to the Jewish state. The United Nations by solemn resolution has condemned this act and called upon the Israelis to rescind their annexation measures. But the Israelis have not taken the slightest notice of this. And, what is more important, the United Nations have not reacted to this act of defiance and contempt by Israel.

The selective conscience of the West

An examination of the attitude of the United Nations and of the Western powers towards the behaviour of the Zionists against the Arabs over the past twenty years or so reveals quite clearly that the West either prefers not to take any notice of what the Zionists are doing, or, if it finds itself in the awkward position of having to take notice, of doing nothing to give effect to any expressions of indignation or condemnation. In the case of Palestine several resolutions in favour of the Arabs have been adopted by resounding majorities. But when the Israelis rejected these resolutions the United Nations, and primarily the Western powers, did not take the natural and logical step of trying to enforce their will either directly or indirectly by means of exerting some pressure upon Israel. Quite the opposite, the Western powers, chiefly the United States of America, have consistently given aid and comfort to Israel and have encouraged it by overt and covert means to continue its policy of arrogance and malevolence towards the Arabs. Israel has been actively supported by the West by means of the supply of weapons and economic assistance. The West could have easily made Israel comply with the resolutions of the United Nations if they had wanted to. But they have preferred soft and meaningless words to action, and these words have acted as a soporific or anaesthetic to the conscience of the West — if, in fact, that conscience had ever existed !

In the Middle East and in other parts of the world, peace can only reign if there is justice. It is idle to hope that mere force — unless it be completely overwhelming and incapable of challenge — is enough for the establishment of peace. Certainly, also, morals and conscience should be allowed to prevail against temporary exigencies or selfish interests. It is both exhilarating and hopeful to see ordinary people and governments in various parts of the world react to a moral issue. But it is likewise depressing and wrong to react only to some special moral issues, and to ignore altogether other moral issues. Conscience must be consistent, and if it is not it does not deserve to be called a conscience. So if the world sees something wrong with an invasion by Russian troops of Czechoslovakia the world should promptly see something equally wrong with an invasion by Zionist forces of Arab lands in Palestine, Jordan, the United Arab Republic and Syria. If it condemns the one act, it must condemn the other. To be alive to one wrong, and to ignore — or, as in the case of the West concerning Palestine, to encourage — another would achieve no good and would instead do great harm.

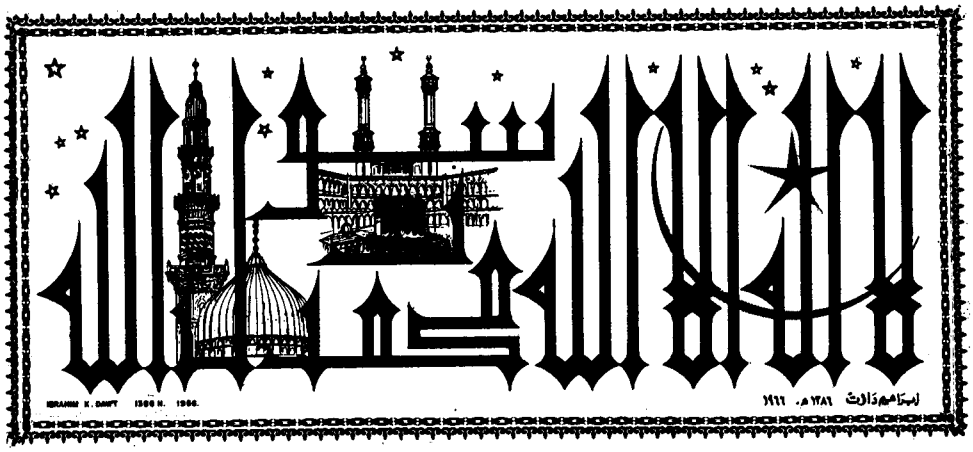
Justice via **strength**

The conscience of the world, and of the Western powers in particular, being what it is, the conclusion cannot be avoided that it is idle for the Arabs and the Muslims to look to the West, or to the United Nations as at present constituted, for the rectification of the harm done to them. In regard to the Palestine problem, it is quite clear that the Western powers, for selfish reasons concerned with the American presidential elections and other domestic matters, are not prepared to exert their abundant and powerful influence against Israel. The West will not do anything practical to bring about a withdrawal by Zionist forces from the Arab lands they now occupy. The Palestinian Arab refugees will not be helped to go back to the land of their fathers, and they will not be compensated for the property they have lost. The Palestinian Arabs now under Israeli military occupation, and who are suffering badly under the harsh tyranny of the Zionist boot, will not be relieved or succoured by any pious words by the West. The Muslim holy places in Jerusalem now under Israeli occupation will not be protected from constant and outrageous profanity and desecration (a fact which has recently been confirmed by a report made by a Western ecclesiastical body) by any words spoken to Israel by the West or any act done by the West.

It is not true that the West does not know the full extent of the misdeeds committed by the Zionists against the Arabs. The Zionists are certainly good propagandists, and the world knows more about their case than it knows about the Arab case. But there is enough known about the justice of the Arab case to induce the Christian West to react if in fact they were disposed to do so. The simple fact is that the West is not interested in justice for the Arabs and the Muslims, and it is high time that the Arab and Muslim leaders understood this and acted consistently in accordance with such knowledge.

The moral of recent events for the Muslims and the Arabs is simple and straightforward. If they want justice for themselves they must go all out to get it. If they want the Israelis to desist from their aggression they must develop sufficient strength to strike against the Israelis. The Arabs and the Muslims must rely on themselves only, and must forever remain suspicious about the motives and intentions of the big powers, for these are only interested in themselves and will sacrifice everything for the realization of their own selfish designs.

To sum up, the road to justice for the Muslims is none other than the road to strength and self-reliance. Those Muslim countries which are developing themselves on modern and enlightened lines, and thereby acquiring strength, are helping to bring about a recognition of justice not only for themselves but for all their fellow Muslims.



(There is but one God. Muhammad is His Messenger.)

The Pillars of Islamic Thought[1]

By Nadim al-Jisr

(A Professor of Philosophy in a Middle East University recently wrote an article casting doubt upon and criticizing some of the provisions of the Qur'án. The Muftí of Tripoli, Nadim al-Jisr, replied in defence of Islam. In the debate that ensued in the Arab press, the pillars of Islamic thought and doctrine were elucidated and established. This article is a resumé *of the arguments put forward by the learned and eminent Muftí of Tripoli, Lebanon.)*

The existence of God

The existence of God is a subject on which philosophy can readily provide an answer. The celebrated English philosopher, Francis Bacon (d. 1626 C.E.), once said that a meagre knowledge of philosophy could take one away from God, while ample knowledge of the subject would bring man nearer to belief in God.

If one believes that God has created the universe, one must believe in consequence that God has also created the laws that govern the universe, as well as all forms of life on the universe. On this the Qur'án says :

> *" O people, a parable is set forth, so listen to it. Surely those whom you call upon besides God cannot create a fly, though they should gather for it. And if the fly carry off aught from them, they cannot take it back from it. Weak are both the invoker and the invoked. They estimate not God with His due estimation. Surely God is Strong, Mighty"* (22 : 73 and 74).

This was said many hundreds of years before philosophers such as Roger Bacon (d. 1294 C.E.) and Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 C.E.) said that science had not attained sufficient knowledge about the origin of a fly.

Some modern philosophers have found it difficult to imagine God as the Qur'án pictures Him — " The Originator of the heavens and the earth " (42 : 11) — and do not give credence to the idea that God created man from earth. Such doubt often leads to a complete rejection of the whole idea of the creation, and of the very existence of God. It is not my purpose here to debate the question as to whether God exists. But on the assumption that there is a God Who has created the universe — a doctrine believed by the great majority of scientists and philosophers — I should like to answer the criticism levelled against the versions of the creation given in the Qur'án. The critics of Islam say that these versions of the creation are in conflict with modern thought and modern scientific principles. They also say that the versions given in the Qur'án are self-contradictory and do not present a harmonious or complete picture. On the basis of this argument it has been claimed that the Muslims are very much handicapped by their religious beliefs, which prevent them from marching forward with the times and accepting modern discoveries which help promote progress in material and other spheres.

Do the principles and beliefs of Islam in fact conflict with reason and with demonstrable science ? In my opinion, quite the contrary. They support scientific principles, and are supported and reinforced by scientific principles. This proposition will be evident from an examination of the main pillars of Islamic thought. All these are capable of substantiation by the application of the usual methods of proof. Complete verification of these principles, however, will require much more space than is available on this occasion — indeed some of these principles would require whole volumes for a comprehensive discussion. Nevertheless, I shall offer demonstrable proof for all the doctrines that I put forward. It must also be pointed out at the outset that Islamic thought is based upon the Qur'án, and is in no way separable from the Qur'án. A corollary to this is the fact that while Islamic thought is based upon the Qur'án it nevertheless is in harmony with modern philosophical and scientific principles. The ideas

1 Based on an article entitled Raká'iz al-Tafkír al-Islámí, which appeared in the *Da'wah al-Haqq*, Rabat, Morocco, for June 1968.

contained in the Qur'án can be shown to be right and wholesome for all times and places, and with the proper approach and intention the Qur'án yields lively principles applicable to the needs of all times, including the present. There is no such thing as " old " Islamic principles as contrasted with " modern " Islamic principles. They all are of the same kind and have the same vitality and validity ; and are all rationally verifiable.

The Qur'án and reason

The relationship between the principles enunciated in the Qur'án and the dictates of reason is one of the most characteristic features of the religion of Islam. The Qur'án ordains that reason is the final arbiter on the meaning and difference between right and wrong, and also gives reason the task of determining the truth of things, including the question of the existence of God. There are in the Qur'án more than three hundred verses in which reference is made to reason and the power and functions of reason, and where ignorance and lack of reason are deprecated. Perhaps the most meaningful of these verses is this :

> *" Surely the vilest of beasts, in God's sight, are the deaf, the dumb, who understand not. And if God had known any good in them He would have made them hear. And if He makes them hear, they would turn away while they are averse "* (8 : 22 and 23).

All belief not based on reason is not considered in Islam to be meritorious or wholesome. Faith not based on rational conviction is acceptable only from those incapable of exercising the reasoning required for this purpose.

The Qur'án also rejects the antiquated or reactionary traditionalism if this conflicts with the dictates of reason. Fallacies, fables and unproven traditions are all condemned by Islam. In Islam, also, there are no profound or unfathomable secrets incapable of rational analysis or proof. All the provisions of the Qur'án are capable of being resolved in such a manner as to conform to the dictates of reason and to be capable of acceptance by the application of ordinary methods of analysis and reasoning.

It can be stated categorically and without reservation that Islam is a religion in which reason is recognized as the supreme arbiter on all things, and in which the various aspects of the faith are capable of rational demonstration and proof. This is one of the most fundamental characteristics of the religion of Islam, and any misunderstanding of this quality of Islam implies ignorance of the Qur'án and the other sources of Islamic teachings.

The Qur'án and freedom

Freedom of the individual is one of the most important aspects of the teachings of Islam. The Qur'án considers freedom and liberty in the various spheres of human activity to be a natural phenomenon. No restriction is recognized against such freedom except in those cases where wrong or evil is committed and harm inflicted upon other individuals or the community at large. Freedom in Islam comprises freedom of thought, of worship, of speech, of work, of ownership of property, and of methods of use of property. The main criterion in the practice of freedom is that it should not cause harm to others. Only in that case does the Qur'án restrict the freedom of the individual.

The Qur'án and scientific knowledge

The Qur'án recognizes the validity of all scientific and ascertainable facts, and does not in any way seek to minimise their effect or relationship to the articles of faith. Indeed, the Qur'án considers that scientific facts of all kinds are valuable proof of the existence of God and His qualities as mentioned in the Qur'án, and their acceptance reaffirms the importance of reason, which is the main source of belief.

The accusation has often been levelled against Islam that the only scientific knowledge which the Muslim is urged to seek is in essence religious knowledge and philosophy, and not scientific knowledge concerning mathematics, physics or chemistry, for example. It is true, however, that Islam urges the acquisition of knowledge about religious matters, for religion is the most important code of conduct and has an important rôle to play in the regulation of the affairs of society and the promotion of harmony and human happiness. But medicine and other ordinary sciences are recommended to the Muslims in no uncertain terms. In fact, Islam urges the Muslims to acquire all such knowledge as is beneficial to man in his everyday life. The following verse from the Qur'án illustrates this point :

> *" Seest thou not that God sends down water from the clouds, then We bring forth therewith fruits of various hues ? And in the mountains are streaks, white and red, of various hues and others intensely black. And of men and beasts and cattle there are various colours likewise. Those of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge fear God "* (35 : 27 and 28).

The " knowledge " here referred to is not merely knowledge of religious matters, but knowledge of physical and other phenomena, scientific knowledge in the ordinary sense of the word.

The Qur'án is not a scientific encyclopaedia

It must be pointed out, however, that the Qur'án is not a comprehensive encyclopaedia of scientific knowledge. There is in the Qur'án abundant reference to scientific knowledge, but the Qur'án is not intended to be taken as the limit of scientific knowledge on any matter. There has been misunderstanding of the verse in the Qur'án which states :

> *" And there is no animal in the earth, not a bird that flies on its two wings, but they are communities like yourselves. We have not neglected anything in the Book. Then to their Lord they will be gathered "* (6 : 38).

This does not mean that any knowledge gleaned from any source other than the Qur'án is improper. The Qur'án is not to be taken as the beginning and end of scientific knowledge on all subjects on this basis. The essential principles of scientific knowledge, however, are contained in the Qur'án. The most important elements, the basis and the general idea of scientific truth is found in the Qur'án. The details are not there, however, and it would be wrong to consider that if a matter is not mentioned in the Qur'án it is not to be taken as scientific. This would be absurd, on any reasonable interpretation of the Qur'án, and unjust to Islam and to the Muslims who have never understood Islam in any different way.

The miraculous nature of the Qur'án

The miraculous nature of the Qur'án is not based solely on its linguistic or rhetoric excellence as ascertained by the

Arabs, a people noted for their appreciation of rhetoric. It is based also on its tremendous capacity to express ideas on various subjects in a convincing manner, using methods not previously known to the Arabs. The words of the Qur'án imparted their meanings as much to the simple and uneducated bedouin in the desert as to the learned and sophisticated philosopher. It is this quality of being understandable and comprehensible to all classes of people that is a miraculous quality of the Qur'án.

A few verses of the Qur'án will demonstrate this theory.

> *" Seest thou not that God has made subservient to you all that is in the earth, and the ships gliding in the sea by His command? And He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth except with His permission. Surely God is Compassionate, Merciful to men"* (22 : 65) ;
>
> *" And We made the night and the day two signs, then We have made the sign of the night to pass away and We have made the sign of the day manifest, so that you may seek grace from your Lord, and that you may know the numbering of years and the reckoning. And We have explained everything with distinctness"* (17 : 12) ;
>
> *" He has created the heavens and the earth with truth ; He makes the night cover the day and makes the day overtake the night, and He has made the sun and the moon subservient ; each one moves on to an assigned term. Now surely He is the Mighty, the Forgiver"* (39 : 5) ;
>
> *" Or, Who created the heavens and the earth, and sends down for you water from the cloud? Then We cause to grow thereby beautiful gardens — it is not possible for you to make the trees thereof to grow. Is there a god with God? Nay, they are people who deviate!"* (27 : 60) ;
>
> *" See you the fire which you kindle? Is it you that produce the trees for it, or are We the Producer?"* (56 : 71 and 72) ;

and

> *" Have We not given him two eyes?"* (90 : 8).

The foregoing verses are typical of the Qur'ánic concept of science, and also of the fact that man must verify scientific principles by rational means. They also show that the way in which the Qur'án referred to scientific principles was a simplified one designed to be comprehensible to all manner of people at various levels of intelligence and learning. The elucidation of all scientific principles on a comprehensive basis was not the purpose of the Qur'án, and this would have entailed discussion of matters not within the grasp or comprehension of many people. But the rudiments of scientific facts were mentioned, and the Muslims were urged to deduce the proper knowledge from these facts. The Qur'án says on this :

> *" We will soon show them Our signs in fartherest regions and among their own people, until it is quite clear to them that it is the Truth. Is it not enough that their Lord is a Witness over all things?"* (41 : 53).

Cause and effect

The principle of cause and effect is one of the principles established in the Qur'án and detectable in the various propositions and arguments contained in it. The simple proposition of cause and effect, and of purpose behind acts, is firmly established in the Qur'án. This is the foundation of belief in physical facts, and the basis upon which belief in the existence and qualities of God is established. The Qur'án says :

> *" So set thy face for religion, being upright, the nature made by God in which He has created men. There is no altering God's creation. That is the right religion — but most people know not"* (30 : 30).

Observation of nature, and a proper deduction from natural happenings, thus leads to belief in God.

The balance of contradiction

There are three elementary principles which serve as the basis of a great deal of what logic and philosophy are about : existence, possibility and impossibility. There is often, however, a great deal of confusion between two kinds of possibility and impossibility — the rational and the traditional. Rational impossibility is that which can be proved by ordinary rational means, e.g. that one cannot possibly be a quarter of two, or that part of a thing cannot be greater than the whole, or that a mountain is not smaller than a tea cup. But there are certain impossibilities recognized by men which are not in fact definite impossibilities, and on which a decision had been arrived at solely by reference to traditional principles or facts not mathematically or scientifically ascertainable. These are what I would call merely " traditional " impossibilities, e.g., that man cannot go to the moon, or that sound cannot carry beyond a certain distance. These are " facts " only by reference to man's level of achievement and discovery at a particular time, and their assessment varies with development and progress in scientific knowledge. Their truth is therefore merely relative and not absolute. The truth of facts mentioned in the Qur'án should not be determined by reference solely to relative scientific knowledge. There are many facts which today are accepted as truth while only yesterday they were deemed absurd and impossible. The Qur'án is for all times and places, and it would be wrong to apply for its assessment principles valid only for a particular time or place.

Rational verification of all facts is not possible. Some facts may be demonstrable, and verifiable by ordinary means. Others may not be capable of such verification. The science of philosophy has always recognized this principle. By the application of normal methods of reasoning certain facts may be ascertained. But sometimes these facts will only be capable of ascertainment and deduction by reference to other facts logically or scientifically connected with them, or presumed to be related by the process of cause and effect. And in any case it may not always be possible to comprehend the real nature of a thing, or its essence. Some of the qualities and characteristics of a thing may be determinable, while its bare existence may not be quite tangible or capable of analysis. This is a method of reasoning and proof which has for a long time been accepted as valid for scientific purposes. It is also the means whereby the existence of God and His qualities can be demonstrated.

It is also one of the principles of Islamic thought that a distinction must be drawn between the actual existence of a thing and the capacity to imagine or delineate all its qualities and characteristics. Not all that exists can be imagined in all its particulars and details. Likewise, inability to imagine or delineate the exact nature of a thing does not justify belief

that it does not exist. If we see a thing we can imagine that it has been produced by somebody, and we can also imagine some of the characteristics of the producer, e.g. that he is intelligent and knowledgeable and capable of certain things. But we may not be able to tell from the product all the characteristics and qualities of the producer with exactitude, because we would need to see the producer and make further examination for that purpose. Despite the lack of evidence, or opportunity to examine the evidence, about the maker of a thing, we would not be justified in denying that it exists.

The purpose of things

One of the pillars of Islamic thought as expressed in the Qur'án is that man is not possessed, nor can he ever be possessed, of full knowledge about the very beginning and end of things. This is something which human minds are not capable of comprehending. Even within the realms of relative time and space, as known to man in everyday life, not all things are capable of real understanding. This has been recognized by many scientists, Muslim and non-Muslim. The European scientists, Pascal (d. 1662 C.E.) for example, accepted this fact. To give examples : very loud noise cannot be heard by man, because it deafens him, very bright light also blinds man and cannot be seen by him; if we are too near a thing we cannot see it in its right perspective, and likewise if the thing is too far from us. This is true of ordinary physical things, and true also of things relating to the unknown, to the realms of religion and belief.

The Qur'án says :

> *" And they have no knowledge of it. They follow but conjecture, and surely conjecture avails naught against truth "* (53 : 28).

This is a well accepted method of reasoning and a generally recognized means of ascertaining the truth. It is also an accepted principle that there is a great deal of difference between categoric deduction of the existence of a thing, on the one hand, and its non-existence on the other. It is possible to be categoric about the existence of a thing which can be proved to exist by reference to recognized means of proof, whether that be physical or mental. But where such means do not lead to proof of existence it is not proper to say that non-existence has thereby been proved. It is only possible to be sure of non-existence where existence would definitely contradict proof of the existence of other things closely related or connected in one way or another with the thing the non-existence of which is the subject of study. Otherwise, it would be improper and unreasonable to reach the conclusion that a thing does not exist. We must in such a case adopt the attitude that while existence cannot be proved in normal methods, and while non-existence also cannot be proven beyond reasonable doubt, existence remains possible, although this may be the subject of doubt by reference to some of the normal methods of proof. These methods of proof are not necessarily absolute, and may only be relative to the knowledge available to man at a particular time, knowledge which can be improved upon or altogether changed by the accident of discovery.

The Qur'án says :

> *" Surely God upholds the heavens and the earth lest they come to naught. And if they come to naught, none can uphold them after Him. Surely He is ever Forebearing, Forgiving. And they swore by God, their stronger oaths, that, if a warner came to them, they would be better guided than any of the nations. But when a warner came to them, it increased them in naught but aversion. Behaving proudly in the land and planning evil. And the evil plan besets none save the authors of it. So they wait for naught but the way of the ancients. But you will find no alteration in the course of God ; and you will find no change in the course of God "* (35 : 43).

The gist of this is that the laws of God and of the universe are unchanged and unchangeable. But it has been proved that the operation of one law of nature may be changed by the application of another law within the same realm. This does not mean that man can interfere with or impede the operation of the laws of God. What it means is that within these laws, and in accordance with a predetermined law governing the interaction and operation of the various laws, certain results can be produced. In other words, one of the laws of God can in certain circumstances operate to change the course of another law of God. Thus the development of the human embryo can be impeded or distorted by physical or chemical means applied by man.

Sufism in Islam

The allegation has been made against Islam that *Sufism* is the basic and only solution for the problems and difficulties of modern man. Many non-Muslims understand the *sufist* movement as an escapist and negative movement by which people avoid a confrontation with the realities of everyday life. But this is not a fair assessment of the *sufist* movement. Islam does not encourage its followers to evade or avoid the realities of life, or to adopt an introvert attitude towards life. If the *sufist* movement has at any time meant escapism, this was a defect in the followers of the movement, and most certainly not a defect in the teachings of Islam, upon which the movement was in general based. It must not be forgotten here that the *sufist* movement started at a time when the main religions of the world were experiencing great pressure and were subjected to many corrupting influences. Whether the accusations levelled by some people against *sufism* are true or not is a subject which cannot be adequately dealt with on this occasion. All that I would say is that the religion of Islam does not encourage — indeed it categorically and in plain terms prohibits — any attitude that leads the Muslim to shun life or divorce himself of its realities. True *sufism* encouraged by Islam is dedication to the will of God, rejection of wealth and luxury for their own sake, and a constant struggle by man to improve the lot of his fellows. In short, it is the *" sufism "* which was practised by the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, as well as the leaders of the Muslims in early days : they worked hard, they sought knowledge and imparted knowledge, they acquired strength, they gave advice, they helped and collaborated with others to promote good and prohibit evil, and they considered as paramount the good and welfare of the society in which they lived. In none of their acts of omission could it be said that the driving aim was a rejection of life, or escapism. Indeed, the very opposite was true, because they were very deeply involved in life in all its meanings.

These are the main pillars of Islamic thought, based on the Qur'án. They are laid down in various provisions of the Qur'án which specifically enunciate the way of life which the Muslim must follow. They are also to be deduced from the sum total of all the provisions of the Qur'án.

There is not a single criticism of Islam which cannot be dispelled and undermined by a specific quotation from the

Qur'án. The great pity is that Muslim youth, which is subjected to the influences of Western thought often hostile to Islam, is not always possessed of the necessary knowledge to undertake the task of answering the criticism levelled against its religion. If it were to refer to the main sources of Islam, and study these very carefully, Muslim youth would have no difficulty in holding its own in any controversy or debate with the detractors and enemies of Islam. The Qur'án says :

> *" And among men is he who disputes about God without knowledge and without guidance, and without an illuminating Book "* (22 : 8).

Islam and its critics

Many of the detractors of Islam enquire of the Islamic attitude towards modern civilization, scientific progress, the industrial revolution, Darwin's theory on the origin of species, Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* and Einstein's theory of relativity. The brief answer to all these questions is that the Qur'án encourages the application of reason to the assessment of the merit of these matters. The good in these matters is welcome, and the evil is eschewed. Darwin's theory on the origin of species, if it can be proved beyond doubt, does not in any way conflict with the teachings of the Qur'án. The same is true of Einstein's theory of relativity, which need not be understood in a way hostile to the teachings of Islam and the provisions of the Qur'án.

There is no doubt that many educated Muslims find difficulty in accepting the fact that miracles have taken place. The answer to this is that the idea of miracles — which, incidentally, is accepted by almost all religions — signifies merely a departure from the normal laws of nature. If one accepts that God is the Creator of all things, including the laws of nature, one cannot find any difficulty in accepting that God at times demonstrates events which are not comprehensible by reference to the laws of nature. It certainly is not possible to disprove miracles or to show that they have never taken place. Admittedly, proof of miraculous happenings is not always easily forthcoming, but that is not enough to disprove them.

The mind v. the heart ?

Finally, I should like briefly to answer the accusation levelled against Islam, namely, that the Muslim is required to take matters for granted, and to believe with his heart rather than with reason. This is a completely false and unworthy accusation, and the teachings of Islam and the verses of the Qur'án provide abundant proof to rebut it.

The Muslim is urged to use his brain and to arrive at conclusions about all things, including matters of religion, by the application of normal methods of reasoning. It is true that not all people are capable of deep and thorough thought, and that they do not all examine everything before they come to believe in it. But those capable of reasoning will find it possible to verify the teachings of Islam. And I hope that in this essay I have shown that the fundamental concepts of Islam are capable of definite proof by ordinary methods of reasoning. The arguments I put forward in this brief article are based not on any special science or technique. They are ordinary methods of logic and philosophy which scientists use in determining the truth or falsehood of all things. Islam is not afraid of the application of these methods in any examination of its principles.

An Anthology of the Holy Qur'an by an American Muslim Orientalist

Selections from *"The Noble Reading"* (Qur'án Majíd)

Translated by
Professor Dr. T. B. IRVING

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One of the principal reasons that the West has not understood Islam is that its basic book, the Qur'án Majíd (*The Noble Reading*), has never been translated with reverence and sympathy into any European language. This critical approach with its desire to disprove or mock the message brought by the Prophet Muhammad is a legacy from the Crusades. Its carry-over has prevented the truth from being known about Islam to non-Muslims.

Professor Irving, who holds his Ph.D. in Arabic and Spanish from Princeton University, founded the School of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Minnesota. He has held a Fulbright research fellowship in Baghdad, Iraq, and travelled widely throughout the Arab world and Iran. Dr. Irving is a member of the American Oriental Society, the Medieval Academy, the Middle Eastern Studies Association, the Middle East Institute and other learned societies.

His speciality is the Arab and the Islamic period in Spanish history, and he has written *Falcon of Spain*, a biography of the 8th century Arab ruler of Spain, 'Abdurrahmán I, as well as contributed numerous articles to magazines here and abroad. He is now Professor of Spanish at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

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God is free from all defects. And (I begin) with His praise.
God Almighty is free from all defects.

The Sword as Wielded by Muslims and Christians for Propagation of their Faiths

by MUHAMMAD 'ALI

III*

An examination of the Holy Qur'an 9:13 which is seized upon by the critics of Islam to show that the Qur'an preaches force in the spread of Islam

Nothing in Chapter 9 of the Holy Qur'án is there to show that the Prophet Muhammad undertook offensive wars

Thus there is nothing to show that the Prophet ever undertook any war to force Islam upon a tribe. Yet words occur in chapter 9 in which the Muslims are told that if their opponents repented and became steadfast in prayers and gave alms, then they were not to be interfered with, as by doing so they became the brethren of the Muslims. It is from this verse that the conclusion is drawn that the Muslims are commanded to kill every unbeliever who does not accept Islam. How unnatural such a conclusion is, one can easily see. But as these words are often misunderstood and misconstrued, I deem it necessary to explain them at some length. For this purpose, I will quote the first few verses of Chapter 9 to show that nothing in this chapter leads to the conclusion of a general warfare against all unbelievers until they became Muslims.

1. " This is a declaration of immunity from God and His Messenger to those with whom you had an agreement among the idolaters.

2. " Go ye, therefore, at large in the land four months: and know that you cannot frustrate the power of God: on the other hand God will disgrace the unbelievers.

3. " And a proclamation on the part of God and His Messenger to the people in the day of the greater pilgrimage that God is clear of the idolaters as is His Messenger. If then you repent (of your oppression), it is better for you and if you turn your backs, then know that you cannot frustrate the power of God: and to the unbelievers announce thou a grievous punishment.

4. " But this concerns not those idolaters with whom you made an agreement, and who have afterwards in no way failed you, and not yet aided any one against you. Fulfil for them then your covenant until the time agreed upon with them: verily God loves the righteous.

5. " And when the sacred months are passed, then kill the idolaters wherever you find them, and seize them and beseige them, and lie in wait for them in every place of observation; but if they repent and are steadfast in prayers, and give alms, then let them go their way, verily, God is Forgiving and Merciful.

6. " And if any one of the idolaters ask thee for protection, then give him protection so that he may hear the Word of God, then send him to his place of safety. This, because they are ignorant people.

7. " How can the idolaters have an agreement with God and His Messenger, save those with whom you made an agreement at the Sacred Mosque. So long as they are true to you, be true to them; verily God loves those who fear.

8. " How! if they prevail against you, they will not observe either ties of blood or covenants. With their mouths they contend you, but their hearts are averse and most of them are transgressors.

9. " They sell the signs of God for a mean price, and turn others aside from His path: of a truth, evil is it that they do.

*Continued from *The Islamic Review* for July 1968.

10. "They respect not with a believer either ties of blood or their covenants, and they are the aggressors.

11. "Yet, if they turn to God and observe prayer and give alms, then they are your brethren in religion; and We make clear the signs for men of knowledge.

12. "But if, after alliance made, they violate their covenant and revile your religion, then do battle with the ringleaders of infidelity, so that they may desist. Verily their covenants are as naught.

13. "Will you not do battle with a people who have broken their covenant and aimed to expel the Messenger and attacked you first? Are you afraid of them? God is more deserving that you should fear Him."

Circumstances under which the verses of the Qur'án (9 : 1-13) were revealed

To understand these verses, it is necessary to bear in mind the circumstances under which they were revealed. It was not the Meccans only who opposed the progress of Islam and persecuted the Muslims, but all the idolatrous tribes of Arabia were guilty of the same offence.

In the beginning the Prophet Muhammad used to preach to the pilgrims who assembled at Mecca from every part of Arabia, and thus Islam had become known to almost every tribe. But idolatry was so deep-rooted in their hearts that they all assumed an hostile attitude to Islam. In fact, no tribe could be friendly or even neutral to Islam without incurring the enmity of the Quraysh who, as the guardians of the Ka'bah, used to warn the assembled hosts in the pilgrimage season against the new doctrines. Hence no member of any tribe could openly profess Islam though he might be inwardly convinced of its truth, and if any one dared do it, he was sure to be persecuted in the same manner as his brethren in faith at Mecca. Thus all the idolatrous tribes of Arabia, which annually assembled at Mecca, had necessarily assumed a hostile attitude towards Islam. When the power of Islam began to grow and the Quraysh suffered crushing defeats in battle after battle, their allies from among the idolatrous Arabs made treaties with the Muslims which were often for fixed periods. But the unbelievers generally paid no heed to such agreements and inflicted injuries on the Muslims whenever they could. Especially was this the case when the Prophet Muhammad went on an expedition to Tabúk with all his companions. These treaties were often made and broken by the idolaters, as the Holy Qur'án tells us in plain words. Thus we have in the eighth chapter of the Holy Qur'án the following description of these idolatrous tribes :

"They with whom thou hast made agreements, but whoever afterwards break their agreement and have not the least fear in breaking it" (8 : 58).

And again :

". . . Or if thou fear treachery from any people, throw back their treaty to them as thou fairly mayest; verily God loves not the treacherous" (8 : 60).

But the Prophet is clearly enjoined to make peace with them if they are inclined to refrain from making war on the Muslims :

"But if they lean to peace, lean thou also to it; and put thy trust in God: He verily is the Hearing, the Knowing. But if they seek to betray thee, then verily God will be all-sufficient for thee" (8 : 63-64).

And to the same purport we have in a previous verse the following warning :

"If you desired a decision, now hath the decision come to you (referring to the conquest of Mecca). It will be better for you if you give up the struggle, and if you return to war, we also will return to it; and your forces, though they be many, shall by no means avail you aught because God is with the faithful" (8 : 19).

A detailed discussion of the first thirteen verses of Chapter 9 of the Holy Qur'án

It was under the circumstances narrated in the previous paragraph that the ninth chapter of the Qur'án was revealed. The Immunity was declared as the last remedy for a people who every now and then broke their covenants and disturbed the peace of the Muslim society. When the opening verses of the ninth chapter were proclaimed to the idolatrous tribes who had assembled at the Pilgrimage, the unbelievers told the Prophet's messenger to inform him that they had already thrown back their treaties which they had made with him and that there was no covenant between them, but the thrusting of lances and the striking of swords. I will now take the verses one by one to show that the Holy Qur'án did not preach in this chapter any principle of persecution for the sake of religion.

The first verse clearly speaks of an immunity to those idolaters with whom the Muslims had entered into treaties. The injunctions that follow, therefore, relate only to such idolaters, and not to the whole world, not even to all the idolaters.

In the second verse the idolaters are told that they " Cannot frustrate the power of God ", showing that the object of the idolaters in fighting against the Muslims was not to resist any supposed persecution by the Muslims, but to frustrate the power of the Muslims and to bring them under subjection to them to stop the progress of Islam by force.

The third verse establishes two points. It shows that the proclamation was not addressed to all non-Muslims or to all the idolaters anywhere in the world, but only to the people that assembled on the " day of the greater pilgrimage ", i.e., only to hostile Arabian idolatrous tribes. Another point which the third verse establishes is that in the war which was now declared against these idolatrous tribes, the charge of aggression could not be laid against the Prophet, for it declares God and His Messenger to be " clear of the idolaters ".

The fourth verse shows that war was declared not even against all the idolatrous Arabian tribes which after carrying on hostilities with the Muslims for some time had then made a treaty with them, but only against such of these tribes as had failed their covenants which they had made with the Muslims or secretly aided other tribes to attack the Muslims.

The fifth verse tells us that aggression and oppression by such idolatrous tribes were to be forgiven if they accepted Islam. These tribes were guilty of grave oppression and excessive outrages against the Muslims, but the latter were commanded to show them a clemency if they embraced Islam. It was not a case of persecution for the sake of religion, but a case of forgiveness for the sake of religion. The principle of forgiving one's bitterest enemies was carried into practice by Islam and Islam only. The unity of the religion of Islam established a relation of brotherhood and hence all past wrongs were forgotten. " Verily, God is Forgiving and Merciful " says the verse, thus impressing upon the Muslims

the necessity of showing forgiveness and mercy to their enemies.

The sixth verse even more clearly refutes the idea that the Muslims were fighting with the idolaters to force them to accept Islam. Even if a member of any of the idolatrous tribes that were at war with the Muslims sought protection, such protection was to be granted to him. If, as its enemies assert, Islam had taught the principle of persecution for the sake of religion, the injunction on this occasion ought to have been that an idolater falling into the hands of the Muslims should be forthwith beheaded if he did not accept Islam. *The principle of "Sword or Islam" has no existence anywhere except in the minds of the hostile critics of Islam.* For, here in the last revelation of the Prophet, he is enjoined to give protection to an idolater belonging to one of the tribes at war with the Muslims, if he sought it. The Word of God was only to be preached to him and he was then to be sent back to his place safely, leaving it to his choice to accept or reject Islam after that. Thus do the Holy Qur'án and the practice of the Prophet show that the principle that "there is no compulsion in religion" was preached by Islam for all ages and that it was never abrogated, even the latest revelation bearing testimony to its truth and endorsing it.

The seventh verse states that the idolaters could not enter into a treaty with the Muslims, and the reason for this is explained in the eighth verse in which the question asked in the previous verse is repeated. The idolaters could not enter into a treaty with the Muslims, not for any fault of the latter, but because they would not, if they prevailed against the Muslims, "observe either ties of blood or covenants" and because their hearts were averse to any alliance with the Muslims and they desired to content themselves only with their words. Hence they broke their covenants again and again. When the Muslims wanted to avenge the wrongs done by them they made a treaty, and when they saw their attention turned in some other direction, they again oppressed the believers without regard either to the ties of blood or to the covenants which they had made.

The ninth verse shows that the idolaters were not content with practising their own religion freely, but they compelled others to forsake Islam. They were fighting not because the Muslims compelled them to accept Islam, but because they desired to compel the Muslims to forsake Islam; not because they were prevented from practising idolatry, but because they did not like others to forsake idolatry. Their object was, as the verse says plainly, to "turn others aside from the path of God", i.e., to prevent them from accepting Islam.

The tenth verse repeats that when a Muslim falls into the hands of the idolaters, they maltreat him and have no regard for ties of blood or their covenants. The eleventh verse again enjoins the Muslims to cease fighting with people who become their brethren, in faith and forgive them all past wrongs.

The twelfth verse says that if after making an alliance any tribe violates its covenant, its ringleaders must be fought against. And the thirteenth verse enumerates the three principal offences of the people against whom the Muslims were commanded to fight. These offences were their persecuting and expelling the Prophet and his followers, their attacking the Muslims first and at last their breaking the covenants which they had made and thus again reverting to the persecution of the Muslims.

The Prophet Muhammad never offered "Islam or sword"

It will be seen from the above that the Holy Qur'án never enjoined or permitted the persecution of the non-Muslims on the score of their religion. The idolatrous Arabs had taken up the sword to destroy the Muslims and they were punished with the sword. And as there is no injunction in the Holy Qur'án to compel the unbelievers to accept Islam or to propagate it by the sword, so there is not a single circumstance in the Prophet's life which should lend any support to such an assertion. It cannot be pointed out that any expedition was undertaken by him to force Islam upon any tribe. We even find him writing letters to the different potentates in the sixth year of Hejirah, but in none of these letters did he threaten any monarch with making war upon him if he did not accept Islam. One of these letters has been discovered, and it proves conclusively that it was not "Islam or Sword" that the Prophet Muhammad offered, but Islam only. The following is the translation of this letter, which has been declared to be genuine:

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. From Mohammad, the servant of God and His Messenger, to Maqauqis, the Chief of the Copts. Peace be upon him who follows true guidance! After this, I invite thee to accept Islam: become a Muslim and thou shalt be saved; God will grant thee a double reward. But if thou turn back, then on thee will be the sin of the Copts."

It appears from the most trustworthy traditions that similarly worded letters were written to many other monarchs. And the strongest of all facts is that no expedition was undertaken by the Prophet Muhammad after the revelation of the opening verses of the ninth chapter, which is alleged by Christian missionary critics to proclaim the principle of persecution for the sake of religion for all ages. Had the Prophet understood any verse of the ninth chapter to mean fighting with the unbelievers to convert them forcibly, he would have sent his armies in all directions. But he lived for more than a year after the revelation of the ninth chapter and its announcement at the time of the Pilgrimage, and not a single battle was fought by him. Does it not show what meaning the Prophet himself attached to the injunctions of the ninth chapter?

The early Caliphs of Islam and the later Muslims never compelled any people to accept Islam

As regards the wars of the earlier caliphs, none of these can be shown to have been undertaken to compel any people to accept Islam, nor can it be proved that any people were actually compelled to change their religion. These wars were necessitated by the aggressions of the Persian and the Roman empires. The Arabian tribes near the borders of these empires had accepted Islam, and it was the aggression of these empires on the frontier that led to wars between them and the Muslims. Had the Muslims undertaken the conquest of these empires with the object of forcing their religion upon them, there is no reason why they should have allowed perfect religious freedom to the non-Muslims in these countries after conquering them. It is a fact that in all the countries which the Muslims conquered, they allowed full religious liberty, and Islam was in fact the pioneer of the valuable religious freedom with which the world is now blessed. The spirit in which the Muslims conquered these empires is well illustrated in the following remarks make by a Freethinker (see the *Crimes of Christianity* London 1925) in connection with the

Continued on page 13

LIBYA

FROM A MIRAGE TO A MIRACLE

LIBYA SUPPLEMENT

King Idris I of Libya

A personification of self-denial.

To get an insight into his lofty ideals, one has only to read his message to his people on the tenth anniversary of the Independence Day of Libya (see opposite page).

The message, as will be readily seen, abounds in words of the Prophet Muhammad and verses of the Holy Qur'án.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

شعبي الليبي العزيز :

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته . أحمد الله تبارك وتعالى الذي أسعدني بالحظ بأن أتحدث إليكم وهي لمناسبة الأولى الذكرى العاشرة لإعلان استقلال ليبيا العزيز . فإني أهنئكم من صميم قلبي وأهنئ نفسي الذي أنعم الله علي بالحياة حتى هنأتكم بالذكرى العاشرة للاستقلال . وقد لا يسعدني بهذا الحظ في المستقبل بأن أتحدث إليكم في مناسبة كهذه ، فلعودان أسدي إليكم النصح (إنما الدين النصيحة) أوصيكم بتقوى الله في السر والعلانية وأن تشكروه على ما أولاكم من نعمة الاستقلال والحرية فإن شكركم (وأسبغ عليكم نعمه ظاهرة وباطنة) والشكر ليس باللسان فقط ولكنه باتباع أوامره وبالانتهاء عما نهى عنه والتعاون على البر والتقوى ، (ولا تعاونوا على الإثم والعدوان) فإن كفر النعمة موجب لزوالها وقال تعالى ، ومن يبدل نعمة الله من بعد ما جاءته فإن الله شديد العقاب . وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في خطبته في حجة الوداع ، إن دماءكم وأموالكم وأعراضكم عليكم حرام كحرمة يومكم هذا في بلدكم هذا . ألا ليبلغ الحاضر الغائب . رب مبلغ أوعى له من سامع . فعلى إتباع قول رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم النجاة من سوء العقبة . وأوصيكم بأن تحافظوا على هذا الاستقلال الذي جاهدتم من أجله زمنا طويلا وقاسيتم من أجله عذابا مريرا كما أوصاكم ولي الأمر منكم بالعدل والإنصاف وكلكم راع ومسئول عن رعيته . كما أوصى عامتكم بالطاعة لأولي الأمر منكم ولا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق ، ولا تنازعوا فتفشلوا وتذهب ريحكم واصبروا إن الله مع الصابرين .

إخواني :

إذا كانت السنوات العشر الماضية سنوات كفاح في سبيل الحرية فإن السنوات المقبلة ستمر بالرخاء بإذن الله تعالى بما منّ الله به علينا من خيرات أرضية ولكن الكفاح من الآن لن يكون أقل صعوبة من كفاح السنين العشر الماضية فللرخاء متاعب تعترض علينا جميعا من اجتنابها وحلها بما يعود على الشعب الليبي في مجموعه بالرخاء والتقدم . وللوصول إلى هذه الغاية يجب علينا التسلح بالأخلاق الكريمة والتمسك بأهداب الشريعة . إن من النتائج السيئة التي يجلبها الرخاء معه ميل الناس إلى حب الاثراء والاقتناص في الملذات ، والبذخ ، والأسراف ، والميل إلى الراحة والكسل . فهذه كلها أسباب ضعف وانحلال أحذركم من مغبتها وأوصيكم بالحذر منها وليكن رائدنا الإخلاص لديننا ووطننا وشعبنا . وأسأل الله أن يعيد هذا العيد عليكم باليمن والخير والرفاهية والاستقرار . والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته .

إدريس

The Text of King Idris I's message to his people on the 10th Anniversary of the Independence of Libya

" In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

" My beloved Libyan people,

" Peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of God upon you all !

" I praise God (Whose name be blessed and glorified), Him Who vouchsafed me the good fortune to address you on this occasion of the 10th anniversary of the proclamation of the independence of our beloved country. I congratulate you from the core of my heart, and I also congratulate myself on His having bestowed on me life to be able to congratulate you, on the 10th anniversary of the independence. It is possible I may not have the same good fortune in the future to talk to you another time on such an occasion as this. I wish to address some advice to you, for ' the religion (of Islam) is good counsel '. I counsel you to fear God in your hearts and in your outward actions and to give Him thanks for what He has bestowed upon you, the gift of independence, freedom in your country and showering on you His favours, both visible and invisible. And remember, to thank Him is not only by the tongue; rather it is by following His Commandments: forbidding that which He has forbidden and co-operation in righteousness and the fear of God. 'And do not co-operate (with others) in sin and transgression', for the rejection of His blessings can take away His favours. God says, ' He who changes the favour of God after it has come to him (will suffer), for God is severe in chastisement.' The Prophet of God (may the blessings of God be upon him !) says in his Farewell Pilgrimage Address : ' For verily your lives, your properties, your honour are sacred amongst you as the sanctity of This Day in This Month in This Town of yours. Yes, let him who is present convey it to him who is absent from here. For verily he who is conveyed the message to sometimes understands it better than he who conveys it.' Thus in our following the words of the Prophet (may the blessings of God be upon him !) there is salvation from the bad luck of being absent. I counsel you to guard this independence for which you have striven hard over a long period and for which you underwent bitter hardships. I also counsel those of you who are placed in authority over you to be just and equitable; for ' every one of you is like unto a shepherd responsible for his flock '. I also counsel each one of you to obey those of them who are placed in authority over you. But (remember) ' there is no obedience to any one of you who asks you to commit a sin against the Creator'. And ' do not quarrel, you will become weak, your prestige will disappear. And be patient ; for God is with those who are patient '.

" My brothers,

" If the last 10 years have meant a struggle for survival, the next few coming years will cover you with prosperity and ease by the grace of God as a result of what God has bestowed upon us in the way of bounties of our land, but the struggle from now on will not be any the less arduous than the struggle of the last 10 years. For prosperity brings its own problems and imposes on all of us the duty to face them and to find a solution to them in the best interests and welfare of all sections of the Libyan people. To reach this goal it is imperative for us to be armed with noble moral qualities and to follow with determination the laws of the Shari'ah. It is also true that pernicious results which prosperity brings in its trail are the love of wealth and engrossment in the pleasures of life and the show of pride and extravagance and an inclination towards comfort and slothfulness. All these are the causes of weakness and decline. I warn you to avoid them and let devotion to our religion, country and nation be our guide. I pray to God that He may bring happy returns of this day with His bounties, blessings, ease and peace.

" Peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you all ! IDRIS "

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على محمد رسوله الكريم خاتم النبيين

"Muhammad is . . . the Messenger of God and the Last of the Prophets . . ." — THE HOLY QUR'AN 33 : 40
"There will be no Prophet after me" — THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

VOL. 56 Nos. 8-9 **AUGUST — SEPTEMBER 1968 C.E.** **Jumada al-thaniyah—Rajab 1388 A.H.**

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW AND ARAB AFFAIRS has great pleasure in devoting the next few pages to a study of the Kingdom of Libya. The historical, social, economic, religious and other aspects of life in Libya are dealt with in articles written by experts on these subjects.

From time to time we have printed special articles on the nascent and progressing Islamic countries. The purpose throughout has been to acquaint the Muslims with the life, thought and problems of their fellow Muslims in other countries, and to familiarize the Muslims generally with their greater homeland, the Islamic world.

In the world of today, ripped as it is by the feuding between the two great political groups, the Islamic world stands as an entity capable of playing an important role in the future of mankind. The Muslim countries occupy vast, but what is more, strategic, areas of the globe, and they possess tremendous strength, both actual and potential, by virtue of the great numbers of the Muslims and the economic and strategic resources of their lands.

In the future of the world of Islam and the world as a whole, the Kingdom of Libya deserves special study and attention. This is a country which has suddenly come upon great wealth through the discovery of vast oil resources, and which has thereby assumed special importance for the oil-consuming countries of the Western hemisphere. But the significant fact about Libya is that, despite many temptations, it has managed to retain a meticulously independent attitude towards the Great Powers, and to avoid getting involved in any of their squabbles. It has thereby earned great respect and authority on the international diplomatic level.

Even more significant is the fact that Libya has been following from the very beginning an enlightened and honest policy regarding the utilization of its oil revenues. Successive governments have carried out very great reforms and changes, and the people of Libya have benefited at every level. Every penny of the oil money has been accounted for, and everything has been channelled into useful national projects, both short-term and long-term. And not only the people of Libya have benefited. Their Arab and Muslim brothers have been allowed a share in the riches of Libya, and the best example of this has been the generous assistance which Libya gave without hesitation, and continues to give, to the sister Arab countries affected by the Israeli aggression in June 1967. In this and other respects Libya has demonstrated compassion and solidarity with all the Arab and Muslim countries, and has shown that the future lay in solidarity, co-operation and co-ordination between the people of Libya and their Arab and Muslim brothers everywhere.

But perhaps the most important and meaningful aspect of life in modern Libya is the way in which this country has marched firmly and speedily on the path of modern progress and technology while loyally retaining its distinct identity as a Muslim country. Under the very wise and courageous leadership of His Majesty King Idris I, Libya has shown the world that Islam and progress go hand in hand, and that Islam is more capable of meeting the challenge of modern times.

It is for these weighty reasons that we believe that the brief study of modern Libya in the next few pages will make interesting and useful reading for both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Libya—A Paradise of Tourism

Cyrene — The Glory of Cyrenaica, Libya

Cyrene is the Rio de Janeiro of Libya

In Cyrene soil and stone speak of one of the world's most noble pasts

Greek and Roman ruins dating back to the seventh century B.C.

By KURT VORDERMAIER

APPROACH TO BENGHAZI

Preface

May this be a greeting to a country — and at the same time from a country — which finds itself on the threshold between old, dignified tradition, and modern, fast-lived " progress ". Of course, it all depends upon what one understands by " progress " — it probably means something different for each one of us.

May it be given to Cyrenaica, to mould and fuse these two factors into one, just as the Greek and Arab-Islamic elements were united to a beautiful harmony there. Then she will be able to look full of hope into the future. For then the future, her future, will be founded upon a solid basis of proven traditions.

It is not only the rich architectural remains — mainly mentioned in this article — that witness to the flower of Cyrenaican Art and Science during antiquity, but there are also the artistic coins and, above all, the famous scholars encircling her like an invisible garland: Aristippos, the founder of the famous school of Cyrenaican philosophers, Kallimachos, Eratosthenes and many more and also in the fifth century C.E. the Bishop Synesios.

* * *

The approach to Benghazi

Our steamer approaches Benghazi, capital of beautiful Cyrenaica. Over the glassy green of the waves, delicate as a mirage — a caressing of the expectant heart — a lovely coastline appears. Out of the veil of fine rain showers, flapping like tent cloths, again and again enshrouding the beach, the dark ribbon of feathery palms emerge. Over the straggling block of the white houses rise the powerful towers and minarets into the mother-of-pearl sky of a cool morning. And at the same time a veil also spreads over my eyes — a haze of tears, which well up in an emotion of happiness at seeing the land that I love like home.

Sure-footed as a sleep-walker, I passed through the great gate. Oh, Benghazi, how I have longed for you from the depths of my soul! How shall I describe the wonders I have seen?

Benghazi looks like Fairyland. Like a mirage, the white houses and the minarets float over the salt lakes, the Sebha. The town appears drawn upward, miraculously suspended, broad, weighty and yet freed of all gravity in the flickering sunlight. The main mosque is like a glorious edifice of heaven come down to earth. But this certain atmosphere, the delicate air, the magical cubes of the Arabian town seem to be spiritually lit from within; everything is permeated by the ambiguous, everything is alive with a mysterious transparence. Reality itself loses its objective nearness to life. The houses themselves seem scattered in the streets like so many blocks of stone, unfriendly, the fronts usually windowless. Outward appearance is neglected, because the Muslims' faith is in other things. Behind the word " Allah " lies hidden an undefeatable power, which I sensed with a shudder in this town.

* * *

As of old, there is the atmosphere, that mixture of incense and mystery, poetry, tradition and dream, in which the soul of North African Islam lies cradled. And especially in Cyrenaica Arab poetry and Greek measure are happily interwoven. It is a country which has in the same sparkling garb assembled the deepest perfumes of Africa, the Orient and the Mediterranean.

* * *

Tripoli is in reality no longer the head and heart of Libya, but rather the ante-chamber of Benghazi. Tripoli is the seat of the government, the upper and lower houses, but the King and the leading ministers reside in Benghazi and Tobruk respectively, where all important decisions are made. Benghazi has become a capital and is turned towards the streaming lights of the Sahara towards Kufrah, where the Sanúsí exercised their influence on the greatest Islamic movement of faith of the 19th century. A tremendous religious impulse was contained in that movement, and all that grew out of it descended like an avalanche over the North African

coast and repeated — on a small scale — what had previously shaken the whole earth : the birth of a total faith. Muhammad turned mainly against polytheism and Judaism, but between Christians and Muslims he saw a connection. We read in the Holy Qur'án (5 : 82) :

> *" The polytheists and Hebrews are our worst enemies, whereas the Christians are most prone to love us."*

One could say that the most radical Protestantism is to be found in Islam.

* * *

A peep into the past of Benghazi

But who would recognize Benghazi, when it appears in the glittering robes of Euhesperides of Berenice, as it was originally called. Its remains lie at the end of the Sebkha. This proves without doubt that in times of ancient Greece today's Lake of Selmani was navigable and was identical with the Lake Triton of the old geographers.

This settlement of Euhesperides was founded about 500 C.E. by the king's party (Arkesilaos IV), probably on an older native site. After the occupation of Cyrenaica by the Egyptian Ptolemy it was called Berenice in honour of the wife of Ptolemy III. By the way, the word " varnish " originates from the name of the town of Berenice, because it was there that this lacquer-like coating was discovered and first made. This is not to be wondered at, because the lentisk grows in wild profusion all over Cyrenaica, and it is the sap of this lentisk, the so-called mastic, which is obtained by making incisions in the trunk, which allow the sap to ooze out; it is used for the manufacture of fine lacquer. Mastic is also used in the preparation of putty, medicines and for incense. Already the ancient Egyptians and Carthaginians used mastic — probably from Cyrenaica — to embalm their dead. This kind of resin does not decay. There exists an Egyptian resin, found in a 2,200-year-old mummy, in which — until today — no essential change has been found. Remarkable is also the meaning which the word " mummy " has in Arabic : the Arabian *múmiyá* means resin.

* * *

An intoxication fills the whole land, even the very soil. It is everywhere. Benghazi is the gate to the underworld, but, where the portal to the Kingdom of Shadows lies, life must be especially near. And life here is obsessed by beauty, it is Pan and nymph. Yes, Cyrenaica is a wonderful land. You only have to keep still and the wonder will come.

Lethe lies a few miles outside the gates of Benghazi. There the earth opens its rocky jaws and issues forth a dull, earthy smell. Already the ancients knew that here lay the entrance of Hades, because there the earth caves in, where the underground waters of Lethe are troubled. A wave of indescribable scent meets one — a mixture or aroma, earth and the dull sound of water.

The mystery of the underworld is that one can enter everywhere. A slight change and the space wherein I breathe is not the same — the ground on which I walk has lost its reality, the windows through which I look have become blind.

When we came out it was nearly night, cool air came up from the ground but hardly stirred the candle flames. We stood for a moment, lights in hand, before we extinguished them. A faint glow was still resting on the slope opposite. One could see but little and the scent was the strongest now and the wild breath of the mint that was wafted over us.

* * *

CYRENE

In the meantime I have left Benghazi behind on my pilgrimage to Cyrene. Justinian already mentioned the walls of Tocra, the ancient Taucheira-Arsinoe of the old Pentapolis (the land of the five cities) of Cyrenaica. Now they gleam fiery red from the sea — like a child's toy, neat and beautifully kept — a little Rothenburg. The walls are set in a square about six hundred and fifty yards long each side, pretty towers strengthening the angles. A serene melancholy lies over the wall. The red dust must surely have been put down on this shore by a truly divine touch of its Creator, and I sensed the wonder of this coast — its ideal uniqueness. Yes, there are landscapes that speak to us like men, and sometimes we feel the breath of Paradise in some corner of the earth. And such a spot is this blessed coast between Benghazi and Derna. It is the coast where I could die, like the old Egyptians passed over in the face of the Libyan desert, the Western Shore.

* * *

Behind Tocra the mountain ridges of Cyrenaica rise, and it is the rhythm of these ridges with which Herodotus preludes his classic description of Cyrenaica. For this coast is like a Daktylos of the earth — rising in three powerful steps out of the Mediterranean, losing itself in the distant sands of faraway Sudan.

Cyrenaica is classical form fulfilled, its mountain metric measure. The Hellenes were drawn by its rhythmical beauty, a great vision led them into the loveliness of the ideal land of their dreams. It is the light of Hellas which is poured out over land and sea. Earth itself seems to play in with the poetic harmony of this classic landscape. The indescribable, the infinite resounds in form and colour, in quiet and silence, and this silence takes part in the music of the spheres. Eyes filled with joy of the world can still perceive what is holy, what is of the world is not yet separated from what is holy.

The Cyrenaican Jabal, land of grand beauties and verdant valleys, reminding one so strongly of classic Greece, experienced a unique enrichment of outlook and expression through the influx of the Muslim population; hardly anywhere else can one find such a harmony of proud austerity and innocent serenity.

Sheep in olive groves; dateless and idyllic, such scenes recall all literature's debt to the bards of ancient Greece who first glorified pastoral life.

Towards the south spreads the great mystery of the Cyrenaican pastures of Asphodel—Kufrah and Tibesti—a stretch of land imbued with the breath of the magical and mysterious. East to west across Cyrenaica where — in the haze of the shimmering heat — the steppe meets the rocky desert, stretches a chain of oases, a continuation of those across Tripolitania, each with wells and palms and its mud-walled villages. Ancient writers referred to these oases (of Augila) as " The Islands of the Blest " (Elysium).

That is Cyrenaica, the land of Asphodel, where the traces of Berenice are perceptible even in our modern materialistic days in the shape of varnish. Time becomes timeless and timelessness becomes time, the spheres resound, solemnity fills the quiet space. Along the shores of Lethe murmur the delightful gardens of the Hesperides. Forms and shapes are

astir around us, which in these days only find their place in the dusty volumes of history, in the abstract and dry knowledge of the sagas and legends of the ancients. Here in Cyrenaica they are put under a spell, here a world becomes apparent again that has long since disappeared.

Here in heroic Cyrenaica they come to life again as in a mirror, just as even after thousands of years the light of long extinct stars still reaches us out of infinite space. You only need ears to hear and eyes to see. Though the riders of the Apocalypse storm through our time, the disenchantment has not become final. Islam has saved the posey; but it needs

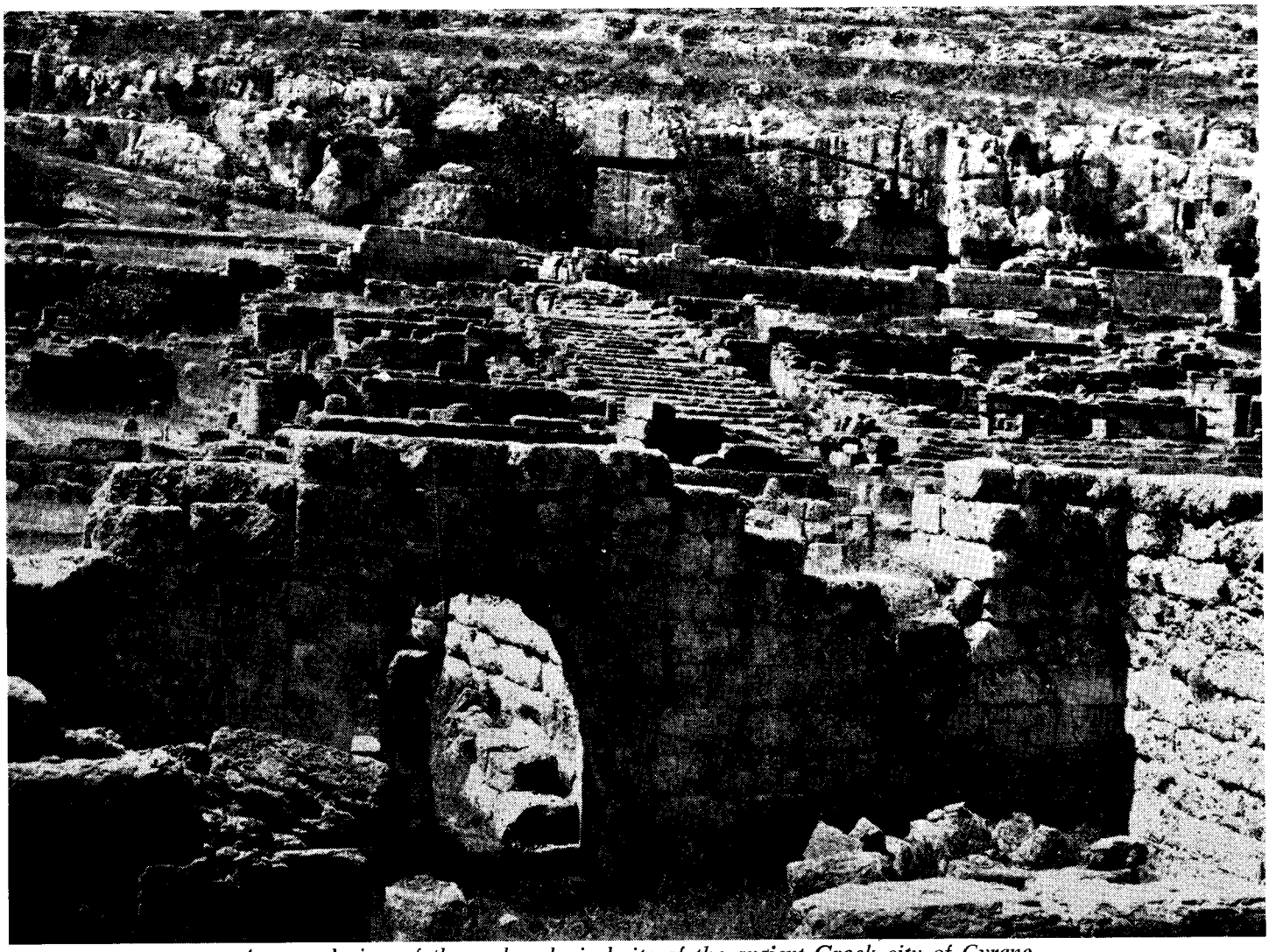
scrubby bushes, pallid through lack of chlorophyl, border the way — a track in the outer court of the desert, recognisable by the imprints of the pads of camels.

* * *

A description of modern Libya in the literature of the ancients

The ancients made a difference between the countries of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Tripolitania was first a province of the Phoenicians, then of the Carthaginians, and finally of Rome. Cyrenaica, on the other hand, is a creation of the Greeks. The ruins and landscape of Cyrenaica remind one

CYRENE



A general view of the archaeological site of the ancient Greek city of Cyrene.

a longing for solitude, a certain emotional attitude which invites one to linger — also in Cyrenaica. Gaze and wonder! There is so much to gaze and wonder at!

The scent of juniper and rosemary is wafted by the light north wind. Flames leap on the earth and the air is filled with the redolence of the cedar wood faggots. From the low black tents of the Bedouin, fires flicker and there is a gentle tinkle of a silver bracelet. In the distance women in their coloured gowns sway like tulips swept by a gentle evening breeze as they wend their way homeward. Through the grey-green wasteland the winding road leads into the valley,

of Greece and although the Romans finally conquered the land, their passage is not so noticeable here as it is in the country of Tripolitania in Sabratha and Leptis Magna. Between the two countries lies the mighty desert of Syrtica, " populated " only by the skeletons of goats and camels.

Here the Fascists built the concrete and marble structure of the " Arch of Philaeni ". This monument was erected on the spot on which the brothers Philaeni, two athletes of old, had fixed for Rome the frontier of Tripolitania. It had been previously agreed that a stone should be put up to mark the frontier, where the Greek runners from Cyrene and the

Roman runners from Sabratha should meet. One is tempted to sigh " Happy times " when arguments over a frontier could be decided by a race. But this didn't prevent the Greeks and the Romans from quarrelling either. They accused each other of fraud. The brothers Philaeni sacrificed their lives to prove their honesty. Since then the frontier has remained unchanged.

What the Thermopylae are for the Greeks, are the laurel groves of Wadi al-Kuf for Cyrenaica. There the Arabs of Cyrenaica fought their epic battles of the 1920's with the Italian invaders. And then there is Tobruk, with its desert of sand and stone, the antique Antipyrgos, the sublime symbol of the North African campaign of 1940/42. " Wanderer (when you come to Sparta) take from us (Lacedemon's citizens) the message, we lie in the grave faithful to our law."

* * *

Beauty and glory flooded Cyrene's holy and inviolate ground in antiquity

Now the red-letter day of my journey starts. Shortly after the crossing where the road branches to Cyrene, I decided to continue my pilgrimage humbly on foot. Here haunted fields are overgrown with glowing red poppies. There are ash grey walls amongst the grasses, blocks emerge from the earth — the colossal remains of a temple. The powerful scenery of Cyrene passes by — witness of lost relics. But I never found the Lotus, described by Cella, and the Silphium, too, was hidden like the blue flower of the romantics.

As I approached Cyrene I saw a fragment of a rainbow in the east, reminding me of the multi-coloured variation of Greek mythology. The discipline of their art set in the frame-work of the chaste serenity of the muses became alive. The sound of an Aeolian harp seemed to hang lost in the crystal blue air. Heavy was the scent of thyme drugging the senses — it was like a narcotic.

This lovely place, connected with so many sagas, legends and the splendour of the antique, is situated on a lovely prominence falling almost steeply towards the distant sapphire sea. Its beauty consists not only in the azure sky, its radiant sunshine and its spring-like climate, but also in the glory of its landscape and especially in the magic of its antique monuments; the maze of shattered arches, temples and basilicas includes parts of structures of many centuries.

Beauty and glory flooded Cyrene's holy and inviolate ground in antiquity, dedicated to the worship of the gods and to the high ideals of humanity. Here soil and stone speak of one of the world's most noble pasts. Loveliest of places it was for the ancient Greeks in Africa; enchanting peregrination it is for today's visitor.

The meeting with this place is both moving and stirring. In awe and trembling one senses the spiritual and emotional vacuum which threatens modern man in his life without devotion and humility before the highest and eternally incomprehensible.

* * *

Cyrene : its produce and trade with the outside world

About 2,600 years ago, under the leadership of noble Battus, Greek colonists founded on this now ruin-strewn patch of ground the city of Cyrene. Taking advantage of the good location, which combines a rich, tillable soil, magnificent scenery and a sound strategic and commercial position, the early settlers established their city beside the fountain of Apollo, the most important spring on the face of the Cyrenaican plateau.

Ships from every land now came into Apollonia, the port of Cyrene. They came from Greece, Asia Minor and Crete, from the isles of the Aegean and from the Black Sea, from Tyre and Sidon and from the delta towns of the Nile, from Italy, Sicily and other towns of the Western Mediterranean, from which a splendid highway led up to Cyrene.

A local source of special wealth lay in the medicinal plants native to the plateau on which Cyrene stands. Chief among these was the silphium, found in no other land. It became so valuable that coins minted in Cyrene bore a design of the king watching men weigh this precious plant. Never in the history of mankind has there been a medicinal plant of such miraculous renown.

It was said to cure every ailment, from croup to the wounds made by the merciless whippings of that day. It was of special value as an antidote for the sting of poisonous snakes and the bite of mad dogs, and was highly prized as a condiment and a drug. Root, stem and fruit were utilized.

As the fame of silphium spread, its price soared. To free themselves of the enormous taxes placed on it by the Romans, the natives of Cyrene radically destroyed the plants. Ever since then it has been extinct.

Cyrene was not only one of the most flourishing towns of the Greek colonies, but also the seat of a great school of medicine and philosophy. (It is significant that situated near today's settlement of Beida was the site of the Sanctuary of Aesculapius.) Physicians, poets and writers of note were born here, among them Eratosthenes, father of geography, Aristippos, Kallimachos, Korneades and Simon of Cyrene, who carried the cross of Jesus Christ.

Many of the victors in the Olympic Games came from Cyrene, and its inhabitants also acquired fame as charioteers. Many of the lions used in the arenas of Rome were brought from the Cyrenaican hinterland.

Unlike on many other famous sites, here one city has not been built upon another, but nature has covered, through the years, with vegetation and earth, " the glory that was Greece ". In contrast to Leptis Magna and Sabratha, Cyrene is not an entirely " dead city ". The thousands of gallons of water which flow daily from Apollo's Fountain will always make this hilltop village a place of settlement; the Arab town of Shahat is the marketing centre of this neighbourhood. The ancient city and its modern counterpart, Shahhat, exist peacefully side by side and the marble columns of the ancient Roman market mark the beginning of the modern "*súq*". This juxtaposition of yesterday and today enhances rather than reduces the charm of Cyrene.

Here among cypress, juniper and ilex, in chasms where springs gush from the sides of terraced hills and oleanders and myrtles bloom, we come to understand why the ancient Greek colonists considered this their Promised Land. In springtime an orange carpet of marigolds covers the meadows, while sweet briar, honeysuckle and convolvulus run riot on the hill.

High above in the cobalt sky are banked row upon row of those great gleaming white cumulus clouds, which add to the glory of the country. Nowhere else do they appear so impressive and perfect as above Cyrenaica.

* * *

In 1913 a superb marble figure finer than the Venus de Milo was found in Cyrene

In December 1913 there were three nights of heavy

storms. Much soil was washed away from the surrounding hillsides. One morning, when the skies had cleared, there was found exposed an ancient bath, up to then hidden from sight, and there rose, not from the sea but from Mother Earth this time, a fair Aphrodite. Her flawless body was intact but the head, unfortunately, was missing. An unknown sculptor of the antique had created this most beautiful of all Venuses, which many authorities on classic art consider finer than the Venus de Milo. This superb marble figure is now in a Roman art gallery, where it rediscloses its beauty to the world, a perfect representation of the ideal youthful body. How well can one, in the face of such overpowering beauty, understand the fable of the sculptor Pygmalion, who was gripped by a glowing passion for his statue of a maiden which Aphrodite, in answer to his imploring, brought to life and whom he finally made his wife.

It is well possible that one day in the course of excavations in and around Cyrene that a dream city of stone and marble may emerge. Only he who has wandered through the Decumano, past the old markets, basilicas, Fora, the Agora and Palaestra, can conceive what secrets may still be hidden in this historical soil.

This town was the Parthenon of Africa, here flowed the Castalia of Cyrenaica and the Delphic Oracle had called Hellas to settlement of the Gardens of the Hesperides. Here around Cyrene they had looked for them, for the long-lost happiness of man. Here they felt their Promised Land and under their very feet, and they were filled with an unheard of, a matchless, hope. They sensed that man in the depth of his being is hope, only hope.

* * *

The marble monuments of Cyrene proclaim " The Glory that was Greece "

The marble of the Thermes, the reflecting waters of the Apollonian Sanctuaries, the little temples of Persephone and Hades, the glowing, majestic Propylaea, the temples of Artemis, Hecate and the Dioscuri rise like a sea of white foam and — glorified into a symphony of glittering marble — they sweep in great waves of music into the valley, soaring again in full chords. At no spot in all this wide, wide world can we more fittingly and more feelingly exclaim : " The Glory that was Greece ! "

A gentle zephyr lulls the senses and the smile of "Cyrene" trembles in space. In and around the ruins the wild fennel runs riot, the deep yellow of its blossoms blazing amongst the other flowers like the effulgent sun in the firmament.

The ancient town is situated at the summit of the two thousand feet mountain. The centre, the Agora, sweeps from the plateau towards the south. To the north-west looms the Acropolis, where the governors of the Ptolemies had their residence. At the foot of the Acropolis a huge terrace is cut into the hillside. It is the sanctuary of Apollo, the ancient fountain head where the god had taken abode as he had done in the mountains of Delphi.

Cyrene is the Rio de Janeiro of Libya. As the statue of Jesus Christ rises gigantically above Rio, so rose the Sanctuary of Apollo above Cyrene.

Down below one could discern the shimmer of long rows of oleasters as though of silver long buried in the earth. The bed of a wadi was wending its way among a mass of boulders rolled down from the ridge — like a battlefield of

A Greek statue discovered recently at Shahhat, near Beida.

Cyclops. One could sense the presence of long lost gods. Only the name had remained, which the town had given to the whole country and the longing of all those who saw the ruins.

* * *

A reverie while at Cyrene

I rest my notebook on my knees and write off the present. Procession after procession of white robed figures stream out of the Necropolis, filling the seats of the theatre. Processions pass through the valley, wave upon wave, as though gigantic layers of mist were creeping over the ground. I did not know what they were seeking in the theatre, these dead of Cyrene. Was it drama, mimes or wild beasts rending the Libyan prisoners, the Garamantes ? There was no movement in this assembly of spirits, but the air was disturbed, as by the sound of many voices. I leaned back in my seat like one who is a stranger — not even suffered as a guest. Below me the land swept in waves to the sea. Heather, broom, privet and juniper, groves of oak, cherry and olive — the air was aglow with their glorious colour — the full chords of green and gold flaming in the light, chiming in jubilant finale over Cyrenaica. And, opposite, Shahat is resting like a white dove, yea and wise Cyrene is leaning on the temple of the Nile. In the distance, near Apollonia, gleaming spots of colour glow on the purple palette of the Mediterranean.

And now the sky seems all roses. Roses are falling everywhere : blue roses, pink ones, white ones, roses with no colour. One might say that the sky is dissolving in roses. Where does all this tender flora come from, for I myself do not know its source, which each day softens the landscape and leaves it sweetly rosy, white and blue — more roses, more roses — like a painting by Fra Angelico, he who used to paint glory on his knees? It might be thought that roses are being thrown down

from the seven heavens of Paradise. As in a warm and vaguely coloured snowfall, the roses fall on Cyrene and its surroundings. Heaven is playing out the climax of the great spectacle, in salvo after salvo of changing colour.

A floral fragrance begins to pervade the land. One obtains the impression of being in a temple in which liberal quantities of incense are being offered amid a profusion of flowers. Wherever one goes, one is fascinated by the changing pattern of perfume, from rose to jasmine and then to rosemary and mimosa, yet all against a background of heavy thyme.

The soul rises to the stars, already kindled by a roseate sky. Nymphs pour nectar in golden cups, the Graces are dancing, the Muses sing. Heaven and earth, mortals and immortals, all take part in the blissful joy. The earth-goddess holds the cornucopia, emblem of abundance.

Is there a land so full of plenty and so ravishingly beautiful, and who would not be eager to till such soil, so fertile, so charming, so gracious and grateful ?

The waving barley of al-Merg, the busy bees of Derna singing Hyblaean honey into the combs, the luscious grapes of Cyrene district so sure to bring good cheer, and the seasoning dates of Benghazi.

Dream, you blessed shores, dream your age-old dreams, sing you shepherds your evening songs of longing. Pan, as of old, hides in the shrubs, listening; the wind carries sweetest fragrance, from the lemon-grove the notes of a nightingale linger over the slightly ruffled waters of the bay. Far from all noisy gaiety this beauty fills the soul with the sweet melancholy of a fading in the middle of the light.

The camera lay forgotten behind a rock, the watch had stopped. Coincidence? I do not know. Up here all hands point to eternity. The magic of Cyrene is unbroken. Battered, but still splendid in old age, centuries of sun have ripened the tawny glory of the columns, friezes and reliefs. One cannot capture it with rangefinder and exposure meter. There is still mystery in Cyrene, in the zephyr caressing the broken columns, in the whisper of the cypresses pointing towards the little clouds. That which remained proves the glory that was ! And in the face of this sanctuary the question might well come to the pilgrim, what burdens, fears and needs are in store for us in the lap of time ? In these days when man has never been so close to the stars — or to his own destruction. And still Cyrene gives the answer, not by the mouth of an oracle, but by its landscape. And it proclaims peace, peace, if we really want it, from the bottom of our hearts. Peace, if at long last the divine triumphs over the all too earthly.

The meeting with Cyrene offers more to man than just the sight of ruins. Even today Cyrene offers more to man than just the sight of ruins. Even today Cyrene means certainty ! We have only to be men of goodwill.

Sheet lightning flashes green and yellow on the horizon. In the distance the long train of a camel-caravan dumbly passes by, like the march of time into eternity. The plaintive chant of the Muezzin sounds from the pointed minaret of the nearby Mosque of Shahhat like the evensong of a shepherd from Asia. On the furrowed street a man with a red fez bows towards the east, absorbed in prayer and devotion. All the poesy of wells, all the harmony of fountains is awakened at the sight of this praying Muslim. Most men of our European society are no longer capable of a concentration like this. One can understand that one single moment can change the praying man into a hero. He has his goal before his eyes, he has so much strength to uplift his soul, independent of all the obstacles of his surroundings !

For quite a while the sound of the caravan bells is in the air, becoming fainter and fainter, until at last it fades away.

The dying sun sends forth its last rays. Wild doves coo their love-song from the nearby cypress grove. Already sounds of a choir of nightingales meet the scent-laden evening from their abode in the flaming blossoms of the rose-bay near the little pomegranate and myrtle gardens. It is a symphony of colour, perfume and birdsong.

There is a flicker of light over the jade-green mountain-range. The whole land of Cyrene between Apollonia and the district of the temple was visible. It lay below us like a map. It was not Africa, it was part of Hellas, it was land that man had mastered and put under his discipline, stretching for miles towards the sea at the foot of the steeply descending mountain. Two mountain walls meeting in a right angle form a step and upon this Cyrene rests above the abyss, the district sacred to Apollo. In a last farewell the rays of the sun gild the ruins. Clouds break over the valley. The shadows of Olympus roll over the foaming crests of Apollonia. From the distance came the roar of the breakers, sad and low, like the monotonous sounds of an organ chanting again and again the low unchanging melody of a funeral march. The sea lay in wait with its fearsome depths, rocky abysses, which brought the chained Prometheus to the shuddering mind.

The sun bowed low and through the crimson veil once more the precious clarity of the sky was seen, as it changed to a soft green till the sun at last disappeared behind the sands of the desert, like a red hot ball of iron hammered out on an anvil. And again the call of the Muezzin rang out into the evening twilight and into the incomparable beauty of the approaching night, proclaiming the infinite greatness of Islam.

* * *

The moonlit night was shot with blue and mauve flames. The sky was radiant. Though it was dark, a backcloth for the white gleaming stars swirling upon it, it was yet radiant. It was like a velvet curtain covering the immense light, as though the glittering stars were but rents through which the indescribable brightness shone. Never had I seen the sky as in that night, so radiant, so sparkling, in spite of its steel blue hardness, so overpowering and streaming. The light seemed to pour forth, veiled from the moon, sparkling from the stars, this light which seemed to burn in secret empyreal depths. Stars sang ; and then a falling star brushed " Berenice's Hair ".

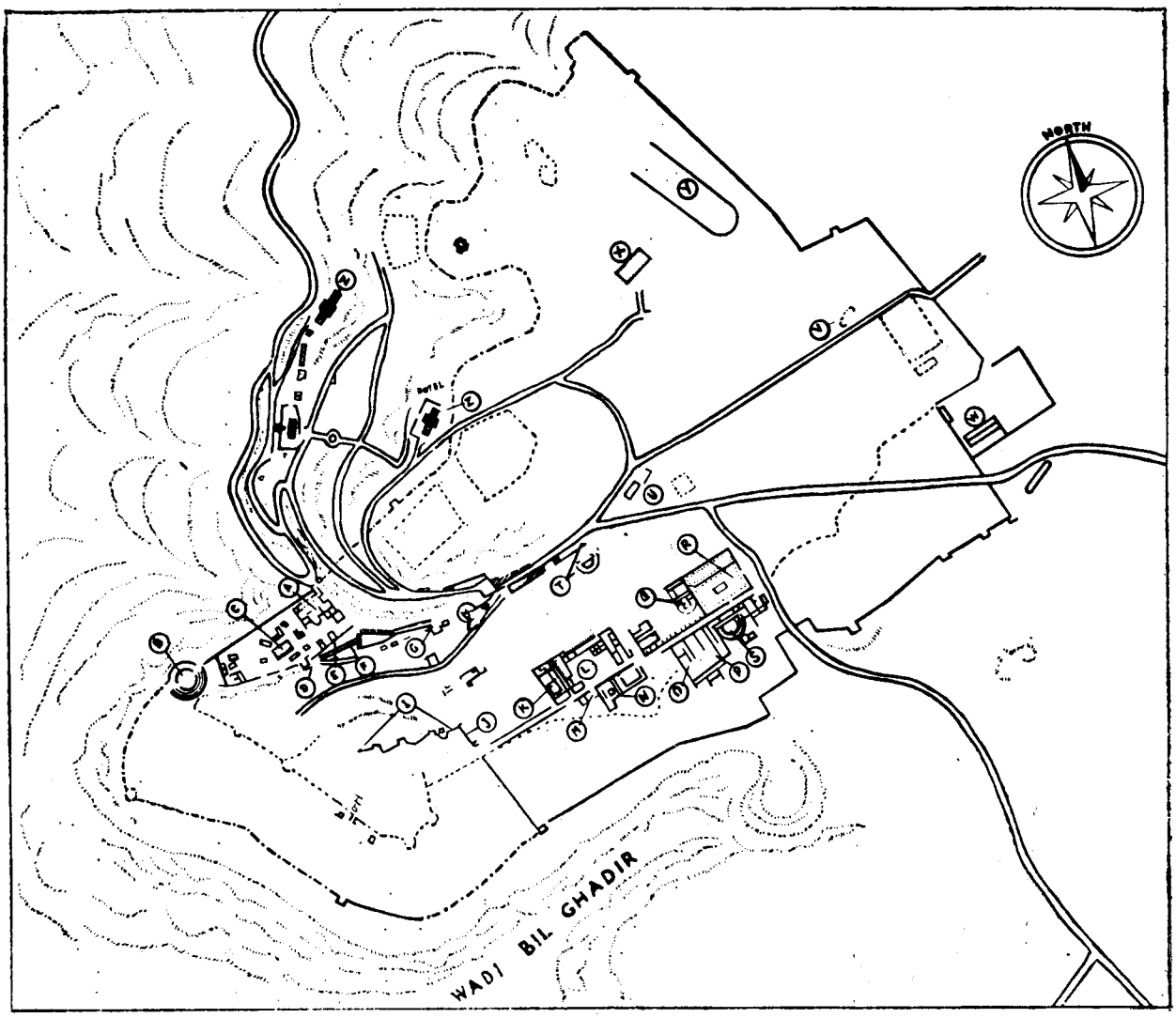
As the light of morning dawned — a veritable " twilight of gods " — and the hordes of night fled, I bid my final farewell to fadeless Cyrene and its valley, with its mulberry and fig trees and vineyards reaching down to the sea.

* * *

A strange greyness still lies over the landscape, a fading last star, but then the heralds of light ride in from the east. Like little boats, the clouds float in the silky green ocean of light. Again and again new colours are spread in a wonderful array. Carpets of royal splendour ! O Cyrene — adorned with everlasting roses from Elysium ! Thou art a symbol of the salute of the gods to the sublime spirit of man ! Glowing scarlet flags are hoisted and suddenly he himself appears, the source of all life on earth : the sun !

I heard the surf beating the Libyan shore, smelled the juniper and rosemary of the hills where old Cyrene lies, and rode through the steppe, where the " pad, pad " of camels' feet breaks the silence of the ocean of sand.

A PLAN OF THE SANCTUARY OF APOLLO AT CYRENE
(dating back to the Seventh Century B.C.)



KEY TO PLAN

(A) The Roman Baths, now containing a small gallery of ancient sculpture. The Baths were constructed under the Emperor Trajan, and repaired under Hadrian. They were completely rebuilt in the fifth century C.E. on a smaller scale.

(B) The Greek Theatre, later converted into a Roman Amphitheatre and used for gladiatorial displays.

(C) The Temple of Apollo, the most ancient and most famous of Cyrene's temples. First constructed in the seventh century B.C., and later rebuilt on several occasions. The columns standing today are Roman.

(D) The fountain of Apollo. The waters flow from a gallery, 200 metres long, in the heart of the mountain:

(E) The Strategheion (building of the Greek generals). Rebuilt under Tiberius, whose statue it contains. Restored and roofed in modern times.

(F) The " New Fountain " and water-troughs. Beside it ran the main street of Cyrene connecting the Sanctuary with the centre of the city.

(G) The Ritual Baths. These subterranean chambers of the Greek period lie behind the high Roman wall.

(H) The Triumphal Arch of Marcus Aurelius, spanning the main street.

(I) The walls of the Acropolis, with a small sanctuary of Isis built up against them.

(J) The Acropolis, gateway, rebuilt in the early Roman period.

(K) The Gymnasium.

(L) The Greek Agora, containing the circular tomb of Battus, founder of the city, and the Naval Monument.

(M) Temple of Jupiter (138 C.E.). The great statue of Jupiter found here is in the main Sculpture Museum.

(N) Municipal buildings.

(O) The Christian House, occupied by Hesychius, a friend of Bishop Synesius. It contains interesting mosaic and marble pavements (*c.* 400 C.E.).

(P) The " House of Jason Magnus ", the city residence of a wealthy Cyrenean family of the earlier Roman period. Fine marble and mosaic floors.

(Q) The Roman Theatre.

(R) The Roman Forum or " Caesareum ", converted into a fortress in the later days of Cyrene. A Basilica or lawcourt adjoins it.

(S) A building of theatre type, probably the assembly-place of the city council.

(T) The Roman Market-place and Propylaeum of Septimus Severus. A small theatre was built on its ruins after the earthquake of 346 C.E.

(U) The centre of the Roman city, not yet excavated. The standing columns lined the main street.

(V) The Christian Cathedral, of the fifth century C.E., recently excavated.

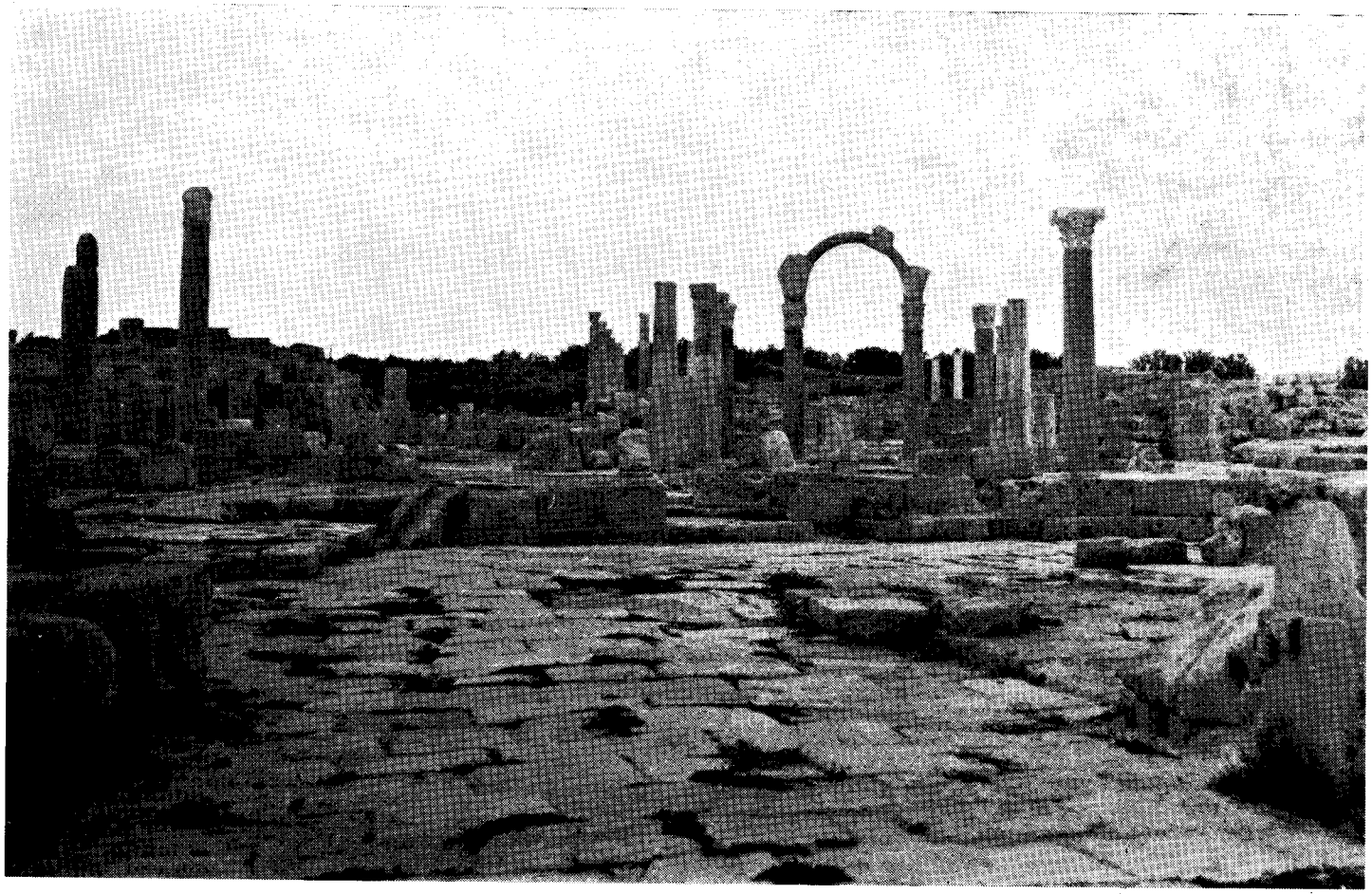
(W) The Water-cisterns.

(X) The Temple of Zeus (6th century B.C.), the largest of the Greek temples. Here was found the famous Head of Zeus, now in the Sculpture Museum.

(Y) The Circus or Hippodrome, used for chariot races.

(Z) The Cyrene Hotel and stairway leading to the main Museums.

SABRATHA — A MARK OF HISTORY IN LIBYA



Roman ruins at Sabratha, 40 miles west of Tripoli. They are a major tourist attraction and are considered to be one of the best preserved settlements and the mosaics discovered there rank with the best found in other ancient cities along the Mediterranean.

The Marks of History on the Arts and Culture of Libya

Greek, Roman and Arab-Islamic Influences

"History acquires meaning and objectivity only when it establishes a coherent relation between past and future."

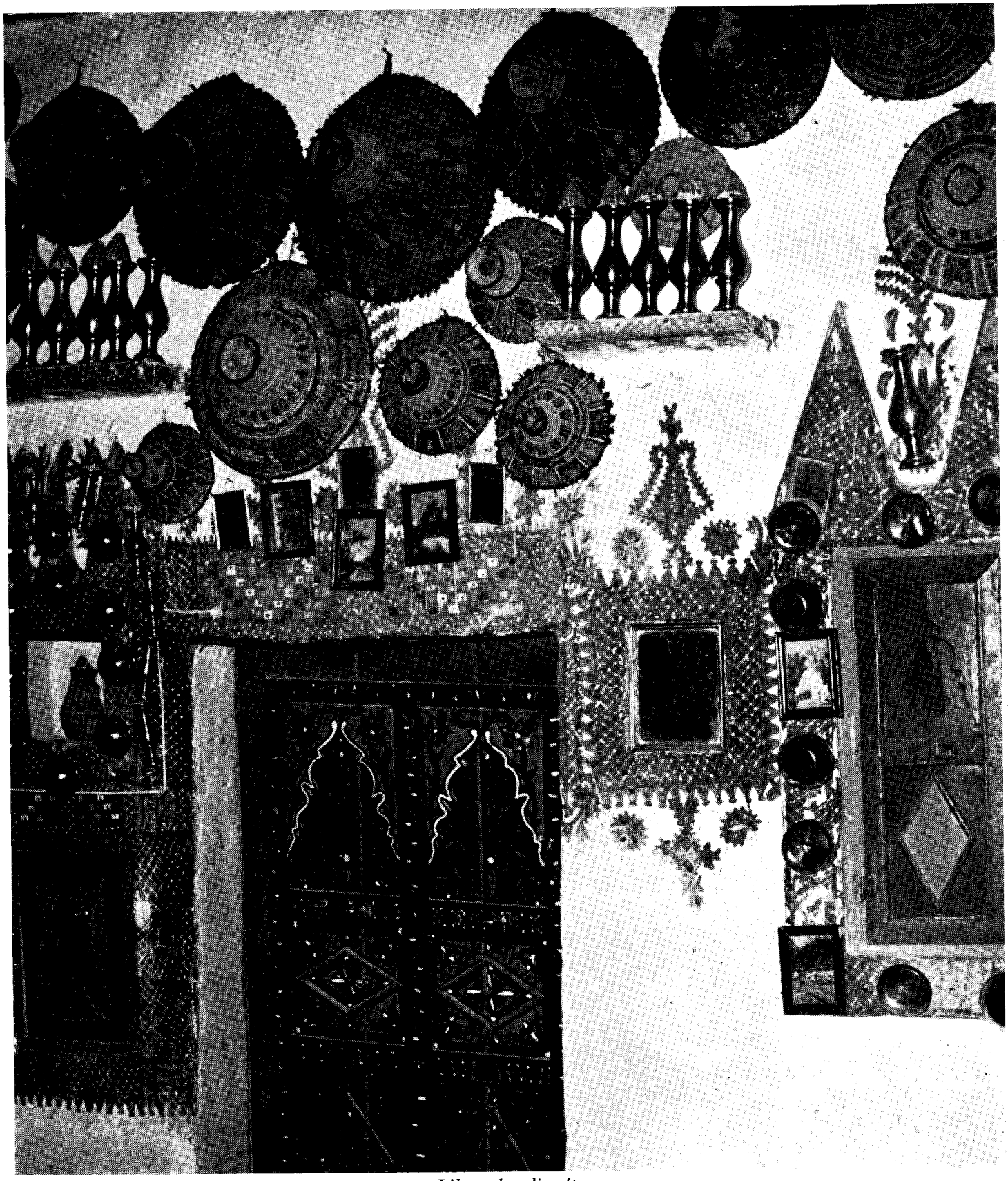
The origin of the name of Libya

A drawing, deep in the Sahara (The Desert), cut thousands of years ago into the ledge of a cliff . . . cave-dwellings and monuments in continuous array . . . forts, cities, tombs and irrigation systems—these are a part of the historical heritage of Libya. Ten thousand years of Man's history is unfolded before us by these relics—years in which the seeds of civilization were planted, to grow with the passing of time in order to give the people of Libya their heritage of Art and Culture.

The name Libya itself dates back to many thousands of years when the area west of the Nile was settled by the tribes of Rebu (Libu), Tehenu and Mishawash. It is supposedly derived from the names of these ancient tribes who lived in Cyrenaica. The name also appears in ancient Egyptian inscriptions dating back to the 30th century B.C., and especially in the inscriptions belonging to the period of the 18th dynasty which indicate, quite definitely, that the land west of the Nile was occupied by the aforementioned tribes.

When the Greeks conquered the eastern part of North Libya, they called the area surrounding their territory by the name of Libya. However, according to a Greek story, the name derived from a native lady who ruled the country in ancient times.

The ARTS and CULTURE



Libyan handicrafts.

Leptis Magna, a mark of history in Libya

Some thousands of years ago, prehistoric artists cut the walls of cliffs with flints and produced their curious records of a world that has disappeared—a world in which there existed herds of tropical beasts which ceased to exist in this terrain for generations. These drawings are a depiction of Nature as it was lived, in a period covering approximately 4,000 years of history—from about 5,000 B.C. up to the time when North Africa was first linked with the "civilized" world (Bronze Age) by Phoenician traders seeking shelter from the storms of the Mediterranean. This was the beginning of Art in Libya, which progressed with time and with the infiltration of different civilizations into the country.

Phoenicians in Tripolitania at about 700 B.C.

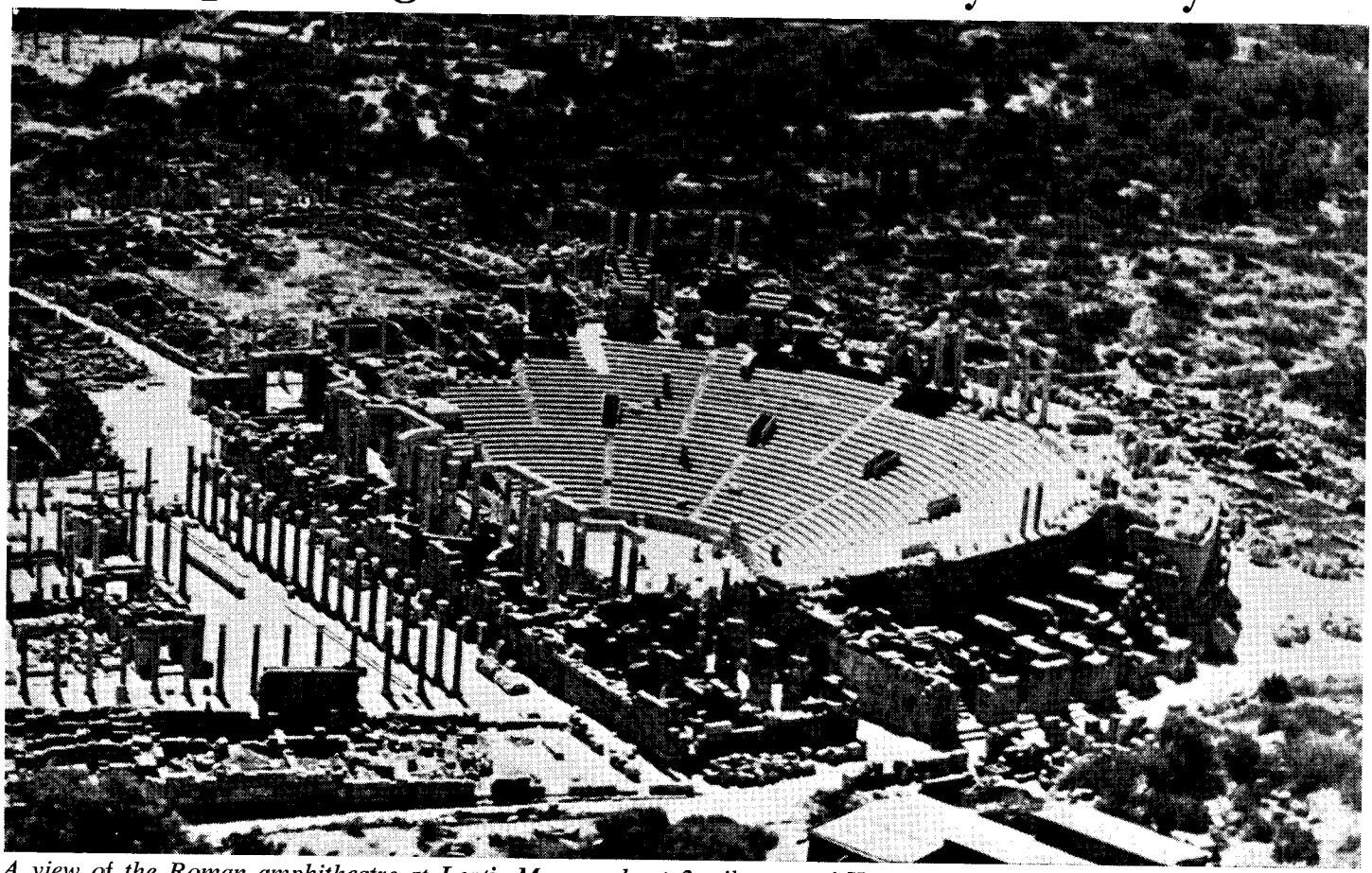
Phoenician Carthage colonised Tripolitania—the land of three cities—about 700 B.C. The three ancient cities founded by the Phoenicians were known as Sabratha, Oea (now known as Tripoli), and Leptis Magna. These trading posts later became "emporia" to guarantee the security of the fertile coast. During the ensuing years the language, culture and administration of the three cities was entirely Phoenician. The land around these cities was used extensively for agriculture and the growing of olives and vines. The three cities were ports from which the produce, brought by caravans from Equatorial Africa, was exported, ensuring the prosperity of the population. Considerable progress was made by Libyan society under the influence of the Phoenicians, especially along the coast.

Greeks in Cyrenaica at about 631 B.C.

At about the same time (approximately 631 B.C.) Cyrenaica was occupied by the Dorian Greeks, who are supposed to have founded Cyrene in the same year. In due course of time they built Euesperides (eventually to become the present-day Benghazi), or Barce along with its port of Teucheira, and Apollonia. These five cities flourished commercially and culturally and became a part of the empire of Alexander the Great. They passed into the hands of his successors, the Ptolemies, in 320 B.C. and in 246 B.C. they were even more securely bound to the Ptolemies by the marriage of Queen Berenice to Ptolemy III. The father of this Queen had made himself the independent ruler of Cyrenaica. At this time Cyrene itself was an architectural jewel wherein cultural life flourished. It is said that the mathematician Theodorus taught in this city and that the School of Philosophy, which was inspired by Aristippus, was the seat of learning for over a century. Lately excavations have revealed admirable examples of houses, temples, baths, theatres, forums, triumphal arches and amphitheatres.

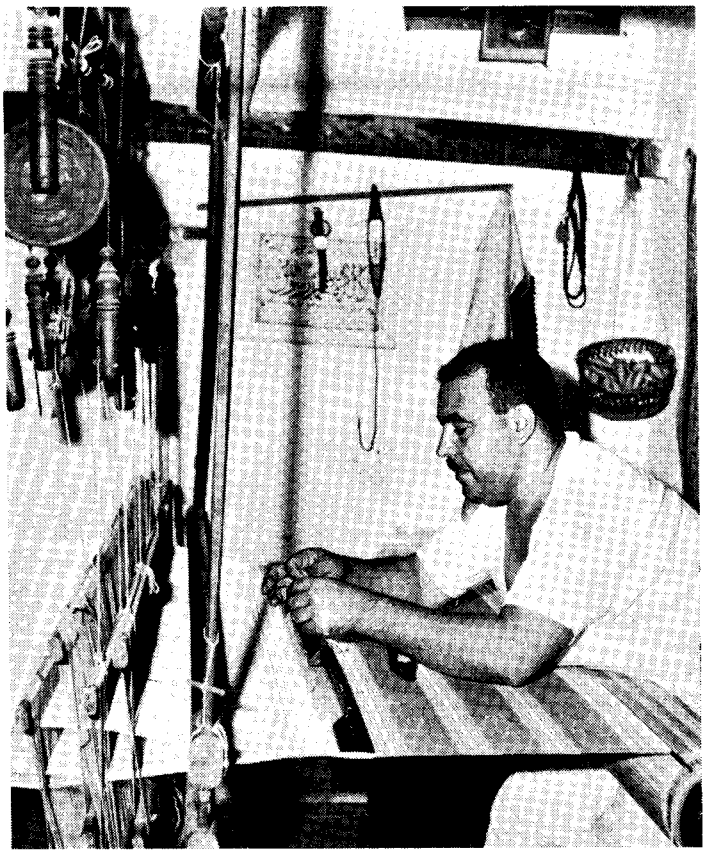
The Roman occupation of Libya in about the first century B.C.

After a considerable length of time both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica came under the domination of Rome. Tripoli-

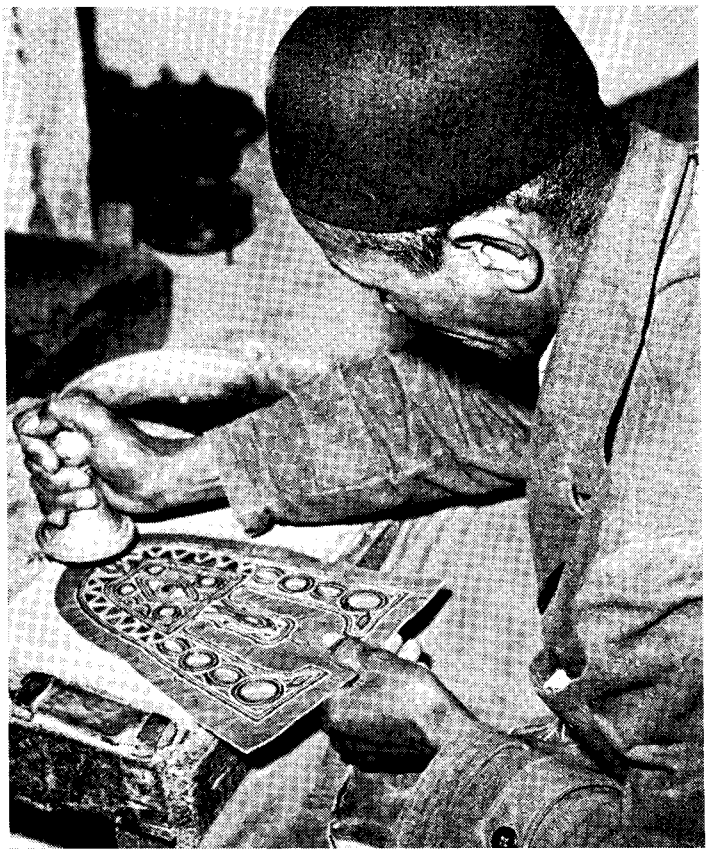


A view of the Roman amphitheatre at Leptis Magna, about 2 miles east of Homs and 70 miles from Tripoli. Marble pillars from Leptis and priceless statues were removed by Louis XIV to grace his palace at Versailles, France, and a number of other pieces were removed to England by order of King George IV.

The ARTS and CULTURE



A woollen rug being woven on the traditional loom.



A Libyan artisan at work.

Young Libyan girls at needlework.

The ARTS and CULTURE

A customer interested in the Libyan craftsmanship.

The Darghut Mosque — one of the ancient and famous mosques at Tripoli. It was built by the Turkish Admiral Darghut Pasha, who seized Tripoli from the Knights of St. John of Malta in 1551 C.E.

tania was absorbed gradually following the destruction of Carthage in the second Punic war and Cyrenaica, according to the will of Ptolemy Apion, the ruler of Cyrene in 96 B.C., was left to Rome. Both were, at the beginning, administered separately—Tripolitania becoming the province of Africa Nova and Cyrenaica being joined, administratively, to Crete.

The Romans remained in occupation of Libya for almost five centuries and in this period, brought to the country both material and cultural prosperity. Vast tracts of land were brought under cultivation with the help of irrigation systems and many buildings were constructed. The Romans, in 20 B.C., sent an expedition led by the Governor Cornelius Balbus to the land of the Garamantes (Fezzan) far to the south —in fact they went to places even farther south which were not seen again by Europeans until the nineteenth century. The Roman garrisons of that period erected many fortifications, some of which are still standing in mute testimony to the deep penetration by the Romans into the south. One of the loneliest man-made habitations in the Sahara—a fortress-like building supposedly built by Roman garrisons is known as Kasr Mara, and is marked on the World Aeronautical Chart by a small square and the legendary "ruins" beside it. In this area the World Aeronautical Chart depicts nothing but approximately 25,000 square miles of uninhabited and arid desert!

Of the present-day three regions in Libya—Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and the Fezzan—the first two were an integral part of the Roman state, while the Fezzan, lying in the south, was subjected only to the symbolic authority of Rome and an occasional show of force.

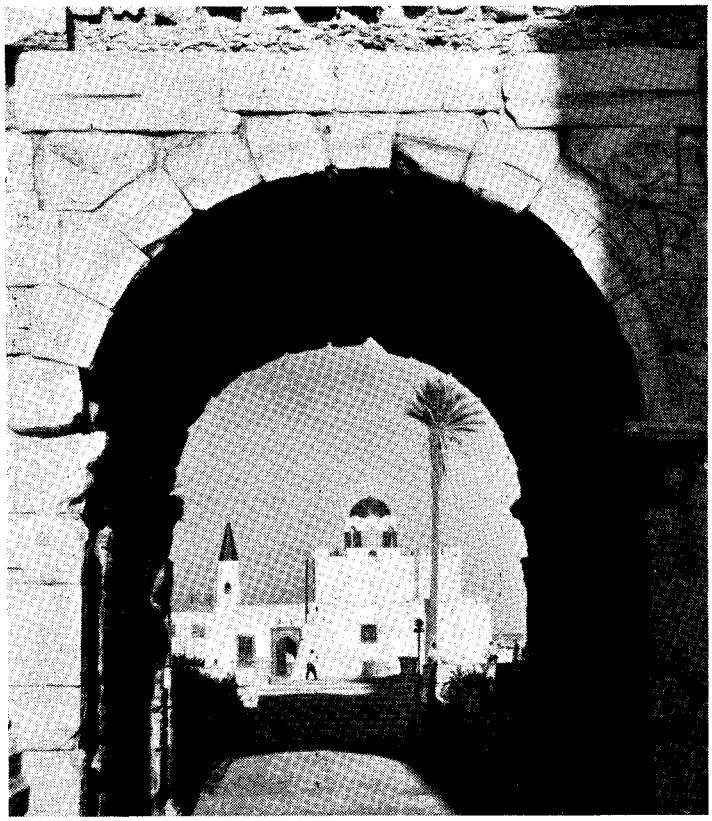
The Romans have left to posterity the cities, aqueducts, cisterns and milestones, the ruins of which still proclaim the vastness of their achievements. In the time of Septimus Severus much was done for Leptis Magna. Magnificent buildings, such as the New Forum, the Great Basilica, the Via Colonnata and the immense Nymphaeum (an edifice with waterfalls and fountains at various levels) were lavished upon it, making it comparable to Rome. The people, in turn, erected a four-portalled "Arch of Triumph" in his honour. At this time, Tripolitania was at the height of its glory—materially and culturally, whereas the prosperity of Cyrenaica was checked by a great Jewish rebellion in 115 E.C. During the time of the Romans, Libyan Art or "Provincial Art" as it was known, became very popular. Decorations in gold, silver, ivory, ceramic tiles and wood, in which Roman patterns were combined with linear, geometric figures reflecting the rigid Libyan art forms, were the objects of Libyan artists. Even in the present-day Libya some of these designs are in use though with the addition of Christian-Byzantine art consisting mainly of figures which represent birds, animals, leaves and fruit.

The decline of the Roman empire brought religious and political discord which, in Tripolitania, ended in disaster. At this time the Vandals from Spain stepped in and occupied the country. The Vandals destroyed the civilization which had been built up and put nothing in its place. They were finally driven out by Belisarius who occupied Libya for the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. However, the country did not regain its former peace and prosperity even though some cities were rebuilt and fortified. During this period an effort was made to restore the grandeur of Leptis Magna and Sabratha. The fine workmanship and the typical Christian ornamental designs of those days have been revealed by the modern archaeologists.

The Arab conquest of Libya in 642 C.E.

In 642 C.E. the Arab armies, on their way to Spain, marched through Cyrenaica and thence on to Tripolitania. Tripoli became an Arab stronghold, but the city was, in later years, to be occupied by other conquerors. With the advent of the Arabs and Islam, however, there came to Libya a completely different culture and way of life.

According to the annals of history, in the year 1145 C.E., King Roger of Sicily invaded Tripoli, thus extending his empire across the Mediterranean. Later, in 1510 came the Spaniards and after them the Knights of St. John of Malta. However, this brief period of European intervention (up to about 1551 C.E.) was brought to an end by the Turkish Admiral Darghut Pasha who seized Tripoli for Sulaymán the Magnificent, who was then at the height of his power. From then on Libya became a part of the vast Ottoman Empire, which stretched from Iraq to the eastern frontiers of Morocco. The only relic left by the Spaniards was the Tripoli castle, which the Knights of Malta rebuilt.



An ancient mosque at Tripoli.

With the coming of Arab rule in Libya, many facets of Moorish art made their appearance in buildings and various crafts. Islamic art is represented by mosques and countless inscriptions, in Kufic script, on tombs and buildings, though many remains of the culture under the various dynasties are yet to be excavated.

The Turkish period of rule in Libya

During the period of the Turkish rule much was done to further trade and diplomatic relations with other countries: the then young United States of America among them. At the same time, however, this was a period when, under some adventurers, privateering was greatly extended along the Barbary coast. Muhammad Sakesli, a Greek from Chios, who appointed one of his lieutenants as the Bey of Benghazi, was one such adventurer.

Early in the eighteenth century Ahmad Pasha Karamanli became the ruler of Tripoli. He was an able ruler and brought stability to his dominion. During his reign he made an endowment for the construction of a mosque (completed in 1736) which was the most exquisite specimen of local Libyan-Islamic architecture and decorative art. In this building the local people demonstrated the flowering of their artistic genius, which was expressed ardently in stone, plaster, wood, glazed windows and enamelled title work. Here, in this mosque, one sees the successful and harmonious fusion of the two streams of art which Muslim historians refer to as Islamic Mediterranean "east" and "west". In all probability, nowhere was this effect so successfully achieved prior to the eighteenth century, when this mosque was completed.

The successors of Ahmed Pasha continued to rule Libya with a firm hand, thus ensuring peace and prosperity in the country. The last effective ruler of the house of Karamanli was Yúsuf Pasha, who came into conflict with the United States. Though a truce was declared after some time, Yúsuf Pasha's maritime activities were gradually curtailed by other more powerful navies and he abdicated in 1834, precipitating civil war among his heirs. Turkey intervened at this time and appointed a new governor. The return of Turkish domination proved unpopular and was soon overshadowed by the rise of a great religious leader—the Sayyid Muhammad Ibn 'Alí al-Sanúsí (grandfather of the present King Idris I)—who founded the Sanúsí School of Thought in Islam. He guided the independent tribesmen back to the purity and spirituality of Islam. He, and later his son, the Sayyid Muhammad al-Mahdí al-Sanúsí, united the country. But, fortunately, when the tyrannical régime of 'Abd al-Hamíd (the Ottoman ruler of the period) was overthrown, Italy chose that very moment to attack.

The Italians slowly conquered Libya and entrenched themselves for the next several years. Under the Italian occupation, the people of Libya underwent a tremendous amount of hardship and facilities for cultural and artistic advancement were non-existent.

The assimilation of the various forms of art

With a varied historical background such as Libya's, the assimilation of the various forms of art was only natural. However, the general trend is to lean more towards the Islamic form of art than any other. Evidence of this may be seen from the mosques and even the traditional Arab houses in Libya which show a great influence of Turkish style. The mosques are generally simple and austere, the minarets being tall and slim and the roofs composed of grouped domes. The mosque at Derna, for example, has forty-two domes! The ceilings of the mosques are ornately decorated with cut and moulded plaster-work.

Down the ages, from the time of the Romans till the present day, Libyan artists have expressed their feelings in their woven fabrics and decorations in gold, silver, ceramic tiles and wood. All these display a mixture of varied influences. In Libya, women adorn themselves with a considerable amount of gold and silver ornaments such as earrings, bracelets and anklets, on which beautiful decorations show the high quality and skill of the artists.

In Misurata, some exquisite and colourful carpets are woven with, again, a fusion of various influences. Pottery work too, has recently been developed and shows great promise in providing Libyan artists with another outlet in which to express their talents.

Culturally, Libya has been influenced tremendously by the Arab way of life. In their folk dances or in their writings, it is the influence of the Arabs that dominates — an influence that unifies the people in all walks of life.

Each of the various cultures and civilizations, which has touched Libya has, in its own way, influenced Libyan society so that what exists now is the assimilation of all that has been good in these past civilizations. All the arts, crafts, music and culture that was the legacy of the past to the present generation are things that the people of Libya treasure pride.

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a thing in which the Sanúsí movement in fact assisted — the Ottoman Government was quite content to have her officials confined to the towns and to have the internal administration and government in the distant parts of the country entirely in the hands of the Sanúsís. The Sanúsí movement in such parts maintained peace, dispensed justice and controlled education; and the collection of the taxes in those parts was effected on behalf of the Ottoman Government by the Sanúsí representatives. Contact between the Sanúsís and the Ottoman Government was maintained through visits by Ottoman officials to Jaghbúb and Kufrah or by Sanúsí representatives visiting Istanbul. This made it unnecessary for the Ottomans to impose their will on the people to any great extent, and prevented friction between the Ottoman Government and the people of Cyrenaica. Peace and tranquillity resulting from this harmonious state of affairs enabled the Sanúsí movement to devote its full attention to the religious field, and enabled Cyrenaica to enjoy a prosperous life, and remain a loyal member of the Ottoman Empire.

There was, however, at a later stage some friction between the Sanúsís and the Ottoman Government. The latter became jealous of the strength and influence which the Sanúsí movement assumed, and were anxious to have the allegiance and subordination of the Sanúsís given on a fuller scale. In fact, in 1904 C.E. and 1908 C.E., attempts were made by the Ottoman Government to impose taxes on the properties of the *záwiyahs*, but those attempts had to be abandoned when it became evident that the Sanúsís would offer a strong and determined resistance to such measures.

Despite the magnitude and influence which it had assumed, the Sanúsí movement, however, did not at that time enjoy any international status or recognition by foreign Powers, and it was because of this that the Sanúsís were unable to protest to the Western Powers against the encroachments made by France in central Africa or against the threatened danger of an attack on Libya itself by the Italians. Thus, notwithstanding the strained relationship that existed at that time between the Ottomans and the Sanúsís, the Sanúsís requested the Ottoman Government to appoint official representatives of its own in Kufrah and Jaghbúb, so that, by the raising of the Ottoman flag there, Turkey could protest legally and legitimately to the world, if those parts became the subject of aggression by a foreign power. (The French finally conquered those parts, which were later combined together under the name of "The French Sudan".) In the period between 1912-1918 C.E. the Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharíf led the people of Libya in their bitter struggle against the Italians. In 1918 C.E. he retired from the leadership of the Sanúsí movement, and left Cyrenaica for the Hijaz, where he stayed until his death in 1933. Upon his retirement the leadership of the movement passed to the Sayyid (now King) Muhammad Idris.

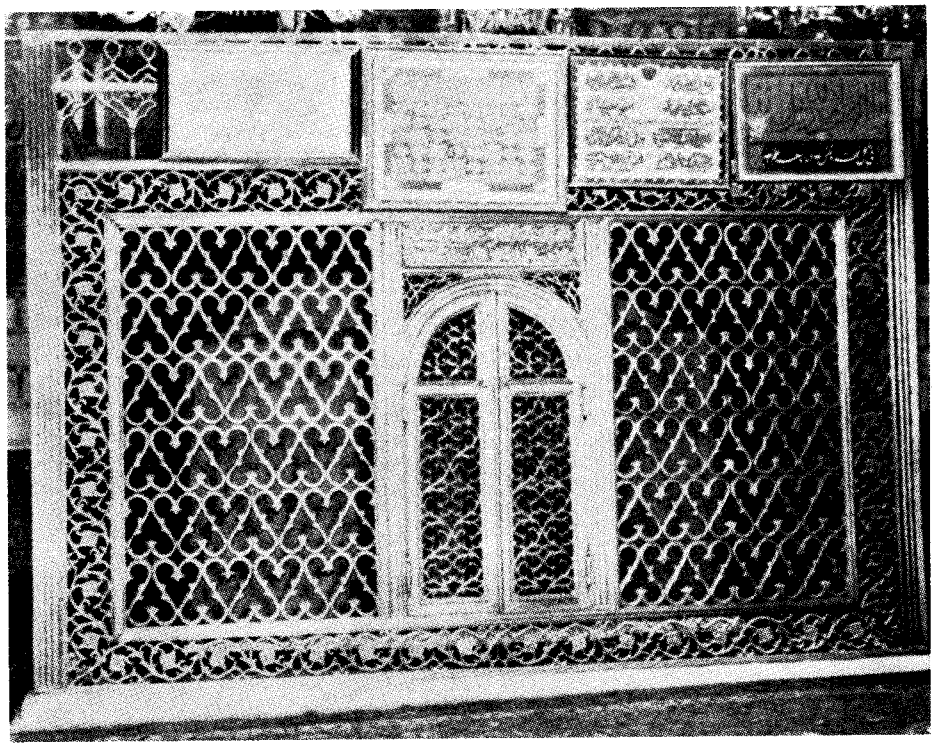
The Sanusi Movement,[1] the first of its kind that set itself the task of reforming the Muslim World

By Dr. NICOLA ZIADEH

A Life-sketch of the Great Sanusi

Beginning of the Sanusi Movement in 1837 C.E.

A description of the *Zawiyah*



The Tomb of the Great Sanúsí (d. 1859 C.E.), at Jaghbúb, Libya.

The disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century C.E. sets Muslim thinkers to bring about internal reforms in the Muslim world

The Ottoman Empire was, until the seventeenth century C.E., a strong power whose armies had penetrated successfully into the European continent and vanquished many of the European states. It was regarded as the defender of Islam and held in high esteem by the Muslims everywhere.

Among the titles of the Ottoman Sultan was that of "Caliph of the Muslims" and "Servant of the Two Holy Mosques" and as such the Muslims looked upon him as a defender of their faith and of their countries.

By the end of the 17th century C.E., however, the Ottoman Empire began to weaken and disintegrate, and this process continued through the 18th century C.E. The European states began to nurse ambitions of acquiring territories held by the Ottomans, and the North African territories of the Ottoman Empire were of special attraction to these European states. This weakness in the Ottoman Empire also encouraged many of its subjects to set up autonomous governments that owed only nominal allegiance to the "mother country". Such semi-independent governments were set up in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Faced with this abject inability on the part of Turkey to defend her Empire and protect her subjects from the imminent danger of foreign aggression, the Muslim leaders in the various parts of the Ottoman Empire lost any confidence they may have had in Turkey as their champion and protector, and began to look in other directions for the preservation of the Islamic world.

These Muslim thinkers proceeded to apply their efforts to bring about internal reforms in the Islamic world. Many groups and schools of thought sprang up, and became very active in this field, though most of them never intended to sever the nominal link with the Ottoman régime (which was regarded by them as the "Caliphate"), perhaps in the hope that this reform in the world of Islam would ultimately bring about a revival of the Ottoman régime itself and pave the way for it to assume again its greatness in this sphere.

There is no doubt that the religious movement initiated by Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahháb in the 18th century C.E. was the first symptom of this new feeling, which predominated in the minds of the reformers and leaders of religious thought in the Islamic world at that time.

The emergence of the Sayyid Muhammad Ibn 'Alí al-Sanúsí (the Great Sanúsí) in the beginning of the 19th century as a great religious leader

Although in the Maghrib (the western part of North Africa) there were similar tendencies which could be perceived clearly in the strength of the Súfí and *Ikhwán* movements, whose object was to bring about reform and renaissance in those parts of the Islamic world, no great thinker or reformer emerged there until the beginning of the 19th century C.E. That great leader was the Sayyid Muhammad Ibn 'Alí al-Sanúsí, the founder of the Sanúsí movement.

The Sanúsí movement has so far had four leaders who nursed and advanced it and spread its teaching. First there was the founder, the Sayyid Muhammad Ibn 'Alí (d. 1276 A.H.; 1859 C.E.), then his son, the Sayyid al-Mahdí (1276-1320 A.H.; 1859-1902 C.E.), followed by the Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharíf (1320-1336 A.H.; 1902-1918 C.E.) and, finally, the Sayyid Muhammad Idris al-Mahdí (who succeeded to the leadership in 1336 A.H., 1918 C.E.) and is now the King of Libya.

1 Adapted and translated from the book by the author *Cyrenaica, the Eighth Arab State*, published by Dár al-'Ilm li al-Maláyín, Beirut, Lebanon.

I shall now deal with the achievements of the first three leaders of the Sanúsí movement, and in a later article I hope to deal with the significance of the services which the Sanúsí movement rendered to the course of Islam and to the Muslims by affecting far-reaching reforms and initiating a new and important era in North Africa; and also by bringing Islam to other parts of Africa. I also hope to deal then with the eventful period during the leadership of the Sayyid Muhammad Idris al-Mahdí, who led the struggle against Italian aggression against his country.

A life sketch of the Great Sanúsí

The Sayyid Muhammad Ibn 'Alí — the "Great Sunúsí" as he has often been called — was born in Algeria on 12 Rabí' al-awwal 1202 A.H. (22 December 1787 C.E.). He was descended from Hasan Ibn 'Alí Ibn Abí Tálib and Fátimah, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad. The designation of his family as al-Sanúsí is derived from the name of his ancestor, the Sayyid al-Sanúsí, who was one of the great Muslim *'ulemas* of his day.

The Sayyid Muhammad Ibn 'Alí grew up in a family of scholars held in great esteem in that part of the country. It was thus not difficult for him to acquire proper learning from his early youth. In his boyhood he applied himself industriously to learning as a pupil of one of the eminent local teachers. At an early age he realized that the Islamic world was badly in need of drastic reform, and so he devoted his efforts towards bringing about this desired change.

He took upon himself a very great task, and in order to equip himself to fulfil this arduous mission he sought further to enhance his learning, and proceeded, for this purpose, to Fás (Fez), which was one of the great centres of learning in those days. There he stayed for seven years (1822-1829 C.E.) first, as a student and later as a teacher in the Great Mosque. During his stay there he gained the confidence and admiration of his pupils and acquired a high reputation as a man of wide knowledge, mature ideas and forceful exposition, and also as a man who possessed true understanding of the spirit of the religion of Islam. During this period, the Sayyid Muhammad also devoted his attention to the study of Súfism. He did this because he was convinced that one of the essential prerequisites of achieving the desired reform in the Islamic world was to bring about true understanding and co-ordination between the activities of all those who at that time were working for the advancement of the religion of Islam, be they individuals or groups, and whatever distance separated them. The Sayyid Muhammad also studied other movements in Islam. He was greatly distressed to find that many of the Muslims lacked the moral courage and strong faith needed to bring home to the Muslims the true principles of the religion of Islam. He was likewise grieved to see that so many of the responsible elements amongst the Muslim people in the various parts of the Islamic world were pre-occupied with their own personal welfare and neglecting their primary duty of advancing the progress of their countries and the welfare of their people.

The Sayyid Muhammad then sought to widen the scope of his activities and learning by travelling to other parts of the Muslim world. He left Fez for Laghouat (in the south of Algeria) which was an important meeting place for the convoys coming from the western part of the Sudan. There he taught the true conceptions of Islam to those who sought such instruction. Later he proceeded to Abú Qabís and then to Tripoli and to Benghazi, and finally to Cairo, where he joined al-Azhar University.

He spent some time at al-Azhar, and in addition to studying at this university he devoted a great deal of time discussing with various people his ideas for the reform of the Islamic world, and urged a return to the true and original teaching of Islam. His first visit to Egypt may have finally convinced him of the view that Turkey, despite its efforts to stage a revival, had become so weak that it was idle to expect it to give a lead to reform or to play any great part in this respect.

The Sayyid Muhammad, however, entertained the hope that a renaissance in the other parts of the Islamic world would eventually revive the Ottoman régime and enable it to assume once again leadership of the Islamic world, and it was with this hope that he sought to maintain the Ottoman Caliphate in the Islamic world.

The Sayyid Muhammad then visited the Hijaz. For his purpose, the Hijaz was the ideal place, for there Muslims from all over the world met for pilgrimage and there, too, he had the opportunity of contacting people from different parts of the Muslim world and discussing with them his ideas. In the Hijaz he also saw an opportunity for meeting great learned men from whom he would be able to complete his learning and acquire wider experience. The Sayyid Muhammad remained in the Hijaz until 1840 C.E. During his stay there he met many of the great *'ulemas* of the time and the well-known authorities on Islam.

The Great Sanúsí sets up the first Záwiyah **in the Hijáz in 1837 C.E.**

One of the great men he met there was the Imám Abú 'Abbás Ahmad Ibn 'Abdulláh Ibn Idris al-Fásí, whom he later accompanied to Sabia, returning to Mecca only after the death of al-Fásí. On his return to Mecca the Sayyid Muhammad set up in Abú Qabís his first *záwiyah* (in English literally "corner", but later meaning a "centre") in 1837 C.E. This date is regarded as the beginning of the Sanúsí movement. Later, other *záwiyahs* were set up in other parts of the Hijáz, namely Tá'if, Medina, Badr and Jeddah. But the Sayyid Muhammad did not stay in the Hijáz very long after that; he left in 1840 C.E. for Egypt, and thence to Tripolitania via the Siwa Oasis and the Jabal.

The Great Sanúsí sets up his second záwiyah **in the Jabal, Cyrenaica**

The Sayyid Muhammad had intended to return ultimately to Algeria, but he was prevented from that by the fear of being persecuted at the hands of the French, who had occupied Algeria a few years earlier. In 1841 C.E. the Sayyid Muhammad reached Benghazi, having temporarily abandoned his intention to return to Algeria, and in Cyrenaica two years after his arrival he set up, in 1843 C.E., a *záwiyah* at Beida in the Jabal (a district on the coast of Cyrenaica) and that *záwiyah* was to become the "mother" of the many other Sanúsí *záwiyahs* set up. From that day, it can be said that the Sayyid Muhammad had begun to formulate final plans for improving the lot of the Muslims in Cyrenaica, so that from amongst them might one day come forth men who would give the lead for reform in other parts of the Islamic world.

The Sayyid Muhammad later paid a second visit to the Hijaz and upon his return from this visit in 1856 C.E. he transferred his "headquarters" from the *záwiyah* at Beida to

Jaghbúb. This he did because he found that Jaghbúb was more central, and thus more convenient for the purpose of making effective contacts with the wide parts of Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and the then French West Africa. Another reason may have been the fact that Jaghbúb, as an important centre for convoys, afforded him the opportunity of contacting people to whom he wanted to convey his ideas on Islam, and this would have enabled him to reach the distant parts of Africa, where he wanted to preach the faith of Islam. The Sayyid Muhammad realised that in Algeria in the west, under the French — who were expected to oppose the Sanúsí movement and guard strongly against its dissemination or its acquisition of any influence — as well as in Egypt in the east, there would not be any fertile ground for initiating his movement, and that therefore only the central part of North Africa and central Africa were appropriate for launching this movement, and in fact stood in greater need of reform.

The Great Sanúsí sets up his headquarters at Jaghbúb from where he sent out trained missionaries

At Jaghbúb, the Sayyid Muhammad set up his headquarters, and there gathered around him his followers and supporters. The hitherto insignificant oasis of Jaghbúb was transformed by this decision of the Sayyid Muhammad into a beautiful and lively place. A large school for the teaching of the religion of Islam was set up by him in Jaghbúb, and this had a library containing about 8,000 volumes on subjects like Islamic law and jurisprudence, the Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, history, interpretation of the Qur'án, astronomy, philosophy and súfism. This school was run by the devoted pupils of the Sayyid Muhammad, who had accompanied him on his tours of study and had proved themselves to be loyal to his ideas and able to preach them.

This school had about 300 pupils, who were being enthusiastically prepared under the guidance of the Sayyid Muhammad in order to proceed to those parts of the Islamic world which had been chosen by the Sayyid Muhammad and take with them the message of the guidance and wisdom of the true teachings of Islam. The Sayyid Muhammad personally supervised the instruction of these pupils, in order to ensure that every single messenger of his mission was thoroughly prepared for his task before he embarked on it. Thus in a very short space of time Jaghbúb became a very great centre of Islamic religious teaching in North Africa, second only to Cairo.

From Jaghbúb all these messengers of the Sanúsí movement spread to many parts of the Muslim world. They carried great and wise learning acquired from their master, the Sayyid Muhammad, and demonstrated great faith comparable only to that held by the great learned men of the early Islamic era. All these dedicated men were determined to make sacrifices for the noble cause they preached.

One of the early results of the initiation of this great movement in Cyrenaica was that the Arab tribes there, who had until then been engaged in constant hostilities with one another and preoccupied with raids, theft and other destructive activities, had suddenly resolved to bury the hatchet. With the acceptance of the true teachings of Islam, as propounded by the Sayyid Muhammad, peace was restored to those tribes of Cyrenaica, and a new method of settling disputes arising between them was now adopted, thanks to the intervention of the leading followers of the Sayyid Muhammad, who succeeded in settling disputes by peaceful means. Through the activities of the Sayyid Muhammad and his followers, Islam also began to spread to other parts of Cyrenaica and Africa. Perhaps a good example of the esteem accorded by the people of Cyrenaica to the movement initiated by the Sayyid Muhammad and of its success is that a delegation representing the people of Kufrah, a group of oases deep in the desert of Cyrenaica, was sent to the Sayyid Muhammad asking him to set up a *záwiyah* in that part, in order that its inhabitants might have the chance to partake of this new guidance which had already found enthusiastic acceptance in many other places. The Sayyid Muhammad agreed to this, and the first *záwiyah* in that district was set up in the Jawf oasis.

An example of the methods employed by the Great Sanúsí to spread his ideas

The methods adopted by the Sayyid Muhammad in disseminating his new movement and in gaining acceptance first can best be illustrated by this authentic story.

A convoy of Negro slaves which was proceeding north through Southern Cyrenaica was met by the Sayyid Muhammad, who offered to buy the whole convoy. Upon buying this convoy he set the slaves in it free and proceeded to teach them the religion of Islam, and after he had completed their education he sent them back to their own people to preach their new faith. Such methods impressed the people in a remarkable manner.

On 9 Safr 1276 A.H. (7 September 1859 C.E.) the Sayyid Muhammad Ibn 'Alí Sanúsí died in Jaghbúb. He was buried there and his grave is preserved until this day.

When the Great Sanúsí died the movement had already taken deep roots in Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and other parts of Africa. His great personality had impressed itself upon his successors, so that the movement he initiated and nursed through difficult times came to acquire under his successors yet greater strength and vitality and conquered wider parts of the world.

The Great Sanúsí's successor, the Sayyid al-Mahdí

The Sayyid Muhammad's successor was his eldest son, the Sayyid al-Mahdí, born in 1844 C.E. at the *záwiyah* at Beida. When the great Sanúsí died, the Sayyid al-Mahdí was under age, and a council of guardians consisting of ten elders was set up to look after the Sanúsí movement until the Sayyid al-Mahdí attained his majority and could succeed to the position occupied by his father. When the Sayyid al-Mahdí came of age, he succeeded to the position of supervising the administration and direction of the Sanúsí movement. His brother, the Sayyid Muhammad al-Sharíf (who was two years younger) concerned himself mainly with the teaching aspect of the movement.

Under the leadership of the Sayyid al-Mahdí (1859-1902 C.E.) the Sanúsí movement reached the climax of its power and influence. One of the decisions made by the Sayyid al-Mahdí, designed to enable him to supervise personally the various affairs of the new and wide Sanúsí movement, was to transfer the headquarters of the movement, in 1859 C.E., from Jaghbub to Kufrah—Kufrah having become by then a major commercial centre, where convoys from the various parts of central and northern Africa met. These merchants and their convoys were a very effective channel for spreading the religion of Islam to distant and otherwise inaccessible corners of Africa. The administrative headquarters of the Sanúsí movement was at the town of al-Táj, and from there the Sanúsí movement brought the faith of Islam to the many parts of Africa.

The influence and prestige of the Sayyid al-Mahdí in the outside world

The friendship and goodwill of the Sayyid al-Mahdí was solicited by many world leaders. The Mahdí of the Sudan sought an alliance with him, 'Urábí of Egypt asked for his support in 1882 C.E., Italy approached him in 1881 C.E. seeking his assistance to check the advance of the French in Tunisia, the Ottoman Sultan asked for his help in the war against Russia in 1876-1878 C.E., and there was an unsuccessful attempt by Germany to rally his support to her side in the fight against the French in Africa in 1872 C.E. But the Sayyid al-Mahdí refused all these requests and approaches, preferring to maintain strict neutrality and aloofness in these international disputes, in order to be better able to devote his strength to the all-important task of spreading Islam and improving the desperate lot of the Muslim peoples — a task to which he devoted his life, and in which he never slackened, following in this regard in the footsteps of his illustrious father. But the Sayyid al-Mahdí, as well as his successor, was eventually forced to take up arms against the French invasion of central Africa in an attempt to step into those parts and establish the Sanúsí movement before the entry of the French would make this impossible. Likewise, his successor, the Sayyid Muhammad al-Sharíf, had to fight against Italy when she launched her aggression against Libya in 1911 C.E.

On the death of the Sayyid al-Mahdí in 1902 C.E., the Sanúsí movement had reached new heights of success, and had become accepted in many parts of the world. Researchers on this subject are agreed that at that time the Sanúsí movement had 136 *záwiyahs* distributed as follows:

Cyrenaica : 45,
Egypt : 21,
The *Vilayet* of Tripolitania : 18,
The Arabian Peninsula (Hijaz) : 17,
The Fezzan : 15,
The Sudan : 14, and
Al-Kufrah Oasis : 6.

The Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharíf (1902-1918 C.E.)

When the Sayyid al-Mahdí died, his son, the Sayyid (now King) Muhammad Idris (born 1889 C.E.), was under age. The leadership of the Sanúsí movement passed to the son of the Sayyid Muhammad al-Sharíf, the Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharíf, who was then 29 years of age. The first years of his leadership (1902-1912 C.E.) were taken up by hostilities against the French, who had launched attacks on central Africa

The feared aggression against Libya was soon to come at the hands of Italy. It is during those years of bitter struggle by the people of Libya, under the leadership of the Sanúsís, that the annals of history have recorded the illustrious deeds of the Libyans, and the shameful acts of Italian mischief.

What were the principles of the Sanúsí movement, and what was the message brought to the people of Islam by Muhammad Ibn 'Alí and his successors and by the Shaykhs (leaders) of the *záwiyahs* set up by him, and which the Muslims of the day welcomed and wholeheartedly accepted? This is what I shall attempt to discuss now.

The Great Sanúsí's call of "Back to the Qur'án and the Sunnah with ijtihád **", the door of** ijtihád **having not been closed, as believed by many.**

The movement initiated by the Sayyid Muhammad Ibn 'Alí al-Sanúsí, known as the Great Sanúsí, was primaritly a call to the Muslims for a return to the true teachings of Islam, and not the "Islam" into which many alien principles and practices had been introduced at the hands of various imposters and pretenders to religious learning. The Sanúsí movement advocated a return to the Islam as practised during the days of the Prophet Muhammad and his Caliphs. In the Sanúsí movement, as, indeed, it is in the real Islam, guidance is drawn in religious matters entirely from the Holy Qur'án and the *Sunnah* (the practice of the Prophet). According to the Sanúsí views, only from these sources can there be a true understanding of the principles of Islam; and that the doctrines of *'ijmá'* (the consensus of opinion among the learned) and the *qiyás* (analogical deduction), which came to be accepted at a later stage of the development of Islam, must not be relied upon. But the Great Sanúsí, however, did not consider that the *ijtihád* (the power of independent interpretation of the law) has been exhausted, and he held therefore that it was permissible, provided it was strictly confined within the bounds of the Holy Qur'án and the *Sunnah*.

Inasmuch as the Sanúsí movement advocated a return to the genuine practice of Islam, it must be pointed out that the movement did not confine itself to worship and devotion in the abstract, but that it required of the Muslims to be "productive" worshippers living industriously by their hard and active work. This attitude can be discerned clearly in the nature of the *záwiyahs*. A *záwiyah* comprises a mosque, a school, farms and shops, and the accommodation for the *Ikhwán* (literally, "Brothers" — the members or staff), who worked with zeal and industry. The character which the Great Sanúsí wanted his movement to assume can be seen in the fact that he wanted the actual construction of the *záwiyahs* to be a matter entirely for the people in whose area the *záwiyah* was to be set up; this he achieved by the active participation of the inhabitants of that area as a whole, without outside help. The *záwiyah* was therefore, from the day its foundation stone was laid, a monument of the achievement of the inhabitants of a particular area where it lay.

Many scholars applied themselves to a study of the relation between the Sanúsí movement and the other Súfí (devotional) movements, especially those that grew up in the north of Africa. The scholars were encouraged by the fact that the Great Sanúsí himself had studied a great number of the Súfí movements like the Tíjániyyah, Shádhiliyyah, 'Idrísiyyah and Qádiriyyah, and spent some time learning about these movements from the great *'ulamá* who professed them. Some of the non-Muslim researchers on this topic were interested in this study from purely academic motives, but many of them, notably the Italians, had embarked on this research with the pre-conceived object of detracting from the value and importance of the Sanúsí movement. They sought to establish that the Sanúsí movement was an abstract devotional movement on the Súfí style and was not concerned with anything apart from mere worship, devotion and penitence. In taking that view they attempted to find some justification for their occupation of Libya, since, they would maintain, there was an administrative "vacuum" in the country — there ceasing to be any civil administration or government after the Ottomans has relinquished Libya to the Italians in 1912 C.E.

The fact, however, as discovered by the honest and unbiased scholars of this subject and as recorded in the annals of history, is that the Sanúsí movement was a combined religious and "civil" movement ("civil" in the sense of administrative and governmental). Though the Sanúsí movement began with the main object of exhorting the Muslims to revert

to the genuine and original teachings of Islam as practised in the days of the Prophet Muhammad and the Caliphs, yet that fact alone meant that the Sanúsí movement had also a " civil " and worldly character. Islam, it must be remembered, had made no demarcation or distinction, in principle, between the conduct of the affairs of the soul (religion) and the affairs of this world (government), and Islam did not confine itself to either of these two aspects of the welfare of man in preference to or in subjugation of the other; for it sought to secure for man's happiness in the world hereafter as well as in this world. It is therefore only natural that an exhortation to the practice of the true principles of Islam should mean a call for true belief and worship, as well as for productive and good work and for orderly political administration within the general framework conceived by the religion of Islam and accepted by the good Muslims at all the stages of the progress of this faith. It is thus only logical that the Great Sanúsí, and his successors in the leadership of the Sanúsí movement, in exhorting the people to take the life of the Prophet Muhammad as an ideal for them to follow and as an aim which they should strive to attain, should have exhorted the people as well to devote their attention to those matters to which the Prophet Muhammad devoted his care. The life of the Prophet Muhammad was the best example that can be put before the people, with a view to enabling them to appreciate the relation between the mortal and immortal lives. For this reason, the Sanúsí movement was based on the principle of working towards the life hereafter, in the words of the Prophet Muhammad, " as if man was destined to die the next day " and working for the worldly life " as if man was destined to live in this world forever ".

Difference between Súfism and the Sanúsí conception of life

There is also no doubt that the Great Sanúsí and his successors, who called for the purification of Islam from all the ill-conceived and misguiding practices that have been injected into it, should never have been content that whoever accepted the conceptions and teachings of that movement should allow any of these bad practices to be in any way whatsoever of any influence on his life or to affect his practice of Islam. It should be noted in this regard that the Sanúsí movement is free from many of the practices adopted by other Súfí movements, like singing and dancing.

These biased scholars are committing a grave error in portraying the Sanúsí movement as a movement akin to some of the Súfí rites whose followers live a life of strict seclusion, laziness and inactivity, spending their time in worship only and relying for their food on the charity of others. The Sanúsí movement is a sincere and determined movement directed at leading the Muslims to the rightful path in the light of the true principles of the religion of Islam. It offered to the people the faith of Islam from Islam's true and rich sources, and expounded to the people the real spirit of the Islamic faith, urging them to follow the rules of conduct laid down by God in the Qur'án and practised by His Prophet. The Great Sanúsí found that many of the Muslims of the day had abandoned all these high ethical conceptions and shut their eyes to the true light of Islam, and he thus took upon himself the task of rekindling in their hearts, by his fervent preaching, the faith that had almost dwindled. He expounded to them the creed of Islam, strengthened their waning faith in Islam, and removed the curtain that had prevented them from seeing the true light of Islam. His preaching was like " the fire that consumed the dry and broken plants but purified the gold ". Those that came into contact with the Great Sanúsí effected a change in their lives and acquired a new will, zeal and strength; they had become a people preaching goodwill, after they had been perpetrators of evil.

A description of the organization of the záwiyah

The centre of life in the Sanúsí movement is the *záwiyah.* The *záwiyah* (literally, corner — plural *záwiyahs*) in this connection meaning a centre for the spiritual, agricultural, commercial and political life of the community where it is located. It is here that we come across the special and unique attributes of the Sanúsí movement. It was not merely a religious, Súfí or spiritual movement, but a movement concerned with all the different aspects of the everyday life of man. When the leader of the Sanúsí movement detailed one of his followers to set up a new *záwiyah,* he would expect that that *Shaykh* (leader) would make that *záwiyah,* with the land attached to it and the people inhabiting it, into a productive and active community. The first step in the process of setting up a *záwiyah* in any part of the country was that the tribe interested in having the *záwiyah* set up in its district would assign a definite area of land from its possessions for the benefit of the *záwiyah;* then the buildings necessary for the *záwiyah* were constructed by the members of that tribe. It was customary to have two groups of buildings in the *záwiyah* — the first group would house the Shaykh of the *záwiyah* and his family, and the second group would comprise the mosque, the school and the guest-house. The extent and size of such buildings naturally depended on the size of the community which the *záwiyah* was intended to serve and on the magnitude of the services required in any particular part of the country. The mosque of the *záwiyah* at Jaghbúb, for example, was large enough to accommodate about 600 devotees, and the school building there had lecture halls and rooms for the accommodation of pupils who came from distant parts to seek education at the *záwiyah.* The *záwiyah* at Jaghbúb, which was regarded as the first core of the academic aspect of the Sanúsí movement, had at one time some 300 students in its school. The guest-house had spacious halls in which the merchants, visitors and travellers could sleep, and could stay for three days, in the first instance, according to the recognised customs of Arab hospitality. The merchants, however, were allowed to stay in the guest-house for a longer period; and the *záwiyahs* that were expected, from the nature of their location, to cater for merchants had especially spacious halls where these merchants could safely deposit their wares and trades; and there were as well pens where the camels and other animals in the convoy could be kept. Those who were in charge of setting up these *záwiyahs* devoted their careful attention to ensuring an adequate supply of water for the inhabitants of the *záwiyah,* by digging a large well in the *záwiyah* itself or abutting on it. The buildings that comprised the *záwiyah* were all surrounded by a wall, which was fortified with towers and strongpoints from which the inhabitants could defend themselves in the event of their being attacked. There were many such attacks, in fact, waged against the inhabitants of the *záwiyahs,* especially at the hands of the French and Italians.

The lands adjoining the *záwiyah* were farmed and tended by the staff of the *záwiyah* (who were called *'Ikhwán* — Brothers), whether these were members of the tribe where the *záwiyah* was situated or not; though the *záwiyah* was regarded as in the ownership of the tribe in whose land it was standing. In this way the *záwiyah* came to be the symbol of the unity of the tribe, and here, it must be pointed out, lies the *záwiyah's* political and administrative significance. The

'Ikhwán who were not residing in lands that were directly attached to the *záwiyah* were required to give their services on the lands of the *záwiyah* for a specified number of days during the year, mainly during the busy farming seasons. The *'Ikhwán* were in addition allotted plots of land which they could exploit for their own personal benefit, but they were not, however, allowed to dispose of these plots, as the ownership remained vested in the *záwiyah*. The excess in the produce, agricultural and otherwise, of the *záwiyah* after the actual requirements of the *záwiyah* had been satisfied, were sent to the General Headquarters of the Sanúsí movement, to be applied towards advancing the cause of the movement. In addition to that there was the *zakáh* (tithe) payable to the Head of the Sanúsí movement, who was entitled in special circumstances to impose some taxes to meet special exigencies and needs; and such taxes were duly levied and sent to him.

The *Shaykh* (leader) of the *záwiyah* was appointed to this position by the Head of the Sanúsí movement, who, in selecting him, usually followed the wishes of the tribe mainly interested in the particular *záwiyah*, though, however, he never allowed his desire to conform to the wishes of the tribe when it was feared that it could subvert the predominant object of the movement. Since the *Shaykh* of the *záwiyah* was a figure of paramount importance in the progress and well-being of the *záwiyah* and its community. It was also essential that the *Shaykh* of the *záwiyah*, who taught the pupils in the *záwiyah* or supervised their education, adjudicated in disputes between the members of the tribe, maintained law and order and generally looked after the safety of the convoys, and, in the case of an emergency, organised the defence of the *záwiyah*. He must of needs be a man capable of commanding and enjoying the respect of the members of the community in the *záwiyah*, so that he may be able to discharge these many functions of his position satisfactorily and to the benefit of the *záwiyah*, its community, and the Sanúsí movement as a whole. The utmost care was therefore exercised in selecting the *Shaykhs* of the *záwiyah*.

It is interesting to observe the system which governed the territorial distribution of the Sanúsí *záwiyahs*, particularly in Cyrenaica. The Sayyid Muhammad Ibn Alí and his successor, the Sayyid al-Mahdí, took particular care to set up the Sanúsí *záwiyahs* in those parts of the country which had some special significance, either commercially, administratively or strategically. Thus we find these *záwiyahs* at the junction of main routes, and located in places which, because of their geographical and strategic position, could be easily defended against aggression, as well as command the adjoining area. These *záwiyahs* were so placed that they were usually at a distance of not more than six hours from each other, especially in the north of Cyrenaica.

By virtue of this layout, and because of the fine system devised for the direct and individual supervision of these *záwiyahs*, they became strongly integrated into each other and maintained a strong bond with the General Headquarters of the Sanúsí movement. The Sanúsí movement therefore came to be regarded more as a government or state rather than as a religious school of thought. Those who have described it as " an Empire within the Ottoman Empire " have not been far wrong.

It must be pointed out at this stage that the Great Sanúsí and his immediate successors did not, at any time, have any military or warlike ambitions, though the strict organisation which governed the movement enabled its followers, when they were at a later stage forced to assume a military character to protect their country from unjustified aggression, to put up a very good fight against the invaders.

The division of the followers of the Sanúsí movement into two groups

The followers of the Sanúsí movement may be generally divided into two groups. There were the *Muta'assibún* (supporters), who formed the greater majority of the Sanúsí, and there were also the *'Ikhwán* or *Mureedún* (the brothers or volunteers), who lived within the walls of the *záwiyahs* — before the greatest majority of the *záwiyahs* were destroyed by the Italians. There were also the *Shaykhs* of the *záwiyahs*, who were Islamic scholars entrusted by the Head of the movement, after they had completed their education in the school of Jaghbúb, to take charge of the *záwiyahs* and supervise the conduct and welfare of their communities. There was also a small group known as *Khawáss* (the " Selected "), who formed the members of the " Inner Sanúsí Council ", if one may use the term. During the life of the Great Sanúsí and his successor these *Khawáss* numbered four, all of whom were not members of the Sanúsí family, and chosen from amongst men who had attained very high positions in Islamic learning. The Council does not exist now — the turbulent events encountered by the Sanúsí movement had made it impossible to maintain such a Council.

The Sanúsí movement during the Ottoman régime

Before concluding this article, it may be appropriate to say a few words about the movement during the Ottoman régime.

When the Sanúsí movement spread amongst the inhabitants of the desert of Cyrenaica, the leaders of the movement became the link between the people and the Ottoman Government. The people accepted the Sanúsí leaders as their representatives and accredited them as their spokesmen, and the Ottoman Government had no choice but to accept that state of affairs, and seek to gain the goodwill and favour of the Sanúsí leaders. The first official recognition by the Ottoman Government of this position was embodied in a decree issued by the Ottoman Sultán in 1856 C.E., which exempted the possessions and properties of the Sanúsí *záwiyahs* from the payment of tax, and permitted the Sanúsí leaders to levy a religious tax on their followers. During the reign of the Sultan 'Abd al-'Azeez, the brother of the Sultan 'Abd al-Majíd, a second decree was issued to the governor of Tripolitania (within whose administrative domain Cyrenaica was) confirming the special privileges accorded earlier to the Sanúsís, and directing that the Sanúsí *záwiyahs* should be regarded as privileged and inviolable territory, where asylum could be taken.

The whole attitude of the Ottoman régime towards the Sanúsí movement at that time may be summed up in saying that the Ottoman Government paid little heed to the constitutional or legal status of the Sanúsí movement in the country. This attitude is understandable if one remembers that in those days there existed in the various parts of the Ottoman Empire many Islamic religious sections and movements, and also that Cyrenaica, being a poor part of the Ottoman Empire, was of no great importance to Turkey. So long as the Sanúsís mentioned the Ottoman Caliph in their Friday prayers in the mosques, and so long as the Sanúsís paid proper allegiance to the Ottoman Government and allowed her representatives in the country to levy her taxes —

Continued on page XVIII

The Sanusiyyah Contribution to Libya's Independence

By Ahmad al-Saliheen al-Houni

Ahmad al-Saliheen al-Houni

About the middle of the nineteenth century, the tribes of the Green Mountain plateau of Libya appeared on the historic scene as the torch-bearers of a revitalised reformist movement in Islam, which proved to be, more than anything else, responsible for the resurgence of Libya in our times.

The 19th century witnessed the disintegration of the Islamic world which had been protected by the Ottoman Empire. When the Ottomans failed to protect their empire, the Colonialist powers began to draw plans to control the Muslim world and parcel out between them the property of the "sick man" even before he had breathed his last.

To cope with the disintegration threatening the Islamic world, a number of Islamic movements came into being with a view to reviving the righteous Islamic principles and uniting the Islamic world to face the fanatic Western imperialism and missionary activities.

The Sanúsí Movement, considered to be the most important of all these revivalist movements of its period, was conceived and set afoot to stem the tide of Christianity attempting to convert the Muslim world. It was in such troubled times that Muhammad Ibn 'Alí, the Great Sanúsí, founded the Sanúsí Movement and preached that the Muslims revive the righteous and the original Islamic ideals and go back to the spirit of Islam as preached by the Prophet Muhammad (may peace be on him).

Muhammad Ibn 'Alí was born in 1787 C.E. in the Algerian town of Mostaghanem in the famous Idris family of North Africa, the descendants of Caliph 'Alí through his eldest son Hasan. His father died when he was still young and he was brought up by his mother. After his primary education in his native place, he was sent to the famous Qarawiyyín Islamic Seminary of Fez in Morocco for seven years. His academic achievements there won for him a teaching post at this renowned college. Later he went to al-Azhar University in Cairo. From Cairo he went to the Hijaz where he spent two decades teaching, studying and meditating.

The Great Sanúsí, feeling the decrepit condition of the Islamic world, especially when France invaded Algeria in 1830 C.E., proceeded to organise the Muslims with a view to fortifying their spiritual defences. At this stage of his life he, like other religious reformers in Islam, decided to visit the sacred city of Mecca where his grandfather, Muhammad Ibn 'Abdullah, was buried.

On his way to Mecca, the Great Sanúsí passed through Libya and saw for himself the disintegrated conditions, both political and social, that prevailed there at that time. He also witnessed the extraneous elements that had crept into the religious life of the Muslims. This state of affairs convinced him more than ever that Libya was the place which needed most of the religious and social reforms. When he returned from Mecca, he decided to launch his reformist mission in Libya, where he later established many a Sanúsí Centre called the *Záwiyah*. In no time his reformist movement found its way to the tribes that lived in the region and succeeded in eradicating un-Islamic practices.

Muhammad Ibn 'Alí was a rare combination of a scholar, mystic and man of action. The dichotomy of the two worlds of the jurists and the mystics, which is normally a source of friction among the Muslims, did not exist in his system. He preached a life of action illuminated by the mystical experience and urged his followers to go back to the Qur'án and the practice of the Prophet Muhammad, keeping away from the reactionary innovations of the later ages. According to him, the doors of *ijtihád* were not closed in the fifth century of Islam, as was mistakenly held by some of the jurists, and the spirit of enquiry was free to play its role in a Muslim's life. This was the message which the Great Sanúsí gave in the Jabal al-Akhdar area of Libya through his various writings.

In 1855, he moved his first *záwiyah* from Beida to the remote oasis of Jaghbúb. There he built an Islamic seminary on the pattern of al-Azhar and collected the biggest library in the Sahara which contained 8,000 volumes and 1,000 manuscripts. It is recorded that from this seminary he sent out 300 scholars to spread the message of Islam in Central Africa and the adjoining Sahara—the areas which were being brought under European rule and economic subjugation.

The Sanúsí warriors' struggle against Italian aggression, which began in 1911.

The Sanúsí *Záwiyahs,* or lodges, which are termed by Professor Evans Pritchard in his *The Sanúsiyyah* (London 1952) "the Centres of Culture," spread security and safety in the Sahara by means of their reformist principles. The Sanúsí Mission, however, did not restrict its activities to the academic preaching of Islamic theology. It was equally concerned with the development of industry and agriculture. Within a short space of time the whole country was dotted with nuclei of *Záwiyahs,* each within about six hours' walking distance from the other. Here every Friday regular congregational prayer was held, attended by the local people. From the pulpit of the *Záwiyah* mosque they were exhorted to adhere to the fundamentals of Islam and to consider themselves as members of the wider Islamic society. These lodges served as community centres under an elder who also mediated in the local disputes. Each of these had a Qur'ánic school attached to it where basic secular education was also given. The adjoining land was voluntarily cultivated to meet the expenses of the lodge. Horticulture and trade were encouraged and some of these places became important trading centres. This was the structure which arose from the sublime foundation of Islam. The Mosque was originally meant to be the forum of the community, its centre of education as well as a place of worship.

The Great Sanúsí died in Jaghbúb in 1859, to be succeeded by his son, Sayyid Muhammad al-Mahdí, who was only 15. The elders of the community took charge as regents and, between 1859 and 1902, brought the movement to its peak.

The imperialist powers were startled by the great success of the Sanúsí Movement in Africa, especially because of their vested interests there. They therefore launched an extensive propaganda offensive against the Sanúsí Movement.

In spite of the fact that the Sanúsí was a peaceful movement pledged against bloodshed, the Imam Mahdi, who succeeded the Great Sanúsí found himself obliged to fight back to defend the Sanúsí Movement against French imperialism. The vast desert witnessed many battles between the Sanúsí and the imperialists who had the overwhelming superiority of armaments and technology. The Imam himself was wounded in one of these battles. After living a life of great achievements, he died and was buried in Kufrah, which had by that time become the second important centre of the Sanúsíyyah.

When Italy invaded Libya in 1911, the Sanúsí Movement found its very existence threatened on two fronts—one against the French imperialists and the other against the Italians. The Libyans, in spite of the heavy odds against them, put up a resistance that cost the enemy thousands of men. But the overwhelming superiority of the aggressors forced Prince Idris to leave the country and conduct the resistance from abroad, which he did successfully until 1931. Even after 1931 the Libyans continued their resistance and Prince Idris brought into play all his diplomacy and wisdom to win for Libya an international backing which helped them liberate ultimately their land from the Fascist regime.

On 9 August 1940 the Sanúsí Army came into existence under the leadership of Idris. Side by side with the Allies, The Sanúsí Army played a vital role in achieving victory against the Italian and German Armies. At long last, Idris and Libya had achieved their objectives.

The military war was then followed by a diplomatic war by the imperialists who were anxious to regain their hold on the country. But their designs never materialised.

On 21 November 1951 the United Nations declared Libya independent. His Majesty King Idris declared to the world on 24 December the creation of the independent United Kingdom of Libya.

From this brief account of the Sanúsí Movement and its vital role in the wars of liberation, we can form an idea of its great contribution to the realisation of independence. After achieving independence, Libya today is forging rapidly ahead to build a modern Islamic society with a flourishing economy and a stable regime, thanks to the pious, dedicated and able leadership of H.M. King Idris.

Libya, the Islamic country—the Libya of the Sanúsíyyah and King Idris — will never forget the mission of the Great Imam Muhammad Ibn 'Alí Sanúsí. His illustrious grandson Idris, now carries the torch of Islam and progress in the form of the principles of the Sanúsíyyah. May the soul of the Great Sanúsí rest in peace and may God give his grandson, King Idris, long life to lead his country from progress to progress.

LIBYA—Some Facts and Figures

Situation and Size

Libya is a part of North Africa extending over 680,000 square miles, making it the fourth largest State in Africa, ranking after the Sudan, the Congo and Algeria. Its 1,800 kms. long coastline, overlooking the Mediterranean, stretches across the north. From north to south its length is about 1,500 kms.

Its boundary line is contiguous to the Muslim lands. Egypt lies in the east, the Sudan in the south-east, the Niger Republic and the Chad in the south, and Algeria and Tunisia in the west. The total length of the frontiers is not less than 480 kms. Besides being a link between the Arab countries lying in the east, south-east and west, it is regarded as the gateway to Central Africa.

Contours

The main highlands of Libya are the Western Jabal and the Jabal al-Akhdar (*the Green Mountains*) in the north; the Tasili, the Tomo and the Tibesti Mountains in the south; the Sud and the Harruj Mountains in the middle.

The main plains of Libya are: the Jefara Plain, which lies between the Mediterranean and the Western Jabal, the Misurata Plain to the east of the Jabal, the Benghazi Plain to the west of Jabal al-Akhdar, the Barqah Plain in the midst of Jabal al-Akhdar, the Batman Plain and the Dafna Plain to the east of Jabal al-Akhdar.

The National Flag

The Libyan National Flag is a tricolour of red, black and green horizontal stripes bearing a white crescent and a five-pointed white star in the centre.

Population

The population of Libya was only 1,089,000 in 1954 and the census of 1964 shows an increase of a little less than half a million, making it 1,559,900. It is a Muslim country, most of its inhabitants are Arabs with a small European community. Its fast-growing prosperity, due to the new oil economy and the peaceful and wholesome Islamic environment created by the constitutional monarchy, portends further steady increases in the population.

At present the average density of population is about two persons per square mile. This is due to the fact that over nine-tenths of the country forms part of the waterless wastes of the Sahara (desert), which supports only some 80,000 people. In the northern and north-eastern and north-western extremities of the country, where better Mediterranean climatic conditions exist, is the population more concentrated. Tripolitania has 102,800 people, and northern Cyrenaica about 450,000. These two areas receive more than eight inches of rainfall a year.

Climate

The climate of the northern regions of Libya is moderate. It is warm in winter and quite refreshing in summer. The sky remains clear and blue almost throughout the year. The rainfall is about 650 mm. on the highlands and 100 mm. on the semi-desert parts. It usually rains during the period between the months of October and March. The fruit crops of the world are generally connected with the winter rainfall.

Main Cities and Towns

Tripoli

It is the largest city of the country and is its western capital, a beautiful port with wide streets, modern buildings and busy market-places. Its rural suburbs are noted for their palm trees, olive trees and evergreen farm lands. Its population is 250,000.

Benghazi

It is second to Tripoli in size and is the eastern capital of the country, enjoying an oriental pattern of design with modern buildings and wide streets.

Beida

It is the most recently-built town and is the Headquarters of the Government. It lies in the centre of a highly developed agricultural area. Farms with fruit trees such as olives, almonds, peaches and vines extend all round the city. Cornfields and forests make a picturesque countryside.

Tobruk

It is a famous port town to the west of Benghazi.

Derna

It is often referred to as the Pearl of the Mediterranean.

Misurata

It is a beautiful town surrounded by palm forests and rich farm lands.

Other important Libyan towns are: Garian, Agedabia, Zavia, Barce (al-Merj).

Administration

Administratively the country is divided into ten governates, each governed by a governor. They are: Tripoli, Benghazi, Zavia, Derna, Sebha, Misurata, Beida, Garian, Homs and Obari.

Main Roads

Libya enjoys an extensive network of wide asphalt roads, the main road of which is the coastal road stretching from the eastern to the western border with a length of 1,822 kms. Other main roads are: the road between Ghaddahia and Sebha (length 850 kms), the Garian—Yefrin Road (length 73 kms), the Tarhuna—Homs Road (length 73 kms), the tourist road joining Susa (Apollonia) with Derna via Ras al-Hilal (length 84 kms) and the Tobruk-Jaghbúb Road (length 285 kms).

Archaeological Sites

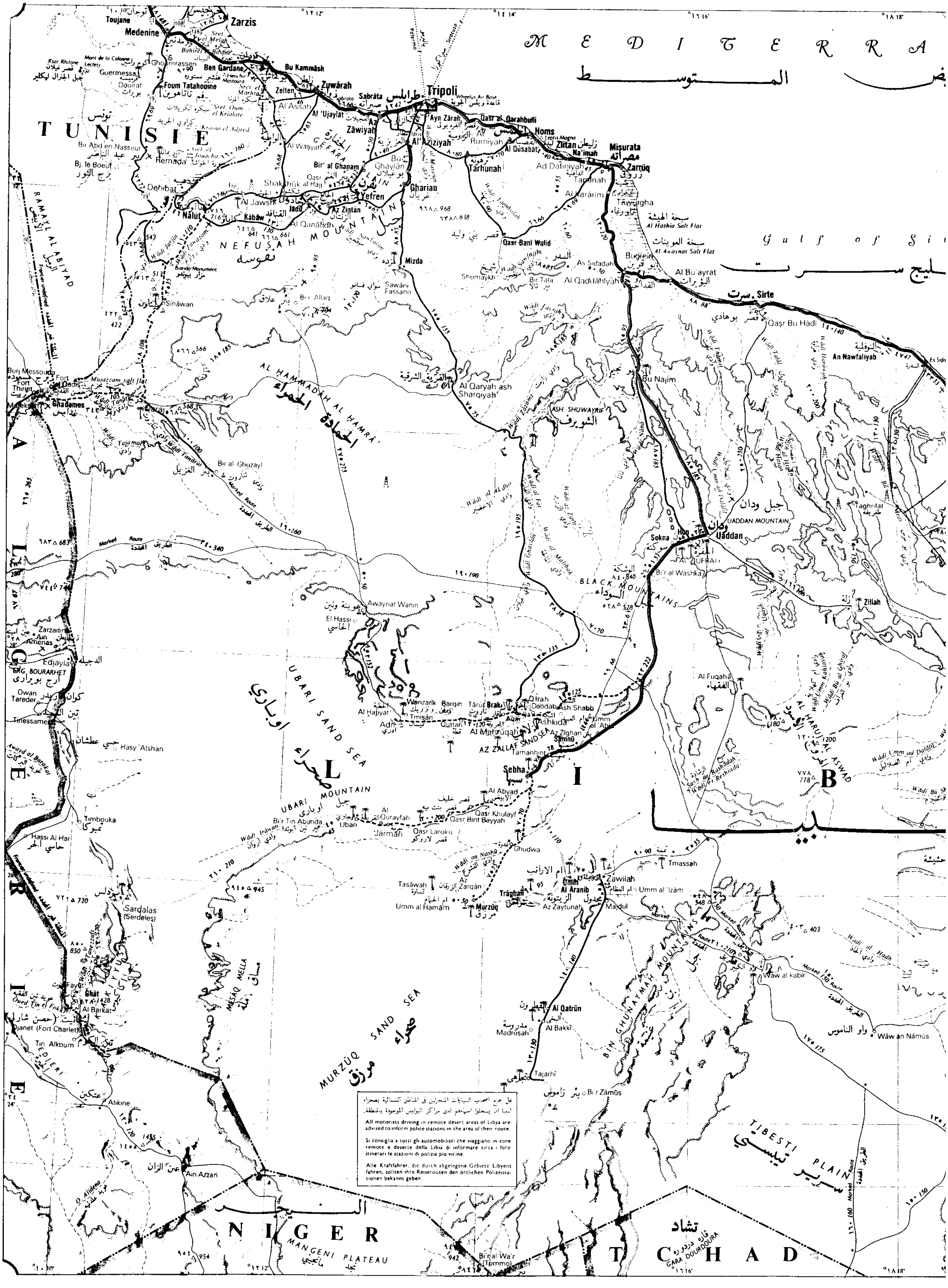
The most noted archaeological sites in Libya are:

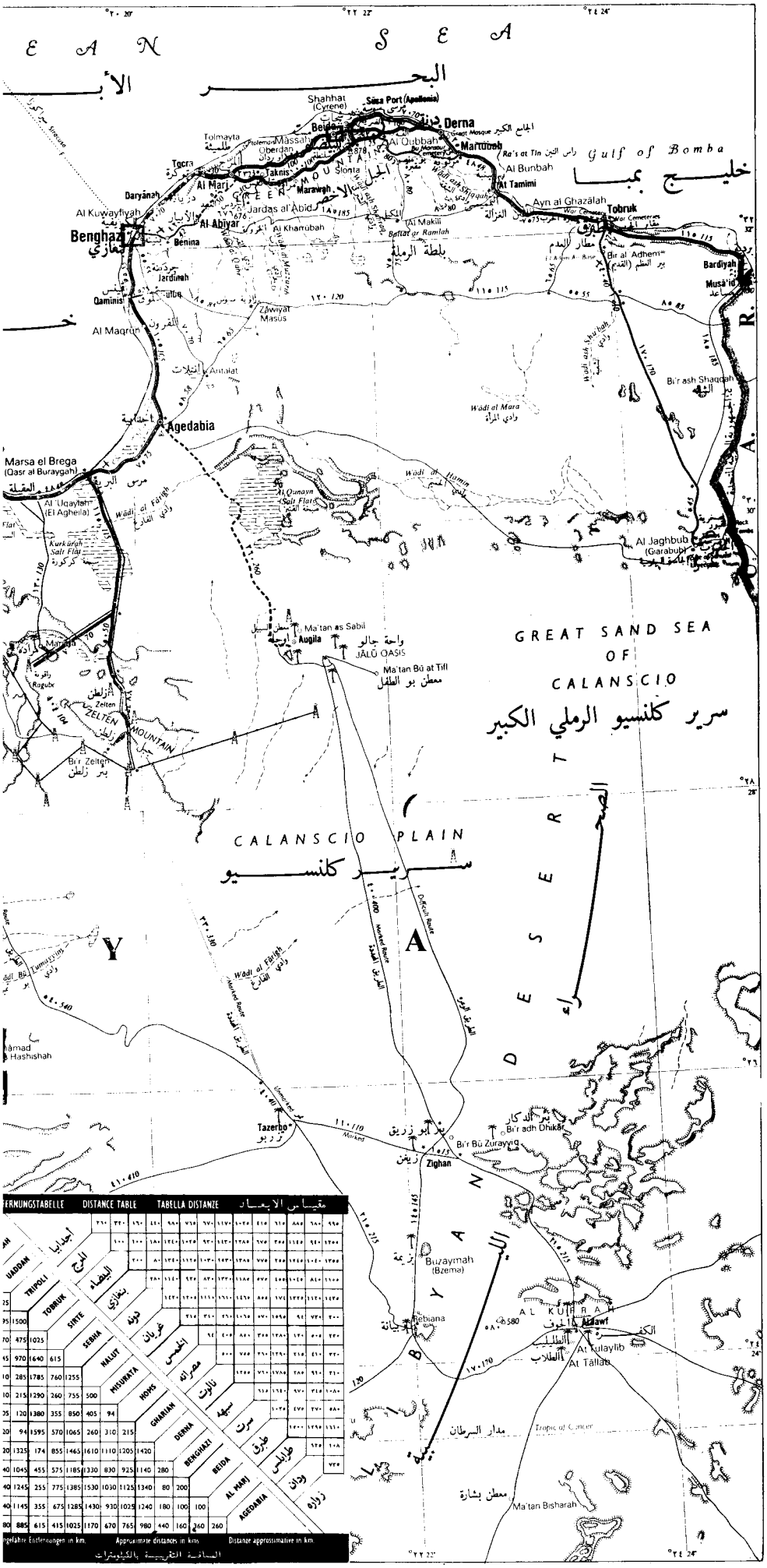
In the western region:
- Libda (Leptis Magna)
- Sabratha
- Sultan

In the eastern region:
- Cyrene (present day Shahhat)
- Apollonia (present day Susa)
- Ptolemaís (present day Tolmeyta)
- Tokeera (Taucheira) (present day Tocra)

In the southern region:
- Germa, the capital of the ancient Libyan tribes: the Garamants.

In addition to the sites mentioned above, there are many other archaeological remains which may draw the attention of the tourist either on the coastal road or on the road leading to the remote southern border.


M E D I T E R R A
المتوسط
Gulf of Si
خليج سرت
TUNISIE
تونس
Tripoli
طرابلس
Zarzis
Medenine
Toujane
Ben Gardane
Bu Kammâsh
Zuwārah
Sabrāta
Foum Tatahouine
Remada
Dehibat
Nalut
Kabāw
Jadu
Az Zintān
Yefren
Gharian
Al 'Azīzīyah
Zāwiyah
Tarhūnah
Homs
Zlītan
Misurata
مصراته
Zarrūq
Tawūrgha
Bugrein
Al Bu'ayrat
Sirte
Qaşr Bu Hādi
An Nawfalīyah
Qasr Bani Walid
Mizda
NEFUSAH MOUNTAIN
نفوسه
GEFARA PLAIN
Sināwan
Ghadames
Derj
AL HAMMADAH AL HAMRA'
الحمادة الحمراء
Al Qaryah ash Sharqīyah
ASH SHUWAYRIF
الشويرف
Bu Najim
UADDAN MOUNTAIN
جبل ودان
Hūn
Uaddan
Sokna
AL JUFRAH
BLACK MOUNTAINS
السوداء
Zillah
Al Fuqahā
AL HARUJ AL ASWAD
Awaynat Wanin
El Hassi
UBARI SAND SEA
صحراء اوباري
Brak
Sebha
Samnū
AZ ZALLAF SAND SEA
UBARI MOUNTAIN
Ubari
Ghudwa
Zawīlah
Tmassah
Murzūq
Umm al Aranib
Trāghan
Al Qatrūn
Madrūsah
Tajarhi
Bi'r Zāmūs
MURZŪQ SAND SEA
صحراء مرزق
MESSAQ MELLA
Wāw al kabir
Wāw an Nāmūs
BIN GHUNAYMAH MOUNTAINS
TIBESTI PLAIN
سرير تيبستي
Ghāt
Al Barkat
Djanet (Fort Charlet)
Sardalas (Serdeles)
Edjayla
Timbouka
Hassi Al Har
Ain Azzan
Atikine
NIGER
النيجر
MANGENI PLATEAU
Bi'r al Wa'r (Tummo)
TCHAD
تشاد
GARA DOURDOURA
RAMAYL AL ABIYAD
الرمل الأبيض
L I B
A L G E R I E
على جميع اصحاب السيارات المتجولين في المناطق النائية بصحراء
ليبيا ان يسجلوا اسماءهم لدى مراكز البوليس الموجودة بالمنطقة.
All motorists driving in remote desert areas of Libya are advised to inform police stations in the area of their route.
Si consiglia a tutti gli automobilisti che viaggiano in zone remote e deserte della Libia di informare circa i loro itinerari le stazioni di polizia piu vicine.
Alle Kraftfahrer, die durch abgelegene Gebiete Libyens fahren, sollten ihre Reiserouten den örtlichen Polizeistationen bekannt geben.



Some Important Features

1) AREA and POPULATION

Libya is a large country covering an area of 680,000 square miles with a small population of approximately 1,600,000.

2) LIBYA'S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

It will be the third largest oil producing country after the U.S.A. and Venezuela when it reaches the 100 million ton mark per annum.

3) LIBYA'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

The ancient ruins in Cyrenaica, Ptolemais (Tolmeyta) and Apollonia are outstanding, as are those at Leptis Magna, near Homs, 70 miles from Tripoli, and at Sabratha, 40 miles west of Tripoli.

Recently an Italian expedition has found in south east of the Fezzan a series of rock-paintings more than 3,000 years old which are technically in advance of any yet seen.