BYZANTIUM AND THE ARABS IN THE SIXTH CENTURY

VOLUME 2 | PART 1

IRFAN SHAHÎD

BYZANTIUM AND THE ARABS IN THE SIXTH CENTURY



Acclamation to the Ghassānid king/phylarch inscribed in the intercolumnar space in the south wall of Church 1: "O Arethas, son of al-Ḥārith!"

BYZANTIUM AND THE ARABS IN THE SIXTH CENTURY

IRFAN SHAHÎD

Volume II

Part 1: Toponymy, Monuments, Historical Geography,

and

Frontier Studies

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IN MEMORIAM

JOHANN GOTTFRIED WETZSTEIN
1815–1905

ERNST EMIL HERZFELD
1879–1948

AḤMAD WAṢFĪ ZAKARIYYĀ
1889–1964

What mean these stones?
Joshua 4:6

فَوَقَفْتُ أَسْأَلُهَا وَكَيْفَ سُؤَالُنَا

صُمًّا خَوَالِدَ مَا يَبِينُ كَلَامُهَا

I halted (my mount) asking the deserted campsites (about their occupants), but futile was my question, addressed to remains, so everlastingly deaf, silent, and inarticulate.

Labīd, *Suspended Ode,* verse 10

Contents

Abbreviations xi
Preface xiii
Acknowledgments xix
Introduction xxv

I

The Federate Sedentary Presence

I The Ghassānids: Sedentary *Foederati* 1
II Oriens: Hydrographic Observations on the Rhomaic and Federate Arabs 15

II

Frontier Studies

I The Military Reorganization of Oriens in 529 21
II *Foederati* and *Limitanei:* The Ghassānid Takeover 35
III The Two Shields 51
IV Ghassānid Military Structures and Arabic Military Terms 60

Appendices

I The Battle of Daras 66
II Al-Rabaḍa Ḥimā 66
III On the Etymology and Connotation of *Qaṣr* 67

III

Historical Geography

I Gaulanitis/Jawlān/Golan 76
II The Golan: Holy Land, Holy Mountain 86
III Jābiya 96
IV Jalliq 105
V Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis 115
VI Salūqiya/Seleucia 133

Appendix

St. Sergius in Recent Scholarship 136

IV

Ghassānid Religious Architecture:
The Churches and the Monasteries

I	Introduction	143
II	The Churches	148
III	List of Attested Churches	149
IV	The Sources on the Monasteries	156
V	Arab Monasticism	164
VI	The Ghassānids and Monasticism	171
VII	Theodore, Bishop of the Ghassānids, ca. 540–ca. 570	176
VIII	List of Ghassānid Monasteries	183
IX	Nunneries	195
X	Ghassānid Monastic Structures	201
XI	Influences	213
	Appendices	
I	Two Monasteries	216
II	*Ghūṭat Dimashq*	217

V

The Sources

A

Poets

I	Introduction	220
II	Al-Nābigha	221
III	Ḥassān	232
IV	Ḥātim	246
V	Imruʾ al-Qays	259
VI	Al-Mutalammis	265
VII	ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm	268
VIII	Al-Aʿshā	272
IX	Labīd	278
	Appendices	
I	A Triplet on the Plague	280
II	Qaṣr Dūma and Sawāʾ al-Haykal	283
III	Jāḥiẓ and al-Hamaḏānī on Ḥassān's Ghassānid Odes	287
IV	Ḥassān in Recent Scholarship	291
V	The Ghassānid Presence in Palaestina Tertia	303
VI	Additional Toponyms	304
VII	Theodor Nöldeke and Julius Wellhausen on Labīd	305

B

Prose Writers

I	Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī	306
II	Yāqūt	341
III	Three Arabic Sources	346
	Al-Yaʿqūbī	346
	Al-Bakrī	348
	Al-ʿUmarī	349
IV	Late Arabic Sources	351
	Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī	351
	Abū al-Fidā	352
	Ibn Khaldūn	353

VI

Historiographical Observations

I	Procopius and the Ghassānids	355
II	*Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān*	364
	Appendix	
	Theodor Nöldeke and *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān*	373

Epilogues

I	Ghassānid Structures and Umayyad *Quṣūr*	375
II	ʿAbbāsid Caliphs and Lakhmid Ḥīra	392
	Appendix	
	On the Ghassānid-Umayyad Relationship	403

Addenda	405
Bibliography	407
Maps	419
Plates	449
Index	457

Abbreviations

AASOR:	*Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
AB:	*Analecta Bollandiana*
BAFIC:	Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*
BAFOC:	Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*
BAR:	British Archaeological Reports
BASIC:	Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*
BASOR:	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Jerusalem)
BGA:	Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum
BSOAS:	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London)
BZ:	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CFHB:	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae
CSCO:	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
DAI:	Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
DHGE:	*Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*
DOP:	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EI:	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*
GAS:	Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*
GF:	Nöldeke, *Die Ghassânischen Fürsten*
HBE:	Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*
HE:	*Historia Ecclesiastica*
HLRE:	Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*
HMH:	Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*
IGLSYR:	Jalabert-Mouterde, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*
JAOS:	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JRA:	*Journal of Roman Archaeology*
ND:	*Notitia Dignitatum*
OC:	*Oriens Christianus*
OCP:	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
ODB:	Kazhdan, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*
PAS:	Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*
PG:	J.-P. Migne, ed., Patrologia Graeca
PLRE:	A. H. M. Jones, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*
PO:	Patrologia Orientalis

PPUAES:	Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria
RE:	*Paulys Realencyclopädie,* new rev. ed.
ROC:	*Revue de l'Orient chrétien*
SubsHag:	Subsidia Hagiographica
TE:	M. Sartre, *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine*
TU:	Texte und Untersuchungen
ZDMG:	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZDPV:	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*

Preface

Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century (*BASIC*) consists of two volumes: *BASIC* I, parts 1 and 2, published in 1995, on the political, military, and ecclesiastical history of the Arab Federates, especially the Ghassānids, in the context of the Arab-Byzantine relationship; and *BASIC* II, parts 1 and 2. This book, *BASIC* II, part 1, examines toponymy, structures, historical geography, and the frontier; the second part, *BASIC* II.2, will present the social, economic, and cultural history of the Ghassānids and will deal with Byzantium and the Arabian Peninsula. The two volumes of *BASIC* constitute the middle part of the trilogy and are also prolegomena for the third part, *Byzantium and Islam in the Seventh Century* (*BISC*). The Arab conquests under the banner of Islam closed the late antique period and opened the early medieval era in the history of the Arab-Byzantine relationship, the Near East, and the eastern Mediterranean world.

I

It had been my intention to write the social, economic, and cultural history of the Ghassānids first, and I had completed researching it when I realized that *BASIC* II.1, the present volume, should take precedence in the order of publication. Scholars who have read *BASIC* I.1–2 have inquired about the exact whereabouts of the Ghassānids, the location of their towns, villages, fortresses, churches, monasteries, and palaces, and a statement from a distinguished art historian finally convinced me of the soundness of this approach. It also became evident that *BASIC* II.1 is the necessary background for *BASIC* II.2, which will include a discussion of the efflorescence of Arabic poetry at the courts of the Ghassānids. This will raise the question of whether they had an *ōideion* in the Byzantine style for poetry recitation, the *inshād* of Arabic poetry, which was very developed in pre-Islamic times, and, if so, where exactly these *ōideia* were located. The same applies to their horses, so important to them in war, for the hunt, and for riding. Did they have one or more hippodromes and, if so, where? All activities of a social, economic, and cultural life are related to fixed spots.

The result of all these considerations was this volume, justified in the order of publication by such reflections and also by another: if "chronology is the spinal column of history," space is also one of its columns. In the case of the Ghassānids

it was to be the search for their *Lebensraum,* for the various districts in Oriens they occupied and urbanized, for their towns and villages; and within these, for their fortresses, churches, monasteries, palaces, and mansions. References to these were extracted from the sources, mainly Syriac and Arabic, and then were categorized. This laid the foundation for researching the problems discussed in chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6, all of which could be done in the quiet of the university library, but it would have been the work of an armchair historian. Themes such as toponymy and historical geography called for fieldwork in Oriens, now Bilād al-Shām. I, therefore, devoted an entire year, 1993–94, to this purpose, which I spent at the American Center for Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman, Jordan. From this base much of my research on the Ghassānids was done and my visits to Ghassānid sites in Jordan and Syria were planned. I visited all the sites that the literary sources have indicated were Ghassānid with two or three exceptions when climatic and other conditions precluded a visit. After visiting the relevant sites in Jordan I traveled to those in Syria, where the German Archaeological Institute was my base. This enabled me to visit the Ghassānid sites from the Ḥawrān and Jawlān to the north, to the Euphrates valley, and beyond, including the two tributaries, al-Balīḥ and al-Khābūr, completing what might be termed a site survey during which my wife, Mary, photographed all the relevant sites as we visited them. This fieldwork was concluded in the summer of 1994; by that time I had visited the entire Ghassānid limitrophe from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat. My vision of the sites and of the Ghassānid achievement in this limitrophe, noteworthy for its difficult climate and terrain, was thereby revolutionized.

My visit to these sites was, I believe, the first of its kind, in the sense that, unlike other archaeological journeys undertaken by the many scholars who have visited this area in the course of the last two centuries, it was sharply focused on the Arab federate (mainly Ghassānid) presence in Oriens in the sixth and seventh centuries and nothing else. In addition to revolutionizing my vision of Ghassānid toponymy and structures, it has drawn my attention to how much remains to be done and can be done in rescuing from oblivion traces of Ghassānid architectural achievements of all types. The Ghassānid scene was both encouraging and discouraging: much has been destroyed, but much remains to be retrieved. The journey confirmed many of the data of the literary sources on the whereabouts of the Ghassānids and on their structures. The saying of biblical archaeologists, "The spade confirms the Book" may, *mutatis mutandis,* be said of the Ghassānid scene, "The spade confirms the *Tārīkh* of Ḥamza."[1] Many of these sites await excavation. This is one of the two ways in which advances in this field can be made. The superstructures of many Ghassānid buildings have disappeared, but the substructures remain with the possibility of uncovering the plans of buildings and their

[1] On Ḥamza and his *Tārīkh,* see below, 306–41.

inscriptions, which will shed light on the history of the dynasty. The other way for advancing knowledge in this area is the discovery of new manuscripts for the poets that eulogized the Ghassānids. It is difficult to believe that the extant poems on the Ghassānids are the only ones composed on the dynasty; much of that poetry has been lost. Especially exciting would be the recovery of *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,*[2] the *locus classicus* of Ghassānid history, which possibly included a full account of their structures.

Excavating the Ghassānid limitrophe is an alluring task that presents many challenges for both historians and archaeologists. Just as the Ghassānid dynasty is a valid and intelligible unit of historical research, so the Ghassānid limitrophe that they inhabited is a clearly defined area with most of the toponyms in it identified in this volume, while the rest will be in due course, as research progresses. This limitrophe is easily accessible to scholars who live in Bilād al-Shām, within striking distance of all these sites. Hence they are in an ideal position to undertake excavations, whether they are related to the two departments of antiquities in Syria and Jordan or to the various universities in these two countries. It is hoped that the European and American archaeological institutes will also become engaged in this research; it was the American and European expeditions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that began serious research in the area that involved the Ghassānids, although their research was not focused on them.

What is wanted is systematic research that targets the Ghassānid limitrophe, not one that treats it peripherally as a *parergon.* My fieldwork in 1993–94 has convinced me that much can be expected from such research on the limitrophe, and such expectations have very recently been justified. Even as I write these lines the news has reached me of the discovery of a church complex at Nitil in the Madaba region of Jordan with the recognizably Ghassānid names of a phylarch and a king inscribed in it. The presumption is that it was built by the Ghassānids, one of whom is also buried there. If true, this church opens new vistas for discussing Ghassānid religious architecture to which a chapter has been devoted in this book, and I will have occasion to write an appendix on it when more details reach me. What matters now is that such an important site has been discovered by a group that was not looking for Ghassānid architectural remains but simply stumbled on one of them, and in a place that the literary sources have not associated with the Ghassānids. Surely this is a sign that these sources have not been exhaustive in their lists, a fact known previously, since other architectural remains, such as those at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr and Ḍumayr, are not mentioned by the authors in question. It is not difficult to imagine how much more fruitful the excavation of well-known Ghassānid sites will be, such as Jābiya in the Golan or Tall al-Khammān in Batanaea. The Ghassānid limitrophe is a vast arc that extended from the Euphrates

[2] For this work, see below, 364–74.

River to the Red Sea at the Gulf of Eilat; thus only a team of scholars and archaeologists can undertake this gigantic task. The discovery of the church at Nitil augurs well for the future, and so does the fact that the Ghassānid structures are entangled with Umayyad sites, as has been suspected, and as has been stated in some detail in the course of this book. As many scholars have been for a long time interested in Umayyad structures in Bilād al-Shām, this may lead them now to a return to the Ghassānid sites in their search for origins and substrates. The task attracts the present writer, but it is too late for him to become an archaeologist. The extent of my involvement in this endeavor is the composition of this volume, which I hope will be of some help to those who will excavate the Ghassānid limitrophe.

II

In its presentation, this book departs from the previous ones in the series in that it is not chronological but topical. This presentation is called for by the nature of the subject matter. The section on the sources, in which the two principal ones, the Syriac and the Arabic, are discussed, requires no knowledge of either language on the part of the reader. The sources function mostly as quarries whence place names are extracted for reconstructing the toponymic world of the Ghassānids. All are transliterated, and no Syriac or Arabic words are used in their respective scripts, with the exception of a few Arabic terms.

It has been necessary to use certain terms in relation to the Ghassānids as their history unfolds and becomes clearer. The zone in which they were settled in Oriens is often referred to as *bādiya,* the steppe land of the Syrian region. The term is unfortunate and misleading when the Ghassānids are involved because linguistically it is related to *badw,* bedouin, the term used for the Arab nomads who moved about in search of water and vegetation for their flocks. As the Ghassānids were a sedentary group, the term is inappropriate, especially as it perpetuates the myth of their nomadism. Instead of *bādiya,* the Graeco-Roman term *limitrophe* is used here as in previous volumes, where the case for its use was stated.[3]

The term *limes* also occurs quite often in this volume as in the preceding ones. It is controversial, and many scholars have denied that there was a *limes* in the sixth century in Oriens. Here, as before, the *limes* is used simply to denote the Byzantine frontier without any of its controversial implications.[4] Because the Ghassānids were elevated around A.D. 530 to be the dominant group among the

[3] See *BASIC* I.1, xix note 4.

[4] The standard work on the *limes* is B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire* (Oxford, 1992), and some chapters in his *The Near East under Roman Rule* (Leiden, 1998); for a review of the former, see E. L. Wheeler, "Methodological Limits and the Mirage of Roman Strategy," *Journal of Military History* 57 (1993), 215–40. For the most recent discussion of *limes,* see C. R. Whittaker, "Limes," in *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World,* ed. G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown, and O. Grabar (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), 542–43.

foederati of Byzantium in Oriens, and because their share of the long *Limes orientalis* was the segment from Circesium on the Euphrates to Ayla on the Gulf of Eilat, it was necessary to find a convenient term for referring only to this segment of the entire *Limes orientalis.* As the term *Limes Arabicus* is already in use to refer to the southern segment in the Provincia Arabia (although to some the term never existed), and as its continuation to the Euphrates was called the *Strata Diocletiana,* a new term was necessary for referring to the segment of the *limes* that combined both these two stretches, coterminous with both the *Limes Arabicus* and the *Strata Diocletiana.* The term *Limes Arabiae* is the convenient one to use: it is distinguished from the southern segment popularly known as the *Limes Arabicus,* and it is geographically accurate since it is that segment of the *Limes orientalis* that faced the Arabian Peninsula, the ethnic reservoir of pastoralists that posed a threat to the security of Oriens.

Acknowledgments

Like its predecessors in this series, this book owes much to many individuals and institutions without whose help it could not have been completed. First and foremost comes Dumbarton Oaks under the aegis of which this series on Byzantium and the Arabs has been published, continuing the theme pioneered by Alexander A. Vasiliev whose classic *Byzance et les Arabes* established it as a branch of Byzantine studies. Dumbarton Oaks' unrivaled resources are well known to all who have been privileged to work there. I am especially grateful to the many members of its staff who contributed to the publication of this volume. In the Byzantine Library, Irene Vaslef extended her customary helpfulness, as did Virgil Crisafulli and Mark Zapatka. Alice-Mary Talbot, the director of Byzantine Studies, meticulously reviewed the entire manuscript. In the Publications Department, Glenn Ruby, publishing manager, expedited the preparation of the manuscript for press, especially its format and illustrations, Lauren Henkin, graphic designer, drew the fifteen maps neatly and elegantly, Robin Surratt, senior editor, saw the manuscript through the editorial process. I also thank Frances Kianka, the copy editor for this book as she was for the preceding volumes in this series. Finally, my conversations with the director of Dumbarton Oaks, Professor Edward Keenan, a Russian specialist, on Alexander A. Vasiliev, who made Dumbarton Oaks a center for Arab-Byzantine relations, have also been an inspiration.

My association with Dumbarton Oaks began in 1954–55 as a junior fellow and has provided me the rare opportunity of contact with its community of scholars, with whom I have had stimulating conversations and extensive correspondence. They are far too many to enumerate but include Alexander Alexakis, Jean-Claude Cheynet, George Dennis, Clive Foss, Oleg Grabar, David Graf, Peter Grossmann, Peter Herde, Kenneth Holum, Benjamin Isaac, Walter Kaegi, Frances Kianka, Leslie MacCoull, Stamatina McGrath, Cyril and Marlia Mango, John Nesbitt, David Olster, Thomas Parker, Lennart Rydén, Werner Seibt, Jean-Pierre Sodini, Guy and Sara Stroumsa, Robert Thomson, Warren and Irina Treadgold, and Witold Witakowski. Special mention should be made of those who are no longer with us: Robert Browning, Alexander Kazhdan, and Nicolas Oikonomides.

I also owe a special debt of gratitude to the American Center for Oriental Research, Amman (ACOR) and its director, Pierre Bikai. As an ACOR-USIA

Fellow for 1993–94, I spent the academic year in Jordan engaged in the fieldwork essential for this volume. ACOR (or Akūr, as it is affectionately called in the language of the country in which it is located) was the center where I conducted my research on the various sites in Bilād al-Shām/Oriens, aided by its excellent library. It was my base, whence I visited the various sites in Jordan relevant to my research. While I was at ACOR, Zbigniew Fiema, a dynamic archaeologist, discovered the famous Petra Papyri, one of which has a precious reference to the Ghassānid phylarch Abū Karib. I am grateful to him for this discovery, which, owing to its sad state of preservation, will take a long time to be evaluated accurately. The Finnish scholar Maarit Kaimio, who is in charge of deciphering this papyrus, was good enough to keep me abreast of progress on it, and I should like to thank her for her communications.

The Studium Biblicum Franciscanum and Custodianship of the *Terra Sancta* in Jordan are under the directorship of Father Michele Piccirillo, whose reputation is well known for his exciting excavations and his recovery of the Christian past in the Holy Land. All his discoveries are relevant to my work in this early Byzantine period, especially in the region where the Ghassānids flourished, such as Mayfa'a Umm al-Rasās, and particularly his more recent excavations at Nitil in the Madaba region. The complex of Ghassānid churches, with their Greek inscriptions, excavated there has opened new vistas for studying federate Arab religious architecture. I am most grateful to Father Piccirillo for information on his historic discovery and especially for permission to include illustrations of the Nitil church complex in this book.

Two other institutions were also invaluable for my work in Jordan. The first was the Department of Antiquities presided over by Dr. Ṣafwān Tall. Both he and Dr. Fawzī Zayadine, well-known scholars in this field, extended much needed assistance. Fawzī's expertise in the Byzantine period was especially helpful in facilitating my visits to the sites. The second was the University of Jordan, which I visited on various occasions to consult books in its library and discuss historical problems with colleagues in this field, especially Drs. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dūri, Iḥsan 'Abbās, and 'Abd al-Karīm Gharaibeh. Dr. Ghāzī Bisheh was exceptionally generous with his time: he took me and my wife, Mary, to see Qaṣr Burq', al-Mushattā, and al-Qasṭal, and we exchanged views on Ghassānid-Umayyad architectural relations. Mr. Rāmī Khouri, the director of Al-Kutba publishing house, kindly provided me with photographs of sites and buildings. My cousins Kāmil and Tawfik Kawar were also helpful in various ways pertaining to my travels in Jordan; Widād, Kāmil's wife, was especially helpful both in facilitating my movements and in recommendations on the best way to reach sites; these were especially valuable coming from an individual who is genuinely interested in Jordan's archaeology.

My work involved not only Jordan but also Syria, where I spent part of my

academic year. My bases in Damascus were the German Archaeological Institute, whose then director was Dr. Thilo Ulbert, and the French Institute of Archaeology (IFAPO), whose then director was Dr. François Villeneuve. The libraries of both institutes were invaluable for my research, as were conversations with the two directors, especially with Dr. Ulbert who had been excavating one of the major Ghassānid sites, Ruṣāfa, and the *praetorium* or *ecclesia* of the Ghassānid king Mundir. Dr. Ulbert was also kind enough to take me with his colleagues on a field trip to Namāra and Khirbat al-Bayḍā. Related to the German Archaeological Institute and its work, although he was not then in residence, is Dr. Gunnar Brands whose work on Ruṣāfa and on Mundir's structure outside it is of special interest to me; I would like to thank him for his letters and offprints on the subject. The maps and library of the French Institute were especially important to my work, as was a conversation, brief as it was, with its director, François Villeneuve, on Gabalene/Jibāl in Jordan and with Mr. Michael Makdisi on bibliography. To the two directors, I am most grateful.

The Department of Antiquities in Syria was absolutely essential for the task of visiting the Ghassānid sites. This fieldwork would have been impossible without the assistance of two of its leading members, Dr. ʿAdnān Bounni and Dr. Qāsim Ṭweir. My trips to the various Ghassānid sites in such an extensive region from Ḥawrān to the Euphrates would have been impossible without the official support of these two colleagues at the Department of Antiquity. I am deeply grateful to them both. While I was visiting the sites in various parts of Syria, I had the good fortune of being assisted by the department's representatives in its regional branches: Khālid al-Asʿad, Ḥasan Ḥaṭūm, Muḥammad Haykal, Muḥammad Khayyata, Murhaf Khalaf, Aḥmad Ṭarakji, and ʿAbd al-Razzāq Zaqzūq, to all of whom I am grateful.

My trip to the Near East for fieldwork in Jordan and Syria would not have been possible without the administrative help of my colleagues at Georgetown University. The Graduate School released me from teaching duties during 1993–94 so that I might devote it exclusively to research. Thanks are especially due to Deans James Alatis, Richard Schwartz, and Richard Cronin for making this possible. A special debt is also owed to our efficient Near East and Arabic specialist at the Lauinger Library, Brenda Bickett, who never stinted me her time and energy in getting books, both at the library and through the interlibrary loan service.

In addition to these institutions and their staff, which have facilitated my research on this volume, there are individuals to whom my warm thanks are due. At the top of this list come: Zvi Maʿoz, whose knowledge of the Golan is unrivaled and to whose monumental chapter on it in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* mine owes much, providing me a panoramic view of the region throughout its various periods, and whose conversations and letters

have been equally valuable; and Franz Rosenthal, our senior Semitist, Arabist, and Islamist, who has been an inspiration to his junior colleagues for half a century and whose comments on the manuscript in its last stages were invaluable.

A debt of a different kind is owed to my wife, Mary, who helped every step of the way and was my constant companion throughout the entire academic year of fieldwork in Jordan and Syria. She photographed the vast number of sites from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat, often under harsh climatic conditions and in difficult terrain. Without these photographs, which I hope to publish, memories of our visits to these historic sites, which had been known to me as an armchair historian only from books, would have faded. These photographs revive memories of my encounters with the remains and traces of a civilization that has almost vanished. Indeed they arouse a sentiment not unlike that described by the English Romantic poet, "Poetry is emotion recollected in tranquility."

The publication of this volume was generously supported by the Diana Tamārī Ṣabbāgh Foundation, and I am most grateful to its Trustees, presided over by Mr. A. Shoman, for their contribution.

The dedication of this book to the memory of three scholars needs a few words of explanation. Without the endeavors of Johann Gottfried Wetzstein, many important inscriptions would have been lost as well as the identification of certain Ghassānid toponyms, and his maps are invaluable. He was the first scholar to walk in the footsteps of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī. Although his industry was sometimes better than his judgment, as Theodor Nöldeke noted, Wetzstein is still the indispensable guide to remains that have since then been lost; without him no record of them would have survived.

The second scholar, a distinguished archaeologist and art historian, is much better known. Ernst Emil Herzfeld's oeuvre is witness to the wide range of his interests and his remarkable versatility. He worked on the list of Ḥamza long after Wetzstein had provided the raw material on which Herzfeld could work, with the advantage of being not an armchair historian, as Nöldeke, the father of Ghassānid history, had been. In addition to a most perceptive reading of the list, Herzfeld discovered "the source of the source" which incomprehensibly had eluded Nöldeke himself. A volume such as this, in which the *Tārīkh* of Ḥamza is so fundamental, ought to commemorate the scholar who was the first to do him justice.

The third scholar, an Arab from Syria, deserves to be mentioned in the company of the first two. Aḥmad Waṣfī Zakariyyā was not an academic but an agricultural engineer with a vivid sense of the importance of his country in the history of the Near East throughout all its periods, pre-Islamic as well as Islamic. He took upon himself, without being aided by any institution or government, to travel far and wide in Syria and wrote precise descriptions of its monuments and the places where he found them. He was inspired by the work of the seventeenth-century

Ottoman traveler Ewliyā Čelebi, who for forty years had traveled extensively in the Ottoman Empire and the neighboring regions; in the third of his ten-volume account of these travels, his *Seyāhatnāme,* he recorded his travels in Oriens/Bilād al-Shām. Zakariyyā made a résumé of this volume with a copious commentary which he titled *Jawla Athariyya* and then proceeded to write a work of his own, *al-Rīf al-Sūrī.* It grieved him to see the monuments of his country in decline or in ruins, and this moved him to issue warnings against those who were tampering with them, treating them lightly, and so destroying them. His two volumes may not be as scholarly and detailed as René Dussaud's *Topographie,* but they are within measurable distance of that invaluable work.

I am indebted to all three scholars for what they have done to preserve the monuments of Oriens/Bilād al-Shām, including those of the Ghassānids. Hence the appropriateness of reviving their memory in these acknowledgments, especially as one, possibly two of them, are nowadays hardly known to the world of scholarship.

The two quotations that follow the dedication page unite an Israelite prophet and an Arab poet. Joshua needs no introduction to the reader, but Labīd does. He was a major pre-Islamic poet, and the verse comes in the exordium of his famous ode in which, *more Arabico,* the poet expresses the traditional lament over the deserted encampment and the departure of its occupants. After halting his mount, he questions the deserted abodes on those who have departed but nurses no hope that the silent remains will respond to his appeal—an exercise in futility. Joshua's question is more optimistic: just as the spade has confirmed the Bible, so has it confirmed Ḥamza.

The second quotation, a verse, needs no apologies. I have always admired the late Sir Ronald Syme as a true product of the school of *literae humaniores,* the students of which study a civilization in its tripartite components: history, philosophy, and literature. He used to grace his scholarly works with quotations from the poets, whose sensitivity to historic events was sometimes more impressive than that of the historians themselves, witness his *Roman Revolution.* Hence the invocation of a verse of poetry from the distant past of pre-Islamic Arabia. May this humanistic approach to historiography continue.

Irfan Shahîd
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Introduction

The chief historian of the reign of Justinian, during which the Ghassānids became the privileged group of *foederati* in Oriens, left these federate Arabs of Byzantium almost homeless without a single reference to a location where they were settled, and so did his school of the historians of the sixth century who followed him. By his silence, Procopius also denied them any share in the spiritual life of Byzantium, whereas they wrote an important chapter in the history of Christianity in Oriens in the sixth century as zealous Monophysites. The result of all this series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* has been a perception of the Ghassānids as nomads who roamed Oriens and made no contribution whatsoever to the life of the limitrophe in which they were settled. That Procopius hardly spoke the truth about the Ghassānids should have become evident from the two books in this series, *BASIC* I, parts 1 and 2, which, however, concentrated on the political, military, and ecclesiastical role of the Ghassānids with only sporadic references to their residences, fortresses, and towns.

Fortunately the recovery of their strong sedentary presence in Oriens, reflected in their architectural achievements, religious and secular, is possible despite the silence of Procopius. Various sources provide the facts of that presence and show that the Ghassānids, who were settled in the long limitrophe that extended from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat and also in the transverse wedge or area that extended from Gaulanitis to Auranitis, were enthusiastic builders (*philoktistai*) who left behind them some impressive architectural monuments both secular and religious and contributed to the rise of settlements and sedentary centers in this limitrophe.

This then is the thrust of this volume. The table of contents clearly reflects its themes, all related to Ghassānid structures. The sources, however, need to be discussed briefly in this introduction, as does the significance of these Ghassānid structures, the detailed discussion of which has imparted a number of new dimensions to Ghassānid history and to the Ghassānid-Byzantine relationship. These should be set against the background of the sixth century and the age of Justinian briefly discussed in the introduction to a previous part of *BASIC* I.1.

I

Theodor Nöldeke, the distinguished German scholar, laid down certain rules, which might be termed Nöldeke's Law, for writing the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam, especially the Ghassānids: the prose Arabic sources of later Islamic times are not entirely reliable on the history of a dynasty that flourished in the sixth century; the general information they present may be acceptable, but they lack accuracy and their weakness is especially patent in chronology and the sequence of rulers. He therefore recommended that a sound history of the Ghassānids must be built on the contemporary Greek, Syriac, and pre-Islamic Arabic sources, especially contemporary Arabic poetry. Each category of these sources has its own value and documents one aspect of Ghassānid history. On this foundation he was able to present the most reliable account of both the chronology and the sequence of Ghassānid rulers.

The first two categories of sources, the Greek and the Syriac, are the principal sources for the military, political, and ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids, and they have formed the basis on which the two previous volumes in this series have been written, *BASIC* I, parts 1 and 2. For this volume on toponymy and structures, the Greek literary sources have nothing to say, but the Syriac and Arabic sources do. Hence they are the ones that have been exploited for writing this volume. Although Nöldeke was mainly interested in chronology and with it the identity and sequence of rulers, he was the first to struggle seriously with the problem of Ghassānid structures as presented by Ḥamza, the tenth-century Muslim writer to whom he had an ambivalent attitude, fully justified because of the problem of source survival when he wrote his monograph on the Ghassānids. The two documents crucial for a proper appreciation of Ḥamza were not at his disposal. Research on the structures of the Ghassānids took a sharp turn for the better as a result of the availability of the evidence from archaeology represented by the *praetorium extra muros* at Ruṣāfa, advertised by A. Musil, and the discovery that the source of Ḥamza was a reliable early work, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* made by E. Herzfeld. However, Nöldeke's Law and technique for advancing the frontiers of knowledge on Ghassānid history remain standard and authoritative, with only modifications and additions called for by the publication of new sources, by better understanding of Muslim historiography and appreciation of certain Muslim authors, such as Ḥamza himself, but above all by the best of all evidence for the Ghassānid establishments—the archaeological—not available to Nöldeke, who remained an armchair historian.

The discovery of the "source of the source" by Herzfeld was a breakthrough, but not being an Arabic philologist he did not pursue it. His discovery, however, has made possible further probings into "the source of the source" and the result has been the section in this volume devoted to *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.* If Nöldeke

had been aware of it, it would have revolutionized his thought on Ḥamza and Ghassānid structures. He therefore, and in full conformity with his own law, fell upon the verses of the two major poets, contemporaries and panegyrists of the Ghassānids, Ḥassān and Nābigha. He was the great connoisseur of Arabic poetry, witness his *Delectus,* and an acute critic of what in it is authentic and what is not, witness his *Beiträge.* This was especially important in his analysis of the poetry of Ḥassān, who became in later life the poet laureate of the Prophet Muḥammad. As a result, much spurious poetry was fastened on him in later times for various reasons. But his pre-Islamic verse is untouchable as far as the problem of authenticity is concerned, and so it has been judged by Nöldeke and by everyone who has written on the poetry of Ḥassān. Various chapters in this volume treat the relevant sources in full conformity with Nöldeke's technique, but a synopsis of them is desirable for a better grasp of their range and value.

The Syriac Sources

Although the main value of the Syriac sources resides in their contribution to understanding the spiritual life of the Ghassānids as zealous Christians, they do have precious references to Ghassānid toponyms and structures. They are all contemporary primary documents. One of the earliest is Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, the Monophysite firebrand, one of whose letters documents the residence of the Ghassānid Jabala in Jābiya, their capital in the Golan as early as ca. A.D. 520. The *Chronicle* of Dionysius of Tell Maḥre, which includes the well-known letter of Peter of Callinicum, documents the Ghassānid presence in or near Mabboug/Hierapolis in A.D. 587 in the far north with a reference to their church in Jābiya in the Golan in the south. By far the most important Syriac document that literally floods with light the Ghassānid contribution to the religious life of Oriens and to their structures is the letter of the Monophysite abbots with reference to 137 monasteries in the Provincia Arabia alone, whose patron and protector was the Ghassānid Arethas.

The Arabic Sources

Like the Syriac sources, most of the Arabic sources are contemporary and primary. Those that are not derive from sources that are, such as the *Chronicle* of Ḥamza. First, the poets. The major ones are a trio consisting of panegyrists of the dynasty, namely, Ḥassān, Nābigha, and Ḥātim, of whom the first two are the most important. Ḥassān was the poet laureate of the Ghassānids, their relative who belonged to the Azd of Medina. Nābigha was the celebrated poet of Dubyān, the Arabian tribe that had close relations with the Ghassānids. Ḥātim belonged to the tribe of Ṭayyi', also a tribe of Arabia and an ally of the Ghassānids. One of the most brilliant portions of Nöldeke's classic on the Ghassānids was the one that treated the first two poets from whom he so skillfully extracted the valuable data on the Ghassānids. The third poet was unknown to him as a valuable source for the Ghassānids.

In addition to this trio there were other contemporary poets who have important references to the Ghassānids: Mutalammis, Aʿshā, Labīd, and ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm, all of whom were contemporaries; to these may be added a few poets of the Umayyad period who have some references to Ghassānid towns and structures, valuable for the persistent Ghassānid presence in Umayyad Bilād al-Shām where the Ghassānids still maintained a strong profile.

Second, prose works. Although written in the Islamic period, two works stand out as fundamental for Ghassānid toponymy and structures because they both derive from an early work on the Ghassānids, written either before or shortly after their fall in the seventh century, most probably during the caliphate of Muʿāwiya. This precious work, discussed in great detail in this volume, is *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* exclusively on the Ghassānid dynasty. It is not extant, and this is a great loss for Ghassānid history, as great as that of the chapter on the dynasty in the Syriac *Historia Ecclesiastica* of John of Ephesus. The two works that stand out are the *Chronicle* of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, a tenth-century Muslim historian, who included in his *Tārīkh* a precious account of the Ghassānids and their structures in a chapter especially devoted to them; and the work of the thirteenth-century geographer/scholar Yāqūt, who in his celebrated *Muʿjam al-Buldān* (*Geographical Dictionary*) also mentioned the Ghassānids. He complements what Ḥamza says on them, and both derive from the same source, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.*

In addition to these two important works, there have been published recently two Islamic works on pre-Islamic Arabia, with a wealth of information, namely, *al-Manāqib al-Mazyadiyya* and *Nashwat al-Ṭarab fī Tārīkh Jāhiliyyat al-ʿArab,* works of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries respectively. They are not specifically on the Ghassānids nor on structures, but they bear indirectly on both.

Another group of sources, Arabic epigraphy, is represented by the Trilinguis Zabadaea, Usays, and Ḥarrān inscriptions. These are sixth-century documents, the last two of which are especially important, as they relate the Ghassānids to one of their forts in Usays and document the erection of a church at Ḥarrān in Trachonitis.

Archaeology

Solid as literary evidence is for the reality of Ghassānid structures, it remains isolated and vulnerable if not buttressed by more concrete evidence on the ground, that is, monuments. Fortunately these have survived almost miraculously for some fourteen centuries to support what the literary sources have yielded on the Ghassānids as builders. The three that have survived are quite significant: (1) the *praetorium extra muros* of Mundir at Ruṣāfa, most probably an audience hall for conducting military and political affairs; (2) the tower of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, which illustrates the Ghassānid role in the Monophysite church and their deep interest in monasticism; and (3) the mansion at Hayyāt, where presumably Mundir resided during his visits to the town.

These three monuments thus illustrate different aspects of Ghassānid life; all are in a good state of preservation and are impressive witnesses to the Ghassānids as *philoktistai.* They are separated from one another by long distances, evidence that the Ghassānids were spread far and wide in Oriens. None is mentioned by the literary sources, surely a sign that these were selective in listing the Ghassānid monuments and thus were not comprehensive, let alone exhaustive.

II

The significance of the conclusions drawn from the evidence of the toponyms and structures of the Ghassānids is multidimensional and may be briefly presented as follows. Together with the two previous volumes on the political, military, and ecclesiastical history of the federate Ghassānids and the next volume on their social, economic, and cultural history, the present volume reveals a mature Christian Arab culture and presence that emerged in Oriens in the century and a half before the rise of Islam. In the history of Arabic culture in Oriens/Bilād al-Shām, this Ghassānid federate one lies between the previous Nabataean/Palmyrene culture, which was pagan Arab, and the later Umayyad culture, which was Muslim Arab. The Ghassānids represented the ripest expression of a Christian Arab culture.

The cultural analyst of Oriens in this early Byzantine period had conceived of the region as bicultural, composed of Aramaic/Syriac and Graeco-Roman sectors. After the appearance of this series on the Arab *foederati,* especially the last on the Ghassānids, it is no longer possible to speak of Oriens in bicultural terms. The Ghassānids stamped the limitrophe with a strong Arab identity after its Arabness had been diluted by the Hellenization and Romanization of the Nabataeans and the Palmyrenes. Consequently the triculturalism of Oriens became firmly established, consisting of the Graeco-Roman component and the Semitic one, divided between the Aramaean and the Arab. The Ghassānid architectural monuments that have survived are the most eloquent witness for the reality of the Arab component in the triculturalism of sixth-century Oriens.

In the history of the *Limes orientalis* in the three centuries from Constantine to Heraclius, the Ghassānids and their military monuments shed light on the second and middle phase of that *limes,* the first being the overhaul of the eastern defense system by Diocletian, and the third and last being the demise of the *limes* under Heraclius. It was they who took over from the *limitanei* the charge and watch over the *limes,* and this takeover brought about the disestablishment of half of the defense system as conceived by Diocletian, imparting a new vibrancy to the stagnant frontier system. Again, their surviving monuments remind the student of frontier studies of the Ghassānid presence along the *limes* during that takeover.

One of the surprises that intensive research into the history of the Ghassānid *foederati* has revealed was the emergence of a new large figure in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations, almost as important as that of the better-known Are-

thas, who has occupied the center of the stage in the history of these relations. Now another major figure, Abū Karib, his brother, appears in charge of the southern sector of the *Limes Arabiae* in Palaestina Tertia.

As the Ghassānids were not only rude soldiers fighting the wars of Byzantium but also princes of peace as patrons of the Monophysite church and of Arabic poetry for which their courts became the destination of poets from the Arabian Peninsula, their architectural achievements were not limited to the construction or renovation of forts and fortresses. They built palaces, mansions, churches, monasteries, and audience halls. Fortresses were purely functional, erected for defense, but these nonmilitary structures must have reflected artistic features in much the same way that such structures reflected them in the Byzantine world of the Graeco-Roman establishment and in the Aramaic world. This was the sixth century, during which Justinian reigned and whose reign witnessed the golden age of Byzantine Christian art both in the capital and reflected in the provinces of the various dioceses of which the Oriens of the Ghassānids was one. Ghassānid architectural features are therefore the reflection of Byzantine art in its provincial version in Oriens and possibly sometimes adapted to Arab tastes. The Ghassānid monuments or what have survived of them are of some interest to the Byzantine art historian of the early Byzantine period. Fortunately the three that have survived reflect something of what they must have looked like before they suffered degeneration. These monuments represent the three aspects of their life: military, religious, and civic.

Whether the study of these monuments and others that, one hopes, will be discovered reveal an Arab adaptation of Byzantine artistic forms remains to be shown. Perhaps the newly discovered church at Nitil in the Madaba region offers a fair chance of studying the artistic features of a Ghassānid structure, not available for inspection in the others that have survived. A chapter in this volume has touched lightly on such adaptations as the ambulatory in or around their churches, reflective of the partiality of the Arabs and the Semites in general to circumambulation as one of their cherished rites in their celebration of the Christian liturgy.

The Byzantine geographers such as Hierocles and George of Cyprus ignore in the *Synecdemos* and the *Descriptio* the toponymy of the Arab federate presence in Oriens, perhaps not surprisingly since such towns as Jābiya were not *poleis* and the toponymy of the *foederati* was not within the range of their interest. But as the volumes of *BASIC* have shown, the towns and districts in which the Ghassānids lived were important in the wars, politics, and religious life of Byzantium, if a holistic view is taken and not only a slanted, sectional one relating to Chalcedonian Byzantium and the Graeco-Roman establishment in Oriens.

Ghassānid towns such as Jābiya and Jalliq and Ghassānid districts such as al-Balqā' deserve to be better known in view of the important part they played in both Byzantine and early Islamic times and in view of the fact that they repre-

sented the strands of continuity between the two orders. The historical geography of these towns and districts and not only the intersection of their coordinates on maps also deserve to be researched and written. Such research is in line with some major projects in Byzantine scholarship, the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini,* edited by Herbert Hunger, and *L'activité byzantine* directed by Hélène Ahrweiler. This research, because it provides a background for early Islamic history, is also related to the work of Islamists on cartography such as the *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* and the work of those interested in regional geography such as Eugen Wirth.

The historical geography of four Ghassānid towns or towns with Ghassānid association has been researched and included in various sections of this volume, as has been one district, the Golan, in its Ghassānid profile. But this is only a modest beginning, intended to arouse further interest. Much more research is needed on what has remained of Ghassānid toponymy in Oriens.

The Ghassānid federate presence has emerged as an important substrate in the structure of the Umayyad state. Various sections of this volume discuss this all-pervasive presence and with it the Byzantine presence, mediated and filtered through the Ghassānids who had themselves been Byzantinized for a century and a half. The founder of the Umayyad dynasty, Muʿāwiya, availed himself of the skills and expertise of the Ghassānids in running the new and first Muslim empire, not on strictly Arabian and Muslim lines. The Ghassānid presence or even heritage obtained in various walks of Umayyad life of which the military was the most visible. The *ajnād,* the military circumscriptions into which Bilād al-Shām under the Umayyads was divided and which were the secret of Umayyad military successes and even their own stability, were inherited by the Umayyads from the Byzantine past in which the Ghassānids played a major role. The conqueror of Carthage, the pacifier of North Africa for the Umayyads, and the founder of Qayrawān was the Ghassānid general, Ḥassān ibn al-Nuʿmān.

Of this all-pervasive Ghassānid presence in the Umayyad state, the most visible and concrete are the architectural monuments of the Ghassānids, some of which have fortunately survived. They are one of the main concerns of this volume; because of their survival they illustrate vividly the Ghassānid presence in the Umayyad state, most of which has disappeared with the fall of the Umayyads and the lapse of time. But this one, the architectural, still stands, and it is argued in this book that the Umayyads must have moved into many of the Ghassānid structures, developed them, and adapted them to their tastes and needs with the result that they became hardly recognizable as originally Ghassānid. Thus Ghassānid architectural history is very much the concern of the Umayyad art historian, especially now that this volume has shown that the Ghassānid architectural presence was not confined to a few monuments but was much more extensive than previously thought, extending from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat, the same area of the Umayyad *quṣūr.* This entails a return on the part of the Umayyad art historian to

Umayyad monuments in order to find out how much they might owe to a possible Ghassānid substrate.

Various articles by the present writer and some sections in *BASIC* I, parts 1 and 2 have questioned the veracity of Procopius in his accounts of the Ghassānid involvement in the wars of the reign of Justinian. It has also been questioned in this volume on toponymy and structures, especially in connection with what Procopius says in the *Buildings,* which led to a return to the *Wars* and the *Secret History* for related matters. The result of the inquiry has been as follows.

The *Wars* and the *Secret History* have concealed the fact that the overhaul of the *Limes orientalis* by Justinian around 530 involved the Ghassānids in a very substantial way. They were given important new responsibilities for the defense of Oriens, which they successfully and faithfully performed. What is more, they gradually replaced the *limitanei* for the defense of the diocese, a radical change in the Diocletianic defense establishment which consisted of *comitatenses* in the interior and *limitanei* in the exterior lines of defense.

In the *Buildings,* Procopius was silent on the Ghassānid contribution to the fortifications he noted at length. As is well known, there is a gap in the list of fortifications that Justinian is supposed to have erected in the East. This gap, which might be termed the "enigmatic gap," extended from Palmyra to Ayla on the Gulf of Eilat. There is no mention of any work done by Justinian in this long sector of the *Limes orientalis,* since Procopius suddenly stops at Palmyra, after giving a detailed account of fortifications in the other provinces in the region. This vacuum must be adjudged enigmatic as it is impossible to believe that the frontier from Palmyra to Ayla was left without any attention on the part of Justinian or the central government. Contemporary Arabic poetry in panegyrics on the Ghassānids refers to Ghassānid buildings, as does a prose work in Arabic, a late tenth-century *Chronicle* that derives from an early authentic source, but above all archaeology. All have witnessed to the Ghassānids as enthusiastic builders, *philoktistai.* The enigmatic gap can thus no longer be said to be enigmatic. Only Procopius' silence made it look so. The Ghassānids were in charge of it, and they must have taken care of its defense, including fortresses, traces of which have survived, such as the *praetorium extra muros* at Ruṣāfa, the tower at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, and the tower at Ḍumayr. Just as Malalas was a check on Procopius and his account of the Ghassānids, making his charge of *prodosia* leveled against them untenable, so do other sources such as the *Tārīkh* of Ḥamza function as checks on Procopius when the latter is silent on who was in charge of the enigmatic gap and who took good care of its fortifications.

Procopius obscured the significance of the appointment of Abū Karib over Palaestina Tertia and presented it as a consolation prize for a "Saracen" in an area that was of no crucial importance to imperial interests. In so doing and in concealing that Arethas and Abū Karib were brothers, he succeeded in concealing the

more important fact of the appointments of the two Ghassānids as wardens and watchers over the *Limes Arabiae,* as part of the general overhaul of the *Limes orientalis* that involved the *magister militum* Sittas in the north, in the Armenian sector of the *limes.*

Terminology

The Limitrophe

The term *limitrophe* was used in the previous volume, *BASIC* I.1, for the zone that the Ghassānid *foederati* occupied where they were deployed along the *limes.* As this volume deals in a large way with frontier studies, it has become necessary to explain the use of this term in this new context.[1] The term is a hybrid, a Graeco-Latin term (*limes*-τρόφος). "Although technically not *limitanei,* the Ghassānids were in fact such, and one of their assignments was the defense of the *limes* along which they were encamped."[2] Now that the Ghassānid takeover from the *limitanei* has been discussed in a chapter entirely devoted to it,[3] the case for the use of the term becomes stronger.

Unlike the term *limes,* which has been under fire as a technical term in frontier studies, this one is not; literally it means the lands set apart for the support of the troops on the frontier, and so it serves the purpose of describing the *zone,* the borderland that the Ghassānids occupied. The case for its use in sixth-century parlance is thus justified in connection with the Ghassānids' new function as *foederati* de jure, and *limitanei* de facto; it is a term free from the old associations of the old one, *limes,* and especially called for by the discovery of the new function the *foederati* were now performing.

The case for its use in this book is justified also because of the section on the Ghassānids as a sedentary group and not a group of nomads,[4] a myth that has vitiated for a long time most of what has been written about them; it was necessary to find a term that would accurately describe the area they occupied in Oriens as sedentaries. The term associated with the Ghassānids in Arabic, *bādiya,* means little or nothing to the general reader and sounds alien in a chapter on Roman frontier studies, unlike limitrophe. Another equally important reason for the choice of limitrophe is that the term *bādiya* is related in the popular conception to nomads, which the Ghassānids were not, a myth this volume has exploded.

The resuscitation of the term from the Graeco-Roman terminology of late antiquity is thus both necessary and desirable. No apologies are needed for its introduction as a neologism since it is attested in English both as an adjective and

[1] This was lightly touched upon in the Preface, above, xv–xvi.
[2] *BASIC* I.1, xix note 4.
[3] Below, 35–51.
[4] Below, 1–15.

a substantive, although it went out of fashion toward the end of the sixteenth century. It is noteworthy that in the twentieth century it was literary artists who revived it: Vladimir Nabokov in English[5] and Louis Calaferte in French. But the term, useful and attractive, is far more the property of the late antique historian.

Ghassānland

In this volume, the useful term *Ghassānland* occurs many times. *Land* in the compound term *Ghassānland* is the translation of Menander Protector's term, when he referred to the territory of the Ghassānid king Mundir in the late 560s (ἡ Ἀλαμουνδάρου γῆ) and also reflects their self-image in the Arabic sources. There is also reference in Theophanes (A.D. 563) to the raids made by the Lakhmid king ʿAmr against the "places" of Arethas, Mundir's father, εἰς τοὺς τόπους αὐτοῦ. Both phrases have been discussed in detail,[6] and both the "places" and "land" were possibly, but not necessarily, *extra limitem.*[7] Whatever was meant by these two terms in Theophanes and Menander, the Ghassānids were settled on state-owned lands that legally were Roman/Byzantine territory and not Arab Ghassānid. So this was Roman territory not ceded to the Ghassānids by the Romans but extended to them to settle on, not as *cives,* but *foederati,* allowed to do that by the terms of the *foedus.* So the term *Ghassānland* should be understood only in this sense.

Whether the Ghassānid takeover from the *limitanei,* which made them such de facto if not de jure, entailed corresponding changes in the terms of the *foedus* is not clear. As is well known, the *limitanei* received grants of land which they tilled,[8] and if such grants were accorded the Ghassānids after their takeover from the *limitanei,* then the employment of the term *Ghassānland* would acquire further and stronger justification. Even more relevant was the Byzantine practice of making land grants to foreign migrants in return for military service.[9] The Ghassānids qualified as such, and so the possibility that they received these land grants can be seriously entertained.

The case for the employment of the term *Ghassānland* may be stated on the ground that the Ghassānids lived in various parts of Oriens in the long limitrophe that extended from the Euphrates to Ayla on the Red Sea, and in the transverse wedge: Auranitis, Trachonitis, Batanaea, and the Golan. So the term is convenient

[5] See *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1989), III, s.v. limitrophe.

[6] *BASIC* I.1, 282, 286–87, 312–14.

[7] Unless the reference was to Roman territory on which the Ghassānids as *foederati* were settled.

[8] The *terras colere* of *Corpus Iuris Civilis: Codex Iustinianus,* ed. P. Krüger (Berlin, 1939), I.27.8.

[9] See M. Whitby, "Recruitment in Roman Armies from Justinian to Heraclius (*ca.* 565–615)," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* (Princeton, N.J., 1995), 114–16.

to use when reference is made to them not in a specific area of their presence in Oriens but in general.

Urbanization/Ruralization

As the Ghassānids were a sedentary group, credited with many structures and settlements in Oriens in the Arabic sources, many of which have been confirmed by archaeology, it was necessary to discuss their achievement in this connection. The term *urbanization* was used in *BASIC* I.1 (e.g., p. xix) and in my article on Ghassānids in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam.* The term was accurate when applied to two Ghassānid toponyms, Jābiya and Jalliq, which were indeed flourishing towns, possibly cities, their two capitals.[10] The rest of their settlements were hardly towns or cities, hence the term "urbanization" is not accurate for describing the efforts of the Ghassānids to establish centers of sedentary life in Oriens, both in the limitrophe and in the transverse wedge. French scholarship has established the fact that the settlements in the transverse wedge where the Ghassānids lived were villages and rural settlements and that such was the culture of that region. The term *urbanization* is therefore misleading, and *ruralization* is the much better term, although its connotation in English is not exactly the establishment of rural sedentary centers in the countryside.[11] But as it is contrasted with "urbanization," its employment is defensible, and so it is close enough as a description of the activity of the Ghassānids as a sedentary group living in the country. Norman Lewis' phrase "the frontier of settlement"[12] describes well the Ghassānid rural centers in the limitrophe, the "limitrophe of settlements." The use of the term is very appropriate in connection with the Umayyad caliphs, who often moved to the country where they built many of their residences.[13]

Conclusion

The reader of this volume, so detailed on the structures of the Ghassānids and their role in the defense of Oriens after the takeover from the *limitanei,* may gain the impression that their role has been exaggerated. This would be a misconception. The prominence given to the Ghassānids derives from the fact that they were such within the framework of the series of Arab *foederati* in the service of Byzantium from the fourth through the sixth century, namely, the Tanūkhids, the Salīḥids, and the Ghassānids, treated in the three preceding volumes in this series. As

[10] In the use of "urbanization," I was influenced, perhaps unconsciously, by Athanasius' employment of the term in the well-known sentence in his *Vita Antonii,* describing the transformation of the desert by the monks, ἡ ἔρημος ἐπολίσθη; see below, 166.

[11] See the *Oxford English Dictionary,* XIV, s.v. ruralization.

[12] See N. Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan, 1800–1980* (Cambridge, 1987), 53 note 1.

[13] On the Umayyad residences in the limitrophe, see below, 375–91.

for their role within the Byzantine defense system in Oriens in the sixth century, this, too, has not been exaggerated but given its rightful place within that system. Oriens was defended by a strong Byzantine/Roman army under the command of the various *duces* and the *magister militum* in Antioch. The Ghassānid *foederati* functioned as only part of this defense system, a point emphasized in the relevant chapter.[14]

[14] Below, 51.

I

The Federate Sedentary Presence

The myth that the Ghassānids were nomads has taken a long time to die, and its duration has been remarkably long. Their alleged "nomadism" deserves a thorough discussion as some important problems are involved in it, such as the Ghassānid substrate of Umayyad structures. As the most important and relevant evidence for sedentariness is architecture, this section presents an account of how Ghassānid structures, with the exception of a few that have survived, disappeared in the course of the fifteen centuries or so that elapsed from the time they crossed the Byzantine frontier.

I. The Ghassānids: Sedentary *Foederati*

That the Ghassānids were a sedentary group was well known to the Arabs of the sixth century and to the Muslim Arab writers of later times. Contemporary poets who composed poetry on them understood this and illustrated it with details of their social life and other aspects of their sedentary lifestyle.[1] One of these poets not only described these aspects but also expressed his partiality to them in contrast to those of the nomads of Arabia.[2] Later Arab authors of the Islamic period also considered the Ghassānids a sedentary group and contrasted them with the pastoralists, whom they called *ahl ʿamad,*[3] "those of the tent-poles," that is, nomads who pitched and struck their tents, moving from one place to another.

When the Arab poets of pre-Islamic times and later authors identified the Ghassānid lifestyle as sedentary and not nomadic, they gave a truthful description of it. The pre-Islamic Arabs were proud of their pastoral way of life and lauded it;

[1] The Ghassānid sedentary lifestyle is reflected in various poems of the *Dīwāns* of Nābigha and Ḥassān, which will be discussed in detail in *BASIC* II.2.

[2] Ḥassān, *Dīwān,* ed. W. ʿArafāt, Gibb Memorial New Series 25 (London, 1971), I, 316, verses 7–9. Even their onomasticon reflects their sedentariness, with such names as ʿAmr, ʿĀmir, and ʿImrān, all of which related to building and living a settled life.

[3] See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq,* ed. Ibn Manẓūr (Beirut, 1984), VI, 297. Also quoted by M. Khuraysāt in "Dawr Ghassān fi al-Ḥayāt al-ʿĀmma," *Proceedings of the Third Symposium on Bilad al-Sham in the Umayyad Period,* ed. M. Bakhīt, vol. I, Arabic Section (Amman, 1989), 195 and note 19.

it was the lifestyle that gave birth to *murūʾa,* the Arab concept of *virtus,* a concept that involved primarily courage in war and hospitality in peace, but also included other virtues such as independence of spirit and love of liberty, and these have been hallowed since then.[4] Even the Prophet Muḥammad, who brought about a revolution of ideas in Arab life and history, subscribed to the ideal of *murūʾa,* and the saying *lā dīna bilā murūʾa* ("religion is impossible without *murūʾa*") is attributed to him. Consequently, the description of the Ghassānids as sedentaries by pre-Islamic poets and later authors could not have been motivated by a desire to flatter them.

The sedentariness of the Ghassānids is confirmed by an examination of the three phases in the unfolding of their history.

1. The South Arabian phase: the Ghassānids lived in South Arabia, the most urban part of the Arabian Peninsula, a fact known to classical writers,[5] and peopled by a Semitic group, cognate with the Arabs and called by various names, such as Sabaeans and Homeritae. Arabs of the south, such as Kinda and Ghassān, adopted a settled way of life because of their contacts with the Sabaean/Ḥimyarite peoples of South Arabia. The history of Ghassān in this South Arabian stage is obscure, but that of other Arabs is not. Such is the history of Balḥārith who lived in the city of Najrān, and of Kinda, with whom are associated certain towns in South Arabia, especially in the Ḥaḍramawt region.[6]

2. The migration period: the Ghassānids moved out of South Arabia in circumstances and at a time not entirely clear. Before they reached Oriens in the north, they (as Azd) had wandered in western Arabia but continued to be associated with three urban centers. They halted in Najrān, whose inhabitants, according to some sources, are related to the Ghassānids. After Najrān they halted in Mecca, where Khuzāʿa, part of the larger Azd group to which they belonged, remained. The third and last station was Yathrib/Medina, the rich oasis in Ḥijāz,

[4] These ideals were given literary expression in early Arabic poetry. Moreover, the pastoralists harbored contempt for the sedentaries, whether farmers, craftsmen, or traders, and contrasted their own *badāwa* (pastoralism) with the *ḥaḍāra,* the life of the sedentaries. For a verse in an early Arabic poem that expresses this contrast, composed by an Umayyad poet, al-Quṭāmī, see A. Amīn, *Fajr al-Islām,* 14th impression (Cairo, 1987), 9–10, for a description of the Arab pastoral way of life.

[5] Even to Ammianus Marcellinus in the 4th century, who speaks of their *urbes* and *civitates* and describes various aspects of their sedentary life; see *Res Gestae,* ed. W. Seyfarth, 4 vols. (Berlin, 1968–71), XXIII.6.45–47.

[6] On Najrān and Kinda, see the present writer in *EI*[2], s.vv. On the towns of Kinda in South Arabia such as Dammūn, ʿAndal, and Khawdūn, see Yāqūt, s.vv. Dammūn and ʿAndal. The geographer associates three of them, sometimes two, with al-Ṣadif, a subdivision of Kinda. Hamdānī has some material on these towns to which he adds Hadun; see al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifat Jazīrat al-ʿArab,* ed. M. al-Akwaʿ (Riyadh, 1974), 169–70. See also the footnotes of the editor, who says that ʿAndal is still a prosperous inhabited place; ibid., 169 note 5.

where two subdivisions of the group, the al-Aws and al-Khazraj, stayed on as agriculturalists.[7]

Reliable details on the Ghassānids during this migration period are lacking, but the history of Kinda, a sister Arab group that also moved out of South Arabia, is clearer. On its way out, Kinda founded the city of al-Faw in Inner Arabia, the remains of which have been uncovered recently by Saudi Arabian archaeologists.[8]

3. The federate period: the Ghassānids became *foederati* in the highly urban region of Oriens. They became fully integrated into Byzantine society and participated actively in its secular and religious urban life, as has been explained in the two previous volumes on the sixth century. This was the perfect context for the Ghassānids to resume their sedentariness and, what is more, to contribute to the urbanization of the long limitrophe of Oriens and its transverse wedge, as indicated in various parts of this volume.

Sedentariness has always been associated with South Arabia, the homeland of the Ghassānids. And so it was in the perception of the classical world, which conceived of it as *Arabia Felix,* in opposition to *Arabia Deserta* and *Arabia Petraea.* Before discussing the genesis of the myth of Ghassānid nomadism, it is well that two migrations involving South Arabia be briefly treated, since they are relevant to the theme of this chapter.

Not only in the western part of the Fertile Crescent in Oriens but also in its eastern part, in Mesopotamia, did Arabic groups from South Arabia such as the Ghassānids contribute to the urbanization of the region in which they settled. In A.D. 638, Saʿd ibn-Abī Waqqās, the victor of al-Qādisiyya over the Persians, founded Kūfa, not far from Ḥīra, on the right bank of the Euphrates. Arab tribes and groups settled in the new foundation, both northern Arabs, traditionally called ʿAdnānis, and Arabs from the south, from Yemen, traditionally called Qaḥṭānis. Those who came from the north were pastoralists or semipastoralists, whereas those who came from the south, from Yemen, were sedentaries. It has been recognized by historians of Kūfa that the process of sedentarization in Kūfa was effected by the Arab groups, the Yemenites, who came from South Arabia.[9] A quotation from an authority on Kūfa is apposite in this connection. "It remains a fact that the Yemenī phenomenon was to determine the political destiny of Kūfa

[7] On Balḥārith in Najrān, Khuzāʿa in Mecca, and al-Aws and al-Khazraj in Yathrib/Medina, see *EI*[2], s.vv. For two Sabaic inscriptions on Ghassān, see Addenda.

[8] For al-Faw, see A. R. al-Anṣāry, *Qaryat al-Fau: A Portrait of Pre-Islamic Civilization in Saudi Arabia* (Riyadh, 1982). Wandering from one place to another as a result of some exigency is no evidence of nomadism. History has recorded the migration and wanderings of groups such as the Huguenots from France to Brandenburg and the Irish from Ireland after the 1840 famine; their wanderings cannot be construed as an illustration of their nomadism. Although these are not exact parallels, the principle is the same.

[9] Such as Hamdān Maḏḥij, Kinda, Azd al-Sarāt, and Ṭayyiʾ.

as well as the colour of its civilisation. According to Massignon, it is through the influence of the old Yemenī element, city dwellers for a long period, that the sedentarisation of the Arab tribes at Kūfa was effected; hence a civilising and urbanising role of the first order may be attributed to it from very early on."[10]

The migration of the Ghassānids as a sedentary group from South Arabia to the north, to Oriens in the Fertile Crescent, may be paralleled by that of the migration of another people, in their case from the Fertile Crescent to South Arabia. Sabaicists now argue that the people of South Arabia, the Sabaeans of ancient times, were not autochthonous but newcomers, immigrants who entered South Arabia from the north, from the Fertile Crescent at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. These were a sedentary people who brought with them, among other things, the script and techniques of irrigation.[11] Thus they provide the spectacle of a sedentary people who made a long trek, as long as that of the Ghassānids but in the opposite direction, along the same route the Ghassānids were to take before the rise of Islam, and their mobility over such a long distance has not been a ground for arguing their nomadism.

The Byzantine phase in the history of the Ghassānids, which lasted for a century and a half, was the climax of their life as a sedentary group after moving in two sedentary orbits in south and western Arabia. Yet it was this period in which they have been presented as a nomadic group of *foederati.*

I

The alleged nomadism of the Ghassānids goes back to Byzantine times and is part of the theme of "the image of the Arabs" in the Byzantine sources. The making of this image began with the major historian of the fourth century, Ammianus Marcellinus, who conceived of the Arabs as Saracens, a term that carried social implications of nomadism, and in some graphic phrases such as *vita est illis semper in fuga* suggested that they were a people with no fixed abodes. The predecessors of the Ghassānids as *foederati* of the fourth century, Tanūkhid and other, were given short shrift in his pages, even though the Arab *foederati* of the fourth century were faithful allies of Byzantium and contributed much to its security and defense, witness the role of the *cuneus* of Queen Mavia in the defense of Constantinople against the Goths after the battle of Adrianople in 378.[12]

It is, however, Procopius of Caesarea in the sixth century, the contemporary of the Ghassānids, who is mainly responsible for both the image of the Arabs/

[10] Hishām Jait in *EI,* s.v. "Kūfa," V, 346, and the bibliography on p. 351 with special reference to the works of H. Jaït and L. Massignon.

[11] For this, see G. Garbini, "Préhistoire et protohistoire," in *L'Arabie avant l'Islam,* ed. S. Noja (Aix-en-Provence, 1994), 18.

[12] On Ammianus and the Arabs, see *BAFOC,* 239–74.

Saracens in Byzantine historiography and for the "nomadism" of the Ghassānids as *foederati.* The *ira* and *studium* that animate his work in general and in its application to the image of the Ghassānids have been analyzed in great detail.[13] Most relevant in this particular context is his silence on Ghassānid structures. The sections on Ḥamza, Yāqūt, the poets, and other sources reveal the extent of these structures of all categories, yet there is not a word in Procopius on any toponym or structure that fixes the Ghassānids to a locale in Oriens;[14] and the natural conclusion of the reader of his pages is that these were nomads with no fixed dwellings, roaming Oriens and untrustworthy at that.

The legacy of Procopius persisted through the sixth century among members of his school, the historians of that century who followed him and who echoed his views. This is true of Agathias, Menander, Evagrius, and Theophylact, the third of whom was an outspoken admirer of Procopius.[15] All these historians are silent on the whereabouts of the Ghassānids in Oriens, and their readers will reach the same conclusions as those who read Procopius: the Ghassānids were nomads with no fixed dwellings. Even the Syriac ecclesiastical strand of Byzantine historiography that was favorable to the Ghassānids, represented by John of Ephesus, was not helpful.[16] Living in Constantinople when he wrote his *Ecclesiastical History* and away from Ghassānland in Oriens, John had no conception of where these *foederati* lived, and hence there is not a single word in his *History* on their whereabouts. What is more, he used quite often a Syriac term[17] when referring to their camp and in such a way as to be actually misleading to future historians of the Ghassānids. Its misunderstanding in modern times has had disastrous consequences on fixing indelibly the image of the Ghassānids as nomads.

The Ghassānid *foederati* of the pre-Islamic period do not appear as such in later Byzantine chronographers such as Theophanes. Even their role, which was considerable during the Persian War of Heraclius' reign and during the Arab Muslim assault on Byzantium, is not clear at all. Their stand in the Golan against the Persians and the Muslim Arabs is not indicated, and Ghassānid toponyms such as Gabita are mentioned but not associated with them.[18] This was, of course, to be expected since this is a very dark period in Byzantine historiography and even more important matters are not recorded. Strangely enough, the Ghassānids who

[13] See *BASIC* I.1, 287–306 and its bibliography.

[14] On Procopius and his suppression of any reference to Ghassānid structures, see below, 355–64.

[15] For these four historians, see *BASIC* I.1, 255–58, 331–37, 592–97.

[16] On John of Ephesus, see ibid., 583–92.

[17] On this term, see below, 10.

[18] Theophanes, *Chronographia,* ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), 332, line 12; 337, line 1. Nikephoros, *Breviarium Historicum,* CFHB 13, ed. and trans. C. Mango (Washington, D.C., 1990), 68, line 27.

decided to leave Oriens and live in Anatolia after Yarmūk are the ones who are remembered in Byzantine history, represented by the many Gabalas.[19] Thus Byzantine chronographies are silent on the Ghassānids as *foederati* and on their structures, even on their name.

II

The course of history since the seventh century was also a contributing factor in projecting the image of the Ghassānids as nomads. Their structures, which would have neutralized all that the hostile Greek historical tradition had projected about their way of life, have mostly vanished. If they had survived, the image of the Ghassānids would have been different and the charge of nomadism would have received a rude shock. Nature played only a minor role. With the exception of a possible earthquake, which has been suspected in the case of one of their main towns, Jalliq,[20] natural disasters did not cause the disappearance of their structures. Historical events and factors did. The Persian occupation of Oriens for some fifteen years during the reign of Heraclius inflicted much damage on Ghassānid establishments,[21] especially as they fought desperately, defending their own Ghassānland in the Golan and Auranitis, a fact reflected in contemporary Arabic poetry.[22]

With the Arab Muslim conquest of Oriens/Bilād al-Shām, many Arab tribal groups from the Arabian Peninsula settled in Bilād al-Shām, some of them in two of the main regions of Ghassānid settlement—the Golan/Gaulanitis and Ḥawrān/Auranitis. The influx of large numbers of pastoralists in a heavily sedentarized area must have conduced to a certain recession in the urban life of the region.[23] But what must have most adversely affected Ghassānid structures, paradoxically enough, were the many structures the Umayyads built in the first century of the Islamic era, the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. As has been argued elsewhere in this book, many of the Umayyad settlements and structures were erected *over* Ghassānid ones. Such is Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī of Caliph Hishām where the Ghassānid substrate is clearly and visibly represented by the tower of Arethas, with a Greek inscription saluting the Ghassānid king as *patricius.* This is the only instance of Ghassānid-Umayyad architectural symbiosis that has clearly survived.[24]

[19] For this, see J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963–1210),* Byzantina Sorbonensia 9 (Paris, 1990), 150–51. The author is unaware of the Ghassānid provenance of these Gabalas who appear in the late Byzantine period since not much research has been done on the Ghassānids of the middle and late Byzantine periods. A preliminary step in this direction has been taken by the present writer in "Sigillography in the Service of History: New Light," *Festschrift Paul Speck* (forthcoming). See Addenda.

[20] On Jalliq, possibly hit by an earthquake, see below, 107–8.

[21] Noted also by Nöldeke, *GF,* 42–43.

[22] See below, 243–46.

[23] See ʿĀ. ʿAbd al-Salām, *al-Aqālim al-Ghughrafiyya al Sūriyya* (Damascus, 1989–90), 409.

[24] For the tower of Arethas at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, see the frontispiece of *BASIC* I.1.

The others have disappeared or have been built over beyond recognition, dwarfed by the Umayyad superstructures, as clearly in Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī.[25] After the *translatio imperii* from Damascus to Baghdad under the ʿAbbāsids, the latter revenged themselves on their enemies, the Umayyads. Their revenge took various forms, one of which was the destruction of Umayyad structures in Oriens.[26] So the Ghassānid substrates suffered the same fate as the Umayyad superstructures.

The Crusades in the eleventh and twelfth centuries also contributed to further destruction, especially in the region of the Golan, so close to the Holy Land, as it witnessed occupations and reoccupations of the region by both parties, attended by various forms of destruction.[27] The final chapter in the devastation of the region in medieval times was written in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the Mongols.[28]

In more modern times, since the seventeenth century, both regions, Ḥawrān and Golan, were the scene of migrations, displacements, and destruction. In 1685 two hundred Druze families settled in Najrān, a town associated with the Ghassānids and their relatives, the Balḥārith of South Arabian Najrān, after which the town had been named. After the battle of ʿAyn Dāra in Lebanon in 1711, in which the Druze were defeated, another migration of Druze to Ḥawrān took place. Such migrations and settlements in Ḥawrān by a new community entailed wars with the local indigenous population and damage to structures. Especially disastrous was the dismantling of houses and other structures and the reemployment of their stones for building other houses.[29]

The region of the Golan witnessed similar migrations and influx of new ethnic groups that were not conducive to stability and to the preservation of Ghassānid monuments and structures. The Sharkas (Çerkes, Circassians) appeared in the Golan and settled in it after their defeat by the Russians in the war that ended in 1864. The Golan saw them settled there around 1878. After the tragic events of 1860, many of the Druze also settled in the Golan. The Turkomans are also represented in the Golan, but the period during which they settled in that region and the reason are unknown.

All these newcomers to the Golan looked for *Lebensraum,* and consequently conflict with the indigenous population was inevitable, the result of which was destruction. When the dust settled, there would be building of new houses by the

[25] The vast Umayyad complex that lies northeast of Palmyra.

[26] Even noted by Jāhiz in *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (Cairo, 1938), I, 73.

[27] ʿAbd al-Salām, *al-Aqālim,* 408, where he quotes the medieval historian Ibn al-Qalānisī in his *Ḏayl Tārīkh Dimashq.*

[28] Noted by F. Villeneuve, "L' économie et les villages," in *Le djebel al-ʿarab,* ed. J.-M. Dentzer and J. Dentzer-Feydy (Paris, 1991), 43.

[29] For these changes in the ethnic and demographic landscape of Ḥawrān, see ʿAbd al-Salām, *al-Aqālim,* 483. On the battle of ʿAyn Dāra, see P. K. Hitti, *Lebanon in History* (New York, 1967), 390.

newcomers from old materials taken from dismantled Ghassānid structures.[30] Such was the scene in the Golan and Ḥawrān when European travelers and scholars visited the two regions. Hardly anything that could remind them of the Ghassānids has survived.

III

The image of the Ghassānids as a sedentary community did not improve much with the publication in 1887 of Nöldeke's classic, his monograph on the Ghassānids, *Die Ghassânischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's,* a series of notes and footnotes, mainly concerned with the chronology of the dynasty and the sequence of its rulers. It was Nöldeke, the father of Ghassānid studies,[31] who was mainly responsible for the perpetuation of the myth of Ghassānid nomadism. He expressed this view in various parts of his work, although, in all fairness to him, "ambivalent" may be the word that best describes his attitude to the Ghassānid lifestyle. Sometimes he speaks of them as nomads[32] and sometimes not, since he was torn between certain authors who vouched for their nomadism and others who did not. But the general impression his monograph conveyed was that of nomadism.

The prestige of Nöldeke, fully deserved, has been such that all those who have written on the Ghassānids since 1887 have been in his debt and also followed in his footsteps regarding Ghassānid nomadism,[33] with the possible[34] exception of

[30] On the Sharkas, Druze, and Turkomans in the Golan, see ʿAbd al-Salām, *al-Aqālim,* 410–16.

[31] And also Lakhmid; his translation of Ṭabarī's narrative on the Lakhmids with its masterly footnotes and seven *Anhänge* provides the necessary groundwork for writing the history of the Lakhmids and Ḥīra, a work that remains to be written. G. Rothstein's excellent *Die Dynastie der Lahmiden in al-Ḥīra* (Berlin, 1899) was written in the style of Nöldeke's monograph that set out to establish the chronology and sequence of the Lakhmid rulers. What is wanted is a history of the dynasty and of al-Ḥīra, including its ʿIbād, and their role in the cultural history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam, an alluring task that awaits a historian. For Nöldeke's translation of Ṭabarī's narrative, see his *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (Leiden, 1879; repr. Graz, 1973) updated by C. E. Bosworth (see below, 392 note 2).

[32] Nöldeke, *GF,* 18, 47, 50.

[33] Such as F. E. Peters, "Byzantium and the Arabs of Syria," *Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes* (Damascus) 27/28 (1977–78), 97–107, and Sartre, "Les nomades et l'Empire en Arabie," in *TE,* 121–203, esp. 155–203 on the Ghassānids. Sartre is much more careful and reasonable than Peters in his perception of the Ghassānids as nomads in spite of the title of his chapter and his descriptions of Imru' al-Qays, the adventurous phylarch of the reign of Emperor Leo, as a *shaykh* and "voleur devenu gendarme" (pp. 154, 155); cf. *BAFIC,* 61–113, where a different evaluation is given of Imru' al-Qays.

Peters' perception of the Ghassānids is the extreme among all those who have written after Nöldeke. He viewed the Ghassānids in much the same way that he viewed the nomads of present-day Syria, who move seasonally from one spot to another in pursuit of water and pasture for their flocks and herds; as his utterly untenable views have been cogently answered by Iḥsān ʿAbbās, there is no need to discuss them further; see I. ʿAbbās, *Tārīkh Bilād al-Shām, A.D. 600–661* (Amman, 1990), 139–40.

[34] See the section on the Ghassānids in his "Arabie," *DHGE,* III, cols. 1200–1219. Note the title of the section (col. 1200) and the first sentence, which augurs well for the Ghassānids but

R. Aigrain. In his monumental article "Arabie," Aigrain tried to be cautious but did not entirely escape being affected by Nöldeke. It is therefore necessary to examine Nöldeke's arguments in order to discover the roots of his conception of Ghassānid nomadism.

A

Nöldeke was a classical scholar as well as an Orientalist and approached Oriental studies from the point of view of the former. He had established the principle that for accuracy and precision, especially in chronology, the Greek and Syriac sources for pre-Islamic times are superior to the Arabic. Naturally, he depended on the Greek sources for Byzantine history, especially for the sixth century, and Procopius was the chief historian. However, Procopius was not a friend of the Ghassānids and, as has been explained before, was the chief maker of their image as both treacherous allies and wandering nomads. Nöldeke did not accept the former charge but did accept the latter.

When Nöldeke wrote, the problem of the *ira et studium* in Procopius was not fully understood, nor had it been the subject of extensive research. Since then it has, and it has been established that Procopius, who had lauded the emperor in the *Wars,* could turn against him and write a denunciation in the *Secret History,* which has been proved to be a work of Procopius.[35] Hence Nöldeke took at face value what Procopius had said. As Procopius' false image of the Ghassānids and his prejudice have been exposed in various articles, there is no need to repeat them, but attention should be drawn to certain terms used by Procopius, which might have misled Nöldeke on the lifestyle of the Ghassānids. These terms still militate against the correct perception of the Ghassānids as a sedentary group.

One of them is the term *Saracens* applied to the Ghassānids. The Byzantines applied it to the Ghassānid *foederati* in official documents in order to distinguish them from the *Arabes,* the term used to denote the Arab *Rhomaioi,* citizens after the Edict of Caracalla and former Nabataeans and Palmyrenes. It was necessary to employ another term to denote the Ghassānids since these were legally not Roman *cives* but *foederati.* The employment of the term, however, was unfortunate, since it denoted also the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula and whatever pastoralists also roamed in Oriens. So the term not only denoted ethnic affiliation but also social status, that is, nomads; hence the confusion about the Ghassānid way of life, which was also described by the same term, *Saracen,* that described the nomad.[36]

Even the term *phylarch* (*phylarchos*), applied to the Ghassānid kings and princes when they became *foederati,* carried the same ambivalence that *Saracen*

compare with what he later says on their *ḥirthā* (cols. 1218–19). Also in the previous section, which he titles "Les Arabes nomades. Les phylarques" (col. 1128), the *foederati* of the 4th and 5th centuries, together with some Ghassānid figures, are subsumed under that title.

[35] See Averil Cameron, *Procopius* (Berkeley, 1985), 4, 49.

[36] For the term *Saracen,* see the present writer in *EI*^{2}, s.v.

did. Literally *phylarch* meant the commander or chief of a *phyle,* a tribe, and this immediately presented the image of the tribal society of the nomads and pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula. Only specialists understood that *phylarchos* had ceased to be so understood and meant a foreign chief or lord in treaty relationship to Byzantium. *Phylarchos* had acquired a new semantic dimension that regulated the relation of Byzantium with the *gentes,* which was what that term meant when applied to the Ghassānids.

B

Procopius was not the only historian who pastoralized or nomadized the image of the Ghassānids and presented them as Saracens; there was another major historian of the sixth century, John of Ephesus, as has been indicated. This was an author who wrote favorably on the Ghassānids and cannot be suspected of prejudice as Procopius was. Yet his unfortunate use of the term *ḥirthā* led Nöldeke to believe that Procopius' perception of the Ghassānids as Saracens was confirmed. His term *ḥirthā* suggested mobility and a nonsedentary way of life.

When Nöldeke wrote, the true meaning of the term *ḥirthā* was not understood, and little was known about the Ghassānid army in the service of Byzantium with which the Syriac term *ḥirthā* was associated. The term turned out to be not a Syriac term meaning an enclosure for cattle and a movable residential abode for the Ghassānids but an old Arabic and Arabian term. It is simply a military term meaning camp, not unlike the Latin *castra* of the Roman troops, which may have been movable or not, depending on military circumstances and exigencies.[37]

That the Ghassānids moved their *ḥirthā* was consonant not with their alleged nomadism but with their function and place in the military system of Byzantium and their place within the Byzantine army of Oriens. Although not technically part of the *exercitus comitatensis,* the mobile force that was rushed from one place to another in Oriens in response to military necessities, they were the perfect mobile force because they contributed cavalry to the Byzantine army. Thus their military mobility was confused with the mobility of the nonsedentary nomads, and so the Syriac ground on which Nöldeke based his conception of Ghassānid nomadism crumbles.[38]

[37] For the etymology of the term *ḥirthā* as an Arabic word, see *BAFOC,* 490–98.

[38] Of the same order of terminological confusion that contributed to the "nomadization" of the Ghassānids was the Arabic term *bādiya,* made popular by A. Musil and E. Herzfeld in their discussions of Umayyad structures. The term meant steppeland, where human beings can live, as opposed to the *ṣaḥrā',* the uninhabitable desert. The Umayyads occupied the area where some of the Ghassānids settled, in the belt that extended from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat, called in this volume the *limitrophe.* As the term *bādiya* is etymologically related to *badw* (Arabic for nomads, pastoralists), this was another factor that created confusion about the social status of the settlers in the *bādiya.* Although nomads were of course to be found in the *bādiya,* other settlers in it, such as the Ghassānids and the Umayyads, were not nomads. The *bādiya* of the Ghassānids was the limitrophe, which they made less pastoral by their presence and by whatever structures they built, just

In addition to the Syriac term *ḥirthā,* which, when misunderstood, contributed to the false image of the Ghassānids as nomads, there were the Syriac literary sources of the period which Nöldeke consulted and which lacked some material crucial for the image of the Ghassānids. Nöldeke was unaware of the encounter between Arethas, the Ghassānid king, and the Chalcedonian patriarch Ephraim and of Arethas' letter to Jacob Baradaeus, documents that do not suggest at all that the Ghassānid king was a nomad. Nöldeke depended on the Armenian version of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Michael the Syrian, since J.-B. Chabot had not yet published the much more adequate Syriac version that contained much new valuable information.[39]

C

Finally, and most related to the theme of this volume on Ghassānid structures and toponymy, is Nöldeke's dependence on the work of J. G. Wetzstein and the former's image of the Ghassānids as reflected through the lens of the latter. Nöldeke was an armchair scholar who never set foot on Arab soil where the Ghassānids had played their role in history. So he had to depend on other travelers/scholars who did, the most outstanding of whom was Wetzstein; so it is necessary to discuss this scholar briefly if only because he, too, contributed his generous share to the blurred image of the Ghassānids in the European perception.

Johann Gottfried Wetzstein rendered the Ghassānids and Ghassānid history a great service; it is important to begin by emphasizing this. He was the first scholar to arrive in Oriens with a copy of Ḥamza's list of Ghassānid buildings in hand. Guided by that list, he did fieldwork and looked for the items of the list on the spot. For twelve years he was the Prussian consul in Damascus (1849–61). With great industry and energy he visited the area of Ghassānid settlement, identified many toponyms, drew maps, and so made his important contribution from autopsy to Ghassānid toponymy, topography, and cartography, gathering data in this early period that otherwise might have been lost. He preserved this information for posterity, and this, not his interpretations, was his permanent contribution to Ghassānid history.[40]

The evolution of his perception of the Ghassānids is a mystery. He started by realizing that they were a sedentary group (as were the Salīḥids in his view), who

as the Umayyads did later, replicating the role of the Ghassānids in earlier times but on a much larger scale. For more on the Ghassānid-Umayyad relationship in the limitrophe, see below, 375–91.

[39] For the encounter with Patriarch Ephraim and the letter of Arethas to Jacob Baradaeus, see *BASIC* I.2, 746–55, 782–88. Nöldeke was also unaware of the letter of Peter of Callinicum, in which the Ghassānid phylarch Jafna appears in a context that presents the Ghassānids as a sedentary group, fully integrated into Byzantine society, part of the urban scene in Oriens; see ibid., 925–35.

[40] For his life, especially in Damascus as the Prussian consul, see I. Huhn, *Der Orientalist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein als preussischer Konsul in Damaskus (1849–1861)* (Berlin, 1989).

had come from a sedentary region of Arabia, the south.[41] Then, all of a sudden, he conceived of them as nomads. Another development in his life was also surprising. The serious student of Oriental studies and the Prussian consul in Damascus suddenly developed into a businessman, borrowing and lending money, and became a commercial and agricultural entrepreneur. After being a scholar in Arabic, Aramaic, Persian, and Turkish, he decided to learn the local dialect of the Damascus region, became interested in the beduins, and visited the Banī Khālid and the ʿAnaza tribes. Thus he turned to Arabic/Islamic culture with a small *c*; and instead of writing on the Umayyad mosque of Damascus he wrote his *Sprächliches aus den Zeitlagern der syrichen Wüste.*[42] During his last days in Syria he witnessed the tragic events of 1860, the denominational and sectarian strife that swept over Syria and Lebanon. He was, however, able to escape and left Damascus in 1862. Thus ended the Syrian sojourn of the man who started well as a scholar who viewed Syria as his spiritual homeland[43] but ended in a disillusionment that affected his vision of the region and its peoples, including the Ghassānids, whom he conceived first as a sedentary people then labeled as nomads. It is not altogether unlikely that the change in his attitude toward the Ghassānids may have been related to this unpleasant experience he went through during the tragic events of 1860. The chronology of his relevant two works give some confirmation to this view. His original vision of the Ghassānids as a sedentary community was expressed in a work he wrote before[44] 1860, while the later vision of them as nomads was expressed in the work that appeared four years after these events and after his return to Prussia.[45]

Wetzstein was one of the first scholars to examine the tower of Mundir at Ḍumayr *in situ.* The Ghassānid king not only erected the tower but also left a Greek inscription in which he indicated that he was its builder, thus not leaving the fact for inferential reasoning by prospective scholars. The inscription was also significant for the cultural image of the builder—a devout Christian. In spite of

[41] See his *Reisebericht über Hauran und die Trachonen* (Berlin, 1860). One quotation from *Reisebericht* is sufficient to illustrate the great value of his recording what he had seen and heard while doing fieldwork: "Zu einem dieser Punkte nämlich, dem imposanten Schlosse Gefne, hatte mein dortiger Führer Hamed, Sohn des Scheichs in Kreje, bemerkt, dass es ein denkwürdiger Bau sei, weil es die Residenz des Königs Gefne gewesen, der nach der Tradition sechs hauranische Städte gebaut habe." The quotation speaks for itself: the toponym Gefne/Jafna with its distinctly Ghassānid name; the impressive castle; and the local tradition of towns built by Jafna. The last clause is probably an exaggeration but does reflect an echo of Jafna, the "builder king" of Ghassān as presented by Ḥamza, who attributes to him the building of two towns and some *maṣānīʿ*.

[42] Published in Berlin, 1868. One of his folktales in this collection was translated into English by Inea Bushnaq as "The Boy in Girl's Dress" and included in her *Arab Folktales* (New York, 1986), 34–44.

[43] Huhn, *Wetzstein,* 3.

[44] His *Reisebericht,* which, though published in 1860, was written before that date; the manuscript must have been sent to Berlin from Syria long before 1860.

[45] In his *Ausgewählte griechische und lateinische Inschriften gesammelt auf Reisen in den Trachonen und um das Haurângebirge* (Berlin, 1864).

all this, Wetzstein stated that "Der Erbauer war der Nomaden (-*Ghassaniden*-) König *Almundir.*" He even went further to say that architecturally the structure responded to the needs and tastes of the lifestyle of a nomadic chief—it was "die Gestalt des Nomadenzeltes"—almost a nomadic tent in stone.[46]

Some fifty years later, Rudoph Brünnow built on Wetzstein's words and went even further in his "nomadization" of Mundir to argue that the tower was not built by the Ghassānid king, even though it was not anepigraphic but a monument in which the builder himself clearly announced his identity.[47] Brünnow's conclusion suggested that the devout Christian who in the inscription thanked his God and St. Julian for his safe return was a liar, and what is more, not in "winged words" but carved in stone.[48] Brünnow wrote ten years after the publication of Nöldeke's monograph and could not have been discouraged in this further "nomadization" of Mundir by the latter's views on the Ghassānids, derived from Wetzstein. Such is the genealogy of error, involving the three scholars, but ultimately going back to Wetzstein.

This was the scholar on whom Nöldeke had to depend for information on traces of the Ghassānids in Oriens gathered by autopsy, a process he himself was unable to do. He apparently accepted Wetzstein's views on Ghassānid nomadism,[49] which seemed to coincide with those of the Byzantine authors he depended upon such as Procopius. But he did not always agree with Wetzstein's interpretations.[50] The water that has flowed under the academic bridge since Nöldeke wrote his monograph, as far as the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic sources are concerned, has been

[46] Ibid., 315. Wetzstein is uncertain which of the three Ghassānid Mundirs the builder of the tower was; but he may be excused, since it was only when Nöldeke examined the Syriac sources and extracted from John of Ephesus the valuable chapter on Mundir, the son of Arethas, that the identity of the builder was established; Nöldeke, *GF,* 13.

In his penultimate paragraph on Mundir, ibid., 315–16, Wetzstein records a local tradition on what he calls "der gelbe König (*melik el-asfar*)" who had in olden times ruled Ḥawrān. Although most of the items in the tradition he records are either inaccurate or plainly erroneous, rule over Ḥawrān may be an echo of something historical, which belonged to the distant past. The assumption of Flavius by the Ghassānids is established; this, of course, means "yellow" and must have been so understood by the Ghassānids and the federate Arabs. Wetzstein's *melik el-asfar,* which, more correctly, might read *al-malik al-aṣfar,* can easily reflect the Ghassānid assumption of Flavius, translated into Arabic. If so, its survival until the 19th century is remarkable but not incredible, since many of the Arab Christian families of the region are serious about their descent from the Ghassānids. *Al-malik al-asfar* can also corroborate the argument that the term Aṭfar of the Syriac sources, applied to the Arab federate king who fell at the battle of Thannūris in 528, was none other than Arabic Aṣfar, Latin Flavius, as has been argued; see the present writer in *The Martyrs of Najrān* (Brussels, 1971), 273–74 and *BASIC* I.1, 48–49, 76–79. Tall al-Aṣfar, 40 km southeast of Salkhad, may be mentioned in this connection; for this toponym, see the map, "Southern Hauran," in H. C. Butler, *Syria,* PPUAES, II, A (Leiden, 1919), between pp. 62 and 63.

[47] For a discussion of Brünnow's views, see *BASIC,* I.1, 525–26.

[48] For the inscription, see ibid., 495–501.

[49] Nöldeke, *GF,* 49–51 esp. 50.

[50] As in his view on *maṣnaʿa,* ibid., 51 note 1.

discussed above. What remains is to discuss what has happened epigraphically and archaeologically, the most solid evidence for Ghassānid sedentariness and for a riposte to Wetzstein's views, which have colored those of subsequent researchers.

Nöldeke ventured the view that the Arab *foederati* never had a word written in the Arabic language carved on an inscription.[51] Some twenty-five years after he wrote, the most glorious Arabic pre-Islamic inscription was found by R. Dussaud, the long Namāra inscription of the federate king Imru' al-Qays,[52] who died in A.D. 328. This clearly proved that the *foederati,* even as early as the fourth century, were a literate group. The Namāra inscription was not engraved for a Ghassānid king, but it has provided the background and foundation for arguing that if the *foederati* of the fourth century left inscriptions, *a fortiori* those of the sixth—the Ghassānids—also did, a fact confirmed by the few that have been discovered.[53] Long funerary inscriptions that recite the *res gestae* of kings such as the Namāra, and presumably those of the Ghassānids that have not survived,[54] are not the inscriptions of a nomadic but of a sedentary society.

The fact that *ḥirthā* was not a Syriac term meaning a pen for cows but a camp for warriors has been referred to, and the fact can be established by linguistic analysis of the term, which has no derivation in Syriac but does in Arabic. It is also a pre-Islamic Arabic toponym that is to be found in various parts of the vast area of Arab habitation.[55] Now Sabaic epigraphy from South Arabia has revealed that *ḥīra/ḥirthā,* which was used by John of Ephesus, was not a Syriac term but a loanword in Syriac and that it is an Arabian word, Arabic/Sabaic, meaning not an enclosure for animals but a military camp.[56] As an Arabic technical military term in Oriens, it was used for the *castra* manned by the *foederati* as a striking force, not by nomads.

More important were archaeological discoveries, the most solid evidence for the sedentary life of a community. Of the three Ghassānid monuments that have survived, the two most impressive that reflected Ghassānid sedentary life, and advertised it in the most eloquent manner, were the tower of Arethas at Qaṣr al-

[51] T. Nöldeke, "Zur Topographie und Geschichte des Damascênischen Gebietes und der Ḥaurāngegend," *ZDMG* 29 (1876), 443.

[52] See *BAFOC,* 31–53.

[53] Such as the Usays and Ḥarrān inscriptions; see *BASIC* I.1, 117–24, 325–28.

[54] On the tombs of the Ghassānids, see below, 226–29, 241, 279.

[55] A town called Ḥīra lies as far away as al-Shāriqa in the United Arab Emirates.

[56] For the Sabaic attestations of the term *ḥīra,* see A. Jamme, *Sabaean Inscriptions from Maḥram Bilqīs (Marib)* (Baltimore, 1962), 68–69, lines 12–13; 132, line 22; 143, line 21; and pp. 300, 436. See also idem, "Un désastre nabatéen devant Nagrān," in *Cahiers de Byrsa* (Paris, 1956), esp. 165–66, where the attestations of the term in Sabaic graffiti are discussed. For some related material, see M. Höfner, "Die Beduinen in den vorislamischen Inschriften," in *L'antica società beduina* (Rome, 1959), 53–68. As for the term "enclosure" for animals used in this period, Arabic poetry has revealed that it was *ṣīra* (plural, *ṣiyar*), attested in the *Dīwān* of Ḥātim, who uses it for the enclosures of the Ghassānids; see below, 247.

Ḥayr al-Gharbī, which lies between Damascus and Palmyra, and the *praetorium* of his son Mundir outside the walls of Sergiopolis/Ruṣāfa. It was after Nöldeke wrote his monograph in 1887 that the two monuments became well known and available for inspection by scholars. All that Nöldeke had at his disposal was the tower of Mundir at Ḍumayr, already "nomadized" or "beduinized" by Wetzstein, with regard to both the identity of the builder and the architecture of the structure.

The Ghassānids were not as lucky as their Arab predecessors in Oriens, the Palmyrenes and the Nabataeans, in the survival of their monuments. Both the capitals of these two Arab peoples, Petra and Palmyra, although shaken by earthquakes, have remained in such a condition as to suggest their former splendor. Not so the two "capitals" of the Ghassānids, Jābiya and Jalliq. Hardly anything remained of the former, while the latter's location has been controversial, and its site, wherever it is, has been built upon. However, two impressive monuments of the dynasty have survived in their entirety, both of them massive structures that clearly indicate their builders' mode of life, in both the ecclesiastical and military life of the Byzantine Orient. They have stood the test of time and the ravages of nature for some fourteen centuries.

The vast majority of the Ghassānid monuments have disappeared, but many Umayyad structures have survived, silent and indirect witnesses for Ghassānid sedentariness. As has been noted earlier, many of them may have been built over Ghassānid ones. Indeed one of the two Ghassānid structures just referred to became part of a larger Umayyad complex of buildings, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī. The Ghassānids who lived in these structures were no more nomadic than the Umayyads, who clearly were not nomads at all. So what was true of the lifestyle of their later Umayyad occupants was also true of their former Ghassānid residents.

II. Oriens: Hydrographic Observations on the Rhomaic and Federate Arabs

As partly desert inhabitants and partly dwellers in arid areas, the Arabs had a very special interest in water, the *sine qua non* of their life and existence. Consequently water conservation became one of their strong points in ancient times. The skills they developed in this area led them to the construction of water-supply installations: cisterns, reservoirs, aqueducts, canals, and bridges. The role played by water in the life of the Arabs is even reflected in the large vocabulary of the Arabic language for water and all that pertains to it.[57]

[57] Cf. also the extensive vocabulary for the *ḥajj,* the pilgrimage, which in Arabic is unique in the comparatist context; see the present writer in "Arab Christian Pilgrimages in the Proto-Byzantine Period," *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt,* ed. D. Frankfurter (Leiden, 1998), 373–74. For water alone, even without reference to soil, clouds, and other natural phenomena that are affected by water and that are endowed with an extensive vocabulary in Arabic, see Ibn al-Sikkīt, *Kanz al-Ḥuffāẓ fi Kitāb Tahdīb al-Alfāẓ,* ed. L. Cheikho (Beirut, 1895), 557–62.

In Byzantine Oriens, where the Arab *foederati* were settled for some three centuries, the Nabataean Arabs distinguished themselves in water conservation and hydraulic engineering. Their skills in constructing cisterns and wells were noted by the ancient writers, among them Diodorus Siculus.

> They are exceptionally fond of freedom; and, whenever a strong force of enemies comes near, they take refuge in the desert, using this as a fortress; for it lacks water and cannot be crossed by others, but to them alone, since they have prepared subterranean reservoirs lined with stucco, it furnishes safety. As the earth in some places is clayey and in others is of soft stone, they make great excavations in it, the mouths of which they make very small, but by constantly increasing the width as they dig deeper, they finally make them of such size that each side has a length of one plethrum. After filling these reservoirs with rain water, they close the openings, making them even with the rest of the ground, and they leave signs that are known to themselves but are unrecognizable by others.[58]

The Nabataeans excelled in *wādī* irrigation, which depended on the erratic rainfall and rainstorms in the arid areas that the Nabataeans inhabited in southern Oriens. The description of their achievements by a specialist, Donald Hill, is worth quoting.

> Using *wadi* irrigation, they developed a thriving agriculture in the Negev that was unequalled until modern times. . . . They developed very elaborate hydraulic systems for utilizing the runoff water from occasional showers. For this purpose, they built many strong dams across *wadis* in order to divert the water to the fields, whether directly or through storage tanks. In the area around the ancient city of Avdat in the Negev, the extent of these waterworks is astonishing: some 17,000 dams have been located in an area of 50 square miles. . . .
>
> The Romans learnt much of their civil engineering from other peoples . . . and in the Negev they took over and maintained the Nabataeans' irrigation systems, no doubt with the assistance of Nabataean engineers.[59]

The expertise of the Nabataeans in water conservation did not die out with the incorporation of Nabataea within the Roman empire in A.D. 106. According to Hill, their expertise lived posthumously through the Romans who conquered them and was carried by the latter into North Africa: "The Nabataean ideas of *wadi* irrigation were rapidly assimilated and applied in North Africa where they

[58] Diodorus Siculus, trans. R. M. Geer, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), book XIX.94.6–8.

[59] D. Hill, *A History of Engineering in Classical and Medieval Times* (La Salle, Ill., 1984), 19, 52.

formed the basis for an expansion in agriculture along the North African coast, which sustained, among others, the magnificent cities of Leptis Magna and Sabratha. The latter has the same effect upon the traveller as the ruins of Palmyra; both come into view quite suddenly, splendid ruins now surrounded by wastelands."[60]

The Palmyrene Arabs who followed the Nabataeans as the dominant Arab group in the Orient also lived in arid areas of this region and so developed the same survival skills. No doubt they availed themselves of the techniques of the Nabataeans to whom they were closer ethnically and geographically than the peoples of North Africa.[61] Although Palmyra fell to the Romans in A.D. 272 as Petra of the Nabataeans had done in 106, their legacy in water conservation did not perish but remained alive in the Oriens of late antiquity, the three centuries and a half that followed the fall of the city. During this period unfolded the history of the three groups of Arab *foederati* of Byzantium, the new experiment in Arab-Byzantine relations after the fall of the Arab client-kingdoms of Petra, Edessa, and Palmyra of whom the third and last were the most prominent and influential—the Ghassānids.

The Ghassānids

The Ghassānids of the sixth century were settled in former Nabataean and Palmyrene territories, from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat. But the main area of their settlement was the south in Nabataea, where they lived in conditions that were roughly identical with those that had forced the Nabataeans to develop those hydraulic skills that elicited the admiration of posterity. So the Ghassānids fell heir to what their Arab congeners had perfected. But in addition to the Nabataean heritage, these Ghassānids now brought into Oriens the skills and techniques of another Semitic people, celebrated also for their hydrological skills, the Ḥimyarites of South Arabia, whence the Ghassānids had hailed before they crossed the

[60] Ibid., 20. In Europe the irrigation system was carried into Spain by the Arabs of Oriens (Bilād al-Shām) who emigrated to the Iberian peninsula in the Umayyad period, some of whom were Ghassānids and other tribal groups of the Inner Shield. Gerald Butt, author of *The Arabs: Myth and Reality* (New York, 1997), mentions "that elaborate irrigation system, bringing water to the plains of Andalusia, giving it the landscape it has today. Even when the Arabs had been expelled en masse, two families were required to stay in each village to operate the irrigation system"; see his "Arabs, Spain and the Tides of History," *Arab Trends* (December 1989), 66.

[61] A third Arab people, the Ituraeans, may also be mentioned in this context of hydrography in Oriens. Although their area was not so arid as that of the Nabataeans and the Palmyrenes, they did distinguish themselves in hydrology. According to S. Dar (*Settlements and Cult Sites on Mount Hermon, Israel: Iturean Culture in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods,* BAR International Series 589 [Oxford, 1993], 242): "The Itureans and other small peoples who became established in Hermon attained a highly developed material culture, which was characterized by a surprisingly proficient technological ability. Their building methods, their ability to collect and store water and the way they terraced agricultural areas still evoke expressions of respect and admiration."

Byzantine frontier. It is therefore necessary to discuss briefly the relevant facts of the South Arabian and peninsular phases of their history in this context.

They had emigrated from the most sedentary part of the Arabian Peninsula, the Ḥimyarite south, a region that had distinguished itself in water conservation, the symbol and pride of which was the celebrated Ma'rib dam, one of the largest to be built in ancient times. The breaking of the dam was an important event in the history of the country, but far from being the cause of its decline and eventual downfall.[62] The Ghassānids were one of those Arab groups that had lived in the south whose emigration to the north is traditionally related to the breaking of the dam, which may or may not have been true.

Before they reached the Roman frontier, most probably during the reign of Anastasius, they had settled with others of the Azd group to which they belonged in Yathrib (Medina), in Ḥijāz, a fertile oasis that depended for its agricultural life on water. Already its Jewish community had perfected hydraulic technologies, and the Ghassānids together with their cousins, the Aws-Khazraj of the Azd, practiced what they had learned about water technologies. This was complex and sophisticated, and it is reflected in the specialized vocabulary pertaining to it that has survived, such as *al-riyāqa,* a form of sondage to ascertain before digging and excavating whether the spot does have water; *al-nawāḍiḥ* (plural of *nāḍiḥ*), the animals used for drawing water from the cistern, such as camels and oxen; *al-sawānī* (plural of *sāniya*), the receptacles with ropes attached to them for drawing water out of the cisterns; *al-sawāqī,* aqueducts that carried this water for irrigation purposes; *al-aḥwāḍ,* the troughs for gathering water; *al-sudūd,* the dams for conserving rainwater; *bi'r* (well, cistern) and the bucket, *dalw,* that drew its water.[63] The Ghassānids acquired skill in these areas while still in Yathrib, and they continued their close relations with their relatives in Yathrib after they became federates of Byzantium. One of these relatives, Ḥassān, became their poet laureate in whose poetry some of the terms listed here are reflected.

On their arrival in Byzantine Oriens, they were settled in the limitrophe, the *bādiya* of Bilād al-Shām, the arid area in which were settled previous Arab federates, the Tanūkhids and the Salīḥids of the fourth and fifth centuries respectively. As the limitrophe was an arid area, the Ghassānids naturally exercised the skills in water techniques they had brought with them from South Arabia, to which they added what they had learned and developed in Yathrib. Here in Oriens they lay astride the two areas where the Nabataeans and the Palmyrenes had lived, and both, especially the former, were acknowledged masters of hydraulic engineering.

[62] On the Ma'rib dam, see C. Robin, "La digue de Ma'rib," in his *L'Arabie antique de Karib'îl à Mahomet* (Paris, 1992), 64–69; also on the dam and an illustration of the hydraulic works at Ma'rib, see Hill, *Engineering,* 51.

[63] For these terms, see ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al ʿUmarī, *al-Ḥiraf wa al-Ṣināʿāt fi al-Ḥijāz fi ʿAhd al-Rasūl* (Qatar, 1985), 101–5.

This accumulated experience inherited by the Ghassānids is reflected in the prosperity of the limitrophe, especially the Ḥawrān region, which flourished in this period under their rule, owing in great measure to their hydraulic skills in an area where water was needed.

There were other features of Ghassānid history, less important but nevertheless reflective of their interest in water. The very name Ghassān itself, according to the Arabic sources, is the name of a body of water in South Arabia where they stopped during their trek to the north; their poet Ḥassān mentioned it in his verse.[64] One of their early ancestors, ʿĀmir, had the sobriquet Māʾ al-Samāʾ,[65] "the water of heaven." During a famine he was looked upon as a substitute for rain, the cessation of which had caused a drought which in turn caused the famine. Finally, according to some historians, when they settled in Oriens, the Ghassānids continued to date events with reference to the year in which the Maʾrib dam broke.[66]

Since the Ghassānids were involved in the military, civic, and ecclesiastical history of Oriens in the sixth century, they, as *foederati* and Monophysites, naturally supervised the construction of a large number of buildings: castles, palaces, churches, and monasteries. These dotted the long arid zone from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat, for the viability of which water was essential. The Ghassānids, in whom were united the hydrological skills of both the Ḥimyarites of South Arabia and the Nabataeans of Oriens, were equal to the task. It was natural that a people who were involved in water in all the phases of their history should have

[64] On this, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān,* 5 vols. (Beirut, 1955–57), s.v. Ghassān, IV, 203, where it is variously located. One tradition locates it near the Maʾrib dam, which, if true, could argue that the emigration of the Ghassānids to the north may be related to the breaking of the dam. If so, it could not have been when the dam broke in the 6th century, because the Ghassānids were then already in Oriens. According to the editor of al-Hamdānī, the body of water called Ghassān still exists in South Arabia near Rimaʿ; see al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifat Jazīrat al-ʿArab,* ed. al-Akwaʿ, 122 note 3.

[65] See Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, *Tārīkh* (Berlin, 1921–22), 77. Even the name of the Ghassānid phylarch, Ḳātil al-Jūʿ, "the killer of famine," Greek Kathelogos, is related to water, the dearth of which caused famine; on this phylarch, see below, 44–46.

[66] As recorded by al-Sakhāwī; see Rosenthal, *HMH,* 336. As already noted, the breaking of the dam could not have brought about the decline and fall of South Arabia as later Muslim historians thought. But it must have been an event of some importance, since echoes of it reached the 6th-century poet al-Aʿshā, who described it and referred to it in a well-known passage in one of his odes; see his *Dīwān,* ed. M. Ḥusayn (Cairo, n.d. [1950]), 43, verses 67–72.

It is noteworthy that the Ghassānids used, as did the *Rhomaioi* of the Provincia Arabia, the era of Nabataean Bostra (the inception of which was A.D. 106) for dating their inscriptions such as that at Usays. This could suggest that they might have been aware of the role of the Nabataeans in the history of Oriens. The Nabataean Arabs had been Hellenized and later Romanized, and so their Arab identity was diluted considerably, and they became *Rhomaioi.* But their impressive monuments, especially at Petra, and their water-conservation system persisted into the Byzantine period, reminders of their achievements of which the Ghassānids, such as those of Abū Karib who lived in the region of Petra, were no doubt aware. For the latest on the era of Bostra, see Z. T. Fiema, "The Era of Bostra: A Reconsideration," in *La Siria Araba da Roma a Bisanzio* (Ravenna, 1989), 109–20.

excelled in water-related installations. This can easily be inferred from the large number of structures associated with their names because they were built in the arid zone, where the Ghassānids were settled.[67] Some of these water-related installations are reflected in the literary sources that recorded their structures in such words as *qanāṭir,* aqueducts, *masnaʿ,* reservoir, and *ṣihrīj,* cistern.[68] Much stronger is the evidence of one of the few Ghassānid monuments that has survived, Qasr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī.[69] It has been argued that this high, massive, and solid tower can only point to a large establishment in that spot, most probably not only a monastery but also a fortress. Such an extensive establishment in the midst of an arid area could only have been kept viable through a system that could supply it with water. It has thus been suggested that the dam of Ḥarbaqa and the elaborate system of irrigation in its original form before the Umayyads developed it must have been the work of the one who endowed the monastery and built the fortress, the Ghassānid Arethas, who is mentioned in the Greek inscription dated in the 550s and whose relation to the tower is generally accepted. That the Ghassānid is not explicitly named as the builder of the tower does not affect the validity of the argument. Its Ghassānid affiliation is clearly implied in the inscription that unmistakably points to it, especially when the background of Ghassānid ecclesiastical involvement is remembered, revealed for the first time in the two preceding volumes of this series, which constitute the correct context for the interpretation of the inscription.[70]

[67] With the exception of Gaulanitis and Batanaea.

[68] On these terms, see the chapter on Ḥamza, below, 322. *Maṣnaʿa* can also mean reservoir but not always, as pointed out by Nöldeke, correcting Wetzstein, *GF,* 51 note 1.

[69] On Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī (West), see below, 203–11.

[70] BASIC I.1, 258–61.

II

Frontier Studies

The reign of Justinian witnessed an overhauling of the military structure and organization of the *Limes orientalis* from the Black to the Red Sea, involving the diocese of Oriens and also the Armenian provinces belonging to the diocese of Pontus.[1] This was a vast reorganization that also involved the provincial administration of the provinces.[2] It was the most drastic reorganization of military command and strategy since the reign of Diocletian when around A.D. 300 that emperor made a thorough reorganization of the eastern frontier after the Persian and the Arab wars.

I. The Military Reorganization of Oriens in 529

These two segments of the *Limes orientalis*—the Armenian and the Arab—are not treated together in the pages of Procopius but are separated. The Arab segment of it, involving the Ghassānids, was dismissed unceremoniously by Procopius with the usual *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* when the Ghassānids are in question. This has been treated previously with concentration on the *basileia* and the *archiphylarchia* conferred on Arethas in 529 but without reference to the reorganization of the Armenian provinces to the north, which was actually an inseparable part of the entire overhaul. The *basileia* will now be drawn upon for a better understanding of what happened in 529.

The *Limes orientalis,* the long line of defense against the Persians of Iran and the Arabs of the peninsula, had two major segments both of which were reorganized. The northern one from the Black Sea to the Euphrates, where the Semitic

[1] On the Armenian segment of the *Limes orientalis* and its overhaul, see Stein, *HBE,* II, 289–92, 470–72.

[2] For the reorganization of Arabia, Palestine, and Phoenicia Libanensis, see *BASIC* I.1, 196–206, where the two novels on Arabia and Palestine and the edict on Phoenicia Libanensis are analyzed. For a discussion of the overhauling of the *Limes orientalis* at the beginning and end of this proto-Byzantine period, namely, during the reign of Diocletian and that of Heraclius, see the articles by J. Eadie and W. Kaegi respectively: "The Transformation of the Eastern Frontier, 260–305" and "Reconceptualizing Byzantium's Eastern Frontiers in the Seventh Century," in *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity,* ed. R. W. Mathisen and H. S. Sivan (Brookfield, Vt., 1996), 72–82 and 83–92.

Orient began, was put under the special command of Sittas, who was appointed *magister militum per Armeniam.* Fortunately the documents that described in detail the nature and scope of this extraordinary command conferred on Sittas have survived. They have been cited and examined by a specialist on Armenian affairs:[3] one was a decree of the emperor on the appointment of Sittas, another a passage in Malalas that provides some important details.

The Imperial Decree

De Armenia et Ponto Polemoniaco, et gentibus. 5. Imp. Justinianus A. Zetae viro illustri, magistro militum per Armeniam, et Pontum Polemoniacum, et (caeteras) gentes.

Cum Propitia divinitate romanum nobis sit delatum imperium: sollicita cura, cauta diligentia pertractantes perspeximus, oportere etiam partibus Armeniae, et Ponto Polemoniaco, et gentibus proprium magistrum militum per hanc legem constituere: tuamque magnitudinem, quae nobis ex ante gestis optime commendata est, idoneam ad talem fore dignitatem confidentes elegimus: certasque provincias, id est, magnam Armeniam, quae interior dicebatur, et gentes, Anzitenam videlicet, Ingilenam, Astyanenam, Sophenam, Sophonenam, in qua est Martyropolis, Belabitenam, et primam et secundam Armeniam, et Pontum Polemoniacum tuae curae cum suis ducibus commisimus, comite Armeniae penitus sublato: cunctosque subdimus numeros, non modo quos in praesenti novos constituimus, sed etiam de praesentalibus, et Orientalibus, et aliis agminibus segregatos, non tamen eorum quantitatem agminum minuentes: sed quia plures eis addidimus sine reipublicae gravamine: et sine augmento sumptuum, aliquantus subtraximus: ita tamen, ut post hanc subtractionem ampliores remanserint, quam usque ad nostra felicia fuerant tempora.

The Emperor Justinian to A. Zeta, *vir illustris* and master of the army for Armenia, Pontus Polemoniacus and the Nations: Having, through God's grace, received the Roman power, and having considered this matter with solicitous care and vigilant concern, we have found it necessary to create by the present law a special military commander for parts of Armenia, Pontus Polemoniacus and the nations. We chose with complete confidence for a post of such responsibility thy highness which has so commended itself to us through its former activity. We entrust to thy care certain provinces, namely Greater Armenia, which is called Interior and the Nations (namely Anzetena, Ingilena, Asthianena, Sophena, Sophanena, in which lies Martyropolis, Ba-

[3] See N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian,* trans. N. G. Garsoian (Lisbon, 1970).

labitena) as well as First and Second Armenias and Pontus Polemoniacus, together with their Dukes. And the Count of Armenia is to be abolished altogether. We entrust [to thee] certain legions, not only those which are now being constituted, but also those chosen from the ones in the capital, those in the East, and certain other regiments. Furthermore, the number of soldiers in them shall not be diminished, for we have formerly added many to them without burdening the republic or raising expenditures. Now, however, we withdraw some of them, but in such a way that even after this subtraction more shall remain than there were before our blessed time.[4]

Malalas: *Chronographia*

᾽Εν δὲ τῷ προγεγραμμένῳ ἔτει τῆς βασιλείας ᾽Ιουστινιανοῦ κατεπέμφθη στρατηλάτης ᾽Αρμενίας ὀνόματι Ζίττας. ἐν γὰρ τοῖς προλαβοῦσι χρόνοις οὐκ εἶχεν ἡ αὐτὴ ᾽Αρμενία στρατηλάτην, ἀλλὰ δοῦκας καὶ ἄρχοντας καὶ κόμητας. δέδωκε δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς τῷ αὐτῷ στρατηλάτῃ ἀριθμοὺς στρατιωτῶν ἐκ τῶν δύο πραισέντων καὶ ἀνατολῆς. καὶ στρατεύσας ἐντοπίους σκρινιαρίους ἐποίησεν ἑαυτῷ σκρινιαρίους στρατηλατιανοὺς ἀπὸ θείας σάκρας, αἰτησάμενος τὸν βασιλέα αὐτόχθονας στρατεῦσαι, ὡς εἰδότας τὰ μέρη τῆς ᾽Αρμενίας. καὶ παρέσχεν αὐτῷ τοῦτο καὶ τὰ δίκαια τῶν δουκῶν καὶ τῶν κομήτων καὶ τοὺς ὑπάτους αὐτῶν, πρῴην μὲν ὄντας καστρισιανοὺς στρατιώτας· ἦσαν γὰρ καταλυθεῖσαι αἱ πρῴην οὖσαι ἀρχαί. ἔλαβε δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ στρατηλάτου ἀριθμοὺς τέσσαρας· καὶ γέγονεν ἔκτοτε μεγάλη παραφυλακὴ ῾Ρωμαίους. ἦν δὲ καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ πολεμικός· ὅστις καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν Θεοδώρας τῆς Αὐγούστας ἠγάγετο πρὸς γάμον, ὀνόματι Κομιτώ, νυμφευθεῖσαν ἐν τοῖς ᾽Αντιόχου, πλησίον τοῦ ῾Ιππικοῦ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως.

In the year of Justinian's reign mentioned above a man named Sittas was dispatched as *magister militum per Armeniam,* for in previous times Armenia did not have a *magister militum* but *duces,* governors and *comites.* The emperor gave Sittas *numeri* of soldiers from the two *magistri militum praesentales* and the *magister militum per Orientes.* Sittas enrolled indigenous *scriniarii* and made them his own military *scriniarii* in accord with an imperial rescript, having requested the emperor to enrol natives since they knew the regions of Armenia. The emperor granted him this and the rights of the Armenian *duces* and *comites,* and also consulars who were formerly *milites castrensiani;* for the former offices had been abolished. He also took four *numeri* from the *magister militum per Orientem* and from that time he became a great bulwark for the Romans. Sittas was a warlike man who married

[4] Ibid., 107; the edict is titulus xxix, Codicis Lib. I.

the sister of the Augusta Theodora, named Komito, whose wedding took place in the palace of Antiochos near the hippodrome in Constantinople.[5]

Nicholas Adontz noted some inaccuracies in the Malalas account but concluded that "the crux of the military organization of the frontier consisted in the reunion of all the Armenian lands under the power of a single commander who was a general or master of the army (*magister militum*)."[6]

This was exactly what also happened in the southern segment of the *Limes orientalis,* the Arab one under Arethas. Here is the well-known passage in Procopius on the extraordinary command conferred on Arethas in 529: διὸ δὴ βασιλεὺς Ἰουστινιανὸς φυλαῖς ὅτι πλείσταις Ἀρέθαν τὸν Γαβαλᾶ παῖδα ἐπέστησεν, ὃς τῶν ἐν Ἀραβίοις Σαρακηνῶν ἦρχεν, ἀξίωμα βασιλέως αὐτῷ περιθέμενος, οὐ πρότερον τοῦτο ἔν γε Ῥωμαίοις γεγονὸς πώποτε.[7] ("It was for this reason that the emperor Justinian placed as many tribes as possible under the command of Arethas, son of Jabala, who ruled over the Saracens of Arabia, bestowing on him the dignity of king, a thing that had never been done before among the Romans.")

The passage conveys the same message as the ones on Sittas—the unification of command under one officer. There is no doubt that the two commands of Arethas and Sittas were associated in the military thinking that went behind the appointment of both men, almost simultaneously, and that the background of the two extraordinary appointments was the same—the outbreak of the Persian War and the realization by Justinian that henceforth there would be a very serious Persian threat in the East that had to be confronted commensurately. Hence the organization of this long frontier with Persia in both its segments, the Armenian and the Arab. That this was indeed the background is reflected in the involvement of both Sittas and Arethas in the first Persian War of the reign. When Belisarius departed after the defeat of Callinicum in 531, Sittas was ordered by the emperor to take over and defend the Orient, which he did; it was then that Arethas and Sittas met. The two proceeded together and later collaborated in 531 in the campaign that centered around Martyropolis. Arethas had also participated in the battle of Callinicum, when he appeared with a force of five thousand cavalry, and was placed by Belisarius at the right wing of the Byzantine army before the impending battle.[8]

The imperial decree that appointed Sittas to this extraordinary command

[5] The *Chronicle of John Malalas,* trans. E. and M. Jeffreys and R. Scott (Melbourne, 1986), 248–49. For the Greek original, see John Malalas, *Chronographia,* ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1931), 429–30. The English version of the Australian team is preferable to that in Adontz, *Armenia.*

[6] Adontz, *Armenia,* 108.

[7] Procopius, *History,* ed. J. Haury and G. Wirth, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (repr. Leipzig, 1962), I.xvii.47.

[8] For these operations of the Persian War, see *BASIC* I.1, 134–42.

has survived, but the document that appointed Arethas has not. Sittas was, of course, closer to Justinian in every respect, and he married his wife's sister Comito; it was only natural that his appointment should have been expressed in terms of a warm imperial decree. But surely Arethas' appointment was not much less important and must have been preceded by a document. The rhythm of Arab-Byzantine relations received much acceleration in this period, with the death of the Ghassānid chief phylarch Jabala at the battle of Thannūris in 528, the death of the Kindite Arethas in the same year, and the conclusion of a new *foedus* with the Ghassānids after the death of Jabala.[9] The document has not survived but is implied in hints and oblique references such as the passage in Procopius, doctored and manipulated as it is. Some of its elements can even be reassembled from the similar document pertaining to the appointment of Sittas. The relevant passage in Procopius has been intensively analyzed in the previous volume[10] from a different perspective. It is therefore due for reexamination in this new, comparative context; the appointment of Sittas can throw some light on the document that has been lost.

> διὸ δὴ βασιλεὺς Ἰουστινιανὸς φυλαῖς ὅτι πλείσταις Ἀρέθαν τὸν Γαβαλᾶ παῖδα ἐπέστησεν, ὃς τῶν ἐν Ἀραβίοις Σαρακηνῶν ἦρχεν, ἀξίωμα βασιλέως αὐτῷ περιθέμενος, οὐ πρότερον τοῦτο ἔν γε Ῥωμαίοις γεγονὸς πώποτε. Ἀλαμούνδαρος μέντοι οὐδέν τι ἧσσον, εἰ μὴ καὶ μᾶλλον, τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα ἔφθειρεν, Ἀρέθα ἐν πάσῃ ἐφόδῳ τε καὶ ἀγωνίᾳ ἢ ἀτυχοῦντος ὡς μάλιστα ἢ καταπροδιδόντος ὡς τάχιστα. οὐ γάρ πω σαφές τι ἀμφ' αὐτῷ ἴσμεν. ταύτῃ τε ξυνέβη Ἀλαμουνδάρῳ, οὐδενός οἱ ἀντιστατοῦντος, ἐπὶ μήκιστον τὴν ἑῴαν ληίζεσθαι πᾶσαν, ἐπεὶ καὶ μακροβιώτατος ἀτεχνῶς γέγονε.[11]
>
> It was for this reason that Emperor Justinian placed as many tribes as possible under the command of Arethas, son of Jabala, who ruled the Saracens in Arabia, bestowing on him the dignity of king, a thing that had never been done before among the Romans. But Alamoundaros continued to inflict injury upon the Romans as much as he had done before, if not more, as Arethas either was very unfortunate in every inroad and engagement or else he acted treacherously as quickly as he could. For we know nothing certain about him as yet. And so it turned out that Alamoundaros with no one to confront him was able to plunder the whole East for a very long time, for he lived to an exceedingly ripe old age.

Both the imperial decree and the passage in Malalas speak of troops withdrawn from Oriens and added to those under the command of Sittas in the Arme-

[9] On all this, see ibid., 70–79.
[10] Ibid., 95–117.
[11] Procopius, *History,* I.xvii.47–48.

nian sector. Malalas is more specific and says they were four *numeri.* This could be related to the fact that with the new Arab command in Oriens there was more security along the Arabian frontier, and therefore some troops could be spared to serve in the Armenian sector.

Malalas notes that Sittas employed natives because of their familiarity with the Armenian scene. This is consonant with the rising importance of the Arabs of the area in shouldering the defense of Oriens. These *foederati* had been settled in Oriens for centuries, and so they could be called native in this sense; also they were living among Rhomaic Arabs, the former Arabs of Nabataea and Palmyrena. What was applicable to the Armenian front on the employment of natives who knew the region is also applicable to the Arabian front. In fact the employment of "barbarians" for the defense of the eastern frontier is striking. In addition to native troops, Armenian and Arab, there were the commanders: Sittas the Goth or Thracian[12] and Arethas the Arab. Apparently the two "barbarians" got along well together, as they participated in campaigning without friction. One, however, died apparently in the prime of his youth, killed in battle in 538, while Arethas lived to a ripe old age until 569.

Procopius is loud in his praise of Sittas,[13] as is the emperor who refers to his record in the service of the state as a background for his appointment, and so he speaks of his "magnitudo, quae nobis ex ante gestis optime commendata est." As has been argued in the previous volume, the appointment of Arethas, too, must have come after the Arab phylarch had demonstrated his competence in such operations as the punitive expedition against the Lakhmid king Mundir, who had killed the Byzantine Kindite phylarch, and after he performed so creditably in quelling the dangerous Samaritan revolt.[14]

Sittas was made *magister militum,* the highest military title in the Byzantine army. As to Arethas' title, this is not stated explicitly. As a "barbarian" prince, he was given the title *basileus,* and his title as *phylarchus* carried with it the highest ranks. He was also *patricius,* although when this was conferred is not clear, and it has been argued it was not conferred in 529.[15] The term *stratēlatēs,* which is the Greek equivalent of *magister,* was applied to Arethas later in an inscription as it was also applied to his grandson Nuʿmān.[16] Whether or not these were honorific

[12] On the ethnic origin of Sittas, see J. R. Martindale, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1992), III B, p. 1160.

[13] Procopius, *History,* II.iii.26–27.

[14] See *BASIC* I.1, 70–76, 82–95.

[15] On the ranks and patriciate of Arethas, see the present writer in "The Patriciate of Arethas," *BZ* 52 (1959), 321–43.

[16] For these inscriptions, see L. Jalabert and R. Mouterde, *IGLSYR,* 7 vols. (Paris, 1929–70), IV, no. 1550 and V, no. 2553 B. For the discussion of the two insertions, see *BASIC* I.1, 258–60 and 505–7. For a reinterpretation of the second inscription and the view that *stratelates* was indeed applied to Arethas, see L. MacCoull, "Notes on Arab Allies as *foederati* in Inscriptions," *Tyche* 11 (1996), 157–58.

titles also is not clear. However, there is no doubt that Arethas in 529 must have been recognized in the titular and rank ladder in a manner appropriate to his elevation to the supreme *archiphylarchia* and *basileia.*

Finally, the manner in which Procopius described the troops put under Sittas calls for a comparison with what he says on those placed under Arethas. In this connection, the subtle prejudice of Procopius, exposed in various previous publications, may be noted. Although it is more appropriate to note in the chapter on Procopius, yet because of the comparative context within which this discussion is conducted and the light it throws on the quality of Ghassānid troops, it is well to discuss it here. In the quotation cited earlier in this chapter, Procopius speaks of "as many tribes as possible put under Arethas," who is also referred to as the one "who ruled the Saracens in Arabia": Βασιλεὺς Ἰουστινιανὸς φυλαῖς ὅτι πλείσταις Ἀρέθαν τὸν Γαβαλᾶ παῖδα ἐπέστησεν, ὃς τῶν ἐν Ἀραβίοις Σαρακηνῶν ἦρχεν.

The contrast is clear: the imperial decree and Malalas speak of *numeri* and refer to *scriniarii* and other regular troops in addition to specifying in clear terms the territorial jurisdiction of Sittas; Procopius, on the other hand, chose to describe the troops under Arethas' command as tribes. His choice of words suggests that these troops were nomads, a suggestion supported by the term "Saracens" which he uses in the paragraph, the term that carried in Byzantine usage the implication of "nomads," often charged with disloyalty and treachery. Procopius' use of ἐν Ἀραβίοις instead of Arabia, the *provincia,*[17] the gentilic rather than the territorial, also conveys to the unsuspecting reader what Saracens suggests, and conceals that Arethas was the Byzantine phylarch appointed for the Provincia Arabia as his headquarters. The truth about the troops, obscured by Procopius, is that they were seasoned troops that had been in the service of Byzantium for more than a quarter century, since the *foedus* of 502, and were commanded by Arethas' father, Jabala, who dominated Arab-Byzantine relations during this quarter century. Moreover, he had fallen in battle for Byzantium at the battle of Thannūris and was eulogized in the *Chronicle* of Zacharia of Mytilene as one who learned how to fight in the Roman manner, which he added to his own manner of fighting *more Arabico.*[18] Arethas inherited from his father, Jabala, his seasoned veterans when he was appointed to the extraordinary command.

In the latter part of the passage, Procopius proceeds to denigrate Arethas as either incompetent or treacherous, while he heaps praise, fully deserved, on Sittas on the occasion of his untimely death after a heroic encounter. He says that he died "in a manner unworthy of his valor and his continual achievements against the enemy, a man who was extremely handsome in appearance and a capable war-

[17] As he does when he refers to the phylarchy of Abū Karib over Palestine which he refers to as a province: καὶ αὐτὸν βασιλεὺς φύλαρχον τῶν ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ Σαρακηνῶν κατεστήσατο. *History,* I.xix.10.

[18] On Jabala at Thannūris, see *BASIC* I.1, 76–79.

rior, and a general second to none of his contemporaries."[19] That Arethas was exactly the opposite of what Procopius said has been discussed in various publications; and he continued to enjoy the full trust of Justinian and of Justin II until the end of his own reign in 569.

Just as Procopius gave no hint that the appointments of Sittas and Arethas were united in being a reaction to the outbreak of the Persian War, and consequently they appear separated and unrelated in his *History,* so is his account of the appointment of Arethas in the southern portion of the *Limes orientalis* separated from that of Abū Karib, whom Justinian appointed as the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia about the same time. It is therefore important to treat Abu Karib in this context of the reorganization of the *Limes orientalis,* since Abū Karib shared with Arethas a major burden of the responsibility and was a very large historical figure. Indeed, it is possible to say that the *Limes orientalis* in its entirety from the Black to the Red Sea was presided over by three commanders, Sittas in the Armenian segment in the north and Arethas and Abū Karib in the Arab, southern part.

Abū Karib

Abū Karib has been much less known than Arethas as a Ghassānid figure of the sixth century. But recent discoveries have established him as a major figure in its military history in Oriens, especially as a watchman over the Arabian frontier in Palaestina Tertia. He first appears in Procopius as one who presented Justinian with the oasis of the Palm Groves (Phoinikōn) in Ḥijāz and who was made the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia around 530. Procopius presents the Palm Groves as worthless. He praises his military prowess in checking the pastoralists, but conceals the important fact that he was the brother of the more famous Arethas. In so doing, he marginalized his role in frontier defense, which, as will become clear, was nearly as important as that of his better-known brother Arethas. This is how Abū Karib appears in Procopius.

> τούτῳ τῷ φοινικῶνι βασιλέα Ἰουστινιανὸν Ἀβοχάραβος ἐδωρήσατο, ὁ τῶν ἐκείνῃ Σαρακηνῶν ἄρχων, καὶ αὐτὸν βασιλεὺς φύλαρχον τῶν ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ Σαρακηνῶν κατεστήσατο. ἀδῄωτόν τε τὴν χώραν διεφύλαξε τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον, ἐπεὶ τοῖς τε ἀρχομένοις βαρβάροις καὶ οὐδέν τι ἧσσον τοῖς πολεμίοις φοβερός τε ἀεὶ Ἀβοχάραβος ἔδοξεν εἶναι καὶ διαφερόντως δραστήριος.[20]
>
> Abū Karib presented Emperor Justinian with the Palm Groves (Phoinikōn); he was the ruler of the Saracens there, and the emperor made him the phylarch of the Saracens in Palestine. And he guarded the land from plunder all

[19] Above, note 13.
[20] Procopius, *History,* I.xix.10–11.

the time; for Abū Karib appeared as formidable and exceptionally energetic to both the barbarians over whom he ruled and no less to those barbarians who were his enemies.

After the splendid isolation to which he was consigned by Procopius, the following documents, which have come to light on Abū Karib in recent times, may be presented. They are documents of incontestable authenticity and of the first importance as they reveal the various dimensions of his historic role in Palaestina Tertia. First, the Sabaic inscription, the Dam Inscription of the ruler of South Arabia, the Abyssinian Abraha, presents him around 540 as one of six rulers of the Near East who sent embassies to Abraha.[21] The inscription reveals two important facts about him: he was the brother of Arethas, both having the same patronymic, son of Jabala; and he appears as an important figure, in company with the six rulers of the Near East: the Roman emperor, the Persian king, the Ethiopian negus, Arethas, the Lakhmid Mundir, and himself. Within the Ghassānid framework, he appears the equal of his brother Arethas in importance and one who had an independent or autonomous political and military existence.

A Syriac ecclesiastical document found in al-Nabk (between Palmyra and Damascus) presents him as an important figure in the history of the Monophysite church:[22] he is referred to explicitly not as phylarch but as king: *malkā;* the manuscript is dated partly through reference to the period of his kingship and presents him in a theological light. He appears as an "orthodox" Monophysite, that is, of the Severan persuasion, and the author of the manuscript calls on some of his brothers to come back to the fold of orthodox Monophysitism from which they had strayed.

A Greek inscription, found in the village of Sammā' in the Golan inscribed in a lintel of a church, dedicated to St. George, refers to him, presumably as a patron or a donor, another indication of Abū Karib's strong attachment to Christianity. This was true of the dynasty in its entirely; its most illustrious member, Arethas, resuscitated the Monophysite church around 540, after a period of eclipse and persecution by Chalcedonian Byzantium.[23]

Finally, a recently discovered papyrus, one of the Petra papyri, mentions Abū Karib in Ṣadaqa, in his own province of Palaestina Tertia, some 25 km southeast of Petra. He appears neither as a soldier nor as a diplomat, nor as a figure in a religious context, but as one engaged in service to the civilian community in the region, involved in arbitrating a dispute between some citizens of the area. This

[21] *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum,* IV, II, no. 541, lines 87–92.

[22] See W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1871), part II, p. 468. For a discussion of this Syriac codex, see *BASIC* I.2, 845–50.

[23] For the inscription, see M. Sartre, "Deux phylarques arabes dans l'Arabie byzantine," *Le Muséon* 106 (1993), 150–53.

role reflects confidence on the part of the community in the judgment of the Ghassānid as a well-known figure in the province, not a stranger but one accepted by the community and related to its everyday life.[24]

These four documents reveal dimensions of the personality of Abū Karib, entirely concealed by Procopius who, though he speaks of him in complimentary terms, presents him merely as a Saracen and an energetic defender of the frontier. But these dimensions are relevant to the problem of the *Limes orientalis* and its drastic reorganization by Justinian in its Arabian profile. This is especially true of two of these documents: the Sabaic inscription presents him as equal to Arethas in importance from the perspective of Byzantium, and so he appears in the perception of the ruler of South Arabia; and the Syriac document refers to him as king, *malkā,* which recalls the *basileia* conferred on Arethas by Justinian in 529. In view of all these data from incontestable contemporary documents, the conclusion is inevitable that the year 529 witnessed not only the appointment of Arethas as the supreme phylarch of the Arab *foederati* in Oriens but also another appointment, that of his brother, Abū Karib, who was also endowed with a supreme *phylarchia* and a *basileia* just as Arethas was. That his command comprised the region to the south of that segment of the *limes* that Arethas commanded, Palaestina Tertia, is confirmed by a statement in Procopius about the appointment of Arethas: "Justinian put him in command of as many tribes as possible." This is made perfectly clear after exploring the appointment of Abū Karib, which explains it fully. Arethas was put in command of many of the tribes but not all; the rest were put under the jurisdiction of his brother, Abū Karib; so the two brothers, between them, ruled all the federates along the Oriental *limes* facing the Arabian Peninsula. Arethas was in command of those in the north, in the Provincia Arabia, Phoenicia Libanensis, Syria Salutaris, and Euphratensis, while Abū Karib controlled those in the south, in Palaestina Tertia.

The question now arises of why the command of a single province or even a part of it, one of the three Palestines into which Palestine was divided, should have been considered by Byzantium sufficiently important that its command was almost on the same footing as the better-known and important command of Arethas in the north. Palaestina Tertia was in fact a vast province; it comprised the Sinai Peninsula, the Negev, the southern part of the old Provincia Arabia, south of the Arnon, and a large chunk of northern Ḥijāz, including Ḥismā and Madyan/Midian.

This was a world of its own, entirely Arab and Arabian, unlike the northern sector that Arethas commanded and that faced both the Persians and the Lakhmids, the main threat to the eastern provinces. The extension of Arethas' com-

[24] The date of Abū Karib's involvement in the arbitration is not clear in the badly preserved papyrus, but it may have been in the 530s; for more on this papyrus, see below, 46.

mand so as to include Palaestina Tertia would have distracted him from his principal assignment in the north, which was to contain the Persians and the Lakhmids. Hence the separation of Palaestina Tertia from the jurisdiction of Arethas in the north.

In the sixth century, Palaestina Tertia was part of the Holy Land and had been for some two centuries since the conversion of Constantine in the fourth and the separation from Arabia of that large territorial slice, which became Palaestina Tertia. Not only onomastically did Tertia become part of the Holy Land/Palestine. In Sinai was the major *locus sanctus* and great pilgrimage center, St. Catherine's monastery. Abū Karib was in charge of regions such as the Negev and the Sinai Peninsula from which pastoralists within the *limes* could present security problems to the pilgrims and the *loca sancta,* as well as threaten from across Wādī ʿAraba in Trans-Jordan. The very special position of Palestine as the Holy Land in the Christian Roman Empire imparted an important dimension to the command of Abū Karib, one of the wardens of the frontier for the protection of the holy places. That he was a protector of the Holy Land from the inroads of the pastoralists must have been part of the self-image of Abū Karib, who as the sources indicate was a phylarch deeply involved in religion and a zealous Monophysite; his possible participation in the quelling of the revolt of that biblical people, the Samaritans, who caused so much havoc in the Holy Land and perpetrated some atrocities, must have reminded him of his assignment as a protector of that holy province.[25]

The responsibilities of Abū Karib were related not only to the various regions that technically constituted the Byzantine province of Palaestina Tertia but also to the wider world of the Arabian Peninsula, especially its western sector. Western Arabia became a Byzantine sphere of influence in all its segments, especially after the Ethiopian conquest of South Arabia in the 520s and its emergence as a Christian state, friendly toward Byzantium. Two of the three main urban centers to the north—Najran and Yathrib (Medina)—were related to the Ghassānids within the larger context of affiliation to the large tribal group Azd, while Mecca too had a strong Azdite colony, the group Khuzāʿa. This was the direct responsibility of Abū Karib, to ensure the continuance of the Byzantine influence there, not only politically and militarily.

Even more important was the economic profile; this was the region of the historic *via odorifera,* the significance of which grew with the change of trade routes, after the outbreak of the Persian Wars of the sixth century, from the Mesopotamian to the west Arabian one. Palaestina Tertia over which Abū Karib was phylarch lay astride the northern segment of this historic route where it bifurcated

[25] On the possible participation of Abū Karib in quelling the Samaritan Revolt, see *BASIC* I.1, 83–84.

to Gaza in Palaestina Tertia and to Bostra in the Provincia Arabia. Its protection was one of the principal concerns of the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia.[26]

Perhaps the foregoing has provided sufficient data for validating the view, put forward here, that in the reorganization of the *Limes orientalis* Abū Karib was seriously taken into account. That *limes* in its entirety from the Black to the Red Sea should be viewed as having been reconstituted ca. 529 under three distinguished commanders in the service of Byzantium: Sittas the Goth, Arethas, and Abū Karib. The first commanded the northern Armenian sector; the last two shared the command of the Arabian one.

The Two Brothers

A cautionary note should be sounded at the end of this section which has united three commanders not normally associated with one another. They have been united in the context of Justinian's overhaul of the *Limes orientalis* ca. 530, his response to the ominous outbreak of the Persian War. But it is equally important to mark the area that separated the Arab and the Gothic commanders from each other. Sittas was a *magister militum* in command of regular Roman troops, the *stratiōtai* of the *numeri* and other units that were put under his command as explained in the imperial edict and in the *Chronographia* of Malalas. His territorial jurisdiction was clearly defined, and he and his troops were legally Roman *cives.* Arethas and Abū Karib were both commanders of *foederati,* a clearly defined category of troops, distinct from the regular Roman troops, the *stratiōtai.* Neither the commanders nor their troops were legally Roman *cives.* Only two of the provinces in which they operated were specifically mentioned by Procopius, namely, Arabia and Palaestina Tertia, but their phylarchal jurisdiction extended over all the limitrophe provinces of Oriens, and the line of defense they were responsible for was twice as long as that of Sittas.

While Sittas was the commander in chief of all the Roman forces at his disposal, and reported only to the emperor, who was his brother-in-law, the two Arab brothers were in command of only the *foederati* of Oriens, both those who were part of the mobile force, the *exercitus comitatensis,* and also those who formed part of the frontier force that watched over the *limes.* Both categories were still part of a larger Roman military establishment in Oriens that consisted of the imperial Roman *exercitus comitatensis* and the *limitanei.* But while Sittas was master in his own house, the two brothers were under the Roman military commanders, ultimately the *magister militum* in Antioch to whom they answered. As for the Roman

[26] This will be treated at length in *BASIC* II.2. On the *via odorifera,* which passed through Palaestina Tertia, and the function of the Ghassānids as protectors of this route, see Y. Frankel, "Roads and Stations in Southern *Bilād al-Shām* in the 7th–8th Centuries," *ARAM* 8 (1996), 177–88; and M. Maraqtan, "Dangerous Trade Routes: On the Plundering of Caravans in the Pre-Islamic Near East," ibid., 213–36.

limitanei, these were not replaced immediately by the Ghassānid *foederati* in the year that witnessed this overhaul of the *Limes orientalis.* They remained and persisted for a long time before they were finally replaced by the Arab *foederati* as the watchmen of the Roman frontier.

Kinda

A discussion of the reorganization of the Oriental *limes* is incomplete without taking into account Byzantium's relations with Kinda, the other important Arab group of *foederati* that Byzantium treated with in addition to Ghassān. These relations have been discussed in the previous volume,[27] but not from this new perspective. With the elucidation of the bipartite structure of the new Ghassānid presence along the *Limes orientalis,* especially the segment commanded by Abū Karib in Palestine, a return to Kinda is imperative especially as it was the province of Palestine to which the Kindite namesake of the Ghassānid Arethas, son of Jabala, was assigned, namely, Arethas, son of ʿAmr.

For almost a quarter century before 529, Kinda had been in a treaty relationship with Byzantium, after the *foedus* of 502 with Arethas, son of ʿAmr. Kindite troops under Aswad fought with the *magister militum* Areobindus in the vicinity of Nisibis during the Persian wars of Anastasius' reign.[28] In the 520s the Kindite Arethas became the phylarch of Palestine, possibly Tertia, after a short interregnum in Ḥīra in Persian territory. Kinda was the powerful Arab group that controlled a substantial portion of the Arabian Peninsula and its tribes, especially the large tribal group Maʿadd in central Arabia. Through Kinda, Byzantium had an indirect sphere of influence in the Arabian Peninsula itself, in addition to the alliance with Kinda, who were deployed both within and beyond Roman territory. This was the situation when in 528 friction between Arethas, the Kindite, and Diomedes, the *silentiarius* of Palestine, resulted in Arethas' withdrawal from Byzantine service and his flight from Palestine into Arabia, where he was killed by his enemy, the Lakhmid Mundir. The murder of the Kindite Arethas was avenged by a Byzantine expedition in which the Ghassānids distinguished themselves, and which was part of the background for the elevation of its most eligible phylarch, Arethas, son of Jabala, to the extraordinary command in 529.

Around 529, then, Byzantium overhauled the military structure that had previously defended Oriens by accommodating the Ghassānids. But there remained the Kindites, who could not be ignored as they were an element of weight in the Arabian Peninsula, where their presence constituted an extensive sphere of influence for Byzantium. Byzantine diplomacy, conducted by the veteran diplomat Abraham and his son Nonnosus, finally succeeded in accommodating Kinda,

[27] For this, see *BASIC* I.1, 19–22, 70–76, 148–60.
[28] Ibid., 20–21.

some time around 531. The Kindite Qays was then the representative of Kinda's power in Arabia. He was persuaded by Abraham to divide his rule over Kinda between his two brothers, Yazīd and ʿAmr, to give up his Arabian patrimony, and to come to Palestine where he was offered a *hēgemonia,* which he accepted, bringing with him a large number of his followers.[29] From the events that took place during these few years between the death of the Kindite Arethas and the advent of Qays in Palestine, two may be singled out as most relevant to the reorganization of the Oriental *limes.*

1. The Arabic sources report that in this period, possibly after the death of the Kindite Arethas, the Persian king Chosroes extended the power and authority of his vassal, the Lakhmid Mundir, so as to reach even the western part of Arabia in Ḥijāz.[30] This posed a challenge to Byzantium's influence in Arabia, especially after the hold of Kinda over the group Maʿadd in Arabia weakened with the death of the Kindite Arethas, son of ʿAmr, who had controlled them. Maʿadd, or at least part of them, lived in western Arabia, Byzantium's sphere of influence, secured through the Ghassānids and the Salīḥids before them in the fifth century. The extension of the power of the Ghassānids as countervailing against that of the Lakhmids, particularly the special command given to Abū Karib in Palaestina Tertia to watch, among other places, the Ḥijāz, thus becomes even more intelligible. It was in large measure a response to challenges from the Persian side and the Lakhmid as stated by Procopius in the passage on the elevation of Arethas, the Ghassānid.

2. Noteworthy is the fact that Qays, now the chief of Kinda, was endowed not with the *phylarchia* but with the *hēgemonia.* This clearly was a command and rank higher than the *phylarchia,* and clearly it was meant to be a sop to the Kindite Cerberus, who was the heir to a distinguished name, that of the Kindite Arethas. This was necessary especially after Byzantium had elevated the Ghassānids so high in the Byzantine hierarchy: it made the two brothers kings and supreme phylarchs, in charge of all the *foederati* in Oriens, and redeployed them as the new *limitanei* along the long *limes* from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. The return of the Kindite presence into Palestine now made the military structure in that province very complex. There were, in addition to the Byzantine *stratiōtai* under the command of the *dux,* three groups of Arab *foederati:* the *foederati* of the Parembole in the desert of Juda, whose occupation of that part of Palestine went back to the fifth century; the *foederati* of the Ghassānids under Abū Karib and the Ghassānids of Palaestina Secunda in the Golan under Arethas, the Ghassānid; and now were added the Kindites under the *hegemonia* of Qays. This complex military presence is reflected

[29] Ibid., 148–60.

[30] See T. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (repr. Graz, 1973), 238.

in the novel issued on Palestine in 535 where the three categories of troops are mentioned as existing in the province: *foederati, limitanei,* and *stratiōtai.*[31]

In addition to the federate Kindite presence in Palestine, there was another one at the strategic fortress of Dūmat, at the southern entrance of Wādī Sirḥān, one of the major gateways to Oriens from the Arabian Peninsula. This was a branch of Kinda, not the same as that to which belonged Arethas, son of ʿAmr, and his grandson Qays. Apparently this branch became prominent after that of Arethas, namely, Banū Ākil al-Murār, started to decline as a result of the death of Arethas at the hands of Mundir the Lakhmid. This branch, the Sakūn, is the one that under their leader, Ukaydir,[32] fought the Muslim troops commanded by Khālid ibn-Walīd. The presumption is that this branch of Kinda was in charge of the defense of Wādī Sirḥān as early as the period of the reorganization of the *Limes orientalis* around 530.

II. *Foederati* and *Limitanei:* The Ghassānid Takeover

The elevation of the two Ghassānid brothers to extraordinary command in Oriens must raise the question of the exact nature and scope of their new duties. Was it simply an internal reorganization of the federate and phylarchal system, which resulted in unifying the federate units under one or two Ghassānid commands, as the passage in the *History* of Procopius seems to suggest? As Procopius was notoriously anti-Ghassānid, one can safely assume that much more was involved in this innovation, what he himself has described as something the Romans had never done before.[33] The Ghassānids were principally employed to defend the frontier, the old *limes* of Diocletian. Consequently, this sweeping change which was implied in Procopius must be related to a correspondingly sweeping change related to the *limes,* especially as Procopius himself presents the background of the elevation of the Ghassānids as related to frontier warfare involving the campaigns of Mundir against the Roman *limes.*

I

It will be argued that this overhaul was nothing less than the prelude for the eventual Ghassānid takeover of the military duties of the *limitanei,* after these, in the opinion of Justinian, had outlived their usefulness. The same historian to whom is owed the valuable date on the elevation of the Ghassānids also provides the most important data for the dismissal, or gradual dismissal, of the *limitanei*

[31] For the three categories of troops in Palestine, see Novel 103 on Palestine, discussed in *BASIC* I.1, 201, where the discussion of the novel focuses mostly on the *foederati;* for a discussion of the *limitanei* in the novel and in that province, see B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire* (Oxford, 1992), 208–13.

[32] See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* ed. M. Ibrahim (Cairo, 1962), III, 378.

[33] *History,* I.xvii.47 and above, 24–25.

and the Ghassānid takeover. The crucial passage on the *limitanei* comes in Procopius' *Anecdota.* As it is the one extant account of Justinian's treatment of the *limitanei,* it should be quoted at length for an intensive examination.

> Προσθήσω δέ τι τούτοις καὶ ἕτερον ἐπεί με ὁ τῶν στρατιωτῶν λόγος ἐς τοῦτο ἄγει. οἱ Ῥωμαίων βεβασιλευκότες ἐν τοῖς ἄνω χρόνοις πανταχόσε τῶν τῆς πολιτείας ἐσχατιῶν πάμπολυ κατεστήσαντο στρατιωτῶν πλῆθος ἐπὶ φυλακῇ τῶν ὁρίων τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς, κατὰ τὴν ἑῴαν μάλιστα μοῖραν ταύτῃ τὰς ἐφόδους Περσῶν τε καὶ Σαρακηνῶν ἀναστέλλοντες, οὕσπερ λιμιταναίους ἐκάλουν. τούτοις Ἰουστινιανὸς ὁ βασιλεὺς κατ᾽ ἀρχὰς μὲν οὕτω δὴ παρέργως τε καὶ φαύλως ἐχρῆτο, ὥστε τεσσάρων ἢ πέντε αὐτοῖς ἐνιαυτῶν τῶν συντάξεων τοὺς χορηγοὺς ὑπερημέρους εἶναι, καὶ ἐπειδὰν Ῥωμαίοις τε καὶ Πέρσαις εἰρήνη γένοιτο, ἠναγκάζοντο οἱ ταλαίπωροι οὗτοι ἅτε καὶ αὐτοὶ τῶν ἐκ τῆς εἰρήνης ἀγαθῶν ἀπολαύσοντες χρόνου ῥητοῦ τὰς ὀφειλομένας σφίσι ξυντάξεις τῷ δημοσίῳ χαρίζεσθαι· ὕστερον δὲ καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ τῆς στρατείας ὄνομα αὐτοὺς ἀφείλετο οὐδενὶ λόγῳ. τὸ λοιπὸν τὰ μὲν ὅρια τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς φυλακτηρίων ἐκτὸς ἔμεινεν, οἱ δὲ στρατιῶται ἐξαπιναίως ἔβλεπον εἰς τῶν εὐσεβεῖν εἰωθότων τὰς χεῖρας.
>
> And I shall add one further item to those I have mentioned, since the subject of the soldiers leads me thereto. The Roman Emperors in earlier times stationed a very great multitude of soldiers at all points of the Empire's frontier in order to guard the boundaries of the Roman domain, particularly in the eastern portion, thus checking the inroads of the Persians and the Saracens; these troops they used to call *limitanei.* These the Emperor Justinian at first treated so casually and so meanly that their paymasters were four or five years behind in their payments to them, and whenever peace was made between the Romans and the Persians, these wretches were compelled, on the supposition that they too would profit by the blessings of peace, to make a present to the Treasury of the pay which was owing to them for a specified period. And later on, for no good reason, he took away from them the very name of regular troops. Thereafter the frontiers of the Roman Empire remained destitute of guards and the soldiers suddenly found themselves obliged to look to the hands of those accustomed to works of piety.[34]

As the passage comes in the *Anecdota,* when Procopius was in an especially sour mood, fulminating against his emperor, it contains features that combine *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* in addition to the kernel of truth that his state-

[34] Procopius, *Anecdota,* XXXIV.12–14; trans. H. B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1935).

ments normally have, and the *Kaiserkritik* is crystal clear.[35] It is, therefore, impossible to believe that the emperor, solicitous for the security of the frontier, would have dismissed its watchmen, the *limitanei,* without good reason. It is, therefore, imperative to find out what might have induced him to do so. Procopius himself provides a clue when he refers to the arrears of their *stipendia,* extending for four or five years. This applied also to the officers, subordinate to the *duces* or *stratēgoi* who were in charge of the *limitanei.* That this could have happened is supported by analogy. In the previous century the *duces* cheated and withheld the *annona* from the *foederati,* the Saracen *foederati,* as is attested in an imperial document.[36] It was therefore natural that the *limitanei* should have become discontented and then demoralized, thus becoming inefficient, and in Procopius' phrase, "had not the slightest zeal for warfare."

These *limitanei* had been watching the frontier for a long time, more than two centuries since the reign of Diocletian who overhauled the defense system in the Orient, paying special attention to the frontier with such measures as the construction, among other things, of the *Strata Diocletiana.* Guard duty, as distinct from the duties of a mobile field army, can become monotonous and lead to inefficiency. What worked along the *limes* in the reign of Diocletian may have understandably become unworkable in the sixth century.[37]

That this must have been the case is supported by a statement in the same passage, which gives a clue to what caused the emperor to have his reservations about the efficiency of the *limitanei.* According to him, these *limitanei* were stationed "in order to guard the boundaries of the Roman domain, particularly in the eastern portion, thus checking the inroads of the Persians and the Saracens." The passage gives prominence to the problem in the Orient, involving both the Persians and the Saracens, and it is this clue that must lead to the cause behind what Justinian did to the *limitanei* of Oriens.

It was in the reign of Justinian that the Persian War in the East broke out, and war continued to break out in the reign of each emperor until Heraclius. The Persian Wars of Justinian's reign were not flattering to his imperial pride, and their battlefields were along the same frontier the *limitanei* were supposed to protect. Except for the campaign of 540, which resulted in the capture of Antioch, they were *frontier* wars.

[35] Benjamin Isaac (*Limits of Empire,* 210) has already cautioned against taking the passage in Procopius as it stands. What follows in this section is consonant with the spirit of his analysis, but tries to separate fact from fiction in the well-known passage. The passage in the *Anecdota* on the *limitanei* has also been noted in M. Whitby, "Recruitment in Roman Armies from Justinian to Heraclius *ca.* 565–615," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East III: States, Resources and Armies* (Princeton, 1995), 112–13.

[36] A novel of Theodosius the Younger; see *BAFIC,* 49–50.

[37] Instances of the decline in the ranks of the *limitanei* are cited in S. T. Parker, *Romans and Saracens: A History of the Arabian Frontier* (Winona Lake, Ind., 1985), 149–50.

Especially important to emphasize within this context is that within the two and a half centuries that separated the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine with whom the rise of the *limitanei* is associated, from that of Justinian, to whom their dismissal is attributed, more than half of this period was characterized by a lull in the hostilities between Byzantium and Persia, with the exception of minor wars.[38] The *limitanei* thus were not fighting but performing guardian and paramilitary duties most of the time, and this must have affected their combat readiness and conduced to their inefficiency.

Related to the Persian Wars and even more important were the Saracen/Arab wars, the devastating raids of the Persian *foederati,* the Lakhmids under the rule of their king Mundir. The raids of the Lakhmids even more than those of the imperial Persian army targeted the frontier of the *limitanei.* On occasion Mundir would make a breakthrough in the frontier and penetrate far into Oriens, as when he reached Apamea in a quest for booty. In another well-known passage in the *History,* Procopius himself provides a detailed and accurate picture of the danger that Mundir posed to the Byzantine frontier.

> For Alamoundaras was most discreet and well experienced in matters of warfare, thoroughly faithful to the Persians, and unusually energetic—a man who for a space of fifty years forced the Roman state to bend the knee. For beginning from the boundaries of Egypt and as far as Mesopotamia he plundered the whole country, pillaging one place after another, burning the buildings in his track and making captives of the population by the tens of thousands on each raid, most of whom he killed without consideration, while he gave up the others for great sums of money. And he was confronted by no one at all. For he never made his inroad without looking about, but so suddenly did he move and so very opportunely for himself, that, as a rule, he was already off with all the plunder when the generals and the soldiers were beginning to learn what had happened and to gather themselves against him. If, indeed, by any chance, they were able to catch him, this barbarian would fall upon his pursuers while still unprepared and not in battle array, and would rout and destroy them with no trouble; and on one occasion he made prisoners of all the soldiers who were pursuing him together with their officers. These officers were Timostratos, the brother of Rufinus and John, the son of Lucas whom he gave up indeed later, thereby gaining for himself no mean or trivial wealth. And, in a word, this man proved himself the most difficult and dangerous enemy of all to the Romans.[39]

[38] The two wars of the 5th century were short and relatively insignificant; see *BAFIC,* 25–39.
[39] Procopius, *History,* I.xvii.40–45, trans. H. B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library.

The passage speaks for itself. It reveals the seriousness of the situation along the eastern front. An emperor who recaptured the Roman West from the Vandals and Goths clearly thought the danger was not posed by the Germans whom he had beaten in the West but by the Persians and the Saracens/Arabs who were threatening the very same frontier that the *limitanei* were supposed to protect. As these proved to be unequal to this task, it is easy to see how the emperor concluded that the *limitanei* had outlived their usefulness and that an overhaul of the defense system of the *limes* had become imperative.

The confrontation of the two passages, separated by Procopius and assigned to two different works, thus contributes to a solution of the problem of the motives behind Justinian's treatment of the *limitanei.* Careful examination of the passage on the *limitanei* reveals that their dismissal did not happen all at once but went through apparently two phases during the reign of Justinian. The first is reflected in the phrase κατ᾽ ἀρχάς ("at first"), when he was dissatisfied with them, and the second is reflected in ὕστερον ("later on"), "when he took away from them the very name of regular troops."[40]

Another fact that emerges from the examination of the passage in the *Anecdota* is that the *limitanei* were stationed principally in the Orient. This much is clear from the statement in the passage itself which says "particularly in the eastern portion," κατὰ τὴν ἑῴαν μάλιστα μοῖραν, a paraphrastic expression for Oriens.

The facts that may be salvaged from the passage in the *Anecdota,* a curious medley of fact and fiction, are: Justinian did indeed want to overhaul the system of defense in Oriens as far as the *limitanei* were concerned; his dismissal of them was not complete nor sudden but gradual and phased; they did not entirely disappear even toward the end of his reign; and, finally, what Procopius says in the *Anecdota* applies principally to Oriens. This must necessarily involve the Ghassānids, the *foederati* who functionally were saddled with duties similar to those of the *limitanei.*

Thus at the outset of his reign, Justinian inherited two problems: an Arab Lakhmid problem: the successful devastating raids of their king Mundir during the reign of his uncle Justin; and a group of *limitanei* who had not been able to ward off the Lakhmid peril, having lost their combat readiness during the long lull in hostilities during the fifth century. Justin had reigned but not ruled, while Justinian had ruled but not reigned. In 527 Justinian both reigned and ruled and

[40] The *limitanei* persisted in the West, attested in Africa and along the Danube, as is noted by, among others, P. J. Casey, "Justinian, the *Limitanei,* and Arab-Byzantine Relations in the 6th c.," *JRA* 9 (1996), 215, 220. Benjamin Isaac has argued for their persistence in Oriens (Palestine), and this is consistent with the view that their dismissal by Justinian was gradual. But he also drew attention to a unit of *limitanei* stationed in Nessana in the Negev, which was still there after the death of Justinian; Isaac, *Limits of Empire,* 211.

so attended to a radical solution of the two problems, which resulted in the elevation of the new mettlesome dynasty, the Ghassānids, to supreme federate power in Oriens for shouldering the responsibilities, previously performed inadequately by the *limitanei* whom he gradually dismissed.

II

A more objective historian would, after giving an account of the dismissal of the *limitanei,* have indicated the identity of those who stepped in to take their place for the defense of the frontier. That the Ghassānids were the obvious alternative has already been intimated and will be confirmed presently. Procopius, with his prejudice against the Ghassānids, does not say this, and in fact goes out of his way to denigrate them, thus diverting attention from them as the new *limitanei.* However, he remains the chief historian of the reign of Justinian and of the Ghassānids, and so a return to the relevant passage in Procopius is necessary for extracting the new role of the Ghassānids from his account, misleading and unfavorable as it is.

After saying that Justinian finally relieved the *limitanei* even of their very name as regular soldiers, Procopius states that "thereafter the frontiers of the Roman empire, ὅρια, remained destitute of guards." The statement is, of course, untrue, since it is impossible to believe that the emperor would have left the frontiers of his state unguarded. The statement, bald and untrue as it is, invites attention to the Ghassānids, the other category of troops in Oriens that were primarily stationed to defend the frontier and that were attested active throughout the reign, unlike the *limitanei* who were gradually phased out.

The confrontation of the two passages in Procopius reveals further evidence. After describing the sorry state of the frontier, ravaged by the Lakhmids of Mundir, he describes the Byzantine reaction, the measures Justinian adopted to countervail against Mundir's threat, and why he chose to react in this fashion. The relevant part of the passage deserves a reprise in this context.

> The reason was this, that Alamoundaras, holding the position of king, ruled alone over all the Saracens in Persia, and he was always able to make his inroad with the whole army wherever he wished in the Roman domain; and neither any commander of Roman troops, whom they call "duces," nor any leader of the Saracens allied with the Romans, who are called "phylarchs," was strong enough with his men to array himself against Alamoundaras; for the troops stationed in the different districts were not a match in battle for the enemy. For this reason the Emperor Justinian put in command of as many clans as possible Arethas, the son of Gabalas, who ruled over the Saracens of Arabia, and bestowed upon him the dignity of a king, a thing which

> among the Romans had never before been done. However Alamoundaras continued to injure the Romans just as much as before, if not more, since Arethas was either extremely unfortunate in every inroad and every conflict, or else he turned traitor as quickly as he could. For as yet we know nothing certain about him. In this way it came about that Alamoundaras, with no one to stand against him, plundered the whole East for an exceedingly long time, for he lived to a very advanced age.[41]

Just as the passage in the *Anecdota* exudes *Kaiserkritik,* so does this one in the history exude *Araberkritik* against the Ghassānids. The veracity of Procopius on Arethas has been examined and was found wanting; the opposite of what he says about Arethas turns out to be true, concerning both his "incompetence" and *prodosia,* trumped up by him. The truth is that Arethas turned the tide against his Lakhmid adversaries and crowned his military career with a great victory in 554 in which Mundir was killed. Seven years later he made his triumphant visit to the capital and to the emperor, who apparently did not care for what Procopius said and continued to repose confidence in the redoubtable phylarch until the end of his long reign. The passage, however, despite its *ira* against Arethas and *studium* for Mundir, does have a valuable modicum of truth, its expression of a causal relationship between the ravage inflicted on the frontier by Mundir and Arethas' appointment as supreme phylarch and king of all or most of the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in Oriens.[42] By its reference to the sorry state of the frontiers, this passage in the *History* calls for a return to the same reference in the *Anecdota* to the state of the frontier, deplored by Procopius. The conclusion yielded by this new confrontation of the two passages leaves little doubt that the extraordinary measures taken by Justinian with regard to Arethas and the Ghassānids entailed saddling them with the responsibilities of the *limitanei* whom Justinian gradually relieved of their duties as watchmen over the *limes.* The passage on Justinian in the *Anecdota* is undated, but the one in the *History* is datable to the year 529. This year, important for Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, and discussed at length in the previous volume of this series, is now endowed with a new dimension of significance related to the new function of the Ghassānids as *limitanei* in fact if not in name, and calls for a return to 529 in order to understand its full significance in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations. Its immediate relevance here is that it indicates that Justinian's treatment of and reservations about the *limitanei* started as early as 529, no doubt after a period of gestation during the reign of his uncle Justin, when he was the

[41] Procopius, *History,* I.xvii.45–48, trans. Dewing.

[42] Mundir did attack and concentrate mainly on the *limitrophe* provinces of Oriens, thus employing the pre-Islamic Arab military tactic of *karr* and *farr,* sudden charge and quick retreat or withdrawal, as is clear in Procopius' passage on Mundir quoted above, 39.

power behind the throne, and during which Mundir did not cease to ravage the Byzantine frontier, despite the truce that obtained between the two superpowers.[43] Procopius' silence on the new status of the Ghassānids in 529 as they stepped into the shoes of the *limitanei* does not diminish the validity of this conclusion, since Procopius' prejudice against Arethas is notorious. The emperor or rather his adviser, probably Abraham, the skillful diplomat and specialist on Arab and Arabian affairs,[44] must have recommended the employment of the Ghassānids for the new function, since the frontier needed troops that were inured to the harsh terrain of the limitrophe and its inclement climate and also (which may have been more important) were familiar with the tribal structure in northern Arabia and the limitrophe, important assets for dealing with the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula.

III

The Ghassānid role as *limitanei* may be documented from references in sources of incontestable authenticity. Immediately after his appointment in 529 as supreme phylarch and king, Arethas details one of his commanders, by the name of Ibn al-Mughīra, to take his position as commander of the military station of Usays deep in the limitrophe some 100 km southeast of Damascus. He himself is supreme commander and so does not go there but stays at his headquarters, presumably at Jābiya in the Golan, and sends a subordinate commander to watch that sector of the frontier in which Usays was located. These facts come from an Arabic inscription, engraved by the commander, Ibn al-Mughīra, himself and dated to the year 528/9. The Ghassānids are in that year clearly in occupation of the military station of Usays on the *limes.*[45]

Some ten years later, before the outbreak of the second Persian War in 540, Arethas appears in the pages of Procopius, in passages full of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi.* They involve the *Strata* dispute, which flared up between the two client-kings of Byzantium and Persia, Arethas the Ghassānid and Mundir the Lakhmid. This has been analyzed in the previous volume of this series.[46] That analysis focused on the *Strata* dispute as the background and *casus belli* of the second Persian War of Justinian's reign, but attention was also accorded the conduct of Arethas during that dispute, as *limitaneus,* although technically he was a *foederatus.* The passage deserves a revisit in this new context where the focus is on the role of the Ghassānids as the *new limitanei.* The relevant elements in the passage are as follows.

[43] On Mundir's raids on the Byzantine frontier during the reign of Justin I, see *BASIC* I.1, 42–48.

[44] For Abraham and his house as diplomats in the service of Byzantium, see *BASIC* I.1, 155–60 and 662.

[45] For the inscription, see *BASIC* I.1, 117–24.

[46] For the *Strata* dispute, see ibid., 209–18.

a. Arethas appears in charge of the *strata* to the south of Palmyra, a segment of the *Strata Diocletiana,* which extended from Bostra to Sūra on the Euphrates. Arethas contests the Lakhmid Mundir's presence in the *strata* on the ground that it was Roman territory on which the Lakhmid was trespassing. Palmyra was far from Arethas' headquarters in Jābiya in the Golan and from the Provincia Arabia, his own province, but after his promotion to supreme phylarch, he appears in faraway Palmyra, evidence that he is now in charge of territory that extended beyond his own provincial phylarchal jurisdiction in the Provincia Arabia.

b. It is noteworthy that it was not the *dux* or one of two *duces* appointed by Justinian to command in Phoenicia Libanensis (to which Palmyra belonged) who appeared to defend Roman territory against the inroads of the Lakhmid Mundir, but the *foederatus,* the federate king Arethas. This is a sure sign that the extraordinary command conferred on him by Justinian in 529 (the significance of which was obscured by Procopius) entailed responsibility for a long segment of the Byzantine frontier, extending beyond Arethas' provincial jurisdiction in the Provincia Arabia. The defense of the frontier around 540 was in the hands not of the Byzantine *dux* but of the Ghassānid *foederatus,* who was behaving virtually as a *limitaneus.*

c. Noteworthy also is the reference to the disputed territory as περὶ γῆς ὁρίων,[47] where the Greek phrase reflects the Latin *limites.* These, of course, were the terms used by Procopius, who was writing a Greek version of the dispute and the terms used by the two contestants. But that such must have also been the terms well known to Arethas is evidenced by their use in two Greek inscriptions, which have miraculously survived and reflect the self-image of the Ghassānid phylarchs themselves as *limitanei.*[48]

d. Finally it is significant that the scene of the *Strata* dispute was not to the north but to the south of Palmyra. As is well known, Procopius in his *Buildings* lists all the fortifications of Justinian in Oriens and stops at Palmyra, recording no fortifications in the segment of the *Limes orientalis* that extended from Palmyra to Ayla on the Gulf of Eilat. What might be termed the "enigmatic gap" in this line of fortifications will be discussed later in this volume. It suffices here to observe that the extraordinary command conferred by Justinian on Arethas must have extended as far as Palmyra, since the remaining part of the frontier to the north of that city, along the Euphrates, in the two provinces of Osroene and Mesopotamia, was protected and guarded heavily by fortresses, as Procopius described in detail. The conclusion, which Procopius concealed, was that Justinian stopped at Palmyra because he left the frontier to its south as far as the Gulf of Eilat largely in the hands of the Ghassānids. This conclusion the *Strata* dispute supports.

The War of the Federates, 545–561: in the fifteen years or so that elapsed

[47] *History,* II.i.3, line 2.

[48] On these two inscriptions, see below, note 51.

between the conclusion of the Second Persian War and the Endless Peace of 561, the two federates, the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids, were interlocked in intermittent but bloody encounters. These military encounters took place mostly along the frontiers.[49] The initiative in these wars was usually taken by the Lakhmid king Mundir. As a client of the Persian king, he carried on the aggressive policy of the Sasanids against the Byzantine frontier as described by Procopius himself in the passage quoted earlier in this chapter. In these encounters it was not the regular Byzantine troops, the *stratiōtai* under the *duces,* that carried the brunt of Mundir's offensive. It was the Ghassānids, as noted by Procopius himself in the *History* passage where he says that the two antagonists, the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids, "waged a war against each other by themselves, unaided either by the Romans or the Persians."[50] This was truly frontier warfare which involved the Ghassānids exclusively and not the regular Byzantine *stratiōtai* under the *duces.* The Ghassānids were living up to their new reputation and status as *limitanei* in everything except in name.

The climax of these wars was the battle of Qinnasrīn/Chalcis fought in June 554. This battle, like the *Strata* dispute, illustrates the role of Arethas as a *limitaneus,* his new role as watchman over the frontier. Qinnasrīn/Chalcis is in Syria Prima far from Jābiya and the Provincia Arabia, the headquarters of the Ghassānid Arethas, where the news reached him of Mundir's invasion of Roman territory. It was not the *dux* of Syria but Arethas from his base in Jābiya that hastened to the north to meet the challenge, this time not on the frontier assigned to him but in the vicinity of Chalcis whither Mundir had penetrated; and this was the crowning victory of his military career since not only did he win the historic battle handsomely but also witnessed the death of his longtime adversary on the battlefield.

The site and the geographical location of the battle of Chalcis is noteworthy. Although Arethas' assignment was most probably to watch the frontier only in that segment where Justinian neglected to erect or restore fortresses, that is, from Palmyra to Ayla, apparently Arethas as a *limitaneus* was charged with the responsibility of repelling all attacks on the frontier in its entirety in the event of an emergency, including the well-fortified segment in the north. Alternatively, his responsibility may have been extended after he demonstrated his ability to shoulder the watch over the *limes,* a quarter century after his appointment in 529. As will be seen further on, his son's military presence extended even farther to the north to Sergiopolis, and Ghassānid military presence later extended closer to the Euphrates, to Hierapolis.

Two Greek inscriptions found at Dakīr in Trachonitis are especially relevant in this context. These two Ghassānid inscriptions deserve a fresh treatment in

[49] For these wars, see *BASIC* I.1, 236–62.
[50] *History,* II.xxviii.12.

this context with its concentration on the new responsibility of the Ghassānids as *limitanei.*[51] One reads: φλ(άβιος) Καθελόγο(ς) υἱὸς φυλάρχου ὁρικὸς.

a. The most important word is ὁρικός, he of the ὅρος, a translation of the Latin term *limitaneus* and perhaps the only attested instance of ὁρικός in this sense.[52] Its importance derives from the fact that it reflects the self-image of the Ghassānids and confirms what has been inferred from an examination of the sources, so far mostly literary, on their new function.

b. Equally important is the reference in the inscription to the phylarchal descent of Kathelogos. The phylarch refers to himself as the son of a phylarch. Although son did follow father in the service of Byzantium, and kingship, too, was hereditary in the royal Ghassānid house, it is important to note that the hereditary principle was observed even in their capacity as phylarchs in the service of Byzantium. Since the phylarch refers to himself as *limitaneus,* this relates to the controversial question of whether or not service among the *limitanei* was hereditary.

c. The other inscription is important in a different way. A phylarch with the same name, Kathelogos, refers to himself as *comes* and *phylarchos* and says that he renewed or restored at his own expense a building in Ḏakīr. One of its striking features is the date (according to the era of Bostra), assigned by its editor to the year 455/6 of the Christian era.[53] As stated in the previous volume of this series, the early date confirms that the Ghassānids started in the service of Byzantium even earlier than Nöldeke suspected. The date, if correct, suggests that even from their very early association with Byzantium as phylarchs and *foederati,* the Ghassānids were expected principally to defend the frontier, the *limes,* of the fifth century and that this was understood by them, even before the year 529, when their frontier duties were even more emphasized with the gradual dismissal of the *limitanei.*[54]

The phylarch's use of the term ἀνενέωσεν in this inscription to describe his involvement in the building (not constructing it as a new one but only restoring it) is helpful for interpreting the list of Ḥamza. In its discussion it has been suggested that when the Ghassānids are associated with a structure in the list, it does not always necessarily mean that they built it but that they renewed or restored it.

[51] For one of the two inscriptions, see *BASIC* I.1, 509–12. For the other, see Sartre, "Deux phylarques arabes," 145–53.

[52] The common adjectival form is ὅριος, related to the noun ὅριον, not to ὅρος, both of which mean boundary. Ὁρικός, the adjective from ὅρος, is the philosophical term related to the meaning of ὅρος as "definition." The only other attestation of the adjectival form ὁρικός is astrological in connotation, "belonging to a ὅριον"; see H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1968), 1251. For ὅριον as an astrological term, meaning "a subdivision of a zodiacal sign, appropriated to a planet," see ibid., 1251.

[53] See Sartre, "Deux phylarques arabes."

[54] The date of the inscription may have followed a local era and not the provincial one of Bostra, and this might give it a later 6th-century date, more consonant with the new function of the Ghassānids as *limitanei.*

This Greek inscription that emanates from a Ghassānid himself gives even more credibility to Ḥamza's list.

d. Finally, the provenance of the inscriptions is noteworthy. They both come from Dakīr, which is located on the eastern outskirts of Trachonitis, al-Lajā. This geographical location qualifies it as one of the military stations of the eastern frontier, a fact supported by the phylarch's own conception of himself as a *limitaneus* watching the *limes.* Thus this locality emerges epigraphically as one of the stations at which the Ghassānids, as early as the middle of the fifth century, were stationed as *limitanei,* a fact vouched for by Kathelogos himself.

One of the Petra Papyri, Roll 83, now called the King's Scroll, associates Abū Karib with Ṣadaqa in the context of a dispute between two Rhomaic inhabitants of the region, concerning a vineyard. Abū Karib appears as an arbitrator. Despite the difficulty of reading the papyrus, owing to its poor state of preservation, the association of Abū Karib with Ṣadaqa can point to only one conclusion. Abū Karib watched over a vast province, and his presence at this particular spot, Ṣadaqa, could not have been fortuitous. It must be related to the new duties he discharged after 529 and must be set against the general backdrop of Procopius' passage on the *limitanei* and the federate takeover, gradual as that was, of their duties. Here are the relevant facts: (a) Ṣadaqa is listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* as a post where was stationed the unit of Equites Promoti Indigenae; (b) Abū Karib was a military figure, the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia; (c) the papyrus or rather his involvement in the arbitration is dated to the 530s, that is, after Justinian catapulted Abū Karib to a hierarchical eminence equal to that of his more famous brother, and, what is more, an eminence related to a takeover of the duties of the *limitanei.* Consequently the convergence of these three facts yields the conclusion that Abū Karib's presence at Ṣadaqa must have been related to his new duties, but the extent to which he exercised them at this stage is not clear. The *limitanei* are still attested in the province both in Justinian's Novel 103 on Palestine and in the papyrus itself. Whether Abū Karib took over Ṣadaqa at a later stage in its history, as his brother Arethas did with Sulayman in the Usays area in 529, is not clear, and it is not important in this context, since the takeover was gradual and may have lasted a long time during the equally long reign of Justinian. What is important is his association with the military station of the *limitanei* of the *Notitia Dignitatum* in the context of the new duties that were being shouldered by the Ghassānid *foederati.* So an Arabic inscription and a Greek papyrus find the two brothers associated with two military units along the *limes,* Arethas in actual possession of one, and Abū Karib hovering around the other, possibly at the stage that antedated the actual Ghassānid takeover, which may have happened long after the date of his involvement in the arbitration.[55]

[55] All discussions of the Petra Papyrus, Roll 83, in this volume are based on the general report of L. Koenen, "The Carbonized Archive from Petra," *JRA* 9 (1996), 177–88, but even more on the report of Maarit Kaimio in charge of editing this particular roll; see her "Update on the

As important as the evidence from the literary and epigraphic sources is evidence from archaeology. It is literally the most concrete and tangible evidence that verifies the statements in the literary and the epigraphic sources for the Ghassānid presence on the frontier. Three impressive monuments have survived, witness to the Ghassānid watch over the *limes.*

1. The tower at Haliorama, or Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī: this has been discussed at length elsewhere. It serves as evidence for the new status of the Ghassānid *foederati* as *limitanei.* It is an edifice impressive by its height, size, and the solidity of its masonry. It literally towers over and above the surrounding area as a watchtower. Its geographical location is on the eastern frontier, far distant from the urban centers located in the middle region of Oriens. This was an erection of a Ghassānid, Arethas, who was given that extraordinary command in 529. All these characteristics of the tower imply a major military station at that location, occupied by the new *limitanei,* the federates.

2. While the tower at Haliorama stands in the central section of Oriens, another one, built by his son Mundir, who inherited his father's responsibilities, stood near Ḍumayr, which lies northeast of Damascus. It was still standing early in the twentieth century when R. Brünnow and A. von Domaszewski visited the region and wrote *Die Provincia Arabia.* What was said of the tower of Haliorama may also be said of this tower at Ḍumayr with respect to its location and function and its reflection of the duties of the new federate *limitanei.*

3. The Ghassānid Mundir is better remembered by another structure, more impressive, which is still standing though dilapidated, the *praetorium extra muros* near Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis. Like the towers at Haliorama and at Ḍumayr, it is evidence of a Ghassānid military presence in the north of Oriens, not far from the Euphrates. Also, its function, judging from what has survived of it, was probably more complex and elaborate than the single tower at Ḍumayr or Haliorama.

These are three Ghassānid military structures that have survived, on a line extending from Ḍumayr in the south to Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis in the north, passing through Haliorama/al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī in the middle. To these may be added Usays and Dakīr, although their structures have not survived. But they are clearly implied by the inscriptions, set up not by a bishop or a priest for church or monastery, but by military Arab figures, implying that they were stationed in military posts with some military structures. One of the two inscriptions, at Usays, clearly expresses military responsibility in the term *musayliha,* while the other implies it. Hence there are five Ghassānid toponyms, documented incontestably by epigra-

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Scrolls," *ACOR Newsletter* 8.2 (1996), 4. I thank Prof. Kaimio warmly for her kindness in communicating with me about this papyrus and look forward to the final publication of her research on this and other papyri, as it may reveal more on Abū Karib and the extent of his involvement in the civil affairs of the region. See Addenda.

Ṣadaqa lies some 25 km southeast of Petra; see Parker, *Romans and Saracens,* 99–100. For more on Ṣadaqa and Abū Karib, see below, 60, 61.

phy, four in Greek, one in Arabic—Usays, Ḍumayr, Ḏakīr, Haliorama, and Ruṣāfa—to which possibly may be added Ṣadaqa, all except one belonging to the sixth century.

These Ghassānid structures, the two most important of which have survived, the tower at Haliorama and the *praetorium* at Ruṣāfa, make it possible to draw the following conclusions. The new federate *limitanei* took over some of the military stations of the old *foederati,* possibly adapting them to their needs and style in warfare, and also built new ones of their own. These two structures could not have been the only ones the Ghassānids built, a fact supported by the witness of Greek sources, both literary and epigraphic. But even without the help of these, the conclusion stands, providing a reliable background for discussing both the enigmatic gap in Procopius' *Buildings* and the presentation of the list of Ghassānid buildings preserved by Ḥamza, now fully corroborated in general by these conclusions. The problem of the *limitanei* is closely linked with that of the Ghassānids, indeed cannot be understood without it; these emerged as the new energetic watchmen of the *limes,* whatever that word meant in the sixth century; and this new assignment entailed a major addition to their responsibility. As far as Ghassānid structures are concerned, this shift to the eastern frontier in a large way necessitated the construction of military structures related to their new military duties. But as the chapter on federate monasticism will reveal, the monastery also found its way to the frontier districts and was often to be found existing in perfect symbiosis with the military fortress, as indeed happened at Haliorama, where both are attested; but the main concern of the new federate *limitanei* was military structures.

IV

The new responsibilities thrust upon the shoulders of the Ghassānid *foederati* as *limitanei* raise the question of whether or not they became exclusively such. Of course, they did not, although watching over the frontier had from the very beginning been one of their principal duties, even before their promotion in the military ladder in 529, witness the two inscriptions that go back to the fifth century and reflect their self-image as *limitanei.* But in addition, they were a mobile field army, allied in function to the *exercitus comitatensis* of Oriens, although technically not so called. Their principal value to the Byzantines was their spirited cavalry, which fought for Byzantium wherever it was needed in Oriens, for example the contingent of five thousand cavalry[56] that appeared at the battle of Callinicum in 531,

[56] The number may not seem considerable now, but it was in those days of small armies. Five thousand cavalry troops formed either one-third or one-fifth of the Byzantine army, depending on whether the army numbered 15,000 or 25,000 men. This valuable detail, concealed by Procopius, was revealed by Malalas in his *Chronographia,* p. 461, lines 17–18. Although he does not specifically say that the Ghassānid contingent of five thousand were all cavalry, it is practically certain that they were. Five thousand was the number that Arrian gives to the cavalry that Alexan-

shortly after the promotion of Arethas in 529. Ghassānid cavalry is attested in all the campaigns of the two Persian Wars of Justinian's reign and in the campaign against the Persians during the reigns of Justinian's successors. They were a mobile field army, described as a στράτευμα by Procopius in his chapter on the battle of Callinicum. Consonant with this view of the Ghassānid *foederati* as virtually an *exercitus comitatensis* is the location of their capitals Jābiya and Jalliq not at the eastern frontier, the old *limes,* but deep in the heart of Oriens in the Golan.[57] It was in the Golan that their famed horses grazed and where some of their camps were located.

It is now possible to draw a picture of the structure of the Ghassānid and Arab *foederati* after 529. They were partly a mobile field army and partly a frontier force, virtually allied to both the *exercitus comitatensis* and the *limitanei* of Oriens. They were partly deployed along the long eastern frontier extending from Ayla in the south on the Red Sea to at least Palmyra in the north, during the reign of Arethas.[58] They were also deployed in the transverse wedge that consisted of Auranitis, Batanaea, and Gaulanitis. They may even have had a presence across the Jordan in Galilea, which, too, belonged to Palaestina Secunda as did Golan. This was the area that witnessed the great concentration of villages and towns associated with the Ghassānids in the contemporary Syriac and Arabic sources and the sources of later times, such as the *Chronicle* of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī.

This double function of the Ghassānids within the Byzantine army of Oriens had its inception during the long reign of Arethas, a period of some forty years

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der used in conquering much of the *oikoumenē;* see Arrian, *Anabasis,* ed. A. G. Roos and G. Wirth (Leipzig, 1926), I.xi.3.

The participation of the Ghassānid contingent of five thousand at Callinicum is usually obscured by modern historians of this period, but some justice is done to it in the excellent detailed account of the battle in G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War, 502–532* (Leeds, 1998), 193–212. For the fact that the five thousand Ghassānids were cavalry, see ibid., 197. Stein argued that the Byzantine army at Callinicum numbered twenty thousand (*HBE,* II, 292), and Greatrex follows this reckoning, hence the Ghassānid contingent formed one-fourth of it.

On the size of the Byzantine armies of this period, see J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* (New York, 1958), 78; J. Teall, "The Grain Supply of the Byzantine Empire, 330–1025," *DOP* 13 (1959), 93; J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (Cambridge, 1990), 251–53; M. Whitby, "Recruitment in Roman Armies from Justinian to Heraclius ca. 565–615," 73–75; W. Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army* (Stanford, 1995), 59–64; and, most recently, T. Coello, *Unit Sizes in the Late Roman Army,* BAR International Series 645 (Oxford, 1996), esp. 31.

[57] See the *explicit* of the letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām where the camp of the Ghassānid Jabala is mentioned, located near his capital Jābiya, in the Golan. The camp, the *hīra* (Syriac, *hirthā*), no doubt quartered part of his mobile army, and both camp and capital are mentioned in the *explicit;* see the present writer in *The Martyrs of Najrān* (Brussels, 1971), 63; for the Syriac text, see p. xxxi, lines 21–23.

[58] It is noteworthy that the Arabian segment of the *Limes orientalis* guarded by the Arab *foederati,* from the Euphrates to the Red Sea, was twice as long as the Armenian frontier guarded by Sittas in the north; hence another reason for dividing the command between the two Arab brothers, Arethas and Abū Karib.

after 529. The Ghassānid presence may have been extended along the frontier to the north of Palmyra, as is implied in his defense of Syria Prima and his great victory of 554 over the Lakhmid Mundir at Chalcis. But it was during the reign of his son and successor Mundir that Ghassānid military presence and posture reached its climax, as explained in the previous volume of this series. His participation in the Persian Wars of Byzantium with his mobile field army was nothing new, but his duty as a watchman of the frontier was. As noted, he was in charge of the frontier for a number of years before his father's death in 569; and his great victories over his Lakhmid adversaries were explicable mostly as a result of his wardenship of the frontier during the years before his own accession in 569, which he spent along the northern sector, close to the Lakhmids, when he perfected his knowledge of the art of frontier warfare. So, of all the Ghassānid federate *limitanei,* Mundir, son of Arethas, turned out to be the most distinguished *limitaneus,* since during the many years of his heir-apparentship he watched over the frontier facing the Persians and the Lakhmids, reflecting on the principles of frontier warfare, which he immediately applied, as soon as he succeeded his father to the supreme phylarchy and kingship. This was the key to the series of astounding victories he won over the Lakhmids, which elicited the admiration of both contemporaries and objective modern historians.[59] His was, then, a new style in frontier wardenship, not static and defensive but mobile and aggressive.

As Mundir turned out to be the most distinguished federate *limitaneus* in the service of Byzantium in the sixth century, it is well that an appreciation by a well-known Byzantinist and late Roman historian be given at this juncture, in a chapter devoted to the new *limitanei.* Ernst Stein is the only twentieth-century historian who, with perfect objectivity, took a correct measure of Mundir's brilliance as a military commander and also of his role as a prince of peace in the wider world of the Monophysite movement.

> His appearance was unparalleled in the long course of Roman history. Although militarily a specialist in a very precisely defined type of combat, nevertheless he performed in it distinguished services so that he could be rightly considered one of the foremost generals of the empire, and probably he was so considered, which the external recognition accorded him evidences. The conferment of the diadem allowed his official character to remain in the background to the same degree that his royal rank was emphasized. Since he succeeded, as the celebrated secular leader of the Monophysites, to decidedly influence the inner religious policy of the empire to his way of thinking,

[59] Such as John of Ephesus in the 6th century and Ernst Stein in the 20th; see *BASIC* I.1, 582–92, 448–51.

there was in reality nothing left for him, which he still could have wished to obtain.[60]

That the Ghassānids during the reign of Mundir moved even farther to the north of Palmyra is reflected in Mundir's *praetorium* at Ruṣāfa, which was a more complex building than the tower of his father, Arethas. This could suggest that it may have been his headquarters for working out strategies against the Lakhmids when he was in the north. After the exile of Mundir and in the reign of Maurice, the Ghassānids appear even farther to the north and closer to the Euphrates, along the frontier zone where a primary Syriac source, Dionysius of Tell Maḥre, documents the presence of their chief phylarch Jafna, in Manbij/Hierapolis.

The prominence given here to the Ghassānids should not obscure the fact that they were not the only occupants of the Byzantine military scene in Oriens; far from it. Along the frontier they were especially prominent, but in the interior there was also the Byzantine army of Oriens commanded by the *duces* of the provinces, and all under the *magister militum* at Antioch, regular Roman troops, the *stratiōtai.* This chapter, which gives emphasis to the new role of the *foederati,* is consonant with the picture drawn by some perceptive historians of the *Limes orientalis,* who did justice to the new role of the Ghassānids in the defense of that frontier.[61]

III. The Two Shields

The Ghassānids and the Kindites, the two most powerful Arab *foederati* in the service of Byzantium in the sixth century, received the most attention from Byzantium for the defense of Oriens. But there were other Arab groups with tribal affiliations other than Ghassān or Kinda in the service of Byzantium in Oriens. These were included in the phrase in Procopius that spoke of the elevation of Arethas to the *archiphylarchia* and the *basileia:* "as many tribes as possible, placed under his command." It is therefore necessary to discuss these so that a complete picture may be gained of the Arab component in the military structure involved in the defense of Oriens in the sixth century. These Arab groups together with the Ghas-

[60] E. Stein, *Studien zur Geschichte des Byzantinischen Reiches* (Stuttgart, 1919), 95–96.

[61] See D. Kennedy and D. Riley, *Rome's Desert Frontier* (London, 1990), 38–39. The treatment, brief as it is, is remarkable for the fact that it appeared even before *BASIC* I.1–2 was published in 1995, which gave a detailed history of the Ghassānid *foederati.* Their discussion of the *foederati* (p. 45), the takeover from the *limitanei,* and their being also a part of the mobile field army anticipates the present volume. The same is true of S. T. Parker's conclusions on the federate Ghassānid takeover of the duties of the *limitanei;* see his *Romans and Saracens,* 159. The treatment by Kennedy and Riley, however, still includes the view that the Arabs with whom Rome dealt, such as those of Jadīma, were nomads, a view that *BASIC* I.1–2 and the present volume have shown to be untrue.

sānids lived within Roman territory, while other groups within the orbit of Ghassānid and Byzantine influence lived outside the Roman frontier in Ḥijāz and northern Arabia. The former groups may be called the Inner Shield, while the latter may be called the Outer.[62]

The Inner Shield

In addition to the Ghassānids, the dominant Arab federate group, there were the Salīḥids of the fifth century and the Tanūkhids of the fourth. The Ghassānids had superseded the Salīḥids as these did the Tanūkhids, but all three existed side by side now under the command of the Ghassānid supreme phylarch and king, Arethas, and also his brother Abū Karib in Palaestina Tertia.

These three dominant groups, as has already been noted, were not the only ones involved in the defense of Oriens. There were others, some of whom had been in Oriens even before the advent of these three dominant groups, all outsiders to Oriens, while some started to enter Roman territory during the paramountcy of these three groups. Although many and important, those federate groups are almost never mentioned in the extant sources, possibly because the three dominant groups stole the show. But they suddenly appear in their entirety in the Arabic sources on the Muslim conquest of Oriens, which are naturally more expansive on the identity of the tribes that fought with Byzantium against Islam. Indeed it is to these sources that is owed knowledge of these tribal groups.[63]

1. Three Arab tribal groups—Taghlib, Iyād, and al-Namir—were settled in the northern part of Oriens in the Land of the Two Rivers, in the two provinces of Mesopotamia and Osroene.

2. The Tanūkhids, Bahrā', and Ṭayyi'[64] were settled in Chalcidicē and the regions south of the Euphrates, that is, Syria Salutaris and Euphratensis.

3. Kalb was settled around Palmyra and in various parts of Phoenicia Libanensis. Portions of it were also at times in possession of the strategic Dūmat al-Jandal at the southern entrance of Wādī Sirḥān.

4. Salīḥ and Lakhm were settled in the Provincia Arabia, the headquarters of the Ghassānids as it had been that of the Salīḥids. The Lakhm in Byzantine territory was the group that emigrated with Imru' al-Qays, the Lakhmid king who left the service of Sasanid Persia and came over to Byzantium. He is the only federate

[62] The terms *Inner* and *Outer Shields* were used for the first time in the volume on the 5th century; see *BAFIC,* 477–79. The tribes that constituted the two shields were treated at great length in *BAFOC,* 381–407. Both chapters in these two volumes are necessary background for the short treatment here, which comes to closer grips with the problem of the defense system in Oriens and the new context of the rise of the *foederati* as the new *limitanei.*

[63] For detailed information on these tribal groups and their locations in Oriens, see *BAFOC,* 381–407.

[64] Ṭayyi' seems to have been settled in more than one location in Oriens: in the north, the middle, and the south. In addition to Chalcidicē, it is attested in Auranitis and in Palaestina Tertia.

Arab king whose tomb is known together with his epitaph, the celebrated long Namāra inscription of 328.[65]

5. In the distant south of Oriens were the tribal groups, the trio of Judām, Banū al-Qayn, and ʿĀmila in Palaestina Tertia, while Kinda was probably in Prima and Secunda.

This federate shield has been plagued by anonymity in the Greek sources, which refer to it under the umbrella title "Saracen," without any indication as to where the various component parts of the shield were quartered.[66] Even the Ghassānids are not referred to by name (except in a solitary Syriac source),[67] and the chief historian of the reign of Justinian does not say anything about their whereabouts in Oriens.

This identification of the various federate groups of which the Inner Shield, the unified Arab federate force in Oriens, was composed may now be related to that precious passage in the Armenian version of Michael the Syrian, analyzed in the preceding volume.[68] After the temporary dissolution of the Ghassānid phylarchate, that source states that the federate groups divided into fifteen units, some of which went over to the Persians. The passage in this Armenian version of Michael and the various federate groups identified in this section of the present volume are mutually illuminating. The Armenian version of the fifteen federate units provides the valuable number fifteen, indicating that the unified federate force was composed of as many units; but the constitution of each unit is not clear and the units are left anonymous. The roster of various tribes identified in this section breaks the anonymity of the passage in the Armenian version of Michael the Syrian by providing the names of the federate groups of which the fifteen units of the federate shield were composed.

The new Arab federate force, now unified under the Ghassānids, must have grown in size and striking power. This became evident when the Arab federate contingent took part in the pitched battles of the Persian Wars as a component of the Byzantine army of the Orient. When Arethas arrived to participate in the battle of Callinicum with a striking force of five thousand cavalry troops, the chances are that that number had been reached by units contributed by the other tribal groups.

All these groups, however, were possessed of a strong sense of identity and tribal chauvinism, and their successful control reflects the measure of prestige the Ghassānids had when they were put in command of all of them. These federate groups were now no longer autonomous or independent, related to the *dux* of the

[65] On this, see *BAFOC,* 31–47.

[66] Unlike their Germanic counterparts in the Roman West, who are referred to not simply as Germans but as Franks, Goths, Vandals, and so on.

[67] In the *explicit* of the letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām; see *Martyrs of Najrān,* 63.

[68] See *BASIC* I.1, 540–49.

province to which they happened to be assigned, but were under the command of the one supreme phylarch, a commander in chief, who was their liaison officer with the central authorities. But friction did arise and was recorded in the sources, sometimes possibly related to the composite structure of the new Ghassānid federate army. Such friction may be suspected during the battle of Callinicum when some of the Arab federates fled, a flight that gave rise to the charge of *prodosia.* Transparently false when leveled against Arethas and his Ghassānids, it may have contained an element of truth when applied to other non-Ghassānid components in the federate contingent, who may have been unhappy about the elevation of the Ghassānid phylarch at their expense and his appointment as their commander in chief.[69]

These tribal groups wrote important chapters in the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam and were to play even more important roles after it, when they became better known to medievalists and historians of the Mediterranean world over which these tribal groups, now Muslim, spread even as far as Spain. So they should also be recognized by the Byzantinist for their role as components of the federate shield of Byzantium when they took part in the defense of Oriens as Christian federate groups. Moreover, immediately after the loss of Oriens to Islam in the seventh century, some of these federate units became components in the four *ajnād,* the military districts into which Byzantine Oriens, now Muslim Bilād-al-Shām, was divided; and they became the mainstay of the Umayyad army in its offensives against Byzantium in Anatolia. They represent the strand of continuity between Byzantine Oriens and Umayyad Bilād al-Shām; hence their importance. For those who believe that the four Umayyad *ajnād* were none other than the four Byzantine themes formed by Heraclius in Oriens in the three years or so that elapsed between the battle of Nineveh and the battle of Yarmūk,[70] these tribes assume even greater significance because they would have been the very same ones that were employed by Heraclius and the Ghassānid Jabala, who was in the seventh century what Arethas had been in the sixth, the commander in chief of all the federate Arab forces at the disposal of Byzantium.

The Outer Shield

The defense of Oriens against the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula was the responsibility of the Arab *foederati* of that diocese, those of the Inner Shield. Their swords and spears were capable of meeting that threat in addition to that of the Lakhmids of Ḥīra, especially during the reign of Mundir. Byzantium, however,

[69] Such friction or dissatisfaction has been suspected in the analysis of the flight of some of the Arab troops at Callinicum; see ibid., 138–39. For friction between Arethas and al-Aswad, possibly a Kindite phylarch in Palestine, see ibid., 251–54.

[70] On these *ajnad,* see the present writer in "Heraclius and the Unfinished Themes of Oriens: Some Final Observations," *Byzantion* 64 (1994), 352–76, and "Heraclius and the Theme System Revisited: The Unfinished Themes of Oriens" *Hoi skoteinoi aiones tu Byzantiu (7os–9os ai.) = The Dark Centuries of Byzantium (7th–9th c.),* ed. Eleonora Kountoura-Galake (Athens, 2001), 15–40.

went beyond reliance on the power of the *foederati* of the Inner Shield and employed diplomacy for reaching the turbulent world of the Arabian Peninsula itself, especially north Arabia and Ḥijāz, in order to exercise some control over its aggressive pastoralists. Byzantium started it with the dispatch of Abraham and Nonnosus to negotiate a settlement with Kinda of the peninsula after the death of their king, Arethas, son of ʿAmr, a diplomatic offensive that was crowned with success. The Ghassānid Arethas mediated a peace between the two warring subdivisions of the Ṭayyiʾ tribal group in north Arabia and inclined the tribe toward Ghassān and Byzantium.[71] The result of such diplomatic efforts was the rise of an arc of some six tribes who lived outside the Byzantine frontier but were either in some treaty relationship to Byzantium or were friendly. These may be listed as follows.

1. Kinda itself remained a peninsular power after the Byzantine diplomat Abraham lured away Qays, its chief, from Arabia and brought him to Palestine over which he was endowed with the *hēgemonia.*[72] Peninsular Kinda remained friendly to Byzantium and the Sakūn, one branch of which was to be found at Dūmat al-Jandal in north Arabia at the southern entrance to Wādī Sirḥān. Its chief, Ukaydir, was killed by Khālid, the victor of Yarmūk, when the latter attacked Dūmat and captured it.[73]

2. The large and powerful tribe of Kalb was settled partly within and partly without the Byzantine frontier, in a vast area in northern Arabia. The sources sometimes find it in possession of Dūmat al-Jandal. Much is known about it in pre-Islamic times but more in the Umayyad era, when it became the principal mainstay of the dynasty, both its Sufyānid and Marwānid branches.

3. Ṭayyiʾ: not unlike Kalb, this powerful tribe was partly within and partly without the *limes.* One portion of it moved into Oriens and settled near Qinnasrīn/Chalcis, where its camp (*ḥāḍir*) was well remembered in the sources on the Muslim conquest. But most of the tribe remained on its impregnable mountain of Shammar; its chief, Ḥātim, visited the Ghassānid phylarch in Moab and Zoghar and remembered him in a panegyric.[74]

Ḥijāz was, with the exception of the Jewish oases, friendly to the Ghassānids and Byzantium, with such tribes as the following.

4. ʿUḏra: the well-known tribe that played an important role in Arab-Byzantine relations in the fifth century. They were settled in Wādī al-Qurā, the fertile region north of Yathrib/Medina.[75]

5. Balī, a tribe settled in northern Ḥijāz. It apparently was in a treaty relationship to Byzantium since it fought the Muslim Arabs at the battle of Muʾta in A.D.

[71] On this, see below, 258.
[72] See *BASIC* I.1, 153–60.
[73] See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* ed. M. Ibrahim (Cairo, 1962), III, 378.
[74] On Ṭayyiʾ, see below, 246–59.
[75] For ʿUḏra, see *BAFIC,* 276–82.

629. The commander of the Arab federates in that battle was one of them,[76] Mālik by name. Apparently part of it was within Palaestina Tertia and part outside in Ḥijāz.

6. Juḍām, an important tribe in both Ghassānid and Umayyad times. It was associated with the Ḥismā region, partly in Palaestina Tertia and partly in Ḥijāz.

These then were the tribal groups, close to the Byzantine frontier, which may be called the Outer Shield. This Outer Shield, especially in Ḥijāz, was also fortified by the presence in Yathrib/Medina of the two Arab tribes al-Aws and al-Khazraj, who were the closest relatives of the Ghassānids, indeed their cousins, and whose poet Ḥassān was practically the Ghassānid poet laureate. One of them, Ibn al-Mughīra, of al-Aws, was the commander whom Arethas sent to take charge of the military station, Sulayman, in 529. Ḥijāz was thus truly a Ghassānid sphere of influence, bounded in the north by the Ghassānids of Palaestina Tertia and in the south by their relatives in Yathrib.

The powerful tribe of Ḏubyān, which belonged to the larger group Ghaṭafān, may possibly be added to the tribes of the Outer Shield. It was settled strategically in parts that belonged to both Najd and Ḥijāz and, like Ṭayyi', had relations with the two antagonists—the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids. Perhaps their main value to the Ghassānids was their horses, for the breeding of which Ghaṭafān was celebrated. One of the most important panegyrists of the Ghassānids was a member of Ḏubyān, al-Nābigha, whose frequent visits to the Ghassānid court imply a relationship of some sort between his tribe and the Ghassānids, sometimes ruffled by aggressiveness on the part of Ḏubyān against certain areas in Arabia, jealously guarded by Ghassān.[77]

The rise of this Outer Shield, the arc of tribal groups on friendly terms with Byzantium and Ghassān, was the result of Byzantine diplomacy, what might be termed the Arabian policy of Byzantium and the Ghassānids. But the extension of Byzantine and Ghassānid presence into north Arabia and Ḥijāz also had other aims as important as or more important than striking at the root of the problem of raiding and insecurity.[78] There were economic reasons; there were mines of valuable metals worked by some of the tribes, and there were the well-known *sūqs,* fairs, of pre-Islamic Arabia and a long segment of the *via odorifera.*[79] So, in peace

[76] Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* III, 37.

[77] On Nābigha and Ghassān, see below, 221–32.

[78] This invites comparison with Caesar's conquest of Gaul and his expeditions against Britain in 55 and 54 B.C. He conquered the remainder of Gaul (not of the Provincia formed in 121 B.C.) in order to protect Italy from offensives mounted by the Celts and the Germans over the Alps, and thus strategically Italy was to be defended not by the Alps but by the Rhine. The same applies to Caesar's expeditions against Britain, inspired by fears of close political contacts between Britain and northern Gaul.

[79] This will be treated in detail in *BASIC* II.2, devoted to the social, economic, and cultural history of the Ghassānids.

and in war, the Outer Shield was of vital importance, but in the context of this chapter on the defense of the Orient only what is relevant to it will be taken up: this involved what in Arabic is called *al-aḥmā*' (plural of *ḥimā*), that is, the protected areas.

Al-Aḥmā'

The principal value of the Ghassānid army was its cavalry, especially important to an army that was de facto a part of the *exercitus comitatensis* of the Byzantine army of the Orient, where mobility was essential in its strategy and tactics. The horse was the sinew of that arm of warfare, cavalry, which in this century was the important one. The battle of Daras in 530 was entirely a cavalry engagement. The Byzantine army in Oriens was pitted against an enemy, the Persians, whose strength was not only cavalry but mailed cavalry, the celebrated *clibanarii.*[80]

As will be explained in the chapter on the Golan, the value of that district was as the grazing ground for the Ghassānid horse, and so it has continued to be throughout the ages even in modern times. But just as the Arabian peninsula was the great ethnic reservoir of the Arabs during the Muslim conquest, so it was the great equine reservoir, where the Arabian horse, made famous by the Islamic conquests, was bred. Special districts or preserves were reserved for breeding it, termed by the Arabs and the Arabic sources *al-aḥmā*', the plural of *ḥimā.*

The best introduction to the Ghassānid involvement in the *aḥmā*' are three relevant quotations on the horse, the *ḥimā,* and the tribe involved in breeding horses:

> In distinction to the camel, which was universally at home in semi-desert terrain and could live adequately off spiny shrubs and saline and acid pasturage (*ḥamaḍ*), a horse requires each day water and a sweet nourishing on graminaceous and herbaceous vegetation (*khulla*). Hence it was only possible to rear horses in the zone of steppe vegetation, such as that part of Najd watered by Wādi'l-Rummah. The horse appeared amongst the nomadic tribes of this region hardly more than a century or two before Islam, and the Banū-Taghlib boasted of being the first to ride this noble animal. . . . It is undeniable that the nomads of Najd took the initiative in adopting the institution of the *ḥimā* or "natural reserve for stock breeding" into which no tribe, except the owners, could enter and where the animals lived and bred completely freely.[81]

[80] For the latest on the *clibanarii*/cataphracts, see M. Mielczarek, "Cataphracts: A Parthian Element in the Seleucid Art of War," in *Ancient Iran and the Mediterranean World,* ed. E. Dabrowa (Cracow, 1998), 101–5.

[81] *EI*², s.v. *khayl,* IV, 1143.

The preceding quotation on the horse mentions the *ḥimā;* consequently another on the *ḥimā* itself is appropriate.

> *Ḥimā,* literally "protected, forbidden place," is an expanse of ground, with some vegetation, access to and the use of which are declared forbidden by the man or men who have arrogated possession of it to themselves. The institution, which dates back to pre-Islamic Arabia, seems to have a secular origin. To protect their flocks from the ill effects of drought, the powerful nomadic lords used to reserve to themselves the grazing and watering rights in certain rich pasturages. . . . The *ḥimā* was often placed under the protection of the tribal deity. It was then assimilated with the *ḥaram* in whose privileges it participated. Its fauna and flora were protected, and it enjoyed the right of asylum.[82]

Another quotation is also appropriate since it involves the tribe to which reference has been made among the tribes of the Outer Shield, namely, Dubyān. It belonged to the group Ghaṭafān whose poet, al-Nābigha, was one of the foremost panegyrists of the Ghassānids. The Ghassānids accorded him a warm welcome, perhaps partly owing to the involvement of his tribe in breeding horses.

> The confederation of Ghaṭafān, spread over Najd, utilised the system of the *ḥimā,* favoured by having at their disposal relatively rich pasture lands on the fringes and slopes of the great plateau, with drainage from running streams. The results of this well-thought-out stockraising policy showed positive results, since in the 6th century, several tribes, including the Banū ʿAbs, were each able to fit out nearly a thousand riders; it is at this time that the *sayyid* assumes the name of *fāris* and the *raʾīs* that of *ḳāʾid al-khayl.* One of the oldest-established and most famous of these reserves for breeding horses was the vast *ḥimā* Ḍariyya, which in the time of the caliph ʿUthmān had several tens of thousands of beasts, horses as well as camels. Equally flourishing was the *ḥimā* of al-Baḳīʿ near Medina, which had a permanent water supply for the whole year. Correspondingly, the great caravan centres of the Ḥidjāz had near them their own *ḥimās* forming a protective zone against the depredations of nomads.[83]

North Arabia, Najd and Ḥijāz, had many of these *ḥimās,* such as Ḥimā Ḍariyya, which was the most famous. Others were Ḥimā al-Rabaḏa, Ḥimā Fayd, Ḥimā al-Nīr, Ḥimā ḏī al-Sharā, and Ḥimā al-Naqīʿ.[84] The relation of the Ghassānids to

[82] Ibid., s.v. *ḥimā,* III, 393.

[83] Ibid., s.v. *khayl,* IV, 1144.

[84] For these *aḥmāʾ,* see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān,* 5 vols. (Beirut, 1955–57), II, 308. The importance of Ḥimā Ḍariyya is reflected in the work of the geographer Bakrī who devoted nineteen pages to the entry, Ḥimā Ḍariyya; see his *Muʿjam,* ed. M. al-Saqqā, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1945–51), III, 859–78.

these *aḥmā*ʾ is not clear in the sources, which are not abundant or helpful on such matters.[85] However, it may be safely assumed that they were related to them in one way or another. These *aḥmā*ʾ/*ḥimā*s, such as al-Rabaḏa, al-Naqīʿ, and Fayd, were in Ḥijāz, where the Ghassānids had a strong presence, notably in Medina/Yathrib itself where the two Arab tribes al-Aws and al-Khazraj were their cousins.

The sources, however, refer to two associated with the Ghassānids: Uqur and Abraq al-Naʿʿār. The first is known from a poem by Nābigha, who says that he warned his own tribe not to occupy Uqur, which apparently they did, but the Ghassānid king campaigned against them and dislodged them. The other was a watering place that Ghassān shared with Ṭayyiʾ.[86] The value of the acquisition of such important areas in the region of the Outer Shield is reflected in the campaign of the Ghassānid king al-Nuʿmān in Ḥijāz in order to occupy the fertile Wādī al-Qurā, which lay north of Medina/Yathrib between Taymāʾ and Khaybar, and which Banū Ḥunn, a subdivision of the ʿUḏra tribe, protected. The Ghassānid king, however, failed in his attempt to acquire it, as is clear from one of the fragments of the poet al-Nābigha.[87]

Procopius and his school,[88] the continuators of the sixth century, who were his disciples and admirers, obscured the role of the Ghassānid horse as they did its rider when they leveled the charge of *prodosia* against the Ghassānids. The only Byzantine author who described the Arab horse well was Zosimus in his account of the exploits of the *cuneus* that Queen Mavia sent to Emperor Valens for the defense of Constantinople before and after the battle of Adrianople in 378. Zosimus spoke of the fleetness and agility of the Arab horse, the skill of its riders in fighting on horseback, and the unconquerable thrust of their pikes.[89] The pre-Islamic, Arab horse, especially the Ghassānid, as well as its riders, received apostrophes also from contemporary poets in verses that reverberated through Islamic times and are still in the front rank of Arabic poetry.

The fame of the Arab horse abroad had, however, to wait until the rise of Islam in the seventh century. The *aḥmā*ʾ of pre-Islamic times became those of the nascent Islamic state, and the Prophet Muḥammad declared them *ḥarams* for God and his Prophet.[90] They thus became the breeding ground for the Islamic horse,

[85] Just as the tribal structure of the Ghassānid Inner Shield is revealed in the Islamic sources, when they treat the Muslim conquest of Bilād al-Shām, Byzantine Oriens, so do the detailed descriptions of these *aḥmā*ʾ become available in the sources that treat early Islamic history during the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Orthodox caliphs.

[86] For Uqur and Abraq al-Naʿʿar, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* I, 235, 69. For the poem of Nābigha, see W. Ahlwardt, *The Divāns of Six Ancient Arabic Poets* (Osnabrück, 1972), 14–15. It is natural to suppose that Abraq al-Naʿʿār, the watering-place Ghassān shared with Ṭayyiʾ, was also a *ḥimā.*

[87] For the poem, see Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* 15–16, no. 13.

[88] For these, see *BASIC* I.1, 255–58, 297–306, 592–97.

[89] See *BAFOC,* 178.

[90] See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. *ḥimā,* II, 308.

ready for *jihād,* or holy war. They issued out of their *aḥmā*' in the Arabian Peninsula carrying the warriors who conquered a wide belt of the globe from India to Spain, and in so doing they spread the fame of the Arab horse far and wide. But it was the same horse that had been reared and trained in these pre-Islamic *aḥmā*' that carried the Ghassānids as they fought the battles of Byzantium against the Persians and the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula.

IV. Ghassānid Military Structures and Arabic Military Terms

Now that the strong Arab federate military presence in Oriens has been demonstrated, it is necessary to return to the list of their military structures preserved in the Arabic sources. These have been studied in detail in a different context, in a section on the sources that belonged to *Quellenforschung.* These sources with their references to Ghassānid structures have been shown to be authentic.[91] They acquire a higher degree of authenticity now that the strong military presence of the Ghassānids in Oriens and along the *Limes orientalis* has been independently established. Three elements of this presence may be stated as background before a return is made to these references in the Arabic sources. (1) The two Ghassānid phylarchs, Arethas and his brother Abū Karib, were involved in the drastic military *renovatio* that Justinian effected in Oriens and that also involved Sittas, the *magister militum per Armeniam.* (2) The Ghassānid *foederati* took over from the *limitanei* of Oriens their guard duties along the *Limes orientalis* and their watch over the frontier. (3) Both archaeology and epigraphy have testified to the Ghassānid presence in Oriens, which had been extracted from the literary sources. They are attested in Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis, at Haliorama/Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, in Dumayr, and possibly in Ṣadaqa.

The Ghassānids thus appear in at least three or four locations, each far removed from the other. These are spread from the extreme north of Oriens near the Euphrates in Ruṣāfa to the extreme south in Ṣadaqa, not far from the Gulf of Eilat. It is impossible to believe that these could have been the only locations that witnessed a Ghassānid presence along the *Limes orientalis.* These *foederati* who took over from the *limitanei* the defense of the *limes* must have taken over their forts and fortresses, those listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum,* if not all at once, at least gradually. They would have occupied these forts, or restored them if they were dilapidated, or adapted them to their own style in defending the *limes* or built entirely new structures, during their long occupation of the frontier zone which lasted for a century.

[91] In the case of Ṣadaqa, the truth about the Ghassānid military presence is inferential, not evidential, since the exact involvement of Abū Karib in it is still not clear. His military presence is based on circumstantial evidence derivative from his elevated position after the drastic reorganization of the *Limes orientalis* in 529 and the gradual dismissal of the *limitanei* by Justinian.

Archaeology and epigraphy have been the two main contributors to the preservation of traces of this strong Ghassānid presence, almost obliterated by the passage of some fourteen centuries, natural disasters, and the hand of man. In such a case, historical evidence from the literary sources might have been helpful in preserving a list of Ghassānid structures, but these too are scarce. The chief historian of the reign of Justinian was no friend of the Ghassānids, and he chose to be silent on the whole segment of the *limes* that extended from Palmyra to Ayla, taken over from the *limitanei* by the Ghassānid *foederati,* the very same segment of the *Limes orientalis* that must have witnessed the erection of their military structures. Fortunately, the silence of Procopius admits of being broken, as memory of these structures has survived in the Arabic sources, which have been intensively examined in this volume. Some severe tests have been applied for their evaluation, with the view of extracting from them data that are beyond reproach. The result is a list of toponyms and structures, the enumeration of a minimalist.[92]

The list, however, receives further fortification and authentication as it is set against the background of the three elements presented at the beginning of this section on the new role of the Ghassānids and of the four toponyms associated with them, as revealed by the archaeological and epigraphic evidence. The archaeologist and the epigrapher tend to be suspicious of evidence from the literary sources, especially if these, like the Arabic, come from a tradition entirely different from the Graeco-Roman. Consequently the confrontation of the data from this Arabic tradition with the evidence from archaeology and epigraphy is especially important for their authentication. It makes sources that are not equipollent more so and closer to each other. When, for instance, the Arabic sources associate the Ghassānids in southern Trans-Jordan with Daʿjān/al-Daʿjāniyya, Aḏruḥ, and Ubayr,[93] this association should no longer be viewed with suspicion, since the evidence from a Greek papyrus finds a Ghassānid active at a place such as Ṣadaqa, not far from these three places, especially as the Ghassānid presence was sometimes only an association, which suggests that they occupied, restored, or adapted them, if they did not actually build them. The same applies to the statement that the Ghassānids were associated in northern Oriens with Ṣiffīn[94] on the Euphrates, also not far from Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis, where they had a strong presence, established by archaeology and epigraphy.

The strong Ghassānid presence in Oriens and along the *Limes orientalis* was recognized early in the twentieth century by E. Herzfeld, who declared for it after his perceptive reading of the list of Ḥamza. Recent scholarship since the days of

[92] See the relevant sections, especially the one on Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, below, 306–41.

[93] Glen Bowersock may have been the first to make this association involving Daʿjāniyya and Aḏruḥ; see his "*Limes Arabicus,*" *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 80 (1976), 226–27.

[94] For the Ghassānids in Ṣiffīn, see below, 337.

Herzfeld has swung in favor of the Ghassānid thesis and is represented by Romanists, Byzantinists, Islamicists, and Orientalists, such as Jean Sauvaget, Glen Bowersock, Jean-Pierre Sodini, Clive Foss, David Graf, David Kennedy, S. Thomas Parker, and Heinz Gaube. This volume devoted to toponymy, topography, structures, and frontier studies has confirmed the Ghassānid thesis and the conclusions of these scholars. Consequently students of the Oriental *limes* can go to the very detailed analysis of the sources for the strong Ghassānid presence, undertaken here for the first time, for a fresh look at the problems of the *Limes orientalis*—its toponyms and structures—in light of this new research. But a simple enumeration is not inappropriate in this section, as it will give a synoptic view of what has been discussed with much detail in many other sections. The following is a list of the toponyms, neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, presented according to their locations in the limitrophe provinces.

I. Arabia
   - Jalliq
   - Shaqqa (Maximianopolis)
   - Qaṣr al-Ṣafā (Khirbat al-Bayḍā)
   - Ṣafāt al-ʿUjaylāt
   - Diyāf
   - Sarkhad/Salkhad
   - al-Qasṭal

II. Palaestina Tertia
   - Aḏruḥ (Augustopolis)
   - al-Daʿjāniyya
   - Ubayr/Bāyir
   - Maʿān
   - al-Ḥafīr
   - al-Sadīr
   - ʿArandal
   - Maʾāb (Areopolis)
   - Zoghar

III. Phoenicia Libanensis
   - Tadmur (Palmyra)

IV. Syria Prima
   - al-Andarīn

V. Euphratensis
   - Ṣiffīn

Arabic Military Terms

Service in the Roman army for three centuries taught the Arab *foederati* Roman methods of warfare.[95] This Roman experience found its climax in the last group of these *foederati,* who endured longest and were the most developed in their integration into the Roman/Byzantine military system, the Ghassānids. The nature and scope of their involvement in the Byzantine military system are reflected in the appearance in Arabic of Roman military terms either translated or transliterated, a lexical reflection of the debt of the Arab *foederati* to the Roman military system.[96]

A

1. *Strata.* The paved roads of the Roman legions impressed the Arabs who marveled at these wonders of construction in their deserts. The term was both transliterated and translated. (a) The former attained much greater currency as *ṣirāṭ* and even found its way into Islam's holy book and gave expression to Islam as the religion of the straight path, *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm.* It was the very same term that appeared in Procopius in connection with the *Strata* dispute between the Ghassānid Arethas and the Lakhmid Mundir, and was actually used by the Ghassānid to buttress his argument.[97] Its employment by the Ghassānid phylarch is the earliest attested use of the term by an Arab. (b) *Raṣīf* is the other term that translated *strata,* or was simply the already existing Arabic word that denotes a paved road. It was used by the historians to denote the *strata* in Bilād al-Shām, the *Strata Diocletiana.*[98] It was probably also used by the Arabs of pre-Islamic times to denote that same Roman road.

2. *Castrum,* Latin for castle, fort, Greek κάστρον. This word entered Arabic and received a wide and immediate vogue as *qaṣr* or *ḳaṣr* despite the fact that it is a less common term for fort than *castellum.* It rather than *castra,* camp/encampment, is etymologically behind Arabic *qaṣr/ḳaṣr,* since this Arabic form denotes fort rather than encampment. The term, whether in its Arabic signification as fort

[95] Explicitly documented for Jabala, the chief Ghassānid phylarch and king in the first quarter of the 6th century; see *BASIC* I.1, 76–79.

[96] Some of these terms are treated in a different context, the authenticity of Ḥamza's *Chronicle,* below, 321–23.

[97] See Procopius, *History,* II.i.7. Whether Arethas in his dispute with Mundir used Arabic *ṣirāṭ* or Latin *strata* is not clear. Whichever term he used, this is the only recorded instance of the employment of Latin by an Arab federate.

[98] See ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* ed. A. Zakī Pasha (Cairo, 1924), I, 230. The paragraph in ʿUmarī is valuable. Even in the late Middle Ages, the Strata was visible and known to the Arabs of the region. ʿUmarī says it extended from Sarkhad/Salkhad to Iraq in the wilderness and was interrupted in various segments. By his time it was ascribed to King Solomon, just as Palmyra was. Apparently it was still used in ʿUmarī's day as the quickest way between Shām and Iraq.

or as mansion, turned out to be the most widely used of all Latin military terms in Arabic, as so many toponyms that dot the map of Bilād al-Shām until the present day testify.[99]

3. *Castellum.* This term, which appears in Arabic as *qaṣṭal,* signifying fortress, did not attain the popularity of *castrum* as a word for fortress. It is possible that the law of phonetic facility, which Arabized *qaṣr* as a monosyllable, tipped the scales in its favor against *castellum,* which, however, survived not as a common but as a proper noun in Arabic, a toponym that is still to be found in Bilād al-Shām. Its most outstanding representation as a toponym is al-Qaṣṭal in Trans-Jordan.

4. *Fossatum,* Latin *fossa,* φοσσάτον, ditch or trench. This term was Arabicized as *fusṭāṭ,* which must go back to pre-Islamic times, when the Arabs transliterated it, as they did *khandaq* from Pahlevi *kandak,* meaning the same. Its attestation is rare; but in referring to the conquest of Moab/Ma'āb (Areopolis) by the Muslim Arabs, the Muslim historian Ṭabarī incidentally remarks that it was a *fusṭāṭ* not a *madīna,* presumably meaning a military station, not a town or city.[100] Its survival in Islamic times, however, was not in Oriens but in Egypt, where it appears as the first city and residence of the Arab governor of Egypt, founded by its conqueror, ʿAmr Ibn al-ʿĀṣ, the famous Fusṭāṭ of Egypt in medieval times.[101]

5. *Vigiliarium.* This term, Graecized as βίγλα, is the watchtower or post so important along the *limes* for observation. This Latin term, translated into Arabic as *manẓar* or *manẓara,* appears in the sources in the plural *manāẓir,* which also sometimes becomes a proper noun denoting an area, such as the one near ʿUrḍ in Phoenicia Libanensis.[102] In the plural it also denotes a stretch of the *limes* in Oriens with watchtowers, "manāẓir al-Rūm," "the watchposts of the Romans."[103]

The term was apparently translated also as *manārat,* whence light[104] emanated, signaling the approach of an enemy. It has survived in the form *manārat,*

[99] Its counterpart as a loanword from Syriac in the religious sphere is *dayr,* monastery, which also survives in so many toponyms in the same region.

The wide popularity of these two terms *strata* and *castrum* in Arabic and their survival in toponyms have their parallels in European languages such as English, in which the Roman military presence in Britain is attested *passim* in toponyms that are tell-tales of both *castrum/castra* and *strata.*

[100] See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* ed. M. Ibrāhim (Cairo, 1962), III, 406.

[101] See *EI,* s.v. Fusṭāṭ.

[102] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* IV, 103; he locates it between Palmyra and Sergiopolis.

[103] See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* II, 57, where the term is used in connection with Shāpūr II's campaign against the Arab tribes Bakr and Taghlib in the area that lay between Iraq and Oriens. This may have been the same segment of the *limes* that Khālid, the victor of Yarmūk, avoided when he made his historic dash from Iraq to Bilād al-Shām. The term used in connection with Khalid's march is "thughūr al-Rūm," not "manāẓir al-Rūm"; see ibid., III, 410. For A. Musil on al-Manāẓir, see his *Arabia Deserta* (New York, 1927), 37, 231, 336, 503, 511.

[104] Cf. *manzar/manẓara,* the other *nomen loci* for *vigiliarium* formed from another root, *n-ẓ-r,* meaning "look."

the minaret of the Islamic mosque, which could have been modeled on the lighthouse or watchpost of the Byzantine military frontier.

6. *Miliarium.* That important landmark on the Roman road, the milestone, the guide of soldier and wayfarer, was transliterated as *mīl.* It appeared as such even in Arabic love poetry in the early Islamic period, as an example of permanence. Since then it has come to mean not the *miliarium* itself but the distance, as in English mile.

7. Ζωγράφος. This term, for the painter whose function it was to polish the shields of the Roman legionaries and who was also still active in Byzantine Oriens, found its way into Arabic as *zukhruf,* which came to signify decoration in general. It is attested in the Koran.[105]

B

The Ghassānids were possessed of a strong sense of Arab identity, which was enhanced by the splendid panegyrics that extolled their Arab ethos, composed for them by the foremost poets of the Arabian Peninsula.[106] It is natural to expect that they did use sometimes strictly Arab terms prevalent among the Arabs and in Arabia for the military concepts of the Roman military system, which may be listed as follows.

1. *Ḥīra,* the military encampment, *castra,* was the most important; it appears in Arabic in various forms, such as *ḥayr* or *ḥā'ir,* sometimes in the plural, *ḥiyār* and *ḥīrān,* and once in the plural of the dual as in *ḥiyārān.*[107] It lies etymologically behind the toponym Haliorama, the Greek form that transliterated it almost beyond recognition, and it has survived in its Umayyad form as Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī and elsewhere in toponyms in various parts of Bilād al-Shām. But it was superseded by *mu'askar* for camp or military station, the *nomen loci* of *'askar,* which derives either from Pahlevi *lashkar* or Latin *exercitus.*

2. *Maṣna'*, plural *maṣāni'*. This Semitic term was widely used in both Arabic and the Sabaic of South Arabia; it appears in pre-Islamic poetry signifying a structure that is powerful and impressive. It might have been applied to some of the Ghassānid military structures, such as a fortress, and it appears in the list of Ḥamza

[105] *Zukhruf* is attested in the Koran four times, and one *sura* (chapter), XLIII, is titled the *sūra* of *al-zukhruf,* after verse 34 where the term occurs. The term ζωγράφος is attested on a stele found at Madā'in Ṣāliḥ/al-Ḥijr in Ḥijāz; this confirms that Greek ζωγράφος or ζωγραφία is etymologically behind Arabic *zukhruf.* The old etymology, related to a Syriac/Aramaic derivation, presented by A. Jeffery in *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān* (Baroda, 1938), 150, can no longer be accepted on either phonological or semantic grounds; see the detailed footnote in *BAFIC,* 477 note 74.

[106] On this, see below, 220.

[107] For the etymology of *ḥīra,* see *BAFOC,* 490–98. The various forms of *ḥīra* sometimes assume new significations such as a game preserve for *ḥā'ir.*

for Ghassānid buildings. It has survived as such in the Koran and in some toponyms, both in present-day Jordan and in Syria.[108]

3. *Maslaḥa,* in the diminutive form, *musyaliḥa:* a noun of place from the root signifying *silāḥ,* weapons, the Arabic counterpart of Latin *castellum,* a fortress or a military station. It is epigraphically attested in the Ghassānid Usays inscription of 528/9[109] and survived in sources on early Islamic history as a military term. However, *qalʿa* has superseded it as a term for fortress.

4. *Ṣarḥ:* a term that appears associated with Ghassānid buildings in Ḥamza's list.[110] It is attested in Sabaic and in the Koran. Of unclear meaning, it could be a military term but is likely to be a civilian one signifying mansion.

Appendix I

The Battle of Daras

In *BASIC* I.1, 132–33, it was maintained that Arethas and the Ghassānids took part in the battle of Daras, mention of which was omitted by Procopius. This chapter, which has delved into the *aḥmā'* of Inner Arabia whence the Ghassānids imported their horses, confirms that the strength of the Ghassānid contingent in the army of the Orient was its cavalry and, consequently, the impossibility that that contingent did not take part in the battle of Daras (A.D. 530), which was won entirely by the Byzantine cavalry. One could go further and say that Belisarius' victory at Daras was, to some extent, due to the participation of the mettlesome Ghassānid cavalry in that battle and that its participation in Callinicum the following year was especially welcomed by Belisarius because of its performance at Daras the year before. The movements of Belisarius before the battle of Callinicum seem to suggest this. After he ascertained the route of the invading Persian commander Azarethes, Belisarius hastened to intercept him with only eight thousand men of whom five thousand were the Ghassānid cavalry under the command of Arethas. This suggests that the commander in chief had great confidence in the Ghassānid cavalry as a result of experience gained while fighting with the Ghassānids in battles at which the performance of their horse had been proven. Such was the battle of Daras, fought in the preceding year, and won entirely by cavalry; on the antecedents of Callinicum, see Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War,* 197.

Appendix II

Al-Rabaḏa Ḥimā

One of these pre-Islamic *aḥmā',* namely, al-Rabaḏa, in Ḥijāz, 200 km southeast of Medina, has been excavated by a team of Saudi archaeologists who began their work in 1979 under the direction of Dr. Saʿd al-Rāshid. The results have been published as *Al-Rabadhah* (Riyadh, 1984).

Al-Rabaḏa became an Islamic *ḥimā,* developed by the caliph ʿUmar in A.D. 637 as

[108] For *maṣnaʿ* as a technical military term and as a toponym, see below, 65–66.
[109] See *BASIC* I.1, 117–24.
[110] See below, 322.

a breeding ground of camels and horses for the conduct of *jihād;* it had the astounding number of forty thousand mounts. This pre-Islamic site soon developed into a town after Abū Dar al-Ghifārī, one of the famous companions of the Prophet Muḥammad (Ṣaḥāba), lived and died there. The pilgrimage to Mecca gave an impetus to the development of the town as it was a station on the pilgrim route that ran from Kūfa in Iraq to Mecca.

Especially relevant to the chapter on hydrography in this volume (above, 15–20) is part 3 of *Al-Rabadhah,* which deals with the water supply and installations and includes color illustrations (pp. 41–48). These installations consisted of reservoirs (circular and square), wells, and underground water tanks, some of which must go back to pre-Islamic times.

Appendix III

On the Etymology and Connotation of *Qaṣr*

Qaṣr has always been considered a loanword from Latin *castrum*/Byzantine Greek κάστρον, fort, fortress, which was Arabicized in ancient times, and later developed semantically to mean "palace," a signification it also has in modern Arabic. This etymology had never been in doubt, vouched for by many distinguished Arabists and Semitists, until 1981 when L. Conrad argued that it is not a loanword from Latin but an indigenous Arabic term derived from the verb *qaṣara.*[1] In its plural form, *quṣūr,* the term has been controversial; its meaning has been hotly debated among art and architectural historians of the Umayyad period.[2] Now another problem of an entirely different nature has arisen from Conrad's article on its etymology and connotation.

Conrad's article is a thoughtful attempt to liberate certain terms in Arabic from their bondage to the classical languages, Greek and Latin. Even more ambitiously, he voices a *caveat* "concerning the tendency, common among scholars who view Islamic society and culture as derivative from the heritage of Hellenism."[3] Unfortunately, his attempt has not been successful and paradoxically leads to what he himself deprecates in his article, namely, "confusion and obfuscation."[4] The article not only contests the etymology of the term *qaṣr* but also its connotation, imparting to it a new semantic dimension; and it goes beyond the etymological and the semantic. According to Conrad, "the point is hardly a philological trifle . . . a more precise understanding of what the medieval *quṣūr* were (or were not) clarifies, in turn, our assessment of the social contexts within which they are mentioned, and our more general understanding of the events being described."[5]

The term is one of the basic loanwords in Arabic, important for the military and social history of the Arabs, and has persisted to the present day. It is therefore necessary to examine this article thoroughly, especially as Conrad has more recently interpreted

[1] See L. I. Conrad, "The *Quṣūr* of Medieval Islam: Some Implications for the Social History of the Near East," *al-Abhāth* 29 (1981), 7–23.

[2] See Epilogue I, below, 375–88.

[3] Conrad, "The *Quṣūr,*" 9.

[4] Ibid., 8.

[5] Ibid., 7.

some early Arabic sources where the term *qaṣr* occurs in light of what he had said more than a decade before.[6] This makes it imperative not only to examine Conrad's statement of his case for the new interpretation but also to restate the case for *qaṣr* as a loanword from Latin, which entered Arabic during the long period of the Roman and Byzantine occupation of Oriens and the Near East.

I

The case for *qaṣr* as a loanword from Latin *castrum*/Greek κάστρον may be presented as follows. The Roman presence in the Near East and in Oriens lasted for some seven centuries, from the Settlement of Pompey in 63 B.C. to the battle of Yarmūk in A.D. 636. Rome was a military power that conquered the region, and its military presence naturally left significant traces in Oriens and on its people. Most relevant in this context is the Diocletianic overhaul of the eastern frontier around A.D. 300, which opened a new era of roughly three centuries during which the empire assumed a defensive posture after a period of expansion and conquest.[7] This entailed the rise of many defensive structures—the forts, camps, and roads for the protection of Roman territory: the *castella, castra,* and *strata.* They dotted the limitrophe from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat and are reflected in the *Notitia Dignitatum.*[8] These, especially the *castra,* have survived even after the Muslim conquest in the numerous toponyms of present-day Bilād al-Shām.[9] They bear the names *qaṣr* and *qaṣṭal,* Arabicized forms and direct descendants of Latin *castrum* and *castellum.* The pedigree of these *qaṣr*s and *qaṣṭal*s going back to their Latin forebears is thus evidenced beyond any doubt.

The Roman military establishment left its traces not only on the toponymy of the region but also in the Arabic language. No one has ever doubted that Arabic *sirāṭ* is Latin *strata,* or Arabic *qaṣṭal* is Latin *castellum.* It would therefore be incomprehensible if *qaṣr,* the third of this trio of conjugate terms, which is still apparent on the toponymic map of the region, is not also the Arabicized form of the Latin term *castrum.*

Furthermore, this particular term has passed into the cognate Semitic languages of Arabic, namely, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac; its etymology there is established as Latin *castrum,* and no Hebrew or Aramaic scholar has ever argued that it is derivative from an indigenous Hebrew or Aramaic root.[10] In view of all this, arguing that Arabic *qaṣr* does not represent Latin *castrum* would make the latter very conspicuous by its absence from the list of the three conjugate Latin terms. It would be especially noteworthy in view of the acceptance of the diminutive of *castrum,* namely, *castellum,* as *qaṣṭal,* the Arabicized

[6] For this interpretation of *qaṣr* in an important poem by Ḥassān ibn Thābit, see below, 293, and for the influence of this interpretation on others, below, 141.

[7] For this, see the present writer in *Rome and the Arabs* (Washington, D.C., 1984).

[8] See references to these *castella* in such abundance for the provinces of Oriens, especially Osroēne, Mesopotamia, Syria, Phoinicia, Arabia, and Palestine in *Notitia Dignitatum,* ed. O. Seeck (Berlin, 1876), 67–82.

[9] For the abundance of *qaṣr* and *qaṣṭal* in what is now Syria and Jordan, in addition to detailed maps, see the geographical dictionaries of Yāqūt and Bakrī, s.vv. *qaṣr* and *qaṣṭal,* and the gazetteers for Syria and Jordan.

[10] For *qaṣr* in Hebrew and Aramaic/Syriac, see Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary,* 240.

form of Latin *castellum.* No one has come up with a quadriliteral root in Arabic for *qaṣṭal* to suggest it was indigenous.

The transmission of this term, unlike some other loanwords, is very easy to account for. The *castra* and *castella* were often manned by Arab troops in Oriens such as the *equites promoti indigenae,* many of whom are listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum.*[11] These were Arab *Rhomaioi* who knew these terms in Latin since they manned these structures and transmitted the terms to Arabic.[12] This is true not only of these *indigenae* but, more important, of the Arab allies (*foederati*) of the early Byzantine period—the Tanūkhids of the fourth century, the Salīḥids of the fifth, and the Ghassānids of the sixth century—who were auxiliaries fighting side by side with the regular Roman forces and living close to these forts or in forts of their own. So they were familiar with the terms and popularized them. Furthermore, when they took over the duties of the *limitanei,*[13] they actually occupied these *castra* and *castella* and no doubt used the same terms that the Romans had used to denote them, Arabicized as *qaṣr.* Procopius has a passage that illustrates how Latin terms passed into Arabic through their use by these *foederati.* During the *Strata* dispute with the Lakhmid king Mundir, the Ghassānid phylarch/king used the term *strata* as part of his argument;[14] surely he would also have used the term *qaṣr* on appropriate occasions. Through such employment of the terms in military parlance, *qaṣr* must have become a well-known Arabicized term.

That such military terms as *qaṣr* became popular in federate circles as the first stage in their diffusion is documented and evidenced by the use of the term in some of the buildings that the Ghassānid Arabs constructed. The list of Ḥamza,[15] the historian who has preserved the precious account of the Ghassānids as *philoktistai,* contains five structures that carry this particular term as an element in their names.[16] Not only the Ghassānids but also their poet laureate Ḥassān employed the term in those poems of his that have survived.[17] Thus it is easy to see how the term *qaṣr* became known in wider circles. In the case of Hassān it is especially significant because he came from Yathrib/Medina in Arabia; thus he documents the spread of the term in that peninsula. Indeed, in Medina itself some of the forts were called *quṣūr* (plural of *qaṣr*), as well as *āṭām* and *ḥuṣūn.*

The Umayyads, the first Islamic dynasty to rule in Bilād al-Shām after the Muslim conquest, settled in roughly where the Ghassānids had settled in the limitrophe. They also took over many of their establishments, some of which were exactly these *quṣūr.* Thus they gave a new lease on life to the term and its employment for these structures.

[11] For the many units with this description stationed in the provinces of Oriens listed above in note 8, see *Notitita Dignitatum,* 67–82.

[12] On the Arabness of these units, see *Rome and the Arabs,* 51–63.

[13] For the Ghassānid takeover of their duties from the *limitanei,* see above, 35–51.

[14] On this, see *BASIC* I.1, 209–16.

[15] A historian of whom Conrad speaks in the following terms, "an authority whose history is based on numerous old and well-informed sources not available in other works"; see his "Epidemic Disease in Central Syria in the Late Sixth Century," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 18 (1994), 48–49.

[16] Namely, Qaṣr Ḥārib, Qasr al-Faḏā', Qaṣr Manār, Qaṣr al-Suwaydā', and Qaṣr Birka. For all these *quṣūr* in Ḥamza, see below, 330, 334–36, 340–41.

[17] On "*qaṣr*" in Ḥassān, see below, 235, 241–42, 245.

But as they were more powerful and more affluent than the Ghassānids, they contributed to the extension of the term from a strictly military connotation to the residential, even the palatial, which prevailed in medieval Islamic times and has endured to the present day, practically superseding the earlier military meaning.[18] The etymology of the term *qaṣr,* its original connotation, and its later semantic development from the military to the residential/palatial are all crystal clear and are documented in the most satisfactory manner. It is Latin *castrum* and cannot be anything else.

II

Although the preceding arguments should be sufficient for rejecting Conrad's hypothesis[19] on *qaṣr,* it is necessary to examine it in detail and, in all fairness, point out what is sound. Since he started with Arabic philology, which he considered the fundamental ground of his argument, it is best to begin by looking at this philological profile. The author states that he "sees no justification for viewing the term *qaṣr* as an Arabization of the Latin *castrum,* or of the Byzantine Greek κάστρον or κάστελλος . . . for *qaṣr* can be viewed as perfectly regular Arabic, the *maṣdar* of the verb *qaṣara.* As such its basic connotation would be that of enclosure, confinement or restriction."[20] This view that Arabic *qaṣr* is derived from the root *qaṣara* as its *maṣdar* (infinitive or verbal noun), the plural of which is *quṣūr,*[21] is a radical departure from the accepted view of *qaṣr* not only in its etymology but also, more importantly, in its connotation. The following objections may be adduced against it.

1. Arabic has four *maṣdars* (verbal nouns) for each verb. All these *maṣdars* are abstract nouns, which express passion, action, or state, without any reference to object or subject,[22] such as a building or structure. This is true of this particular *maṣdar, qaṣr,* as illustrated in the long entry on it in the lexicon.[23] The only exception is when it means building,[24] which is significant and indicative of its non-Arabic origins.

2. The morphological pattern according to which this *maṣdar, qaṣr,* is formed is sometimes called the *ṣīgha maṣdar* to distinguish it from the others, the three that are called the *mīmī maṣdar,* the *nomen vicis,* and the *nomen speciei.*[25] This particular *maṣdar,* unlike the others, can rarely be pluralized, and in the lexicon it has no plural in the many instances of its use in Arabic. The plural *quṣūr* is never used as the plural of *qaṣr,* with the exception of the instance when *qaṣr* means building, which again is significant and reflective of its non-Arabic origin. *Quṣūr* is actually another morphological pattern of

[18] On the Umayyads as successors of the Ghassānids in Oriens, see Epilogue I, below, 375–91.

[19] The detailed restatement of the case for *qaṣr* as Latin *castrum* has brought out some new aspects of this problem, namely, the manner of its transmission, the various stages of the route it has taken for its naturalization in Arabic, and the later semantic development of its connotation.

[20] The quotation is not one but two sentences, which appear on two different pages; see Conrad, "The *Quṣūr,*" 8 and 9.

[21] Stated in the first sentence of his article, ibid., 7.

[22] See W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language* (Cambridge, 1955), I, 110.

[23] See E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1885), book I, pt. 7, 2532–36.

[24] Ibid., last column, p. 2534.

[25] For which, see Wright, *Grammar,* 110, 122, 123.

this *sīgha maṣdar*[26] and is always used in the singular in the many instances of the occurrence of this verb in the lexicon.[27]

3. On the semantic level, Conrad is slightly better off. The verb *qaṣara* means to confine, partition off, and it has other slightly different connotations. From this he concluded that it also means enclosure, confinement, restriction, the last two of which it can mean as a *maṣdar,* but not so much the first, a concrete noun. Conrad read into the term *qaṣr* the meaning "enclosure" because it is the term that can describe the Arabian structures to which *qaṣr* can apply, the term he thought was indigenous Arabic. None of the meanings of *qaṣr* listed in the lexicon, however, refers to a building except the one instance in which it is an isolated case, the loanword *castrum.* This has been touched upon in paragraph 1 above but morphologically, not semantically. As will be seen further on, the semantic dimensions Conrad noted in the structures in Arabic that he called *quṣūr,* and that he thought Arabic, derive from the concept of *qaṣr* not as an Arabic, but as a Latin term, *castrum.*

These reservations, based on Arabic morphology and semantics, concerning Conrad's hypothesis of *qaṣr* as an Arabic term suggest the non-Arabic origin of the term. That the medieval Arab lexicographers included Arabicized *qaṣr* within the entry on the Arabic root *qaṣara* was a reflection of their weakest point, namely, ignorance of Semitic and other languages that contributed loanwords to Arabic. In this way, Arabicized *qaṣr* appeared in the medieval lexica, standing in splendid isolation as a lexical unit without a verbal root from which it can be derived, in the same entry as Arabic *qaṣara,* until modern research revealed that it was not an indigenous Arabic term but a loanword from Latin.

Conrad would have been on perfectly firm ground philologically if he had noticed a certain derivative from the verb *qaṣara* that illustrates his point—the term *maqṣūra.* This term is formed on the pattern of the *nomen patientis* in Arabic, the *maf ʿūl* form (passive participle); the new lexical unit formed from this pattern means the space in the mosque reserved or partitioned off for the *imām* or ruler.[28] The term is applied in the same sense to spaces thus partitioned off in secular buildings or palaces, *maqāṣīr* in the plural. There is no doubt about the Arabic derivation of the word *maqṣūra,* which, unlike the *maṣdar, qaṣr,* does denote something concrete (the space partitioned off in the mosque or palace) and admits of being pluralized as *maqāṣīr.*

In saying what he did about the etymology and connotation of *qaṣr,* Conrad is oblivious of an important and relevant linguistic feature, which all languages, including Arabic, have, namely, non-synonymous homophonous roots. Arabic, as does English, abounds with homophones or homonyms. *Qaṣr,* the loanword from Latin *castrum,* and *qaṣr* the *maṣdar* of the verb *qaṣara,* represent this linguistic feature; they sound alike but

[26] Ibid., 112, no. 33. "The *nomina verbi,* which may be derived from the ground-form of the ordinary triliteral verb, are very numerous" (ibid., 110); this pattern, *fuʿūl,* is one of them.

[27] For *quṣūr* not as a plural but as a *maṣdar* in the singular, see two examples in Lane, *Lexicon,* in the first column of p. 2533 and one in the middle column of the same page.

[28] This brings to mind the μητατώριον in the Christian church. The Umayyad caliph Muʿāwiyya is said to have been the first to use this in Islam, possibly after the attempt on his life. Was this one of his adaptations of Byzantinism, to be added to others?

signify different concepts. The holy book of Arabic and Islam is the *locus classicus* for the coexistence of these two nonsynonymous homophonous roots.

The term *qaṣr* appears three times in the Koran,[29] two of which are in the plural (*quṣūr*); in these three instances it is clearly used in the sense it had in Ghassānid times, the era of the Prophet Muḥammad, meaning impressive buildings, possibly even palaces. Derivatives from the Arabic root *qaṣara* also appear in the Koran, about eight of them, in various morphological patterns, all related to the root-meaning of *qaṣara.*[30] The medieval Koranic scholars who did well in commenting on the Koranic lexicon, including its foreign terms, were unaware of the origin of *qaṣr* from Latin *castrum.*[31] The first part of this appendix has argued that *qaṣr* in the sense of fortress or palace could only have been the Latin loanword, since it has no derivation in Arabic and the term is well attested in Oriens, dominated by Rome for seven centuries. That in the Koran it was a loanword is also supported by the fact that the holy book contains two other loanwords from the military lexicon of Rome—*sirāṭ* from *strata* and *zuhkruf* from Greek ζωγραφία—and it would be futile to deny that the third, *qaṣr,* is not Latin *castrum.*[32] Conrad is aware of the Koranic attestations of the term but has mistakenly identified the two groups, the one that contains the three instances of *qaṣr*/*castrum* and the others that contained the clearly Arabic derivative from the verb *qaṣara.*

III

After arguing for the etymology and connotation of the term *qaṣr* within the indigenous framework of Arabic, Conrad devotes the major part of his article to structures in Arabia and Iraq that carried that name, structures of the most varied kinds ranging from stables to more impressive buildings.[33] In other words, he looked for structures in strictly Arab milieus after positing an Arabic etymology for the term *qaṣr.* In so doing, he has gathered much interesting material on the spread of the term and its application to various kinds of structures, relevant to writing the social history of these communities that had them and the architectural expression of their social, economic, and military life; but the material has little relevance to his main thesis on the Arabic etymology of the term *qaṣr* and its connotation.

[29] For these occurrences, see Koran XXII.45, VII.74, XXV.10. Although Conrad does not relate these instances to Latin *qaṣr,* he does concede that the terms describe "impressive buildings"; Conrad, "The *Quṣūr,*" 9.

[30] See *al-Muʿjam al-Mufahras li Alfāẓ al-Qurʾān al-Karīm,* ed. M. ʿAbd al-Bāqī (Beirut, 1992), 693.

[31] Al-Suyūṭī wrote two books on the foreign vocabulary of the Qurʾān but was unaware of *qaṣr* as a Latin loanword, since he worked under the same disability as other medieval Muslim scholars; see his *al-Muhaddab,* ed. I. Abū Sikkīn (Cairo, 1980), arranged alphabetically, and *al-Mutawakkilī,* ed. Abd al-Karīm al-Zubaydī (Beirut, 1988), arranged according to the various languages that contributed to the foreign vocabulary of the Koran. For al-Suyūṭī, the medieval Egyptian scholar (d. 1505), considered "the most prolific author in the whole of the Islamic world", see *EI*², IX, 913–16, s.v.

[32] On *sirāṭ* and *zuhkruf* in the Koran as loanwords, see Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary,* 195–96, and also the refinement on *zuhkruf,* above, 65 and note 105.

[33] Conrad, "The *Quṣūr,*" 11–23.

The author's excursion into the Arabian Peninsula in search of *quṣūr* seems motivated by a desire to prove his thesis on the Arab etymology of the term *qaṣr.* It bypasses Oriens, the region where the term has always been and still is so abundantly illustrated toponymically in Arabic, clearly reflecting the Latin provenance of the term. Conrad points out certain features that these Arabian *quṣūr* have: stability, permanence, security, and strength. All these are truly dimensions of the original *quṣūr,* as Roman fortresses in Oriens. Consequently his conclusion on the Near Eastern *qaṣr* in its social context must be rejected: "In reference to buildings, the term *qaṣr* probably arose in the Arab tribal milieu and designated a stable, permanent edifice, as opposed to the tents and collapsible reed houses of the fully nomadic and transhumant clans."[34]

The dimensions of strength, stability, permanence, and security, as well as the term itself, *qaṣr,* spread into western Arabia from the region of cultural and military dominance, Oriens. The Ghassānids were an important channel of transmission. As Azd, they had their relatives in both Medina and Mecca, the Aws and Khazraj in the former and Khuzāʿa in the latter. The Arab *quṣūr* of Medina[35] could easily have been influenced by those of their relatives in Oriens, who had helped them in their wars to achieve a strong presence in Medina.[36] The Ghassānid and other federate presence in north Arabia also explains the diffusion of *quṣūr* in that region. Thus these were not original but derivative from Oriens.

The spread of the term *qaṣr,* and what it stood for, in Iraq can also be easily accounted for as an influence emanating from Oriens and western Arabia, partly through the Arabs, who came to Iraq as generals and administrators immediately after the Muslim conquest of that region. They continued to do so during the period of the Umayyad caliphate when its governors ruled Iraq. Even in pre-Islamic times, the Christians of Ḥīra and Mesopotamia looked up to Byzantium as the Christian empire for inspiration of various kinds, including architecture.[37]

That Byzantine architecture was admired in pre-Islamic Arabia is reflected in the poetry of one of the poets of the Muʿallaqāt, the "Suspended Odes," namely, Ṭarafa, who belonged to the tribe of Bakr, in northeastern Arabia. In one of his similes, he speaks admiringly of *Qanṭarat al-Rūmī,* "The Qantara of the *Rhomaioi,*" the bridge or aqueduct of the Rūmī. In an English version of the simile, his Arabic verse is rendered in a couplet

[34] Ibid., 21.

[35] Ibid., 19.

[36] For relations between the Ghassānids and their relatives, the Arabs of Medina, see *BASIC* I.1, 38, 48, 123. It is significant that the *uṭum,* the fort, of Uḥayha ibn al-Julāḥ, one of the *sayyids* (chiefs) of the Arabs in Medina before the rise of Islam, was built for him by the Byzantine architect Sinimmār, who is also credited with building the palace of al-Khawarnaq for the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra, al-Nuʿmān; see Ahmad al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ al-Amthāl,* ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1978), I, 283; see also the following note.

[37] The career of Sinimmār, the Byzantine architect of the Lakhmid king Nuʿmān's palace, speaks for itself; see G. Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Laḫmiden in al-Ḥīra* (Berlin, 1899), 15–16. His association with Ḥīra is better attested in the sources than with Medina, but if the account is true of both Arab cities, Sinimmār would have been a well-known itinerant architect, who put his talents at the disposal of two different Arab communities, thus spreading Byzantine architectural styles, presumably prevalent in Oriens.

"Like the bridge of the Byzantines, whose builder swore/It should be all encased in bricks to be raised up true."[38]

As for the development of the connotation of the term *qaṣr* in two directions, this is easily accounted for. Within the peninsula, Arab society, especially in its pastoralist environment, was not so developed as its counterpart in Oriens. Hence it was only natural that what the peninsular Arabs constructed would not have been so advanced architecturally. With the retreat from Oriens by the Romans and later with the fall of the Umayyads themselves, Oriens, the main source of inspiration for these *qaṣr*s in Arabia, was cut off and a decline in their architectural features set in.

On the other hand, *quṣūr* developed progressively in Umayyad Bilād al-Shām, as they reached the climax of their development under the Umayyads, who were more powerful and affluent than the Ghassānids. Their *quṣūr* became caliphal residences, giving their name to these structures which henceforth have assumed the name palaces, an appellation that has endured in the Arab world to the present day. *Castrum,* in its Arabicized form *qaṣr,* returned with the Umayyads to the Roman West whence it had originally come. It survives in Italian as *cassero* (fortified tower) but most prominently in Spain in the famous Umayyad palace of Alcázar in Seville.

IV

Conrad, as a historian, attempted to draw significant historical conclusions from studying a term, *qaṣr,* that he considered fundamental for understanding important features of Arab social life and history. Sound philology, however, is essential for arriving at conclusions that are dependent on language, and it has been shown that the author's philology was flawed. Conrad's hypothesis of an Arab etymology of the term *qaṣr* led him to Arabia itself, the "homeland" of the Arabs, to seek illustrations of *quṣūr.* In so doing, he left the region that witnessed the rise and development of the term and what it stood for, namely, Roman/Byzantine Oriens, in which lived the Roman *limitanei* who manned these *quṣūr,* then the Ghassānids both as *foederati* and de facto *limitanei,* and then the Umayyads, the new masters of Oriens. Throughout his article there is the tendency to view the Arabs and Arab history in romantic pastoralist terms, fashionable nowadays in historiography on the Arabs.

This tendency is clear in his paragraphs on Ḥīra,[39] the most urban of all Arab centers in pre-Islamic times. For Conrad, that city is the Ḥīra visited by Alois Musil more than a millennium after it became a *khirbat* (ruin), rather than the Ḥīra that was once a bustling city with some thirty monasteries and four churches and the many palaces celebrated in antiquity.[40] This is not to deny that Ḥīra may have started as the place where Arab pastoralists settled in the third century when they founded it, nor that the city included some features for the accommodation of the pastoralists of northeastern Arabia who lived in its close proximity. But this is a far cry from saying, as Conrad does, that it "was arguably not a town at all."[41] Ḥīra endured as the foremost Arab pre-Islamic urban

[38] See A. J. Arberry, *The Seven Odes* (London, 1957), p. 84, verses 13–14.
[39] Conrad, "The *Quṣūr,*" 16, 20.
[40] See "Epilogue II," below, 392–403.
[41] Conrad, "The *Quṣur,*" 20.

center for three centuries after its foundation in the third, and continued to flourish for three more centuries in Islamic times.

Conrad refers to the term *kasr,* plural *ksûr* (colloquial for *quṣūr*), applied to the buildings in Ḥīra when Musil visited them and found them occupied by "clans." Musil draws a picture of decadence, natural after more than a millennium since Ḥīra's demise. But his description also documents the persistence of the term *quṣūr,* and this indicates that these had originally been impressive buildings, possibly the palaces that elicited the admiration of historians and poets even in the Islamic period, such as al-Sharīf al-Raḏī, who in the tenth century could speak admiringly of its domes.[42]

In the same paragraph,[43] Conrad refers to Khālid ibn-al-Walīd and his military operations in Ḥīra in A.D. 633, but the implication of his references is not entirely clear. In this very context, it should be pointed out that Ḥīra in 633 was not the Ḥīra of some thirty years before. Around 602, the Persian king had Nuʿmān, the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra, murdered, and that terminated the life and history of the dynasty that had ruled Ḥīra for some three hundred years. Chaos and confusion reigned in Ḥīra for the next thirty years when the Persians asserted their authority in the city and the Arab tribes won the famous battle of Ḏū-Qār against them. The turbulent tribes of northeastern Arabia had been checked and controlled by the Lakhmids, but these were now free to do what they pleased. This was the situation[44] when Khālid ibn-al-Walīd appeared on the scene in 633. In the ninth century, the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Mutawakkil built a palace in the style of one of the palaces of Ḥīra, and it was significantly called al-Ḥīrī.[45] This does not sound like the city that Conrad suggests Ḥīra was. On the ʿAbbāsid caliphs who in medieval times built the most luxurious of Arab palaces, also called *quṣūr,* there is not a word in an article titled "The *Quṣūr* of Medieval Islam."

In spite of these critical remarks, Conrad's article remains a welcome contribution and has much useful and interesting material on the development of the term *qaṣr* in the Arabian Peninsula in medieval and modern times. Its examination has stimulated the present writer to trace the development and transmission of the term from the pre-Islamic Roman/Byzantine period through Umayyad/ʿAbbāsid times, not in the region of Arab culture with a small *c* as Conrad did, but in that with a capital *C,* in the Oriens of the Ghassānids and Umayyads and in the Iraq of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs.

[42] See ʿĀrif ʿAbd al-Ghanī, *Tarīkh al-Ḥīra* (Damascus, 1993), p. 652, verse 3.
[43] Conrad, "The *Quṣūr,*" 20.
[44] For Ḥīra in the course of these thirty years, see Rothstein, *Die Dynastie,* 119–25.
[45] See "Epilogue II," below, 393 note 4.

III

Historical Geography

Of all the regions that the Ghassānids occupied in Oriens, Gaulanitis was the most important. In addition to being the region with which the secular history of the Ghassānids, both military and political, was associated and in which Jābiya, their capital, was located, Gaulanitis was unique in being part of the Holy Land. Hence its importance in ecclesiastical history in general and, in particular, the history of the Ghassānids, the zealous Monophysite *foederati* of Byzantium.[1] Although the region has received much attention recently, especially from archaeologists,[2] certain aspects of its history remain to be investigated and elucidated. Its prosperity in the Byzantine period from the fourth to the seventh century has been noted,[3] whereas other aspects of the region have not received enough attention.

I. Gaulanitis/Jawlān/Golan

There is no doubt that the prosperity of Gaulanitis in the three centuries of the Byzantine period was based on its being part of the Holy Land. Palestine, which

[1] For this, see the next section, "The Golan: Holy Land, Holy Mountain," below, where the biblical version of the name Golan is appropriately retained.

[2] The 19th-century German explorer Gottlieb Schumacher wrote important works on Gaulanitis containing detailed maps with place names that no longer appear on modern maps. His work has been truly described as "a cornerstone of Golan exploration" by the foremost subsequent scholar of Gaulanitis, Zvi Maʿoz, who has written voluminously on it. His monumental article on Gaulanitis was of great importance to me in writing this chapter, and I should like to thank him for his replies to questions I posed to him. Daniel Urman and Claudine Dauphin should also be mentioned among others who have paid special attention to the region in the Roman and Byzantine periods; the latter kindly supplied me with some of her work on the region. For Maʿoz' article "Golan," see *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1993), II, 525–46, with a select bibliography on Gaulanitis on p. 546. To G. Schumacher's *The Jaulan* (London, 1888) may be added his *Across the Jordan* (London, 1886), which includes discussion of Gaulanitis. For cartographers, the German version of *The Jaulan* is the better volume, since the maps and the localities are much clearer and more legible.

[3] See Maʿoz, "Golan," 538. The prosperity of Gaulanitis is striking, especially when contrasted with the period immediately preceding and the one following, the Umayyad period. For the historical geography of certain important toponyms in *Gaulanitis,* such as Jābiya, and Seleucia, see below, 96–104, 133–36.

had not been an important province in the pagan Roman period, suddenly became the Holy Land of the new Christian Roman Empire, and Jerusalem became its spiritual capital. The emperors accorded it special attention beginning with Constantine; one former empress, Eudocia, settled there, investing in it, and Justinian lavished his attention and munificence on it. Pilgrimage became a most important Christian duty and contributed largely to its prosperity. Gaulanitis shared in the general prosperity of the Holy Land of which it was a part. It had witnessed some of Christ's miracles and his lakeside ministry. There is no doubt that this was the main factor behind the region's prosperity, and Byzantium was the main contributor.

The rise of the Ghassānids to power and the region's emergence as their headquarters was another factor. These were zealous Monophysites as well as military *foederati,* and as both they contributed further to the general prosperity of the region as Chalcedonian Byzantium did. But in what way did the Ghassānid presence in Gaulanitis further its prosperity? Surely they contributed security, without which there would have been no prosperity. But this was not the principal factor that the Ghassānid presence contributed, important as it was. The answer to the question must lie elsewhere. Provinces received governors who may or may not have taken their duties seriously, and were sometimes notorious for embezzling funds. Their term of office may have been long or short, but they did depart after a period of time, and probably had no natural affinity with the province or its inhabitants. Such a succession of governors did not ensure continuity in provincial policy or administration, even if this had been salutary. By contrast, the Ghassānids stayed in Gaulanitis for a century and a half, and the region became practically their homeland, an image reflected in contemporary Arabic poetry. The analogy with the Herodians, who occupied the same region as the Ghassānids in the first century, is very apt. Benjamin Isaac, speaking of the Herodians and contrasting client-kings with provincial governors, wrote: "The difference between the level of activity of the Roman authorities and that of the Herodian client kings is remarkable. All that has often been claimed for the Roman Emperors was in fact carried out by these vassals. It is difficult to say whether their subjects had any cause for gratitude, but at least most, though not all, of their munificence was spent in their own territory and not on palaces in Rome or Constantinople. Josephus' observation that there was a serious danger of unemployment when the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem was finished is well-known. Whatever the merits of these endeavours, it is essential to keep in mind the difference between vassal kingdoms and provinces in this respect."[4] A century and a half of continuous residence in Gaulanitis made all the difference between the Ghassānid

[4] See B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire* (Oxford, 1992), 370–71.

client-king and the provincial governor in their respective relation to and care for Gaulanitis, hence for their attention to its welfare. It is indeed "essential to keep in mind the difference between vassal kingdoms and provinces."

From the perspective of the Byzantine central government, the Ghassānids were primarily *foederati,* a military group whose main function was guarding the eastern frontier against the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula, the Lakhmids, and the Persians. But their presence in Gaulanitis was also important for security reasons. In 529, when a dangerous Samaritan revolt broke out in Palaestina, it was the Ghassānid phylarch who succeeded in quelling it; another revolt had broken out before the turn of the century,[5] and there were many discontented Jews in Palaestina Secunda, both Galilee and Gaulanitis. So the Ghassānid presence there must also have seemed related to possible disturbances in this part of the Holy Land. Furthermore, an important trade route, the Via Maris, passed through the middle of Gaulanitis. Security provided by a strong Ghassānid military presence no doubt contributed to the protection of this important artery of trade.

All these were elements of weight in the calculations of the central government when it allocated Gaulanitis to the Ghassānids for their headquarters. But all these were dwarfed by the fact that it was this region that provided the Byzantine army of the Orient with its cavalry, especially important in a period and a frontier in which cavalry was now the principal arm of warfare against the Persians, whom the Byzantines resembled in many of their tactics and armor, especially cavalry and archery.

The Ghassānid presence in Gaulanitis, so deep in the interior of Oriens, has aroused curiosity in students of the region in this period.[6] The plateau formed part of the transverse wedge that consisted of Auranitis, Trachonitis, and Batanaea and Gaulanitis, running from east to west. Federate presence in Auranitis and Trachonitis, in more easterly areas, is explicable by the function of the *foederati*—the protection of the frontier. But Gaulanitis lies so deep in the interior that it calls for an explanation.

The key is surely related to the primary function of the *foederati* as *equites* (horsemen) in the Byzantine army of the Orient. Cavalry entailed a strong Ghassānid presence in Gaulanitis. A quotation from Gottlieb Schumacher, a nineteenth-century traveler who made some important observations on the region, is very appropriate, especially as it distinguishes Gaulanitis from Auranitis, the other region that witnessed a strong Ghassānid presence: "The growth of grass is less abundant in Haurân than in Jaulân; for the sun more quickly dries up the stoneless, sandy plain of the first than the hilly, stony region of the last. Therefore,

[5] On the Samaritan Revolt, see *BASIC* I.1, 82–95.
[6] See Sartre, *TE,* 187.

Jaulân is called the grazing country (Belâd er Rabiʿah), while the Hauran is wheat country (Belâd el Kameh)."[7]

The Ghassānids provided the army of the Orient with its cavalry, and their horses grazed in the pastures of Gaulanitis. An earlier section of this volume has discussed the *aḥmā*' of pre-Islamic Arabia, the protected reserved areas, the breeding ground of the Arabian horses.[8] The *aḥmā*' thus are to be paired with the pastures of Gaulanitis, the one for breeding and rearing horses, the other for pasturing them.

Gaulanitis became for Byzantium what the region of Apamea had been for the Seleucids, who had ruled the same region that was to become Byzantine Oriens. Gaulanitis and the Ghassānid capital, Jābiya, must have looked similar to Apamea and its environs under Seleucus Nikator. A passage from Strabo on Apamea as a horse-pasturing region where the Seleucid king kept his horses and his horse-related establishment is instructive and may provide a glimpse of the situation that obtained in Ghassānid Jābiya and Gaulanitis on a similar scale. After referring to the "broad marshes and exceedingly large cattle-pasturing and horse-pasturing meadows" in the vicinity, he goes on to say: "Here too, Seleucus Nicator kept the five hundred elephants and the greater part of the army, as did also the later kings. It was called Pella at one time, by the first Macedonians, because the majority of the Macedonians who made the expedition took up their abode there, and because Pella, the native city of Philip and Alexander, had become, as it were, the metropolis of the Macedonians. Here, too, were the war-office and the royal stud. The royal stud consisted of more than thirty thousand mares and three hundred stallions. Here, too, were colt-breakers and instructors in heavy-armed warfare, and all instructors who were paid to teach the arts of war."[9]

It was in Gaulanitis that the horses of the Ghassānids "safely grazed," celebrated in contemporary heroic poetry, and given names, of which two or three have survived, such as al-Jawn and Mawdūd. The Ghassānid love of and respect for horses is reflected in the fact that the Ghassānid phylarch and king was sometimes referred to not by his name but through his horse, as when the Ghassānid king al-Ḥārith is called Fāris al-Jawn, "the Cavalier, or Rider of al-Jawn," his horse.[10] Gaulanitis remained a region where the horses of the masters of the region, including the Ottomans, grazed throughout the ages. It persisted into more recent

[7] See Schumacher, *Across the Jordan,* 25. For a more detailed distinction of nine items that distinguish the two regions, Gaulanitis and Auranitis, from each other, see Ṣ. Khayrī, *Iqlīm al-Jawlān* (Damascus, 1976), 11–17.

[8] On the Ghassānid cavalry and the *aḥmā*', see the section "The Outer Shield," above, 54–60.

[9] Strabo, *Geography,* XVI.ii.10, trans. H. L. Jones, *The Geography of Strabo,* Loeb Classical Library, 8 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), VII, 251.

[10] See al-Aʿlam al-Shantamarī, *Dīwān ʿAlqama al-Faḥl,* ed. D. al-Khaṭīb and L. Ṣaqqāl (Aleppo, 1989), p. 43, verse 25. More will be said on this aspect of Ghassānid life and its relationship to the horse in the next volume of this series, *BASIC* II.2.

times as the region where horses were bred and pastured by its inhabitants—Arab, Druze, and Čerkes—until motorized means of transportation replaced the horse and brought to an end the role of the famed Arabian, the *equus caballus.*[11]

The Ghassānid Onomasticon in the Toponymy of Gaulanitis

It is only natural that a dynasty that lasted a century and a half and distinguished itself in the service of the region should have left some traces in that region's toponymy. These place names are associated with two well-known members of the dynasty, Ḥārith (Arethas) and Jabala.

1. Ḥārith/Arethas has left his name on a mountain or *tall* called Jabal Ḥārith. The name is accurately attested in the most authentic document that goes back to his reign, the Syriac letter of the 137 Monophysite abbots of monasteries in the Provincia Arabia and the adjoining regions. On this mountain, which lies north of Jābiya, there was a monastery whose abbot was named Theodore.[12] The mountain is also mentioned in the elegy written by the panegyrist of the dynasty, Nābigha, some thirty years later around A.D. 600. He says that the mountain (which he calls Ḥārith al-Jawlān, "the Ḥārith of the Jawlān") mourns the death of his master, the king al-Nuʿmān, a descendant of Arethas. The mountain is also mentioned in the poetry of Ḥassān in a fragment in which he describes the Persian invasion of Gaulanitis; the term Ḥārith al-Jawlān is again used for the mountain, thus emphasizing that it belonged to the region of Gaulanitis, important for identifying the location of the toponym.[13] It has survived to the present day in the toponymy of the region not as a mountain but as a *tall,* and the name Ḥārith has experienced some mutilation; it appears as Ḥāra, and the mountain is called Tall al-Ḥāra.[14] In a scholarly context, it may be called Mons Arethas (Mount Arethas).

The name of the Ghassānid king Ḥārith may also have survived in a village that lies at the foot of Jabal Ḥārith, now called Ḥāra (as in the mutilated name of the king in Tall al-Ḥāra). This is likely to have been a village named after him, as is the *tall* or *jabal.* The fact that it contains some ruins could support this view.[15]

[11] Khayrī, *Iqlīm al-Jawlān,* 137. The author provides some vivid details on horses in the Jawlān; until recent times the three peoples who inhabited the region used to rear horses of noble pedigrees, of which he names five—the Hamdānī, al-Samirī, al-Kuḥaylānī, al-ʿAjūz, and al-Saklawi. He further states that horses were used on certain occasions such as weddings when races would be held; ibid. Such must have been roughly the situation in the Gaulanitis of Ghassānid times, glimpses of which are given by the few references that have survived in the extant sources; for these, see *BASIC* II.2.

For the Jawlān as pastureland for the horses of the Ottoman cavalry, and for other relevant details on the region as a grazing ground, see A. W. Zakariyya, *al-Rīf al-Sūrī* (Damascus, 1955), II, 488.

[12] For the monastery on the mountain, see *BASIC* I.2, 825–26.

[13] For the mountain in the poetry of Nābigha and Ḥassān, see below, 224.

[14] See R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale* (Paris, 1927), 234.

[15] Ibid.; R. Dussaud and F. Macler, *Rapport sur une mission scientifique* (Paris, 1903), 49.

2. Another toponym associated with the name Ḥārith appears in al-Ḥārithān, the dual of Ḥārith. The employment of the dual for toponyms is common in Arabic, and the name Ḥārith was common in the dynasty: witness the fragment of Nābigha that gives valuable information on a small "tree" of the dynasty.[16] In that fragment the poet refers to three Ḥāriths, so it is not clear which two of the three gave their names to the toponym. It is likely to be the two that came later in the century after the death of the famous Arethas in 569, that is, al-Ḥārith al-Aṣghar and al-Ḥārith al-Aʿraj: Ḥārith the Younger and Ḥārith the Lame.

Al-Ḥārithān appears as a fortress with a body of water nearby, judging from a verse by the panegyrist Ḥassān.[17] But its location in Ghassānland is not clear. There is a toponym Umm-Hārtayn/Ḥārtēn in Trachonitis; the second part of the toponym, "Ḥārtēn,"[18] could be interpreted as a corruption of Ḥārithayn, as it is easy for the *th* to become *t* in colloquial Arabic. Such phonetic mutilation has been noted in Tall al-Ḥāra, originally al-Ḥārith.

Khirbat al-Ḥawārith, at the foot of Mount Hermon: the Ghassānid name al-Ḥārith appears in the singular in Ḥārith al-Jawlān and in the dual in al-Ḥārithān; Ḥawārith is the plural. But whereas the toponyms in the singular and the dual are definitely associated with the Ghassānids and are so attested, Khirbat al-Ḥawārith is not. No extant source has associated it with the Ghassānids, so its association with them is far from established; but the toponym should at least be noted in this context.[19]

3. Jabala is the third Ghassānid king whose name occurs in toponyms. The history of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations begins with a Jabala around A.D. 500 and ends with the more famous Jabala who lost the battle of Yarmūk. So it is not clear which of the two should be associated with the toponyms that include the name Jabala. These toponyms are in the area of Nahr al-ʿAllān, the river of al-ʿAllān, which runs parallel to and east of Nahr al-Ruqqād, supposed to be the eastern boundary of Gaulanitis, but these boundaries shift.

Knowledge of these toponyms is owed to Schumacher, who visited the area more than a century ago. His descriptions are worth quoting, especially as these toponyms do not appear on modern maps.

1. Khirbat Jabala: a little village that was in ruins when Schumacher visited

[16] See Nöldeke, *GF,* 33–35.

[17] There are two toponyms with that name in Trachonitis, not far apart. One lies about 12 km north of Philippopolis/Shahbā, and another about 25 km also to its north. The second one is close to Dakīr some 7 km to its north; Dakīr is a toponym associated with the Ghassānids through two inscriptions, for which, see above, 45. For the two toponyms see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map II, B1 and B2, s.v. Oumm el-Ḥāratein. See the section on Ḥassān, below, 243. That it was a fortress is clear from a verse composed by al-Qaʿqāʿ during the Muslim invasion of Bilād al-Shām, ibid.

[18] Revealed in Wetzstein's map, it is about 8 km northwest of Dakīr in Trachonitis.

[19] For a potter's workshop found at Khirbat al-Ḥawārith, see Maʿoz, "Golan," 558.

it. He describes it as follows: "*Khirbet Jebeleh.* A small ruin a mile west of Sahem ej Jaulân. It is close to the borders of the 'Allân, on a small mound, the summit of which is covered with large stones of irregular shape. Scattered ruins extend for some distance down from this to the plain. The neighborhood is rendered marshy by the spring and the stream of the Wâdy Jebeleh."[20]

2. Wādī Jabala: the valley through which the stream of Jabala runs. The stream is considered an affluent of Nahr al-ʿAllān and, according to Schumacher, joins al-ʿAllān from the east about 8 km south of Jisr. Nahr al-ʿAllān, of which Wādī or rather Ghadīr Jabala is an affluent, is well described by Schumacher,[21] who notes that "*Wâdy Jebeleh* has its beginning in the marshy region lying northeast of the ruins of Jebeleh, where there are a number of springs. It is a small though rapid stream, and falls into the 'Allân after running a course of about a mile."[22]

3. Birkat Jabala: in addition to the *wādī* and the *khirbat,* Jabala's name is associated with a little pool, a *birkat,* called Birkat Jabala, which appears in old maps of the region and in close proximity to Khirbat Jabala.[23]

In addition to toponyms that reflect the names of individual members of the dynasty, there is a spot called al-Musmiyye al-Ghassāniyya,[24] in which the adjectival form from the collective name Ghassān occurs, but its relation to the Ghassānids is not clear.

The dynasty left traces of its names in other regions of Oriens as well: (1) Nuʿmān in Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān (in Syria Prima), likely to have been named after

[20] Schumacher, *Across the Jordan,* 155–56.

[21] Ibid., 16–18.

[22] Ibid., 36–37. Schumacher has a paragraph on what he calls ʿAyn Hamātah: "'*Ain Hamâtah.* A perennial spring, of considerable volume and of good water, but partially built up. It is near the *Khurbet Hamâtah.* From it a stream of excellent water runs round Jamleh while another branch flows southwards into Wâdy ez Zeyyatin." It is quoted here because of its relevance to the Arab federate presence in the Gaulanitis. The Salīḥids, it has been maintained, also occupied Gaulanitis before the Ghassānids replaced them as the dominant *foederati* of Byzantium. Ḥamāṭa is a most unusual name; it was the name of Ḍujʿum, the eponym of the Salīḥids or rather their royal house, the Zokomids. So it is quite likely that the Salīḥids occupied this spot to which the Salīḥid king gave his name, a valuable addition to the toponymy of the Salīḥids, which is so badly preserved; on Ḍujʿum/Ḥamaṭa, see *BAFIC,* 253.

[23] I visited this area in June 1994 and could see in the *wādī* a body of water that seemed like a pool. The local guides were not sure whether this was Birkat Jabala or another one further on, which for climatic reasons I could not visit.

[24] For this spot, see D. Urman, *The Golan during the Roman and Byzantine Period,* BAR 269 (Oxford, 1985), 93. The name is strange, and its meaning is not clear. An identical toponym appears in Trachonitis, on the *praetorium* of which see Z. Maʿoz, "The Praetorium at Musmiyye, Again," *DOP* 44 (1990), 41–46. The fate of this *praetorium,* which goes back to the 2nd century, in later Byzantine times, especially when the Ghassānid *foederati* were gradually taking over the military stations and establishment of the regular *limitanei,* is not clear. In addition to al-Musmiyye/al-Ghassāniyya (Urman, *Golan,* 93), there is also Tell el-Ghassāniyya.

Nuʿmān the son of Mundir,[25] whom Maurice exiled to Sicily; (2) Jafna in Ḥawrān,[26] also named after a member of the dynasty, since Jafna is a distinctly Ghassānid name (as there were many Jafnas, it is not clear which one is indicated by this locality); (3) finally, a place called Ghassān, northeast of Bostra in Batanaea, after the collective name of the dynasty or the group in its entirety.[27] Some locales and villages in parts of modern Syria are called al-Ghassāniyya, but it is not clear how ancient they are; they may have acquired that name after the Ghassānids moved and settled in various places in Bilād al-Shām after the Muslim conquest.

It is possible that the Ghassānids were imitating their Byzantine masters, who gave their names to places and cities, such as Anastasiopolis and Justinianopolis. If so, this could have been an example of how the vassal was imitating the lord. Alternatively, these toponyms may have been given Ghassānid dynastic names by some admirers or members of the Ghassānid royal house, who wanted to perpetuate the memory of the Ghassānid phylarchs/kings in much the same way that the Herodians gave the names of Roman emperors to cities such as Caesarea, Sebaste, and Tiberias.

The prosperity of Gaulanitis during the Byzantine period, especially under the Ghassānids, recalls its prosperity under the Herodian dynasty,[28] a parallel that has been touched upon at the beginning of the chapter. A comparison of the two dynasties—the Edomite and the Ghassānid—reveals how roughly the same conditions that obtained in the region produced roughly the same results. The comparison is mutually illuminating and endows the history of Gaulanitis with some continuity after the long hiatus that intervened between the first and the sixth century, during which the region reverted to Roman provincial rule.

The Edomite Herods and the Ghassānid Jafnids endured for a long time in the region, approximately a century and a half; both were "native" to the area and not newcomers or strangers, although originally and in the distant past they had hailed from outside the Roman frontier. The two dynasties became related to the territories they governed in a way that the Roman governors could not have been.

It is well known that this region, especially the wedge in which Gaulanitis was included, consisting of Auranitis, Trachonitis, Batanaea, and Gaulanitis, was harsh and difficult from the perspectives of both physical and human geography. Trachonitis, the term, speaks for itself. The Romans as well as the Byzantines of

[25] In the volume on the 4th century, the Tanūkhid king Nuʿmān was suggested as the one after whom Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān was named; see *BAFOC,* 377. But compared to the Ghassānid Nuʿmān he remains a shadowy figure; moreover, the revolt of Nuʿmān after Byzantium betrayed his father, Mundir, provides the right background for a reinterpretation of the toponym as one named after the Ghassānid Nuʿmān; *BASIC* I.1, 464–78.

[26] For Jafna, see above, 12.

[27] Dussaud, *Topographie,* map II, 2B.

[28] For these see A. H. M. Jones, *The Herods of Judaea* (Oxford, 1967).

later times did well to leave it in the hands of local groups who could endure its climate and terrain and also deal with its inhabitants. Both the Herodians and the Ghassānids enforced law and order, and security conduced to the prosperity that obtained in the region in the period of both dynasties.

Both dynasties contributed not only to the security and economic prosperity of the region but also to its culture. The *philoktistēs* Herod the Great founded/refounded cities and erected many buildings, and his sons took after him. The one most relevant here is Philip, to whom fell the tetrarchy of this region from Gaulanitis to Auranitis. He built two cities, Caesarea near the sources of the Jordan, in the district of Paneas, the Caesarea Philippi of the New Testament, and also Julias in Lower Gaulanitis, Bethsaida Julia.[29]

As various chapters in this volume have indicated, the Ghassānids were also *philoktistai,* and this chapter on Gaulanitis will concentrate on one of their towns, Jābiya, which was their contribution to the urban scene in the region. It became a flourishing town under them, not unlike Caesarea Philippi under the Herodians, which neither Vespasian nor Titus would have cared to visit, enjoying the hospitality of the tetrarch, if it had not been an especially pleasant place.[30] Jābiya must have functioned in the same way. No doubt many Arab figures from the peninsula, especially the poets, came to the court of the Ghassānids there.

Finally, the contribution of the two dynasties may be noted in the sphere of religion; they relieved the region of its pagan character, dominated from the north by the great shrine or sanctuary of Paneas/Pan and Mount Hermon itself. Monotheism in its Jewish version was introduced into Gaulanitis with the conquest of the region by the Hasmoneans, and the process was carried on by the Judaizing Herodians. The Byzantine period witnessed the introduction of monotheism in its Christian version, and this was given an impetus by the Monophysite Ghassānids. The final stage came with the Arab conquest, when Gaulanitis witnessed the beginning of the introduction of monotheism in its Islamic version during the Umayyad period, a process that finally changed the religious complexion of the region. Apposite as the comparison is between the two dynasties in the sphere of religion, the Ghassānids, it should be noted, were much more engaged in religion than the Herodians and were more spiritually involved. It is doubtful whether any of the Edomite dynasts was genuinely pious.

Gaulanitis in this Byzantine period witnessed important historical events that were part of world history in the seventh century. The last time it had witnessed such events was during the Jewish War, such as the heroic siege of Gamala in A.D. 67 and its equally heroic defense in which the Roman commanders Ves-

[29] See Josephus, *The Jewish War,* II.168; trans. H. St. J. Thackeray (London-New York, 1989–90).

[30] Ibid., III.443–44, VII.23–24.

pasian and his son Titus were involved. But it was only in the seventh century that the region witnessed military operations of more than local significance. They are important to recall for a more intelligible history of Gaulanitis, when suddenly it again became the stage on which unfolded some dramatic events in the history of the Near East, the watershed of the seventh century.

In the second decade of the seventh century, the Persians mounted their greatest offensive ever against the Roman East, occupied the whole of Oriens and Egypt, penetrated Anatolia, and in the third decade laid siege to Constantinople itself. The mettlesome Ghassānid client-kingdom could not face the entire Persian army deployed against it, but Gaulanitis, their headquarters, was the scene of some battles where the Ghassānids must have made a valiant stand in defense of their land.[31] Unlike the historic siege of Gamala, Jābiya and Gaulanitis in this decade had no historians such as Josephus, but echoes of the gigantic struggle between the two world powers reverberated in Arabia and among the Arabs.

The fall of Jerusalem and before it the whole of Oriens into the hands of fire-worshipping Persians shook not only the Christian *oikoumenē* but also pagan Arabia, especially the nascent Muslim community in Mecca, which in A.D. 614, the year of the fall of the holy city, was still struggling for its very existence amid a hostile and pagan environment; as monotheist in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, it had natural affinities with the Byzantines against the Persians. The fall of Jerusalem was recorded in sura (chapter) 30 of the Koran, called the Sūra of the Rūm (the *Rhomaioi*). The Koranic verse is not specific on battles and engagements, but in addition to its implied reference to the fall of the holy city, the Koranic exegetes also speak of the battle of Aḏriʿāt, in Ghassānid territory, where the Persians scored a victory.[32]

The Ghassānids were involved in both Aḏriʿāt in Batanaea and Jerusalem in Palaestina Prima, especially in the former. That Palaestina Secunda experienced a Ghassānid-Persian struggle for the conquest of Gaulanitis, which ended with a victory for the Persians and much destruction in the region, is reflected in two precious verse fragments composed by one of the panegyrists of the Ghassānids, indeed, their poet laureate and kinsman, Ḥassān.[33] This is the only evidence that documents this stage in the victorious march of the Persians through Oriens and the involvement of Gaulanitis, when after a long lull of peace and security the region became a battleground in the Byzantine-Persian conflict.

The struggle in and for Gaulanitis was repeated in the fourth decade of the

[31] For the Persian offensive and the Ghassānid profile of it, see *BASIC* I.1, 635–42.

[32] Ibid., 638–39. The Koran, a holy book, would naturally have been more interested in the fall of Jerusalem, toward which the early Muslims in Mecca prayed, than in a military engagement at Aḏriʿāt. Hence the consternation expressed in the Koranic verses is more appropriate to the fall of the holy city; the reference to it is implied.

[33] On this, see above, 242–44.

seventh century. Hardly had the Ghassānids returned to their home and Gaulanitis, after strenuous campaigning with Heraclius in Anatolia and Mesopotamia against the Persians, when a new storm broke loose, this time from the same peninsula the Ghassānids were supposed to watch over. The sources, both Greek and Arabic, are more plentiful on this than on the earlier conflict, although it is not entirely clear exactly what happened. But Gaulanitis was involved, including the Ghassānid capital Jābiya, which is sometimes equated with Yarmūk as the name of the famous battle. Jābiya itself apparently was not a battleground, but an engagement took place in the vicinity; the decisive stage of the battle was at a distance from it, near the confluence of the Yarmūk and al-Ruqqād. Evidently Jābiya emerged from the struggle intact.[34]

Gaulanitis did not lose its importance as a stage of world history with the defeat of Byzantium, its evacuation of Oriens, and the end of the Ghassānids as Byzantium's *foederati.* As explained in the section on Jābiya, Gaulanitis retained its importance in the Umayyad period, but in a different context. During the twenty years of Muʿāwiya's governorship of Bilād al-Shām, Gaulanitis was the metropolitan province, so to speak, of the four *ajnād* into which Bilād al-Shām was divided. It remained the region where the great military encampment of the four *ajnād* was located and where their horses grazed until A.D. 717 when the encampment was moved to Dābiq, north of Aleppo, for the siege of Constantinople. Even after Muʿāwiya became caliph of the whole Umayyad empire and moved the capital to Damascus, Gaulanitis retained its military and political importance through Jābiya. The latter became the site of the great military encampment and the crucial deliberations that effected the transition of power from the Sufyānid to the Marwānid Umayyad branch and the smooth succession of caliphs within the Marwānid branch.[35] It was only the *translatio imperii* from Umayyad Damascus to ʿAbbāsid Baghdād in Mesopotamia that sealed the fate of Gaulanitis as it did for the rest of Bilād al-Shām.

II. The Golan: Holy Land, Holy Mountain

Although the region of Cis-Jordania in which lay Judaea and Galilee is considered the main part of the Holy Land, Trans-Jordan, which included both Peraea in the Provincia Arabia and the Golan/Gaulanitis in Palaestina Secunda, also had its share of holy places. The Golan had some of the *loca sancta*[36] associated with the

[34] For a lucid account of all this together with a clear map, see W. E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge, 1992), 112–46, esp. 112–14 and the map on 113.

[35] On this, see F. Gabrieli, "La Siria Araba e il suo secolo d'oro," in *La Siria Araba da Roma a Bisanzio* (Ravenna, 1989), xxiii–xxxii.

[36] The Golan had three important *loca sancta:* Paneas/Caesarea Philippi, the scene of the miracle of the woman with the flow of blood; Kursi, the scene of the miracle of the Gadarene swine; and Bethsaida, home of three of the twelve Apostles. The Ghassānids were firmly established in the Trans-Jordanian part of Palaestina Secunda in the Golan, but whether there was also

early ministry of Jesus, where he performed miracles and whence both the Kinneret could be seen and what lay beyond—Galilee.

The prosperity of the Golan no doubt began with the conversion of Constantine, which led to the rise of the concept of the Holy Land and pilgrimage to its holy places. The various *loca sancta* of the Golan received attention and became pilgrimage destinations. The separation of Palaestina Secunda, to which the Golan belonged, from Palaestina Prima may also have enhanced its new identity. Chalcedonian Byzantium naturally contributed substantially to the prosperity of the Golan as a holy land, but there is no doubt that the Ghassānids, too, made an important contribution. Although they were zealous Christians and defenders of the Holy Land against the Lakhmids and the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula, the Ghassānids were actually occupying part of the Holy Land, the Golan; hence their special attention to it. Their capital, Jābiya, was in the Golan, and this was important for the development of the region in areas that have been explored. Also, in the Golan was most probably the episcopal see of the Ghassānid Theodore, who, consecrated with a mandate to spread the faith and installed in part of the Holy Land, must have been especially inspired to build churches and monasteries in this region of special holiness.[37]

A

The lack of contemporary and primary sources makes it impossible to trace satisfactorily the Ghassānid achievement in building religious structures in the Golan or the rise of the Golan as a holy mountain,[38] as discussed later in this chapter. As far as churches are concerned, it is possible to identify only a few in the entire Ghassānland, because of the loss of the letter written by the Monophysite archimandrites around 570 concerning the Tritheistic heresy.[39] Churches that may be allocated to the Golan within this group are even fewer, not more than two and possibly only one, the church of Sergius in Jābiya.[40]

Monasteries are much better known than churches. The letter of the Monophysite archimandrites gives the impressive number of 137 monasteries for part

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a Ghassānid presence in the Cis-Jordanian part of that province, in Galilee, is not clear, but it is possible. The reference to Galilee/Jalīl in the *Dīwān* of Nābigha, one of their panegyrists, is suggestive. For the reference, see below, 221–22.

[37] The Golan's role as the most ecclesiastically privileged spot in all of Ghassānland may be reflected by the existence in early Islamic times of a Monophysite diocese of the Golan, presided over by a Monophysite bishop, a situation that is quite unlikely to have developed in Islamic times but must have been a continuation of a prior situation in the Byzantine period. On the Golan and its bishops in Islamic times, see *BASIC* I.2, 892–93.

[38] The Golan is more of a plateau than a mountain; however, for the Arab geographers, it was a *jabal* (mountain).

[39] On this letter, see below, 147.

[40] See below, 149–50.

of Ghassānland, mainly the Provincia Arabia and some regions in the two neighboring provinces of Palaestina Secunda and Phoenicia Libanensis. The letter reflected signatures mainly from the Provincia Arabia, but many of the toponyms that have defied identification may have belonged to the Golan. Those that have been identified or presumed to belong to the Golan in the previous section are: (1) the monastery of Jabal Ḥārith (Mons Arethas) and (2) that of Sergius in Jābiya. These two monasteries are certainly located in the Golan since the toponyms associated with them are clearly identifiable. Less certain are the following monasteries: (3) that of Bath Arʿ; (4) NMR, possibly in the northern Golan near Lake Phiale; (5) al-Ghadīr/Ghadīrtā, since there are a number of Ghadīrs in the Golan such as Ghadīr al-Bustān, which is a tributary of Nahr al-Ruqqād, the eastern boundary of the Golan;[41] and (6) Kafr Shams.[42]

Four monasteries are clustered in the north, near Mount Hermon, which administratively may have belonged to Phoenicia Libanensis rather than Palaestina Secunda and the Golan, but geographically and topographically belonged to the Golan as the natural extension of that plateau. These monasteries are: (1) that of the Stylite at Beitima near Kafr Hawwar; (2) Kafr Hawwar; (3) Durbul, east of ʿArne; and (4) Mar David at Hine, west of Kafr Hawwar.[43]

Recent archaeological research has added the following to the number of Golan monasteries known from the literary sources: (1) that of Naʿaran; (2) al-Ramthāniyya; (3) Kursī; and (4) Qurkh.[44]

The names of many villages in the Golan, as in other parts of Oriens, begin with the word "Dayr," a sure sign that they had a monastery or that they began as

[41] For these monasteries, see *BASIC* I.2, 825–27, 826, 832. In the case of the last two monasteries, uncertainty prevails on the localization of the toponyms with which they are associated. In the discussion of the two monasteries in *BASIC* I.2, I entertained various possibilities; now I am inclined to add a Golan localization for both. As regards the first, NMR at the foot of Mount Hermon is a distinct possibility, as is Ghadīr, Ghadīr al-Busṭān, which is a tributary of the Ruqqād, the eastern boundary of the Golan.

[42] This is the Kefer Shemesh of the letter of the archimandrites, left unidentified by Nöldeke and also in *BASIC* I.2, 828–29. It surely is Kafr Shams, which lies west of Ṣanamein and some 25 km northeast of Jābiya in the Golan; see Dussaud, *Topographie,* 335. The abbot of this monastery was the only one in the list of 137 abbots whose name was distinctly Arabic, the *hypokoristikon* Khulayf.

[43] For these four monasteries in the vicinity of Mount Hermon, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* 391, 392, 393. The monasteries belonged to the list of 137 monasteries enumerated in the letter of the archimandrites, but Dussaud grouped them together around Mount Hermon.

[44] References to these monasteries, which may or may not be Ghassānid, may be found in the many publications of Claudine Dauphin. Ramthaniyya, for instance, is too early to be Ghassānid; see S. Gibson and C. Dauphin, "Landscape Archaeology at Er-Ramthaniyye in the Golan Heights?" in *Archéologie et Espaces: X Rencontres Internationales d'Archéologie et d'Histoire* (Antibes, 1989), 35–45. For the monastery of Naʿaran, see C. Dauphin, "Jewish and Christian Communities in the Roman and Byzantine Gaulanitis," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 114 (1982), 138; for the monastery of Qurkh, excavated by Z. Maʿoz, see "Deir Kurkh," *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 2 (1983), 23–25.

a monastery around which the village later grew (such as Dayr/Deir ʿAzīz in the southern Golan); it is not clear, however, whether they were Ghassānid or even Monophysite. There is also Dayr/Deir al-ʿAdas, ("the monastery of the lentils"), the very name of which reflects a monastic diet; it lies some 30 km northeast of Jābiya in the Golan.[45]

B

Sporadic references in the Syriac and Arabic literary sources, mainly the former, and archaeological research reveal that the Golan was an important monastic region. Unlike other areas, such as the Judaean Desert in Palestine with its historian Cyril of Scythopolis, it does not seem to have had a historian; if it had, his work has not survived. However, echoes of the Golan's monastic character in pre-Islamic Byzantine times may be detected in the early medieval Arabic sources, where the Golan appears explicitly as one of the holy mountains of the three Abrahamic religions. Before discussing the term *holy mountain* as a new term for the Golan in the Arabic sources, it is well to discuss the origin of the concept in Byzantine times.

Although the Golan belonged to the Holy Land because of its Gospel associations, another dimension of holiness was imparted to it in the early Byzantine period by the many churches and monasteries built there, especially the latter. The rise of the concept of the Golan as a holy *mountain* and not only a holy *land* may be attributed to the following. Mountains, especially mountaintops, attracted the early monks, particularly hermits, and so became with deserts the traditional abodes of monks. Such in the fourth and fifth centuries were Mount Auxentios, Mount Sinai, and the Wondrous Mountain, and in later times Mount Olympus and Mount Athos. Although a plateau, the Golan qualified as a mountain, whose harsh terrain attracted the early monks, as did the fact that it was part of the Holy Land.

Not only the mountain but also the river that it overlooked, the Jordan, must have invited monks to choose the Golan as their habitation. If the Mount of Olives was the holy mountain of Christianity, the Jordan was its holy river, as it witnessed the baptism of Jesus by the John the Baptist. But John was also the first ascetic in the history of Christianity, the one who fed on locusts and wild honey and wore a rough coat of camel's hair. He was also the "vox clamantis in deserto,"

[45] For Deir ʿAzīz, see Maʿoz, "Golan," 542, and L. Oliphant, "New Discoveries," *Palestine Exploration Fund* 18 (1986), 76–77. Oliphant writes Dar ʿAzīz instead of Deir, or Dayr, apparently unaware that the term is Arabic for monastery. The mistake is repeated on p. 81, but Dayr ʿAzīz is correctly rendered in the Arabic script on the same page. For Dayr al-ʿAdas and its church with a mosaic of a camel caravan, see C. Foss, "Syria in Transition, A.D. 550–750," *DOP* 51 (1997), 254–55.

traversing the extent of the Jordan and not only its southern reaches where the Epiphany took place (Luke 3:3).

In addition to the combined attraction of mountain and river, there was in the northern Golan a mountain, Hermon, that had biblical associations going back to Jesus himself, who at its foot cured the woman with the flow of blood at Paneas. The site became a pilgrimage destination and became especially attractive through a sculptural grouping thought to represent the miracle that was described by writers from Eusebius to Malalas.[46] Perhaps even more important was the association of Paneas with Christ's famous promise to Peter, "You are Peter, and on this rock I shall build my church," apparently reflected in art since Eusebius speaks of images at Paneas of Christ and the two Apostles, Peter and Paul.[47] The miracle and the promise to Peter endowed Paneas with an aura of holiness that extended to Mount Hermon, the northern boundary of the Golan.[48] So Mount Hermon must have shed its holiness on the Golan and thus contributed to the rise of the concept of the Golan as a holy mountain.[49] Such were the religious associations of the Golan when the Ghassānids appeared on the scene in the sixth century, installed there with their capital at Jābiya.

In the first three centuries of the Christian era the heroes of the church were the martyrs. After the conversion of Constantine, when persecutions and martyrdoms ceased, the monks became the new heroes.[50] It is within this context that the contribution of the Ghassānids to the Golan as a holy mountain will be sought.

Holy mountains are more associated with monks and monasteries than with priests and churches. No doubt Chalcedonian Orthodox Byzantium contributed its generous share to the erection of monasteries in the Golan as did the Ghassānids. But the latter were distinguished by being installed in that holy spot where their capital also lay. What was said of the motives and ways in which the Ghassānids contributed to the rise of religious structures is also applicable here. In addition, the Ghassānids were hardy warriors whose religion was more allied to these "athletes of the spirit," the monks who endured the rigors of hermitages in the inhospitable deserts, than to priests and churches in more comfortable urban surroundings. Naturally the Ghassānids would have been more attracted to the erec-

[46] See *ODB,* s.v. Panias, III, 1570–71.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Although the boundaries of the Golan fluctuated as it expanded and contracted in response to administrative divisions imposed on it.

[49] Hermon itself, snow-clad sometimes even in summer, could not have been home to many monasteries in contrast to the more accommodating region to the south. Perhaps for this reason the term holy mountain was applied not to Hermon but to the Golan, either the region south of it or to the whole of the plateau including Hermon.

[50] Martyrs, however, experienced in the early Byzantine period a resurrection, since over their relics, often translated for a second *depositio,* were built *martyria* and monasteries. So martyr and monk met in monasteries built over relics.

tion of monasteries in the Golan. Their presiding bishop, Theodore, who had a mandate for reviving a persecuted church, was a former monk, and so he would have given special attention to founding monasteries in the Golan. Also, the availability of relics[51] over which *martyria* and monasteries could be built would have enhanced the holiness of these structures and made them pilgrimage centers, all of which would have contributed to the rise of the concept of the Golan as a holy mountain. Aphek/Fiq is a case in point.[52]

C

The Arabic source referred to in the previous section that speaks of the Golan as a holy mountain is the tenth-century geographer al-Muqaddasī. In his *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm,* this native of Bilād al-Shām (as his name indicates) devoted a section to what he called "al-Jibāl al-Sharīfa," "the noble mountains," "holy mountains," mountains that had become holy also to the followers of Islam, an Abrahamic religion, to which both Judaism and Christianity belong. Among the holy mountains in Oriens, al-Muqaddasī counted the Mount of Olives. He further says that he found in the Golan forty of his coreligionists living as one Muslim community of *zuhhād* (ascetics), whose chief or guide was one called Abū Isḥāq al-Ballūṭī, whose robes were of rough wool and who fed on acorns.[53] This precious passage in al-Muqaddasī repays careful study for its own sake, for the light it throws on the Christian background of the Golan as a holy mountain, and for the relationship between Islamic *zuhd* (asceticism) and that of the early Christian period.

Whether the term "holy mountain" was a Muslim designation for the Golan or a translation of a term (ἅγιον ὄρος) that had already been used in Byzantine pre-Islamic times is not clear.

The food of the Muslim ascetics is noteworthy; acorns were not a delicacy. That the community fed on acorns indicates their strict way of life in much the same way that the ascetic ideals and values of Christianity enjoined such a diet. The ring of authenticity is evident in this detail since to this day the Golan is known as a region in which oaks grow and acorns are available. Acorns are mentioned as the food of hermits in at least two *vitae* of middle Byzantine saints.[54] It is noteworthy that the name of the guide of that group of ascetics mentioned by

[51] From Najrān, where the Ḥārithids, the relatives of the Ghassānids, had been martyred around A.D. 520.

[52] On Aphek, see below, 94–96.

[53] See Al Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm,* BGA (Leiden, 1906), III, 188. For an English translation of this work, see B. A. Collins, *Al-Muqaddasī: The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions* (Reading, U.K., 1994). For al-Muqaddasi, see A. Miquel in *EI*^{2}, s.v.

[54] For diet in the monasteries, see M. Dembinska, "Diet: A Comparison of Food Consumption between Eastern and Western Monasteries in the 4th–12th Centuries," *Byzantion* 55 (1985), 431–62. For acorns as the diet of hermits, see L. Petit, "Vie et office de Saint Euthyme le jeune," *ROC* 8 (1903), 184, lines 4–6, and the *vita* of Paul of Latros, ed. T. Wiegand, *Milet III. 1. Der*

al-Muqaddasī included the relative adjective *Ballūṭī* ("he of the acorns"), clearly reflecting the fact that acorns were the staple food of the community.

The number of Muslim ascetics (forty) is also significant. This number has important associations in both the Old and New Testaments: the forty years of wandering in Sinai for the Israelites and the forty days that Christ fasted. Forty was also the number of the martyrs of Sebasteia. However, no such associations would have been meaningful to the Muslim *zuhhād* of this Islamic period, so the number forty must have other associations. One that comes to mind immediately is the "Monastery of the Forty," one of the Monophysite monasteries included in the 137 monasteries listed in the letter of the Monophysite archimandrites of A.D. 570. It has been argued that the reading, unintelligible as "Arʿabnatia", can only be "Arbaʿinaia" (forty), which thus makes sense.[55] The monastery is indirectly associated with the "Monastery of the Ghassānids," whose abbot did not sign the document in the letter; the person who signed for him was Mar Elias, the archimandrite of the Monastery of the Forty. This monastery has not been precisely located, but the passage in al-Muqaddasī revealing the existence of a Muslim ascetic community with the tradition of the number forty in the Golan suggests its location there. If this is correct, and if the forty Muslim ascetics carried on the tradition of the Monastery of the Forty, this would be a remarkable case of continuity between early Christian asceticism/monasticism and that of the Islamic era and, what is more, through a Monophysite group whose ethnic affiliation may have been Arab in view of the relation of the Monastery of the Forty to the Monastery of the Ghassānids.[56]

This strand of continuity can be stretched a little further within the Muslim context. Al-Muqaddasī states that this guide, Abū Isḥāq al-Ballūṭī, belonged to the *maḏhab* (school) of Sufyān al-Thawrī, an ascetic of the eighth century.[57] So the ascetic movement to which al-Ballūṭī belonged is now drawn back to a century closer to the Ghassānid period in Oriens. When it is remembered that Sufyān al-Thawrī, who was a native of Kūfa, was on friendly terms with Shayban al-Rāʿi, a hermit in

Latros (Berlin, 1913), 110, lines 14–16. See also "The Regulation of Diet in the Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents," in *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents,* ed. J. Thomas and A. C. Hero, 5 vols. (Washington, D.C., 2000), V, 1696–1716. One of the monasteries in Palestine is called Dayr al-Ballūṭ, "the Monastery of the Acorns"; see F. M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* (Paris, 1967), II, 152.

[55] For the Monastery of the Forty, see *BASIC* I.2, 833–35.

[56] There are those who affirm it and those who deny it: see H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (Oxford, 1957), 128–29. For one who accepts it mildly, see O. Livne-Kafri, "Early Muslim Ascetics and the World of Christian Monasticism," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20 (Jerusalem, 1996), 105–29. For another who affirms it unequivocally, see D. Sahas, "Monastic Ethos and Spirituality and the Origins of Islam," in *Acts of the XVIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies: Moscow (1991),* ed. I. Ševčenko and G. Litavrin (Shepherdstown, W.V., 1996), II, 27–39.

[57] For Sufyān al-Thawrī, see *EI,* IV, 500–502.

Lebanon,[58] then a geographical link is established between the forty Muslim ascetics of the tenth century and the Muslim *zāhid,* the hermit of Lebanon, in the eighth, and Lebanon is contiguous with the Golan. The strand of *zuhd* (asceticism) is thus traceable in this region from the tenth century to the eighth, which brings it close to that of Christian monasticism in Oriens and in the Golan in particular.

D

Related to this discussion of monasticism in the Golan are two toponyms that deserve special treatment: Kafr Ḥārib and Aphek/Fīq.

Ḥārib

Ḥārib occurs in both the poetry of Nābigha and the *List* of Ḥamza. In the former it is an indicator of the location of the tomb of one of the Ghassānid kings, and in the latter it occurs in connection with a *qaṣr* built by a Ghassānid king. It follows from both references that the toponym was associated with the Ghassānids.[59] In the context of monasticism in the Golan, it has a particular significance. *Ḥārib* sounds and looks like an Arabic word, derived from the root HRB related to "spoils" and "war." But, as noted earlier, the root has nothing to do with "spoils" and "war"; only its Arabization as *Ḥārib* has contributed to this notion.[60] It is actually allied to Arabic *Kharrūb* (carob), as is clearly reflected in the Hebrew version of the name, which goes back to Talmudic times, where the village appears as Kfar Ḥrūv.[61] This is a case where the correct etymology is very illuminating since it leads to a discussion of that locality in the history of monasticism in the Golan.

The carob, the Mediterranean evergreen tree (*Ceratonia siliqua*), is native to the area and grows abundantly in this region and in southern Lebanon, to such an extent that it gave the village which is situated on a mountain its name, "the village of carobs." In view of its Ghassānid associations, the village's location atop a mountain overlooking the Kinneret, and especially the abundance of carobs in the vicinity, it is possible that there was a monastery there. The many monasteries that dot the region suggest this, and the carob tree is a strong argument in favor

[58] See ibid., 502.

[59] On the two occurrences of the word *Ḥārib,* see below, 228. The toponym also appeared in connection with the Salīḥids, the predecessors of the Ghassānids as *foederati* in the 5th century (see *BAFIC,* 260), and it may have appeared another time related to the Salīḥids if the reading of *Harib* is correctly changed into *Ḥārib* in one of the verses related to the Salīḥids, for which, see ibid., note 45. Consequently the locality, Ḥārib, is closely associated with the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium.

[60] See below, 228.

[61] See Dussaud, *Topographie,* 384, where it appears as Kefar Ḥaroub; the more correct transliteration of the Hebrew version, however, is Kfar Ḥarūv, but there are variant transliterations from the Hebrew.

of a monastery in or near the village, or on the mountain, a favorite place of retreat for monks.[62]

The carob is not a delicacy and in the Gospels appears as the food of pigs in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:16).[63] So carobs were possibly the food of ascetics, much like the acorns grown in the Golan to the present day, and it is explicitly mentioned in the life of the hermit St. Theodore of Kythera.[64] That carobs may have been part of the monastic diet of monks and hermits in this region could throw light on why the carob is associated with the asceticism of John the Baptist.[65] According to the Gospel (Matt. 3:4), he fed on wild honey and locusts. The "wild honey" (Greek N.T., μέλι ἄγριον) of the English Bible is *debsha* in the Syriac version, the molasses that in this region is still made from carobs. As John the Baptist was the first ascetic of the Christian faith, it is easy to see how the ascetics of later times ate carobs from which his molasses was made.

Aphek/Fīq

If a monastery at Kafr Ḥārib/Kfar Ḥarūv is not attested in the extant literary sources, one at Aphek/Fīq is. It is necessary to discuss this monastery in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods. Of all the monasteries of the Golan, that of Fīq is the one most remembered in the Islamic literary sources.[66] No doubt this is partly because Fīq lay on the main road connecting Damascus with Bēth-Shān on

[62] Kafr Ḥārib/Kfar Ḥarūv has been well investigated by epigraphers. The results, however, suggest a settlement of the Roman and early Byzantine periods, the community of which was pagan and which flourished in the 3rd–4th centuries, although there is a Christian symbol that suggests a Christian presence.

The evidence from the Arabic now suggests that in the early Byzantine period (5th–6th centuries), and with the progress of Christianity, the locality continued to flourish. The commanding position of the settlement on cliffs overlooking the Sea of Galilee could explain the presence of a military group such as the Ghassānids, charged also with security within the province. The Ghassānids, to whom is ascribed a *qaṣr* (either a fortress or a mansion), could also have built a monastery on the mountain. For Kafr Ḥārib in the inscriptions, see R. Gregg and D. Urman, *Jews, Pagans, and Christians in the Golan Heights* (Miami, 1996), 7–17, devoted to Kafr Ḥārib.

In the same work, five pages are devoted to the epigraphic study of Mumsiyye, termed otherwise al-Ghassāniyye, a Circassian village south of Qunayṭira, where an inscription was found dedicating the church to St. George. Its relation to the Ghassānids, implied by the name al-Ghassāniyya, is not clear. If it was related, traces of such a relationship must have been obliterated by the later Circassian occupation of the site; see Gregg and Urman, *Golan,* 210–14.

[63] In the Syriac version of Luke, the word *carob* is clearly used, obscured in the English version.

[64] For carobs as the food of Theodore, see N. Oikonomides, "Ὁ βίος τοῦ ἁγίου Θεοδώρου Κυθήρων," Πρακτικὰ Τρίτου Πανιονίου Συνεδρίου I (Athens, 1963), 288.

[65] For Ḥarūv (carob) as *Johannisbrot* and *Johannisbrotbaum,* see J. Levy, *Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim* (Darmstadt, 1963), II, 105.

[66] It is described in Shābushtī and ʿUmarī, for which see below, notes 68, 70.

the other side of the Jordan that after A.D. 749 became the capital of the Golan.[67] Arabic poems were written on the monastery in Islamic times even by the celebrated early ʿAbbāsid poet Abū Nuwās, who visited it on his way to Egypt,[68] and it was still flourishing when al-ʿUmarī wrote in the fourteenth century.

The monastery, of course, must go back to pre-Islamic times, and thus the question arises of whether it was also a Ghassānid monastery or one somehow associated with the Ghassānids. In support of this possibility, the following may be adduced. First, Fīq is one of the toponyms mentioned in the *Dīwān* of Ḥassān associated with the Ghassānids.[69] Perhaps if those Ghassānid odes of Ḥassān had survived in their entirety, they might have contained some verses on the monastery that had attracted the attention of a poet of the caliber of Abū Nuwās in Islamic times. Second, these Islamic sources speak of it as a place visited by the Christians as a pilgrimage center. It became such because, according to the tradition they preserved, Jesus visited that spot and sat on a rock from which the *dayr* was hewn; Christians who visited the *dayr* would take a chip of the rock with them as a blessing.[70] The account involving Jesus is apocryphal, but the importance of the *dayr* as a pilgrimage center remains. In view of the availability of Monophysite relics at the disposal of the Ghassānids and the rise of the monastery of Mahajja in Batanaea associated with the Ghassānids, it is possible that some relics from Najrān were deposited in Fīq, which made it a pilgrimage center, later erroneously associated by tradition with Jesus. Its associations with the Old Testament may also have contributed to its rise as a Christian center.[71] Schumacher observed that

[67] See Maʿoz, "Golan," 545. Fīq was surveyed in 1986; see *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 6 (1987); for the inscriptions, see Gregg and Urman, *Golan,* 27–36. On Nana, the Arab deaconess, see ibid., 35–36.

[68] See Shābushtī, *Kitāb al-Diyārāt,* ed. G. ʿAwwad (Baghdad, 1966), 204–6. In spite of some vulgarities on the part of Abū Nuwās, the poem has considerable interest as it describes the celebration of the liturgy in the conventual chapel. Its lexicon contains Syriac and Arabic ecclesiastical terms common in the liturgy of eastern Christianity, including *haykal, bīʿat, nāqūs, ḥawārī, ruhbān, ṣawāmiʿ injīl, shaʿānīn, shamʿla,* and *ṣulub.* There is no doubt that the description of the *dayr* and the liturgy is the result of autopsy. In another poem, Abū Nuwās describes his journey to Egypt from Baghdad and the route he took, mentioning such way stations as Tadmur/Palmyra, al-Ghūṭa in Damascus, the Golan, Bēth-shān Antipatris, and Gaza. So he did pass through the Golan and no doubt stayed at the *dayr* at its hostel (xenodocheion). Apparently he found the Golan difficult to traverse, since its harsh terrain tormented his mounts; for this poem, see *Dīwān Abī Nūwās,* ed. A. al-Ghazālī (Beirut, 1982), 482–83; the reference to the Golan appears on p. 482, line 9.

Abū Nuwās has other poems in which he remembers Christian churches and monasteries and employs Christian terms; see *Abū Nuwās: al-Nuṣūs al-Muḥarrama,* ed. J. Jumaʿa (London, 1994), 124–38. Unfortunately they are plagued by the usual vulgarities of the poet, but they are worth studying all the same.

[69] See below, 246.

[70] See al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* ed. A. Zakī Pasha (Cairo, 1924), I, 336.

[71] See 1 Kings 20:26–30 and 2 Kings 13:17.

"the view from Fik down into the valley embraces first of all the deep-lying Kulat el-Husn, and then the lake, which spreads out deceptively as if it were lying in the immediate neighbourhood. This view is very beautiful, but not so open as from Kefr Harib. Immediately below the first rock terraces of the village, the abundant spring, Ain Fik, gushes forth."[72]

III. Jābiya

Jābiya is one of the two most famous Ghassānid towns and residences, the other being Jalliq. The two appear as the "capitals" of the Ghassānids, Jābiya in Gaulanitis being the more famous. It is not surprising that there has been no serious history of Jābiya in Byzantine times. This is primarily because the Ghassānids have been erroneously thought to have been nomads; consequently their capital was nothing more than the military camp of a nomadic group, a view popularized by Nöldeke himself and followed by all those who have written after him. The chapter in this volume[73] devoted to the correction of this view calls for a more serious treatment of the Ghassānid capital, difficult as it is to write a detailed account of it in view of the scarcity of the sources. Jābiya was for twenty years the capital of Bilād al-Shām in its entirety, when Muʿāwiya was its governor before he became caliph in 660. Since the Umayyads were not nomads, their choice of Jābiya as their capital for twenty years immediately after the fall of the Ghassānids as *foederati* argues that Jābiya was not the capital of a nomadic group.[74] Its prominence during the Umayyad period also contributed to the interest of historians in this phase of its existence rather than as the capital of the Ghassānid *foederati* in the Byzantine period; witness the opinions of Umayyad enthusiasts such as H. Lammens, who dismissed Ghassānid Jābiya in his article in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*

[72] See Schumacher, *The Jaulan,* 137.

[73] See above, 1–15.

[74] The well-known encounter between Omar the caliph and Muʿāwiya when the former visited the latter as governor of Bilād al-Shām is revelatory. When the caliph saw Muʿāwiya moving around not alone but in a procession, surrounded by a retinue, he objected to his conduct as unworthy of a Muslim and a betrayal of its ideals. Muʿāwiya retorted by saying that as he was now receiving ambassadors from foreign potentates, these were not likely to be impressed by his walking around without a procession. Omar agreed and let him go. If Muʿāwiya, solicitous about his image in the perception of foreigners, adopted the pomp and circumstance of royalty, he certainly would not have agreed to have as his capital, where he would receive ambassadors, a place that was a collection of huts and tents. On Muʿāwiya and his encounter with Omar, see Balāḏurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf,* ed. I. ʿAbbās, Bibliotheca Islamica (Beirut, 1997), IV.1, 147.

The same historian, Balāḏurī, provides more on Muʿāwiya's concern for appearances and their importance for his image. When he transferred his residence from Jābiya to Damascus on becoming caliph, he built his palace al-Khaḍrā of bricks. When he asked the members of a Byzantine delegation to Damascus what they thought of his palace, they were not impressed, saying that brick does not conduce to permanence. He immediately pulled it down and rebuilt it of stone; ibid. On Muʿāwiya's palace, see J. Bloom. "The Ḳubbat al-Khaḍrā and the Iconography of Height in Early Islamic Architecture," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993), 135–41.

in a paragraph and considered it as "a collection of dwellings, half nomad and half sedentary, a confused mass of tents and dwellings,"[75] as did R. Dussaud before him.

In addition to the chapter on the Ghassānids as sedentary *foederati,* the two previous books in this series, *BASIC* I, parts 1 and 2, have provided the necessary detailed background for the treatment of Jābiya as the capital of a group that played an important role in the political, military, and ecclesiastical history of the region. The list of buildings attributed to them in authentic sources examined in this volume can lead to only one conclusion: the capital of such a group could not have been a "jumble of tents" but a town in which there were many forms of advanced civic life; thus it must have been graced with buildings that were related to these forms.[76] Ghassānid structures that survive elsewhere, together with references in the literary sources to many of their buildings, solid and marmoreal, justify the assumption that such must have existed in Jābiya, because it was their capital, even though the extant sources have preserved pitiably few references to its structures.[77]

Finally, the rivalry between the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids, which found expression in various forms, including the building of religious structures, as noted by Iṣfahānī in his *Aghānī,*[78] must have applied to their capitals as well. Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmids, was a well-known city in pre-Islamic times, celebrated for its palaces, churches, and monasteries. The Ghassānids, who were even more prosperous[79] than the Lakhmids and lived in the shadow of an empire that was superior in its artistic life and achievements to that in the shadow of which the Lakhmids lived, namely Sasanid Persia, surely must have seen to it that their capital did not lag behind that of their rivals in urban development, amenities, and monuments, both secular and religious.

Before assembling the few extant references to Jābiya, it is well that its curious etymology be briefly discussed. One etymology, revived by Lammens, related to "reservoir" and metaphorically to the concept of generosity, goes back to Miskīn al-Dārimī, quoted in *Aghānī.*[80] Another may be suggested, a Syriac etymology, according to which the word would mean "the Chosen." Whatever the true etymology, the plural "Jawābī," thought to be related to Jābiya's location on several small hills, has to be rejected, now that Jawābī turns out to be a corrupt reading for Khawābī, a well-known toponym quite distinct from Jābiya.[81]

[75] See H. Lammens, "Djābiya," *EI.* The article, despite its age, is a most competent résumé of the history of Jābiya in the Islamic Umayyad period.

[76] This will be treated in detail in *BASIC* II.2.

[77] See below, 245, 294.

[78] See below, 161.

[79] See Abū al-Baqā', *al-Manāqib al-Mazyadiyya,* ed. S. Darādika and M. Khuraysāt (Amman, 1984), II, 525.

[80] See Lammens, "Djābiya."

[81] On this, see below, 240.

A

The sources for constructing a history of Jābiya are scarce and exiguous; they can hardly lead to what may be dignified as a contribution to historical geography. Nevertheless, they are contemporary and authentic, consisting of Syriac ecclesiastical documents, contemporary Arabic poetry, and two references in the Greek chronographers. The earliest reference to Jābiya appears in a letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, in its explicit,[82] where the bishop says that he wrote his letter from the camp of Jabala, the Ghassānid king, at Jābiya, which he refers to in its Syriac form, Gbīthā. The reference informs us that near the town there was also a military camp, the federate camp (*ḥīra*) of Jabala, the chief Ghassānid phylarch and king. The letter, written ca. 520, reflects the primacy of Jābiya among all Ghassānid towns, as the place whither foreign envoys and important individuals would come to discuss official matters with the Ghassānid king, in this case the fate of the martyrs of Najrān and possible Ghassānid assistance for their coreligionists in South Arabia.

The next reference comes in another document, the letter of the 137 abbots of Monophysite monasteries, written in 569, concerning the Tritheistic heresy. The letter refers to "the monastery of St. Sergius,"[83] whose abbot was Mar Alos. So Jābiya, the capital of the *foederati,* had a monastery dedicated to their patron saint, Sergius.

There is a hiatus of some fifty years between the reference to Jābiya in Simeon's letter dated 520 and the letter of the abbots around 569. During this period, Arethas, the Ghassānid phylarch and master of Jābiya, was able to resuscitate the Monophysite movement, and around 540 he returned from Constantinople with a bishop, Theodore, consecrated for his Arab *foederati.* It has been suggested that although titularly he was the bishop of Bostra, as a Monophysite he could not have lived there, but must have been bishop *extra muros,* and that his residence must have been in Jābiya, which thus became his episcopal headquarters, de facto if not de jure his episcopal see.[84]

The third reference to Jābiya is in the letter of Peter of Callinicum, preserved in Dionysius of Tell Maḥre and included in the Syriac *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian. Two Monophysite groups, one led by Peter of Callinicum and the other by Damian of Alexandria, met in 587 in Jābiya at the church of St. Sergius, in order to compose their differences, but failed.[85] So the Ghassānid capital had the distinction of becoming the venue for the meeting of two warring Monophysite parties, evidence of its importance within the Monophysite movement.

This was the last reference to the Ghassānid capital in the Syriac primary sources for the pre-Islamic Byzantine period. These sources have thus attested to

[82] See *Martyrs,* 63.
[83] See *BASIC* I.2, 827.
[84] On Theodore, see ibid., 850–60, esp. 852.
[85] Ibid., 913–15.

the military and ecclesiastical importance of the Ghassānid capital, with their reference to the camp, the monastery, and the church of St. Sergius in it; and these could not have been its only ecclesiastical monuments. It has been suggested that it became virtually the Ghassānid episcopal see under Theodore.

The poet laureate of the Ghassānids, Ḥassān, refers to Jābiya on two occasions in association with Gaulanitis, Jābiyat al-Jawlān, "the Jābiya of Gaulanitis."[86] The few poetic references that have survived with specific mention of Jābiya involve only social matters, not military or ecclesiastical ones. One poem refers to his maternal uncle acting as an orator (*khaṭīb*) at the court of the Ghassānids. For the recitation of panegyrics and for delivering speeches, the Ghassānids probably had an *ōideion.* The reference in one of Ḥassān's poems to *buyūt al-rukhām* ("houses of marble") has no toponym associated with it.[87] But if marble was used by the Ghassānids (and indeed it is attested in the composition of their panegyrist), it is natural to suppose that Jābiya, being their capital and showpiece, must have had some marble structures, especially after more than a century of existence as their capital. Jābiya developed as the power of its masters, the Ghassānids, grew in Oriens.

Its position deep in the heart of Oriens saved it from the raids of the Lakhmids and the Persians to which even Antioch and Apamea were exposed. But in the second and the fourth decades of the seventh century, the region in which it was located witnessed two major invasions, first by the Persians and then by the Muslim Arabs. Apparently Jābiya itself was spared whatever destruction followed in the wake of the two invasions. The little that is known about the fate of Gaulanitis during the Persian invasion is owed to the poems of Ḥassān.[88] The extant fragments are precious because no other sources have survived; they do not refer to havoc wrought on Jābiya, which is not even mentioned, but to other localities. The presumption is that for some reason Jābiya emerged intact or, if it suffered, the Ghassānids must have restored whatever was destroyed after their return to it in the few years that separated the battle of Nineveh from that of Yarmūk.

During the second invasion, that by the Muslim Arabs, the climax of which was the battle of Yarmūk, there is indeed reference to Jābiya as the locality associated with the battle. The sources are the two Greek chronographers, Patriarch Nicephorus and Theophanes.[89] The battle of Yarmūk is sometimes referred to as the battle of Jābiya.[90] The presumption is that the appearance of the name is explicable by a desire to identify the place near which the battle was fought. So again,

[86] *Dīwān Ḥassān,* ed. W. ʿArafāt (London, 1971), I, 40.

[87] Ibid., 106.

[88] See below, 242–44.

[89] See *BASIC* I.2, 638 note 48 for the references in the two chronographers. Jābiya is also mentioned in this connection by a Syriac source published by Nöldeke; see Dussaud and Macler, *Mission,* 46 note 4.

[90] On this, see W. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge, 1992), 112–14.

as during the Persian invasion, Jābiya was apparently spared any fighting and consequent destruction. This is supported by the fact that immediately after the conquest and the victory, Muslim rulers made Jābiya their headquarters for running the region of Bilād al-Shām. Such was the case during the visit of the caliph Omar to the region and more importantly during the twenty years of the governorship of Muʿāwiya in Bilād al-Shām; he would not have chosen to live in a ruined place for two decades, especially as he was aware of the importance of appearing "royal" before his people and foreign visitors.[91] A pointer in the same direction is the fact that the Umayyads did not build much there except of course a mosque and a *minbar* (pulpit), only natural since Jābiya was now the headquarters of the Islamic governor of Bilād al-Shām. So while the Umayyads took over other Ghassānid establishments and renovated, added, or built anew on the site (as in Haliorama/Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī), they did nothing of the sort at Jābiya, evidence that they captured the city intact with all its facilities and amenities that had served the Ghassānid kings, its former masters.

B

It is one of the ironies of Ghassānid history that their capital, Jābiya, after flourishing for a century as the urban center of the Ghassānid phylarchate and kingship in the Byzantine period, retained its importance in the first century of the Islamic era, after the fall of the Ghassānids as Byzantine *foederati.* In fact, its continued existence in the Umayyad period of some hundred years or more, both during the emirate of Muʿāwiya and the caliphate of his successors, was the golden period in its history. After being the capital of a group of *foederati* in the pay of Byzantium, and ignored by George of Cyprus and Hierocles, Jābiya suddenly became the capital of the whole of Oriens, now Bilād al-Shām, thus taking the place of Antioch on the Orontes, the capital in Byzantine times. Even after the *translatio imperii* from Jābiya to Damascus when Muʿāwiya became caliph, Jābiya continued to be of pivotal importance to the Umayyads, both the Sufyānid and the Marwānid branches, now the masters of a wide belt of the globe, the Umayyad empire which extended from India to Spain. Although its history during the Umayyad period belongs to the seventh century and is thus outside the chronological framework of this volume, a brief survey of its importance is appropriate, as it reveals the strands of continuity between the Byzantine and Islamic periods in Oriens/Bilād al-Shām and throws light on the problem of institutional assimilation and on matters strictly Byzantine.[92]

The best reflection of the importance of Jābiya in the consciousness of the

[91] On this, see above, note 74.

[92] For Jābiya during the Umayyad period, see Lammens, "Djabiya," *EI* and also in *EI*², revised by J. Sourdel-Thomine.

Muslim Arabs is the caliph Omar's choice of Jābiya as his headquarters when he came to visit the conquered provinces. It was here that Omar summoned all the generals who took part in the conquest and delivered his famous speech, called *Khuṭbat al-Jābiya,* on a memorable day called *Yawm al-Jābiya.* It was there and then that Omar planned the administration of Oriens, the most important feature of which was the institution of the *dīwān,* the register, the system of regular allowance, an institution of the utmost significance in the economic history of early Islam, especially for the junds of Bilād al-Shām. The administration of Bilād al-Shām in the Umayyad period to a large extent followed the lines drawn up by Omar. His presence there endowed the place and the *yawm* with a new Islamic sanctity derived from the personality of Omar, the great companion (*ṣaḥābī*) of the Prophet; it was a claim to fame to have been present on the *yawm* when Omar delivered his *khuṭba.* Perhaps related to it is the *ḥadīth* described to Ibn ʿAbbās that the souls of the believers will be congregated at Jābiya.[93]

After Omar came Muʿāwiya, who gave Jābiya an added significance since he chose it as his capital for twenty years during his governorship of Bilād al-Shām. This was only appropriate, now that Byzantine Oriens became Arab Bilād al-Shām, since Jābiya was the most important Arab city in Oriens in pre-Islamic times. It was also natural when the *ʿamīr* of Bilād al-Shām became the caliph of the Arab empire in its entirety that Muʿāwiya should have moved to a city such as Damascus, now that he was receiving foreign potentates and ambassadors to whom Damascus was better known than Jābiya.[94] But throughout his caliphate and that of his successors, Sufyānid and Marwānid, Jābiya kept its importance. The largest Arab military camp in the Umayyad period was established there, in the jund of Damascus, and in this capacity Jābiya eclipsed the capital itself. Jābiya remained the principal military camp of Bilād al-Shām until the reign of Caliph Sulaymān. The plague of ʿAmwas in Palestine gave Jābiya an added distinction. Because of its healthy climate, it became the sanatorium for the troops afflicted by the plague and henceforward the largess for the troops in the *jund* of Damascus was distributed in Jābiya.

Just as Jābiya was the cradle of the Sufyānid branch where Muʿāwiya established the power of his house, so did it become for the Marwānid branch in A.D. 685, when power was transferred to it under Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam. It was at Jābiya that he unfurled his banner before he marched to win the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ which gave sanction to the decisions made at Jābiya for the transfer of the caliphate to the Marwānids. Jābiya continued to enjoy prestige after the battle: it was at Jābiya that ʿAbd al-Malik announced that his two eldest sons were to be his

[93] For a detailed account of the visit of the caliph to Jābiya, see L. Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam* (Milan, 1910), III, 927–31.

[94] On the choice of Damascus as Muʿāwiya's capital, see H. Lammens in *al-Machriq* (1931), 892–96.

heirs-presumptive in much the same way that Muʿāwiya announced his caliphate in Jerusalem. After wintering at Ṣinnabra, ʿAbd al-Malik used to spend a month at Jābiya before returning to Damascus.

The decline of Jābiya started after the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik; his announcement of his two sons as his heirs was the last great political event that Jābiya witnessed. This was followed in A.D. 717 by Caliph Sulaymān's transfer of the great military concentration of troops at Jābiya to Dābiq, north of Aleppo, to prosecute the siege of Constantinople. With the second *translatio imperii* from Damascus to Baghdad and the advent of the ʿAbbāsids, Jābiya in company with the other cities of Bilād al-Shām continued to decline until, some twelve centuries later, it almost vanished from the face of the earth.

The various waves of migration that inundated Gaulanitis, where Jābiya was located, have already been discussed, as well as how the region's attractiveness for human habitation encouraged the new settlers to reuse the stones of Ghassānid buildings.[95] Unlike Halioram/Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, Jābiya was not a military station or a monastery, but a town; yet it has entirely vanished. It is remembered now by the *tall* to which it gave its name, Tall al-Jābiya, the little hill nearby, and the Damascus Gate, called Bāb al-Jābiya, "The Gate of al-Jābiya," an appellation that must have arisen in the Umayyad period, a reflection of the importance of Jābiya in the consciousness of the Umayyads, who apparently still remembered their old capital.

C

The final fate of Jābiya as a flourishing pre-Islamic Arab town brings to mind the similar fate of the two other most important Arab urban centers of the same period, Ḥīra and Najrān. They, too, have practically vanished leaving only faint traces of their former prosperity. The general appearance of these cities may be recovered from descriptions of Ḥīra and Najrān at least partially, in the medieval sources, but none has survived for Jābiya. Only archaeology can discover the original aspect of the town. One must turn to some of the travelers who visited the site before it completely disappeared. Of the many travelers, scholars, romantics, and enthusiasts who have scoured the region, three may be singled out: Gottlieb Schumacher, Rudolph Brünnow, and René Dussaud. All of them described the topography of Jābiya and its environs.

Schumacher left a good description of Tall al-Jābiya and Tall al-Jumūʿ. The two *talls* are of commanding height, enabling a lookout on the top to see as far as Ḥawrān and ʿAjlūn.[96] Of Tall al-Jābiya he says: "It is the most conspicuous point of all the country around. It is a hill with two peaks, the eastern and the highest

[95] See above, 7–8.

[96] See Schumacher, *Across the Jordan,* 230.

(sic) of which reaches an elevation of 2,322 feet above the sea. It commands a fine view over Northern Hawran and Jedur."

The name of the other *tall,* which should be vocalized Jumūʿ (not Jemu'ah), should be translated "the Hill of the Hosts."[97] The etymology Schumacher gives for it may be folkloristic. The *tall's* strategic position and the military term Jumūʿ ("hosts") suggest that the appellation was applied to it for some military reason. It may have witnessed an important gathering such as that called by the caliph Omar, or it may have been the scene of a battle during the Persian or the Muslim invasion of Gaulanitis, or it may have been the great encampment for the Ghassānid army, stationed in Gaulanitis when it was not on active duty. For a military organization such as the Ghassānids, the existence of two peaks with commanding heights, whence a goodly portion of the transverse wedge could be seen, suggests that the *tall* was part of the large military encampment of the Ghassānid federate army.

Dussaud's valuable section on Jābiya deals mainly with its Islamic period, with matters pertaining to the Muslim conquest, Yarmūk, and the visit of the caliph Omar.[98] So it is Brünnow, who visited the region at the end of the nineteenth century, that has the more valuable details. After careful examination of al-Jābiya and Tall al-Jābiya, Brünnow left a very accurate description of both, which are most relevant to this discussion of the facilities and amenities of Ghassānid Byzantine Jābiya before it disappeared.[99]

1. Al-Jābiya: Brünnow says that Jābiya lies on three hills of which he gives an accurate description; two are in the east, and one is in the north. It is on the northern hill that the ruins of Jābiya are mostly to be found. On this hill he found still standing the stone foundation walls of a huge building complex. On its scattered stones one could at times see a *mīzān* (weighing scale) characteristic of a Ḥawrān building. In addition, there are traces of the water system: the main reservoir, Birkat al-Jābiya ("the pool of Jābiya"), and in close proximity multiple side reservoirs. The water is abundant and good and reaches Nawa and Shaykh Saʿd through a stone aqueduct. On the northeastern border of the eastern hill is a large wall that forms part of a ring wall surrounding the entire hill.[100]

These remains of a huge building complex, of the water system, and of the fortifications represented by the wall do not suggest that Jābiya was a collection of huts. They are valuable details for documenting the skills that the Ghassānids employed in building their capital. The most valuable information that Brünnow has provided pertains to art. He could not find inscriptions but found two sculptures, one of which he reproduced, as an indication of the "former magnificent

[97] This is the term in the Arabic Bible, used in the translation of "Hosts" in the phrase "Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts."

[98] See Dussaud and Macler, *Mission,* 45–49.

[99] See R. Brünnow, "I. Mitteilungen," *ZDPV* 19 (1896), 17–20.

[100] Ibid., 18–19.

buildings" of Jābiya. He suggested that a few years before his visit many more sculptures, such as the one he found, may have existed, and that the Circassians removed many of them and reused them for their own purposes. "Only two sculptures, one of which is reproduced below (fig. 8), justify the conclusion on the existence of magnificent buildings in former times. Only a few years before, ornaments of this description in far greater numbers may be assumed to have existed. But the Circassians, who started to use the ruins as quarries, have now thoroughly cleaned them out."[101] As this ornamental piece is one of only two extant sculptures representing Ghassānid art in their capital, it is shown in Plate five. It is a pity that the other sculpture was not also reproduced in Brünnow's article.

2. Tall al-Jābiya: not only al-Jābiya received attention from Brünnow but also the *tall* that lay a half-hour's journey south of al-Jābiya. It consisted of two peaks of approximately the same height, and on both peaks there were craters. Brünnow noted the following points of interest.[102] On the higher north peak, remains of an old building could still be seen together with a few cisterns. More important artistically was his discovery of an architrave that showed forms similar to the sculptures he found at Jābiya itself. He also considered that an encircling wall surrounded the rims of the two peaks.

The *tall* now stands with no indication that it was ever inhabited by human beings. But Brünnow's visit reveals that it had witnessed human habitation and contained structures that were both functional and artistic. Since he noted that the view from the *tall* was splendid (*herrlich*), as the whole Gaulanitis and the flat Ḥawrān lay below, it is quite likely that it was a military station because of its strategic position, including possibly a *vigiliarium.*

Finally, Brünnow visited the area southwest of Tall al-Jābiya, where he noted an old mill built completely in the Ḥawrān style with stone doors, *mīzān* and *rebīta.*[103] He also mentions a newer mill (*neuer Mühle*), but it is not clear whether it went back to Ghassānid times. However, he describes the elaborate water system constructed there involving a stream and aqueducts, which might suggest that the two mills belonged to the same system and that the whole water complex goes back to Ghassānid times. The mill is shown in Plate six, because of the paucity of Ghassānid remains in Jābiya and its environs.

Such is the evidence of surface archaeology and site surveys. Now that the traces of Jābiya have mostly disappeared, only excavation can provide further details, especially the layout of the city and the substructure of individual buildings. Possibly some inscriptions, seals, and coins may also be found which will illuminate some aspects of Ghassānid history.

[101] Ibid., 18.
[102] Ibid., 19.
[103] Ibid., 20.

IV. Jalliq

The second "capital" of the Ghassānids was a town that continued to exist in Umayyad and later Islamic times, similar to, but not quite identical with, the other "predominant partner," Jābiya. While the latter was and remained the more important of the pair with which the Ghassānid name was associated, involved in major political and military events, the former was much less involved in the affairs that shaped the history of the Umayyad dynasty. It apparently was the more congenial place for princely residence and relaxation during the Umayyad period, and its proximity to and association with Damascus, the Umayyad capital, ensured its immortality in the literary consciousness of the Arabs until modern times, even though the town itself or its name disappeared in the later Middle Ages. While Jābiya's etymology hovers between two possibilities only, either Syriac Gbīthā or Arabic Jābiya, Jalliq's has so far defied all attempts at explanation. Likewise its location has not been identified, unlike Jābiya's which is well known. It is to these two problems that this section is partly devoted.

Yāqūt, a perceptive and discriminating scholar, clearly understood that Jalliq was not an Arabic word but a foreign one, and so he left the problem open for future etymologists. But surely to the student of Roman-Byzantine-Arab relations in this period, Jalliq is none other than an Arabicized form of *Gallica,* the name of the third legion, so well associated with the region for centuries and well attested. The consonantal skeleton is perfect, whichever system of transliteration is adopted, but as the closest for reflecting the original Latin, it may be transliterated *Gallic.*[104] The vocalic sequence is not certain, as the Arab authors were not clear on how to vocalize the word, but this is far less important than the consonantal sequence. The Arabic version of *Gallica,* however, leaves it apocopated vocalically without the terminal *a.*

The solution of the etymological problem is of more than purely linguistic interest; it sets the stage for solving the second problem, that of the location of Jalliq. Following on this hypothesis that Jalliq is Latin/Roman Gallica, the search for the location of federate Jalliq must begin with the station of Gallica while it was still a legion or at least a unit in the Roman-Byzantine military system in the Orient to the defense of which Gallica as a frontier force was allocated. Before reaching conclusions on this thorny problem, all available data on federate Jalliq should be collected and examined as a contribution to federate historical geography, that of the second "capital" of the Ghassānids, a town that played an important role in both the pre-Islamic history of Oriens and its post-Islamic period as Bilād al-Shām. The elucidation of its history will throw light on its probable loca-

[104] On the various vocalic sequences suggested for its pronunciation, see *Dīwān al-Mutalammis,* ed. H. K. Ṣayrafī (Cairo, 1970), 314 note 1.

tion and contribute toward solving this problem, discussion of which will be deferred to the end of this section.

Federate Jalliq before the Ghassānids

Although its name is indelibly associated with the Ghassānids, there is no doubt that its federate status goes back, if not to the Tanūkhids of the fourth century, at least to the Salīḥids of the fifth. The Salīḥids, whom the Ghassānids overthrew and replaced as the new dominant group of *foederati* in Oriens, had occupied the area that was later occupied by the Ghassānids, Gaulanitis and Batanaea, what has been called the transverse wedge. This is clearly reflected in the triplet of verses that refer to the death of their king Dāwūd/David, with reference to the term Ḥārib in Gaulanitis.[105]

Research has revealed another toponym in Gaulanitis that is strictly Salīḥid in its resonance: ʿAyn Ḥamāṭa, a spring in the region, described and recorded by the pioneer of explorers of Gaulanitis, G. Schumacher.[106] This most unusual name in Arabic, Ḥamāṭa, was the name of the first of the Zokomid royal house of the Salīḥids, the Zokomos of the Greek sources and Ḍujʿum of the Arabic, Zokomos being his surname. The Salīḥid presence in sixth-century Bostra has been noted in a verse of clearly pre-Islamic vintage even though its attribution to Nābigha may turn out to be incorrect.[107] What matters is its pre-Islamic dating, which thus documents the Salīḥid presence also in Batanaea in addition to Gaulanitis.

These three references are the background against which may be set the third and the most relevant verse that explicitly associates them with Jalliq, in which reference is actually made to the final struggle between the two Arab groups, the Ghassānids and the Salīḥids, during which the former overturned the latter. Without the two clearly authentic verses, this third may be haunted by the ghost of authenticity, but with these two, that ghost may be said to have been almost laid to rest, if not quite.[108] Its authenticity, if not absolutely established, at least may be entertained.

The identification of Jalliq as a Salīḥid station is confirmed by the statement

[105] See *BAFIC,* 260 and note 132.

[106] See above, 82 note 22.

[107] Below, 228 note 45.

[108] The verse refers to the encounter between Sabīṭ, the tax collector of the Salīḥids, and Jiḏʿ, the Ghassānid chief, and the death of the former at the hands of the latter; see *BAFIC,* 283–86. The verse may have come from *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* which must have told the story of the Salīḥid-Ghassānid struggle and the victory of the latter over the former.

The verse, actually a couplet, appears in one of the manuscripts of Hishām al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-Nasab al-Kabīr,* British Library Add. 22376; thus its source is an early and not a late Islamic one, and it comes from Hishām himself, the historian of pre-Islamic Arabia.

It should be noted that the reading Jalliq is not crystal clear; however, its consonantal skeletal form with the preposition *bi* attached to it, *bglq,* has been read by the present writer as bi-Jalliq; see *BAFIC,* 308 note 370.

in the late Andalusian historian Ibn Saʿīd that Ghassānid Jalliq was not a Ghassānid foundation but was taken over by them from others, after which they refounded and restored it.[109] It follows from these indications that the military station of legio Gallica was in the fifth century already in the hands of Arab *foederati,* the Salīḥids.[110]

Ghassānid Jalliq

It was under the Ghassānids that Jalliq rose to prominence, to such an extent that it became their second "capital" after Jābiya. Pre-Islamic poetry has a few important references to it as a Ghassānid "capital." The first of these pre-Islamic poets who remembered Jalliq was al-Mutalammis, the poet who defected from the Lakhmids of Ḥīra and came over to their enemies, the Ghassānids, sometime between A.D. 554 and 569. Only a hemistich of one of his verses has survived in which he refers to Jalliq, in a context that suggests he had an altercation or quarrel with someone there.[111] The verse is not very informative, but it implies that Jalliq was a well-known Ghassānid place where the Ghassānids held court and where a refugee poet spent some time with his Ghassānid patrons as he did in Bostra itself.

The next reference to Jalliq comes from Labīd, the well-known poet of the *Muʿallaqāt,* the Suspended Odes of pre-Islamic Arabia.[112] According to Labīd, Jalliq was where the famous Ghassānid king Arethas died, not Jābiya. That day is remembered by the poet as an important "day" called "Yawm Jalliq," the Day of Jalliq. A close examination of the verse has shown that the death of the Ghassānid king was due most probably to an earthquake that hit the region, known to be not immune to earthquakes. As his death is known from the Syriac sources to

[109] See Ibn Saʿīd, *Nashwat al-Ṭarab,* ed. N. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (Amman, 1982), 207–8.

[110] Such a takeover in the 5th century dovetails with the Greek inscription of an Arab *foederatus* who calls himself ὁρικός, Latin *limitaneus.* This raises the question of whether he might have been a Salīḥid, not a Ghassānid. His sobriquet. Καθελόγος, Arabic Kātil al-Jūʿ, "the killer of hunger," could equally well apply to a Salīḥid, since it was a sobriquet, not a name, and in this arid area such sobriquets can recur with the frequency of drought and famine which were common in this region. For the inscription, see *BASIC* I.1, 509–12 and another also by Καθελόγος dated 455/6, ibid., 512.

There is a parallel to the application of the same *laqab,* or sobriquet, to two personages that belonged to two different groups, also related to aridity, drought, and famine. Māʾ al-Samāʾ, the "Water of Heaven," was applied to one of the early ancestors of the Ghassānids, ʿĀmir, and also to the parent of Mundir, the Lakhmid king, who was called al-Mundir ibn-Māʾ al-Samāʾ. Such parallels could tip the scale in favor of the phylarch Ḳātil al-Jūʿ as a Salīḥid rather than a Ghassānid. For the Ghassānid ʿĀmir's sobriquet, Māʾ al-Samāʾ, see Ḥamza, *Tārīkh* (Berlin, 1921–22), 99.

Despite the reasoning in the two previous paragraphs, the present writer is more inclined to think that Kathelogos of the inscription was a Ghassānid, not a Salīḥid phylarch whose *floruit* was not in the 5th century, that of the Salīḥids, but in the 6th, that of the Ghassānids; see the case for this above, 45 note 54.

[111] See *Dīwān al-Mutalammis,* 314.

[112] On these verses, see below, 278–79.

have taken place in A.D. 569, the earthquake that struck Jalliq may be assigned to this date.

The third poet to mention Jalliq was the Ghassānid panegyrist Nābigha. In his most famous ode on the Ghassānids, while he was singing the praises of King ʿAmr, he refers to two of his ancestors, one buried near Ḥārib in Gaulanitis and another in Jalliq.[113] Thus Jalliq was the burial place of one of the Ghassānid kings, whose remains were buried in at least three different places. The confrontation with what Nābigha says of Jalliq and what Labīd had said on the death of the Ghassānid king whom he mentions by name, al-Ḥārith/Arethas, makes it almost certain that Ḥārith, who died in Jalliq, was also buried there. This must be the site of his mausoleum.[114] Of the three places, Jalliq is the one that is precisely indicated, whereas the other two are described in terms of their distance from other places, such as Ḥārib.

The fourth poet to remember Jalliq in pre-Islamic times was Ḥassān, the poet laureate of the Ghassānids and their cousin, who mentions it in two of his verses.[115] In one verse, the poet refers to Jalliq in such a way as to suggest that it was a walled city, since he mentions its gate, and that the district of al-Balqāʾ was not far distant, a reference that is helpful in establishing its location. In another verse he refers to the "sons of Jafna" (the eponym of the Ghassānids) around the tomb of their ancestor, whom he describes as Ibn Māriya, a matronymic that is usually applied to the famous Arethas. This establishes that the tomb of Arethas was indeed in Jalliq as Labīd had implied and Nābigha had confirmed.

The atmosphere that surrounded Ḥassān and is reflected in the poems in which Jalliq is mentioned is that of pleasure and entertainment. Even in the poem in which he refers to the tomb of Ḥārith, his conception of himself was that he was the boon-companion of the Ghassānids, all of which is consonant with the image of Jalliq in Umayyad times as a place for entertainment, as is clear in the poetry of Yazīd, Muʿāwiya's son and successor as caliph.

Umayyad and Islamic Jalliq

Just as Jābiya retained its importance during the Umayyad period, indeed reached a central position in the history of Bilād al-Shām by being the capital of Muʿāwiya, so did Jalliq, the other Ghassānid capital, but to a lesser degree, commensurate with the relative importance of the two capitals in pre-Islamic times. Jābiya remained the more important and serious capital where political and military decisions were made, while Jalliq became a residence for the Umayyads, not so much for politics but for entertainment and relaxation.

[113] See below, 226.
[114] The tombs of the Ghassānids as mausolea will be discussed in *BASIC* II.2.
[115] On these verses, see below, 235, 241.

While Muʿāwiya himself resided at Jābiya and later in Damascus, Yazīd, his son and heir-apparent, chose Jalliq as one of his residential towns, where he would spend much time. In the verses that Yazīd composed involving Jalliq, the place appears as a pleasant one where the olive grew, gardens abounded, and churches with domes could also be seen.[116]

In addition to the poetry of Yazīd as a source for the history of Jalliq in Umayyad times, there is a poem by their poet laureate, the Christian al-Akhṭal, who thanks Yazīd for coming to his rescue against some powerful enemies, represented by none other than the Anṣārī, al-Nuʿmān ibn-Bashīr.[117] For al-Akhṭal, this too was "the Day of Jalliq," "Yawm Jalliq," as for Labīd the death of Ḥārith was "the Day of Jalliq."

Unlike Jābiya, Jalliq survived well into later Islamic times, after the fall of the Umayyads, and did not suffer the fate of other towns in Bilād al-Shām that withered under ʿAbbāsid rule. This is clearly reflected in medieval Arabic poetry composed by the poets of the region in which it figures prominently as a most pleasant place: in the words of one of these poets, ʿArqala al-Kalbī, it was "the languorous pupil of the eye of the world."[118] In addition to references to it in contemporary poetry, the sources refer to its occupation by Nūr al-Dīn of the Zangid Atabegs of Mosul/Mawṣil,[119] the champions of Islam against the Crusaders, the predecessors of the Ayyūbids. Saladin was the recipient of a panegyric by one of the poets, Wuḥaysh al-Asadī, in which there is reference to Jalliq in a triplet of verses that speak of Saladin's restoration of the town after what was apparently a period of decline and oppression.[120]

Even after it physically disappeared as Jalliq, it survived in the literary consciousness of the Arabs partly because it was erroneously identified with Damascus by some medieval writers such as the geographer al-Dimashḳī and al-Ḳalḳashandī, the polygraph.[121] It became a symbol of the ancient grandeur of the region of Bilād al-Shām, associated in the imagination of the Arabs with the Ghassānids and the Umayyads. As such it appears in the verse of the foremost neo-classical poet, Aḥmad Shawqī, in some of the most patriotic Arabic poems composed in the first quarter of this century.[122]

[116] See above, 152.

[117] See Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī* (Beirut, 1958), XV, 84.

[118] On the medieval Arabic poets, see al-ʿImād al-Iṣfahānī, *Kharīdat al-Qaṣr wa Jarīdat al-ʿAṣr,* ed. S. Fayṣal (Damascus, 1955), 181, 217, 224, 242, 269, 407, 415. For the verse of ʿArqala al-Kalbī, see *Kharīdat,* 217, verse 1. The hemistich in which Jalliq is mentioned is preceded by one in which al-Shām is likened to a beauty spot (*shāmat*) in the cheek of the world.

[119] Ibid., 78. Nūr al-Dīn had occupied Damascus in A.D. 1154.

[120] Ibid., 242, verses 2–4.

[121] See *EI*², s.v. Djillik, II, 541, col. 1.

[122] See A. Shawqī, *Dīwān al-Shawqiyyāt* (Cairo, 1961), II, 67, verse 11; 99, verse 10; 182, verse 6.

The Location of Jalliq

The location of Jābiya has never been in doubt, in contrast to that of Jalliq. Although it survived much longer than Jābiya, and well into late Islamic times, the site of Jalliq has been a matter of controversy for a long time. The geographer Yāqūt associated it with Damascene, while the geographer Dimashḳī and al-Ḳalḳashandī actually identified it with Damascus itself.

Modern scholarship has also been divided on its location. While Lammens, a specialist on Umayyad history, identified it with Jizzīn, Dussaud rejected this identification and suggested instead Kiswa, a site some 20 km south of Damascus, as the Jalliq of medieval times.[123] If one follows Dussaud in rejecting Lammens' solution, there remains the possibility that Jalliq is Kiswa, a solution that has been widely accepted since Dussaud proposed it; it is a suggestion that has to be considered seriously.

But as the mystery of the etymology of Jalliq has been shown to admit of a solution, namely, that it is none other than Latin *Gallica,* this in turn leads to a possible solution of the problem of the location. As Jalliq is Latin *Gallica,* a few words on the whereabouts of this legion in the Roman and the Byzantine periods become necessary.

Legio III Gallica

In Roman times this legion moved to various places in Oriens, finally settling in Danaba, slightly north of Damascus.[124] This remained its station in Byzantine times since both the legion and its station are mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum* with reference to its commander, the *praefectus Legionis Tertiae Gallicae,* at Danaba.[125] The legion was last heard of here in the fifth century.

Although the legion was not heard of as such after its last mention in the *Notitia Dignitatum,* its station Danaba was, not in its capacity as a military post but as a bishopric, as were other military stations such as Sūra, Barbalissus, Ruṣāfa, and Evaria.[126] Bishops were attested in Danaba for almost a century, significantly, starting from the middle of the fifth century, when presumably Danaba as a military station in the *Notitia* was last mentioned.[127]

[123] See Dussaud, *Mission,* 441–43; *Topographie,* 319–21; and *La pénétration des Arabes en Syrie* (Paris, 1955), 70.

[124] For Legio Gallica, its movements and permanent location in Danaba, see *RE,* XII (1925), 1517–32, esp. 1523–29.

[125] For the last mention of it in this document, see *Notitia Dignitatum* (*ND*), ed. O. Seeck (Berlin, 1876), Oriens XXXII.31.

[126] See Jones, *Cities,* 878.

[127] Its bishops are already noted in note 8, p. 68 of the *ND,* the footnote on Danaba, with reference to Le Quien's *Oriens Christianus.* See also J.-M. Fiey, *Pour un Oriens Christianus Novus* (Beirut, 1993), 189. For the period A.D. 451–553, the names of two of Danaba's bishops have

A confrontation with the Arabic sources for this period may now be attempted. These have indicated that the Salīḥids, the *foederati* of the fifth century, were already occupying the station of Jalliq in the fifth century. This seems to be consonant with the changes in military stations such as Danaba in the same century, when the region was becoming Christianized and the station became a bishopric, thus diluting its character as an exclusively imperial military post. Its ecclesiastical character is further confirmed by the Arabic sources of some two centuries later in the Umayyad period, when Jalliq is referred to as a town with churches and domes.[128] This was to be expected in a city of zealous Monophysites like the Ghassānids, but their predecessors, the Salīḥids, had been equally zealous Christians although not Monophysite. The confrontation of the two sets of sources thus does not present any insuperable difficulty for what happened to the station of Legio III Gallica in the fifth century. The Christian *ecclesia* and the Arab *foederati* moved into its station, Danaba, and occupied it. The *foederati* also changed its name or added to it another, Jalliq, the name of the legion that had occupied it, a phenomenon attested in other parts of the empire, where the name of the legion becomes a toponym.[129]

Jalliq did not remain a Salīḥid station and is in fact hardly remembered as associated with the Salīḥids. It became a Ghassānid station and eventually their second capital after Jābiya. So the question arises in connection with the location of Ghassānid Jalliq: did the Ghassānids remain at Danaba, now called Jalliq, north of Damascus, or did they carry the name to some other location? A Jalliq north of Damascus is not entirely inconsistent with what the Arabic sources say when they refer to the Ghassānids as settled north of Damascus in places that Ḥassān visited, such as al-Qasṭal.[130]

In spite of all this, there are two sources inconsistent with these conclusions, one coming from contemporary pre-Islamic poetry and another from the prose sources of Islamic times that refer to the conquest of Bilād al-Shām, both of which seem to indicate that Ghassānid Jalliq has to be sought in a location south, not north, of Damascus. (1) Ḥassān, in a poem that has already been mentioned in this section, refers to Jalliq as a place whence one could see the region of al-Balqā'; since this is in Trans-Jordan, it suggests a location south rather than north of Damascus.[131] (2) Equally important are two references in the sources for the Muslim conquest of Bilād al-Shām and more specifically concerning operations in the

been preserved, Theodorus and Eulogius, for whom see G. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis* (Padua, 1988), II, 735.

[128] On this, see above, 152.

[129] For which, see below, note 145.

[130] On the reference to al-Qasṭal, north of Damascus, see below, 241.

[131] See below, 235.

region of Damascus itself. The references are to Thaniyyat Jalliq, and the accounts suggest a location south of Damascus.[132]

The various sets of sources seem to lead to some contradictory conclusions on the location of Jalliq as either south or north of Damascus or even perhaps to the possibility of two Jalliqs, but not the two that had been rightly rejected by Dussaud.[133] Two suggestions may be made in order to reconcile the seemingly contradictory conclusions.

1. Legio III Gallica may have moved south from its station at Danaba north of Damascus; indeed two locations there are somewhat homophonous with Danaba.[134] The legio Gallica was known for its mobility. It was moved from Syria to Oescus in Moesia, then was returned to Raphanaea on the Orontes, suffered *damnatio memoriae* for opposing Elagabalus, and then was restored and stationed in Danaba.[135] So it is possible that after it ceased to function as a legion, some of its units were detailed to a place south of Damascus, but still carried the name *Gallica.* Hence traces of the name were left both north and south of Damascus.

2. The Ghassānids themselves may have first occupied the station north of Damascus when they wrested it from their predecessors, the Salīḥids, and then may have carried the name as they moved to a station south of Damascus, the region closer to their headquarters in Gaulanitis and Batanaea. They would have done this after some of them moved to Andalusia during the Umayyad period when they founded a Jalliq near Saragossa.[136] Even within the same region, in the south of present-day Jordan there are resoundingly Ghassānid toponyms, replicas of the ones in the district of Damascus, such as Sakkā and Baradā.[137]

The problem of the location of Jalliq is consequently again still an open question, in view of the new light shed on it by its suggested etymology as Gallica. However, its identification with Kiswa has been the regnant view and must be considered seriously until a better solution is in sight. But this identification must come to terms with certain questions that can legitimately be raised in this connection. Kiswa is not a modern name with which a medieval name such as Jalliq can be reconciled by saying that the old name, Jalliq, gave way to the new name, Kiswa. Kiswa is known to Yāqūt.[138] Even before Yāqūt, the toponym was known in the

[132] Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1962), III, 392, 405. For the many meanings of Thaniyyat, see E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863–93), book I, part 1, 359.

[133] See above, note 123.

[134] See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān,* 5 vols. (Beirut, 1955–57), III, 7, 8; s.vv. Dināb, near Sarkhad, and Danaba in Damascene and in Balqāʾ (Trans-Jordan); see also Dussaud, *Topographie,* 332.

[135] For this, see *RE,* XII, 1528–29.

[136] On this, see *EI*[2], s.v. Djillik, II, 541, col. 2.

[137] Signs indicating these two localities are visible on the road that leads from Karak to the Dead Sea and south to Zogar, at a spot called Badhan. I saw them when I made a field trip to that area on 21 April 1994. This was the Ghassānid territory, visited by the poet Ḥātim ca. A.D. 600; see below, 246–48.

[138] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. Kiswa.

sixth century as the site of a monastery whose abbot signed the famous letter in A.D. 569 concerning the Monophysite tritheistic heresy.[139] Moreover, although the letter involved the Ghassānids directly, Kiswa but not Jalliq appears in it.

These two facts must lead to some doubts concerning the identification. But the following observations may be made in an attempt to reconcile them.

1. Kiswa is associated with the Ghassānids, as known from Yāqūt.[140] Although the etymology he gives for it is folkloristic, yet the element of truth in its Ghassānid federate, and thus Roman, connection may be accepted.[141] Consequently, Kiswa could have been a military station of the Ghassānids, which they may have taken over from Roman troops. If so, it is perfectly possible that Kiswa was the place that Gallica might have moved to after being in Danaba north of Damascus.

2. It was not unusual in Oriens for towns and cities to have a pair of names, one Greek and another Arabic/Semitic. Such were Sergiopolis/Ruṣāfa, Chalcis/Qinnasrīn, Epiphania/Ḥamā, and Larissa/Shayzar.[142] So it is possible that Jalliq (Gallica)/Kiswa may belong to such cities with pairs of names. Gallica may have moved to the vicinity of Kiswa, and so the two names lived side by side with each other, one name used on certain occasions, or by one group, and another on others by another group. The Ghassānids, as soldiers and *foederati,* may have preferred to retain the name that related to their military function and so referred to the place as Gallica in its Arabicized form, Jalliq. This may be supported by the strategic position of Thaniyyat Jalliq during the Muslim conquest of Oriens, where the Byzantine army took position before the fateful battle, under the command of Heraclius' brother Theodore.[143]

The location of Jalliq is of considerable importance for future archaeological research. In addition to its being the second Ghassānid "capital," it was the place where the most famous of all Ghassānid kings, Arethas, was buried, and where his tomb lay. That tomb must have contained a long epitaph detailing the many

[139] See *BASIC* I.2, 830.

[140] See above, note 138.

[141] Already appreciated by Sartre, *TE,* 180. Significant in this account is the reference to the tribute that the envoys of the Romans came to collect from the Ghassānids in Kiswa which led to the death of the envoys. There is a striking correspondence between this account and that of the Arabic historians on how the Ghassānids overturned the Salīḥids after the latter sent their tax collector to receive the tribute from the Ghassānids. It is therefore perfectly possible that this was a version of what appeared in other Arabic accounts with which it is almost identical; for the Romans who came to collect the tribute, the Salīḥids may be substituted, and this can easily be done since they were the representatives of the Romans in the collection of tribute. So this account becomes valuable for pinpointing the exact spot at which the quarrel between Salīḥ and Ghassān took place, which finally led to the defeat of the former at the hands of the latter.

[142] Even in the 6th century; see below, 262–65.

[143] Thus the other capital of the Ghassānids, Jalliq, was involved, as was natural in the historic battles that raged in the thirties, but to a lesser degree than Jābiya.

achievements of a long reign of some forty years, not unlike that of the Lakhmid king Imru' al-Qays, of Namāra, whose epitaph was found almost intact and who was buried exactly two centuries before Arethas began his reign. The chances are that the epitaph of Arethas also survived and may still be buried underground, like that of Imru' al-Qays.[144]

Conclusion

Despite the uncertainty that still haunts the location of Jalliq, some contributions to its historical geography have been presented here. The most important new light comes from discovering the etymology of Jalliq, namely, that it is Latin Gallica. Its eventual takeover as a station by the *foederati* may be described as the last days of Legio III Gallica after some six centuries of service in Oriens. What happened to the legion and its station in later times is no longer shrouded in obscurity. Although its life came to an end when it was disbanded and lost its separate identity as a legion, its name has survived in the Orient, concealed under the Arabic form Jalliq. Consequently, Jalliq may be added to other toponyms in Oriens that have kept the names of Roman legions and their stations, such as Lajjūn/Lejjun in both Palestine and Trans-Jordan for *legio,* as well as other elements of the Roman military establishment, such as *castrum* and *castellum,* which have survived as toponyms in Qaṣr and Qastal. But Jalliq is distinguished by the fact that the name of the legion itself, Gallica, has survived.[145]

In addition to the survival of Gallica in Ghassānid Jalliq in Oriens, it has survived also in the Muslim Occident at the other end of the Mediterranean, when the Ghassānid Arabs emigrated to Spain in the Umayyad period and gave the name Jalliq to a place near Saragossa.[146] In so doing they brought Gallica home to western Europe where it had been raised in Gaul by Caesar and also near the northwestern district in medieval Spain, which also carried the name Galicia.

The most important aspect of this discussion of Jalliq and its Gallic origin

[144] Needless to say this would flood with light the reign of Arethas and give an impetus to the study of Ghassānid history and the reign of Justinian. In addition to the historical value of such an epitaph, it would be an invaluable gift to the student of the Arabic language and script in the 6th century. Only short inscriptions have survived from 6th-century Oriens. Such a long inscription as the epitaph of Arethas would be the counterpart of that long Arabic inscription of Dayr Hind in Ḥīra of the same century and would invite fruitful comparison with the famous long epitaph of Imru' al-Qays, found in the same region. It is hoped that this footnote might stimulate interest in looking for it. Retrieving it is not an impossibility since it is likely to be buried underground, being an epitaph on a tomb, similar to that of Imru' al-Qays.

[145] Just as the Cohors Nona Batavorum has left its name in Passau on the Danube and in the Dutch district of Betuwe, and the Treveri have left theirs in Augusta Treverorum, modern Trier. See also J. C. Mann, "City-Names in the Western Empire," in *Britain and the Roman Empire* (Aldershot, 1996), 129–34.

[146] See *EI*^{2}, s.v. Djallik, II, 541, col. 2.

is, of course, the fact that it is another illustration of the takeover by the *foederati* of the military stations of regular Roman *stratiotai,* during the reign of Justinian, who decided that the *limitanei* had outlived their usefulness. The truth about the takeover, inferential in many other cases, is evidential in this case, reflected onomastically. One of the surprises encountered in the discussion of the various phases of this takeover is that apparently it was the Salīḥids in the fifth century that represent the first stage of the takeover. This could suggest that the movement toward getting rid of the *limitanei* started in the fifth century before Justinian's well-known decision on them. Alternatively, and more probably, it represents not a tendency or a process but a special case that called for such a takeover, possibly the decision to disband the Legio Gallica as such in the second half of the fifth century—the dark period for these units in the *Notitia Dignitatum,* when exactly how they were gradually phased out is not clear. The Greek inscription that speaks of a phylarch as ὁρικός (*limitaneus*), of fifth-century vintage, gives epigraphical confirmation to the federate takeover.[147]

Finally, Jalliq has often been referred to here as the second capital of the Ghassānids after Jābiya; this raises the question of why the Ghassānids had to have two capitals, one in Jābiya in Gaulanitis and another, Jalliq, in Phoenicia Libanensis. Perhaps geography holds the key to the answer. Climate may have caused the Ghassānid royal house to spend the winter in the Phoenician capital rather than in the Palestinian Jābiya where it might have been very cold in winter but pleasant in the summer months. Moreover, Jābiya was located deep in the heart of Oriens, away from the *limes* and the limitrophe. It was the capital of the region where their horses grazed and were prepared for their duties. Jalliq was closer to the *limes,* a frontier post, and so had more of a military character than Jābiya, distant from the *limes* and the possibility of foreign raids and attacks across the frontier. It must have had a pleasant climate, judging from the fact that the hedonistically inclined crown prince Yazīd favored it as a resort where he played and caroused. Apparently because of this, Jalliq survived much longer than Jābiya as a flourishing town associated with enjoyment in Umayyad and later Islamic times.

V. Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis

Sergiopolis and its saint meant much to the Arabs of the proto-Byzantine period, especially the Ghassānid *foederati* whose patron saint Sergius was. The relationship of the Arabs to Sergius and Sergiopolis has been discussed in two earlier parts of this series.[148] Treatment of structures *intra muros* as well as *extra muros* is discussed

[147] But see above, note 110, on the possibility that the inscription is that of a Ghassānid of the 6th century.

[148] See *BASIC* I.1, 501–5; I.2, 949–62.

here in connection with Ghassānid structures and the frontier, in which Ruṣāfa played a roles as one of the military stations listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum.*[149]

This important pilgrimage center in Oriens has received much scholarly attention since the days of A. Musil.[150] The more recent project of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut of excavating Ruṣāfa has resulted in monumental volumes that are now the fundamental work on Ruṣāfa and the background for further scholarship on the city.[151] The Arab profile of Ruṣāfa has received attention only recently with the publication by Dorothée Sack of the fourth volume of the series, but it deals with Islamic Ruṣāfa of the caliph Hishām and his mosque. The volume includes a long contribution by Barbara Kellner-Heinkele in which she assembled references to Ruṣāfa in the Arabic sources, mostly Islamic.[152] The volume on the praetorium, the most visible monument of the Arabs at Ruṣāfa, has not appeared yet.[153] Hence this section is a contribution to the pre-Islamic Arab past of Ruṣāfa, which will thus complement the volume on the caliph Hishām's mosque. This section examines in detail for the first time the pre-Islamic Arabic sources on Ruṣāfa and discusses both the praetorium *extra muros* and the reservoir *intra muros;* the federate group Bahrā' that was encamped around Ruṣāfa as part of the federate Inner Shield for its protection; Arab religious rites pertaining to the pilgrimage; and Arab religious practice in honoring the saint through some peculiar votive offerings.

Bahrā'

The association of Bahrā' with Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis is attested by a verse in a pre-Islamic poem that describes the whereabouts of various tribal groups: "And as for Bahrā', they are a group whose place we know; they have a *sharak* around al-Ruṣāfa that is *lāḥib.*"[154] This single verse is very informative. Bahrā' was a federate tribe of the Inner Shield, settled within Oriens and with a special relationship with Ghassān, the dominant federate group.[155] The verse provides a specificity

[149] *ND,* Oriens, XXXIII.27.

[150] A. Musil, *Palmyrena* (New York, 1928), 155–67, 260–79, 299–329. Musil's assemblage of the Arabic sources on Ruṣafa (pp. 268–72) has now been superseded by the contribution of Barbara Kellner-Heinkele (below, note 152), just as E. Honigmann's article on Ruṣāfa in the old *EI* (1936) has been superseded by that of C.-P. Haase in *EI*^{2} (1995), VIII, 630–31.

[151] This applies to the first three volumes, but the fourth is more relevant to this chapter, for which see the following note.

[152] D. Sack, *Die Grosse Moschee von Resafa-Ruṣāfat Hišām,* Resafa 4 (Mainz, 1996); for B. Kellner-Heinkele's contribution, see ibid., 133–54.

[153] It is being written by Thilo Ulbert with emphasis on the architecture of the *praetorium.* Volume VI on the architectural ornaments of the city will be written by Gunnar Brands.

[154] For the verse, see al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt,* ed. A. Shākir and A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1943), II, 6, verse 15.

[155] See *BAFOC,* 382, 383, 384 note 129, 407; *BASIC* I.1, 648. The two Arab groups contracted an alliance known to the sources as "Ḥilf Ghassān wa Bahrā'" ("the alliance of Ghassān and Bahrā"), for which see the manuscript of Hishām al-Kalbī, *Mukhtaṣar Jamharat al-Nasab,*

that throws light on the function of Bahrā' around Ruṣāfa. This is expressed by the crucial word *sharak,* described as *lāḥib.*

1. The most common meaning for the Arabic word *sharak* is "trap," "snare for trapping animals." But this is incomprehensible in this context and indeed invalidated by the adjective *lāḥib* and the fact that the *sharak* runs all the way around Ruṣāfa; finally, by the fact that hunting would have been forbidden in a holy place (a *ḥaram*) like Ruṣāfa.[156] The signification "snare" or "trap" can be entertained if the denotation of the term is a defensive ditch, but then the term should be *khandaq,* a term known in pre-Islamic Arabic meaning "ditch."[157]

2. The word *sharak* has another meaning, which must be the one required here, namely, "road," "path," or "track."[158] This meaning is supported by the fact that the *sharak* runs around Ruṣāfa, a description applicable to a road, not a trap; but more importantly by the adjective that describes it, *lāḥib,* a word that means "conspicuous," "clear."[159] A similar use of the adjective as a substantive meaning a clear road occurs in the poem of 'Alqama[160] lauding the Ghassānid al-Ḥārith. So the *sharak* around Ruṣāfa was a clear, conspicuous road or path.

This raises the question of the function of a road that ran around the city, associated with the Christian federate tribal group Bahrā', which protected the city. The most natural answer to this question is that this *sharak* was a processional path around the city for circumambulation (*ṭawāf*), a well-known ritual in the performance of the pilgrimage among the Semites.[161] The Arabs, especially the federate Arabs, would thus perform the pilgrimage to Ruṣāfa, a pilgrimage center, and circumambulate the city on certain occasions, such as the feast day of the saint, as the Christian Arab Orient continues to do when celebrating Easter to the

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p. 168 B (Princeton University Library). For this manuscript, see R. Mach, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts (Yahūda Section) in the Garrett Collection, Princeton University Library* (Princeton, N.J., 1977), 385, no. 4487.

Subdivisions of Bahrā' such as Hinb, Qās, and Shabīb fought with the Ghassānid army at the famous battle immortalized by the poet 'Alqama; see *Dīwān 'Alqama,* 45, verse 1. The poem will be analyzed in detail in *BASIC* II.2.

[156] The precinct around a temple in pre-Islamic Arabia was *ḥaram* (sacrosanct), in which hunting was sacrilegious (as it was in Christian precincts). The most famous of these precincts was the one in Mecca, which with the rise of Islam remained sacrosanct and indeed became more so.

[157] For *khandaḳ,* Pahlevi *kandak,* see *BASIC* I.1, 77–79.

[158] See Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon,* book I, part 4, 1542.

[159] Ibid., book I, part 7, 2653.

[160] One of the panegyrists of the Ghassānids; see *Dīwān 'Alqama,* 40, verse 19. Garth Fowden, who had just published an article on the hunt in Oriens ("Desert Kites," in *The Roman and Byzantine Near East, JRA* Suppl. series 31 [Portsmouth, R.I., 1999], II, 107–36), asked whether *sharak* in the verse may not mean *"trap," "snare."* Not one but three arguments have been advanced in this section which preclude that interpretation, and they are decisive. For Ruṣāfa as a *ḥaram,* thus out of bounds for hunters, which is the third argument, see E. K. Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain* (Berkeley, 1999), 99.

[161] On this, see the present writer in "Ghassānid Religious Architecture," in J. Naṣrallah *Mémorial* (forthcoming).

present day. It was natural that the ambulatory path should have been *extra muros,* since it would have been difficult to have crowds of federate Arab pilgrims performing a circumambulation within the city walls.[162]

In this way the Arab federates would have venerated St. Sergius in a characteristically Arab fashion, through *ṭawāf,* the circumambulation of his shrine at Ruṣāfa; thus the verse provides a glimpse into this Arab dimension of the veneration of the saint. Its revelation of the presence of Bahrā' outside Ruṣāfa calls for a number of observations related to a general reassessment of the Arab federate presence in this region.

The Arab federate shield of Byzantium in Oriens under the leadership of the Ghassānids was complex, composed of many groups. It is important to know where each of these groups was stationed in the vast arc that extended from the Euphrates to Ayla, but information is not always available for all the members of the Shield's constituency. This group, Bahrā', suddenly appears during the Muslim conquest of Oriens fighting with other federate groups against the Muslims at the battle of Mu'ta in A.D. 628, and later at Dūmat al-Jandal against Khālid ibn-al-Walīd. Its whereabouts in pre-Islamic times in Oriens, however, would have remained unknown had it not been for this verse, which locates it in the vicinity of Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis.

As the Ghassānids were in command of all federate troops in Oriens, Bahrā' around Ruṣāfa must have been under the command of the Ghassānids' chief phylarch. The Ghassānid-Bahrānī relationship outside Ruṣāfa is confirmed by the special relationship between the two described by the prose sources, the *ḥilf,* the alliance between Ghassān and Bahrā'.

Such a strong federate presence around Ruṣāfa raises the question of who was responsible for its defense late in the sixth century. In the fifth, the defense was undertaken by the Equites Promoti Indigenae listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum,* who were under the command of the *dux* of Syria and Euphratensis.[163] Since then, and in the sixth century, the *foederati* started to take over from the *limitanei,* and so it is possible that by the end of the sixth century the federate Arabs represented by Bahrā' had taken over the defense of Ruṣāfa from the Equites Promoti Indigenae.[164]

Ruṣāfa was not only a shrine and a holy city, but also an important station

[162] When Bahrā' was converted to Christianity is not clear, presumably when it became a federate of Byzantium and part of the Inner Shield. Its pre-Christian past is reflected in a verse by a poet who belonged to the well-known Christian tribe of Taghlib. The poet says that during an altercation some members of the Bahrā' tribe taunted his group Taghlib, describing their swords as Christian swords, with the implication that they were weak. This could easily imply that Bahrā' at that time was not Christian. For the verse, see *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt,* II, 11, verse 22.

[163] See *ND,* Oriens, XXXIII.27.

[164] In A.D. 529, when these Arab *foederati* had taken over the military station of Sulaymān in Phoenicia Libanensis, the Ghassānid chief phylarch Arethas sent one of his commanders, Ibn Mughīra, to take charge of it; *BASIC* I.1, 118.

on the trade route that ran from Mesopotamia through Syria, more precisely from Sūra to Palmyra. So Bahrāʾ would have been performing three or even four functions: guarding the shrine of the saint; protecting the region from the inroads of the pastoralists and the more organized offensives of the Lakhmids; protecting an important trade route; and possibly taking part in provisioning Ruṣāfa.

Bahrāʾ may not have been the only group of the federate shield that was defending Ruṣāfa; possibly Taghlib may also have participated.[165] These federates, however, must have had their camps (*ḥīra*s, Greek *parembolae*) around Ruṣāfa. When it is remembered that the Arab federates were also represented by the solid and impressive structure of the Ghassānids, the praetorium *extra muros,* the presumption is natural that there was a strong Arab presence outside Ruṣāfa. This must have consisted of more than just a few military camps, with some collapsible tents and must have been a more developed settlement in an area made less arid and more suited for human habitation by the hydrological skills of the Arab federates. It cannot be entirely fortuitous that the vicinity became one of the most important residences of the Umayyad caliph Hishām. The presumption is that it was already a flourishing suburb *extra muros,* attractive enough to cause a caliph to make it one of his most important residences.[166]

Al-Zawrāʾ: Ruṣāfa as a Trapezoid

A verse by one of the three chief panegyrists of the Ghassānids, al-Nābigha, sheds light on the Ghassānids, already associated with Ruṣāfa through the *praetorium* of Mundir, as it adds some colorful details on the Ghassānid profile of the city.[167] The verse in question occurs in a panegyric on the Ghassānid king al-Nuʿmān, who had conducted a successful campaign against Banū Asad and had returned with a booty consisting of many camels.[168] The poet says: "Herds of

[165] On the verses of its poet, the celebrated ʿAmr ibn-Kulthūm, that reflected the federate scene in Oriens, including reference to such places as Andarin and Damascus, see below, 268–70.

But whatever other federate Arab tribes were stationed in the vicinity of Ruṣāfa, it was not the Banū Ḥanīfa. This was a subdivision of the large tribal group Bakr, settled in northeastern Arabia and moving in the orbit of the Lakhmids and in the Persian sphere of influence. The erroneous view that Banu Ḥanīfa were settled around Ruṣāfa derives from a corrupt reading of the commentary of the medieval scholar al-Aṣmaʿī, who spoke not of Banū Ḥanīfa but Banū Jafna, that is, the Ghassānids, as having a presence around Ruṣāfa. It is easy for Banū Jafna in the Arabic script to be transcribed by a careless scribe as Banū Ḥanīfa, but the correct reading is preserved in one of the manuscripts of Nābigha (Istanbul, Aḥmad III, no. 2603), which was used by Shukrī Fayṣal in his edition of the *Dīwān* of Nābigha; see *Dīwān* (Beirut, 1968), 92 note 9. The erroneous reading Banū Ḥanīfa may be seen in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam* III, 156, s.v. Zawrāʾ.

[166] A parallel to this is the Umayyad Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, built on a Ghassānid substrate, that of pre-Islamic Halioram, where the Ghassānid tower still stands; on this, see below, 206–10.

[167] The verse has been noticed briefly in the section on Nābigha, below, 229–30. It is analyzed intensively here as part of the historical geography of the city.

[168] For the poem and the verse, see W. Ahlwardt, *The Divāns of Six Ancient Arabic Poets* (Osnabrück, 1972), 4, verse 10.

camels (*mu'abbalāt*[169] [not for riding]) were left (to pasture) near a cross that was set up over *al-Zawrā'*." The verse with its reference to the cross and to the description of Ruṣāfa as *zawrā',* the trapezoid, together with the camels that were left there to pasture, calls for the following comments.

The victorious Ghassānid king, after soundly trouncing the tribal group Asad, returns to his base in Oriens, possibly the Golan or Ruṣāfa itself. The spoils, in the form of camels which he brought with him, he apparently dedicated, *more Arabico,* to the saint who presumably may have helped him in battle.[170] This hypothesis is the most likely explanation for the special treatment the Ghassānid accorded the spoils of the war with the Asad—a votive offering at the shrine of a saint whom even the Persian shah had remembered with gifts.[171] The dedication of camels to a saint may sound strange, but in the context of sixth-century Ruṣāfa it was very appropriate. The camel was more useful and valuable than the horse in those arid and isolated regions and provided Sergiopolis with the necessities of

[169] The term *mu'abbalāt* has many meanings, all complimentary. In this context, it means that these camels were privileged and treated well, left to pasture at will and not used for riding. See Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon,* book I, part 1, 7–8, s.v. *'abila.* It is possible that the technical term in pre-Islamic times for the dedication of animals to God was *ta'bīl.* In the verse, *mu'abbalat* is morphologically the *nomen patientis* and is used adjectivally as an epithet of the camels, but from its root, the term *ta'bīl,* the verbal noun may be formed to indicate the process or act of dedication, involving especially camels. If *ta'bīl* was indeed the technical term in pre-Islamic Arabic for the dedication of camels to God, it is better to construe *mu'abbalāt* in the verse not as an adjective in the genitive, agreeing with the word preceding it, but in the accusative as a *ḥāl,* going with the verb *ẓallat.*

[170] This may be implied in the last verse of the poem (verse 16) according to which the army of the Ghassānid king invoked the names of Jesus and Job against their enemy, the Banū Asad. Between these two names, the verse has another, a third name that the Ghassānids invoked, that of Du'miyy, a man of Iyād. This Du'miyy comes between Jesus and Job, two *biblical* figures, while Du'miyy is said to have been a member of the tribal group Iyād. As he appears inappropriately between two religious figures, it is possible that the original reading was Sarjīs (Sergius), whom the Ghassānids considered their patron saint. Cf. the more famous dedication of the two Ghassānid swords, Mikhdam and Rasūb, which finally were possessed by the Prophet Muḥammad. For the reference to the two swords, see the *Dīwān of 'Alqama,* 44 and note 5. The route through which they reached Muḥammad is controversial and will be treated in *BASIC* II.2.

[171] On the offerings of Chosroes, see Evagrius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*HE*), ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898; repr. Amsterdam, 1964), VI.21. But closer to the offering of the Ghassānid king is reference to the camel associated with the tribe of Thamūd in the Koran, the tribe that was destroyed by God because it hamstrung the camel that had been held sacred, "God's camel," for which see the *sura* (chapter) called *al-A'rāf* in the Koran, VII, verses 73–79; for "God's camel," see verse 73.

Animal sacrifice is known to the Old Testament and to the Koran (XXII, verses 28, 34, 36), both belonging to the world of the Semitic Orient, and it has survived in a large way in Islam as one of the rites of the Islamic pilgrimage, the *ḥajj.* The verse in Nābigha thus is valuable as it suggests that Christian Arabs in pre-Islamic times dedicated animals to God or the saints from the spoils of war. Another verse analyzed in the section on Bahrā', the other federate group settled around Ruṣāfa, has suggested the existence of *ṭawāf,* circumambulation, another feature of Semitic piety. Both then may have been practices at Ruṣāfa by the Christian Arabs.

life. Such was the mount of the cameleer whose medallion has survived reflecting his function in provisioning the city of the saint.[172]

The reference to the cross set over Ruṣāfa attracted the attention of the medieval commentator,[173] who understood its implication to the Ghassānid who dedicated the camels, namely, that he was a Christian. As Ruṣāfa was a city of many crosses, the question arises which cross was the one that the poet referred to. From the context of the verse, which describes the camels pasturing in the shadow of the cross, it can be inferred that it was large and conspicuous to an approaching visitor to the city. So presumably it was set up over one of its gates.[174] This reference to the cross is a *hapax legomenon* in the poetry composed for the Ghassānids and may be added to other Christian terms in the poetry of Nābigha and Ḥassān.

The poet also refers to Ruṣāfa not by name but by one of its descriptive epithets, *al-Zawrā'* (the trapezoid). It is interesting that the Arab poet noticed the city's trapezoidal shape and used the epithet *al-Zawrā',* thus endowing the city with a third name in addition to Ruṣāfa and Sergiopolis.[175]

One single Arabic verse in the panegyric of Nābigha has proved to be a veritable mine of information on the Ghassānids and Sergiopolis. It has provided the student of sixth-century Ruṣāfa with three colorful details: its shape as a trapezoid with an Arabic name for it, *al-Zawrā';* a large cross, perhaps set up over one of its gates; and the bucolic scene *extra muros* of camels pasturing safely in the shadow of the cross and dedicated to the saint.

From the specificity that the verse provides, it may be assumed that the poet visited the Ghassānids not only in the south of Oriens, in the Golan, but also in the north at Ruṣāfa, a conclusion supported by his reference to Palmyra in another poem.[176] This brings him close to Sergiopolis, and the latter was a caravan station between Palmyra and Sūra on the Euphrates. Thus Ruṣāfa emerges not only as a Ghassānid station that was military in nature but also as a place where the Ghassānids held court and received poets.

[172] For this, see *BASIC* I.1, 507. The word for "herds" in the verse is *aqāṭīʿ* (plural of *qaṭīʿ*), meaning herd, drove, or flock. The Arabic for "camels" in the verse is "*anʿām,*" which applies to sheep and cows as well, but mostly and more regularly to camels.

[173] For al-Aṣmaʿī on this verse, see *Dīwān al-Nābigha,* ed. Fayṣal, 92 note 9. His commentary on this verse is the best. A variant reading of the phrase, involving the cross, *ṣalīb,* is *liḏi ṣalībin* instead of *ladā ṣalībin,* the common, familiar one. The former phrase literally means "he of the cross," referring either to the Ghassānid king or less appropriately to the saint himself, Sergius; for this reading, see Abū al-Baqā', *al-Manāqib al-Mazyadiyya,* I, 270.

[174] The possible adornment of one of the gates of pre-Islamic Ruṣāfa with a towering large cross is thus an attractive element in the description of the city, owed to this Arabic verse.

[175] On Ruṣāfa as a trapezoid, see C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (New York, 1976), 39. The term *zawrā'* appears again in the poetry of Nābigha but in another sense, that of a wine cup of a certain shape; it appears in this sense in one of his poems on the Lakhmid king, for which see Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* p. 20, verse 33.

[176] See below, 229.

The Reservoirs of Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis

The reservoirs and cisterns of Ruṣāfa published by the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut have revealed a truly impressive water supply system in that holy city and pilgrimage center in the sixth century.[177] The identity of the builders of these cisterns and reservoirs has been a controversial question in which the Arabs and especially the Ghassānid *foederati* have been involved. It is therefore necessary to reopen the question and discuss the problem. The evidence for Ghassānid involvement in the reservoirs derives from statements in two reliable Arabic sources, the *Chronicle* of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī and the *Muʿjam* of Yāqūt. The more important statement, by Yāqūt, is as follows: "And I have found in *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* (the following statement): Then al-Nuʿmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn al-Ayham reigned, and he was the one who repaired the reservoirs (*ṣahārīj*) of al-Ruṣāfa and constructed its greatest reservoir (*ṣihrīj*)."[178]

This reference in Yāqūt is unique in the whole history of Ghassānid toponymy and structures since the source is indicated. Unlike all others, this toponym, Ruṣāfa, has been identified beyond any doubt, as has been the structure related to the toponym. Furthermore, both have been intensively excavated and extensively studied, an illustration of the way in which future excavation could illuminate other Ghassānid toponyms and structures.

Of the vast literature on Ruṣāfa, the most relevant and fundamental is the article by Werner Brinker, "Zur Wasserversorgung von Resafa-Sergiupolis."[179] It is a technical examination of the water supply system of Ruṣāfa in which all the allusions to it in the literary sources, both Greek and Arabic, are assembled. The author also discusses the identity of those responsible for this water supply system. Following what Procopius says on the relation of Justinian to it, Brinker concludes by crediting Justinian with most of its elements and dismissing all pre-Islamic Arab participation, including Yāqūt's statement on the Ghassānid contribution.[180]

I leave to hydrologists, hydrographers, architects, and structural engineers the examination of the technical arguments in this article and limit myself to examining the two sets of sources, Greek and Arabic, that discuss the identity of the builders of this water supply system in pre-Islamic Ruṣāfa, namely, the Byzantine emperor Justinian, and the Ghassānid king Nuʿmān. Brinker may be excused for expressing doubts on the authenticity of the Arabic report in Yāqūt and his

[177] For the cisterns (and canals) of Ruṣāfa, see pls. 40–49 that follow the article by Werner Brinker cited below in note 179.

[178] See Ḥamza, *Tārīkh,* 79, and Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* III, 47. Both have been touched upon lightly in the philological discussion, below, 322, 338.

[179] *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 5 (1991), 119–46 plus its many plates.

[180] Ibid., 145. In this connection, it might be mentioned that Musil doubted the truth of Procopius' statement and said that "the famous cisterns of ar-Resafa are undoubtedly of older origin"; *Palmyrena* (New York, 1928), 265.

dismissive attitude to it because the report appears as an isolated statement that has never been critically scrutinized and evaluated. The following paragraphs attempt to do just that, bringing the Arabic report to the attention of archaeologists and art historians in order to reexamine this question.[181]

What may have discouraged Brinker from taking the statement in Yāqūt seriously may be the late date of Yāqūt (13th century), which may suggest that this author has no great value for pre-Islamic problems. Brinker apparently did not realize that Yāqūt was quoting from a work that goes back to the Umayyad period at the latest, and is possibly earlier. The source is *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* which has been discussed in this volume as a reliable source for the history of the Ghassānids.[182] The statement on Ruṣāfa and the Ghassānids in Yāqūt, which has miraculously survived, is in fact unique, the only one on Ghassānid buildings that explicitly states its source.

More important is the image of the Ghassānids. As has been argued, they have been erroneously perceived as a nomadic people; hence they could not have been associated with the construction of such impressive reservoirs as those of Ruṣāfa. The sedentary nature of the Ghassānids has already been established in this volume, as well as their mastery of hydrology.[183] They had hailed from South Arabia, the country of the most famous dam in the ancient Near East, and had spent some time in Yathrib. The latter was a flourishing oasis where the main occupation of both the Jewish and Arab communities was agriculture, based on advanced techniques in water conservation. After assimilating these techniques and skills, the Ghassānids crossed the Byzantine frontier and settled in the limitrophe in Oriens, where those masters of hydraulic engineering had settled, the Nabataeans and the Palmyrenes, to whose legacy in hydrography the Ghassānids fell heir. The *foederati* who encamped outside Ruṣāfa, not far from its reservoirs, were these Ghassānids, in whom were united the hydrographic techniques of South Arabia, western Arabia, and the Byzantine Oriens of Nabataea and Palmyrena.

A

Perhaps the foregoing arguments have prepared the way for coming to closer grips with the statement in Yāqūt on the Ghassānid Nuʿmān and the reservoir(s) of Ruṣāfa. The Arab federates of Byzantium were zealous Christians, well known for their veneration of monks and saints. Such were the Ghassānids in their special

[181] Herzfeld and Musil rehabilitated Ḥamza, toward whom Nöldeke had had an ambivalent attitude, as a serious source; Sauvaget corrected Herzfeld and Musil on the structure of Mundir outside Ruṣāfa and argued that it was not a church but a *praetorium;* and Grégoire corrected Sauvaget by drawing attention to the inscription of Mundir in the *praetorium* as a formula, well known in the proto-Byzantine period, but see below, 129.

[182] On Yāqūt and his source, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* see below, 342–43.

[183] See above, 1–19.

relationship to Sergius, their patron saint in war, to whom was dedicated the church in their capital Jābiya in the Golan.[184] Arab federate military presence outside Ruṣāfa is established with both the Ghassānids and another federate group of the Inner Shield, Bahrā',[185] encamped for the defense of the holy city against pastoralist raiding, the Lakhmids, and the Persians, who had made Ruṣāfa a special target for their offensives.

In addition to protecting Ruṣāfa with their horses, the Ghassānids also used camels in the service of the holy city, as the medallion of the cameleer with a Greek inscription has witnessed.[186] Of all the federates that were protecting Ruṣāfa, the Ghassānids no doubt were the most prominent, in part because of their being the dominant federate group in the sixth century under whom all the others were subordinates. They also had a special relationship with Ruṣāfa because their most illustrious king, Mundir, owed to its saint and his shrine his reconciliation with Byzantium and his return to the Byzantine fold in the 570s, after he met, at the shrine of the saint, Justinianus, the *magister militum* in Oriens.[187]

This strong Ghassānid presence in and attachment to Ruṣāfa is reflected not only in the literary sources such as John of Ephesus and the poet Nābigha but in the well-known structure erected by Mundir, the *praetorium extra muros.* The *praetorium* is the most important element in this sequence of arguments for establishing a Ghassānid connection with the reservoirs, even if it turns out to be a church.

This particular religious center, Ruṣāfa, was more than just a shrine of a saint. It became a great pilgrimage center in Oriens whose fame spread far and wide. Christians, as well as the fire-worshiping shāhānshāh of Iran, Chosroes Parvīz himself, sent gifts and votive offerings to Ruṣāfa in gratitude for the saint's benefactions.[188]

If those who lived so far from Ruṣāfa, such as the great shāh of Iran, contributed to the shrine of the saint there, *a fortiori* the Ghassānids, who were encamped around the city and to whose saint their king Mundir owed his return to the Byzantine fold, must have contributed generously to the city. The *praetorium* was a building related to the military duties of the Ghassānids as soldiers. What would have been more natural than that these experts in water conservation should have contributed something in the area of their expertise—a reservoir *intra muros.*

In addition, the Ghassānids are associated in reliable literary sources with works such as *qanāṭir* (aqueducts).[189] More important is the evidence from archaeology. In the discussion of the Ghassānid substrate in Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, it has

[184] On this, see *BASIC* I.2, 931, 932.
[185] On Bahrā', see above, 116–19.
[186] See *BASIC* I.1, 507.
[187] Ibid., I.1, 373–78.
[188] On this, see Evagrius, *HE,* VI.21.
[189] On this, see below, 326–27.

been suggested that its elaborate water system was originally the work of the Ghassānids before the Umayyads developed it further. So here there is an analogy involving a monastery at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr, Ghassānid Haliorama, and a water system.[190]

The evidence about the water system at Qaṣr al Ḥayr/Haliorama and the Ghassānid involvement in it is only inferential. Another source that explicitly documents an Arab involvement in cisterns for religious foundations is a perfect analogy with the Ghassānids and the reservoirs of Ruṣāfa. In his invaluable work on the monks of Palestine, Cyril of Scythopolis recorded the history of the phylarchs of the Parembole, in the Desert of Juda, who were devoted to another saint, Euthymius.[191] One of these phylarchs, Aspebetos, contributed to the monastery of the saint, the remains of which have survived. According to Cyril, Aspebetos "built a great cistern with two entrances, which has survived in the garden to the present day, and a bakery nearby, and for the holy man he built three cells together with an oratory or a church in the midst of the cells."[192] Noteworthy is the phrase the "great cistern with two entrances" (ἐποίησεν μέγαν λάκκον δίστομον). The "great cistern" recalls the "great cistern" of Yāqūt (*al-ṣihrīj al-aʿẓam*), and the two entrances reflect some sophistication in its construction.

Aspebetos was a diminutive phylarch and a recent arrival from Persia, yet he engaged in extensive construction work for the monastery inspired by his devotion to the saint. The Ghassānids were the most powerful of all phylarchs and *foederati* in the long history of Byzantium; their power and presence extended from the Euphrates to Ayla. It is not extravagant to think that they would have built a reservoir for the saint whom they venerated. Such a gesture on their part as an expression of devotion is consonant with their function around his holy city—their horses and camels defended it and revictualed it and now they also provided it with a water reservoir—in the area of their expertise.

B

In addition to Yāqūt's report on the "great reservoir," the rest of the *khabar* (account or report) derivative from *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* quoted by Ḥamza, must be discussed. Ḥamza adds that al-Nuʿmān, the Ghassānid king, "repaired the cisterns of Ruṣāfa after a Lakhmid king had damaged them."[193] Historically, the statement that the Ghassānids repaired the cisterns after a Lakhmid king had left them in ruins is credible. The Lakhmids, the inveterate enemies of the Ghassānids, often made Ruṣāfa their military objective.[194] Destroying water installa-

[190] See below, 210–11.

[191] On these phylarchs and St. Euthymius, see *BAFIC,* 181–92.

[192] Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita S. Euthymii, Kyrillos von Skythopolis,* ed. E. Schwartz (Leipzig, 1939), 49, p. 24, lines 17–20.

[193] See Ḥamza, *Tārīkh,* 79.

[194] On this, see *BAFIC,* 121–35; *BASIC* I.1, 232. The Ghassānid repair of the reservoirs is accepted by Marlia Mango in *ODB,* III, 1877 but her dates for the Ghassānid king are far from

tions such as cisterns was a well-known form of inflicting damage on the enemy in Arab warfare. Arabic has a special technical term for this form of vandalism, *taʿwīr.*

In repairing the reservoirs of Ruṣāfa, the Ghassānids were engaging in an activity expected of the federates. Just as the Roman legionaries in former times and the *limitanei* were expected to engage in paramilitary duties, such as building roads, so were the Ghassānid federates.

The Lakhmids never entered or captured Sergiopolis, so the reservoirs referred to must have been *extra muros* rather than within the city walls. During the reign of Heraclius, when the Persians swept over Oriens, Sergiopolis was of course within the occupied area, but the Lakhmids had fallen from grace before then, ca. A.D. 602, while the Persians presumably were respectful of Sergius since their king had sent votive offerings to his city.[195]

The report in the *Akhbār* reflects a precise knowledge of the reservoirs of Ruṣāfa, since it refers in the plural to a number of them that have been ruined and repaired but singles out a great one, *al-ṣihrīj al-aʿẓam;* all this corresponds with what is known about the reservoirs of Ruṣāfa, that in addition to the main reservoir (clear in the maps), there were other, lesser ones.[196]

There remains the question of the identity of the Ghassānid who restored the ruined cisterns and built the great one. He is referred to as al-Nuʿmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn al-Ayham. If Ḥamza or Yāqūt was accurate in the ascription of this work at Ruṣāfa to a Ghassānid named al-Nuʿmān, this king must have been one of three bearing this name in the later history of the dynasty: al-Nuʿmān, the son of Mundir, the builder of the *praetorium,* of the reign of Maurice, well remembered in the Greek and Syriac sources; al-Nuʿmān who was the intermediary between Maurice and Chosroes Parvīz during the revolt of Bahrām Chūbīn, known to the Syriac sources;[197] or the al-Nuʿmān whom the poet Nābigha lauded and elegized. The last two of these three Nuʿmāns are associated with Ruṣāfa in the sources, but none had a father named al-Ḥārith.

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certain, and so is the existence of a king by the name of Nuʿmān in the period assigned for him, A.D. 604–616. Although no documentation is given for the provenance of this statement on Nuʿmān and his dates, it apparently derives from Musil, *Palmyrena,* 267, who is unreliable on this point. Nöldeke worked out the correct sequence and chronology of the Ghassānid dynasty, and there is no room in his chronology for a reign that spanned the period 604–616. There was a Nuʿmān around A.D. 600, but it is not certain that he was the one associated with the reservoirs, and no Ghassānid was in power in Oriens after ca. 610 when the Persians mounted their offensive against Oriens and occupied it. Yāqūt, whom Musil cites, referred only to the repair of the reservoirs by the Ghassānid king al-Nuʿmān, but said nothing about his regnal years nor anything about his wars with Persia to which Musil refers.

[195] Trimingham says the Persians pillaged the city in A.D. 616, without giving his source; see J. S. Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (New York, 1979), 238.

[196] See the plates and the map (p. 120) in Brinker, "Zur Wasserversorgung."

[197] For this less-known Ghassānid figure, see A. Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool, 1993), and *BASIC* I.1, 556–60.

Ḥamza or Yāqūt may not have been accurate in reporting his patronymic, and so one of the three Nuʿmāns listed above may have been the patron of the work at Ruṣāfa. But if there was a mistake in the name, not in the patronymic, the Ghassānid king may indeed be the famous Mundir, who was indeed "the son of Ḥārith," the patronymic that appears in Yāqūt. Furthermore, he was the Ghassānid king most associated with Ruṣāfa in John of Ephesus; his association with the city is also attested by his *praetorium.* It is therefore tempting to think that after constructing the *praetorium extra muros* for the protection of the holy city of Sergius, he followed it up with the construction of "the great reservoir" *intra muros.*

C

A return to Procopius is now necessary to examine his statement on Justinian and the reservoirs of Ruṣāfa. Brinker quotes the Byzantine historian on the building of reservoirs by Justinian and concludes that many elements in the water supply system may be attributed to the emperor.[198] Since the only support for Justinian's association with Sergiopolis and its reservoirs is Procopius, we must examine exactly what he said. The relevant statement is as follows: καὶ ὑδάτων θησαυρίσας μέγα τι χρῆμα πλήθειν αὐτοῖς ἐσκευάσατο ("and he stored large quantities of water and so put at the disposal (of the inhabitants of Sergiopolis) an ample supply of it").[199]

This statement contains no reference to reservoirs. In contrast, the technical term for reservoirs (ἔλυτρα) is used by Procopius in describing Justinian's construction of the reservoirs at Daras.[200] So the only literary source that is thought to support the Justinianic connection with the Ruṣāfa reservoirs does not explicitly say this. Also, Justinian's building activity in Ruṣāfa may have been exaggerated by Procopius, whose *Buildings* is known to have been panegyrical of Justinian or even adulatory,[201] while his negative attitude to the Arabs may even have made him omit all reference to their involvement in Ruṣāfa. Arethas, the Ghassānid who

[198] See Brinker, "Zur Wasserversorgung," 144.

[199] Procopius, *Buildings,* II.ix.7.

[200] Ibid., II.ii.1 and 6; φρέαρ is another word for "well" used by Procopius; ibid., V.ix, 15, 16, 17, 18.

[201] See below, 360.

Most relevant here are questions on the walls of Sergiopolis and who built them. Procopius attributed them to Justinian, but some scholars have doubted this attribution. R. Dussaud in 1927 attributed them to Anastasius, and most recently Gunnar Brands (see below, note 203) has also argued more forcefully for an Anastasian attribution; see E. K. Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain,* 93–94. This raises the question of what exactly the emperor did build in Sergiopolis if the walls and reservoirs are not to be attributed to him, nor apparently any church within the walls; ibid., 94. It also relegates Procopius' account to the category of fulsome adulation rather than historical truth. The gem-encrusted cross that he and Theodora sent to Sergiopolis may turn out to be the only reflection of this contribution, although his interest in the saint cannot be doubted; witness, among other things, the church he built for him in Constantinople.

built the tower of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr and possibly the elaborate water system near the tower including the Ḥarbaqa dam, could conceivably have contributed to the water supply in Ruṣāfa, the city of his patron saint.

D

As the reservoirs of Ruṣāfa, including the "great one," are anepigraphic, this has left open the question of the identity of their builder(s). One has, therefore, to fall back on the two sets of literary sources, the Greek and the Arabic. The Greek (Procopius) associates the water system with the Byzantine emperor, while the Arabic (*Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān*) explicitly ascribes not just a water system but the "great reservoir" to the Ghassānid phylarch. The two traditions have been closely examined in this chapter, with reservations expressed concerning the Greek source, Procopius. The Arabic source has been examined from all angles; unlike the Greek source, it derives from a *Chronicle* that is free from the prejudice that always haunts Procopius. As the chief historian of the reign of Justinian, however, he has to be taken into account, because there is always an element of truth in his words.

Perhaps the two traditions can be reconciled. There is no doubt that Justinian accorded Ruṣāfa much attention and had a special interest in its saint. Although there is no explicit statement that he actually built the famous reservoir (and Procopius would have clearly mentioned it if he had), it cannot be ruled out that he contributed something to its water system. The Arabic source, however, does not refer to the water system in general but to the reservoir, especially the "great reservoir" (*al-ṣihrīj al-aʿẓam*). So two different elements in the water system are involved in the discussion, and consequently the emperor and the phylarch could easily have each built a part of the water system. Thus the two literary traditions are not necessarily in opposition to each other. Furthermore, the attestable association of the Ghassānids with Ruṣāfa, that is, the *praetorium,* is dated to the last quarter of the sixth century, long after both Justinian and Procopius had died. Hence the "great reservoir" constructed by the Ghassānid phylarch according to the Arabic source is a late sixth-century one, and this reconciles even further the two literary traditions.

There remains the question of whether a Ghassānid could have built a reservoir so vast and impressive as that revealed by the German archaeological team. The literary source and archaeology both suggest an answer in the affirmative. An echo in the literary source suggests the construction of a reservoir of such description. In the report deriving from *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* the verb used for the construction of the "great reservoir" is not the common verb *banā* but *ṣanaʿa,* a verb from which is derived the term *maṣnaʿ* or *maṣnaʿa,* which means "fortress," "castle," "mansion," and sometimes "reservoir." So the verb implies that something strong and impressive was constructed. It is noteworthy that the later Arab

author Ibn al-ʿAdīm,[202] when describing Ruṣāfa and referring to its reservoir inside the wall, speaks of it as a large *maṣnaʿ* (*maṣnaʿ kabīr*). The use of the term in *Akhbār* could thus be significant and is in any case consonant with the powerful aspect of the main reservoir as revealed by archaeology.

So the vastness and impressiveness of the reservoir should not invalidate or weaken the view that it was built by the Ghassānids. Two of their monuments—the tower at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr and the *praetorium* outside Ruṣāfa—are both impressive. But the latter is the more relevant witness to the close association of the Ghassānids with Ruṣāfa in one aspect of its life, security, and defense. The builders of such an impressive building as the *praetorium* could easily have built the architecturally simpler reservoir. The *praetorium,* so close to the reservoir, is thus crucially relevant to the view that the latter is a Ghassānid structure. All indications point to this conclusion except the lack of an inscription. But if the *praetorium* had been anepigraphic, few would have believed it was built by the Ghassānids, in view of the prevalent myth that they were nomads. The Ghassānid construction of the Ruṣāfa reservoir has to be accepted unless an inscription turns up that invalidates this conclusion. Until then, the reservoir in Ruṣāfa will illustrate the performance by the federate Ghassānids of nonmilitary services in one of the two main pilgrimage centers in Oriens after Jerusalem.

The Praetorium

The Ghassānid structure outside the walls of Sergiopolis has been considered a secular building, a *praetorium,* or audience hall. This has been the dominant view since 1939 when J. Sauvaget contested Musil's view that it was a church. Gunnar Brands has recently argued that the structure is a church.[203] Whether the structure is a secular or a religious building, the fact remains that it is a *Ghassānid* structure that reflects a strong Ghassānid presence around Sergiopolis. The opinion expressed here, that it is a secular building, is consonant with what has long been the dominant view.

The most recent book on Sergiopolis and its saint, by Elizabeth K. Fowden, elegantly reconciles the two perceptions of the structure as both religious and secular. She points out that the church served both as a place of worship and a venue for conferences, referring to "the range of religious, social and political uses to which churches in Late Antique Syria were put." In her view, to suggest that

[202] See Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Bughyat al-Ṭalab fi Tārīkh Ḥalab,* ed. S. Zakkār (Damascus, 1988), I, 113.

[203] See J. Sauvaget, "Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis," *Byzantion* 14 (1939), 115–30; Musil, *Palmyrena,* 323–26; for those who also argued for its being a church, including Samuel Guyer and Ernst Herzfeld, see ibid., appendix X, p. 299. The long appendix on Ruṣāfa in its entirety, including the section on the *praetorium,* was written by Musil's colleague and collaborator Antonin Mendl. For G. Brands' view, see "Der sogenannte Audienzsaal des Mundir in Resafa," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 10 (1998), 211–35.

"church and audience hall were mutually exclusive categories is simply to miss the point."[204]

As the *praetorium* is a Ghassānid building, questions about its function can receive more satisfactory answers as more is known about Ghassānid history. The two preceding books in this series, *BASIC* I, parts 1 and 2, have shed new light on the builder of the *praetorium,* Mundir, and consequently have provided the relevant background for discussing its significance and function in the context of structures and frontier studies. So far, the *praetorium* has stood in splendid isolation, a sphinx to the riddle of which some solutions have been suggested, although presented in a vacuum and naturally tentative. Now with the new data revealed by incontestably authentic pre-Islamic sources, one may discuss the *praetorium* with some precision and concreteness, derivative from the sparse but valuable new data.

A pre-Islamic verse has revealed the identity of the Arab federate tribe that was encamped around Sergiopolis for its protection, Bahrā', which together with other Arab federate tribes were, since A.D. 529, under the command of the Ghassānids. These, however, were left anonymous in the Greek sources, while the Arabic, helpful as they are, do not pinpoint exactly where in Oriens each of these federate groups was settled. Bahrā', it is now known from the verse, was settled around Ruṣāfa under the leadership of the Ghassānids, whose *praetorium* was outside the city. The function of the structure as a *praetorium* now receives clarification, as at least one group and its phylarchs would be frequent visitors to receive orders and to consult with the Ghassānid commander in chief Mundir and his successors.

The *praetorium* was not only a structure with a military function, isolated from the holy city and its pilgrimage activities. One pre-Islamic verse has revealed that Bahrā' was in charge of a path that surrounded Ruṣāfa, whose function has been seen as religious, the circumambulation of the city on certain religious occasions, most probably Easter and the feast of the saint on 15 November. Another verse has suggested that the Ghassānid kings would sometimes make votive offerings to the shrine of the saint, such as the gift of animals, which were left to pasture unmolested in the vicinity of Ruṣāfa. Thus the *praetorium* would have been a venue where religious matters pertaining to the saint and the holy city would be discussed; its lord would appear not only as a soldier defending the city but as one who also cared for it as a religious and pilgrimage center.

It is not difficult to conclude, on the strength of the Ghassānid involvement in the religious life of Ruṣāfa, what the self-image of the Ghassānid lord of the *praetorium* was. He emerged as the secular leader of the Monophysite world at the

[204] Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain,* 168.

conference of Constantinople in 580.[205] It is consonant with his image in the perception of the Monophysite world that his self-image in Oriens as the lord of the *praetorium extra muros* was also that of the guardian of the shrine of the saint to whom his Monophysites were especially devoted, and whose conference in Constantinople he dominated, as is clear from the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus.

The conclusion drawn from an examination of a report in the Arabic sources was that the "great cistern" of Sergiopolis was constructed by a Ghassānid king. This imparts a new dimension to the functions performed by the Ghassānid lord of the *praetorium*—a nonmilitary one. The federate horses defended the city, and their camels revictualed it with food; now the Ghassānid king provides it with an equally important element, water. So this federate and Ghassānid contribution to the material needs of Ruṣāfa may be added to federate contributions to its religious life, represented by the *ṭawāf,* the circumambulation, and by votive offerings.

The well-known inscription νικᾷ ἡ τύχη Ἀλαμουνδάρου is worth a revisit, since its precise interpretation is elusive, especially when applied not to a charioteer but to a Ghassānid king in his *praetorium* outside a holy city.[206] One of its dimensions has not been fully discussed, namely, that it is in Greek, not Arabic. All three Ghassānid inscriptions of the reign of Mundir are in Greek, found at Ḍumayr, Hayyāt, and Ruṣāfa.[207] That no Arabic inscription has been discovered so far may be due to the problem of source survival. For the reign of his father there is the Usays inscription in Arabic and the Ḥarrān inscription in both Arabic and Greek.[208] Arabic is strongly associated with the Ghassānids who reigned after Mundir and who were lauded by such poets as Nābigha and Ḥassān in resounding panegyrics. If the entirely Greek character of the Mundir inscriptions is *not* due to the problem of source survival, it is possible to conclude that Mundir was exclusively involved in the war against the Persians and in the Monophysite problem, neither of which needed Arabic, and he may not have been interested in the poetry of panegyrists, the language of which was Arabic.[209]

The Greek of the inscription, so prominent in the *praetorium* in which Mundir would meet with his Arab federates and their chiefs, calls for another comment. It could argue that some of these Arabs, at least their chiefs, understood Greek, or more cogently that the *praetorium* was the venue not only for Arab

[205] See *BASIC* I.2, 900–910.

[206] For a discussion of this inscription, see *BASIC* I.1, 501–3. For its application as an *acclamatio* to charioteers, see ibid., note 354. See also Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain,* 159ff.

[207] *BASIC* I.1, 489–505.

[208] Ibid., 117–24, 325–31.

[209] An analogous situation obtained in Safavid Persia in the 16th and 17th centuries when poetry withered under a dynasty that was interested in religion and not in literature, for which see E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge, 1930), IV, 24–30.

chiefs but also for non-Arab Byzantine commanders and personalities, such as Justinianus, the *magister militum* through whom Mundir was reconciled with Emperor Justin II.[210] This is consonant with the high rank and prestige of Mundir in the Byzantine army and the possibility that he was actually considered a *stratēlatēs,* a *magister militum.*[211] So the inscription in Greek may have been carved for the eyes of Byzantine military colleagues when they would visit the federate commander in chief for coordinating strategies against the Persians, while the choice of that particular acclamation νικᾷ ἡ τύχη was appropriate for the general whose arms were always attended by victories.

The elucidation of the role and significance of the *praetorium* in both Ghassānid and Byzantine history undertaken in this section provides the right background for the valuable data supplied by the Syriac source on that Ghassānid figure, called variously as Abū Jafna, Jafna, and Nu'mān. He is associated with a major historical event in the history of Persia and Persian-Byzantine relations, the revolt of Bahrām Chūbīn against Chosroes Parvīz and Maurice's extension of help to the Persian king, a transaction in which the Ghassānid king and phylarch played a key role.[212] The statement of the Syriac source that Ruṣāfa was his headquarters has to be accepted because it is no longer an isolated datum with no confirmation. When, a few years after the death of Mundir, another Ghassānid appeared with Ruṣāfa as his headquarters, it is practically certain that his residence must have been this *praetorium,* erected by his predecessor Mundir. The *praetorium* had always been associated only with Mundir, but now the name of a later Ghassānid tenant, Jafna, should be added to that of its original builder, Mundir.

It is possible to conclude from the preceding discussion that Ruṣāfa may have become later in the sixth century the main Ghassānid camp for the prosecution of the war against the Persians which flared up again after the Endless Peace of 561 in the reigns of Justin II, Tiberius, and Maurice. Its strategic position was clear. It was near the Persian frontier, but safely withdrawn from it some 20 km south of the Euphrates, unlike other cities that were either on the Euphrates or close to it, such as Circesium, Zenobia, Callinicum, Sūra, and Barbalissus. It was not the south of Oriens, with Jābiya in the Golan, that was now the right headquarters for the prosecution of the war against the Persians, with a front in the north near the Euphrates. In this period of continual wars with Persia, cities other than Jābiya such as Hierapolis come to the fore as the headquarters of the chief federate phylarch, Jafna.[213] An exact parallel for this shift in military posture was the transfer of the great Umayyad military camp for the prosecution of the war

[210] For the meeting of these two at the shrine of St. Sergius, see *BASIC* I.1, 373–78.

[211] Ibid., 506, 528; see also L. MacCoull, "Notes on Arab Allies as *Foederati* in Inscriptions," *Tyche* 11 (1996), 157–58.

[212] On this, see *BASIC* I.1, 556–60.

[213] See *BASIC* I.2, 930, 934, 935.

against Byzantium from Jābiya in the south, in the Golan, to Dābiq in the north, near Aleppo/Beroea.[214] Such a transfer in the sixth century can be supported by the realization that Sergiopolis was a holy city, an important fact for the morale of the Byzantine army, now a Christian Roman army that was accompanied during its campaigns by priests and that used to shout "Nobiscum Deus," recite the "Kyrie eleison," and sing the "Trisagion" as part of its liturgy of war.[215] Sergius was a military saint, an officer who was martyred not far from the Persian frontier around A.D. 306; furthermore, he was the patron saint of both the imperial Byzantine army and the federate Arab contingent.

Finally, the existence of a major Ghassānid *praetorium* at Ruṣāfa may be related to the federate takeover of the duties of the *limitanei,* one of the main themes of this volume. This takeover has been argued for on the basis of a close examination of certain passages in Procopius. It remained to verify this conclusion and illustrate it whenever possible with cases, such as Ruṣāfa, where such takeovers were in fact made. In the fifth-century *Notitia Dignitatum,* Ruṣāfa appears as a military post at which were stationed the Equites Promoti Indigenae under the *dux* of Syria and Euphratensis.[216] In the decade or so of Mundir's reign, there was erected the *praetorium* of the federates, guarding Ruṣāfa together with other groups of the Inner Shield, represented at least by one such group that the extant sources have revealed—Bahrā'. It is, therefore, possible to assume that the regular Byzantine unit of *stratiōtai* that had defended Ruṣāfa had turned it over to the Arab federates of the Ghassānids. Thus Ruṣāfa takes its place alongside other posts that have been taken over from the *limitanei,* posts such as Sulaymān, in the region of Usays, identified with Mons Jovis where was stationed the Ala Prima Damascena,[217] in Phoenicia Libanensis, and Ḍumayr (where Mundir erected a tower whose inscription has also survived), identified with Thelsee where were stationed the Equites Saraceni.[218]

VI. Salūqiya/Seleucia

This locality in Gaulanitis was captured in the Hasmonean period by Alexander Jannaeus and fortified by Josephus. But after its Herodian period during the reign of Agrippa, little is known about it.[219] So reference to it in the poetry composed for the Ghassānids is of special interest.

[214] This happened during the reign of Caliph Sulaymān, A.D. 715–717.

[215] For this, see *Maurice's Strategikon,* trans. G. T. Dennis (Philadelphia, 1984), 33, 77.

[216] *ND,* Oriens, XXXIII.27.

[217] *ND,* Oriens, XXXII.33. For the identification of Mons Jovis with Usays (Seis), see Dussaud who made this conjecture in *Topographie,* 271. For Mount Usays, see ibid., 374, 371–72, s.v. Djebel Seis.

[218] For Thelsee, see *ND,* Oriens, XXXII.28. For the identification of Ḍumayr (Ḍoumeir) with Thelsee, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* 270.

[219] See Josephus, *The Jewish War,* I.105, II.574, IV.2.

The Ghassānid warrior was a *kataphraktos* who wore breastplates, often referred to as double-plated.[220] In one of the verses of Nābigha, their panegyrist, the poet praises their swords, saying that "they penetrate the double-plated Salūqī," that is, a breastplate made in Seleucia.[221] The question arises of whether the reference is to this Seleucia in Gaulanitis.

Seleucia was a dynastic name, after the Macedonian Seleucus, and consequently there were many Seleucias. There was one on the coast of the Mediterranean, one on the Euphrates (better known as Zeugma), Seleucia on the Tigris, and Seleucia on the Eulaios.[222] There is a chance, however, that the Seleucia referred to by Nābigha was the one in Gaulanitis. The swords of the Ghassānids were cast in a locality called al-Mashārif in southern Trans-Jordan.[223] The locality figured in accounts of the early Muslim conquest, and its adjectival form *al-Mashrafiyy* became the name for a sword in Arabic. Al-Mashārif was not the only locality where swords were made; there was Bostra itself, the capital of the Provincia Arabia. Its swords, the *ṣafā'ih,* "the broad blades" of Buṣrā, were well known in Arabic poetry of this period.[224] So evidently the armor of the Ghassānids was forged locally in the area of their presence. As swords were cast in two places within the phylarchal jurisdiction of the Ghassānids, it is quite likely that breastplates were also forged locally at Seleucia.[225]

A precious passage in Malalas sheds much light on this problem and supports the conclusion that Seleucia in Gaulanitis had an arms factory, a *fabrica.* In his account of the reign of Diocletian, the chronographer states that the emperor had three *fabricae* built in Antioch, one in Edessa, and one in Damascus. Significant is what he says about the one in Edessa, that he had it built in order to supply weaponry for local needs.[226] Oriens was a large diocese, and Antioch, its capital, had the three arms factories. But for outlying provinces in the north and in the

[220] This is clear in the famous ode of ʿAlqama, a panegyric on the Ghassānid Ḥārith, in which he refers to his breastplate as double-plated; in another verse he also refers to the chain breastplates of the Ghassānid warriors. See *Dīwān ʿAlqama,* 44, verse 27 and 45, verse 30.

[221] For the verse, see Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* 3, verse 21. The poet was describing the penetrating force and thrust of the Ghassānid sword and how even a double-plated breastplate made at Seleucia could not withstand it.

[222] Susa, the ancient capital of Persia.

[223] The locality al-Mashārif is well attested in the accounts of the historians of the Muslim conquest of Oriens. It appears in connection with the campaign of Mu'ta in A.D. 628; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* III, 39, and Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* V, 131, s.v.

[224] For reference to the "Swords of Bostra" in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, see al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt,* I, 64, verse 15. It is significant that the poet al-Huṣayn belonged to Ḏubyān, the tribe of the panegyrist of the Ghassānids, Nābigha. The Ghassānids supplied the tribe of their panegyrist with swords cast at Bostra.

[225] Seleucia was visited by Schumacher who gave an account of it in *The Jaulan,* 237–38. The map in the German edition of his work, *Der Dscholan,* is much clearer than the one in the English edition, and there it appears lying some 15 km from the southern tip of Lake Ḥuleh.

[226] *Chronographia,* 307–8; διὰ τὸ τὰ ὅπλα ἐγγὺς χορηγεῖσθαι (ibid., 307, lines 22–23).

south, the emperor had local ones built for providing troops stationed there with their weapons instead of transporting them from Antioch. Damascus apparently functioned as such for the southern sector, but this was around A.D. 300. Thereafter, in the course of two centuries or so, the Arab phylarchal and federate system was perfected for the defense of Oriens, and in 529 the *Limes orientalis* was overhauled, in which the Ghassānid *foederati* were heavily involved. It is therefore natural to suppose that local *fabricae/ergasteria* were built in this southern region and that Seleucia was one of them. The choice of Gaulanitis for it could not have been fortuitous; this was the region where the Ghassānid horses grazed and where their riders were also stationed. Seleucia supplied them with their breastplates. The Ghassānid horsemen would thus start their march for campaigns from their base in Gaulanitis, fully accoutered as *kataphraktoi.*[227]

It is thus possible that Salūqiya in the Golan may be considered a locality where a Byzantine *fabrica* (armory) was located in sixth-century Oriens. This must remain only a possibility since there was another Seleucia in northern Syria, which is known to have had an arms factory in the seventh century and which may have been the one meant by Nābigha when he spoke of the breastplates of Salūqiya. But Seleucia in the Golan had the advantage of being close to the Ghassānid headquarters in the south of Oriens, where the other arms factories in Bostra and Mashārif were located, which supplied the Ghassānids with their weaponry.

The question has been raised whether arms factories (*fabricae*) existed in Oriens in the early seventh century other than the ones in Seleucia in northern Syria.[228] The preceding section of this chapter has revealed that two localities witnessed the existence of such *fabricae,* Bostra and Mashārif, and possibly a third, Salūqiya in the Golan, reference to all of which is owed to the Arabic sources—contemporary, pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. In a fundamental article on these *fabricae* in late antiquity, Simon James raised the question of the attestation of these *fabricae* and their dates.[229] He noted the well-known passage in Malalas which attested the *fabricae* and related them to Diocletian's overhauling of the defense of the Roman Orient after the Persian and the Arab wars, and he also noted their attestation in the *Notitia Dignitatum:* twenty *fabricae* in the western section and

[227] Nābigha, the Ghassānid panegyrist, describes in one of his odes how the Ghassānid king Nuʿmān mounted an offensive against some recalcitrant tribes, Banū Asad. In addition to describing horse and rider, he states that the Ghassānid cavalry contingent started its operation from its base in Gaulanitis; for the poem, see Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* 4, esp. verses 4–8.

[228] See W. E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Muslim Conquests* (Cambridge, 1992), 44. But other Seleucias, especially the one on the Mediterranean, near Antioch, remain a strong rival or candidate as the place at which the Salūqī breastplates referred to in Nābigha's poem were made; on other Seleucias, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* III, 126, s.v. Salūqiyya.

[229] See S. James, "The *fabricae:* State Arms Factories of the Later Roman Empire," in *The Production and Distribution of Roman Military Equipment,* ed. M. C. Bishop, BAR International Series 275 (Oxford, 1985), 257–331, esp. 265.

only fifteen in the eastern.[230] The present volume could throw some light on the rise or development of *fabricae* in the sixth and seventh centuries in Oriens.

The facts most relevant to this question are: (1) the outbreak of the Persian war throughout the sixth century in the reign of every emperor, the climax of which was its outbreak in the reign of Heraclius; (2) and the elevation of the Ghassānids to paramountcy, as the *foederati* of Byzantium, which entailed the special extraordinary command given to the two Ghassānid brothers, Arethas and Abū Karib, especially the former, his elevation to the *basileia* and the *archiphylarchia,* and finally the advancement of the Ghassānids to take over from the *limitanei* the watch over the *Limes orientalis.* In the context of these far-reaching changes in military structure and administration and of the disastrous Persian wars, it is not difficult to conclude that Byzantium either increased the number of *fabricae* for providing the new federate army with its weaponry or developed old ones that already existed. Such may have been the *fabricae* in Bostra and Mashārif. It is noteworthy that these (and possibly Salūqiya) were located in the two provinces that were the headquarters of the two Ghassānid brothers, Arabia and Palaestina Tertia. The mines of the district of Wādī ʿAraba, rich in copper and iron, well known since biblical times, were within the confines of the two provinces.[231] Since Justinian initiated a new Arab and Arabian policy, he may possibly be credited with the rise or development of *fabricae* in Oriens, in support of this initiative. Novel 85 issued in 539 testifies to his deep interest in such *fabricae,* and so it is not impossible that the *fabricae* at Bostra and Mashārif and possibly Salūqiya in the Golan may have been due to the emperor's deep concern for the security of Oriens and to the rise of a new defense system that required the rise or development of such *fabricae.*

Appendix

St. Sergius in Recent Scholarship

After the manuscript of this volume was completed, Elizabeth K. Fowden's book on St. Sergius appeared in 1999, entitled *The Barbarian Plain: St. Sergius between Rome and Iran.*[1] As the present volume has paid special attention to St. Sergius and his city, Sergiopolis/Ruṣāfā, and as Fowden's book pays much attention to the Arabs and their relation to the saint, it is necessary to discuss it in detail. In a review of this book for the *Catholic Historical Review,*[2] I welcomed it as the standard work on St. Sergius, one that will remain such for a long time to come. I also pointed out that, although the author is not an Arabist, she has acquitted herself well. The main objection concerned Fowden's view of the Arabs as nomads, and the attention of the reader was drawn to some inaccuracies

[230] Ibid., 257.

[231] In this connection, references may be made to a specialist *fabricensis* in the East, the ζωγράφος, who left an inscription behind him in Madā'in Ṣāliḥ in Ḥijāz, but the inscription is undated; see *BAFIC,* 477 note 74. Cf. the *zographos* of Sardis in James, "*Fabricae,*" 275.

[1] See E. K. Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain: St. Sergius between Rome and Iran* (Berkeley, 1999).

[2] 86:4 (2000), 650–52.

in the book as well. The more detailed examination of the work in this appendix is presented in the hope that the points raised in it will be attended to in the second edition of this admirable work.

The Nomadic Myth

It is regrettable that Fowden's book appeared before the present volume on the Ghassānids. The previous volume, *BASIC* I.1–2, did not address the question of Ghassānid sedentariness, since it dealt with political, military, and ecclesiastical aspects of Ghassānid history, but the illustrations might have conveyed that these *foederati* of Byzantium were sedentary people and could not have been nomads. The present volume has done this squarely in a long section devoted to this question. The author thus had not had the case for Ghassānid sedentariness laid before her and so has viewed the Ghassānids from a perspective that is still common in certain circles. This view is owed principally to Procopius, who dominated sixth-century Byzantine historiography on the Arabs and whose views have been followed by others. Not being an Arabist, the author has had to work with opinions from writers who focus on nomadism. It is true that not all the Arabs of late antiquity were sedentary, and some *were* pastoralists. When the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium are in question, especially the last and the most important, the Ghassānids, there is no doubt about their sedentary nature. Fowden, however, has extended the concept of nomadism to include them. This misapprehension of the social level that the Ghassānids reached calls for the following observations.

The title *The Barbarian Plain* is misleading in that it transmits to the reader, even before reading the book, the author's perception of the Arabs. It is also a strange title; had it not been for the subtitle, the reader would not have guessed that the book is about a saint. Fowden borrowed the phrase from Procopius, hardly an objective observer of the Arab scene. Thus the title of the book as it reflects the *mise-en-scène* in which the saint and his cult flourished suggests from the very beginning Arab nomadism and barbarism. Even a title such as *The Saracen Plain* might have been slightly better, since the term barbarian, more than Saracen, carried the well-known pejorative overtones among members of the Graeco-Roman establishment. It was the antonym of Greek (civilized), and the two conjugate terms had been so hallowed in the usage of antiquity that even Aristotle did not prove immune to their spell.

The truth about this "barbarian plain" is not so simple. No doubt, some Arab pastoralists roamed about the region, but Sergiopolis itself was protected by the powerful Ghassānid *foederati,* a sedentary group who were zealous Christians with a special relationship to the saint. Newcomers such as Bahrā', identified in *BASIC* II.1 as part of the Inner Shield of Arab federates, also protected the shrine, but, as newcomers from Arabia, they may have been only recently sedentarized. Other *foederati* had been longer than they in the service of Byzantium and had been consequently subjected to the sedentarizing influences that emanated from serving in the Byzantine army; thus they had absorbed many aspects of sedentary life in Oriens of which service in the army was only one.[3]

This misconception of the Ghassānids permeates the entire section on these *foeder-*

[3] But neither Ghassān nor Bahrā', the main Christian Arab federate groups, can be called barbarians as the title of Fowden's book would clearly suggest.

ati; but when nomadism is not referred to, this section is full of insights. The misconception has, however, generated some erroneous views which should be pointed out.

The Ghassānids are rarely referred to in the sources as Banū Ghassān, which is an erroneous appellation.[4] They are referred to as Ghassānids or much less often as Ghassānians, and the former is firmly established in spite of its erroneous etymology. The employment of Banū Ghassān in the book seems to be used in order to confirm the author's view that the Ghassānids were nomads. Etymologically, Ghassān is not the name of a person but of the spring of water after which the Ghassānids came to be known, although the term later became a personal name. Its employment in the book implies that Ghassān was an eponym and that the Ghassānids were his descendants in much the same way that the term *banū* is used to indicate pastoralist tribes.

The author speaks of "tribal churches" in connection with a group in Ḥīra, who built a church called in the sources Bī ʿat/Banī Zimmān.[5] This is a misunderstanding of the implication of the term. The group who built the church belonged to the most sedentary center of pre-Islamic Arabia, namely, Ḥīra, and its inhabitants, composed of various Arab groups, were sedentary Arabs called ʿIbād. In this context, the term means that the family or the group endowed or built a church and so it carried its name as donors or benefactors; this does not, however, mean that it was a church in which only that particular group prayed. The term Banī Zimmān in Bī ʿat Banī Zimmān was simply a way of identifying or referring to the church.[6] Because Banū/Banī Zimmān of Ḥīra belonged ultimately to the large Azd group to whom the Ghassānids of Oriens also did, the author chose to refer to the Ghassānids not as such but as Banū Ghassān, which further suggests to the reader that the nature of Ghassānid society was tribal.

Having done this, Fowden then carries her concept of the tribal church—which might be described as the tribalization of Arab federate ecclesiastical architecture—to the church of Mundir, the famous phylarch and king, referred to in the letter of the archimandrites as "The church of the glorious, Christ-loving patrician, Mundir."[7] The distinguished Ghassānid, apparently *more Arabico,* endowed the church or built it, and so the Monophysites, who knew of his stature and services to the Monophysite cause, wanted to single him out for distinction or simply to refer to the church as his, and as such apparently it was known. This does not mean that it was a church in which only the phylarch or his retinue or his household prayed, or it may have been a private chapel for the Ghassānid royal house, but this is a far cry from its being a tribal church with the implication that this appellation carries.[8]

[4] For such employment of this term in *The Barbarian Plain,* see 1, 141, 161.

[5] So it appears in Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab,* ed. ʿA. Hārūn (Cairo, 1962), 374. In Balādurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān,* ed. S. Munajjid (Cairo, n.d.), 345, it appears as Bī ʿat Banī Māzin, the form chosen in *The Barbarian Plain,* 161. Both appellations are correct, and both Zimmān and Mazin belong to the Azd.

[6] The name Rockefeller Plaza or Center in New York does not imply that it is a family structure for the exclusive use of the Rockefellers. In fact, those pre-Islamic Arab founders or endowers of churches are *mutatis mutandis* not unlike the cultural philanthropists of modern times after whom foundations and universities are named.

[7] *The Barbarian Plain,* 164.

[8] For what the Monastery of the Ghassānids (which is also listed in the letter of the Archimandrites) may mean, see *BASIC* I.2, 833–35.

"Discretion"[9] is recommended regarding *BASIC* I.2, but the basis of this recommendation is not clear. Perhaps it is related to Fowden's endeavor "to bring into the picture the *pastoral* dimension of the Ghassānid confederation." This is consonant with the romantic view of the Ghassānids, which I have termed "the nomadization or pastoralization of Ghassānid history," especially as Fowden says in the following sentence that the author of *BASIC* I.1–2 "underscored the sophistication of . . . the Ghassānid *elite.*"[10]

In *BASIC,* I presented for the first time in contemporary scholarship a detailed and sequential account of Ghassānid ecclesiastical history, based mainly on authentic Syriac documents. In so doing, I was also fulfilling a wish expressed by Syrologists that the neglected *Monophysite documents* be used by historians for constructing the history of that Christian denomination.[11] Writing the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids along different lines would have been a falsification of that history, and the present volume has confirmed the position on the Ghassānids previously taken.

Consonant with Fowden's view of the Ghassānids and the Arab *foederati* as nomads is her evocation of what she believes is a parallel, namely, the case of the Ṣakhr or Banū Ṣakhr, a pastoralist tribe in Bilād al-Shām in the twentieth-century Syrian steppe.[12] The *shaykh* of the tribe apparently built in the 1920s a *qaṣr* that was used for a variety of functions. The *shaykh,* according to her source, lived in a tent nearby, although the *qaṣr* was also used as family headquarters. On the basis of this single solitary instance from the twentieth century, the author drew the conclusion that the Ghassānids and the other *foederati* of Byzantium were nomads, not unlike the Ṣakhr tribe, and so whatever structures are ascribed to them are not evidence of sedentariness.

This is clearly the fallacy of false analogy. In the case of the Ṣakhr, it is known that they were pastoralists; in the case of the Ghassānids, no one has called them pastoralists except those who follow Procopius. Everything about the history of the Ghassānids for a century and a half in the service of Byzantium is utterly unlike the history of the Ṣakhr or Banū Ṣakhr, and so that related operation of *mutatis mutandis* usually employed for making the analogy valid does not yield the conclusion desired by those who wish to liken the Ghassānids to the Banū Ṣakhr. Fowden is not the only one who does this, and indeed she may have borrowed the analogy from others who have employed the same idiom. As the present volume has clinched the point and argued for the sedentariness of the Ghassānids, it is superfluous to say more.

The author treats in the same vein the first group of *foederati* in the service of Byzantium, the fourth-century Tanūkhids.[13] *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (*BAFOC*) has shown the Tanūkhids to be *foederati,* orthodox Christian defenders of the Roman *limes,* and the builders of various structures, of which the religious ones, monasteries and churches, are especially important, documented in the Arabic sources.

[9] *The Barbarian Plain,* 142 note 40.

[10] For both quotations, see ibid., 142 (emphasis added).

[11] See A. Van Roey and P. Allen, *Monophysite Texts of the Sixth Century,* Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 56 (Leuven, 1994), x. *BASIC* I.2 was preceded in the fulfillment of that wish by Aloys Grillmeier, whose work appeared six years before *BASIC* I.2; see his *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche,* II.2 (Freiburg, 1989). Both parts of *BASIC* I were in press before *Monophysite Texts of the Sixth Century* appeared in 1994.

[12] *The Barbarian Plain,* 146 note 56.

[13] Ibid., 163 note 118.

Whatever their level of pastoralism before they crossed the *limes,* it would have been diluted or completely shaken off by service in the Roman army and attachment to Christianity, an urban religion. If they had been semisedentary in the fourth century, they would have become completely sedentarized by the seventh, after being subjected for three long centuries to the twofold sedentarizing influences emanating from the Roman army and the Christian church. The author quotes from *BAFOC* and considers that the views held there sweep away what she calls the "gray area," but the reasoning is not clear and so not easy to follow.

Some Inaccuracies

In addition to the nomadization or bedouinization of the Arab *foederati* and the tribalization of the Arab federate ecclesiastical architecture, the book under discussion has a few inaccuracies; they will be presented in the order in which they appear in the work.

Fowden questions the truth of the statement in *BASIC* I.1, 953 that Sergius was martyred "on the Euphrates front where he was stationed against the Persians."[14] The statement was made in connection with my conclusion that the main interest of the Byzantine emperors in Sergius was their conviction that he was the palladium of Byzantium in the Persian wars, which flared up suddenly in the sixth century in the reign of every emperor. Since Sergius was assigned to Oriens, I assumed he was a soldier in the army of the Orient, which faced Persia, and, without saying that he actually fought the Persians, I concluded that the place of his burial, Sergiopolis, was enough to arouse imperial interest in the saint as a palladium against Persia.

The author may have thought I implied that Sergius actually fought the Persians, but, most probably, as she gave a new interpretation of the *passio,* the implication of my statement was unacceptable to her. I have no strong views on where or when Sergius was martyred, or by which emperor. I simply followed A. H. M. Jones in his interpretation of the *passio* with whom she evidently disagrees.[15] She may be right rather than Jones, but it is irrelevant to my conclusion on why the emperors were interested in Sergius, a matter more important for political history than the place and date of his martyrdom.

There is some confusion concerning Ghassānid-Byzantine relations involving the two dates,[16] A.D. 502 and 529. There is no doubt that 502 witnessed the first treaty between Ghassān and Byzantium during the reign of Emperor Anastasius, but the Ghassānids in Oriens were one among many other groups of *foederati* including the Salīḥids whom they had defeated. The Ghassānid involvement in 502 is attested in Theophanes by the attack conducted by the Ghassānid Gabala, together with two Ḥujrid Kindites, Maʿdīkarib and Ḥujr.[17] The year 529 witnessed the elevation of the Ghassānid phylarch Arethas to the *basileia* and the *archiphylarchia.* What is in dispute is the identity of the phylarch called Arethas, who is mentioned by Theophanes in the treaty with Anastasius in 502. I have argued with plenty of evidence, especially because of his patronymic, that he was not the Ḥujrid Arethas but the Jafnid Arethas: see *BASIC* I.1, 3–12.

[14] Ibid., 13 note 10.
[15] Ibid., 13 note 14.
[16] Ibid., 64 and note 21.
[17] Theophanes, *Chronographia,* ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), I, 141.

The argument advanced by C. Robin, to whom Fowden refers, favors a Ḥujrid Arethas, but he wrote his article unaware that I had attended to the problems he dealt with as early as 1958 in an article in *Der Islam,* especially its appendix.[18] The problem is not a "knotty one" as Fowden says. It is a haplography on the part of Theophanes, occasioned by the identity that obtained in the names of the two chiefs, the Ḥujrid and the Jafnid, each of whom was called Arethas.

Fowden rightly warns against the identity of some Arabs, mentioned by John Moschus, as allied with the Ghassānids, but somewhat hesitatingly.[19] I had already argued for the position she has espoused in detail in *BASIC* I.1, 600–602.

Fowden seems to doubt the fidelity of the Ghassānids[20] to Byzantium in spite of the substantial articles written as early as the 1950s, let alone the two volumes of *BASIC* I. Perhaps she was only reflecting what Chalcedonian Byzantium felt about the Monophysite Ghassānids.

Two pages in *The Barbarian Plain* illustrate most strikingly the author's dependence on other opinions when it comes to Arabic and *Arabica.*[21] They are most unfortunate examples of such dependence, in this case on L. Conrad's analysis and translation of two poems by Ḥassān ibn-Thābit. Fowden not only quotes his English version which abounds with mistakes but also repeats his questionable view that there was an anonymous reviser of Ḥassān's poems, and translates *quṣūr,* not as correctly and traditionally done, but as compounds. All these mistakes have been pointed out in an appendix in this volume devoted to the examination of Conrad on Ḥassān.[22]

The section on al-Ramthāniyya, the site in the Golan excavated and studied by Claudine Dauphin,[23] also follows Conrad. The site is very interesting, but the date A.D. 377 is too early for it to be Ghassānid. So the conclusions drawn from it as a Ghassānid site cannot be accepted.

Fowden thinks that Sharāḥīl, the phylarch of Ḥarrān who built the *martyrion* for the Baptist, is unattested as a Ghassānid name and hence he may not be Ghassānid. Sharāḥīl is in fact attested as a Ghassānid name.[24]

The well-known Ghassānid Mundir was indeed exiled to Sicily but not his son, Nuʿmān.[25]

Minor inaccuracies, possibly misprints: for Hawrān, read Jawlān as the region where Jābiya was. For *qadi,* read *qāʾid.*[26]

[18] See "Ghassān and Byzantium: A New *terminus a quo,*" *Der Islam* 33 (1958), 232–55.

[19] *The Barbarian Plain,* 123 note 126.

[20] Ibid., 133.

[21] Ibid., 145–46.

[22] See below, 291–302.

[23] *The Barbarian Plain,* 146–49.

[24] Ibid., 163. For Sharāḥīl as a Ghassānid name, see Hishām al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-Nasab,* ed. N. Ḥasan (Beirut, 1989), 619. Another version of the name, Sharaḥbīl or Shuraḥbīl, is attested as the name of the Ghassānid who intercepted the Prophet Muḥammad's envoy to Bostra in Oriens, for whom see al-Wāqidī, *The Kitāb al-Maghāzī of al-Wāqidī,* ed. M. Jones (Oxford, 1966), II, 755. A third Sharāḥīl is attested in Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī as king/phylarch, for whom see *Tārīkh,* 80; for Ḥamza and his *Tārīkh,* see below, 306–41.

[25] *The Barbarian Plain,* 173; on Nuʿmān, see *BASIC* I.1, 533–34.

[26] *The Barbarian Plain,* 169, 173.

As I noted in the review of this book in the *Catholic Historical Review,* this study of St. Sergius will remain the standard one for a long time to come. With the exception of these observations on the section that deals with the Arabs in the book, Fowden's work is an important contribution to our understanding of the saint and his city. Even in the section on the Arabs, Fowden's elegant solution of the problem posed by the Ghassānid structure outside Sergiopolis has already been acknowledged,[27] and so must her insights in the interpretation of the famous Mundir inscription in that structure.[28]

[27] See above, 129–30.
[28] *The Barbarian Plain,* 155–72.

IV

Ghassānid Religious Architecture: The Churches and the Monasteries

I. Introduction

Of the architectural achievement of the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth and fifth centuries, the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids respectively, almost nothing has survived. Of the Ghassānids there are only some remains, namely, the Ghassānid monastery tower of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī and the secular *praetorium extra muros* outside Sergiopolis/Ruṣāfa, a reflection of the special place the Ghassānids had in the history of Arab federate architecture in Byzantine Oriens. This is confirmed in the literary sources, which, even though they belong to the later Islamic period, do convey the strong impression the Ghassānids had made on those who inherited their structures and those who wrote about them. Such is the chapter on the Ghassānids in Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, and the reference to them in *Aghānī* as one of three groups of Arabs in pre-Islamic times who excelled in building religious structures. Thus the literary-archaeological confrontation elucidates the role of the Ghassānids in the history of Arab federate architecture. Because of this role and because of its relevance to the history of art and architecture in Byzantine Oriens and also to the more important problem of Umayyad art, it needs and deserves special accounting.[1]

The Ghassānids inherited a tradition of religious architecture that their predecessors in Oriens—the Tanūkhids and the Salīḥids—had started.[2] Hence they fell heirs to a tradition already established among the Christianized *foederati* of

[1] This section presents a general account of factors operative in the flowering of Arab Ghassānid religious architecture in the 6th century. It complements the discussion in the part devoted to Ḥamza, which will be presented in the context of source criticism, vouching for the reliability of that Arabic source. For an enumeration that sums up these factors, see below, 147–48. The Ghassānids wrote a little-known but important chapter in the history of architecture in Oriens. A thorough study of this contribution from all possible angles and in all contexts is therefore called for.

[2] For Tanūkhid and Salīḥid structures, see *BAFOC,* 433–35 and *BAFIC,* 289–95. Only the Salīḥid Dayr Dāwūd, the monastery of David, has survived; see ibid., 297–99. Neither the Tanūkhids nor the Salīḥids were singled out as the Ghassānids were in the Arabic literary sources as great builders.

Byzantium which they continued and developed. They were the most powerful and influential of these three groups of *foederati,* much more so than the Tanūkhids and the Salīḥids. This power derived from the fact that Byzantium made their king Arethas in 529 the commander in chief of all federate Arab forces in Oriens. This position of being supreme phylarch and king in Oriens carried with it the extension of their power from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat. The Ghassānids were also zealous Christians for whom the construction of churches and monasteries was a natural accompaniment to the extension of their power over this vast limitrophe. Thus the proliferation of churches and monasteries followed this enhancement in their political and military power.

Most important in this connection was the resuscitation, some ten years after 529, of the Monophysite church to which the Ghassānids belonged and the appointment of an all-presiding bishop to look after the spiritual needs of the Ghassānid limitrophe and beyond into western Arabia, especially Ḥijāz. This was Theodore, most probably an Arab. An all-powerful episcopal structure was established within which the construction of religious buildings progressed, part of the duties of a bishop.[3] The following are the features of his episcopate relevant to these structures.

After a period of persecution, at least so viewed from the point of view of Monophysite writers, that church was in a mood of euphoria, anxious to resurrect its clergy and its structures. Hence the number of consecrations and buildings that followed, in which Theodore was naturally involved. The newly consecrated bishop lived some thirty more years, sufficient for the completion of his projects, undertaken within the framework of a well-organized institutional structure, the Ghassānid episcopate. Another feature was the military and political support of the Ghassānid phylarchs behind the work of the bishop, a contemporary of the two fiery and energetic brothers, Arethas and Abū Karib, the former of whom was the moving spirit behind the revival of the Monophysite church. A perfect harmonious relation obtained between bishop and phylarch in furthering the cause of their church.

The spread of religious architecture in the limitrophe was also consonant with the spirit of the Ghassānid army. It was an army of crusaders who were fighting pagans and fire-worshipers. Hence the appearance of religious structures in the camps of the Ghassānid army in the limitrophe. When Arethas' son Jabala died in battle in 554, he buried him in the *martyrion* near Qinnasrīn/Chalcis.[4] Mundir's victorious campaign against Ḥīra was hailed as the victory of the Cross. From the spoils of Ḥīra he endowed churches and monasteries.[5] After the great

[3] For Theodore, see *BASIC* I.2, 771–74. For a more detailed treatment, see below, 176–82.
[4] *BASIC* I.1, 241–43.
[5] Ibid., 381, lines 18–19.

victory of 554 over the Lakhmid Mundir, some Ghassānid soldiers opted for a monastic life around St. Simeon the Younger, who helped them (or so they believed) in the battle.[6]

The zeal of the Ghassānids for building religious structures must have been enhanced by the extraordinary events that took place in the South Arabian city of Najrān, inhabited by the Arab group of Balḥārith.[7] These were relatives whom they knew before they emigrated from South Arabia. When the martyrdoms of Najrān took place in the 520s, many of the Najrānites fled to the Ghassānids, as confirmed by the letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, written from the Ghassānid capital Jābiya, about these martyrdoms.[8] The axis Najrān-Jābiya was thus firmly established with these martyrdoms; hence the Balḥārith presence in Ghassānland with such places as Najrān in Trachonitis and Dayr Najrān near Bostra. Most important was the availability of the relics of these martyrs and the rise of *martyria* in the literal sense in Ghassānland, of which Maḥajja in Batanaea most probably was one.[9]

Not only within the Ghassānid and Arab framework in Oriens and the Arabian Peninsula can these structures be explained but also with reference to Constantinople and Anatolia. A leading Monophysite, John of Ephesus, was living in both places. He knew the Ghassānids well and indeed was their most important contemporary historian. His function as the propagator of Christianity in Anatolia among pagan pockets and his erection of churches and monasteries is well known. So it is possible that this bishop, who extended financial aid for the building of churches and monasteries in Anatolia, may have remembered the "mailed fist" of his church, the Ghassānids, and so extended financial aid to them in Oriens.[10]

Even more important was Emperor Justinian, the contemporary of Theodore, who reigned even longer than Theodore did as bishop. During his reign,

[6] Ibid., 247. Compare the case of the Iberian travelers who were on their way to a pilgrimage in the Holy Land and who, when they stopped at the Miraculous Mountain of Simeon the Younger, decided to become monks; see *La vie ancienne de Syméon Stylite le jeune,* ed. and trans. P. van den Ven (Brussels, 1962), I, 81.

[7] See the present writer in *The Martyrs of Najrān* (Brussels, 1971), 34–64.

[8] The phrase "Those who came from Najrān related" is repeated often in the letter; see ibid., 44, 48, 60, 61, 62.

[9] On Maḥajja as a pilgrimage site, see *BASIC* I.2, 828.

[10] The evangelizing activity of John of Ephesus has been well discussed in F. Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World at the End of Antiquity: The Case of Rural Anatolia and Greece," *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985), 327–52, esp. 322–34. The age of Justinian presented the remarkable spectacle of the spread of Christianity by Monophysite leaders, such as John of Ephesus in Anatolia, and in Oriens the two newly consecrated bishops of the movement around 540, Jacob Baradeus and Theodore. This was more true of the latter since Jacob was already resurrecting established churches and monasteries, the hierarchy of which had been thinned during a period of persecution, while Theodore, in addition to doing the same in Oriens, was spreading the faith beyond the limits of the empire in the Arabian Peninsula. The evangelistic efforts of Theodore in Arabia complement those of John of Ephesus in Anatolia in wiping out pagan pockets.

some thirty-four churches were built or rebuilt in Constantinople, which ca. 536 contained some seventy monasteries. Above all, Justinian was the builder of Hagia Sophia. All this must have been seen by the Ghassānid phylarch and king Arethas when he visited Constantinople more than once, and this must have inspired him to act similarly.

Not only in Constantinople but also in and around Ghassānland, in Oriens, the emperor engaged in building activities that must have inspired imitation by his Ghassānid vassals, whether churches, such as the completion of the Nea Ecclesia in Jerusalem, or the rebuilding and fortification of monasteries, such as St. Catherine's on Mount Sinai and St. Sabas in the Desert of Juda. The consecration of the Nea Ecclesia may even have been attended by Arethas, who was living nearby, just as his father Jabala may have attended the consecration of the cathedral of Bostra in 513, performed by the Monophysite patriarch Severus, and witnessed by the prominent figures of that denomination, including Philoxenos of Mabboug.[11]

The sixth century was the golden age of Byzantine art and architecture, the age of Justinian. The provinces followed the example of the capital, Constantinople, both artistically and in the proliferation of religious structures. This is reflected in the cities and towns around Ghassānland: Gerasa had seven churches, and Umm al-Jimāl had some seventeen, not all of which can be dated to the sixth century.[12]

The prosperity[13] of the region in this century may have also contributed to an efflorescence of religious architecture. The outbreak of the Persian wars in the reign of Justin, and continuing hostilities in the reign of every emperor until Heraclius, diverted commerce from the Mesopotamian to the west Arabian route, resulting in a feverish caravan trade that involved the two provinces, Arabia and

[11] On the consecration of the cathedral of Bostra, see *BASIC* I.2, 699. On whether the church dedicated to Sergius and Bacchus was the cathedral or a pilgrimage church, see C. Foss, "Syria in Transition, A.D. 550–750," *DOP* 51 (1997), 240–41. Ghassānid presence at the dedication of churches is attested despite the paucity of the sources and the problem of source survival. Mundir, the son of Arethas, attended the dedication of the church at Evaria/Ḥuwwārīn in 582 to which he had been invited; see below, 152.

[12] The increase in building activity in Oriens during this period is borne out by the recent archaeological discoveries in Jordan, especially by M. Piccirillo, in Madaba, Mount Nebo, and Mayfa'a in the Provincia Arabia, the provincial headquarters of the Ghassānids. Other parts of Oriens, too, were the scene of similar building activity and witnessed the same increase in religious architecture, such as the area of the Miraculous Mountain of St. Simeon the Younger after the Second Persian War of Justinian's reign; see F. Trombley, "Religious Transition in Sixth-Century Syria," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 20 (1994), 187.

[13] The prosperity of the region and its relation to its artistic life was noted by scholars, one of whom attributed this partly to the loss of portions of the Roman West to the Germanic tribes, such as Africa/Tunisia to the Vandals and the consequent loss of its oil and wines, which gave added importance to those produced in Oriens; see J. Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens de Syrie* (Paris, 1947), 304. Clive Foss understood well the value of the Ghassānids for the prosperity of the region; see his "Syria in Transition," 250–52.

Palaestina Tertia.[14] Bostra, one of the termini of the trade routes, lay in the Provincia Arabia, while it was through Palaestina Tertia that the second terminus, Gaza, was accessible. The two brothers Arethas and Abū Karib were installed in these two provinces respectively, and so they contributed to the prosperity of this trade by their protection of caravan routes and also by their involvement in the well-known fairs of the region, especially the *sūq,* the fair of Bostra.[15]

Finally, Ghassānid Christianity, which found expression in religious structures, must have been enhanced in some way by the geographical fact that Ghassānland was contiguous to the Holy Land. Palaestina Tertia under Abū Karib comprised Sinai, the scene of the Decalogue, and Madyan/Midian, the home of Jethro and Seppora. Within the Provincia Arabia lay the locality that witnessed the ministry of John the Baptist beyond the Jordan in Perea (according to John 10:40); and in Palaestina Secunda in the Golan, the Ghassānids lived in a region in which Jesus performed two of his early miracles.[16]

Before the accession of Justinian in 527, both Anatolia and Oriens were far from being entirely Christianized, as there remained many pockets of paganism in those regions.[17] Nothing illustrates better the contrast between this picture and that of Oriens after the reign of Justinian than the revelation in the letter of the Monophysite archimandrites of the astounding number of 137 monasteries only some forty years after the accession of Justinian and in the Provincia Arabia alone, not counting the many other provinces of the diocese of Oriens. Another letter[18] sent to the Monophysite priests involved the churches, not the monasteries, of the Monophysites, but the response to it has not survived; if it had, it would have revealed a large number of *churches* in the Provincia Arabia. The rise of the Ghassānids to paramountcy in Oriens took place two years after the accession of Justinian, and they were instrumental in the resuscitation of the Monophysite church from 540 on. In the exchange of these letters they were heavily involved, and so this contemporary document of 137 monasteries is the best and most concrete evidence for the contribution of the Ghassānids to religious architecture in Oriens.[19]

To sum up: a rare conjunction of events and circumstances explains the flowering of religious architecture under the Ghassānids: the age of Justinian in

[14] See also P. Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton, N.J., 1988).

[15] The Ghassānids and the *sūq* (fair) of Bostra will be treated in detail in *BASIC* II.2; for the time being, see S. Al-Afghānī, *Aswāq al-ʿArab* (Damascus, 1960).

[16] On the Ghassānids and the Holy Land, see below, 86–87.

[17] See F. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 470–527* (Leiden, 1995), II, 1–204. The chronological terminus of the book is A.D. 527, the year of Justinian's accession. The choice of the date is significant. The author presumably wanted to indicate that the process of Christianization experienced an acceleration during the reign of Justinian, which is certainly true. This section and the following illustrate this process partly through the instrumentality of the Ghassānids.

[18] See *BASIC* I.2, 821.

[19] For the three letters and the exchange, see ibid., 809–24.

art and architecture; the personalities, secular and ecclesiastical, who were contemporaries and long-lived (Theodore, John of Ephesus, Arethas, and Abū Karib); events such as the martyrdoms of Najrān; circumstances and other factors such as the prosperity of the region; and its inspiring proximity to the Holy Land.

II. The Churches

Christianity is a religion that cannot exist without a church, a priest, and a holy book. Although the problem of the existence of the third is still unresolved, there is no doubt that the Arab church of the federate Ghassānids had its churches, none of which have survived as intact buildings or ruins, but are attested in the literary and epigraphic sources. It is the aim of this section to recover these references and draw a picture of the Ghassānid churches in all possible dimensions.[20]

The most important and clear reference to Ghassānid churches comes in the 560s in the letters that were exchanged between the Monophysite hierarchy that condemned the tritheistic heresy and the priests and monks of the Provincia Arabia, the headquarters of the supreme Ghassānid phylarch. One of the letters addressed by the bishops was answered by the abbots, who included their names and the location of their monasteries.[21] The second letter addressed to the priests and presbyters of the churches in the Provincia has survived, but the reply has not. This is most unfortunate since just as the reply of the monks revealed the existence of some 137 monasteries in the Provincia and the neighboring areas alone,[22] the reply of the priests and the presbyters would have revealed their names and a large number of churches and their locations. These would have been Monophysite churches, some Ghassānid, in much the same way that the letter of the archimandrites has revealed some Ghassānid monasteries. However, their existence is clearly implied although not expressed, and the analysis of references in the sources to specific Ghassānid churches confirms this conclusion.

In addition to the letter, the formal document emanating from the bishops

[20] This paragraph was written before Father M. Piccirillo discovered and excavated the complex of Ghassānid churches at Nitil, in the Madaba region in Trans-Jordan, and before Gunnar Brands argued that the Ghassānid structure outside Sergiopolis is not a secular building, *praetorium*/audience hall, but a church, on which see above, xv. The work of these two scholars is a welcome surprise. It is a solid background for the sections that follow on Ghassānid religious structures, reference to which is derivative from the literary sources, Syriac and Arabic, and it represents the fruitful literary-archaeological confrontation, always desired in such cases. Although these sections are based on authentic literary sources, the archaeological evidence is crucial for validation, hence the importance of the structures at Nitl and Sergiopolis. I can only make brief reference to both, since work on the former is ongoing and is still in its initial stages, while the status of the latter awaits the reaction of art historians on the recent conclusions of the author.

[21] On this letter, see *BASIC* I.2, 821.

[22] The reader is reminded that the 137 monasteries documented in the letter of the archimandrites were Monophysite but not all Ghassānid. The strictly Ghassānid, or associated with the Ghassānids, were specified in *BASIC* I.1, 824–38 and 998–99.

that condemned tritheism, a reference in the later historian Michael the Syrian has been analyzed in the preceding volume. When Emperor Justin II excommunicated the Monophysite patriarch Paul the Black and ordered that his name be erased from the diptychs, the latter took refuge at the court of the Ghassānid phylarch Arethas. The phylarch supported him and ordered his name to be proclaimed in the churches of the Διακρινόμενοι and to be inscribed in the diptychs.[23] It has been argued, and the point has been understood by others, that Arethas could order reinscription only in the churches of his own jurisdiction, that is, the federate Arab churches;[24] hence the value of this specific reference to churches in Michael's account. The federate church at Ḥarrān in Trachonitis is documented indubitably by an inscription, which thus makes possible the fruitful confrontation between the Syriac literary source and the Arabic/Greek inscription.[25] It was such churches that Arethas must have had in mind when he ordered the reinscription of the name of Paul in their diptychs.

Confirmation of a different kind is also available in the late Syriac work of Bar-Hebraeus. During the ʿAbbāsid period and after the *translatio imperii* from Damascus to Baghdad, the caliph al-Mahdī had his well-known encounter with the remnants of the Tanūkhids in the region of Qinnasrīn/Chalcis. After a bloody encounter with their chief Maḥaṭṭa, who was beheaded on his refusal to convert to Islam, the caliph ordered the destruction of the Tanūkhid churches.[26] Here is a clear reference to the *foederati* of the fourth century who preserved until the eighth century the churches they had built in the Byzantine period. The Salīḥids, who superseded them as the *foederati* of Byzantium in the fifth century, also built their churches; and surely the Ghassānids, the most powerful and influential of all *foederati,* must have erected many churches, as expressed and implied in the Syriac literary sources.

III. List of Attested Churches

The list established here consists of seven churches, whose Ghassānid affiliation ranges from the absolutely certain to the probable and the possible. They lay in the Provincia Arabia, Palaestina Secunda, Palaestina Tertia, Phoenicia Libanensis, and Syria Prima.

The Church of St. Sergius

The church was located in Jābiya, the capital of the Ghassānids in the Golan. As such, Jābiya must have had a number of churches and monasteries. The sources, however, speak of only one church, or possibly two, in Jābiya.

[23] Ibid., 802. Διακρινόμενοι was a term that described the Monophysites.
[24] Ibid., 803. So understood by R. Aigrain, "Arabie," *DHGE* III, 1207.
[25] On the church at Ḥarrān, see *BASIC* I.1, 325–31; also *BASIC* I.2, 803 note 26.
[26] See *BAFOC,* 423–32.

1. The letter of Peter of Callinicum, analyzed in a previous volume, refers to the church in Jābiya dedicated to St. Sergius, the patron saint of the Ghassānids.[27]

2. In the letter of the archimandrites of the Provincia Arabia written in 570 concerning the tritheistic heresy, one of the signatories was Eustathius, who described himself as the priest of the church of the Ghassānid king Mundir.[28] This church, of unknown location, may have been in Jābiya or somewhere else.

There is only one, or possibly two, references to churches in Jābiya. The town, however, must have had more. It has been argued in a previous volume that it was the episcopal see of Theodore,[29] the bishop of the Ghassānids during the reign of Justinian; hence there must have been at Jābiya also a slightly more impressive church than the ordinary one, built for the bishop. In the Islamic tradition, a *ḥadith* is ascribed to Ibn ʿAbbas, the cousin of the Prophet Muḥammad and an authority on Koranic exegesis, on Jābiya as the place where the "souls of the faithful reside," while those of the infidels reside in Barhūt in Ḥaḍramawt.[30] Whatever this may exactly mean, it suggests that the town possessed a certain holiness which the Arabs of Islamic times remembered. Christian Najrān, too, was considered a holy city in early Islamic times.[31]

The Church of Ghassān: *Bīʿat* Ghassān

Reference to this church comes from an unexpected source, a work on the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad, namely, al-Iṣāba.[32] In the entry titled "Arṭabān," it is stated that "Arṭabān" had been a *shammās fī bīʿat Ghassān,* a deacon at the church of Ghassān. It is further stated that he had been taken prisoner and that in the distribution of the spoils, he was allotted to someone from the tribe of Muzayna named ʿAbd-Allah ibn-Durra or Dirra.[33]

The implication of these statements is that during an expedition in which the tribe of Muzayna took part, presumably against a Christian Arab group, Arṭabān was taken prisoner. Where the military expedition took place, whether in Byzantine territory or northern Ḥijāz, is not clear; most probably it was in Palaestina Tertia. But the statement, brief as it is, is instructive. It adds one more church to the list of those built or endowed by the Ghassānids in an area close to the center of the nascent Muslim state, Medina; the church obviously had a hierarchy,

[27] See *BASIC* I.2, 931.

[28] Ibid., 830, no. 19.

[29] Ibid., 852 and 893–94.

[30] For the *ḥadīth,* see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān,* 5 vols. (Beirut, 1955–57), s.v. Djabiya.

[31] On the angels, said to descend on Najrān, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. Najrān, V, 269.

[32] See Ibn Ḥajar al- ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Isāba fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥāba* (Cairo, *hijrī* 1328, A.D. 1910), I, 102, s.v. Arṭabān.

[33] A paraphrase of "fa-waqaʿtu *fī* al-sahm li ʿAbd-Allāh ibn-Dirra/Durra al-Muzanī." In Islamic legal terminology, *sahm* is one's share in the division of the spoils of war.

since Arṭabān was only a deacon in it; his name, most probably the Armenian Artabanus, suggests that the clergy in Arab churches were sometimes non-Arab.[34] The deacon Arṭabān evidently adopted Islam and was listed among the Companions of Muḥammad, the *Saḥāba.* The two terms *bīʿat* and *shammās* are Syriac and passed into Christian Arabic in pre-Islamic times.

The Church of St. John the Baptist

According to the bilingual inscription that has survived, this church was built by the phylarch Sharāḥīl ibn Ẓālim and was dedicated to St. John the Baptist. It has been argued that the phylarch in question was a Ghassānid, since the name Sharāḥīl occurs as a name in the genealogical trees of the Ghassānids and since his phylarchate was in the Provincia Arabia, of which the Ghassānid Arethas was in charge.[35] So the church may be added to the list of churches that the Ghassānids built.

The church is especially significant, as is its inscription. The Ghassānid phylarchate was represented by many minor phylarchs under the command of the chief one in the Provincia Arabia, all zealous Christians. The natural presumption is that they, too, erected structures just as Sharāḥīl did, but their structures have not survived the ravages of time. So this solitary provincial church built by a minor phylarch is a pointer in that direction.

It is noteworthy that the phylarch calls the church not *bīʿat* or *kanīsat,* but *martyrion,* Arabic *martūr,* which may literally be true in that the bones of some martyrs were deposited there, especially as the church was built, it has been argued, after the campaign against the Jewish oasis of Khaybar in Ḥijāz.[36] So the inscription gives a third term, *martūr,* used in Arabic for a church in that period, but unlike the other two, it does not seem to have attained a wide vogue. In later times, *martūr* was superseded by *mashhad* as the Arabic name for *martyrion.*

The Church of Najrān: *Bīʿat* Najrān

Najrān, not the well-known Arabian martyropolis in South Arabia, but the one in Trachonitis in the Provincia Arabia, had a church, a *bīʿat,* on which Yāqūt has written with great enthusiasm, praising its beauty and noting the fact that it was a votive shrine. It has been argued that this was built by a Najrānite community, which had emigrated from South Arabian Najrān after Caliph Omar ordered the inhabitants of Najrān to vacate their city. However, the Ghassānid connection with the Arabs of Najrān, Balḥārith, is clear. They were their relatives, and it

[34] The most complete description of the hierarchy of an Arab Christian church is that of Najrān; see the present writer in *Martyrs,* 64. For non-Arab clerics at the Arab church of Najrān, the Roman, the Persian, the Abyssinian (Cushite), see ibid.

[35] For a detailed discussion of the inscription, see *BASIC* I.1, 322–31.

[36] For the campaign of the Ghassānids against Khaybar, see *BASIC* I.1, 322–31.

would indeed be remarkable if the church was built in honor of the South Arabian martyrs in pre-Islamic times while the Ghassānids were still in the service of Byzantium.[37] Yāqūt gives only a glimpse of its art and architecture, indicating that it had marble columns and was decorated with mosaics.

The Church(es) (*Biyaʿ*) of Jalliq

The other "capital" of the Ghassānids after Jābiya, namely Jalliq, must have had churches, just as Jābiya had. These are attested by the Umayyad caliph Yazīd (A.D. 681–683) in one of his poems, an amatory lyric in which he speaks of his lady love as spending spring in Jalliq with its *biyaʿ,* "churches" (plural of *bīʿa,* church). From the poetry of Yazīd, it may be inferred that Jalliq had not one but many churches (*biyaʿ*) and that these were domed.[38]

The Church(es) of Evaria/Ḥuwwārīn

It has been argued that the first attested bishop of the Ghassānids around 519 was John of Evaria, Ḥuwwārīn.[39] This clearly implies that Evaria had at least one church. Much later, in 582, the Ghassānid king Mundir came to meet Magnus in Evaria for the dedication of a church, apparently not Ghassānid, but the visit implies some Ghassānid connection with Evaria/Ḥuwwārīn.[40] The Ghassānid connection with Evaria/Ḥuwwārīn is implied in the Islamic sources, which speak of the Umayyad caliph Yazīd for whom Evaria was a favorite playground;[41] the Umayyads occupied and resided in previous Ghassānid towns and residences. At least one of the many churches that adorned the town must have been Ghassānid.[42]

[37] For this *bīʿa* (church) in Trachonitis, see the present writer in "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP* 33 (1979), 79. An entry in Bakrī's Geographical Dictionary speaks of Balḥārith ibn-Kaʿb, the Arab group of Najrān to whom belonged its martyrs, as living in Oriens/Bilād al-Shām in a place called al-Jawābī. If true, then this Balḥārith colony in Oriens may be related to the *bīʿa* of Najrān in Trachonitis. Al-Jawābī is definitely associated with the Ghassānids, and it has been suggested that in the absence of such a toponym in the region, it is a corruption of al-Khawābī, a deterioration in transcription, owing to a single diacritical point; see Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* 4 vols., ed. M. al-Saqqā (Cairo, 1945–51), s.v. al-Jawābī.

[38] See Balādurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf,* ed. M. Schloessinger (Jerusalem, 1938), IV, B, 2, lines 17–18. Line 18 in Yāqūt has the term *qibāb,* plural of *qubba,* dome, which could imply that the churches of Jalliq were domed; see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. Māṭirūn.

[39] For this bishop, see *BASIC* I.2, 717–22.

[40] Evaria was the town where Mundir was betrayed and arrested by Magnus; the church presumed to be the one that was to be dedicated was identified by R. Mouterde; see *BASIC* I.1, 458 note 183.

[41] For Yazīd in Ḥuwwārīn, see *EI*², s.v. Ḥuwwārīn. He died and was buried there.

[42] Even when Ẇ. Zakariyya passed through Ḥuwwārīn and described it in the 1930s, the ruins of six churches were visible, while a seventh was still standing; see Zakariyya, *Jawla Athariyya* (Damascus, 1934), 380–81.

The Church of St. George, Sammā'

A recently published inscription found at Sammā' in the Provincia Arabia asks God to protect the phylarch Abū Karib, who has been identified with the Ghassānid phylarch of Palaestina Tertia and the brother of the more famous Arethas.[43] This is the second attestation for the Christianity of Abū Karib, the phylarch who appears as a warrior defending the Byzantine frontier in the pages of Procopius, the first being the reference to him in the Syriac codex DLXXXV of the monastery of Nabk. In that codex, Abbot Simeon dates the writing of the manuscript during his kingship and invokes God's mercy on him.[44]

In the case of the codex of Nabk it was a monastery that Abū Karib was associated with, while in this inscription it is a church. The occasion that explains the presence of the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia in the Provincia Arabia is irrelevant here; what is relevant is to understand his relation to the church in Sammā'. Again as in the case of the monastery of Nabk, the relation can be described only as an association since the exact relation is not clear. As indicated by M. Sartre, the invocation is taken from the well-known Psalm 120 (121):8 but personalized by Abū Karib. During his visit to the church and village he may have made a donation or helped the Christian community there in one way or another. He may even have contributed toward the erection of the church. There may even have been in Sammā' a Ghassānid community and not only a Christian Arab one.

The Church of the Pastoralists: *Kanīsat al-Aʿrāb*

The church of the pastoralists was in Maʿarrat al Nuʿmān in Syria Prima. It has been argued that the Nuʿman alluded to in the name of the town may have been the Ghassānid, who in the 580s raised the standard of revolt against the central government because of the treacherous arrest of his father Mundir in Evaria by Magnus. The case for a Ghassānid rather than a Tanūkhid affiliation of the church was based on the fact that the Tanūkhid Nuʿmān is a shadowy figure, while the Ghassānid Nuʿmān was not, and that even the term Maʿarrat, Syriac for "cave," may be related to the Ghassānid Nuʿmān, who may have hid there during his revolt. It was also suggested that this may have been a church built during the episcopate of Theodore, the bishop of the Ghassānids for some thirty years during the reign of Justinian.[45]

The two terms of the name are noteworthy: (1) *kanīsat* rather than *bīʿat* is

[43] For the inscription, see M. Sartre, "Deux phylarches arabes dans l'Arabie Byzantine," *Le Muséon* 106 (1993), 150–53. The stone on which the inscription was inscribed was reused in building a house in the present-day modern village of Sammā', but originally belonged to the church of St. George in the village. Sammā' lies some 17 km northwest of Suwaida in Auranitis; R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie* (Paris, 1927), map II, A2, s.v. Samme.

[44] See *BASIC* I.2, 845–50.

[45] For all this, see *BASIC* I.2, 841–43.

used for church;[46] (2) Aʿrāb, denoting pastoralists, is used rather than ʿArab. These Aʿrāb are likely to be a group of federate pastoralists in the north in Syria Prima. A Ghassānid connection with the church can be predicated only if Theodore, the Ghassānid bishop, was behind the building of the church, as part of his reorganization of the Arab Christian church in Oriens after Arethas, the Ghassānid king, resuscitated the Monophysite *ecclesia* around 540.

The Church of Maḥajja

This locality, Maḥajja, south of Damascus, has been discussed in the previous volume, as has been the *dayr,* the monastery associated with it.[47] The word *maḥajja,* as has been explained, means a pilgrimage place; as such it had a certain holiness attaching to it, possibly derivative from some relics of saints, or possibly of the martyrs of Najrān. Consequently, this holy place had within it not only a *dayr* but also a church, which may have been the repository of the relics of a saint or martyr. Hence it can possibly be added to the list of Ghassānid churches in this region.[48]

The Church at al-Mayṭūr(?)

In addition to al-Māṭirūn, Yāqūt speaks of a village in the vicinity of Damascus called al-Mayṭūr. He cites a couplet by the poet ʿArqala, who speaks of spending a night at al-Māṭirūn, then traveling to Mayṭūr, where apparently he had a good time.[49] The word is not Arabic and suggests *martyrion,* of which it is most probably a corruption, just as *māṭirūn* is. So this could possibly be a toponym that received its name from a church built there. The survival of the term *martyrion* in toponyms suggests that these *martyria* were literally such, that is, repositories of relics of martyrs, possibly brought from South Arabia after the martyrdoms of Najrān had made such relics available. So these places could have been for this reason pilgrimage centers in much the same way that Maḥajja served as such. Alternatively *martyria* in these cases may be simply other names for churches.

While Māṭirūn's Ghassānid connection is vouched for through its occupation by the Umayyads, who fell heir to the Ghassānids and took over many of their structures, a Ghassānid association for Mayṭūr is neither explicitly stated nor inferable from an Umayyad occupation. It appears only in the same verse with Māṭirūn, and consequently its Ghassānid connection is derivative solely from the

[46] *Kanīsat* finally prevailed and is now the usual word for a Christian church.

[47] *BASIC* I.2, 828.

[48] For the Ghassānid ambiance of the letter of the archimandrites in which this Maḥajja occurs (and indeed for the three relevant letters), see ibid., 809–24.

[49] For both see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.vv. Māṭirūn and Mayṭūr. Māṭirūn will be discussed in the section on monasteries, in connection with Dayr al-Māṭirūn; see below, 189–90. For a third version of Greek *martyrion* transliterated into Arabic, see the Ḥarran inscription, where it appears as *marṭūr* or *marṭūl; BASIC* I.1, 325–31.

association of the latter with the Ghassānids. Both Māṭirūn and Mayṭūr then may represent toponyms that received their names from Christian religious establishments, just as some towns and localities received their names from the military establishments of the Roman army such as *castellum* and *castrum.*

It is clear from the foregoing enumeration of Ghassānid churches that their geographical distribution coincided with the provinces in Oriens where the Ghassānid presence was strongest: the Provincia Arabia, Palaestina Secunda and Tertia, and the southern portion of Phoenicia Libanensis. However, the existence of churches farther to the north and south cannot be excluded; the absence of any references to them may be related to the well-known problem of source survival. The chances, however, are that in those regions of the limitrophe from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat and in northern Ḥijāz and western Arabia, the Ghassānid Christian influence was expressed not so much through churches as through monasteries.

Although the patron saint of the Ghassānids was Sergius, the military saint and martyr, it is noteworthy from the study of these churches that other saints have not been neglected, to whom the Ghassānids were attached, especially St. Julian, for whom the Monophysites until the present day have special reverence.[50] In addition to Sergius and Julian, George and John the Baptist have been associated with the Ghassānids, and possibly Elias.[51] This suggests that the Ghassānids, although a military aristocracy, were devoted not only to their military patron saint Sergius, but to other Christian saints as well.

Clive Foss has argued for a possible Ghassānid architectural presence in the towns around Jābiya, such as Nawā and Inkhil, for example, the audience chamber on ground level at the former and the palace at the latter.[52] These are, of course, secular buildings. But if Jābiya was, as he has plausibly argued, a center that radiated influence on such neighboring towns as Nawā and Inkhil in the secular sphere, it is natural to suppose that it did also in the religious, and so the two towns may also have had Ghassānid churches. Sammā', which was farther than either from Jābiya, did have a church associated with the Ghassānids. So did Kafr

[50] On St. Julian, see H. Kaufhold, "Notizen über das Moseskloster bei Nabk und das Juliankloster bei Qaryatain in Syrien," *OC* 79 (1995), 91–108.

[51] On the popularity of Elias/Elijah and the importance of his cult in the Laja, Trachonitis, one of the stamping grounds of the Ghassānids, see F. Trombley, *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World* (Leiden, 1995), II, 362, 367. The author gives an explanation for the importance of the cult of Elias in the Trachonitis on p. 362, but another may be suggested. Elias' name as a prophet is associated, among other things, with drought and rain, of which he appears the master in 1 Kings 17:1, 7, 14 and 18:1, 41–45. The Ghassānid *foederati* and the Arabs of the limitrophe and in Trachonitis lived in an arid area where water was the *sine qua non* of their life; hence the importance of the prophet whose prayers controlled drought and rain.

[52] See Foss, "Syria in Transition," 251–52.

Shams/Kfar Shemesh have a Ghassānid monastery, also farther from Jābiya than Nawā and Inkhil.[53]

IV. The Sources on the Monasteries

The sources for Arab monasticism in the proto-Byzantine period may be divided into two classes: those that belong to this Byzantine period and those that belong to the Islamic. The pre-Islamic Byzantine sources may be divided into those written in Syriac and Greek and those in Arabic, consisting of a few but valuable references to be found in the contemporary Arabic poetry on the Ghassānids.

The Greek sources are represented by the two ecclesiastical historians, Theodoret and Cyril of Scythopolis. The first wrote on monks and hermits in northern Oriens, while the second wrote on monasticism in Palestine, the Holy Land, in both cases non-Ghassānid. Cyril is the more important writer for federate monasticism since he paid special attention to the Arab phylarchs of the Palestinian Parembole in the fifth century. Both have been discussed earlier in this series.[54]

More important than the Greek is the Syriac tradition, since this is more informative and deals specifically with the Ghassānids. John of Ephesus, the chief historian of the Monophysite movement and of the Ghassānids, is known to have devoted to them an entire chapter in his *Ecclesiastical History,* but unfortunately that chapter has not survived.[55] It is quite likely that his chapter on the Ghassānids listed or mentioned many of the monasteries that they built. Much more important is the precious Syriac document that contains the signatures of 137 Monophysite abbots together with the names of their monasteries. The involvement of the Ghassānids in it has been discussed as well as the number of monasteries that are associated with them.[56]

Scattered references to Ghassānid structures in the poetry of the contemporary poet Ḥassān ibn Thābit include some that pertain to monasteries.[57] Finally, archaeological evidence is available for the Ghassānid interest in monasticism, namely, the monastery tower, which has survived in the complex later taken over by the Umayyads and called Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī.[58]

References to monasteries in the Islamic period mostly derive from Muslim sources.[59] It is strange that no Christian has written on monasteries, especially in

[53] For a map that shows the five places, see ibid., fig. E.

[54] On Theodore and Cyril of Scythopolis, see *BAFIC,* 148–59, 181–207.

[55] See *BASIC* I.1, 583–92.

[56] On this, see below, 183–84.

[57] On Ḥassān, see below, 232–46.

[58] For its monastery tower, see below, 206–10.

[59] For the long list of Muslim authors who wrote on monasteries in medieval times, see G. ʿAwwad, *Kitāb al-Diyārāt* (Baghdād, 1966), 36–48, to which may be added H. Nājī, *Al-Budūr al-Musfira fī Naʿt al-Adyira* (Baghdad, 1975), 4–5, also p. 3 notes 2, 3. It is now mostly Christian Arabs who write on monasteries; see ʿAwwad, *Kitāb,* 322–36. The number of references to monas-

Oriens/Bilād al-Shām.[60] The only exception was Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī (the Armenian), now correctly identified as Abū al-Makārim, a twelfth-century author who wrote on the churches and monasteries of Egypt.[61]

This genre of Islamic historiography, devoted to monasteries, was started by Hishām al-Kalbī, the historian of pre-Islamic Arabia.[62] However, he wrote not on the Ghassānid monasteries but on those of Ḥīra. From him derive all subsequent writers on monasteries, the most important of whom was Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 967), the author of *al-Aghānī,* who is known to have written a nonextant book on monasteries, *Kitāb al-Diyārāt.*[63] Iṣfahānī was one of a group of writers and poets, three of whom were younger contemporaries who wrote on the same subject: al-Khalidiyyān (two brothers) and al-Sarī al-Raffā'. There were others, but these are the most important.

Al-Khālidiyyān were the two brothers Abū 'Uthmān and Abū Bakr, who were from the village of al-Khālidiyya near Mawṣil, hence their name, a relative adjective derived from this toponym in the dual. As poets they were interested mainly in poetry on the monasteries in the Islamic period and related matters. Their work *Kitāb al-Diyārāt* has not survived, but they are quoted in later works on the subject.[64]

A contemporary and a rival poet who grew up in Mawṣil was al-Sarī al-Raffā'. He, too, came to Ḥalab/Aleppo where he joined the circle of the Ḥamdānid prince Sayf al-Dawla. His book *Kitāb al-Diyara,* like that of al-Khālidiyyān, has not survived, but it is almost certain that it was written in their style—mainly anecdotal with much attention given to poetry on the monasteries.[65]

From such authors, but mainly from Hishām and Iṣfahānī, the two scholars/geographers Bakrī and Yāqūt derived most of their information on monasteries. Of these two, Yāqūt is the more important source. To these may be added the fourteenth-century author al-'Umarī, who devoted a long chapter in his *Masālik al-Abṣār* to monasteries.[66] Although a late author, his chapter is most valuable since it contains material not found in Yāqūt and Bakrī.

While the two basic works of Hishām and Iṣfahānī on monasteries have not

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teries in Islamic sources impressed Yāqūt, who was consequently forced to include in his *Mu'jam* only a selection, which nevertheless is most valuable; see the introduction to his entry "Dayr" in *Mu'jam,* II, 495.

[60] If anyone did, his work has not survived.

[61] See B. T. A. Evetts, *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt* (Oxford, 1895); for Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī, see G. Graf, *Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur,* Studi e Testi 133 (Vatican City, 1947), II, 338–40; however, for the correct identification, see now J. den Heijer, "Coptic Historiography in the Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid and Early Mamlūk Periods," *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996), 67–98.

[62] For Hishām, see *BAFOC,* 349–66 and *BAFIC,* 233–42.

[63] For Iṣfahānī, see *EI*[2] s.v. Abu l-Faradj al-Isbahani, I, 118.

[64] See ibid., s.v.; and Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 382–83, II, 627–28.

[65] See *GAS,* II, 626–27.

[66] For al- 'Umarī, see *EI*[2], s.v. Ibn Faḍl Allah, and below, 349–51.

survived, that of Shābushtī, a tenth-century writer, is preserved;[67] indeed it is the only work exclusively devoted to monasteries that is extant, while the other books written on the subject in medieval times are not. It is titled *Kitāb al-Diyārāt* (*The Book of Monasteries*).

Of the long list of Muslim authors who apparently were attracted by this genre of Arabic historiography on monasteries, reference should be made to the work of those who were interested in the monks themselves. Al-Ḏahabī, a Muslim author (d. 1348), wrote a monumental history, *Tārīkh al-Islām* (*The History of Islam*), in which he enumerated what he called *Funūn al-Tārīkh,* "the genres of historiography," of which he counted forty and of which one was called *Tārīkh al-Ruḥbān wa Ulī al-Ṣawāmiʿ* (*The History of the Monks and Those of the Monasteries*).[68] By the time of Ḏahabī, this genre apparently had established itself as a legitimate one in Islamic historiography. It is noteworthy that the two terms he used for monks and monasteries were the terms used in the Koran.[69] This raises the question of whether interest in the history of monasteries may be added to the list of themes, the treatment of which by historians and Koranic exegetes was inspired by reference to them in the Koran.

None of these Arabic works treats specifically Arab, let alone Ghassānid, monasticism since they are general works. Only one work refers, among other things, to Ghassānid monasteries, while another, not extant, most probably did so. The first is the *Chronicle* of Ḥamza,[70] who credits two Ghassānid kings with the construction of monasteries: ʿAmr ibn Jafna, to whom is ascribed the building of three monasteries—Ḥālī, Ayyūb, and Hunād—and Al-Ayham ibn al-Ḥārith, to whom is ascribed the building of three other monasteries—Ḍaḵhm, al-Nubuwwa (al-Labwa), and Saʿf (Shaʿf). The second is *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,*[71] which, it has been argued, was the source of Ḥamza's *Chronicle.* The former work must have listed many of the Ghassānid structures, both secular and religious, whence Ḥamza derived his knowledge of the six Ghassānid monasteries. It has also been argued that Ḥamza made only a selection of Ghassānid structures and conse-

[67] For Shābushtī, see *EI*², s.v.

[68] For al-Ḏahabī, see *EI,*² s.v. al-Ḏahabī. The passage in which Ḏahabī refers to *Funūn al-Tārīkh* is not to be found in his *Tārīkh* but in the *Iʿlān* of al-Saḵhāwī, who derives it from Ibn Ḥajar; see F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1968), 391. On this genre in Ḏahabī's classification, see ibid., 390, no. 31, where "recluses and hermits" answer to "ʿUlī al-Ṣawāmiʿ." For Abū al-Qāsim Tammām ibn-Muḥammad al-Rāzī, an author of a work on monks, listed in al-Saḵhāwi's *Iʿlān,* see ibid., 432, no. 32, and Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 226–27. S. Munajjid has published a text by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 894) on the history of monks, "al-Muntaqā min Akhbār al-Ruḥbān," for which see "Morceaux choisis du livre des moines," in *Mélanges* (Institut Dominicain d'études orientales du Caire) 3 (1956), 349–58.

[69] For the verses on monasteries and monks, see *Koran,* chap. XXII: 40, 5:82, 57:27. Two verses express reservations on monks: 5:31, 34.

[70] On Ḥamza, see below, 306–41.

[71] On *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* see below, 364–73.

quently *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* most probably contained a longer list of monasteries than the one included in the work of the epitomator, Ḥamza.

Thus this chapter is the first attempt to isolate the cluster of monasteries associated with one Arab group, the Ghassānids, in one geographical area, Oriens/Bilād al-Shām. It includes a commentary on the historical significance of this monastic cluster, which had been deprived of its identity by the nonsurvival of the sources that had presumably grouped together these Ghassānid monasteries.[72]

Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Diyārāt*

After Hishām, the author of the work on the monasteries of Ḥīra, Iṣfahānī is the most important writer on monasteries. Only two aspects of his work are discussed here as most relevant: the change he effected in the style of books on monasteries, which was followed by later writers on the subject; and the precious passage in his work on the three groups of Arabs in pre-Islamic times, who were known as religious *philoktistai.*

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Iṣfahānī was the first to write a general work on the monasteries, rather than a treatise on one region, such as Hishām's on Ḥīra and its environs. This is clearly reflected in the title of the book, *Kitāb al-Diyārāt,* that is, *The Book of Monasteries.*[73] The nature of the work is clearly reflected in the many quotations by later authors who wrote on monasteries in general and which were attributed to him. Although Hishām should be credited with the initiation of this genre of historical writing in Islamic times, Iṣfahānī developed it into a genre that dealt with monasteries in a comprehensive fashion, not local or regional, limited to one particular geographical area. In so doing, he has preserved for posterity some very valuable data on Arab Christianity and its structures before the rise of Islam. It is especially unfortunate that the book is not extant, but much of what the subsequent authors on monasteries have written derived from Iṣfahānī's *Kitāb al-Diyārat,* which thus partially survives in quotations.[74]

Iṣfahānī may also be credited with the new style of writing about monaster-

[72] Only what is relevant to the concerns of this volume has been briefly discussed in this section. The theme of Arab monasteries has many other fascinating dimensions that will be treated at length in a separate publication.

[73] For Iṣfahānī, see Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 378–82. The *Kitāb al-Diyārāt* is not mentioned in *GAS,* presumably since it is lost; for reference to it, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist,* ed. G. Flügel (repr. Beirut, 1964), I, 115, line 15.

[74] The quotations from Iṣfahānī's *Kitāb al-Diyārāt* that have survived in the works of later authors have been gathered together and published in a volume of some 207 pages; see Iṣfahānī, *Al-Diyārāt,* ed. Jalīl al-'Atiyya (London, 1991). So have quotations that have survived from *Kitāb al-Anwār wa Kitāb al-Diyārāt* by al-Shumayshati been assembled and published by Iḥsān 'Abbās in *Shaḏarāt min Kutub Mafqūda fī al-Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1988), 381–87.

ies. His predecessor Hishām was a historian who most probably limited himself to enumerating the churches and monasteries of Ḥīra with descriptions, inscriptions, and other relevant data on structure, such as would interest a historian.[75] Iṣfahānī, a man of letters, *adīb* and poet, had other interests reflected most clearly in his principal work, *al-Aghānī* (*Songs*), which concerns poetry set to music and sung by Arab Muslim singers. As his *Kitāb al-Diyārāt* has not survived, it is difficult to state categorically whether he extended his interests in poetry and music to his conception and composition of this book. But in view of his interests as a poet and man of letters, it is practically certain that he did. This can be inferred from the extant quotations from his book in later authors on monasteries and in the chapters in his *Aghānī* devoted to Ghassānid poets. These include panegyrists such as Ḥassān, whose poetry on the Ghassānids is quoted with descriptions of the tunes and musical modes to which it was set and long *khabars* (accounts) of Ḥassān and his relations with the Ghassānids.[76]

Kitāb al-Diyārāt was thus apparently the turning point in the development of this genre in Arabic literature, where the main interest of the authors was no longer the monastery itself as a Christian place of retreat for monks but as a place where Muslim visitors, including caliphs, princes, and governors, relaxed. Indeed the monasteries became the destination of Muslims where they relaxed and drank wine, away from the eyes of monitors of such tastes and conduct, frowned upon by Islam. The artistic concomitant of such relaxation at the monasteries was the composition of poetry, of which much has been preserved, and it dominated the writing of later books on monasteries by poets. Shābushtī's work, the only one that has survived, is representative of this type, full of sensual descriptions of the scenes of carousing and merrymaking.[77]

B

The passage from Iṣfahānī on *philoktistai* deserves a detailed examination as the only passage in an Arabic source that takes a synoptic view of the achievements

[75] On Hishām's exploitation of these inscriptions and the written records of Ḥīra deposited in these religious structures, see *BAFOC,* 349–66. All his successors who wrote on monasteries did so from an entirely different point of view, much less serious and often frivolous.

[76] See *Aghānī* (Beirut, 1958), XV, 120–33.

[77] A telling indication of the partiality of Shābushtī to poetry, often sensual and vulgar, and to anecdotes, not always edifying, is his elimination of the entry on the famous Dayr Hind, the Elder, the wife of Mundir who left that precious inscription so informative on herself, her son King ʿAmr, and her Kindite forebears. Instead Shābushtī included the entry on the *dayr* built by Hind the Younger, which had no inscription; see *Kitāb al-Diyārāt,* 244–46. The editor of Shābushtī's *Kitāb al-Diyārāt,* Gurguis ʿAwwad, noted this and included the inscription in one of his many appendices to the text of *Diyārāt,* p. 390.

For convents in Islamic times and the various reasons that can be suggested for their popularity with Muslim visitors, see G. Troupeau, "Les couvents chrétiens dan la littérature arabe," *La nouvelle revue du Caire* 1 (Cairo, 1975), 265–79.

of the three Arab groups in the entire Arab area in the sixth century and provides some intimate details not found elsewhere. It was quoted by Bakrī and Yāqūt, who, strangely enough, forget to mention their source. Although its authorship could easily be inferred, it is explicitly assigned to Iṣfahānī by the careful al-ʿUmarī in *Masālik al-Abṣār:* "Three groups[78] of Yamanite Christians used to compete with one another in the construction of *biyaʿ* (churches) with attention to their decoration[79] and the beauty of their structures: the house of al-Mundir in Ḥīra, and Ghassān in al-Shām (Oriens) and Banū al-Ḥārith ibn-Kaʿb, the Ḥārithids in Najrān. Their *diyārāt*[80] (monasteries), which were exceedingly high, were located in places that abounded with trees, gardens, and streamlets. They used to have the appointments/furnishings[81] of these structures made of gold and silver, and their veils/curtains of brocade (*dībāj*). In their walls they had mosaics and in their ceilings gold."[82]

The perceptive Muslim author, writing in the tenth century, identified three great centers of Christianity in the history of the pre-Islamic Arabs—Jābiya,[83] Ḥīra, and Najrān—associated with the Ghassānids, the Lakhmids, and the Ḥārithids respectively. The passage makes perfectly clear that pre-Islamic Arab religious structures were not simple crude buildings but were artistically constructed and crafted. In addition to the impression of massiveness and solidity that the passage gives about these structures, it provides information on the decoration and furnishings of these buildings. A previous section has listed the many structures associated with the Ghassānids, but the appearance of these structures is indicated in neither the sources nor the pitiable remains that have survived.

The specific references to gold and silver, brocade, and mosaics indicate that the Arab Christian church and monastery were as lavishly appointed many Byzantine churches of the period.[84] Yāqūt adds *ṣuwar,* which can mean paintings or

[78] The Arabic *buyūt,* plural of *bayt,* in the sense of house, implies a noble house, the group within the tribe that had *sharaf,* nobility and prestige.

[79] Arabic *ziyy* is a general term meaning, among other things, "form," mostly about clothes and fashions nowadays. So it could have been used in the general sense of "ornament/decoration" or possibly the exterior architectural aspects.

[80] The author started speaking of churches, *biyaʿ,* then switched to *diyārāt,* monasteries. As already noted and argued, the description given applies to both churches and monasteries but is more applicable to the latter.

[81] The Arabic term *ālāt,* now used for "machines/devices," most probably refers in general to the appointments inside the monasteries such as the vessels, lamps, table at the altar, and others that pertain to the celebration of the liturgy.

[82] The passage is quoted in Bakrī and Yāqūt in their *Muʿjam*s, s.v. Dayr Najrān. For the passage in al-ʿUmarī, with attribution to Iṣfahānī, see *Masālik al-Abṣār,* I, 309.

[83] The reference in the passage is to al-Shām, Oriens, the habitation of the Ghassānids, but Jābiya was their capital and is used here to balance Najrān and Ḥīra of the Ḥārithids and the Lakhmids, respectively.

[84] Sometimes a random reference to monastic appointments is given, as when an author mentions that the Lakhmid king al-Nuʿmān furnished Dayr Hind with five hundred lamps; see below, 163.

statues, more likely the former.[85] All these have disappeared with the passage of time. Evidence of tall buildings and massive structures, however, has survived in the tower of Haliorama and the *praetorium extra muros* outside Sergiopolis if this turns out to be a church. These monuments, which correspond with Iṣfahānī's descriptions, suggest that he also accurately described the interior of these structures. In addition to this valuable information, the passage describes the location of the monasteries and their environs, a matter of some importance for explaining why these monasteries attracted visitors in pre-Islamic and Islamic times, both Christians and non-Christians alike.

The reference to the three centers raises the question of the source(s) at the disposal of Iṣfahānī when he wrote that passage. There is no doubt that one source was Hishām al-Kalbī, who wrote on Ḥīra a monograph titled *Kitāb al-Biyaʿ wa al-Diyārāt* (*The Book of the Churches and Monasteries of Ḥīra*). As to his sources for the Ḥārithids of Najrān and the Ghassānids of Jābiya in Oriens, although extant texts contain no references to any specialized works on these, the sources of Iṣfahānī can be safely conjectured. The history of the Ḥārithids was well known. They were remembered by the poets of pre-Islamic Arabia, who referred to their Kaʿba and their Christianity, and their own poets were famous. Furthermore, one of the *sūras* of the Koran was supposed by Muslim exegetes to refer to the martyrdoms of Najrān, and there was that scene in Medina, the objurgation, the *mubāhala* between the Prophet Muḥammad and the delegation of Najrān, one of whom was a bishop. The Ḥārithids and Najrān retained some of their importance in Muslim times since the former were the *Akhwāl,* the maternal uncles of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs.[86]

The Ghassānids of Jābiya were also well known to the writer of the *Aghānī* through the celebrated poets who visited them and composed panegyrics on them, most of which were still extant when Iṣfahānī wrote, especially those of Ḥassān, which told of ecclesiastical structures. It is also tempting to think that the book on the Ghassānids that Ḥamza used, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* was still available to Iṣfahānī, since this book told in detail about their structures, the ecclesiastical ones included.[87] The Ghassānid substrate in Umayyad structures may have received

[85] See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. Dayr Najrān, II, 538, col. 2, line 13.

[86] For Najrān and the Ḥārithids, see the present writer in *EI*^{2}, s.v. Nadjrān, and "Byzantium in South Arabia," 23–94.

[87] On *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* see below, 364–73. While Ḥamza simply selected from *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* a few items and referred to only six monasteries, Iṣfahānī would perhaps have given a list of all the monasteries to which he found references in *Akhbār.* The latter was writing a special monograph devoted to the monasteries, while Ḥamza wrote a short chapter on the dynasty, not a specialized one on monasteries. The loss of Iṣfahānī's work is thus especially unfortunate as he would have revealed the full extent of the Ghassānid monastic establishment and because, in listing the monasteries of Ḥīra (which he no doubt derived from Hishām's lost book), he might have included some of the monastic inscriptions that Hishām found, such as that of Dayr Hind. This would have been invaluable for throwing light on the history of the Lakhmid dynasty and Christianity in that great center of Arab Christianity before the rise of Islam, Ḥīra. More relevant to the

some attention in Iṣfahānī's *Diyārāt,* since he was well informed about the Umayyads to whom he belonged and about whom there is much material in his major work, *Aghānī.* Its loss is therefore unfortunate for this reason also.

C

One passage in *Masālik al-Abṣār* illustrates in detail what Iṣfahānī says in general on the artistic aspects of Christian Arab religious structures. It occurs, as has been noted, in his entry on Dayr Hind the Younger:[88] "And it was related that al-Nuʿmān used to pray in it and receive communion; that he hung in its *haykal* (chapel) five hundred lamps (*qindīls*) made of gold and silver.[89] Their oil during feast days were oils of lily (iris; *zanbaq*) and of willow (*bān*) and others that were similar to these. And the wood he used to burn (for censing in it)[90] consisted of Indian aloes and of ambergris, in quantities that defy description."

This rare passage repays careful study and a thorough examination. Al-Nuʿmān is the last Lakhmid king of Ḥīra. The Arabic verb for "receive communion" is *yataqarrabu,* a denominative verb from *qurbān,* the host in the celebration of the sacrament of the eucharist. *Haykal* is the word used to denote not the sanctuary but the church in the monastery, the conventual chapel, essential to every monastery. The five hundred lamps sound excessive, but are conceivable in the chapel of a large monastery. The number may have suffered through a transcriptional error, and it could have been less; nevertheless, the number remains striking. Lighting was important for churches and monasteries; it was overseen by the καν-δηλάριος.

The gold and silver mentioned in this passage recalls the same phrase used by Iṣfahānī in describing the appointments of the Christian monasteries. In this context, the word *adhān* means oil (singular *duhn* or *duhna*).[91] The oil that fueled the lamps was not the usual olive oil, but oil of a higher grade, made of expensive and exotic plants, such as *zanbaq,* the lily/iris, and the *bān,* which has many varieties, one of which is the Egyptian willow, the *salix aegyptia.* The burning of *al-hindī* and *ʿanbar* (Indian aloes and ambergris), suggests that they did not burn frankincense, which was available in South Arabia. Both were known in Ḥīra and

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concerns of this volume, Iṣfahānī might have copied some Arabic inscriptions inscribed in the Ghassānid monasteries as Hishām had done for the Lakhmids, and these would also have been invaluable.

The chances are good that Iṣfahānī used *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.* If so, this would have been an Umayyad work used by Iṣfahānī to be added to the others he used, such as the book of Yunus al-Kātib on music, for which see Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 379.

[88] See above, note 82.

[89] The pronominal suffix in *adhānuhā* goes back to the five hundred *qindīls.*

[90] The pronominal suffix in *fihi* goes back to *haykal,* the chapel.

[91] See E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1867), book I, part III, 926, where the exact phrase *duhn al-bān* or *duhnat bān* is used, "oil of *bān.*"

were referred to in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, as were *zanbaq* and *bān* in the preceding sentence.

The Lakhmids were affluent, and Ḥīra was a flourishing city where all these exotic and deluxe articles were available. Such sumptuousness in the celebration of the liturgy was indulged in during festivals and feast days. It was this aspect of Christianity that endeared the monasteries to its Muslim friends and visitors in the Islamic period. It is easy to conceive how much more lavish and spectacular the religious celebrations of the feast days of the Christian calendar must have been in pre-Islamic times. What was said of the Lakhmid practice in the observation of these feast days can with more truth be said of the Ghassānids, whose Christianity was of much longer duration and who were much more dedicated than the Lakhmids, since these adopted it officially only during the reign of the last king Nuʿmān. Hence the value of this rare passage, *mutatis mutandis,* for the Ghassānids, who, according to Iṣfahānī, used to compete with the Lakhmids in the expression of their Christianity.

This extremely informative passage on the appointments of the interior of an Arab Christian conventual chapel only goes to confirm what has been said in the course of this book on the nonsurvival of Hishām's work on the monasteries and churches of Ḥīra, and what a grievous loss this has been for the reconstruction of Arab Christian history before the rise of Islam. It is almost certain that this passage derives from the historian of the monasteries of Ḥīra, Hishām al-Kalbī. Al-ʿUmarī introduces it with the term *wa-ḥukiya,* "and it was related," the same phrase that introduces the following paragraph on the same monastery, but this time it is followed by the authority, Hishām, called as usual in the Arabic sources Ibn al-Kalbī.[92] Iṣfahānī had before him Hishām's book on the monasteries of Ḥīra, from which this passage has been excerpted, not by him but by al-ʿUmarī. Iṣfahānī had other interests, being a man of letters and a poet. Hence he must have omitted many of the historically important passages in Hishām's book such as this one. This is confirmed and reflected in the passage that follows the second by Hishām, in which Iṣfahānī relates the encounter of Hind, the Lakhmid princess, with Khālid ibn-al-Walīd after the conquest of Ḥīra. It is a most interesting account but cannot compete in its historical significance with accounts that Hishām has included in his book such as the passage analyzed in this section.

V. Arab Monasticism

If references to the churches of the Ghassānids in the sources are few and are mostly implied, those that pertain to their monasteries are explicit and not inconsiderable. This reflects an important aspect of Ghassānid Christianity: it was more

[92] For this, see *BAFOC,* 349 note 1, where I suggest that his name Hishām is the more natural and convenient term to designate him than Ibn al-Kalbī, his patronymic.

a "religion of monks"[93] and monasteries than of priests and churches, unlike that of other areas in Christendom. The Arabs wrote an important chapter in the history of monasticism, but it is practically unknown in the annals of ecclesiastical history.[94]

The Desert

After the rise of monasticism in Egypt, it was the Semitic Orient that witnessed its spread.[95] That Orient comprised the Fertile Crescent and the Arabian Peninsula, especially the former, where lived the two main Semitic groups: the Aramaic/Syriac-speaking and the Arabic-speaking peoples. The movement became so popular that even in Islamic times Edessa alone and its environs included 300 monasteries and, according to another account, 360 monasteries.[96] The history of monasticism among the Aramaic/Syriac-speaking peoples of the Fertile Crescent, including the Greek element, has been recognized, but this recognition has not extended to the Arabs of the area.[97] It is the aim of this section to highlight it and mark its significance, with special reference to the Ghassānids.[98]

[93] For Christianity in Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England as a "religion of monks," see P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A. D. 200–1000* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), 226.

[94] One monumental article in Arabic should be mentioned in this connection, that of Ḥ. al-Zayyāt, "al-Diyārat al-Naṣrāniyya fī al-Islām," *al-Machriq* 36 (1938), 291–418. But it is mainly on the history of the Christian monasteries in the Islamic period and how they fared in the ambience of the new order, in the land of the Islamic caliphate. Besides, it is not specifically on Arab monasteries but treats all monasteries including those of the Aramaean Syriac-speaking peoples of the Fertile Crescent, which thus obscures the strictly Arab character of many monasteries.

[95] For the spread of monasticism from Egypt to the Asiatic Near East, see A. Fliche and V. Martin, *Histoire de l'Église* (Paris, 1947), III, 345–84. Monasticism, specifically in Oriens, is well attested. In addition to the large number of monasteries in its southern part, reflected in the letter of the Monophysite archimandrites of 570, see, for the northern part, E. Honigmann, "Nordsyrische Klöster in vorarabischer Zeit," *Zeitschrift für Semitistik* 1 (1922), 15–33.

[96] See Zayyāt, "al-Diyārat," 291.

[97] See A. Vööbus, *A History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient,* CSCO, Subsidia 14 (Louvain, 1958). The author seems to use the linguistic term Syriac interchangeably with the geographical, Syrian, which he uses in the title. The book, however, comprises the eastern half of the Fertile Crescent, Mesopotamia, as well as the western, Syria, and so the title is rather confusing.

The lack of recognition for Arab monasticism is primarily because cultural analysts of Oriens and the Fertile Crescent have spoken of the region in bicultural terms, Greek and Aramaic/Semitic in which the Arab was included within the latter, with the result that the presence of the Arabs in Oriens was obscured. However, the region was tricultural: Greek, Aramaic, and Arab. The elucidation of the Arab presence in Oriens in the three centuries of the Byzantine period has been the concern of this series; see F. Millar, *The Roman Near East, 31 B.C.–A.D. 337* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993) and its review by the present writer in *Catholic Historical Review* 81 (1995), 251–52.

[98] Hence this section is limited to the monasteries that were strictly Arab and those that belonged to Oriens, Bilād al-Shām. It is only in this way that the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs in pre-Islamic times can be established, a period in which monasticism played an important role.

The lack of recognition of Arab monasticism is due in part to the fact that the ecclesiastical history of the Arabs has not been written yet; this is partly due to the prevalent bicultural division

Monasticism had a special appeal to the Arabs, in no small measure because the early hermits and monks chose the desert as their habitation. The desert has always been associated with the Arabs in the perception of classical authors since the days of Strabo and his tripartite division of Arabia, one of which was *Arabia Deserta.* With the rise of monasticism, the desert acquired a new function; it was no longer peopled only by pastoralists and their tents but now by monks and dotted with hermitages and monasteries. The forbidding desert, the scene of the *natura maligna* of the pre-Islamic poets, now had its panegyrists, monks who sang its praises. In the *Vita Antonii* the desert became a city where the monks established the kingdom of heaven on earth: ἡ ἔρημος ἐπολίσθη ὑπὸ μοναχῶν ἐξελθόντων ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων καὶ ἀπογραψαμένων τὴν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς πολιτείαν. St. Euthymius was described by Cyril of Scythopolis as "a lover of the desert" (φιλέρημος), and the Cistercians of later times praised the *béatitude du désert,* its peace and silence.[99] Better than all the foregoing quotations in praise of the desert was scriptural authority. The Psalmist himself took refuge in it when he exclaimed: "Truly I would flee far away; I would lodge in the desert," a verse invoked by St. Sabas when he retired to the desert of Rouba and Koutila.[100]

In addition to admiration for the fortitude of the monks and their powers of endurance in the face of adverse conditions—harsh terrain and inclement climate—the Arabs were attracted to monasteries by their facilities: food, shelter, and also care, especially the healing power of some of the inmates of those monasteries. Indeed the miraculous powers with which the Arabs thought the monks were endowed were often the means of their conversion from paganism to Christianity.[101] Even before the Koran remembered the monks and the monasteries kindly

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of Oriens in the perception of historians, as explained in the preceding note, and to the myth of federate nomadism, including that of the Ghassānids. However, it should not be concluded from the use of such a rubric as "Arab monasticism" that it had a character all its own or that it had a distinctively Arab hue, peculiar to it, although one hagiographer did state that of all the ethnic groups who adopted Christianity, the Arabs were the ones who were the most attached to fasting and asceticism; on this see below, 178–79, and *BAFIC,* 291 note 288.

[99] See Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita S. Euthymii,* ed. E. Schwartz, *Kyrillos von Skythopolis* (Leipzig, 1939), p. 24, line 22. On the Cistercians, see F. Cali, *L'Ordre Cistercien* (Paris, 1972), 43.

[100] See Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Euthymii,* p. 95, line 14. In the *New Oxford Annotated Bible,* "wilderness" is used instead of "desert," but the latter is the more accurate translation, since it reflects Hebrew *midbar* correctly translated in the Septuagint (ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ) and in Festugière's French version of Cyril ("au désert"). See the *New Oxford Annotated Bible,* ed. B. Metzger and R. Murphy (Oxford, 1991), Psalm 54:7, and A.-J. Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient,* 4 vols. (Paris, 1961–65), III.1, 23, line 15. In the Septuagint it is Psalm 54:8.

[101] The conversion of the Salīḥids, the *foederati* of Byzantium in the 5th century, to Christianity was owed to a monk, for which see *BAFIC,* 3–4. However, the most outstanding example of the role of monasticism in the conversion of the Arabs is that presented by Simeon the Stylite of Telanissos in the northern part of Oriens, by whom crowds of Arabs were converted; see *BAFIC,* 149–53, 159–64, and Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization,* II, 183–99, who has also

in the seventh century, a sixth-century Syriac ecclesiastic, Aḥūdemmeh, the Monophysite bishop of upper Mesopotamia, paid tribute to the Arab devotion to monasticism. In the *History* of his Christian mission to the Arabs, his biographer wrote a warm appreciation of their attachment to Christianity and singled them out of all the Christians for their devotion to monasticism: "mais ils aimaient le jeûne et la vie ascétique plus que tous les chrétiens, au point de commencer le saint jeûne des quarante jours une semaine de plus avant tous les chrétiens."[102]

The Diffusion of Monasticism in the Arab Area

The Arab area in this period was vast, comprising most of the Arabian Peninsula and parts of the Fertile Crescent. The first was shared by the cognate Semitic peoples of the south known to the classical authors as Sabaeans and Ḥimyarites, while the latter was shared by other Semitic peoples who spoke Aramaic/Syriac. Arab monasticism in Oriens and the sphere of Byzantine influence in western Arabia associated with Ghassānids was part of Arab monasticism that spread over this vast area.[103] Therefore a brief survey of it in its entirety is appropriate before discussing Arab monasticism in Byzantine Oriens in detail.

The Arabian Peninsula

Monasticism spread in western Arabia, South Arabia, and eastern Arabia, including the Persian Gulf. In western Arabia, especially Ḥijāz, were the regions of Ḥismā, Madyan, and Wādī al-Qurā with such monasteries as Dayr Ḥismā, Dayr Ḍamḍam, and Dayr al-Qunfud. Masājid Maryam, near Mecca, may also

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argued for the possible Arab origin of Simeon, p. 194. On a more modest scale was the conversion of the Arabs by another monk, St. Euthymius, in the Judaean desert; see *BAFIC,* 181–92. On the importance of the monastery as an instrument of conversion, see Trombley, "Paganism," 327–52.

[102] On Aḥūdemmeh, see *BAFOC,* 402–22, and *BAFIC,* 291 note 288. For the quotation, see *Histoire de Mar Aḥūdemmeh,* PO 3 (1909), 28. For a more detailed account of the mission of Aḥūdemmeh to the Arabs, see the section on Theodore, the bishop of the Ghassānids, below, 176–82.

[103] Since monasticism was a cosmopolitan phenomenon, its spread in Arabia and in the limitrophe in Oriens does not necessarily mean that the inmates of monasteries were always exclusively Arab. Some no doubt were, as when a monastery is called the "Monastery of the Arabs" or the "Monastery of the Ghassānids." But often monasteries consisted of monks of varied ethnic groups. Non-Arab missionaries hailing from the Aramean area in Mesopotamia spread the Gospel among the Arabs in the Arab area and no doubt the inmates of the monasteries they founded were non-Arab, especially in the initial stages of evangelization. But with the organization of an Arab federate church under the Ghassānids in the 6th century in the Arab area both *extra limitem* and *intra limitem,* the Arab element in the monasteries became dominant. The identity of many an Arab monk has been obscured by their assumption of biblical or Graeco-Roman names of saints and martyrs, although the sources sometimes go out of their way to indicate the Arab ethnic background of certain monks. In this connection, the Arab attachment to fasting and the ascetic way of life, noted above, note 98, should be recalled. For Arab monks and Arab *hegoumenoi* of monasteries, see *BAFIC,* 524–26.

have been a monastic complex as might have been Kilwa. In South Arabia, especially after the Ethiopian conquest of the country in the 520s, monasteries spread, such as Dayr Najrān and the monastery of St. Sergius, called Masjid al-Nabī Sarjīs, in Tarīm, now an Islamic mosque.[104] In the eastern part of the peninsula, the Christianizing process proceeded from lower Mesopotamia, in which the Arab city of Ḥīra played a role. Of the two parts of Arabia, eastern and western, the spread of Christianity and monasticism is better known in the latter; only archaeology can reveal the full extent of Christianity and monasticism in the eastern part.[105]

The Fertile Crescent

Monasticism spread in both halves of the Crescent, Mesopotamia, in the larger sense of the Land of the Two Rivers, and Byzantine Oriens. In upper or northern Mesopotamia, the Arab element was important, reflected onomastically in the term "Arabia," so called since the days of Xenophon; as Osroene, it was ruled by the Arab Abgarids of Edessa in later times. So some of the monks that lived in the monasteries of Edessa and Ṭūr ʿĀbdīn must have been Arab, although their ethnic identity was concealed by the Christian, biblical, and Graeco-Roman names they assumed.[106] However, the greatest concentration of Arab monasteries was in lower Mesopotamia around the city of Ḥīra. Such was their density that it attracted the attention of the early Muslim historian Hishām who wrote a monograph exclusively devoted to the churches and monasteries of Ḥīra; most of what is known about these monasteries of lower Mesopotamia is derived from this monograph which is not extant but which has survived partially in the works of later Muslim writers.

Oriens

Byzantine Oriens, however, is the area of Arab federate presence (Tanūkhid, Salīḥid, and Ghassānid) that admits of a close inspection of Arab monasticism in

[104] For this *dayr,* a monastery turned mosque, in Tarīm (Ḥaḍramawt), see my "Byzantium in South Arabia," 84–87. Since that article was written, in which various possibilities were suggested for the holy man Sarjīs, I have become convinced that Sarjīs was Sergius, the well-known military saint of Sergiopolis.

[105] As indeed is happening in the modern Arab states that occupy the area of the Persian Gulf and eastern Arabia in late antiquity. Remains of churches are being discovered in the strictly Arab area, the latest of which is a church in the United Arab Emirates. A quotation from *Archaeology* is appropriate: "An early Christian church has been found on Sir Bani Yas Island in the United Arab Emirates, the first evidence of a Christian presence there before the advent of Islam. Three finely crafted plaster crosses were discovered in a building that had a courtyard and at least 15 rooms," *Archaeology* (Sept./Oct. 1994), 28.

[106] For the latest on Ṭūr ʿĀbdīn, see A. Palmer, *Monks and Masons on the Tigris Frontier: The Early History of Ṭūr ʿĀbdīn* (Cambridge, 1990). For a monk (possibly two monks) of Edessa who preserved their Arabic names, see *BAFIC,* 179.

the sixth century. The areas of Arab monastic diffusion in Oriens were many, extending from the north of the diocese to its south. The north was the stamping ground of the Tanūkhids in the fourth century, and within that region Chalcidicē was a well-known monastic area. Such monasteries as Dayr Khunāṣira/Anasartha must have counted some Arabs among its inmates, and so must have the area around the great pilgrimage and monastic complex of Simeon the Stylite.[107]

It was in the south of Oriens, especially in the two provinces of Arabia and the Second Palestine, that the Arab Ghassānid monastic areas were to be found. Ghassānid monasteries existed in the so-called transverse wedge consisting of Auranitis, Trachonitis, Batanaea, and Gaulanitis. In these areas were found the Arab monasteries listed in the letter of the Monophysite archimandrites; to these areas should be added the southern part of Phoenicia Libanensis, where also some Arab monasteries existed.

Salīḥid monasteries must also have existed in some of these areas since, unlike the Tanūkhids, they were settled in the south of Oriens, but the extant sources have not preserved explicit reference to their monasteries in this region.[108]

In Palaestina Prima there was a strong Arab Christian presence in the Desert of Juda before the advent of the Ghassānids, represented by the bishops of the Parembole, but the Ghassānids added Dayr Ghassānī and possibly Dayr ʿAmr.[109]

In the extreme south of Oriens was the enlarged province of Palaestina Tertia, which comprised the southern part of the old Provincia Arabia that included Sinai and northern Ḥijāz, and in all three areas there were monasteries. In Sinai, where that peninsula had a strong Arab ethnic complexion, some or many of the monks must have been Arab in the monasteries at Rhaithou and Phārān. In the region around Ayla, there was the Arab monastery of Dayr al-Qunfud associated with the tribe of Balī, but with a possible Ghassānid connection. In Ḥijāz, the northern part of western Arabia, monasteries existed in three areas: Ḥismā, Madyan, and Wādī al-Qurā, the areas already referred to as part of the Arab monastic presence

[107] On the monasteries of northern Oriens (Syria), see Honigmann, "Nordsyrische Klöster," 15–33.

[108] In the north, however, in the province of Euphratensis, the monastery of Dayr Dawud built by the Salīḥid king Dāwūd (David) is mentioned in both literary Arabic and epigraphic Greek sources, sometimes under the name of Dayr al-Lathiq; for more on this monastery, see below, 201.

[109] Unlike the "Monastery of the Ghassānids" documented in the Syriac letter of the archimandrites of 570, Dayr Ghassānī is not so well documented. It may be a modern name given to the locality, but some names in Palestine have survived since biblical times. William F. Albright practically created biblical Palestinian archaeology on the principle that "the spade confirms the Bible" and excavated sites that still carry their biblical names, although transformed with the passage of time. Dayr Ghassānī was visited by Albright, who found some pottery going back to Byzantine times, a fact not altogether irrelevant to the view that the monastery possibly goes back to Ghassānid times, see *BASIC* I.1, 654–55.

in the Arabian Peninsula, but mentioned here because they included a strong Ghassānid military and political presence.

Again as in the case of the transverse wedge, Salīḥid monasteries may have existed in these southern parts of Oriens, both in Palaestina Tertia and northern Ḥijāz, since the Salīḥids, strongly attached to monasticism to which they owed their conversion to Christianity, were settled in these regions.

Arab Federate Monasticism in Oriens

Federate monasticism in Oriens reached its climax in the sixth century under the patronage of the Ghassānids, who were its great promoters. In order that their achievement may be better grasped, a brief account of pre-Ghassānid federate monasticism in the same region may be given. These federate antecedents involved the Tanūkhids of the fourth century and the Salīḥids of the fifth. The Tanūkhids promoted monasticism mostly in Mesopotamia before their migration to Oriens; three monasteries in Ḥīra are associated with them.[110] However, their contributions in Oriens are not mentioned in the exiguous sources that have survived. However, in the same century during which they flourished as *foederati* of Byzantium in Oriens, there appeared the large figure of Moses as the representative of Arab monasticism in the fourth century; he was, however, not a Tanūkhid. He had been a hermit in Sinai, supporting the Orthodox Nicaean faith during the Arian controversy in the reign of Valens when he finally was appointed the bishop of the Arab *foederati* of Queen Mavia. He became a saint, commemorated on 7 February; his name appeared in a dialogue between Pope Gregory III and St. Willibald in the eighth century as a model of the Christian missionary.[111]

In the fifth century, the major Arab figure in monasticism was the Salīḥid king Dāwūd, who renounced the world. He became a monk and built the famous Dayr Dāwūd.[112] Salīḥid Christianity was heavily involved with monasticism, since their first king owed his conversion to a monk. In addition to the Salīḥids, there were the *foederati* of Aspebetos, in the Judaean desert near the Jordan River. Two of them, Maris and Stephanus, became *hegoumenoi* of the monastery of Euthymius.[113] In northern Oriens in Syria, Arab monasticism was influenced by Simeon

[110] They are the monasteries of al-Aʿwar, al-Sawā, and Qurra: *BAFIC,* 290; for the monastery of Ḥanna, see *BAFOC,* 419; for Tanūkhid Christianity, see ibid., 418–35. It is also possible that they were associated with Dayr Khunāṣira/Anasartha, for which, see ibid., 434 and other relevant discussions of Khunāṣira/Anasartha, on 222–38, 405.

[111] For Moses, see *BAFOC,* 152–58, 185–87.

[112] For Dāwūd and his monastery, see *BAFIC,* 297–300. For Arab monasteries and monasticism in the 5th century, see ibid., 289–301, 405–9. Another Arab king in the same century, the Lakhmid king Nuʿmān of Ḥīra, adopted Christianity and became a *sā'iḥ,* an itinerant monk; see ibid., 161–64.

[113] On these *foederati* and their relations to the ascetics and monks of the Jordan valley, see *BAFOC,* 181–85; on the two monks Maris and Stephanus, ibid., 191–92.

the Stylite, the pillar saint, and Simeon Priscus, and names of Arab monks have survived in the works of Theodoret of Cyrrhus.[114]

VI. The Ghassānids and Monasticism

A

Of all the Arab groups of pre-Islamic times whose names are associated with monasteries and monasticism, the Ghassānids were the most outstanding. Al-Bakrī, the eleventh-century geographer of the Muslim West, recognizes three groups as the patrons and promoters of Arab Christianity before the rise of Islam: the Ghassānids of Oriens, the Lakhmids of Ḥīra, and the Balḥārith/Ḥārithids of Najrān.[115] He said that these groups used to compete with one another in building ecclesiastical structures. The term he used, *yatabārūna* ("compete"), is noteworthy since it expresses their enthusiasm and that each of the three groups was aware of the achievements of the others. However, there is no doubt that the Ghassānids were the front runners. The Lakhmids were converted only toward the end of the sixth century and were always living in the shadow of a fire-worshiping empire, the Sasanid, which regarded Christianity as the religion of its secular enemy, Byzantium, and the Christians as a fifth column. Najrān was an important center of Christianity in the Arabian south, but it was only a city, and was often threatened by unfriendly rulers of South Arabia, as when around 520 it became a city of martyrs and in 570, when South Arabia succumbed to the domination of fire-worshiping Persia, which continued to rule it for some sixty years until the conquest of the country by Islam. By contrast, the Ghassānids endured for a century and a half in Oriens as a most powerful dynasty and *foederati* of Christian overlords whose contributions to the cause of Christianity have been documented in detail in the preceding volume of this series.[116]

Thus both synchronously and diachronously the Ghassānids emerge as the most outstanding Arab group of late antiquity in the history of religious architecture. A previous section has explained how they eclipsed their two predecessors in the service of Byzantium, the Tanūkhids and the Salīḥids, and the foregoing

[114] On the two Simeons, see *BAFOC,* 148–56. For the Arab monk Abbas (Arabic ʿAbbās), see ibid., 153 note 26.

[115] See *Muʿjam,* II, 603. The statement is derivative from *Aghānī* and appears also in Yāqūt and ʿUmarī; for its analysis, see the section on the sources for the monasteries, above, 160–63.

[116] That the Ghassānids were ahead of the Lakhmids in the construction of monasteries and churches is reflected by the fact that what was associated with the Lakhmids in the Arabic historical tradition was their palaces, the celebrated Khawarnaq and Sadīr, rather than their monasteries and churches, the opposite of what the Ghassānids were celebrated for. Although Ḥīra was full of monasteries, they were not built by the dynasty, which remained officially pagan until the last decade of the 6th century when Nuʿman, the last Lakhmid king, adopted Christianity. These monasteries were built by the *ʿibād,* the Christian population of Ḥīra, and by two female members of the Lakhmid royal house, who were Christian, the two Hinds.

paragraphs have argued for their superiority over their contemporaries, the Ḥārithids of Najrān and the Lakhmids of Ḥīra.

The same passage in Bakrī on the three groups of Arabs employs the term *biyaʿ,* literally "churches," for the type of religious structures in which the three groups competed. Although the term, strictly speaking, means churches, not monasteries, yet in this context it is almost certainly used for both, and more for the latter. The Arab authors were not always strict in the employment of Christian terms. The term most probably refers more to monasteries. The passage in Bakrī comes in the entry on the monastery of Najrān, Dayr Najrān, not the churches, and Arab authors say practically nothing on federate Arab *churches.* As the monasteries had their own churches, the conventual chapels, this led to the indiscriminate use of the term in the Arabic sources. This is illustrated in the entry on Dayr Hind, the monastery of Hind, in Bakrī, where the author inserts in the entry the famous inscription of Hind, the Lakhmid queen, who refers to the *bīʿa* within which the inscription was carved.[117] This is clearly the church within the *dayr,* the Monastery of Hind.

In addition, the description of the location of these *biyaʿ,* amid gardens, water, and trees, suggests a rural rather than an urban setting.[118] Such was the monastery of al-Lujj, Dayr al-Lujj, which the last Lakhmid king used to visit on Sundays and feast days for relaxation; the passage describing it implies that it was not within Ḥīra but outside it.[119] Finally and most cogently is the interchangeability of the two terms, *bīʿa/biyaʿ* and *dayr/diyārāt,* in the very same passage. The passage in Bakrī is derived from Iṣfahānī's *Aghānī,* and various authors quoted it but with slight variations. Al-ʿUmarī, who also quoted it, uses in the first sentence in the passage *biyaʿ;* then in the second sentence, he uses *diyārāt* instead. The same interchangeability obtains in ʿUmarī's account of a monastery, Dayr Mārūthā, which he says used to be referred to as *al-bīʿatayn* ("the two churches") because there were two sets of quarters in it, one for monks and the other for nuns; and that term *al-bīʿatayn* also occurs in a verse on the *dayr.*[120]

The leading position of the Ghassānids in their contribution to Arab monasticism and to monasticism in Oriens is also reflected not only in the passage of Bakrī in his *Muʿjam* but also in Ḥamza, whose *Chronicle* listed Ghassānid buildings. When he lists ecclesiastical structures, he ignores churches completely and gives recognition to the six monasteries the Ghassānids built together with their

[117] For Dayr Hind in Bakrī, see *Muʿjam,* II, 606–7.

[118] Such monasteries are to be distinguished from the hermitages of solitaries, which in location and facilities were forbidding.

[119] For Dayr al-Lujj, see Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* s.v., II, 595. Some of the feast days of the Christian calendar are still occasions for festivities in the Christian Orient. On the Feast of St. Elias, visitors often spend the night on Mount Tabor feasting and celebrating the memory of the saint.

[120] See al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 359, lines 7, 9 and 332, lines 5, 10, 14.

names. The astounding number of Monophysite monasteries that only the Provincia Arabia had around 570 and in which the Ghassānids were heavily involved also testifies to the role of the Ghassānids in the intensive development of monasticism and monasteries in Oriens in this early Byzantine period.[121]

B

The Ghassānid contribution to monasticism has been disentangled in this volume from the Syriac/Aramaic and its identity has been restored. It has been shown to have been considerable, an important chapter in the history of monasticism in the East. An explanation of this outstanding contribution is therefore necessary. One factor was the spirit of the age; the predecessors of the Ghassānids in the federate system were especially attached to monks and solitaries, the most famous of whom were Euthymius in the Jordan valley and Simeon the Elder at Telanissos. So were the Ghassānids attached to their descendants in the spirit, such as Simeon the Younger. These ascetics, more than the priests and the bishops, were the strong personalities of Christianity in the Oriens of the Ghassānids, some of whose soldiers, after their great victory over the Lakhmid king Mundir in 554, stayed with Simeon the Younger as his disciples, because they thought he had helped them win the victory.

Constantinople itself was giving a lead in its attention to monasticism and monasteries. Justinian's interest in monks and monasteries is well known; during his reign, Constantinople had seventy monasteries. Closer to the Ghassānids in Oriens, he built, or rebuilt, St. Sabas, whose abbot he had received in Constantinople, and also St. Catherine's on Mount Sinai, a pilgrimage place for the Christian Arabs of this period.

Monophysitism, to which the Ghassānids passionately adhered, must have contributed to Ghassān's partiality to monasticism as it emphasized the divine nature of Christ. The monk more than the priest reflected the ideal of *imitatio Christi.* The monk in his hermitage, totally renouncing the world, was closer to Christ as God than the priest who lived in the hustle and bustle of the city and was perennially busy, as he must have been, with the things that were Caesar's. Theodore, the newly elected chief hierarch of the Arab church around 540, had been a monk before his elevation to the Ghassānid Arab episcopate. He could not have forgotten entirely his life in a monastery. More important is his mission and his mandate for the revivification of the Monophysite church and for spreading the faith. Now his jurisdiction was the region of southern Oriens and northern Ḥijāz. This was a priority that fell on his shoulders as the bishop of the Arab limitrophe and western Arabia. Christian confessions that were frowned upon by

[121] The strictly Ghassānid (or associated with the Ghassānids) within these 137 Monophysite monasteries were singled out in *BASIC* I.2, 824–38 and 998–99.

Orthodox Byzantium were known for their missionary zeal. Such were the Nestorians, whose record in spreading the faith in the area of the Persian Gulf, eastern Arabia, India, and central Asia is well known. The Monophysites were in a similar position vis-à-vis Orthodox Byzantium. They were no less zealous in propagating Christianity in the western parts, the Nile valley and western Arabia. This latter was partly Theodore's jurisdiction, and he must have approached his missionary work with vigor after a period of eclipse and persecution of the Monophysite church. But these regions were arid desert regions, more easily penetrated by monasteries. Hence the importance accorded to monasticism as an instrument of conversion and propagation of faith among the Arabs in these regions.

Within the arid area in which the Ghassānids were installed in Oriens, one particular sector faced the Jordan, the holy river of Christianity, in the vicinity of which acts of asceticism and renunciation were performed by the two main figures of the Gospel: Christ himself fasted forty days in its wilderness, and the Baptist, the first Christian ascetic, ate locusts and wild honey and dressed in camel's hair. The area, especially the Judaean wilderness between the Jordan and Jerusalem, became a great monastic region; this could not fail to inspire the Ghassānids and give an impetus to their interest in monasticism. In this, the Ghassānids were privileged since they were the only *foederati* of Byzantium who were close to the Holy Land, protected it, and even occupied part of it in the Golan in Palaestina Secunda.

In addition to the work of Theodore, the Ghassānid kings promoted monasticism on the secular level. Indeed Ḥamza, the historian of Ghassānid buildings, mentions only the kings and not Theodore as the builders of monasteries. As builders, these kings had for their role models not only the emperors in Constantinople, such as Justinian, but also their immediate predecessors as *foederati,* the Salīḥids, who were especially attached to monasticism. One of their kings, Dāwūd/David, actually became a monk and built the famous "monastery of Dāwūd," which still stands in a ruined state. The Ghassānids must have been aware of this. It has been argued that the *dayr* mentioned by Ḥamza, called Dakhm, is really a corruption of Daj'am, the Zokomid, the name of the royal house of Salīḥ.[122] So emulation of the previous dynasts in the same area must also have been an incentive in the Ghassānid continuation of the royal federate Christian tradition in its patronage of religious architecture.

Patronage and the various motives behind it must have played a role in the Ghassānid interest in monasticism and monasteries. The Ghassānids, as great patrons of Arabic poetry at their court in Jābiya, also patronized the erection of religious structures, especially monasteries. One of them, Mundir, is explicitly referred to by John of Ephesus as having endowed monasteries after his victory over

[122] See below, 332–33.

the Lakhmids and his successful campaign against Ḥīra, while two towers, one erected by him at Ḍumayr and the other by his father at what later became the Umayyad Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, reflect the interest of the Ghassānid rulers in monasteries. The motives behind patronage in this period were many, including thanksgiving for a military victory or a safe return or cure. Such was the tower at Ḍumayr, the inscription of which has survived, in which Mundir says he erected the tower after thanking God and St. Julian for his safety and that of his sons, while the one at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr may have been erected after a military victory, possibly that in 554 against the Lakhmid Mundir.

Finally, another factor was the identity of the Ghassānids as *foederati,* a military aristocracy charged with the defense of Oriens against the pagan Arabian pastoralists and the fire-worshiping Persians, the secular enemy. A previous volume in this series described the important chapter they wrote in the history of Monophysite Christianity, as its protectors and promoters. They were soldiers of the Cross who fought their wars and performed their military functions as such. Byzantine military manuals such as the *Stratēgikon* have much relevant material on what might be termed the liturgy of war that was firmly established in the conduct of Byzantine warfare: the blessing of the flags before combat; the saying of prayers and the recitation by the officers and the general of the *Kyrie eleison,* followed later by the battle cry *Nobiscum Deus.*[123] It may be safely assumed that some form of this took place in the Ghassānid army. Those guarding the limitrophe were in a permanent state of alert and would have welcomed the permanent presence of a monastery near them.[124] The Ghassānid soldier, especially the one stationed in the limitrophe rather than in the more clement terrain and climate of the Golan, Batanaea, or Auranitis, had a more natural affinity with the monk, whether the solitary or the monk of a *koinobion,* than with the priests and bishops of the urban scene in Ghassānland.[125] These monks were the athletes of the spirit, counterparts of the Ghassānid soldiers, the athletes of the body: thus they became the moral force behind the Ghassānid Christian army guarding the limitrophe.

[123] See *Das Strategikon des Maurikios,* ed. G. T. Dennis and E. Gamillscheg, CFHB 17 (Vienna, 1981), 138, lines 15–17. For the liturgy of war, the antecedents of battles and their sequels in the campaigns of Christian Byzantium and the medieval West, see M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory* (Cambridge, 1986).

[124] Monasteries on the frontier may be distinguished from those in such areas as Batanaea or the Golan. The former must have been modest ones since they were purely functional, often forts turned into monasteries, and so were unlike those described or referred to by Bakrī in his *Muʿjam,* II, 603, which were decorated with mosaics and other artistic features.

[125] In this connection the sequel to the battle of Chalcis, between the Ghassānid Arethas and the Lakhmid Mundir in 554, may be invoked. According to the *vita* of Simeon the Younger, the saint prayed for the Ghassānid host and contributed to its victory. On their return from the battlefield, some Ghassānid soldiers decided to stay with the solitary saint and remained his disciples; see *BASIC* I.1, 244, 247.

It has been noted by ecclesiastical historians of this region and period that the monks lived side by side with the troops that defended the Byzantine frontier, and it has been further suggested that the monks rebuilt or repaired the military stations abandoned by the Byzantine regular soldiers or the *limitanei.*[126] Now the tentative hypotheses of these scholars may be presented more confidently. One of the major concerns of this volume is the elucidation of the Ghassānid role in the defense of Oriens after Justinian dismissed the *limitanei* from their stations and their watch over the *limes.* It has been argued that the Ghassānids in a very large way replaced the *limitanei,* and so the *foederati* became *limitanei* of the frontier in fact although not in name. The new *limitanei* were zealous Monophysite soldiers whose zeal was reflected on various occasions and in various ways. So when these moved to take over the fortresses and camps of the *limitanei,* they would have welcomed the proximity of those monks who were already in monasteries on the frontier or established themselves there simultaneously with the Ghassānid takeover. The frontier was not the place for secular priests and parishes, only soldiers and monks whose conventual chapels could serve the religious needs of the soldier. The Ghassānid fort, *maslaḥa,* and the *ḥīra/ḥayr* had near it the *dayr.* The zealous Ghassānid soldier was an armed "monk," while the monk was a spiritual athlete. The symbiosis between the monk and the soldier reflects the militarization of the image of Christ, which began with Constantine, who stamped the XP on his *labarum.* This found an architectural expression in the monastery tower, discussed later in this volume. The Ghassānid *hira,* a military station on the frontier with a nearby monastery or a fortified monastery in which soldier and monk lived together, anticipated and foreshadowed the later Muslim *ribāṭ.*[127]

VII. Theodore, Bishop of the Ghassānids, ca. 540–ca. 570

Theodore, the bishop of the Ghassānids in the sixth century during the reign of Arethas and Justinian, has been mentioned in connection with Ghassānid religious structures, both churches and monasteries, and it has been suggested that he must have been responsible for the construction of many of them. The truth of this conclusion has, of course, been inferential rather than evidential. It is therefore appropriate to give special attention to the chief Ghassānid hierarch, during whose episcopate these structures were presumably erected, throwing light on his mandate to revive an almost defunct church and spread the Gospel *in partibus infidelium.* Both of these assignments were also related to structures, since Christianity is a religion that cannot truly exist without them.

[126] Suggested by Dussaud and accepted by Lammens and with caution by Devreesse; see R. Devreesse, *Le Patriarcat d'Antioche* (Paris, 1945), 229 note 2, and Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens,* 269, note 2.

[127] On *ribāṭ,* see *EI*[2], s.v. The presence of monks along the Arabian frontier is paralleled by their presence in Cappadocia.

The *Life* of Theodore and his activities have been discussed in detail in the previous volume.[128] The Syriac sources, both contemporary and late, mention his work within the Monophysite church, especially his major role in the tritheistic movement of the late 560s. But these surviving Syriac sources are almost completely silent on his more important assignment within the jurisdiction assigned to him, the Arab area, both federate within Oriens and *extra limitem* in northern Ḥijāz, where he was supposed to resuscitate and convert respectively. How did he set about performing his duties among the Arabs and in the Arab area? The Arabic sources are as silent as the Syriac in that they do not refer to him directly and explicitly in connection with erecting religious structures. However, the large number of Monophysite monasteries around the year 570, after a period during which its establishment was dismantled and its hierarchy decimated, could surely be related, at least inferentially, to his episcopate. These 137 monasteries were mainly in the Provincia Arabia, the headquarters of the Ghassānid supreme phylarch Arethas and his federate bishop, Theodore. However, more probing into Theodore's career is needed in order to find out more about his activity in spreading the faith and his contribution to religious structures; his appointment as bishop in 540 was an extraordinary one, and much was expected of him. He actually shared with Jacob Baradaeus responsibility for the fate of the entire Monophysite world in Oriens, and the jurisdiction assigned to him was as extensive as that assigned to Jacob. Like Jacob, he had a long life, which enabled him to achieve much. He remained bishop for at least thirty years and appeared strong even toward the end of his life when he was a major figure in dealing with the tritheistic heresy around 569.

Fortunately a Syriac *Life* of another ecclesiastic, that of Aḥūdemmeh, the Monophysite metropolitan of the East in Persian territory, in upper Mesopotamia, can perhaps be used to shed light on the way Theodore must have operated among the Arabs in order to convert and spread the faith.[129] Although not Arabic-speaking, Aḥūdemmeh was born in Bēth-ʿArabāyē, the province called Arabia since the days of Xenophon. He was consecrated by Jacob Baradaeus in 559 and was sent to Bēth-ʿArabāyē to do missionary work among its Arabs. The *vita* is a precious document, perhaps unique in describing the process of converting pagan Arabs to Christianity. Its relevance to illuminating the work of Theodore in converting the Arabs is immediately apparent. His efforts to convert the Arabs started

[128] See *BASIC* I.2, 788–92, 806–8.

[129] For the Syriac *Life* of Aḥūdemmeh, see PO 3 (Paris, 1909), 15–51. His episcopate was 559–575, and his seat was Tagrit, east of the Tigris; he was briefly mentioned in W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge, 1972), 321, but not at all in E. Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites* (Louvain, 1951). Frend draws attention to the works of J. M. Fiey, in which he states that despite Aḥūdemmeh's efforts, the Nestorians remained in the majority in the area of Aḥūdemmeh's missionary activity. True as this may be, it does not affect at all the value of the section on the conversion of the Arabs of upper Mesopotamia; see Frend, ibid., note 2.

to bear fruit when he succeeded in curing the daughter of the chief of the Arabs from her evil demons, after which he began his mission by baptizing them.[130] The *vita* has a section devoted to his missionary work among the Arabs, and the words of the hagiographer are best quoted *in extenso.* The passage sheds light on the process of converting the Arabs and has many references to the building of religious structures.[131]

> With great care and patience, he went through their encampments, one after the other; he gave them instruction and taught them through many discourses. And it was not only the instruction and the teaching that was hard and difficult for the holy Mar Aḥūdemmeh, but he had to endure and go through much suffering because of the cold, the heat, the difficult roads, the deserts, and the bitter waters that were to be found there. However, he never ceased from observing his perfect fast, his prayers, and his vigils. The Blessed Mar Aḥūdemmeh was able through his zeal to bring together priests from many countries, and through sweet, pleasant words and gifts, he persuaded them and attracted them and was able to appoint a priest and deacon for each tribe. He established churches and gave them the names of the chiefs of their tribes so that they might extend assistance to these churches in all matters that these might need. He consecrated altars, placed them in (the churches), and attended to every thing and matter that was necessary to the church; he bought and transported everything that was right, beautiful, and appropriate for a bishop of truth, (such as he was).
>
> Then he endeared their hearts to all the virtues of the love of God (piety), more especially to giving to the needy; which makes one like unto God himself, who loves it as is written (in scripture): God loves the donor who gives gladly, and the Messiah has said in the Gospel: Give and it shall be given unto you; be merciful as your celestial Father is. Their alms spread over all men and in every place but especially more over the holy monasteries, which are to the present day still sustained by them as far as their material needs are concerned: the holy and divine monastery of Mattaï and Kōktā and Beit Mar Sargīs and the community of monks at the mountain of Shīgar, together with the other holy monasteries of the faithful in the land of the Romans and the Persians; they also made substantial gifts, which were sold for high prices. And not only did they give their donations to the churches, the monasteries, the poor, and the strangers, but they loved fasting and the ascetic life more than any other Christians, and so much so that they started

[130] See PO 3, pp. 24–26.

[131] For the Syriac text, see ibid., 26–33. It has been annotated by François Nau and may be consulted with profit in his French version of the Syriac text; ibid. My translation tries to be as literal as possible within the norms of idiomatic English.

the holy fast of the Forty Days (Lent) one week before all the other Christians. Many individuals among them never tasted bread throughout the whole period of the fast, and this was true not only of the men but also of numerous women. They were fired by zeal for the orthodox faith, and each time the holy church was persecuted, that is, when it was pursued by its enemies, (the Arabs) gave their necks (suffered martyrdom) for the church of Christ, particularly the chosen and numerous groups among them, namely the ʿAquoulayê, the Tanoukhâyê and the Ṭouʿayê.

And when they became faultless in all the Christian customs, this holy Mar Aḥūdemmeh wished to turn them over to the grace of God and attend to other matters to which God was calling him. He charged them with the following recommendations: "My children, do not abandon God lest he should abandon you and lest you should fall into a path full of evil."

And when the blessed one (Aḥūdemmeh) finished his warnings and completed his prayer, he left them and came to build the grand and beautiful house of Pesīlotā in the middle of Beit ʿArabâyê in a place called ʿAynqénayê, and he placed in it an altar and (relics of) the holy martyrs and called this temple after the name of the holy Mar Sargīs, the famous martyr, because many of the Arab groups loved his name very much and sought refuge with him more than any other people. And through this temple that he had built in the name of Mar Sargīs, the holy Mar Aḥūdemmeh skillfully contrived to detach them (the Arabs) from (visiting) that temple of Mar Sargīs of Beit Reṣāfa, which lay on the other side of the Euphrates, since this was far away from them. And as much as possible, he made this one similar to the other one, so that the sight of the former might prevent them from going to visit the latter. And near this (temple) house that he built, he constructed the great and well-known monastery called ʿAynqénayê, making it distinguished both by its structure and by all its appointments. And he gathered together in it a large community and gave them some beautiful rules, those through which the soul is restored to tranquility from the hustle and bustle of this world. And this community lived the new and happy life of Paradise (which consisted) of perpetual worship day and night, the doxology of the holy scriptures, which pleases God, (the exercise of) modesty, humility, and the spiritually beautiful discipline, perpetual fasting, the holy prayers, glorious vigils, pious asceticism, abundant charity, hospitable acceptance of the poor and the stranger. He set up a table and provided it abundantly with all the goods for all those who arrived at its door. It was like a garden full of things good for the entire country in which it was located. And all that the people of that country needed was supplied by it.

Satan, who from the beginning was jealous of the first of our human race and caused them to fall from a Paradise full of life and to be condemned

to death and to a life of sin, became jealous (even) of this place. He started by whispering into the ears of those who acceded to his wishes, as the serpent had done in the ear of Eve. He excited those who were distant from God and were heretics, and these burned (the monastery); its glorious community was dispersed, as even the Apostolic company was dispersed at the time of the great mystical/spiritual Crucifixion. But as God who gave back to Adam his first beauty and drove Satan away by a just judgment, so did he the adversaries of the Orthodox faith and exalted the power of the church. He sowed good intentions in the heart of the king (Chosroes I), and so he gave his orders that the monastery be built as it had been before. And through the prayer of the holy Mar Aḥūdemmeh, all that used to be there came back to its place. Satan was put to shame and confounded as were his adherents, and the monastery abounded with monks and with beautiful ornaments even more than the first one; divine praise rose high from its interior, and many praised God there. The holy Mar Aḥūdemmeh called the superior together with all the community, and talked to him and said: "Hold your brothers together carefully in the fear of God (piety). And pray God constantly for them and show yourself as a good example so that they may imitate your practice." And he also spoke thus to the brothers, "My children, love one another, and pray constantly; receive strangers with a warm heart so that your work may not be in vain."

After he spoke these words, he made over them the venerable sign of the Cross, left them and went away to make the divine visitation that had been entrusted to him by the grace of God. When he had visited all those peoples to whom he had given instruction, whom he had guided and led to every good deed,[132] he still wished to build a monastery in a place that was distant, in a difficult country, a dried-out waterless land, because those who followed this road and wandered in this land suffered terribly. He built large and beautiful structures, had big and beautiful doors made, and had two wells dug, one inside the monastery and another outside it. He consecrated it and brought in a community of about forty inmates. Thenceforward all those who passed by that place praised God and said: "In a land as difficult as this one, what a grand and accomplished structure has been built!" This monastery was called Gaʿtanī or holy Mar Aḥūdemmeh. And because of their proximity to the monastery of Gaʿtanī, he knew also the men of ʿAqrountâ, a camp (κάστρα/*castra*) of the orthodox lovers of Christ,[133] and be-

[132] The Arabs he had converted, as stated earlier in this long quotation.

[133] It is not entirely clear from the text whether this group was Arab. Nau clearly considered them such, since this part of the *vita* is included in the section of his translation that has the rubric *Ses oeuvres chez les Arabes* (PO 3, p. 26), and I tentatively followed him in including this part in my English version. It is noteworthy that the term used for their domicile is ʿAqrountâ (a town

> cause he was aware how zealous they were for the faith and in observing the cult of saints, he wished to visit them constantly because they were dearer in his eyes than all the other Christians, as was John in the eyes of our Savior, dearer than all the other disciples. So that he went to the length of calling them "the camp of Christ" in view of the splendor of their faith and piety. And he wished to look at them all the time as our Savior always looked at John because of his spiritual beauty.

This lengthy passage from the *vita* concerning the Arabs and their conversion was briefly noted in a previous volume in this series[134] but is clearly even more appropriate here. The following commentary discusses only those features of the *vita* that will help understand the work of Theodore.

Jacob sent to the Arabs of Bēth-ʿArabāyē one who was not entirely a foreigner to them. Although he was not Arabic-speaking, he was born there and was aware of the language problem presented by their "difficult language," the phrase used by his biographer.[135] The choice of an Arab or one who was familiar with the Arabs was clearly the right one for successful missionary work: this fact should shed light on the language used by these newly converted Arabs in their churches. The natural presumption is that it was Arabic, since the hagiographer went out of his way to speak of the difficulty their language presented to missionary work. And it would have been surprising if these pastoralists were asked to worship in a language they did not understand, such as Syriac.

More important are the structures he built in order to give a solid foundation to the Christianity the Arabs had just embraced. He built churches and assigned to each tribe a priest and a deacon; he also consecrated altars and placed them within the churches he built; he named these churches after the tribal chiefs who had contributed toward their construction in order to ensure the continuity of their support. Significant was his building a *martyrion* for St. Sergius in order to save the Arabs the trouble of making the pilgrimage to his famous shrine at Sergiopolis/Ruṣāfa in Euphratensis, a reflection of the importance of Sergius to the Arabs.

Most important is what the biographer says on monasteries. Aḥūdemmeh did not think it sufficient to build churches but also decided that monasteries were also important for the completion of his mission. Their number is striking. He

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on the Tigris between Tagrīt and Beit Âsâ) and is further described as a *qaṣṭrā* (Greek κάστρα, Latin *castra*), not the term used when the hagiographer spoke of the Arabs earlier in the *vita* whom Aḥūdemmeh had converted and whose camp appears in Syriac as *maṣḥrītā* (ibid., 26, line 10). *Qaṣṭrā* in the Syriac of the period is not a camp but a fortified place; hence those involved who lived in it are not likely to have been pastoralists. Whether they were Arabs cannot be determined from where they lived. On the similar problem of identifying the ethnic identity of a group who lived in a *qaṣṭrā,* see *BASIC* I.2, 714–15.

[134] *BAFOC,* 419–22.

[135] PO 3, pp. 19, 22.

encouraged the Arabs to make donations for the religious structures he built, especially for the maintenance of the monasteries. He also complimented the Arabs by distinguishing them from all the other Christians for their devotion to fasting and the ascetic life.

There are many comparisons with, and contrasts to, Theodore and his apostolate. First, both were contemporaries doing their missionary work among the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent, one in Byzantine Oriens and the other in the Arabia of upper Mesopotamia. Hence the achievements of Aḥūdemmeh, that have been recorded, may possibly shed light on the work of Theodore, of whose achievement no records survive. Aḥūdemmeh achieved so much despite the fact that he was operating in the territory of the Persian king, the fire-worshiper, who finally had him killed for converting one of the princes of the royal family. Theodore, on the other hand, was operating in the territory of the Christian Roman Empire that encouraged proselytizing. Aḥūdemmeh's life was cut short by Chosroes, while Theodore lived long and served as bishop for at least thirty years, twice as long as Ahūdemmeh. So the number of religious structures he must have built would have been more numerous than those of Aḥūdemmeh.

Most important is that Aḥūdemmeh was a minor bishop compared to Theodore, the presiding bishop over the entire Arab federate church in Oriens. Moreover, Theodore was on the same level of hierarchal eminence as Jacob Baradaeus, with whom the Monophysite confession in Oriens was divided. He, like Jacob, had a mandate to consecrate priests and bishops and to build churches and convents. Consequently, he would have consecrated a great number of bishops, who would have done what Aḥūdemmeh did in upper Mesopotamia.[136]

The conclusion suggested by the study of the *vita* of Aḥūdemmeh in this comparative context is that Theodore, the chief hierarch of the Arab Ghassānid church in the sixth century, must have been a major figure in the construction of churches and monasteries in Oriens, reflected only partially through the 137 monasteries of the Provincia Arabia alone, knowledge of which is owed to the accidental survival of only one Syriac letter. The two documents, the letter and the *vita,* complement each other, and serve as the basis for drawing conclusions on Theodore, by inference and by analogy, respectively. Previous sections have explained the impetus given to religious Arab structures by the secular Ghassānid kings who were *philoktistai,* such as Arethas. The building of churches and monasteries was the proper concern of the chief hierarch, Theodore, to whom must therefore be related the flowering of Arab Ghassānid religious architecture in its golden period, the sixth century. Unfortunately, no biography specially devoted to Theodore that recounts his achievement has survived.[137]

[136] On the many bishops the Arabs had in the Provincia Arabia, which attracted the attention of Sozomen, see *BAFIC,* 178–79.

[137] In the *vita* of both Jacob and Theodore, the first naturally receives the lion's share because he was the principal figure of the movement after whom the Monophysite church was called Jacob-

VIII. List of Ghassānid Monasteries

The list of monasteries associated with the Ghassānids is more extensive than the one for churches. Again, as in the case of the churches, their association with the Ghassānids ranges from the certain to the probable or possible. The monasteries are in Syria Prima, Phoenicia Libanensis, the Provincia Arabia, the three Palestines, and Ḥijāz. Unlike the churches, which are mentioned sporadically in the sources, the Ghassānid monasteries are better noticed in both Syriac and Arabic texts. Hence it is best to begin the list with those that are included in the most informative of all sources, the Syriac letter of the Monophysite archimandrites.

The Syriac Document

The isolation of the strictly Ghassānid monasteries in this list is possible but difficult because the abbots assumed biblical or Graeco-Roman Christian names and so it is not easy to detect their ethnic background. Furthermore, the locations of many of the monasteries have not been identified, and so it is impossible to tell whether they were situated in Ghassānid territory. One can therefore only point out what is recognizably Ghassānid both explicitly and implicitly. In the case of some it is possible to classify the monasteries, as clusters of them share the same location.

> Recognizably Ghassānid are: "the Monastery of the Ghassānids"; "the Dayr of Jafna," a resoundingly Ghassānid name of one of their kings; and "the Monastery of the Arabs," alternatively known as Nahr Qaṣṭrā, which may be tentatively added as the monastery of some federate Arabs who may have been Ghassānid. Of the three, two are definitely Ghassānid.[138]
>
> Two monasteries located on Jabal Ḥārith al-Jawlān (Mons Arethas), the mountain named after the famous Ghassānid king.[139]
>
> Possibly two monasteries ascribed to the Ghassānids in the Arabic *Chronicle* of Ḥamza that appear also in this Syriac list are Dayr Ḥāla, "the Monastery of Ḥāla" and Dayr al-Ghadīr, "the Monastery of al-Ghadīr." The references to the two monasteries in Ḥamza and in the Syriac document are similar but not exactly identical, hence only a degree of probability can be predicated of their Ghassānid association.[140]

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ite, a term that is objectionable to the Monophysites of Oriens in much the same way that the term Mohammedanism instead of Islam is to Muslims. Theologically, they were not the followers of Jacob Baradaeus but Monophysites, who call themselves Orthodox, a term they have used to the present day.

[138] For a short description of these, see *BASIC* I.2, 833–35, 831–32, 827–28. The location of the two Ghassānid monasteries is not clear. That of Jafna could be the village called Jafna (above, 12 note 41), or it may be unrelated to the toponym and located somewhere else.

[139] See *BASIC* I.2, 825–26. The mountain is now called Tall al-Ḥāra; see above, 800.

[140] On these see the section on Ḥamza, below, 306–41. Nöldeke identified Dayr Ḥāla with Dayr al-Khall near the Yarmūk. On Dayr al-Khall, Yāqūt (*Muʿjam,* s.v.) says that the *mushrikūn,*

Monasteries in locations associated with the Ghassānids in the contemporary poetry of Nābigha and Ḥassān, especially the latter, are: five monasteries in Jāsim, eleven in Dārayyā, two in Sakkā, one in Tubnā, one in al-Buḍayʿ, and one in Marj al-Ṣuffar.[141]

A monastery in Jābiya, the "capital" of the Ghassānids in the Golan, is certainly Ghassānid.[142]

ʿAqrabāʾ is stated by Yāqūt to be the residence of the Ghassānid kings; it had two monasteries.[143]

"The monastery of the White Tower," which has been identified with Mundir's Tower at Ḍumayr.[144]

The Dayr at Haliorama, which has been identified with Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī where the tower of Arethas still stands.[145]

The two *dayrs* of Maḥajja are likely to be Ghassānid, especially in view of the name, which signifies "pilgrimage center."[146]

Dayr Kiswa can be identified as Ghassānid, if Kiswa is indeed Jalliq, the famous Ghassānid capital.[147]

Dayr Kafr Shemesh has an abbot, the only abbot with a true Arab name in the diminutive, Khulayf.[148] It could have been a Ghassānid *dayr.*

And so possibly is the Dayr of ʿŪqabtā, for which Eustathius, the prior of the church of Mundir, signed.[149]

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in this case the Christian Byzantine army, during the battle of Yarmūk were stationed in it, *nazalūhu;* Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. Dayr al-Khall. This could speak for its Ghassānid association. Khall is Arabic for vinegar, the drink of Christ on the cross, not inappropriate for a monastery, whose inmates looked upon Christ as their model.

[141] For these see *BASIC* I.2, 826, 829–30, 827, 830, 832–33. These places mentioned by Ḥassān were evidently Ghassānid, since Ḥassān not only mentions them in an elegy on the Ghassānids, but refers to *maghnā* and possibly *maghānī* in the first verse, clearly residences.

[142] *BASIC* I.2, 827.

[143] Ibid., 826–27.

[144] Ibid., 827.

[145] For its possible Ghassānid character, see the argument ibid., 833.

[146] Ibid., 825, 828. For more on its association with the Ghassānids, see below, 000.

[147] Ibid., 830.

[148] Ibid., 828–29. Kefar Shemesh, Kfar Shams. The toponym was left unidentified by Nöldeke; see *BASIC* I.2, 829 note 132. But now the maps and its different spellings closer to the Arabic reveal it as a locality 16 km northwest of Ṣanamein and 10 km southwest of Dayr al-Bakht in eastern Golan; see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map II, A1. A *dayr* located so close to Ghassānid settlement in the Golan and whose abbot had the Arabic name of Khulayf strongly suggests a Ghassānid connection.

[149] *BASIC* I.2, 380–81. "Prior" is a term of Latin monasticism, but it is the closest to *thenyānā,* the Syriac term that describes Eustathius. As the prior was the second under the abbot so was the *thenyānā.* The Syriac term is a calque of Greek *deuterarios.*

The *Dīwān* of Ḥassān

Ḥassān, the panegyrist of the Ghassānids, who contributed so much to knowledge of Ghassānid toponymy, has also contributed two precious references to their involvement in monasticism in his poem that rhymes in *N.*[150] In the version of its text in *Aghānī* there are two relevant verses. One verse speaks of prayers in a monastery, a *dayr,*[151] which is consonant with what he had said in the poem on the Ghassānid celebration of Easter. Another verse refers to Afīq[152] (Apheka), a well-known toponym in the Golan, which overlooks the Sea of Galilee and the site of a famous monastery that continued to flourish until the days of al-ʿUmarī in the fourteenth century.[153] In the poem, Ḥassān refers to Afīq as a place associated with the Ghassānids but does not mention a "*dayr* Afīq," only a *dayr* in another verse without any qualification. However, the reference to a *dayr* in the poem and the mention of Dayr Afīq in the sources suggest that the association of the two is justified and that the monastery in Afīq must have received some attention from the Ghassānids. Dayr Afīq may thus be considered a monastery with a Ghassānid association.

The List of Ḥamza

Of all the Arabic sources, this list is the most important for Ghassānid monasteries,[154] with which Ḥamza associated two Ghassānid kings: ʿAmr ibn-Jafna, to whom he attributes Dayr Ḥālī, Dayr Ayyūb, and Dayr Hunād/Hind; and Al-Ayham ibn al-Ḥārith, to whom he attributes the building of Dayr Dakhm/Dajʿam, Dayr al-Labwa, and Dayr Shaʿf.

Masālik al-Abṣār of ʿUmarī

A later section analyzes the passage in ʿUmarī in which he discussed two Ghassānid toponyms, Dayr al-Khammān, in the Bathaniyya/Batanaea, and Qunayyat al-Sālār, in the region of Yarmūk, either a monastery or a church.[155]

The Monasteries of the Provincia Arabia

Since the Provincia Arabia was the principal province of the Ghassānid phylarchs/kings, it was only natural that it should have had many monasteries associ-

[150] See below, 244.

[151] See *Dīwān Ḥassān,* 2 vols., ed. W. ʿArafāt (London, 1971), I, 256, line 2.

[152] Ibid., 256–57, where the verse is quoted in three different ways. Afīq has already been discussed briefly, principally as a toponym; see above, 94–96.

[153] The *dayr* was described by Shābushtī in his *Diyārāt,* and it was mentioned by Abū Nuwās, the well-known early ʿAbbāsid poet in whose verse Afīq appears as Fīq, the present-day spelling. For the description of the monastery and Abū Nuwās' poem, see Shābushtī, *Kitāb al-Diyārāt,* ed. G. ʿAwwād (Baghdād, 1966), 204–6. See al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* I, 336–37.

[154] For a detailed discussion of these monasteries, see below, 324–25, 332–33.

[155] See below, 349–51.

ated with the Ghassānids. In addition to the ones noted in the letter of the Monophysite archimandrites, the following may be mentioned.

The Monastery of Buṣrā/Bostra, Dayr Buṣrā

References to *dayr*s (monasteries) in and around Bostra are especially important because the Muslim tradition maintains that it was at one of these monasteries that the meeting took place between the Prophet Muḥammad (before his prophetic call) and the mysterious monk Baḥīra. Other meetings may have taken place in other monasteries along the caravan route from Mecca to Bostra or Gaza during Muḥammad's fifteen years as a caravan leader before his call ca. A.D. 610. The Muslim tradition, however, singles out for this meeting Bostra and its environs. Two possibilities are Dayr Bostra/Buṣrā within the city, and Dayr al-Bāʿiqī, some 20 km southwest of Bostra near Qaṣr al-Bāʿiqī. Yāqūt speaks of the meeting in one of the two *dayrs.*[156]

An encounter between Muḥammad and a monk in a Christian monastery naturally implies that the monk was Arab or spoke Arabic. Arab monasteries or monasteries built by Arabs, in this pre-Islamic period, suggest not the assimilated Hellenized and Romanized Arabs of Petra and Palmyra, but the *foederati* who kept their identity as Arabs. Were the Ghassānids involved with these monasteries which, according to the Muslim traditions, witnessed the encounter between future Prophet and the Christian monk? There is no definitive answer to this question. One can only point to certain facts that might suggest such a connection. The Ghassānids were the most active of all the *foederati* in the spreading of the Christian faith, especially in their patronage of monasticism. For the first time in federate history, there was a presiding bishop with a missionary mandate that involved the vast Arab limitrophe in its entirety and beyond. Bostra had been the capital of the Arab Nabataeans and then became the capital of the Provincia Arabia, the principal province in Oriens in which were stationed the Ghassānids. Also, in the sixth century, Theodore was appointed the Monophysite bishop of Bostra, although he resided at the capital of the Ghassānids, in nearby Jābiya. With so many monasteries associated with the Ghassānids in this very region—Golan, Batanaea, Auranitis—it is possible that the Ghassānid Theodore may have been involved with the monasteries in and around Bostra.[157]

Since Bostra is not included in the extensive list of 137 Monophysite monas-

[156] See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.vv. Dayr Buṣrā and Dayr al-Bāʿiqī. For the encounter of Baḥīra with Muḥammad, see S. Gero, "The Legend of the Monk Baḥīra: The Cult of the Cross and Iconoclasm," in *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam,* ed. P. Canivet and J.-P. Rey-Coquais (Damascus, 1992), 47–57, with extensive bibliography; more recently, see S. Griffith, "Muḥammad and the Monk Baḥīra: Reflections on a Syriac and Arabic Text from Early Abbasid Times," *OC* 79 (1995), 146–74. One version of the encounter presents Muḥammad as a youth, thirteen years old, together with his uncle Abū Ṭālib.

[157] On Theodore's activity in the limitrophe, see *BASIC* I.2, 853.

teries in the Provincia Arabia and the neighboring regions,[158] this seems to exclude a Ghassānid Arab monastery in Bostra itself. So the question is reduced to: if such an encounter between prophet and monk did take place, was it in a *dayr* within Bostra or outside it? There was a secular Ghassānid presence within Bostra but most probably not an ecclesiastical one represented by a Monophysite monastery. If there was an Arab monastery, it must have been a dyophysite one, whose monks were like those mentioned by the later Islamic sources at Dayr Bostra, Arab monks who belonged to the group al-Ṣādir, possibly affiliated to the Christian Orthodox tribe of ʿUḏra.[159] More likely to have had some Ghassānid connection are monasteries outside Bostra such as Dayr al-Bāʿiqī, the other *dayr* at which the Muslim tradition places the encounter between Muḥammad and the monk, or even the locality called simply al-Dayr (*the* monastery), which originally must have been the site of a monastery before it became the name of a locality.[160]

The Dayr of Usays

The important inscription discovered by Klaus Brisch, examined palaeographically by Adolph Grohmann and commented upon philologically and historically by the present writer, has established Usays as an important Ghassānid military station in the defense of Oriens. Although the publications of Brisch on Usays have been predominantly on the Umayyad period of the site, its pre-Umayyad period has now been established by the inscription, which reveals a Ghassānid presence.[161] That presence has so far been known as military, but references to some religious structures in this period have been made, consisting of a monastery and a church. Brisch notes that "the extremely primitive monastery with a tiny church is opposite to the Umayyad castle to the north of it, on the foot of the slope of the volcano proper."[162] The final publication on the excavation promised by Brisch no doubt will provide more detailed and precise information. The Ghassānids then also had a monastery in the Usays region. The reference to a tiny church presumably is to the monastery chapel. The Umayyads were to duplicate this with their palace and mosque.

The Monastery of al-Qaṣṭal

The military toponym al-Qaṣṭal (Latin *castellum*) has a Ghassānid association, especially the one in the Balqāʾ region in Trans-Jordan and the other one in

[158] As has been perceptively noted by Aigrain, the 137 Monophysite monasteries are all outside the main cities of the Provincia; see "Arabie," col. 1211.

[159] On these monks at Dayr Bostra, see *BAFIC,* 447.

[160] On Dayr al-Bāʿiqī, see the long footnote in *BAFIC,* 297 note 312 with its bibliography. On al-Dayr (el-Deir), due south of Bostra and so close to it, see PPUAES, II, A, 101–5.

[161] On all this, see above, 42 note 45.

[162] Personal communication from Klaus Brisch, 19 March 1998.

Damascene.[163] Ghassānid affiliation with Qasṭal implies some religious structure in either place. In addition, a verse by the Umayyad poet Jarīr, in an elegy on the caliph al-Walīd (news of whose death in A.D. 715 reached the poet while he was at al-Qasṭal), speaks of Dayr al-Qasṭal, explicit evidence that the Ghassānid station at Qasṭal (in Balqā') did have a monastery.[164] Reference to a *dayr* in al-Qasṭal, the station that was taken over by the Umayyads, could only mean that the *dayr* had been constructed in Byzantine times, when the Ghassānids resided at that station.

This explicit reference to a *dayr* adds to the number of *dayrs* associated with the Ghassānids and contributes to a better understanding of the phrase *ḏāt al-maḥārib,* "of the niches," the adjectival phrase used by the Umayyad poet Kuthayyir ʿAzza in describing al-Qasṭal, "al-Qasṭal of the niches."[165] *Maḥārib,* used in Islamic times to denote niches in mosques, had been used in pre-Islamic times to denote Christian structures or some element in them, as in the Kaʿba of Najrān.[166] The term may have been applied by the poet to the Christian religious structures erected in Byzantine times before Qasṭal was taken over by the Umayyads. The use of the plural *maḥārib* instead of *miḥrāb* suggests that more than one religious structure existed in Qasṭal, perhaps a complex of them.[167]

The Monastic Complex of Mayfaʿa/Umm al-Raṣāṣ

Mayfaʿa/Umm al-Raṣāṣ was one of the military stations of the *Notitia Dignitatum.* As has been argued, when the list of Ḥamza was being analyzed, one of the items could easily be read Mayfaʿa.[168] If correct, this would establish its connection with the Ghassānids beyond doubt. Recent intensive excavations at Mayfaʿa have revealed a group of religious structures of church and monastery, even a monastic complex.[169] The involvement of the zealous Monophysite Ghassānids in it can thus be entertained.

Mayfaʿa is also important because it was the third locality with which the Prophet Muḥammad and the monk Baḥīra are associated, after Bostra and Dayr al-Bāʿiqī. The chances of an encounter at Mayfaʿa between the two are strong,

[163] See below, 241.

[164] For the verse, see *Dīwān Jarīr,* ed. M. al-Ṣāwī (Cairo, *hijri* 1353, A.D. 1934–35), 297, line 5.

[165] For the verse in Kuthayyir, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. Qasṭal. The Qasṭal referred to in this verse is that of Balqā', not of Damascene, since Balqā' qualifies Qasṭal in the verse. This establishes that the Qasṭal taken over by the Umayyads as their famous residence was the one in Balqā'.

[166] For the use of the term *miḥrāb* as an element in the Arab Christian *martyrion* of the martyrs of Najrān, its Kaʿba, in the 6th century, see my "Byzantium in South Arabia," 71.

[167] Father Piccirillo's most recent dig at Nitl is of obvious relevance to Qasṭal and its Maḥārib in the plural. The dig is in the same region in Trans-Jordan and has revealed not one but a complex of two churches.

[168] Below, 331–32.

[169] See M. Piccirillo, *Umm al-Raṣāṣ, Mayfaʿah,* I, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio Maior 28 (Jerusalem, 1993).

perhaps even stronger than at Buṣrā or its environs. Mayfaʿa was in a strictly Arab area ethnically, and its monks are likely to have been Arabs or Arabic-speaking. Unlike Bostra, this was not a city but a village. It lay in the southern part of the Provincia Arabia where the Arab element was even more pronounced.

The Muslim tradition, however, is more in favor of an encounter between Muḥammad and Baḥīra in the Bostra region. But it is unanimous on another encounter, involving the so-called *hunafāʾ*, those monotheists who appeared on the eve of the rise of Islam and are said to have been neither Christian nor Jewish but were Abrahamic in their monotheism. One of them, Zayd ibn ʿAmr, is said to have met a monk at Mayfaʿa who prophesied for him the advent of Muḥammad. After he heard—so the story goes—of the appearance of Muḥammad as prophet in Mecca, he began a journey there from Oriens but was killed by the people of Mayfaʿa while on his way.[170]

The Monasteries of Phoenicia Libanensis

As research on the Ghassānids has revealed that their phylarchal jurisdiction extends far and wide in Oriens and not only in the Provincia Arabia, it is not surprising to detect traces of their monastic establishments in such provinces as Phoenicia Libanensis and Syria Prima.

The Monastery of al-Nabk

Syriac codex DLXXXV of the British Museum, the provenance of which is al-Nabk in Phoenicia Libanensis, contains a precious reference to Abū Karib, the Ghassānid king and phylarch of Palaestina Tertia during the reign of Justinian. This reference to Abū Karib and its implication for Ghassānid ecclesiastical history has been analyzed.[171] What matters in this context is the relation of Abū Karib to the monastery, which must have been special, otherwise it is difficult to explain why he was singled out for mention in the manuscript. Abū Karib may have contributed something to its construction or he may have endowed it. So here is another instance of Ghassānid association with a monastery; in this case, the correct term to use is "association," a capacious enough term that leaves the exact nature of his relation to the monastery open.

The Monastery of al-Māṭirūn

The location of this monastery has been left vague in the sources, which only say that it was in the vicinity of Damascus. Scholars have followed Yāqūt without

[170] For the Islamic profile of Mayfaʿa involving the encounter of Zayd ibn ʿAmr and the Prophet Muḥammad with the monks of Mayfaʿa, see S. H. Griffith, "Mayfaʿah: Un sito dimenticato nella primitiva traduzione islamica," in Piccirillo, *Umm al-Raṣās,* 51–54.

[171] See *BASIC* I.1, 845–50.

actually pinpointing its location.[172] Al-Māṭirūn is actually not close to Damascus, but some 3 km east of Ḍumayr; the local inhabitants of Ḍumayr still refer to the spring in it by the name of al-Māṭirūn. Its correct location was ascertained by the Syrian scholar A. W. Zakariyya, who visited the place twice in the 1930s and gave a detailed description.[173] Its Ghassānid connection may be supported by the fact that it was at Ḍumayr that the Ghassānid Mundir built his tower, which presumably protected both Ḍumayr and the nearby al-Māṭirūn.

Al-Māṭirūn can only be an Arabic version of Greek *martyrion.* The existence of a *dayr* at that site is attested in Arabic poetry cited by Yāqūt. It receives mention in Umayyad times in the poetry of the caliph Yazīd and the poet ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Qays al Ruqayyāt,[174] in a way that suggests that it became a playground for the Umayyads. This is another pointer to its Ghassānid connection, since the Umayyads often occupied the residences of the Ghassānids.[175]

The Monastery of al-Naqīra

Dayr al-Naqīra was situated on a mountain near Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān in Syria Prima.

The conclusions about "Kanīsat al-Aʿrāb" in Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān may with equal truth be applied to Dayr al-Naqīra: there is possibly a stronger association of Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān with the Ghassānids than with the Tanūkhids of the fourth century because the Ghassānid Nuʿmān was a well-known figure, while the Tanūkhid has remained a shadowy one. The *dayr* could have been one that was constructed during the episcopate of the Ghassānid bishop Theodore, who, as a former monk, would have had a natural interest in monasteries.[176]

The Umayyad caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz died at this *dayr,* and his tomb may still be seen there. On the confusion of this *dayr* with Dayr Murrān as the resting place of the caliph, see D. Sourdel in *EI,* s.v. Dayr Murrān.

The Monasteries of Palaestina Prima

Two monasteries in Palaestina Prima, or at least one of them, point definitely to a Ghassānid provenance. Dayr Ghassānī or Dayr Ghassān, as it was called in

[172] For Dayr al-Māṭirūn, see Yāqūt, s.v. Dayr al-Māṭirūn; cf. Dussaud, *Topographie,* 306.

[173] See A. W. Zakariyya, *al-Rīf al-Sūrī* (Damascus, 1955), 287–90.

[174] Ibid. In his commentary on the verses by Yazīd, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī in *Khizānat al-Adab* says that there was a *dayr* near al-Māṭirūn, where the lady whom Yazīd was addressing in the poem took monastic vows and lived. On this, see *Shiʿr Yazīd ibn-Muʿāwiya,* ed. S. Munajjid (Beirut, n.d.), 23.

[175] Greek *martyrion* in this case became a proper noun, the name of a locality, just as *dayr,* monastery, became a proper noun in many cases in Oriens such as Dayr Ayyūb, the Monastery of Job. The term *dayr* is also sometimes qualified, as in Dayr Ayyūb, but sometimes appears without any qualification as in al-Dayr close to Bostra to its southwest. Yāqūt was aware that Māṭirūn is not an Arabic word, but he could not etymologize it.

[176] For Dayr al-Naqīra, see *BAFOC,* 434. For a detailed examination of a possible affiliation of Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān with the Ghassānids, see above, 153, "Kanisat al-Aʿrāb."

the eighteenth century, by its very name suggests a Ghassānid foundation; it lies 30 km northwest of Jerusalem.[177] Dayr ʿAmr, attributed previously to the Salīḥids, could also have been a Ghassānid foundation in view of the involvement of Ghassān in the Holy Land.[178]

The Monasteries of Palaestina Tertia

Not all monasteries, even the few that have survived, have been as lucky as the Ḥarrān church in having an inscription that provides information on the builder and the date of its construction. As for those monasteries known only through literary references locating them in various parts of Oriens, Bilād al-Shām, and Ḥijāz, there is usually no indication of their exact situation or builder. Yet these were real and many, and they raise the question of Ghassānid involvement, since the previous *foederati,* the Tanūkhids of the fourth century and the Salīḥids of the fifth, were also zealous Christians and founders of monasteries; when some monasteries are left anonymous and anepigraphic, it is not easy to decide which of the three successive *foederati* of Byzantium can be credited with building them.[179]

The case, however, for the Ghassānid share in building monasteries in these regions, Oriens and Ḥijāz, is strong. They were the last of the three *foederati,* the most powerful and influential, and above all, it was in the sixth century that an organized federate Arab church came into being during the reign of Arethas and Justinian, especially with the appointment of Theodore as its presiding bishop. He was the incumbent of the federate episcopate for some thirty long years, and his jurisdiction was primarily in the Arab region of Oriens including Ḥijāz and parts of western Arabia. The episcopate of Theodore coincided with the phylarchate over Palaestina Tertia of the energetic Abū Karib, whose zeal for Christianity has been revealed by a Syriac literary source and Greek epigraphy. Both were contemporaries of Justinian, the great *philoktistēs* whose reign witnessed the explosion of Christian art and architecture.[180] The areas referred to above were arid; their climate and terrain invited monks, especially hermits, to dwell in them. Sinai and part of Ḥijāz (Madyan) were also biblical lands that had special appeal for hermits.

Sinai

Sinai had attracted monks from the early Christian period because of its biblical locales and its great monastic center at St. Catherine's. But it was ethni-

[177] On Dayr Ghassānī, see *BASIC* I.1, 654–55 and I.2, 996. The appellation Dayr Ghassān makes more sense than Dayr Ghassāneh/Ghassānī; cf. Biʿāt Ghassān. See also above, note 109.

[178] See *BAFIC,* 255 and *BASIC* I.2, 997. ʿAmr is also better attested as a Ghassānid than as a Salīḥid name since the latter is shadowy compared to the former.

[179] For monasteries discussed in connection with the Tanūkhids and Salīḥids of the 4th and 5th centuries, see the indexes in *BAFOC* and *BAFIC,* and esp. 289–301 in the latter.

[180] For a detailed discussion of the role of the Ghassānids, especially during the episcopate of Theodore, see *BASIC* I.1, 850–57.

cally an Arab region and fell within the phylarchal jurisdiction of Abū Karib after he was appointed ca. A.D. 530 the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia. The Ghassānid profile of its Christianity, especially after the consecration of the Ghassānid bishop Theodore, has already been discussed. It is, therefore, perfectly possible that the former monk Theodore may have given Sinai some attention. If there were Arab monasteries in Sinai inspired by, and founded during, the episcopate of Theodore and the Phylarchate of Abū Karib they would have been in Phārān and Rhaithou.[181]

Edom

Possible Ghassānid involvement in the development of monasticism in Sinai may also be suggested for that part of Palaestina Tertia that had been part of the Provincia Arabia, roughly ancient Edom, the region south of Wādī al-Ḥasā, biblical Zered.[182] Such monasteries as Dayr al-Qunfud near Ayla/Eilat were associated with the tribe of Balī.[183] It is difficult to believe that the zealous Monophysite phylarch Abū Karib, who wandered as far north as Sammā' in the Provincia Arabia, where he was mentioned in a church inscription, did not also engage in the construction of churches, especially monasteries, or endowing them in his own province. But with the present state of excavation in Palaestina Tertia it is difficult to associate him with any particular church or monastery in that region.

Ḥismā

Finally, there was that rugged region called Ḥismā, the boundaries of which were not clearly defined by the Arab geographers and could have belonged geographically to both Palaestina Tertia and northern Ḥijāz.[184] Ḥismā was associated with the federate Arabs, with such tribes as Judām and with the Ghassānids who conducted a campaign against some of its rebellious tribes.[185] Attested in this region is a *dayr* that goes by the name "Ḥismā", but whose builder is unknown. Another monastery, Dayr Ḍamḍam, was clearly built by an Arab, since the name is Arabic and appears in one of the Suspended Odes of pre-Islamic Arabia. Unlike Dayr Ḥismā, its location in this region is undetermined. Both could have been

[181] For Arab Christianity in Sinai, see *BASIC* I.2, 968–89. For Rhaithou, see ibid., 971–72. For the Ghassānid presence in Sinaitic Christianity, see 981–82 and also the section on Theodore of Phārān, 983–84.

[182] For a recent description of this region and a historical overviews, see M. Sartre, *IGLSYR. Inscriptions de la Jordanie* (Paris, 1993), IV, 5–8 and 9–24. Sometime between A.D. 451 and 535, Wādī al-Hasā (Zered) was replaced by Wādī al-Mūjib (Arnon) as the northern boundary of Palaestina Tertia.

[183] For Dayr al-Qunfud, see *BAFIC,* 309.

[184] On Ḥismā, see Sartre, *Inscriptions,* 165–66, with a useful bibliography on scholars who have visited and worked in this inhospitable region.

[185] On the campaign of the Ghassānid Nu'man in Ḥismā, see *Dīwān al-Nābigha,* ed. M. Ibrāhīm, 133–36, esp. 136, line 31.

Ghassānid, or may have only received some attention from the Ghassānid bishop Theodore.[186]

Ḥijāz

Although strictly outside Byzantine territory, Ḥijāz was a Ghassānid sphere of influence,[187] and the sources, even in Islamic times, refer to regions in Ḥijāz that had monastic establishments.

Kilwa

Traces of what was considered a hermitage or even a monastic complex were found in the 1940s in the Kilwa region in the northeastern part of Ḥijāz. Its monastic character was inferred from the name Kilwa, which, it was argued, is Arabic for Greek *kellion* (a hermit's cell). There is no indication as to the date of these ruins or the identity of those who built the structure(s).[188] It is possible that this monastery, too, belonged to the episcopate of the Ghassānid bishop Theodore.

Madyan

The Arabic sources speak of *ruhbān Madyan* ("the monks of Madyan"), indicating the existence of a monastic establishment in that region. Madyan is biblical Midian, associated with Moses, Jethro, and Sepporah, and it is quite natural that monasteries should have been established there. The federate tribe of Judām was settled there and in Ḥismā; so it is possible that the monks belonged to that tribal group.[189] But again, as in the case of monasteries left anonymous in the sources, it is possible that the Ghassānids were in some way involved in the monastic structures of Madyan.

[186] For Dayr Ḥismā and Dayr Ḍamḍam, see Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* II, 447, and *BAFIC,* 295. For Ḍamḍam in the Muʿallaqa of ʿAntara, see Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* 49, line 2.

[187] There were the tribes of the Outer Shield, federate Arabs outside the *limes,* consisting of Judām, Balī, and ʿUdra; see *BAFIC,* 479. The center of Byzantine-Ghassānid influence was Yathrib/Medina, inhabited by the two Arab tribes of al-Aws and al-Khazraj, cousins of the Ghassānids. Farther south was Mecca, where there was another Arab group, Khuzāʿa, who were also Azdites related to the Ghassānids. The clan of Banū Asad of the Quraysh in Mecca was the *ḥalīf* (ally) of the Ghassānids. Quṣayy, the great figure in the history of Mecca before the Prophet Muḥammad, according to the Arabic sources, returned to Mecca and became its master through the assistance that Byzantium extended to him; for all this see ibid, 350–60, esp. 355–60.

[188] On Kilwa, see *BAFIC,* 294–95, also map VI; for Kilwa, located now in Saudi Arabia, and for those who have visited and written on it since Horsfield in 1933, see Sartre, *Inscriptions,* p. 5 and nos. 2, 3.

[189] On Madyan, see *BAFIC,* 294. In addition to what the Umayyad poet Kuthayyir ʿAzza says on "*ruhbān Madyan,*" another Umayyad poet, Jarīr, also refers to them; see *Dīwān Jarīr,* ed. N. Taha (Cairo, 1969), I, 308, line 6.

Wādī al-Qurā

Wādī al-Qurā was "the Valley of the Towns" that led to Medina. There are references in the sources to its *ruḥbān* ("monks"), and it has been suggested that the Christian tribe of ʿUḏra may have been responsible for the rise of monasticism in the valley.[190] But this valley was so close to Medina where the Ghassānids had their cousins, the two Arab tribes of al-Aws and al-Khazraj, that they may have also contributed to the rise or development of its hermitages.

Masājid Maryam

In his *Geography,* al-Muqaddasī, the tenth-century Muslim author, referred to Masājid Maryam, located outside Mecca on the way to Medina.[191] These were places of worship in honor of Maryam/Mary, which easily point to a pre-Islamic structure in honor of the Virgin, but which in the Islamic times of al-Muqaddasī had become a place of Muslim worship.[192] The use of the plural Masājid ("places of worship") suggests monasteries rather than churches, a monastic complex, as more appropriate Christian religious structures in that distant region near Mecca. It is unclear who was responsible for building the complex. It could go back to the fifth century during which the tribe of ʿUḏra, a well-known Christian tribe of the Outer Shield, flourished, or to the Ghassānids of the sixth century. Veneration of the Virgin Mary was common to all Christian denominations, and the Monophysites especially revered her as the Theotokos.[193] The Ghassānids who were influential in Medina were also so in Mecca, and it is possible that Masājid Maryam may be attributed to the missionary zeal of Theodore.[194]

Other Monasteries

In addition to the clusters of monasteries related to these regions, there are the references to monasteries in the sources such as Dayr Saʿd, Dayr Ḥabīb, Dayr Kaʿb, where the indication of their location is much more general such as "a place in Bilād al-Shām," references that compound the difficulties involved in the search

[190] For Wādī al-Qurā, see *BAFIC,* 294.

[191] *Masājid* is the plural of *masjid,* now the usual word for the Islamic mosque. It is a noun of place derived from the verb *sajada,* to prostrate oneself in worship, and a loanword from Aramaic, on which see A. Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān* (Baroda, 1938), 263. For its appearance in al-Muqaddasī, see his *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fī Maʿrifat al-Aqālīm* (Leiden, 1877), III, 77.

[192] For a discussion of Masājid Maryam and the reference to Mary, see *BAFIC,* 391, nos. 3, 4; for ʿUḏra, see the index in *BAFIC.* For another interpretation of Masājid Maryam, see J. van Ess' review of *BAFIC* in *Die Welt des Orients* 25 (1994), 183–84.

[193] See the significant reference to her in the letter of Arethas, the Ghassānid king, to Jacob Baradaeus, *BASIC* I.2, 784, line 2 of the letter.

[194] The Ghassānid presence in Mecca will be discussed in detail in *BASIC* II.2.

for a Ghassānid provenance.[195] In spite of all these reservations, the Ghassānid contribution to the rise of monastic structures in these regions is real, and only archaeological research can establish it and reveal its extent.

Surviving Monuments

Few Ghassānid monuments have survived, with the exception of one impressive monastic monument[196] and possibly more. The monastery tower of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, built by Arethas, has survived with its inscription.[197] This complex was a monastery before it became an Umayyad palace and is witness to the great interest the Ghassānids took in monasticism. The tower built by Mundīr at Ḍumayr, which could also have been a monastery tower, has not survived.[198]

Under the title Al-Ghassāni, the new *Geographical Dictionary of the Arab Syrian Republic* includes an entry in which three structures are described as monasteries and are attributed to the Ghassānids.[199] They are 30 km east of al-Nashshabiyya, which is about 15 km east of Damascus. The three monasteries are 2 km apart. Of the northern one there remain traces of halls, rooms, towers, and two cisterns. The middle monastery is square and consists of two stories; east of it are the remains of what must have been a storeroom, while to its west there is a cemetery. The southern monastery is not described, but a photograph of it is provided. The basis of their attribution to the Ghassānids is not indicated, but if the attribution turns out to be true, this would be a major Ghassānid monastic complex.

IX. Nunneries

Just as monasteries for monks spread from Egypt to Oriens and Anatolia, so monasteries for women, nunneries, also spread quite early in the history of monasti-

[195] As in the case of Dayr Kaʿb, described simply as a *dayr* in Bilād al-Shām; Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* 594. The case for its relation to the Ghassānids is stated with some detail by the present writer in "Byzantium in South Arabia," 80.

The Arab character of such monasteries as Dayr Ḥismā and Dayr al-Qunfud must remain inferential pending excavation, but other monasteries such as Dayr Ḥabīb, Saʿd, Kaʿb, and Ḍamḍam relate the monasteries explicitly to the Arabs as personages who either built or endowed them. This can be confirmed by the mission of Bishop Aḥūdemmeh among the Arabs of Mesopotamia, who called the churches by the names of Arab tribal chiefs who would extend aid to the churches and attend to their needs in every way (PO, 3, p. 27). This is epigraphically confirmed in two pre-Islamic Christian inscriptions of Ḥīra in which the benefactor begins by saying that he or she built the *dayrs* that carried their name respectively. On the *dayrs* of Ḥanzala and Hind, see Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* 577 and 606.

[196] The other being the secular one, Mundir's *praetorium extra muros* at Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis.

[197] For the tower, see *BASIC* I.1, frontispiece; for the inscription, ibid., 258–61.

[198] The tower was seen by early scholars and travelers. The inscription was recovered by Klaus Brisch. On the inscription, see *BASIC* I.1, 495–501.

[199] See *al-Muʿjam al-Jugrāphī li al-Quṭr al-ʿArabī al-Sūrī,* ed. M. Tlas (Damascus, 1992), IV, 438. This work became available to me in Washington, after I visited Syria in 1994.

cism. A large number of nunneries is known to have existed in Egypt, organized according to the Pachomian rule, while in Anatolia, Makrina, the sister of Basil the Great, founded a convent that operated according to her brother's rule.[200] They soon multiplied; this was a natural development, especially in view of the importance of women in Christianity, beginning with the Virgin Mary, and the influence of women in Byzantine history.[201]

The Semitic Orient in both halves of the Fertile Crescent was not unaffected by the rise of convents for women. J. Lassus was able to vouch hesitatingly for one or two in the western half, in Byzantine Oriens, but many more certainly existed.[202] Some nineteen have since been identified from sources in the later Islamic period, but no doubt they go back to pre-Islamic times when building churches and monasteries was both possible and encouraged by the central government.[203] Just as the Ghassānids built on previous Arab federate establishments, secular and ecclesiastical, in the case of monastic ones continuing the work of the Salīḥids and Tanūkhids, they most probably did so also in building nunneries.

Although there are no explicit references in the Arabic sources to a nunnery in the fifth century, contemporary pre-Islamic poetry does have a number of technical terms that suggest at least a fifth-century date for Arab nuns and nunneries. The common and regular term for nun, *rāhiba* (plural *rawāhib*), is attested in the poetry of the foremost poet of pre-Islamic Arabia, the Kindite Imru' al-Qays.[204] Another term, '*aḏārā*[205] (plural of '*aḏrā*'), is also used, and in a context that suggests a religious ceremony, such as circumambulation of an altar or a shrine (*dawār*). Finally, there is Fartanā, used as the name of a girl or a woman,[206] which has no derivation in Arabic and almost certainly is Greek *parthenos,* virgin, often applied to the Virgin Mary.

It is clear and explicit that a nun is denoted by the term *rāhiba,* while '*aḏāra* and Fartanā imply it because of the religious context in the first and the Greek

[200] See *ODB,* s.v. nunnery with its bibliography.

[201] "Few states made more space for women, gave them a more important role, ensured them a broader influence on politics and the destiny of power than the Byzantine Empire," quoted in S. Tomin, "Empress Mara Brancovic," *Studi sull' Oriente cristiano* 2.1 (Rome, 1998), 165. The most recent book on the subject is D. M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits, 1250–1500* (New York, 1996).

[202] See Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens,* 283 and the possibility of a female stylite in the region that witnessed the rise and development of pillar saints. The *vita* of Matrona of Perge (*Acta Sanctorum,* Nov. 3: 796–97, 800–801) mentions two convents in 5th-century Syria, at Emesa and Beirut.

[203] See Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt, "al-Diyārāt al-Naṣrāniyya fī al-Islām," *al-Mashriq* 36 (1938), 291–417; for the nunneries, see 312–15.

[204] See Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* 118, line 43.

[205] Ibid., 149, line 58; also above, 000, on *dawār* and ambulatory. For the relationship between virgins and nuns, see the account of Dayr al-'Aḏāra, "Convent of the Virgins," Yāqūt, *Mu'jam,* s.v.

[206] Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* 157, line 5.

etymology of the latter. It is difficult to believe that nuns appeared among the Arabs only when Imru' al-Qays composed his poem. The chances are that they appeared earlier, possibly in the fifth century. There is also the curious term *hayjumāna* (*haigoumāna*) which is hard to accept as an Arabic term. The formation of a term with this unusual morphological pattern to indicate a military leader is unconvincing. The chances are that it is the Arabic form of Greek ἡγουμένη (abbess).[207] This then suggests that the Arabic language had the relevant words for abbess, *hayjumana,* and nun, *rāhiba.*

A fifth-century date for the rise of nunneries among the Arab federates may also be supported by reference to the history of the Salīḥids. Their king Dāwūd/David became a monk and built the Monastery of Dāwūd, Dayr Dāwūd, which persisted well into Islamic times. His daughter is known to have been a poet who wrote an elegy on his death, and it has been suggested that she may have assumed the monastic garb after the tragic death of her father.[208]

Imperial role models may have helped the rise of nunneries among the Arabs of the region. It was in this century, specifically ca. 443–460, that Empress Eudocia left Constantinople and retired to Jerusalem where she contributed so much to improving its urban life, both secular and religious, endowing monasteries and other foundations. Her presence in Jerusalem must have been well known to the women of the Christian Orient, including those across the Jordan such as the daughter of the Salīḥid king, Dāwūd, who may have been inspired by her example in renouncing imperial splendor and leading the religious life.

Finally, there was the tribe of ʿUḏra in Ḥijāz, one of the tribes of the Outer Shield, which moved in the Byzantine sphere of influence in Arabia, in the fifth century when the Salīḥids were the dominant Arab *foederati* of Byzantium. This was a Christian tribe whose very name is suggestive, since it meant virginity in Arabic. The tribe was associated with the rise of Platonic love poetry among the Arabs, and it has been suggested that its rise goes back to pre-Islamic time.[209] Now

[207] See *BAFIC,* 406–9. Note also the attestation of the term *Hayjumāna* in a significant context in the *Dīwān* of Salama ibn-Jandal, the pre-Islamic poet; *Dīwān,* ed. F. Qabāwa (Aleppo, 1968), 190, line 1.

[208] *BAFIC,* 446–47.

[209] On ʿUḏra and Arabic platonic love poetry, see ibid., 443–49. On Arab monasteries in the 5th century, see a more detailed account in *BAFIC,* 289–301, 405–9.

Masājid Maryam (Mary) in Ḥijāz may have been a complex of nunneries. Masājid (plural of Masjid) now denotes mosques, but originally it denoted a place of worship. It is a curious name for a complex of Islamic religious buildings, and it has been argued that the complex had been Christian, but in Islamic times was converted into a mosque. As to whether it was a complex of churches or monasteries, there is no way of telling. The chances are that religious structures in a region such as Ḥijāz are likely to have been not churches but monasteries. The tribe of ʿUḏra, which means Virginity—it has been argued—was possibly related to the Virgin Mary, and ʿUḏra was a Christian tribe. A complex of Christian religious buildings in Ḥjāz where ʿUḏra was the most important Christian ally of Byzantium is thus more likely to have been that of nunneries. On ʿUḏra and Masājid Maryam, see *BAFIC,* 391, 443–45.

the Christian affiliation of this tribal group, named ʿUḏra, could easily suggest the rise of the Christian model of virginity and sexual abstinence associated with monks and nuns, since the term '*aḏrā*' and the abstract noun '*uḏra* are applicable to women rather than men. As its abode was in Ḥijāz, there is reason to think that some nunneries, and not only monasteries for monks, existed in the Arabian Peninsula in the district of Ḥijāz.

Ghassānid Nunneries

It is, however, in the sixth century that Arab nunneries are attested by explicit references in the literary sources. Indeed, the most famous Arab monastery is a nunnery, Dayr Hind in Ḥīra, built by the Kindite queen, the wife of the Lakhmid king al-Munḏir. Its sixth-century date is attested by an inscription.[210] As for the Arab nunneries in the western half of the Fertile Crescent, in Byzantine Oriens, especially those built by the Ghassānids, there is a single reference in Ḥamza to Dayr Hunād/Hind.

As already indicated, reference to a Dayr Hunād occurs in Ḥamza's list of buildings erected by the Ghassānids and it was ascribed to the Ghassānid king ʿAmr ibn Jafna.[211] It has been argued that Hunād is either the plural of Hind (there were several Hinds among the queens or princesses of the Ghassānid dynasty) or a corrupt reading for Hind, one of these queens or princesses.[212] The *dayr,* presumably a nunnery, may have been built by her or for her by the Ghassānid king. The Ghassānids were great patrons of ecclesiastical structures, especially monasteries. With the rise of nunneries in Christendom, in the Semitic Orient, it is natural to suppose that their patronage included nunneries. Since the Ghassānid kings were zealous Christians, it is also natural to suppose that the same can be predicated of their queens and princesses, especially as Christianity, unlike other religions, had a special appeal for women.[213] Ghassānid women were strong personali-

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There was a *lapsus calami* in *BAFIC,* 407 note 10. While reading E. Honigmann's article, "Juvenal of Jerusalem," *DOP* 5 (1950), 256, I inadvertently misread Aelia, which he used instead of Jerusalem, for Aela (Ayla, Eilat) and thought that Bassa, the *hegoumenē* of the convent to whom Pulcheria, the sister of Theodosius II, wrote was the abbess of a monastery in Ayla, whereas in fact the monastery was in Jerusalem. So there was no nunnery in Ayla in the 5th century, as argued in *BAFIC,* 407 note 10, although what is said on Ayla as an Arab city and the data pointed out in that note remains valid. The only Arab monastery related to Ayla was most probably Dayr al-Qunfud, in the region of Ayla, but most probably it was a monastery for monks, not a nunnery; for Dayr al-Qunfud, see *BAFOC,* index, s.v.

[210] For a recent treatment of Dayr Hind and its inscription in a literary context, see the present writer in "The Authenticity of Pre-Islamic Poetry: The Linguistic Dimension," *al-Abḥāth* 44 (Beirut, 1996), 3–29; for the inscription, see 11–12.

[211] For Dayr Hind in Oriens and its notice in Ḥamza, see below, 324–25.

[212] For the two Hinds included in the enumeration of the forebears of the Ghassānid prince eulogized by the poet al-Nābigha, see Nöldeke, *GF,* 33–34.

[213] See above, note 201.

ties; the famous Arethas of the reign of Justinian was known by his matronymic, Ibn Māriya, as well as by his patronymic, Ibn Jabala. The Ghassānid prince eulogized in the precious fragment that has survived from Nābigha's poetry[214] is described as descending not only from two male ancestors but two ancestresses, both named Hind. Ghassānid women must have played an active role in the dynasty; one of the princesses, Ḥalīma, is said to have taken part in the famous battle called Yawm Ḥalīma.[215] However, as in the case of other societies and dynasties, the role of women would have been expressed in the endowment of ecclesiastical structures, especially nunneries, and other benefactions pertaining to Christian *philanthropia.*

The sixth century in particular provided role models for them. Empress Theodora, a Monophysite like the queens and princesses of the Ghassānid dynasty, is known to have founded the monastery of Repentance (*metanoia*) in Constantinople.[216] Just as the Ghassānid kings, frequent visitors to Constantinople, were inspired by the buildings there, the Ghassānid women may also have been inspired by the empress' patronage. More important was the role model of Hind, the Kindite princess and later the Lakhmid queen who built Dayr Hind in Ḥīra. She was a distinguished woman of the sixth century, who inspired the daughter of her grandson al-Nuʿmān, the Lakhmid king, to build another monastery, also called Dayr Hind (and she was the namesake of Hind the Elder) to which in old age she retired after assuming the monastic garb.[217] These queens, especially the first, were well known to their Ghassānid counterparts. Kindite-Ghassānid relations were friendly, and the Ghassānids are referred to by the Kindite poet-prince Imru' al-Qays as their maternal uncles (*akhwāl*),[218] since Māriya, the wife of Arethas, was said to be a Kindite princess. The Ghassānids and the Lakhmids emulated each other in the construction of monasteries.[219]

Finally, a major piece of evidence comes from sixth-century Najrān in South Arabia. One of the letters of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām reveals the presence in Najrān of the mysterious "Sons of the Covenant" and "Daughters of the Cove-

[214] Above, note 212.

[215] Since Arab women in pre-Islamic times took part in battles, there is no need to reject without further appeal the account that links the famous victory of the Ghassānids, called Yawm Ḥalīma, with a princess of that name. The Wādī Ḥalīma known to the geographers could easily have been named after the Ghassānid princess, who encouraged the Ghassānid warriors, and Ḥalīma can only be the name of a woman in Arabic; see, however, Nöldeke, *GF,* 19. Noteworthy in this connection is that three of the Ghassānid kings were known by their matronymics, a fact reflective of the importance of these Ghassānid queens: Ibn Māriya, Ibn Salmā, and Ibn Hind.

[216] Procopius, *Anecdota,* XVII.5–6.

[217] For the two *dayrs,* each of which was called Dayr Hind (Hind the Elder and Hind the Younger), see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.vv.

[218] See his *Dīwān,* ed. A. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1964), 311, line 1.

[219] For the statement in Bakrī on emulation, see above, 161.

nant,"[220] who were among the martyrs of Najrān around 520. Who exactly these children of the covenant were is not entirely clear; there is no doubt, however, that they were a group of ascetics who vowed sexual abstinence and virginity as one of the most important of their vows.[221] They were either a group of ascetics or novices on a period of probation preparatory to becoming monks and nuns. In either case they suggest the existence of asceticism among the Arabs of pre-Islamic times in the sixth century, an asceticism that may or may not have progressed to full-fledged monasticism.[222]

It is practically certain that these Daughters of the Covenant who are attested in Najrān also existed in Ghassānland.[223] The axis Najrān-Jābiya was quite close. The Balḥārith of Najrān were the relatives of the Ghassānids, and their Christianity was Monophysite coming principally from the Oriens of the Ghassānids. So the Daughters of the Covenant probably followed the model of Ghassānid relatives in Oriens/Bilād al-Shām.

As for the location of the Ghassānid Dayr Hind,[224] the geographers place it near Damascus in what they call Bayt al-Ābār, "the House of Wells or Cisterns," without further specification as to its location. It has recently been located south of Damascus and presumed to be the *tall,* the large mound east of Germana.[225] Dayr Hind is considered as belonging to this district, Bayt al-Ābār, south of Damascus.

How many other nunneries the Ghassānids erected is not indicated in the sources. As Ḥamza's list has been considered a select one, it is likely that Dayr Hind was not the sole nunnery that they built. The name of one of the monasteries, Dayr al-Labwa, "the Monastery of the Lioness,"[226] may suggest a Ghassānid queen or princess as a patroness or builder, one of those powerful Ghassānid women whose names appear in the matronymics of the three Ghassānid kings.

[220] For these, see the present writer in *Martyrs,* 61, 64.

[221] On the identity of these Sons and Daughters of the Covenant, see ibid., 250–51; see also Vööbus, *History of Asceticism,* 197–208; and G. Nedungatt, "The Covenanters of the Early Syriac-Speaking Church," *OCP* 39 (1973), 191–215, 419–44 and its bibliography. For a more recent treatment of the Sons and Daughters of the Covenant, see S. Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria. The Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism," in *Asceticism,* ed. V. L. Wimbush and R. Valantasis (Oxford, 1995), 223–34. For the very latest, brief though it is, see D. Caner, "Wandering, Begging Monks, Social Order and the Promotion of Monasticism in the Roman East, 360–451 C.E." (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1998), 94–95, 135–38.

[222] A closer examination of the sources reveals that there were nuns at Najrān, hence also nunneries; see the present writer in *Martyrs,* p. xvii, line 24 for the Syriac text, p. 54, line 6 for the English version.

[223] As they existed in many other parts of the Christian Orient; see Vööbus, *History of Asceticism,* 203–4.

[224] See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v.

[225] See M. Kurd ʿAlī, *Ghūṭat Dimashq* (Damascus, 1984), 164.

[226] On Dayr al-Labwa in Ḥamza, see below, 333.

X. Ghassānid Monastic Structures

Secular Ghassānid structures can be studied architecturally owing to the accidents of survival. Such is the *praetorium extra muros* near Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis built by the Ghassānid king Mundir. Another is the house at al-Hayyāt in northern Auranitis, built in 578 by Flavius Seos, the procurator/*epitropos* of the Ghassānid Mundir. A third is most probably al-Qasṭal near al-Mushattā in Trans-Jordan. All these have been preserved in a reasonably good condition that enabled art historians and architects to write meaningfully on them.[227] Unfortunately, this is not so true of Ghassānid religious structures, although their churches have fared better than their monasteries.[228] However, the latter are luckily represented by an impressive remain, the monastic tower of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī.

I

Before discussing this indubitably Ghassānid structure, it is well to discuss others that may throw light on Ghassānid monastic architecture and may be related to them. Dayr Dāwūd, the monastery of Dāwūd, was built by the Salīḥid king of that name, who took the monastic garb. Its ruins still survive in the present-day al-Turkmāniyya, discovered by A. Musil, who made a sketch of its plan.[229] It has been suggested earlier in this volume that the monastery called Dayr Ḍakhm, attributed by Ḥamza to the Ghassānid king al-Ayham ibn al-Ḥārith, was really a Salīḥid monastery, Ḍakhm being a corruption of Ḍajʿam,[230] the eponym of the Salīḥids, whose royal house was called the Zokomid. If so, the chances are that the Ghassānids did not build it but, rather, renovated or restored it, and consequently the plan sketched Musil would be the Ghassānid version of the mon-

[227] K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* (repr. New York, 1979), I, part 2, 636–37, has assembled references to the Ghassānid buildings that have survived, which he considers to be six, two of which are of doubtful attribution. Although more on them has appeared since he wrote, brief description and enumeration of these structures with its bibliography are adequate in this context.

[228] For M. Piccirillo's exciting discovery of a complex of Ghassānid churches at Nitil in the Madaba region of Trans-Jordan and G. Brands' article on the Ghassānid structure *extra muros* at Sergiopolis, which he considered a Ghassānid church, see above, 148 note 20. They entail a new look at Ghassānid church architecture. However, neither pertains to monasteries; hence the discussion of monastic structures in this section remains unaffected and needs no modification.

[229] For this plan, see the frontispiece of *BAFIC.* This Dayr Dāwūd had another name, Dayr al-Lathiq, since the Salīḥid king who built it was nicknamed "the bedraggled," al-Lathiq; see ibid., 257. Noteworthy is the survival of the name al-Lathiq as the name of the monastery in a Greek inscription that has preserved even the Arabic definite article (*al*) and is a remarkable witness for the soundness of the Islamic historiographical tradition on this pre-Islamic site. The inscription involves the *periodeutes* John, who came to the shrine of St. Simeon at Telanissos where he commissioned a mosaic in which he and his kin are commemorated; for the inscription, see *IGLSYR,* no. 421.

[230] See below, 332–33.

astery.[231] Even without identifying Ḍakhm with Ḍajʿam, Dayr Dāwūd remains an important example of an Arab federate monastic establishment, pre-Ghassānid as it may be.

It has been suggested that Manīʿa, built, according to Ḥamza, by the Ghassānid king Jabala ibn al-Ḥārith, might be read Mayfaʿa (Umm al-Raṣāṣ), the ecclesiastical complex recently excavated by M. Piccirillo.[232] The tower that still stands could have been constructed by the Ghassānid king just as another Ghassānid, Arethas, constructed the tower at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī.[233] If the Ghassānid association with Mayfaʿa turns out to be more extensive than building the tower, more will be known about Ghassānid monastic architecture. Sources such as Ḥamza and the letter of the Monophysite archimandrites have revealed the names of some Ghassānid monasteries in addition to the tower of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī. Many of the sites of these monasteries have been identified, and future excavation will undoubtedly reveal much on Ghassānid monastic architecture.[234]

Archaeologists and art historians have excavated and described the monasteries of the region called the transverse wedge (Auranitis, Trachonitis, Batanaea, and Golan), monasteries such as El-Karis, Dayr al-Naṣrānī, Al-Dayr, and Sammāʾ.[235] Whether the Ghassānids were associated with these monasteries is still an open question.[236] Now that the role of the Ghassānids in the religious history of the region has been elucidated, it is possible to go back to the cluster of these monasteries and entertain more seriously a Ghassānid affiliation for some of them. Jābiya, the capital of the Ghassānids, dominates a cluster of villages such as Nawā and Inkhil, which may have been influenced by their patronage, as has been recently

[231] Of course, Dayr Ḍakhm/Ḍajʿam may be another Salīḥid monastery, in addition to Dayr Dāwūd, since the Salīḥids, who were especially devoted to monks, certainly built more than one monastery.

[232] See below, 331–32.

[233] The tower at Mayfaʿa may have been that of a stylite monk or hermit.

[234] Especially tantalizing is the monastery with the name Adyirat al-Ghassānī, since its ruins are still standing, if indeed they are Ghassānid; for this, see above, 195.

[235] These have been studied early in the century by scholars such as Butler who visited the area. Since then, they have been reexamined by others: see Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens,* 267–72.

[236] Dayr al-Naṣrānī, for instance, was once thought to be Ghassānid by Butler. The theory of its Ghassānid origin has recently been revived and affirmed by Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization,* II, 331. The following may be added to the latter's view of the Ghassānid origin of the *dayr/deir:* the name of the monastery is said to be that of Sergius and Bacchus (Sergius was indeed the patron saint of the Ghassānids, although he was not exclusively their patron saint); and the geographical location and topography argue for the possibility that it was Ghassānid. It was the easternmost site in Auranitis and is on top of a high conical hill. This is where the Ghassānids were stationed; the strategic location of the monastery suggests a military post such as the federate Ghassānids might have occupied, with a monastery nearby or included in it as became fashionable in this period.

suggested.[237] For religious architecture, two other localities, also in the vicinity of Jābiya, are more important and relevant: Kafr Shams and Dayr (Deir) ʿAdas. The former has been identified as the site of a Ghassānid monastery, listed in the letter of the Monophysite archimandrites of 570, while the latter's name, "the Monastery of Lentils," speaks for itself as the site of a monastery at which this distinctly monastic food formed part of the community's diet.[238]

An inscription suggesting influence or patronage was discovered recently in a village even farther from Jābiya than Nawā and Inkhil where Ghassānid influence was suspected. The inscription at the church of St. George in Sammā' definitely associates the church and possibly the village with the Ghassānids through reference in the inscription to the well-known phylarch Abū Karib, the brother of the more famous Arethas.[239] The chances are that the village included a monastery as well as a church. Fieldwork and archaeological research may reveal the full extent of Ghassānid involvement in these ruins and tell the full story of Ghassānid religious architecture.

II

In view of the nonsurvival of a single Ghassānid monastery or a description in the literary sources, one can only say that in their plans and structures the Ghassānid monasteries must have had as their models those monasteries in Oriens whose ruins have survived and have been described by the early visitors of the region and by architectural historians. The three monasteries already referred to—El-Karis, Dayr al-Naṣrānī, and Al-Dayr—are possible models; if one of them turns out to be Ghassānid, it will illustrate the appearance of a Ghassānid monastery.[240] However, the Ghassānid monastery must have contained the usual components: cells of individual monks, a conventual chapel, refectory, storage room, cistern, *xenodocheion,* external walls, and in some cases a tower.

The Tower

If it is impossible to describe the plan and structure of a Ghassānid monastery, one can discuss certain features pertaining to it partly from the pitiable remains of what has survived on the ground and in the sources. First and foremost

[237] Clive Foss has done full justice to the Ghassānids even before the appearance of *BASIC* I.1 and 2; for this and for his views on the possible Ghassānid influence on Nawā and Inkhil, see his "Syria in Transition," 250–52.

[238] See the map, fig. E in Foss, "Syria in Transition," which clearly shows the four localities and their proximity to Jābiya.

[239] On the inscription, see above, 153 note 43.

[240] For their plans, see Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens,* 268–79. See also the comments on Syrian monastic architecture in I. Peña, *The Christian Art of Byzantine Syria* ([England], 1996), 108, 109, 113.

must come the monastery tower, since the one surviving part of a monastery associated definitely with the Ghassānids is the tower at Haliorama. It is possible to distinguish three functions of the monastery tower in this period and region.

The least important, if it was ever a function, was that at its top possibly rested the gong.[241] In a monastery the inmates were few and probably did not need a gong to call them to prayers or meals in a *koinobion.* The call to prayer was clearly more the function of churches with congregations in the cities, and the church tower first functioned as the depository of gongs and later of bells; the church tower became a belfry. Monasteries that were erected along the frontier in the limitrophe and in the vast arid areas of southern Oriens—in Sinai and in northern Ḥijāz—probably had towers, for which the following different functions may be suggested.

As already noted, the Ghassānid *maslaḥa/ḥīra* (fort and camp) in the limitrophe was manned by zealous Christian troops[242] who performed their religious duties even in the limitrophe while they were stationed to watch the frontier. The tower of the neighboring monastery could easily have been the depository of the gong not for alerting its inmates but for calling the troops in the neighboring fort. The tower with its gong thus functioned as the link between *ḥayr* and *dayr* in the Ghassānid limitrophe. The tower could also have served as a lighthouse to illumine the paths of wayfarers and caravaneers of the pre-Islamic Arabs. The light that emanated from it would also have been a guide to wayfarers and caravaneers to stop at these monasteries where they could spend the night, receiving hospitality[243] and possibly medical care, primitive as this must have been. This function of the monastery as lighthouse (*phanarion*) is well remembered in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry in which the monastery tower is indeed called *manārat,* the minaret of English and other European languages.[244] So this function of the monastery tower was mainly intended not for the benefit of its inmates, but for those outside, the wayfarer and caravaneer. In this way through Byzantine *philanthropia,* the monastery became a center for radiating Christianity and its ideals to the Arabs of those regions.

[241] Arabic used the Aramaic term for gong (Greek σήμαντρον), *naqūs,* which appeared frequently in early Arabic poetry. It became closely associated with Christianity and was sometimes contrasted with *aḏān,* the Islamic term for the call to prayer, characteristic of Islam. The village of Banqūsa in northern Syria, Bēth Naqūsa, "the House of the Gong," received its name from the gong; see Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens,* 236 note 6. For gongs, *semantra,* in monastery towers, see E. V. Williams, *The Bells of Russia* (Princeton, N.J., 1985), 14.

[242] On the involvement of the Ghassānid troops in Christianity, even its theology, see *BASIC* I.2, 818, 878.

[243] For the Arabs of pre-Islamic times, the light that emanated from the monastery must have seemed like their own "nār al-qirā," "the fire of hospitality," lit in pre-Islamic Arabia for the same purpose.

[244] For the *manārat* of the *rāhib* (monk, hermit) see the verse in the *Dīwān* of Imru' al-Qays; Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* 148, line 37.

Even more expressive of the function of the Ghassānids as the watchmen of the frontier and the protectors of Oriens against the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula was the role of the monastery tower in security measures. It was thus an observation post that could alert nearby military stations and those in the interior to an imminent raid.[245] Thus the monastery along the limitrophe became a fortified monastery, as already suspected by scholars,[246] with its tower functioning like the watchtower (*vigiliarium*/βίγλας) of the Roman army, deployed along the ancient *limes.*

Another function for the monastery tower has also been suggested, especially for those that were not in the limitrophe but in or near urban centers, such as the ones listed in the letter of the Monophysite archimandrites of 570. The tower was a place of retreat for solitary monks, a seclusion tower for some of those who lived in a *koinobion* but nevertheless wanted to contemplate in solitude. Sometimes these seclusion towers had their own chapels.[247]

III

In addition to this type of monastery, the one with a tower, apparently there was another type, even more expressive of the austerities of asceticism associated with Orients, and related to its most outstanding one, stylitism.[248] One of the monasteries listed in the letter of the archimandrites was called the "monastery of the pillar."[249] So it is possible that stylitism also found its way into monasteries in this region of strong Ghassānid presence and was expressed in the form of a pillar that served as living quarters for a monk.[250]

The Arabs and the Ghassānids in particular were not strangers to stylitism. Those of the fifth century protected Simeon the Elder and almost rioted in order to acquire his body after his death, before Ardaburius the *magister militum* inter-

[245] The Arabic term sometimes used for the monastery tower, *al-qā'im,* could serve this function. One of the monasteries in Iraq, Mesopotamia, actually received its name from this term, Dayr al-Qā'im al-Aqṣā, a fortress that separated Byzantine from Persian territory. For this *dayr,* see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam,* s.v., II, 526; for a discussion of the term, see Zayyāt, "al-Diyārāt al-Naṣrāniyya," 311.

[246] See Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens,* 269 note 2.

[247] For this function of the monastery tower, see S. Popović, "Elevated Chapels: The Monastery Tower and Its Meaning," paper read at the 19th Annual Byzantine Studies Conference, Abstracts of Papers, Princeton, 1993–94. I should like to thank the author for providing a copy of this paper and for further conversations on this function of the monastery tower.

[248] For a new perspective on the origin of stylitism, see D. Frankfurter, "Stylites and Phallobates: Pillar Religions in Late Antique Syria," *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990), 168–98.

[249] See Svöldeke, "Topographie," *ZDMG* 29 (1876), 428.

[250] In addition to native *'amūd,* another term, *usṭuwān,* found its way into Arabic and sometimes in connection with the pillar of the monk, the stylite; see L. Cheikho, *al-Naṣrāniyya* (Beirut, 1912), 211. For other Arabic terms related to monks and monasticism, see ibid., 211–14. The etymology he suggests for *usṭuwān,* namely *istwr,* however, cannot be accepted. There is no such word in Greek. *Usṭuwān* comes to Arabic from Syriac *istwn,* which adds *n* to Greek στῦλος, and from which *istwrāyā,* the pillar saint, is formed in Syriac.

vened and brought it to Antioch.[251] Some of the Ghassānid troops, exultant and grateful to Simeon the Younger for helping them win the great victory in 554 over their adversary Mundir the Lakhmid, stayed with the saint after returning from battle.[252]

The name of the Ghassānids was associated with both types of monasteries, those in the limitrophe and those in the interior of Oriens in and around the towns. Of all the constituent parts of a monastery, the tower was the one that involved the Ghassānids most, since it bore on their function as watchmen over the frontier. Hence when they wanted to contribute to a monastery that happened not to be their own, they most probably would do so by building a tower. Such was the tower of the Ghassānid Arethas at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr monastery. That this was the case is reflected most clearly in the tower built by his son Mundir at Ḍumayr. The inscription that relates the monastery of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr to Arethas did so by implication; it was engraved by the inmates of the monastery and addressed to the Ghassānid king. That at Ḍumayr was engraved by Mundir himself; in it he thanked God and St. Julian for his safe return and indicated that it was he who built the tower.[253]

The Ghassānid Tower at Haliorama, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī

The Ghassānid monastery tower at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī and the *praetorium extra muros* near Sergiopolis are the most outstanding Ghassānid monuments that have survived. While the secular *praetorium* has been studied repeatedly by art historians, archaeologists, and architects, the monastery tower has been relatively neglected. Its site was occupied by the Umayyads, and the caliph Hishām had his palatial complex built on the site. This has completely changed the character of the site from a pre-Islamic Christian Ghassānid monastery into an Islamic Umayyad palatial complex. Even its name became resoundingly Umayyad. After being Ḥayr or Ḥiyār, the Greek of which was Haliorama, it became Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, the western Qaṣr al-Ḥayr to distinguish it from another Umayyad structure, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī, the eastern Qaṣr al-Ḥayr northeast of Palmyra. The later Umayyad palatial complex which was built on the site of the vanished monastery was an impressive Umayyad complex, and archaeologists and art historians were naturally interested in the later Umayyad superstructure. Interest in the Umayyad complex thus relegated the surviving part of the pre-Islamic Ghassānid

[251] See *BAFIC,* 160.

[252] See *BASIC* I.1, 244.

[253] The inscription was analyzed in *BASIC* I.1, 495–501. In this inscription, the term σωτηρία was not interpreted in the Christian sense of salvation. The context and the term εὐχαριστῶν in the inscription suggest that Mundir built the tower as an expression of thanks to God and St. Julian for something rendered, and the inscription indicates that it was for his safety (not salvation), presumably his safe return from a journey or perilous expedition.

structure to the background; and the tower, the only surviving part of the Ghassānid structure, has never received the serious study it deserves. The standard work on early Muslim architecture dismisses it in one sentence. The monograph that has been devoted to Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī does some justice to it, but again the author is naturally interested in the Umayyad complex.[254] After reading the monograph, the student of the site learns much about the Umayyad complex but little about the pre-Islamic Ghassānid site and its significance.

The importance of this tower is related to the ecclesiastical history of the period in its Monophysite profile, the system of military defense in the diocese of Oriens in the sixth century, and the problem of the pre-Islamic Ghassānid substrate in the study of the later Umayyad structures of the region, all of which would be advantaged by a study of the pre-Islamic site in a detailed manner. The first step toward the successful conclusion of such a study is to separate the pre-Islamic Ghassānid elements of the site from the later Umayyad ones, collect the relevant data, and study it in relation to the pre-Islamic Ghassānid milieu to which it properly belongs and to the region of Ghassānid dominance in the Byzantine limitrophe.

An examination of the Ghassānid establishment at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr is made possible by the almost miraculous survival of three types of sources: epigraphic, archaeological, and literary. These sources are the Greek inscriptions; the extant tower and cisterns; and the Syriac literary document of 570, the letter of the Monophysite archimandrites of whom the abbot of this monastery was one.[255] The

[254] Creswell's monumental work includes only a passing mention of the tower; see *Early Muslim Architecture,* I, part 2, 506–18; on the tower, see p. 508. Daniel Schlumberger did more justice to the tower and the Ghassānid substrate in the second part of his article in *Syria* 20 (1939), but his main thrust remained the Umayyad complex. This is reflected in his relegation of the valuable data he collected on the pre-Islamic site to footnotes (pp. 363 notes 1–4) and of the discussion of the Greek inscriptions to an appendix (pp. 366–72). So there was no attempt to study the Ghassānid complex in its own right.

The two articles that had appeared in *Syria* were republished in 1986 as a single monograph with additions to the original, but the section on the Ghassānid complex remained practically the same; see D. Schlumberger et al., *Qaṣr al-Heir el-Gharbī,* Institut Français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 120 (Paris, 1986), 24–28. When the monograph appeared, the role of the Ghassānids in Oriens had not been fully understood, and *BASIC* I.1 and 2 had not been published. Notice, however, was taken of the short article on Ghassān that appeared in *EI*^{2}, but not of the article by A. Alt, important for understanding the Greek inscriptions, which had appeared in *ZDPV* 67 (1945), 260–62.

[255] The inscriptions received detailed treatment from the Ghassānid perspective in *BASIC* I.1, 258–61 and Leslie MacCoull has contributed further valuable observations on the inscriptions in "Notes on Arab Allies as *Foederati* in Inscriptions," *Tyche* 11 (1996), 157–58. Reference to the monastery of Haliorama in the Syriac literary source is discussed in *BASIC* I.2, 833. The almost miraculous survival of all three sets of sources has made possible drawing conclusions on the monastery-fortress and its Ghassānid affiliation. If one of the three sets had not survived it would have been difficult to do so. This Syriac reference, brief as it is, has definitely documented the Monophysite complexion of the monastery which is not clear from the Greek inscriptions. More-

archaeological-epigraphic-literary confrontation of the three types of sources has yielded the conclusion that the site was occupied by the Ghassānid *foederati,* that it was both a monastery and a fortress, a fortified monastery or a sacred fortress, built by the Ghassānid king Arethas, that it was definitely a Monophysite monastery in the Ghassānid orbit, and that its abbot around 570 was called Sergius.[256]

First, the name of the site: the efforts of R. Dussaud and E. Honigmann have resulted in the correct identification of the Halioram of the Syriac source and the Haliaramia of the Peutinger Map with the site occupied later by the Umayyads and called Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī.[257] Although the Umayyad complex obscured the former Ghassānid one, the Umayyad name has preserved in one of its elements, al-Ḥayr, the key to unlocking the etymology of Halioram, obscured in turn by its Greek transliteration. Clearly, Arabic *ḥayr* in one form or another is behind the Graecized form Haliorama. The Greek form has preserved the definite article *al* in the first syllable, *Hal. Ḥayr* is preserved in its mutilated transliterated form in the second syllable, *ior,* preserved better in the Peutinger Map that keeps the correct vowel, *iar,* in Haliaramia. The soft *h* in Arabic cannot be reproduced in Greek and so is reflected in the iota. The Greek form, however, suggests that the grammatical morphological pattern of the original Arabic was not *ḥayr* but the plural *ḥiyār,* which is as common as *ḥayr.* There remains the problem presented by the *m* in the last syllable, *ma,* and this too can be solved by suggesting that the original Arabic term was the dual of the plural *ḥiyār,* namely, *ḥiyārān,* which is possible in Arabic and is attested. The *n* and the *m* interchange in transliteration, and so the existence of the *m* could argue that the Arabic form and name of the site was al-Ḥiyārān. The dual form as the name of places is extremely common in Arabic toponymy, and al-Ḥiyārān is attested in one of the suspended odes of pre-Islamic Arabia as the site of the great battle that witnessed the great victory in 554 of the Ghassānid Arethas over the Lakhmid king Mundir.[258]

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over, it has assigned the monastery to the cluster of monasteries identified as Ghassānid among the 137 of the Monophysite monasteries of the letter of the archimandrites of 570. Without it and its confrontation with the Greek inscriptions, it would have been impossible to attribute a Ghassānid provenance to the monastery. This raises the important question of how many more of those monasteries can be associated with the Ghassānids, monasteries that have not been lucky enough to have a Greek inscription for confrontation and for verification as this one.

[256] The name Sergius for an abbot of a monastery built by the Ghassānids was very appropriate. Sergius was the patron saint of the Ghassānids, and their church at Jābiya, their capital, was dedicated to him. The monastery at this site was also most probably dedicated to Sergius, since it was a fortress in the limitrophe and Sergius was the military saint considered a palladium for Byzantium in its wars with Persia.

[257] On the efforts of Dussaud and Honigmann to identify the site, see Schlumberger et al., *Qaṣr al-Heir el-Gharbī,* 25 note 237. For the support of Honigmann's view, see *BASIC* I.2, 833.

[258] For the toponym, see the verse in the ode of al-Ḥārith, trans. T. Nöldeke, *Fünf Moʿallaqāt* (Vienna, 1899–1905), I, 61, verse 38 and note 6. The name of the battle has been controversial, and many possibilities have been suggested, such as al-Ḥiyār or al-Ḥiyārān (Nöldeke, *GF,* 18–19). It would be remarkable indeed if this site turns out to be the site of the battle. This would be a

The recovery of the correct name of the site in pre-Islamic times is a matter of considerable importance to understanding its significance. *Ḥayr, Ḥiyār, Ḥīra* are related military terms of this period denoting the fortress and the camp of the Ghassānid *foederati,* the *castra* and *castella* of the Roman troops, stationed along the old *limes.* The Arabic military term definitely assigns the site to a military context and suggests that it was one of the fortresses of the Ghassānid army of *foederati* deployed along the frontier. This is important to emphasize not only for the Ghassānid military posture in their new duties as watchmen over the *limes* but also for indicating that the site had been primarily an important military station to which a monastery was added. The extant Greek inscriptions have emphasized the site as a monastery and thus obscured its principal role as a military station and an important one, judging from the extensive water system constructed at the site, which suggests that the fortress accommodated a considerable number of troops.[259]

It follows from this that the site was a Ghassānid fortress, an important military station as well as a monastery, and thus represents a complex consisting of both a fortress and a monastery. This sets the stage for discussing the tower, which clearly functioned as such for both the fortress and the monastery, even more for the former. The first feature that attracts attention is the height of the tower. It literally towers over all that surrounded it including the Umayyad complex that lay under it when the latter was still standing. Its height is one of the best arguments for its function. It could not have been built mainly for the benefit of the inmates of a monastery but for those of a fortress and in this case a fortified monastery or a sanctified fortress.

The second striking feature is its massiveness and the impression of strength that it conveys. The solid massive masonry has endured for centuries and contrasts with the Umayyad complex, which was built of brick. The massive character of the tower suggests that its function was more related to the fortress in the Ghassānid complex than to its monastery.[260]

The height and massiveness of the tower also suggest that the military fortress and monastery occupied an extensive area. It is inconceivable that a tower of such height and massiveness would have been erected to serve a diminutive fortress or monastery. This is confirmed by the correct etymologizing of the term in Arabic as meaning not only one but possibly two *ḥiyār*s, the dual or even the plural, and so a complex of fortresses and camps may have been involved. This conclusion

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most appropriate background for the construction of a fortress and monastery to commemorate the event. On the battle, see *BASIC* I.1, 240–51.

[259] On the extensive and elaborate water system at the site, see below, 210–11.

[260] The massiveness of the tower, both its height and the size of the stones, can be seen in the frontispiece of BASIC I. 1. Even without knowing its dimensions, these can be appreciated by comparison with the man standing at the foot of the tower.

receives confirmation also from the three cisterns attached to the site, or perhaps even a more extensive water system that was expanded when it served the later Umayyad occupants, a system that has been revealed by excavation and research. These cisterns, which are placed in various parts of the complex, have been presumed to go back to Ghassānid times.

Finally, the tower was not circular like the later Umayyad towers of the site, but square or rectangular like that of Mayfaʿa. The significance of this is not clear; perhaps it was easier to cut square stones than round ones, especially as the stones of the tower were so massive.

The question then arises why the Umayyads spared this element in the Ghassānid complex in spite of their destruction of the rest of the Ghassānid establishment, especially in view of the incongruity of the tower and its asymmetry with the Umayyad complex, as it was too high and massive, and unlike the smaller towers of the Umayyad complex, it was square, not round. Only one explanation that carries conviction: it was too strong to be pulled down and so was left alone.[261]

The survival of the tower of Haliorama, which dominates by its height the Umayyad complex, as it still does the landscape of the region, leads the student of Ghassānid history to a better understanding of the contemporary Arabic poetry composed on these dynasts. A Ghassānid poet, Ḥassān, marveled in one of his poems on their structures which he called *aẓīmat al-arkān* ("great in its corners or pillars").[262] That this phrase was not an exaggeration may be affirmed now by this new literary-archaeological confrontation between the tower and the poem. Ḥassān may have seen even more impressive monumental structures in such areas of Ghassānid presence as the Golan and Auranitis. This confrontation confers even more authenticity on these few surviving fragmentary verses.

The Cistern(s)

In addition to the tower, three cisterns survive.[263] Although they have no inscriptions to associate them with the Ghassānids, archaeologists have concluded that they are probably part of the Ghassānid substrate in the later Umayyad complex.[264] It is only natural to suppose that the Ghassānids to whom the monastery-

[261] In this, it invites comparison with Īwān Kisrā, the famous Sasanid palace at Ctesiphon, which has survived because it was so difficult to pull down. For the mosaic in it commemorating the Persian victory at the battle of Antioch, see *BASIC* I.1, 235–36.

In studies on Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, not much is said on the function of the tower in Umayyad times, but apparently it was found useful in later times. N. Elisséeff states that "later, this tower served as watch- and relay-tower for the fire signals between Bayḍa and Ḳaryatayn"; see the entry on Ḳasr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, *EI*[2], IV, 726.

[262] For the verse in Ḥassān that describes the massiveness and solidity of Ghassānid structures, see *Dīwān,* I, 255, verse 4.

[263] See Schlumberger et al., *Qaṣr al-Heir el-Gharbī,* 11, 25.

[264] Ibid., 25.

fortress is attributed should have provided the complex with cisterns. The Christian Arab *foederati* of this proto-Byzantine period are associated with the construction of cisterns such as those of the Palestinian Parembole who constructed the cistern for the monastery of St. Euthymius in the Jordan valley.[265] Since the Ghassānids belonged to the same tradition, the three cisterns in the complex can be reasonably assigned to those who built the tower; the two are naturally complementary parts of the complex. The fact that the site had not one but three cisterns speaks for the extensiveness of the Ghassānid complex.

Scholars of the Umayyad phase of the site have discussed the details of the elaborate and complex water system. Reference is made to the dam of Ḥarbaḳa, to the canalization system, reservoirs, *birkas* (ponds), a bath that served the Umayyad residents of the site and the orchards that needed irrigation.[266] The question arises as to what extent these features were Umayyad and to what extent Ghassānid. Was the Ghassānid contribution only the three cisterns? It is possible. Yet the passage in Bakrī suggests that monasteries, especially those that were also intended to be destinations of royalty on certain occasions and Christian feast days, were often surrounded by gardens, trees, and flowing water.[267] As Qaṣr al-Ḥayr was an extensive fortified monastery, it is quite possible that the Ghassānids did more than build three cisterns.

The *Xenodocheion*

In addition to the tower and cisterns, a third element could have been contributed by the Ghassānid phylarchs to the monasteries, namely, the hostel, the *xenodocheion,* which provided food and lodging to the wayfarer, especially to those in the arid and desolate areas of the limitrophe such as Sinai and northern Ḥijāz. These *xenodocheia* were often separate buildings erected for the purpose of offering hospitality to wayfarers, but some were attached to monasteries. These *xenodocheia* expressed the peculiarly Arab concept and ideal of *ḍiyāfa* (hospitality), and the *xenodocheion* would have been the *maḍāfa* of the Arab house. It reflected the Arab ethos and was an area where Christian *philanthropia* met Arabic *ḍiyāfa.*[268]

[265] For this, see *BAFIC,* 182. For a more extensive discussion of the construction work of the Arab phylarch-bishop of the Parembole, Aspebetos, see D. J. Chitty, "Two Monasteries in the Wilderness of Judaea," *Palestine Exploration Fund* (1928), 135.

[266] For a detailed description of this elaborate water and irrigation system at the site, see Schlumberger et al., *Qaṣr al-Heir el-Gharbī,* 2–9 and also the succinct description by Elisseeff, *EI*^{2}, 726–27.

[267] See above, 161; the passage in Bakrī derives from the *Aghānī* of Iṣfahānī.

[268] Hospitality was the twin virtue of courage, the two pillars of Arab *virtus, murū'a.* The ideal of hospitality, however, is expressed most strikingly in the linguistic sphere of Greek, not Arabic. The former is the only language in which one word denotes stranger and guest, ξένος. For Byzantine and Christine *philanthropia,* see D. J. Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1968).

III

If not much is known about the internal structure of the Ghassānid monasteries, something is known about the areas in which they were built and their natural surroundings. This is described in the work of later Islamic writers on monasteries and especially in that passage in Bakrī on the three groups of Arabs who competed in building religious structures, including the Ghassānids, who, it has been argued, were the most outstanding.[269] Bakrī states that the three groups built their monasteries in pleasant spots surrounded by water, trees, and gardens. As has been indicated before, the *biyaʿ* mentioned in this passage in Bakrī refers to monasteries rather than churches. It is clearly implied that the choice of such attractive surroundings was related to the fact that these monasteries were often the destinations of members of these royal houses where they could spend some time in relaxation. This is confirmed by the description of one of these monasteries near Ḥīra, Dayr al-Jujj, whither the last Lakhmid king, Nuʿmān, used to go on Sundays and feast days and where he and his retinue would spend some time in its relaxed atmosphere.[270] It is clear that these monasteries were neither in urban centers nor in the arid zones of the limitrophe, but in the countryside of those regions with more temperate climates such as the Golan, Batanaea, and Auranitis.

As for the cultivated areas around the Ghassānid monasteries, they must have been the usual ones that grew vegetables, fruits, and trees for the support of the inmates, especially two products, the olive and the vine, important for their liturgical function in Christian worship.[271] In addition to the value of olives as food, olive oil was important for lighting the lamps of the monasteries and for two of the seven sacraments, chrismation and unction. Olive oil was also one of the two ingredients of the *myron,* the other being balsam, used for the consecration of priests and kings. Grapes, useful as food and drink, were also an essential ingredient for the wine of the eucharist. One of the panegyrists of the Ghassānids, Ḥassān, used to stay in the *xenodocheia* of these Ghassānid monasteries, where he would drink wine, his preferred beverage. In his own words, "all other beverages are a ransom for the wine," "fa hunna li-ṭayyibi al-rāḥi al-fidāʾu."[272]

[269] On this passage, see above, 161.

[270] On Dayr al-Lujj, see Bakri, *Muʿjam,* s.v. II, 595–96.

[271] Both products are mentioned in Ghassānid contexts by the poets. Ḥassān remembers the vines, and Yazīd, the second Umayyad caliph, remembers the olive trees around Ghassānid religious structures in the Ghassānid town of Jalliq; for both, see above, 109, and below, 241. Oil and wine were in great demand in Constantinople, especially after the Vandal conquest of one of the Byzantine provinces that provided the capital with both, namely, Africa. Hence the importance of olive groves and vineyards in Oriens in this period; see Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens,* 304.

[272] For Ḥassān's stay at Dayr al-Khammān, see below, 233; for the wine as ransom, *fidā*ʾ, see *Dīwān,* I, 17.

Inside the Monastery

The sources make sporadic references to the interiors of monasteries; it is natural to suppose that these were roughly the same as in other monasteries of the period in this region. The passage in Bakrī on the three groups of Arabs who competed in building religious structures, including the Ghassānids, speaks of gold and mosaics on the walls and ceilings of the *biyaʿ* (churches), and, as has been argued, the term is likely to be more true of monasteries. Even without the express reference in Bakrī to the fact that Ghassānid religious structures were adorned with mosaics and paintings, this would be a natural conclusion, given the religious artistic explosion of the period that would have been reflected in the churches and monasteries of the Christian *foederati.*

References in Arabic poetry clearly suggest that the monastery and the church had sculptural decoration, not only mosaics and paintings. These references occur in the poetry of the pre-Islamic poets, Aʿshā and ʿAdī ibn Zayd, who moved in Arab milieus, and also in early Islamic poetry of the Umayyad period. The two terms for statues, Aramaic *dumya/timṯhāl,* start to occur in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry.[273] An important element in the life of the monastery attracted the attention of the pre-Islamic Arab poet, namely, the gong that brought the monks together for prayer or meals. However, the most important feature of the monastery that attracted the Arab wayfarer, caravaneer, and poet was no doubt the lighting in the monastery. "The lamp of the hermit or the monk" figured prominently in Arabic poetry; lamps were compared to the stars, or sometimes, in an inverted simile, the stars are compared to the lamps of the monk in the monastery.[274] The most celebrated simile involving a pre-Islamic lamp in a monastery, however, comes in the Koran where a theology is expressed, the second term in the simile being God himself, the famous Light Verse, while the following verse speaks in complimentary terms of the dedicated inmates whom the lamp serves during their vigils.[275]

XI. Influences

The influence of the monastic architecture of Oriens on North Africa has been suspected in the case of the monastery of Ain-Tamada in Algeria. Monasteries in

[273] For these attestations in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, see Cheikho, *al-Naṣrāniyya wa Ādābuhā,* 205.

[274] For this inverted simile, see the verse of the foremost poet of pre-Islamic Arabia, Imruʾ al-Qays, in Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* 156, verse 20.

[275] Koran, *Sūrat al-Nūr,* no. 24, verses 35–37. Ignace Guidi noted that three of the terms in Arabic for lamp are loanwords: *sirāj* from Persian; *qandīl/qindil* from Greek, and *nibrās* from Aramaic; see his *L'Arabie antéislamique* (Paris, 1921), 52. Two of the terms involving light in the *sūra* are also loanwords: *zujāja,* the lantern within which the lamp is contained, and *miṣḥkāt* within which the lantern is placed; the former is Aramaic and the latter Ethiopic. See Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān,* 149–50, 266.

Oriens such as Dayr al-Naṣrānī and al-Dayr (el-Deir) near Bostra have been thought to be the models. Although the hypothesis is criticized by some scholars, yet a certain resemblance has been conceded.[276] If the two monasteries in Oriens turn out to be Ghassānid, this would be an Arab Ghassānid echo architecturally in the West.[277]

More important than such influences in the Roman West are those that affected the Arabs themselves, before, during, and after the rise of Islam. The influence of Ghassānid monasticism in this area is one of the many strands of continuity between the two principal periods of Arab history divided by Islam. Monasteries, as is well known, became great cultural centers in this period and not only religious centers devoted to Christian worship and life in its most perfect form, the ideals of piety, poverty, and obedience. It is, therefore, to the influence of Ghassānid monasticism on Islam that the discussion must turn, especially Mecca and its Arab inhabitants, Quraysh.

The Ghassānid rise to power in the sixth century coincided with that of Mecca as the great caravan center of western Arabia and of Quraysh as its principal trading community.[278] As has been perceptively argued, "humanly speaking, Muḥammad succeeded because he was a Meccan,"[279] that is, not a nomad but a city dweller, born into the urban community that controlled the trade of western Arabia. The trade routes traversed by the Meccan caravans, led by the ancestors and relatives of the Prophet Muḥammad, were made safe by the protective power of

[276] For the hypothesis, see W. Seston, "Le monastère d' Aïn-Tamada et les origines de l'architecture monastique en Afrique du Nord," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire,* École française de Rome, 51 (1934), 89–113. Cf. the review by J. Lassus in *Bulletin d'études orientales,* Institut français de Damas, 4 (1935), 127–29.

[277] And, of course, a modest one. A backdrop to eastern Byzantine influences from Syria on the Christian European West is provided by an excellent chapter in Peña, *Christian Art of Byzantine Syria,* 227–41, which discusses the various types of influences exerted by Syria and the Syrians on the West, but the most relevant is what he says on monks and monasteries. Peña discusses the arrival of eastern monks in the West and their influence on the development of the monastic movement in Europe during the 4th to 6th centuries, and how they arrived, not empty handed, but carrying with them "codices . . . *plans of churches* and gold or the work of silversmiths from their homeland" (emphasis added). For such Syrian models and others for the West, see ibid.,531, 535.

Another echo of a different nature may be caught in a well-known dialogue between Pope Gregory III (731–741) and St. Willibald, the nephew of the apostle of Germany, St. Boniface. When the nephew was reluctant to join his uncle in his German mission, the pope made a pointed reference to the Arab bishop-saint Moses, who had been a monk before he was consecrated as the Arab Christian bishop of federate Queen Mavia in the 4th century. Thus an Arab monk-bishop was presented as a model for the English saint; see *BAFOC,* 186–87.

[278] The orthodox view propounded with great force and learning by H. Lammens but challenged recently by P. Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton, N.J., 1988). For the exchange involving this work, see R. Sergeant, "Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam: Misconceptions and Flawed Polemics," *JAOS* 110 (1990), 472–86, and the rejoinder by the author in "Sergeant and Meccan Trade," *Arabica* 39 (1992), 216–40. In spite of the extreme views presented by Crone, the author raised many an important question, which the historian cannot ignore.

[279] H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (Oxford, 1957), 25.

the Ghassānids, who, moreover, administered some of the most important fairs (*aswāq*) of pre-Islamic times such as that of Bostra. Thus they contributed to the welfare of both Quraysh and Mecca. Besides, their monasteries along the *via odorifera* guided and sheltered the Meccan caravaneers, among them Muḥammad himself, the future prophet of Islam, who had led the caravans some fifteen years before his call as prophet ca. A.D. 610.

In addition to material facilities and conveniences, the monasteries spread knowledge of Christianity among the Arab and Meccan caravaneers including Muḥammad. The Islamic tradition related him to a mysterious monk, Baḥīra, in an encounter that must have an element of truth in it.[280] Although the details are difficult to accept in their entirety, there is no doubt that Muḥammad as a caravan leader had visited many of these monasteries; it is natural to suppose that some of them in northern Ḥijāz and Palaestina Tertia were Arab with whose inmates Muḥammad could freely converse.[281] This, together with specific verses that refer to monasteries and their inmates in the Koran, suggests that the Arabs to whom the Koran was addressed and the Prophet himself to whom the Koran was revealed had personal knowledge of these monasteries. Such is one of the most attractive verses in the Koran, the Light Verse, a description of a Christian monastery—its lamp and lantern, and its inmates, dedicated to the worship of God.[282]

As this volume has revealed the extent to which the Ghassānids were involved in monasticism and the building of monasteries, especially in this region within which the *via odorifera* of the Meccans passed leading to the two *termini,* Gaza and Bostra, the case for a Ghassānid influence on the Prophet during the prophetic period of his career may be valid.

The influence of Arab monasteries continued after the rise of Islam and worked in two ways. One was through Islamic asceticism, *zuhd,* which spread so quickly in the early days of Islam. Scholars have related this to Christian asceticism,[283] and a chapter in this volume focused on *zuhd* in order to relieve it of generalizations that cannot always be proved. In the chapter on the Golan and its rise as a holy mountain or plateau in the sixth century, reference has been made

[280] On Baḥīra, see above, 186.

[281] Some of these monasteries in Ḥijāz and Palestine have been discussed; see above, 190–91, 193–94.

[282] Koran, chap. 24, verse 35; so understood by Koranic exegetes in the West where this passage has often been discussed. Its celebrated simile has been considered inspired by Christian places of worship. See D. B. Macdonald, *EI,* s.v. "Allah," I, 303; R. Bell, *The Qurʾan* (Edinburgh, 1937), I, 340 note 1. It was also considered so in J. L. Beaume, *Le Koran analysé,* which was deemed worthy of translation into Arabic by the Orthodox Muslim scholar Muḥammad Fu'ād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, *Tafṣīl Āyāt al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm* (Cairo, 1955), 315, where verse 36 of the *sūra,* on the inmates, occurs and is subsumed under the heading "Monks," *al-Ruhbān,* without any comment, reservation, or cautionary note by the Muslim scholar who translated it. I will discuss the Light Verse in this *sūra* in detail in a forthcoming publication on Koranic studies.

[283] Gibb, *Mohammedanism,* 128.

to the forty Muslim ascetics of the tenth century, who, it has been argued, went back in their tradition to Ghassānid times, in their diet of acorns, and most probably in their number, forty, associated with one of the Ghassānid monasteries, which had that number, "the Monastery of the Forty."[284] Whether this can be established beyond doubt or not is difficult to tell, but it was most probably the Arab monasteries whose inmates could speak Arabic that provided contact between Muslims and Christians in this early Islamic period, and these were mostly erected by the Ghassānids.

In a preceding section, it has been indicated that the military stations of the Ghassānids often had near them monasteries and hermitages of Christian Arab monks. In early Muslim times, the system of *ribāṭ*s developed,[285] and it has been suggested that this had been preceded in pre-Islamic times and among the Arabs by the fortified monasteries of the Ghassānid limitrophe. The concept of *jihād* in Islam, and militant Christianity in the sixth century, gave rise to the two similar institutions, possibly independently of each other. If so, the two appear as parallel developments without any genetic relationship.

Appendix I

Two Monasteries

In addition to the monasteries associated with the Ghassānids in the Provincia Arabia, it is possible to add two more: Dayr al-Naṣrānī in southeastern Auranitis and al-Dayr, south of Bostra, to which reference has already been made.

Dayr al-Naṣrānī

Although no text, literary or epigraphic, witnesses to its Ghassānid character, this has been inferred from its geographical position, the topography of the region in which it stands, and the Greek inscription involving the patron of the Ghassānids, the military saint Sergius.[1] The impression it made on Howard Crosby Butler, the scholar who visited it early in the twentieth century and drew its plan, is worth quoting in support of its Ghassānid origin and as an incentive for future archaeologists who may care to excavate.

> In the southeastern foothills of the Djebel Hauran there is a high conical hill like a sentry overlooking the black stone desert to the east. This hill is crowned by the ruins of a Christian monastery which makes it a landmark for miles around. The ruins cover about half the level space at the summit of the hill. . . . This tower is built of unhewn blocks of basalt, only the doorway being of cut stone; its walls are of unusual thickness, and its doorway is its only opening. Upon the lintel of this doorway, which now opens into one of the buildings of the monastery, is an inscription which mentions the erection of a portal. The tower is unquestionably older than the complex of buildings with which it has been incorporated, and is probably

[284] See above, 91–92; for the Monastery of the Forty, see *BASIC* I.2, 834.
[285] On *ribāṭ,* see *EI*[2], s.v.
[1] See Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization,* II, 331–32.

> to be regarded as an ancient watch-tower set up as guard against the Bedawin of the desert. . . . The whole building is much ruined, and it is interesting only as an example of a remote monastic institution of the early Christian period, occupying the site of a military guard-house which may have succeeded a shrine or altar of some still more ancient "high-place."[2]

Al-Dayr

This is the second monastery after Dayr al-Bāʿiqī which lay outside Bostra and could have had a Ghassānid association. Al-Dayr has been suggested by Wetzstein, followed by Butler, to be in fact the famous Dayr Najrān.[3] Butler described it as follows: "This convent was apparently one of the largest religious establishments in the Ḥauran, and its plan is the most symmetrical and beautiful of all the monasteries in Syria that are known."[4]

A case can be made for the possibility of its being a Ghassānid building or one that had enjoyed their patronage. Theodore, consecrated around 540 as the bishop of the Ghassānids, had a mandate for the revival of the Ghassānid Arab hierarchy after a period of persecution. His official title was bishop of Bostra; as has been argued, this was an appointment *extra muros,* and Theodore certainly never resided in Bostra. He may, however, have built a monastery *extra muros.* A monastery would have been the obvious structure to build for a confession that was not the official orthodox one. So a monastery, less obtrusive than a church to the Chalcedonians, would have reflected the Arab Monophysite presence of their bishop, the titular of the see of Bostra. Near Bostra, the capital of the Provincia Arabia, was held one of the most famous *sūqs* (fairs) of Oriens in pre-Islamic times. The Ghassānids were not only soldiers in the service of Byzantium but also provided security and protected the economic interests of Byzantium and the region, one of which was the *sūq* of Bostra.[5] This is likely to have been held outside the city, and a *dayr,* which usually had a *xenodocheion* providing amenities for caravaneers, might have been built in its vicinity in order to accommodate travelers from distant lands, such as Mecca, deep in the heart of Ḥijāz. This particular monastery and the toponym associated with it is called simply al-Dayr, *the* Dayr (monastery). This recalls such a term with the definite article *al,* without any qualification, in the poetry of Ḥassān on the Ghassānids. The term occurs in two consecutive verses in one of his well-known poems.[6] So there is a chance that al-Dayr was a Ghassānid foundation or associated with them.

Appendix II

Ghūṭat Dimashq

In *Ghūṭat Dimashq,* the Syrian scholar Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī devoted a chapter to the monasteries in the region of Damascus, those that have wasted away and almost disap-

[2] PPUAES, II.A, Architecture, Southern Syria, 334–35.

[3] For Butler's section on al-Dayr (Id-Der), see PPUAES, II.A, Architecture, 101–5.

[4] Ibid., 102.

[5] For Sūq Būṣrā/Bostra, see the standard work on these *aswāq* by Saʿīd al-Afghānī, *Aswāq al-ʿArab* (Damascus, 1960), 362–71.

[6] See *Dīwān,* I, 518, verses 6, 7.

peared.[1] It is not an unworthy pendant to the string of monasteries enumerated by Yāqūt and especially relevant because of the possible Ghassānid association of a few of them. In the chapter titled "al-Duyūra al-Dāthira," he observes that many of the villages or localities that begin with the word *dayr* must have been originally monasteries, but that later these developed into villages, which kept the name of the monasteries.

1. Dayr Dārayyā:[2] one of the many monasteries associated with Dārayyā in the letter of the Monophysite archimandrites. The author speaks of the huge stones of which it was built, some of which were taken from the monastery and reused for rebuilding parts of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus when the latter experienced a conflagration at the beginning of the twentieth century. Reference to its large stones call to mind those that are still to be seen in the Ghassānid tower of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī.

2. Dayr Qays:[3] this is described as being in the district of Khawlān, and sometimes referred to as Dayr al-Qass, the "Monastery of the Priest," the more probable name, transformed erroneously by transcription into Qays. The monastery is located in the district of Khawlān. In another chapter of *Ghuṭat Dimashq,* the author says in his entry on Khawlān that it was a village that belonged to Ghassān.[4] Khawlān was a well-known South Arabian tribe and must have been related to the Ghassānids, who also came from South Arabia. So the *dayr* had some Ghassānid associations.

3. Dayr Sābir[5] in the district of Ḥarlān near Damascus. There is no explicit Ghassānid association but it could be inferred: (1) the district of Ḥarlān had some relation to the Ghassānids, since John their bishop was exiled to Ḥarlān at the beginning of the reign of Justin I;[6] the author locates Ḥarlān next to al-Safwāniyya, east of Bāb Tūma, one of the gates of Damascus;[7] (2) another indication of its possible Ghassānid association is Yāqūt's statement in his entry on Ḥarlān to the effect that the noblemen among the Umayyads used to live in Ḥarlān.[8] The Umayyads took over many, perhaps most, of the buildings of the Ghassānids, and this could have been one of them. To the same order of association with the Ghassānids is the further reference that Dayr Sābir in Ḥarlān was the residence of the Umayyad prince ʿUtba ibn Muʿāwiya.[9]

4. Finally, in another chapter, the author refers to a village called Bayt Lahya, which he says belonged to the Kindite tribal subdivisions called al-Sakūn and al-Sakāsik, and in which there was a church.[10] This could have been Christian Kinda, which had a presence in Oriens in the sixth and seventh centuries as federates of Byzantium. He further says that the church, the *kanīsa,* at the time of the Andalusian traveler Ibn Jubayr had become a mosque decorated with colored marble, so wonderfully arranged.

These religious structures, some of which may have belonged to the Ghassānids or

[1] M. Kurd ʿAlī, *Ghūṭat Dimashq* (Damascus, 1984).
[2] Ibid., 194.
[3] Ibid., 195.
[4] Ibid., 169.
[5] Ibid., 195.
[6] On John, the bishop of the Ghassānids, see *BASIC* I.2, 717–22.
[7] *Ghūṭat Dimashq,* 168.
[8] Yaqut, *Muʿjām,* s.v.
[9] *Ghūṭat Dimashq,* 195.
[10] Ibid., 164.

were patronized by them, suggest that the vicinity of Damascus had a Ghassānid presence, a fact already reflected in the many Monophysite monasteries listed in the letter of the archimandrites.

Before Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī wrote on the monasteries of Damascus and its vicinity, the Catholic writer Ḥabīb Zayyāt wrote in the 1940s a series of three articles on the same subject, which were much more extensive and detailed.[11] Although valuable, these deal with the monasteries in Islamic times and with problems that are not the concern of this volume. Noteworthy are Zayyāt's remarks on how some precious Syriac manuscripts that contained information on Christian monasteries in Oriens were lost.[12]

[11] See Ḥ. Zayyāt, "Adyār Dimashq wa Barrihā," *al-Machriq* 42 (1948), 328–32; ibid. 43 (1949), 80–97 and 399–462. For his article on the monasteries in general, not only in Oriens, written from the same perspective, see ibid. 36 (1938), 291–418.

[12] Zayyāt, "Adyār Dimashq wa Barrihā," *al-Machriq* 42 (1948), 328–29; 43 (1949), 80, 418–19.

V

The Sources
Part A: Poets

I. Introduction

The eight pre-Islamic poets discussed in this chapter all lived in the sixth century, and thus their works are primary sources for Ghassānid history. Three of them lived into the early Islamic period: Aʿshā, Labīd, and Ḥassān. Five of them eulogized the Ghassānids: Nābigha, Ḥassān, Ḥātim, Mutalammis, and Aʿshā, and the others mentioned places relevant to Ghassānid toponymy. They all came from various parts of the Arabian Peninsula, attracted by the fame of these federates of Byzantium.

The most important are the first three—Nābigha, Ḥassān, and Ḥātim—to whom may be added Imru' al-Qays, the foremost poet of pre-Islamic Arabia, whose poetry has that precious reference to Ghassānid Usays, but whose value lies elsewhere than in Ghassānid toponymy. His Caesar Ode with its string of place names documents the Arab presence in the valley of the Orontes in sixth-century Oriens.

Of these eight poets, the first was a member of the powerful tribe of Dubyān which had close relations with the Ghassānids; the second was the "poet laureate" of the Ghassānids, and their relative from Yathrib/Medina; the third was the *sayyid,* the chief of the tribe of Ṭayyi', whose name became the generic name for the Arabs in the Syriac sources, the Ṭayāyē; the fourth was a prince of Kinda, the son of that Ḥujr, Ogaros, noticed by Theophanes in ca. A.D. 500; the fifth was a member of the tribe of Bakr in northeastern Arabia, clients of the Lakhmids, from whom he defected to the Ghassānids in Oriens; the sixth was the *sayyid,* chief of the Taghlib, the sister tribe of Bakr who, too, defected from the Lakhmids and came over to the Ghassānids; the seventh was the well-known itinerant poet of pre-Islamic Arabia and who also was a member of the tribe of Bakr; the eighth and last was a *sayyid* of the tribe of ʿĀmir, who, of all those who survived into the Islamic period, adopted Islam, as did Ḥassān, who became the "poet laureate" of the Prophet Muḥammad.

II. Al-Nābigha

In both his panegyrics and elegies on the Ghassānid kings, Nābigha had occasion to refer to many places associated with the Ghassānids, which may be divided into two categories: those that refer to topographical features and geographical areas in Oriens where the Ghassānids were settled; and those that refer to toponyms, such as towns and villages. These references will be treated in this order.[1]

A

Of the first category, Nābigha mentions place names from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat.

1. Al-Jawlān/Gaulanitis/Golan. Nābigha confirms Jawlān as the principal seat of the Ghassānids. He adds the significant detail that it was the starting point of their campaigns,[2] whence the Ghassānid king would lead his cavalry, the mainstay of the Ghassānid army, and where their horses grazed in its rich pasture lands.

2. Ḥawrān/Auranitis. The eastern sector of the Ghassānid transverse wedge in Oriens is mentioned only once in Nābigha in an elegy in which he associates nature with general grief over the deceased Ghassānid king.[3]

The other two regions of the wedge that lay between Auranitis and Gaulanitis, namely, Trachonitis/al-Lajā and Bāshān/Batanaea/Bathaniyya are not mentioned by name, but there is no doubt that Nābigha visited or passed through them and may have mentioned them in poems that have not survived.

3. Al-Jalīl/Galilea. This term occurs in one of the poems of Nābigha addressed to the Lakhmid king Nuʿmān of Ḥīra.[4] He speaks of Yawm al-Jalīl,[5] the Day of al-Jalīl, which may refer to an important event in the life of the poet, or simply to the day when he passed through al-Jalīl. This would be a tantalizing reference if it really referred to the well-known district in Palaestina Secunda in Oriens.[6] The commentators are not agreed on whether it refers to it or to a *wādī,* a valley south of the city of al-Ṭāʾif in Ḥijāz.[7] In support of its identification with

[1] The most recent edition of Nābigha's collected poems, the *Dīwān,* is by M. Ibrāhīm, *Dīwān al-Nābigha al-Dubyānī* (Cairo, 1977) (hereafter *Dīwān,* followed by page and verse numbers). An earlier edition is by Shukrī Fayṣal. For an excellent commentary, see M. Ibn-ʿĀshūr (Tunis, n.d.?). For Nābigha and all that relates to him and his *Dīwān,* such as editions, manuscripts and studies, see Sezgin, *GAS,* II, 110–13.

[2] *Dīwān,* 50, verse 4 and 121, verse 25.

[3] Ibid., 121, verse 29.

[4] Ibid., 17, verse 9.

[5] It is wrongly quoted in Yāqūt as Dū al-Jalīl in the second hemistich of Nābigha's verse. This reading must have been a *lapsus calami* on the part of Yāqūt, since in addition to its lack of manuscript support, the hemistich does not scan; see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. al-Jalīl, II, 157–58.

[6] "Galilea of the Nations," *gelil ha-goyim,* Isaiah 8:23 and Matt. 4:15.

[7] See M. Ibn Bulayhid, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Akhbār* (Riyadh, 1971), II, 4–6 for the most extensive discussion of the two and other alternative interpretations; he also corrects Yāqūt on al-Jalīl as a *wādī* south of Ṭāʾif, less than a day's journey from it, and according to him still known as such.

Galilea, the following may be suggested. (a) The poem, although addressed to the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra, was an *iʿtiḏāriyya,* a poem asking pardon after his estrangement from Nuʿmān, when the poet went over to the Ghassānids. So a district in Oriens is not altogether surprising in a poem on the Lakhmid of Ḥīra. (b) Galilea was adjacent to Gaulanitis, the main seat of the Ghassānids, and it may have witnessed a modest Ghassānid presence, if al-Marrūt, mentioned in Yāqūt as one of the seats of the Ghassānid kings, turns out to be biblical Meroth in Galilea.[8] (c) The toponym al-Sanad, mentioned in the opening verse of the poem,[9] is mentioned also by Ḥassān as one of the toponyms in Ghassānland. (d) That al-Jalīl was known or may have been known to the Arab poets of the period is reflected in a verse by the Medinan poet Abū Qays ibn al-Aslat, who speaks of *ruhbān al-Jalīl* ("the monks of al-Jalīl"); he was not related to the Ghassānids as a panegyrist as Nābigha was. Although these arguments do not establish with certainty that Galilea was what Nābigha meant, they make it at least possible.[10]

4. Al-Manāẓir. This term is the plural of *manẓar,* the noun of place from the verb *naẓara,* and so it can mean the place at which or from which one looks. As a military term in this period and region, it can mean only the latter, the watchtower.[11] The term, a *hapax legomenon* in Nābigha's poetry on the Ghassānids, occurs in the poem in which he praises the Kalbite federate commander Ibn al-Julāḥ, who had conducted a successful campaign against a subdivision of Ḏubyān, the poet's own tribe.[12] It is preceded by a string of place names—Ḫala, Ḏunāba, and Suwā—and it is not entirely clear whether *Manāẓir* is separate from the three preceding toponyms or possibly in apposition to them. In another edition of the *Dīwān,*[13] *Manāẓir* is preceded by the word *aw* ("or"), which makes clear that Manāẓir is not in apposition to the string of three toponyms that precede it. So Ma-

[8] For the latter, see Josephus, *The Jewish War,* Loeb edition (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), III, 39.

[9] *Dīwān,* 14, verse I; for al-Sanad in Ḥassān, see below, 236.

[10] The verse by Abū Qays comes in a triplet quoted by Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. "al-Jalīl," but is not to be found in the surviving poetry of Abū Qays. There is no trace of it in *Aghānī,* which covers it extensively; see Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī,* ed. A. M. Bajāwī (Cairo, 1970), XVIII, 117–31. Nor is it found in a work specially devoted to the *ḥanīf* poets; see A. J. al-ʿUmarī, *al-Shuʿarāʾ al-Ḥunafāʾ* (Cairo, 1981). For Abu Qays ibn-al-Aslat, see Sezgin, *GAS,* II, 287. For Byzantine Palestine of which Galilee was part, see C. Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine. Peuplement et populations,* 3 vols., BAR International Series 726 (Antibes, 1998). However, the term al-Jalīl and the district must have been known to Nābigha, who visited the Ghassānids in the Jawlān; it was across the Jordan River, which separated Gaulanitis from Galilea. It was known to the Christian Arabs of the period from references to it in the Gospels (Matt. 4:15) and reference to the Apostles as the Galileans. Another region across the Jordan, Lebanon, may also have been mentioned by Nābigha; for Lubnān/Lebanon, see *Dīwān,* 66, verse 23 and note 1.

[11] For the Latin/Greek term of which *manāẓir* was a translation, see above, 64–65.

[12] *Dīwān,* 175, verse 3. The term *manāẓir* is preceded by the word *miyāh,* plural of *māʾ*, water. The watchtowers were naturally built in this arid region near water spots. For a good commentary on the poem, see Ibn ʿĀshūr, *Dīwān* (Tunis, n.d.) 112–13.

[13] Ibid., 112, verse 3.

nāẓir has to be sought either where the three toponyms are located or elsewhere in Oriens.

If Manāẓir is in apposition to the three toponyms, then it must be in Wādī Sirḥān. The indefatigable traveler A. Musil identified the three toponyms or thought he did, locating them in Wādī Sirḥān, a sphere of influence and presence for Kalb, the federate tribe that guarded that gateway to Oriens from the raids of the pastoralists.[14] If Manāẓir is not in apposition to the three toponyms, then it has to be sought within Oriens, where Kalb was also settled, since the powerful tribe with its numerous subdivisions straddled both sides of the Byzantine frontier. Within Oriens the Manāẓir could refer to the region or line that extended from the Balqā' in Trans-Jordan to Ḥuwwārīn, Evaria in Phoenicia Libanensis, and also all the way to the Euphrates and beyond to Hīt.[15] Watchtowers existed all along the frontier in the limitrophe provinces: Arabia, Phoenicia Libanensis, and Syria Salutaris.

The term recurs in the Islamic sources as Manāẓir al-Rūm, "the watchtowers of the Rūm (Romans)," when these sources refer to the Byzantine period in the history of Oriens.[16] There is no doubt that the term goes back to the immediate pre-Islamic past, when the Arabs translated the Latin/Greek term into Arabic as Manāẓir. The occurrence of the term in this primary source for the sixth century, the poet-panegyrist of the Ghassānids, Nābigha, is, therefore, most welcome, a *hapax legomenon* though it is, and so it may be added to the other military technical terms that appeared in Arabic in pre-Islamic times, such as *ḥīra, musyaliḥa/maslaḥa,* and even *jund.*[17]

5. Wādī Sirhān. In verse 6 of the same poem there is reference to Qurāqir, a toponym that is associated with a watering place, also possessed by Kalb in Wādī Sirḥān. This has been identified with what is known as Qulbān Qurāqir by Muslim medieval geographers and confirmed by others in more recent times.[18] This

[14] See A. Musil, *Arabia Deserta* (New York, 1927), 337, third note from the last.

[15] Ibid. and 37 note 6. See also the map, the frontispiece of *Arabia Deserta,* where the Manāẓir appears not in Wādī Sirḥān but along the more important frontier in Oriens—from northeast of Damascus to the Euphrates. It does not, however, show the Manāẓir from the Balqā' to Ḥuwwārīn.

[16] Such is the reference to "Manāẓir al-Rūm" in Ṭabarī when he was describing the campaign of Shapur II against the Arabs in the peninsula in the 4th century, a campaign that brought him to the Roman *Limes Diocletianus* in Oriens; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1961), I, 57.

[17] For Arabic pre-Islamic military terms, see below, 63–66.

[18] Musil, *Arabia Deserta,* 100–101; also the map at the end of the book where it appears transliterated as Ḳulbān Kerazer. The Saudi scholar H. Jāsir visited Wādī Sirḥān more recently and described Qurāqir, now called Jaw Qurāqir, as *manhal,* a water spot and one of the most important in Wādī Sirḥān; for this and for a map of the *wādī,* see his *Fī Shamāl Sharq al-Jazīra* (Riyadh, 1981), 575 and 611 respectively. Both Qurāqir and Suwā have become better known since Khālid, the victor of Yarmūk, stopped at both of them during his famous march from Iraq to Oriens. For this and other Qurāqirs, see U. Thilo, *Die Ortsnamen in der altarabischen Poesie* (Wiesbaden, 1958), 82.

toponym, together with the others mentioned above—Khala, Dunāba, and Suwā in Wādī Sirḥān—all belonging to Kalb and mentioned in the context of a military operation conducted by Ibn al-Julāḥ, gives a glimpse into the fortification system in that gateway to Oriens, namely, Wādī Sirḥān, although not mentioned by name in the poem. It was protected by federate Kalb and indirectly by Ghassān.[19]

6. Ḥismā. The mountainous volcanic region of southern Palaestina Tertia and northern Ḥijāz is mentioned by Nābigha in connection with the campaign of the Ghassānid king, whom he calls by his matronymic, Ibn Hind.[20] The king had come from the north, presumably from Gaulanitis, in order to punish some recalcitrant tribal groups. He speaks of the dust of war in the mountains of Ḥismā which presumably the hoofs of the Ghassānid horses had stirred. Ḥismā was also the seat of the tribe of Judām, another important federate tribe in Oriens. The Ghassānid campaign in Ḥismā illustrates inter-Arab tension within the federate camp in Oriens and the duty of the Ghassānid supreme phylarch and king to impose order and ensure obedience to his authority, as commander in chief of the Arab federate forces.[21]

In addition to these regions in Oriens mentioned by Nābigha, there are some four references to others, less important but relevant to rounding off the picture of the Ghassānid presence in Oriens.

1. Ḥārith al-Jawlān. This is the Mountain of Ḥārith in Jawlān. It occurs in his elegy on Nuʿmān.[22] The mountain in Gaulanitis was named after the most famous Ghassānid king al-Ḥārith, son of Jabala, the Arethas of the reign of Justinian. It was later called Jabala al-Ḥāra by apocope.[23] Again, as in the case of Ḥawrān, the reference to it is owed to the poet's desire to indulge in a "pathetic fallacy" to make nature participate in the general grief for the death of Nuʿmān.

2. Al-Atm. This occurs in the poem that describes the campaign of the Ghassānid Nuʿmān in Palaestina Tertia, the same that brought him to the Ḥismā region.[24] Al-Atm is a *wādī* that runs down from the Sharā mountain range into

[19] For more on Wādī Sirḥān, see below, 283–87.

[20] *Dīwān,* 133, verse 16; Ḥismā appears on p. 136, verse 31. For Ḥismā, see Thilo, *Ortsnamen,* 56. For the most recent discussion of the Ḥismā region, see Ḥ. Jāsir, *al Muʿjam al-Jagrāfī li al-Bilād al-ʿArabiyya al-Saūdīyya* (Riyadh, 1977), I, 433–37, and M. Sartre, "La Ḥismā," in *IGLSYR, Inscriptions de la Jordanie* (Paris, 1993), IV, 165–66.

[21] On traces of this in the historian Ḥamza, see below, 316–17.

[22] *Dīwān,* 121, verse 29.

[23] For the "Mountain of Ḥārith" with its convent, see T. Nöldeke, "Zur Topographie," *ZDMG* 29 (1876), 430–31, and R. Aigrain, "Arabie," *DHGE,* III, 1210. Tall al-Ḥāra is conical in shape, is 1,127 m high and dominates the plain below; see R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique* (Paris, 1927), 334. Dussaud's argument on p. 335 suffers from the fact that he thought al-Jawābī in Ḥassān's verse is the same as Jābiya, the headquarters of the Ghassānids, whereas it has been shown to be al-Khawābī (below, 240).

[24] *Dīwān,* 134, verse 24.

Wādī ʿAraba about 5 km from al-ʿAqaba.[25] It still has that name in modern Jordan, pronounced as Yatm, and is often referred to as Yatm ʿUmrān after the tribe al-ʿUmrān, a subdivision of the Ḥuwayṭāt.[26]

3. Ubayr and al-Kawāthil. These two toponyms occur in a poem addressed to the Ghassānid king ʿAmr when he campaigned against Banū ʿAwf, a subdivision of Dubyān, the tribe of Nābigha, despite warning by the poet to his tribe against any action that might elicit a military response from the Ghassānids, which, however, took place after his tribe did not heed his warning.[27] Of the two toponyms, the first is the more important one. It is preceded in the verse by the word *qinān,* "the tops or crests of a hill or a mountain," clearly suggesting a mountain or range of hills or mountains. Ubayr was known to Ptolemy,[28] and Yāqūt knows of three Ubayrs,[29] but the relevant one in this Ghassānid context is that in Trans-Jordan, associated with the tribe of Banū al-Qayn ibn Jasr, one of the federate tribes of the Inner Shield in Oriens.

Ubayr is the name of a watering place, a mountain or mountain range, and a *wādī,* most branches of which are in Trans-Jordan, and it connects with Wādī Sirḥān at a point 16 km south of al-Nabk.[30] The one mentioned in this poem is the mountain range in Trans-Jordan, where the present-day Qaṣr Bāyir still stands. This textual discussion of the association of this important toponym with the Ghassānids in Nābigha's poem is preparatory for the later discussion of its manifold significance for the Byzantine defense system, for federate Arab history in Oriens, and for the Ghassānid substrate of Umayyad structures.[31]

The other toponym, al-Kawāthil, has not yet been correctly located. Yāqūt assigns it to three different places, but the one in Nābigha's poem must be sought in Trans-Jordan since it is close to Ubayr.[32]

4. Al-Jināb and ʿĀlij. These two toponyms are mentioned in the same poem

[25] See Y. Jabr, *Muʿjam al-Buldān al-Urduniyya wa al-Filastīniyya* (Amman, 1988), 222; also Thilo, *Ortsnamen,* 61–62, where it appears as Itm.

[26] See Ḥ. Jāsir, *Majmūʿat Buḥūth ʿArabiyya,* Festschrift Isḥāq M. al-Ḥusaynī (Jerusalem, n.d.), 43.

[27] For the two toponyms, see *Dīwān,* 143, verse 14. The king is referred to by name on p. 144, verse 19.

[28] Already noted by Thilo, *Ortsnamen,* 105–6, s.v. Ubair.

[29] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* I, 85.

[30] See Jāsir, *Majmūʿat Buḥūth,* 75–76. He also corrects Yāqūt on Ubāyr, who thought it was north of Ḥawrān, whereas it is south of it; see also Musil on the campaign of the Ghassānid ʿAmr in a long footnote, *Arabia Deserta,* 324 note 76. He wrongly dates the campaign to A.D. 620, an impossible date when Nābigha was already dead and Oriens was under Persian occupation.

[31] Ḥamza also vouches for the Ghassānid association with Ubayr; see below, 329.

[32] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* IV, 486, s.v. al-Kawāthil, and 366–67, s.v. al-Quṣayba. Musil locates the one near the Euphrates as lying 52 km southeast of al-Quṣayba; A. Musil, *Palmyrena* (New York, 1928), 178 note 48.

as the preceding one. The poet warns his tribe, or a subdivision within it, Banū ʿAwf, to leave the territory between these two places alone, presumably since it was under the protection of the Ghassānid king.[33] The second toponym has been identified with the well-known Nafūd desert,[34] whereas the location of the first has been left undetermined by medieval geographers. Many places are called by that name, but Nābigha's toponym must be close to this tribe, Dubyān, since its subdivision Banū ʿAwf is warned in the poem.

Musil was the first to give a more specific description of it (transliterating it as al-Genab): "it is a plain overlooked by the much eroded hills and bounded on the west by rugged volcanic cliffs and on the east by the sandy desert of the Nefud and its projects."[35] Almost half a century later, the Saudi scholar Ḥ. Jāsir reviewed the evidence of the sources and gave his conclusions. He confirmed that ʿĀlij is modern Nafūd; he described al-Jināb as the spacious territory that extends from the ʿIrāḍ of Khaybar to Taymāʾ and its mountain, namely, Ḥadad. It then extends to the north until it joins with Wādī ʿAraba. He describes it now as full of *mustanqaʿāt* (swamps) that are wide and whose mountains are few, one of which is Jabal Barid. He further says that Al-Jināb's name is now al-Jahrāʾ.[36] So both toponyms, al-Jināb and ʿĀlij, have modern names, al-Jahrāʾ and al-Nafūd, respectively.

B

The most celebrated urban centers of the Ghassānids are al-Jābiya and Jalliq. The *Dīwān* of Nābigha, however, refers to other, less important ones, although the level of Ghassānid presence or identity in them is not easy to determine and there are surprises. Al-Jābiya, the more famous of the two, is not mentioned in the *Dīwān.* Its nonattestation is explicable either by the fact that Nābigha did not visit his patrons there or that his poems in which al-Jābiya is mentioned have not survived.

1. Jalliq. This is mentioned in the most famous of his panegyrics on the Ghassānids. The reference is welcome because of the detail that he attaches to the toponym, namely, that the tomb of one of the Ghassānid kings was to be found there.[37]

2. Ṣaydā occurs in the same verse as the preceding one, Jalliq, where the tomb of another Ghassānid king was to be found. This toponym is found neither in Ḥassān nor in any of the other poets who lauded the Ghassānids; its occurrence

[33] *Dīwān,* 144, verse 15.

[34] Thilo, *Ortsnamen,* 28; and so did Musil and Jāsir.

[35] Musil, *Arabia Deserta,* 518.

[36] See H. Jāsir, in *Fī Shamāl Sharq al-Jazīra,* where he summarizes his views on al-Jināb on pp. 499–500; for his map, see p. 319.

[37] *Dīwān,* 41, verse 4. On the correct vocalization of Jalliq and its etymology, see above, 105.

in Nābigha raises the question of its location. The celebrated Ṣaydā/Sidon in Phoenicia Maritima is out of the question. By elimination, two other Ṣaydas remain for consideration: the one in the Bathaniyya/Batanaea[38] and the one in the Golan. The former can be ruled out since the poet qualifies Ṣaydā as one near Ḥārib, which, as will be presently argued, was in the Golan/Gaulanitis, not in Batanaea. The latter is most probably the Ṣaydā mentioned in Nābigha's verse. It lies closer to Ḥārib than the Ṣaydā of Batanaea, 5 km northeast of Kashfīn and 36 km south of Qunayṭira.[39] This Ṣaydā may thus be added to the Ghassānid toponyms in the Golan where excavation is likely to be fruitful, especially as it was the burial place of one of their kings.

Dussaud, surprisingly enough, thought the Ghassānid toponym mentioned in Nābigha's poem was the one in Bathaniyya (for him Ḥawrān), not noting that this one, northeast of Der'a, is out of the question since it is very far from Ḥārib near which the poet locates Ṣaydā. Although the other Ṣaydā in the Golan appears on his map I, D3, he evidently was oblivious of its Ghassānid association and identity with the toponym in Nābigha, and he says nothing about it in the text. It is, however, well described in the Syrian *Mu'jam.*

Although Ṣaydā in the Golan is most probably the toponym mentioned in Nābigha's verse, reference should be made to Ṣaydā on the Sea of Galilee of Gospel fame, known as Bethsaida, despite the fact that identifying it with the Ṣaydā of the verse is attended by some difficulties. Bēth does not appear in Nābigha's verse, but this is easy to explain by the metrical necessity that may have forced the poet to drop it; Arab poets do take liberties with proper nouns sometimes because of that necessity.[40] Although Bēth Ṣaydā has been located on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee,[41] yet it is roughly the same shore to which Ḥārib belongs, a little farther than the preposition '*ind* that precedes Ḥārib would lead one to expect. But again, precision is sometimes neither expected nor possible in the monorhymed and monometered Arabic ode of classical times.

Biblical archaeologists are inclined to assume that Bethsaida lay in ruins in the sixth century.[42] If it was, its site was probably well known; and it is perfectly consonant with the zeal that the Ghassānid kings had evinced for their Christian faith that one of them should have wished to be buried in that site, the birthplace

[38] For this Ṣaydā, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* 367, map II, 2A.

[39] For this Ṣaydā, see ibid., map I, D3. For a description of the site, see *al-Mu'jam al-Jagrāfī li al-Quṭr al-Sūrī,* ed. M. Tlas (Damascus, 1992), IV, 165.

[40] Even so skilled a poet as the 'Abbāsid Abū Nuwās had to say '*Aynay* instead of '*Ayn Ubagh* for metrical reasons, as he himself confessed; Nābigha had to say *Bāgh* instead of *Ubāgh* in remembering the famous Ghassānid victory over the Lakhmids. For both of these, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam,* I, 61.

[41] See *Bethsaida,* ed. R. Arav and R. A. Freund (Kirksville, Mo., 1995), 74.

[42] Ibid., 224.

of three of the twelve Apostles, and hallowed by memories of some of Christ's miracles. The reference in Nābigha's verse may possibly argue that Ṣaydā in the sixth century was not entirely abandoned.

3. Ḥārib. The poet leaves it open whether Ḥārib was a town or a mountain.[43] The chances are that it was a mountain on the eastern or southeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee in Gaulanitis. Etymologically the root of Ḥārib has nothing to do with Arabic ḤRB, but is related to Kharrūb (carob), Hebrew Ḥirūv, as is clear from the Jewish village on it, Kfar Ḥirūv, "the village of carobs," which developed later into Arabic Kafr Ḥārib and which thus obscured its correct etymology, related to carob. This correct etymology is important for the study of a part of the Golan as a region in which monks or ascetics fed on carobs.[44] Whether the Ghassānids were established on Mount Ḥārib is not clear from Nābigha's verse, but their association with it is strongly suggested in a later Islamic source.[45]

4. Tubnā and Jāsim. In a moving elegy on the Ghassānid king Nu'mān, the poet speaks of his tomb as lying between Tubnā and Jāsim.[46] These are two well-known towns in eastern Gaulanitis or western Batanaea, and so they present no problem of identification.[47] The chances are that they might well have witnessed a Ghassānid presence. In support of this presence, it may be said that the burial of the Ghassānid king in that place described as "between Tubnā and Jāsim" cannot have been fortuitous and so an association with the Ghassānids must be predicated in both places. Tubnā and Jāsim were the seats of two Monophysite monas-

[43] *Dīwān,* 41, verse 4.

[44] For the village of Kafr Ḥārib, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map I, 3C. On Gaulanitis as a monastic region, see above, 86–96.

[45] Ḥamza, who speaks of Qaṣr Ḥārib, built by the Ghassānid king Jabala ibn-al-Ḥārith, for whom see below, 330. In one of the couplets ascribed to Nābigha, the poet speaks of his having visited a scion of the Zokomids (the royal house of the Salīḥids) in both Buṣrā (Bostra) and *Burqat Ḥarib.* While the first is well known as the capital of the Provincia Arabia, the second has not been identified, and Yāqūt has nothing to say on it other than quoting the couplet; *Mu'jam,* II, 399. It is quite likely that Hārib should be read Ḥārib; if so, this will be added to the precious few references to Ḥārib related to the Arab federates, this time the Salīḥids, who were associated with Ḥārib, judging from a triplet that has survived and that describes the death of the Salīḥid king Dāwūd; see *BAFIC,* 259–60. The other toponym mentioned in the triplet, al-Qurnatayn, is also mentioned in Nābigha, *Dīwān,* 196, verse 1.

The couplet may be found in W. Ahlwardt, *The Divāns of the Six Ancient Arabic Poets* (repr. Osnabrück, 1972), 164, in the sections of verses ascribed to Nābigha. They were preserved by Yāqūt who ascribes them to al-Nābigha without saying which one of the many poets called al-Nābigha in Arabic. The lexicographer al-Zabīdī in *Tāj al-'Arūs* expressly ascribes them to al-Nābigha al-Dubyānī, the panegyrist of the Ghassānids; see the edition by Ibn 'Āshūr, *Dīwān,* 67.

[46] *Dīwān,* 121, verse 2. This edition of the *Dīwān* has Buṣrā instead of Tubnā, clearly a mistake noted long ago by Nöldeke, *GF,* 40, note y. Buṣrā is too far from Jāsim to have been used in a context that pinpoints the location of the tomb. Nābigha's elegy moved even the dour Nöldeke, *GF,* 38–39.

[47] The boundaries of these two districts shift and overlap; for Tubnā and Jāsim, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map II, 2A.

teries around 570, not much earlier than the year in which Nuʿmān died and was buried.[48] When it is remembered that the Ghassānids were zealous Monophysites and that the abbots of these two monasteries were signatories to the letter sent by the group of Monophysite abbots ca. 570 to the Ghassānid king, who was the ancestor of the one elegized in the poem, it is not altogether unlikely that there was some Ghassānid presence in these two towns, probably related to the Ghassānid support of its monasteries.[49]

These five toponyms belonged to the transverse wedge (Gaulanitis, Batanaea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis). The extension of their power in 529 enabled the Ghassānids to establish a presence further north, in such well-known towns and cities as Tadmur/Palmyra and Sergiopolis/Ruṣāfa, vouched for by Ḥamza (for Tadmur) and archaeology (for Sergiopolis). Echoes of this may be caught in Nābigha for Tadmur/Palmyra and more than echoes for Sergiopolis.

1. Tadmur/Palmyra. Reference to this occurs in the famous panegyric on the Lakhmid king Nuʿmān, whom Nābigha compares to the biblical king Solomon, who ordered the Jinn to build Tadmur/Palmyra with large slabs of stone and columns.[50] As already mentioned, Ḥamza associates the Ghassānids with Palmyra; the reference to it in Nābigha's poem raises the question whether the poet actually visited Tadmur/Palmyra to pay his respects to his Ghassānid patrons.

The reference to Tadmur by name does not by itself argue that the poet visited Tadmur in person, but another poem of his by implication suggests a personal visit by him. That poem is devoted to the description of a woman's body in its entirety without any inhibitions.[51] It has been suggested that in so doing, Nābigha was inspired by a nude statue, one of the many that were to be seen in the cities of Oriens, possibly in Tadmur or in Dura Europos.[52] One verse in the poem does suggest a sculpture, when he expressly speaks of the woman as a marble statue set up on a pedestal.[53] Consequently it is possible that he saw a statue in Tadmur/Palmyra, when he passed through it on his way to his Ghassānid patron in Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis, which he apparently visited, as may be inferred from a verse that refers to it.

2. Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis. The reference to Sergiopolis occurs in a poem in praise of the Ghassānid Nuʿmān where Sergiopolis is referred to as al-Zawrāʾ.[54] In addition to the toponym, the verse speaks of a cross set on it, and camels nearby. The

[48] On these two monasteries, see *BASIC* I.2, 826, 827. Ḥassān's poetry associates the Ghassānids with Jāsim in a more intimate way; see below, 240, 245.

[49] On the letter of the Monophysite abbots of 137 monasteries, see *BASIC* I.2, 821–24. On Ghassānid support of monasteries, see *BASIC* I.1, 381.

[50] *Dīwān,* 21, verse 1.

[51] Ibid., 96, verse 3 and 97, verses 31–34.

[52] See Akram Maydānī, *ʿAyn al-Nābigha. Māḏā Raʾat,* published lecture delivered in Damascus, Syria, 15 November 1984.

[53] *Dīwān,* 93, verse 1, where he speaks of a *dumya* (statue) made of *marmar* (marble).

[54] *Dīwān,* 52, verse 1.

commentator explains that the camels were spoils captured from the tribe of Asad, which the Ghassānid king defeated. The reference is welcome, since it is the only reference in pre-Islamic poetry that associates the Ghassānids with Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis, an association established beyond doubt by archaeology and epigraphy. The verse is valuable for the details it gives, involving camels and the cross and even the description of Sergiopolis as al-Zawrā'.[55]

3. Namāra/Numāra. There is a reference to this toponym in one of the verses ascribed to Nābigha, but its location is uncertain.[56] If it is the well-known locality in the Ṣafā region where the tomb of Imru' al-Qays, "the king of all the Arabs", was found, the reference becomes important. It would imply that Nābigha, the panegyrist of the Ghassānids, visited them there, and so the locality must have remained important long after the days of Imru' al-Qays. The toponym is preceded by the word "Yawm," which can imply some important occasion that Namāra witnessed, or it may simply be the adverb of time.[57]

In addition to the toponyms in Oriens discussed in the foregoing paragraphs where a Ghassānid presence can be said to be established, there are references to two other toponyms, possibly three, which cannot be considered Ghassānid, namely, Bostra and Capitolias.[58] These were cities of the Decapolis, one of which, Bostra, was the capital of the Provincia Arabia. But they had been old Semitic and Arab foundations before the Macedonian and Roman periods in Oriens and the Near East, and it is relevant to mention that Nābigha uses the old Semitic names for them, Bayt Rās for Capitolias and Buṣrā for Bostra. The context of the reference relates to wine pressed in or exported from the two cities.

Any Ghassānid association with these two cities in Nābigha can only be surmised. The Ghassānid supreme phylarch and king in Oriens surely had business to transact in Bostra where the Byzantine civil and military governors of the Provincia Arabia resided. So presumably he may have had a mansion or residence there where he could stay when he visited the city, which had been an Arab Nabataean city until A.D. 106.

A Ghassānid presence in Bostra may also be predicated from an examination of a verse attributed to Nābigha, which has survived as part of a couplet.[59] The

[55] On the significance of this for the theme "the Arabs and Sergiopolis," see above, 119–21.

[56] *Dīwān,* 157, verse 2. The poem in which this verse occurs is sometimes ascribed to another pre-Islamic poet, Aws ibn-Ḥajar. The toponym derived from the root NMR appears in many morphological forms in various parts of Oriens and the Arabian Peninsula.

[57] If Namāra/Numāra turns out to be the Namāra of the Ṣafā region, then a Ghassānid presence can easily be predicated there, and with it, Namāra may be added to the series of military stations taken over by the Ghassānids for the defense of Oriens; see above, 42–49.

[58] *Dīwān,* 131, verses 9–10. Luqmān in verse 10 could be the name of a place or of a man—the wine merchant.

[59] This verse has already been discussed in connection with the toponyms Ṣaydā' and Ḥārib in Nābigha, above, no. 9. It appears in Ahlwardt's edition of Nābigha, *Divāns,* 164.

poet speaks of his visit to a descendant of the Zokomids, the dominant *foederati* of Byzantium in the fifth century whom the Ghassānids replaced. The verse clearly suggests that this Zokomid actually lived in Bostra and that the poet visited him there. If Bostra witnessed a federate Zokomid presence, then it may also have had some Ghassānid association. The verse not only implies a Ghassānid presence, but also suggests that, before the Ghassānids, the Zokomids most probably had some federate presence in Bostra.

Finally, a poem in the *Dīwān* describes the campaign of the Ghassānid king against the tribe of the poet, Dubyān, which had possessed itself of Uqur, a protected place, belonging to the Ghassānids. The poet had warned his tribe against annexing it, but it did not listen and so was visited with condign punishment by the Ghassānid king. The poem refers to three toponyms, Uqur and two others, Jawsh and ʿIẓam or Ḥadad, where the Ghassānid king joined a contingent from the federate tribe of Kalb, then led it in order to conduct the campaign against Dubyān. Only the toponymy of this important campaign will be discussed here.

1. Jawsh and ʿIẓam.[60] These were clearly localities in the territory of the tribe of Kalb, but their exact position is not clear. A verse in the *Dīwān* of al-Rāʿī, the Umayyad poet, clearly suggests that Jawsh is near ʿĀlij (the Nafūd), associated with Kalb. Others suggest that it was in the territory of al-Qayn ibn Jasr, another federate tribe in Oriens.[61] As for the other toponym, ʿIẓam, there is the alternative reading, Ḥadad. Some authorities say it is the mountain of Taymāʾ and is now called Ghunaym; others say it belonged to Kalb.[62] Since the contingent that the Ghassānid king picked up and led on his way to punish Dubyān was Kalbite, the chances are that the two toponyms belonged to the territory of Kalb.[63]

2.Uqur. This was a *ḥimā* protected by the Ghassānids in the Arabian Peninsula.[64] In the sources it is variously described as a mountain, a valley, and a watering place; of course, it could have been all three, an expanse where all these could have existed contiguously. Its location has also been controversial. According to the most extensive treatment of Uqur by a contemporary Saudi Arabian explorer and scholar, it belonged to a subdivision of Ghṭafān, Banū Murra, and was located in the *ḥarra* (volcanic stony tract) of Fadak in Ḥijāz.[65] Uqur was important to the Ghassānids, since it was one of their *ḥimā*s; hence the campaign of the Ghassānid

[60] *Dīwān,* 77, verse 10.

[61] For a discussion by various authors of the location of Jawsh, as reflected in poetry, see Jāsir, *Fī Shamāl Sharq al-Jazīra,* 502–3.

[62] On Ḥadad, see ibid., 511. For the alternative reading Ḥadad, instead of ʿIẓam, see Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* 10, verse 10.

[63] The importance of these two toponyms, where the Kalbite troops (called by Nābigha the Rufaydāt) joined the Ghassānid phylarch, will be discussed in *BASIC* II.2.

[64] *Dīwān,* 75, verse 1.

[65] Jāsir, *Fi Shamāl Sharq al-Jazīra,* 112–14.

king starting from his headquarters in the distant Golan in order to recapture it from Ḏubyān which had possessed itself of it.[66]

III. Ḥassān

Unlike his older contemporary Nābigha, the other principal poet of the Ghassānids, who died before the rise of Islam, Ḥassān lived to a ripe old age and died around A.D. 660 in the early years of the caliphate of the first Umayyad, Muʿāwiya.[67] His longevity makes it possible to recognize three phases in the composition of his Ghassānid poems, impossible to detect in the case of Nābigha. It is necessary to present this tripartite division of Ḥassān's Ghassānid poems for the better understanding of them, since each phase provides the background and context for their composition. His poems, sometimes fragmentary, may be assigned to three phases within the sixty years or so during which the poet composed for the Ghassānids, roughly A.D. 600–660. It is within the following chronological framework that the poems of Hassān on the Ghassānids will be discussed. These poems refer to the towns, villages, localities, and districts associated with the Ghassānids which he visited.

The first period antedated the Persian advance on and occupation of Oriens, Bilād al-Shām, the climax of which was the fall of Jerusalem in 614 and the withdrawal of the Ghassānids with the Byzantine army to Anatolia after the Persian victory. A second clearly defined period is 622–632, during which the Prophet Muḥammad lived in Medina, Ḥassān's city, whither he emigrated in A.D. 622. Ḥassān became his "poet laureate" for these ten years but continued to remember his previous patrons, the Ghassānids. This period may be extended so as to encompass the eight years that elapsed between the withdrawal of the Ghassānids in 614 and the emigration of the Prophet Muḥammad to Medina in A.D. 622. In spite of the occupation of Oriens by the Persians, communications between Ḥijāz and Oriens were not suspended; witness the continuation of Meccan trade with Oriens in the 620s during the Persian occupation. One of the Meccan caravans was intercepted by the Muslims at Badr, where the well-known Muslim victory took place in A.D. 624. So it is possible that sometime after A.D. 614 Ḥassān trav-

[66] The fertility of Uqur became almost proverbial. Its praise was sung by a poet quoted in the chapter on *Ghinā* and *Khiṣb* (wealth and fertility), for which see Ibn al-Sikkīt, *Kitāb Taḏīb al-Alfāẓ,* ed. L. Cheikho (Beirut, 1895), 2. For the importance of Uqur as a *ḥimā,* see above, 59.

[67] For Ḥassān, see Sezgin, *GAS,* II, 289–92. The standard English edition of Ḥassān's poems is W. M. ʿArafat, *Dīwān of Ḥassān Ibn Thābit,* 2 vols. (London, 1971). This edition is used in this section (hereafter *Dīwān,* followed by volume, page, and line numbers). Other editions have appeared, such as that of S. M. Ḥanafī, *Dīwān Ḥassān ibn-Thābit* (Cairo, 1974), which strangely enough does not refer to the standard English edition. The old edition of ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Barqūqī is still worth consulting for its perceptive commentary; see his *Sharḥ Dīwān Ḥassān Ibn Thābit al-Anṣārī* (Cairo, 1929). Good books on Ḥassān have appeared in Arabic, two of which may be singled out: I. al-Naṣṣ, *Ḥassān ibn-Thābit* (Beirut, 1965) and M. T. Darwīsh, *Ḥassān ibn-Thābit* (Cairo, n.d.).

eled from Medina to Oriens to find out what had happened to the haunts in Ghassānland that had been so dear to his heart before the Persian advance and occupation of the region.

The third period was after the Persian withdrawal from Oriens in A.D. 629. This is a long period of some thirty years, extending to the death of Ḥassān around A.D. 660, during which he visited Oriens, Bilād al-Shām, apparently more than once, but it is difficult to say exactly when this happened. In one of his poems he refers to the plague that broke out in Oriens immediately after the Arab Muslim conquest, since the reference seems to imply that he witnessed its effects and not only heard about it. He visited Oriens again in the first year of the caliphate of Muʿāwiya, A.D. 661, when it is recorded that he came to salute him on that occasion.

The First Period

The first period must have extended for some fourteen years or so, terminating in A.D. 614, the year of the fall of Jerusalem and the withdrawal of the Ghassānids from Oriens. From this period some nine poems have survived, in which he remembered the Ghassānids.

1. Poem 23 in which he refers to the wines of Bayt Rās and Baysān in verses 8 and 13, while in verse 10 he refers to his drinking the former in *buyūt al-rukhām* ("marble houses").[68] It is noteworthy that he refers to these two cities, two well-known cities of the Decapolis, by their Semitic, not by their Greek names, Capitolias and Scythopolis. This is the interest of this reference rather than the Ghassānid association with them, which must have been slight. The Ghassānids evidently drank wines imported from these two cities.[69]

2. Poem 27 in which he refers in verse 1 to al-Khammān as a place at which he spent at least one sleepless night, watching the stars. This is a toponym known only from Ḥassān and to which he refers again.[70] The toponym, located in al-Bathaniyya (Bāshān/Batanaea), has disappeared except for the *tell/tall* of that name. The implication of this reference is that there was a hostel at which the poet could spend the night. The poem is important for the chronology of Ḥassān's career since he says in verse 11 that he was forty years old when he stayed at al-Khammān.

3. Poem 85 where in the first verse he refers to a place called Dāt al-Salāsil (plural of *silsila,* "chain"). Yāqūt places it in northern Ḥijāz, presumably because

[68] *Dīwān,* I, 106, lines 8, 13.

[69] Thus not only the cities of the Orontes in the north but those of the Decapolis in the south were known to the Arabs and other Semites by their old Semitic names; see the section on Imru' al-Qays, below, 259–65.

[70] *Dīwān,* I, 116, line 1. See below, note 78, for more on al-Khammān; for its location, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map II, 2A, s.v. Tell Khammān.

of the *ghazwa,* the military operation, conducted against a place with that name, dispatched by the Prophet Muḥammad under the leadership of ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ.[71] This is possible, but more likely it is a place in Bilād al-Shām in view of the two verses, 3 and 4, in which he describes the vines that grew in that region, Dāt al-Salāsil, more truly spoken of the vine district in Ghassānland, Oriens, than to a water spring in Ḥijāz in the territory of Judām.

4. Poem 87 where in the first two verses he refers to a string of place names, seven in number, most of which apparently are located in the territory of Judām, the Ḥisma region of southern Trans-Jordan and northern Ḥijāz.[72] The poem is a short one of four verses, the occasion of which is unknown, as is the exact location of these toponyms. It possibly refers to some tension within the Arab federate camp between Ghassān and Judām, already mentioned in one of Nābigha's poems.[73] Two toponyms, however, stand out, Gaza and al-Marrūt. The first is startling since it implies that the federates and Judām in particular had established some presence in the vicinity of Gaza, which belonged to Palaestina Prima, not Tertia, where there was a federate Arab presence. The second, al-Marrūt, is specifically described by Yāqūt as one of the residences of the Ghassānid kings, but he could not be thinking of the Marrūt mentioned in this poem since it is pejoratively referred to in the list of seven toponyms, located in the territory of Judām in southern Palaestina Tertia and northern Ḥijāz.[74]

5. Poem 90, which consists of seven verses in which Ḥassān remembers the well-known Ghassānid king al-Ḥārith al-Jafnī[75] in the context of a defeat he sustained in a battle in which, according to some commentators, the king was killed. If so, the poem becomes a short elegy on him. The battlefield is not named, nor is it entirely clear that the king was killed; it is only a possibility. But if the poem is truly an elegy, it may then be added to Ḥassān's poems on the Ghassānids, which were all elegies; none of his panegyrics on the Ghassānids has survived.

6. Poem 105, a triplet on the plague. The clear implication is that Ḥassān

[71] *Dīwān,* I, 197, verse 1. Cf. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* II, 325–26; for the *ghazwa,* see Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-Maghāzī,* ed. M. Jones (Oxford, 1966), II, 769–774.

[72] *Dīwān,* I, 201, lines 1–2. The seven toponyms are Maʿīn, ʿArd, Ghazza, al-Marrūt, al-Khabt, al-Munā, and Bayt Zammārā'. These toponyms, with the exception of three, are unknown to Yāqūt; see *Dīwān,* II, 158–59. Al-Khabt is between Mecca and Medina.

[73] See above, 224.

[74] On the Arab federate presence in Palaestina Tertia, see *BASIC* I.1, 981–82. The use of *fā' al-taʿqīb* attached to Ghazza and to the toponyms before and after it suggests that the poet was not thinking of Gaza itself but its surrounding region. Since the great-grandfather of the Prophet, Hāshim, died and was buried in Gaza according to the Arabic sources, the city is often referred to as the Gaza of Hāshim, Ghazzat Hāshim. For the other toponym, al-Marrūt, as an entry in Yāqūt with Ghassānid associations, see below, 346. For the homophone in Arabia, see Thilo, *Ortsnamen,* 68.

[75] *Dīwān,* I, 201. A Ghassānid king is also described thus by Nābigha as al-Ḥārith and al-Jafnī; see his *Dīwān,* 42, verse 7. The king eulogized by Nābigha was elegized by Ḥassān.

saw its effect in person during a visit to Oriens. Verse 1 speaks of the plague's effect on Bostra and Rumaḥ. While Bostra is well known, Rumaḥ is not, and its exact location in Oriens is not clear.[76] Verse 2 is more important. The first hemistich refers to its effect on a place called Dū Baʿl, which presumably lies in the same region.[77] The second hemistich refers to al-Khammān, which had been mentioned before in poem 27 where it is not clear what the place was, other than the possible implication that it was a hostel where Ḥassān stayed overnight. In this hemistich there is reference to *kull qaṣr* ("every qaṣr") in al-Khammān, and that they all had been affected by the plague. So al-Khammān must have been a place that had many *quṣūr* ("mansions") where wayfarers could stay. Verse 3 is interesting in that it reflects the Arab idea that the plague was caused by the *jinn.*[78]

The poem has been thought to refer to the plague (*ṭāʿūn*) of ʿAmwās, which broke out in A.D. 638–9 after the Muslim conquest of Oriens. But the reference to *arḍ al-Rūm* ("the land of the Rūm") in the third verse suggests that it should be reassigned to the first period of Ḥassān's poetry, when Oriens was still Byzantine/Roman territory.[79]

7. Poem 136, which consists of twelve verses, a lyric in which the poet remembers the maiden he was in love with, Shaʿthā', and his own virtues, which he enumerates at length.[80] Especially relevant are verses 1–4. The first verse refers to both Jalliq, the well-known Ghassānid town, and the district of al-Balqā' in Trans-Jordan. In certain manuscripts, Jalliq is preceded by the word *bi-bāb* ("at the gate of Jalliq"), which clearly implies that it was a walled city with a gate. The reference to al-Balqā' suggests that this district or what lies before it, *dūna al-Balqā',* could be seen from Jalliq; hence the reference helps to determine the exact location of Jalliq, which has been controversial.

The second verse refers to three toponyms as the starting points for the descent of the caravan or mounts of Shaʿthā' on their journey; they are al-Maḥbis,

[76] *Dīwān,* I, 228. The medieval authorities are not helpful on Rumaḥ, as is clear from Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* II, 427 and III, 68, who refers to Dāt Rumḥ and Rumḥ, neither of which is assigned to Oriens. Besides, the toponym in Yāqūt is vocalized Rumḥ; see Thilo, *Ortsnamen,* 87–88.

J. W. Wetzstein's map (in his *Reisebericht über Haurân und die Trachonen* [Berlin, 1860]), drawn in 1858, for the region east of Damascus, Hawran and Trachonitis, includes a Rimah (plural of Rumḥ) and a Tell Rimah to its north; the two are southeast of Salkhad in Auranitis and northeast of Dayr al-Kahf. Thus Rumah in Ḥassān may have become Rimah by the 19th century.

[77] As in the case of Rumaḥ, this toponym remains unknown. Yāqūt refers to Sharaf al-Baʿl as a *jabal,* mountain, on the way from Medina to Damascus; *Muʿjam,* I, 455.

[78] The use of the plural *quṣūr* rather than the singular *qaṣr* suggests that the word should be translated palaces, mansions, not fortresses. If the latter had been meant, one fortress, not many, would have been enough in a military post. For al-Khammān, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map, II, 2A. On the plague, see Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān,* ed. A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1943), VI, 218–20, who also quotes a Islamic *ḥadīth* (tradition), on the *jinn* as the cause of the plague.

[79] See Appendix IV, below, 291–92.

[80] *Dīwān,* I, 279.

al-Kuthbān, and al-Sanad. The region between Jalliq and al-Balqā' does not seem to have such toponyms.[81] It is just possible that they were topographical features of the region and not real place names. In any case they are minor toponyms of no great historical significance.

The third verse contains no toponyms but is of interest since it describes the caravan carrying Shaʿthā' and other women who are draped in *rayṭ* (plural of *rayṭa*), and whose white faces are likened to snow or hail (*barad*), a word relevant to discussing an important controversial word in one of his well-known poems.[82] The fourth verse refers to Buṣra/Bostra and Jabal al-Thalj, "the mountain of snow," Mount Hermon, covered with clouds; the Ghassānids had close associations with both of these.

8. Poem 153, a historically important poem in which the two Ghassānid kings ʿAmr and Ḥujr are remembered posthumously, especially in connection with their campaign against Persia.[83] There are two important toponyms in verse 9 where the poet says that the two Ghassānids ruled the area extending from Jabal al-Thalj (Mount Hermon) to the two sides of Ayla, Eilat, modern ʿAqaba. The verse has already been analyzed. Noteworthy in this context is that the Ghassānid jurisdiction is now described as if it was coterminous with the entire Jordan depression itself, and not the easterly part of Oriens along the old *limes.* Research on the Ghassānid settlements and camps has revealed that they did have a presence in the Jordan rift, at such places as Zoghar and Arindela.[84]

9. Poem 245, a triplet of verses that sings the praises of wine and music in Ghassānland. The first verse strings together four toponyms, the first hemistich of which contains three that are of uncertain locations,[85] but they are outside Ghassānland since they are contrasted with the one in it, namely, the Golan/Gaulanitis; hence they must be minor Arabian localities. The reference to the Golan adds the topographical fact that the poet was in a meadow (*marj*) of the Golan that was covered with vegetation.[86]

[81] Ibid., II, 207. On Jalliq and its location, see above, 105–15.

[82] On Baradā, the river of Damascus, and *bard,* meaning hail, snow, or ice in one of Ḥassān's poems, see below, 241. The most comprehensive description of *rayṭa* is a thin and soft garment, all one web and so a single piece, not two sewn together; E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863–93), book I, part 3, 1201.

[83] *Dīwān,* I, 307–8.

[84] For the analysis of this verse, see *BASIC* I.1, 624–35. On Ghassānid Zoghar and Arindela, see references in Ḥātim and Yaʿqūbī, below, 247–48, 347–48.

[85] *Dīwān,* I, 426; the three toponyms are Ḥamt, Zīm, and Ṣawara. Ṣawara and possibly Zīm seem to be localities near Medina in Ḥijāz, while Ḥamt is completely unknown; see *Dīwān,* II, 308.

[86] The implication of the verse in which *marj* occurs is that the meadow was Ghassānid. Meadow suggests grassland and natural vegetation, but in this case *marj* is followed by the passive participle *maghrūs* (planted), which suggests the hand of man as the instrument of its growth, thus confirming that the Ghassānids were not engaged only in warfare.

The second verse speaks of entertainment through the *musmi'a* ("song-stress") and the *ibrīq* ("jug of wine"), both of which are enjoyed in the morning (*yughdā 'alaynā*), while the second hemistich contrasts the rich Golan with the poor Ḥijāz, "the nursling of hunger and misery."

The third verse introduces a toponym, the specific place within the Golan where he spent the night. It is called Dārat Jawwātā, a toponym that has not so far been identified.[87] It must have been one that has since changed names or is a corrupt reading. The second hemistich refers to Ḥassān's party being awakened by the clucking of hens and the sound of the *nawāqīs* (plural of *nāqūs*), bells or gongs, which suggests that the poet might have spent the night in a monastery. If so, this would be one of the early references to the use of *nāqūs* in Arabic, Greek σήμαντρον/σημαντήριον.

10. Poem 309, also a triplet, addressed to a woman who remains unnamed and for whom Ḥassān longs.[88] The poem does not appear in the *Dīwān* of Ḥassān and belongs (as do some others) to poems that are to be found elsewhere. The first verse refers to two toponyms, al-Junbuḏān and al-Dayr, the first of which sounds Persian and has not been satisfactorily explained; al-Dayr, the term for monastery, may here be a proper noun, a locality called al-Dayr.[89]

The Second Period, A.D. 622–632

This period witnessed the composition of five poems, in which Ḥassān, although now the poet laureate of the Prophet Muḥammad, still remembers the Ghassānids, his relatives and patrons, a connection he was very proud of even after the military disasters of A.D. 614 and their temporary withdrawal to Anatolia.

1. Poem 1 was composed on the occasion of the conquest of Mecca[90] by Muḥammad in A.D. 630, but critics assign its first part, in which the Ghassānids are involved, to the pre-Islamic period (the first period in this chronological framework) in view of references to wine, inappropriate in a poem on the conquest of Mecca and on Muḥammad, the recipient of the Koranic revelation, which denounced wine and prohibited its drinking.[91] Yet the poetic conventions of pre-Islamic poetry were such that it is not impossible that Ḥassān composed his poem on the conquest of Mecca and, in conformity with the rigid conventions of Arabic poetry, preluded it with an exordium that remembered wine and the deserted

[87] In *Dīwān,* ed. Ḥanafī, p. 270, Jawwāta appears as Jawwāna. In Yāqūt, Juwāthā appears in Baḥrayn, in eastern Arabia, and figures prominently in the *ridda* war; see *Mu'jam,* II, 174. It cannot be the toponym referred to by Ḥassān.

[88] *Dīwān,* I, 478.

[89] See *Dīwān,* II, 320. The toponyms can be exemplified in Trans-Jordan and Palestine, but closer to Ḥassān's triplet is a *dayr* in Batanaea very close to Bostra on its southwest; see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map II, 3A, s.v. Deir.

[90] *Dīwān,* I, 17.

[91] See *Dīwān,* II, 5.

encampments. The famous *burda* ode, in praise of Muḥammad, composed by a contemporary of Ḥassān's, opens with a prelude not unlike this one with its reference to wine.

The prelude describes Ghassānland after the Persian occupation, since the poet expresses his regrets over the deserted encampments, originally inhabited by the Ghassānids and their allies. If the prelude truly belongs to the poem on the conquest of Mecca, Ḥassān must have visited Ghassānland shortly before the emigration of Muḥammad to Medina in A.D. 622. But if the prelude is not a prelude but an independent poem, it may have been written when Ḥassān visited Oriens after the battle of the Yarmūk.

The first verse contains three toponyms, Dāt al-Aṣābiʿ, al-Jīwāʾ, and ʿAdrāʾ. The third is a well-known town, which has survived with that name until the present day and is located about 20 km northeast of Damascus. But neither al-Jīwāʾ nor Dāt al-Aṣābiʿ, both of which must be close to ʿAdrāʾ in the region of Damascus, have been identified.[92] The second verse refers to the inhabitants of these three places or the area bounded by them, Banū al-Ḥashās, a subdivision of Banū al-Najjār, to whom Ḥassān himself belonged; they in turn belonged to the larger group al-Khazraj, one of the two principal Arab/Azdite tribes of Medina. So when Ḥassān came to Ghassānland he would come not only to the territory of his patrons, the Ghassānids, but also to a land where members of his own clan also lived, and possibly fought in the Ghassānid federate army.[93]

The third verse refers to the meadows (*murūj*) in this area, inhabited by Banū al-Ḥashās, in which roamed herds and flocks of camels and sheep. So in addition to engaging in agriculture, the Ghassānids bred livestock. The sixth verse refers to a wine cask from Bayt Rās (Capitolias), the wine of which used to be mixed with water and honey in Arab federate Oriens.[94] Verse 7 refers to the apples, *al-tuffāḥ,* which Ḥassān apparently ate in Ghassānland, most probably imported from the region celebrated for its apples, Lebanon.[95]

2. Poem 5 has four "Ghassānid" verses; only the first, verse 7, explicitly mentions a Ghassānid toponym, al-Jābiya, referred to as Jābiyat al-Jawlān, "the Jābiya of the Jawlān." The context is the visit of Ḥassān's maternal uncle to the Ghassān-

[92] ʿAdrāʾ is northeast of Damascus; see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map. IV, 1B. It is erroneously said to lie northwest of Damascus in *Dīwān,* II, 5. Unlike Dāt al-Aṣābiʿ al-Jīwāʾ, it is attested in poetry, but its exact location in the region of Damascus is not clear; for Arabian al-Jīwāʾ, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* II, 174.

[93] For Banū al-Ḥashās, see Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat,* ed. A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1962), 350.

[94] Cf. another drink involving ice or snow mixed with wine which he refers to when he visited the Ghassānids in Jalliq; below, 241.

[95] The apples of Lebanon were as famous in medieval times as they are today. Mutanabbī mentions them: *Dīwān,* ed. A. Barqūqī (Cairo, 1930), II, 501. The apples of Lebanon appear as one of the wonders (*ʿajāʾib*) of Bilād al-Shām, for which see Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān,* ed. Y. al-Hādī (Beirut, 1996), 166; also Abū Manṣūr al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-Qulūb,* ed. N. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1965), 233.

ids in Jābiya during the reign of al-Nuʿmān, around A.D. 600, when his uncle was the *ḵẖaṭīb* (orator) on that occasion.[96] So the verse establishes that the family of Ḥassān was well connected with the Ghassānids at Jābiya since his uncle had also appeared there, not as a poet but as an orator. It is not clear what exactly the occasion was. Verse 10 speaks of *bāb* Ibn Salmā, "the door or gate of Ibn Salmā," with whom Ḥassān pleaded for freeing three prisoners. As Ibn Salmā may be the Ghassānid or the Lakhmid king, the venue may be Jābiya in Gaulanitis or Ḥīra in Iraq.[97]

3. Poem 16 has two verses that refer to regions relevant to the routes that led to Oriens.[98] Verse 6 refers to al-Shām, and verse 8 refers to the road that led to the Ḥawrān/Auranitis region from Raml ʿĀlij, the sand of ʿĀlij, now called the Nafūd desert. Ḥassān is referring to the fact that the Muslims in Medina after the battle of Badr blocked the Meccan caravans from reaching al-Shām through the usual route, and so the Quraysh tried another one leading to Ḥawrān from ʿĀlij via the Nafūd desert. The poem thus reveals an alternate route to Ḥawrān in Oriens from ʿĀlij, close to Ṭayyiʾ, the ally of Ghassān.

4. Poem 24 was composed during the visit of the deputation of Tamīm to the Prophet Muḥammad in Medina.[99] Ḥassān takes pride in the fact that his group, the Anṣār of Medina, welcomed and defended the Prophet, and in verse 3 he, surprisingly, connects the Anṣār with the Ghassānids of al-Jābiya, which he calls Jābiyat al-Jawlān. He takes pride in the fact, a reflection of the prestige of Ghassān in Arabia, even after they had disappeared for some fifteen years from Oriens, having withdrawn with Heraclius to Anatolia after the Persian victory in A.D. 614.[100]

5. Poem 103 has a verse in which there is reference to al-Balqāʾ, the well-known region associated with the Ghassānids, but its relevance in the poem is not clear, and a variant reading is al-Barqāʾ.[101]

The Third Period

Five poems may be assigned to this lengthy period, A.D. 632–661.

1. Poem 13 is perhaps the most famous of Ḥassān's poems on the Ghassānids.

[96] *Dīwān,* I, 40. The uncle referred to was called Maslama ibn-Mukhallad ibn al-Ṣāmit, the cousin of Ḥassān's mother, called al-Furayʿa; see Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat,* 366.

[97] For arguments in favor of his being the Ghassānid king, see I. al-Naṣṣ, *Ḥassān ibn-Thābit* (Beirut, 1965), 55–57.

[98] *Dīwān,* I, 85.

[99] *Dīwān,* I, 109.

[100] Additionally, the reference to Ghassān before the Tamīm delegation was appropriate, since the Ghassānids had defeated Tamīm, and their poet ʿAlqama came as a suppliant to the Ghassānid court for freeing the Tamīm captives; for ʿAlqama's poem, see above, 116 note 155. There are references to the *basileia* of the Ghassānids (conferred by Justinian on Arethas in 529) in verses 1 and 8.

[101] *Dīwān,* I, 224. Al-Balqāʾ occurs in verse 5.

It is a long ode of some thirty-three verses and has the most toponyms, ten in all.[102] Verse 1 contains three toponyms: al-Jawābī, al-Buḍayʿ, and Ḥawmal. The first, al-Jawābī, has been thought to be the plural of Jābiya, possibly referring to the three hills on which it sits.[103] It is unlikely that such a skilled versifier as Ḥassān would have been forced to say al-Jawābī instead of al-Jābiya, especially since this was the hallowed name of the most celebrated Ghassānid urban center. An alternative reading for al-Jawābī must, therefore, be sought. This is perfectly justifiable because of the ease with which the diacritical marks of the Arabic script can be misplaced above or beneath the consonantal skeleton of the words, thus obscuring them sometimes beyond recognition. Al-Jawābī, accordingly, can easily be read as al-Khawābī, involving one misplaced diacritical mark. Such a toponym is to be met with more than once in Oriens, but the most relevant one is al-Khawābī of the valley called Wādī al-Khawābī, which runs south of Derʿa/Adriʿāt in Bathaniyya/Bāshān/Batanaea, in Ghassānland, and close to the other toponym al-Buḍayʿ, the one identifiable toponym in the verse. This makes certain that the reading al-Jawābī, which had mystified scholars, should be discarded in favor of al-Khawābī, an identifiable toponym in the region and contextually perfect for Ghassānid toponymy.[104]

Of the two other toponyms in the verse, al-Buḍayʿ can easily be located. It is a well-known mountain south of Damascus and still retains its name.[105] Ḥawmal, clearly a toponym that belongs to the same region as al-Khawābī and al-Buḍayʿ, has not been identified. It has homophones in Arabia, which some geographers and travelers have identified.[106]

The second verse has Marj al-Ṣuffarayn, the site of one of the battles of the Muslim Arab conquest of Oriens, which has been located between Kiswah and Shaqḥab, south of Damascus, and Jāsim, a well-known town that has retained its name to the present day and lies southwest of Ṣanamein and north of Derʿa.[107]

[102] *Dīwān,* I, 74–75.

[103] For these three hills, see R. Brünnow, "Mitteilungen," *ZDPV* 19 (1896), 18. For the view that Jawābī is the plural of Jābiya and is identical with it, see *EI*², s.v. Djābiya.

[104] There are more than one al-Khawābī in the region; one is noted by Dussaud in *Topographie,* 139–40 and 142 note 7, but is irrelevant, since it is located in the north of Lebanon. A recent Syrian publication has solved the problem and revealed the al-Khawābī of Ḥassān's poem: *al-Muʿjam al-Jaghrāfī li al-Quṭr al-ʿArabi al-Sūrī,* ed. M. Ṭlas (Damascus, 1990), I, 500 (Wādī al-Khawābī).

[105] For al-Buḍayʿ, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* I, 443–44, where an alternative pronunciation is given for Buḍayʿ as Buṣayʿ; the former is more correct. See also Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* II, 477, s.v. Ḥawmal.

[106] Ḥawmal is a toponym well known to students of Arabic poetry since it appears in the first verse of the most famous Muʿallaqa of pre-Islamic poetry. On the controversy about its location and the authorship of this verse, whether it was composed by the Arabian Kindite Imruʾ al-Qays or the Kalbite Ibn Ḥizām whose federate tribe lived in Oriens, see *BAFIC,* 442–43. For Ḥawmal in Arabia, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* II, 325–26 and Ibn Bulyahid, *Saḥīḥ,* I, 17.

[107] For Marj al-Ṣuffarayn and Jāsim, see R. Dussaud, *Mission scientifique* (Paris, 1903), 45 note 2; and *Topographie,* map II, 1A and 2A.

Verse 7 refers to the Ghassānid residence, Jalliq. Ḥassān's phrase *fi al-zamān al-awwal* ("in the distant past"), reflecting his boon companionship with the Ghassānids, is a clear indication of the poem's composition after the battle of Yarmūk. Verse 11 refers to the tomb of their king, "the son of Māriya," but does not specify its location. However, the chances are that Ḥassān refers to Jalliq, which he had mentioned in verse 7, a theory supported by a verse in another poet, Labīd, who clearly implies it.[108]

Verse 13 speaks of a Ghassānid place by the name of al-Barīṣ. Much has been written on whether it was a district coterminous with the Ghūṭa of Damascus or the name of a river.[109] A third, more recent identification locates al-Barīṣ west of Kiswah, near a locality called Khān al-Shīḥa, apparently still called al-Barīṣ.[110] The same verse has in some manuscripts the word Baradā, the river of Damascus, but it is doubtful that the reading is correct. Another reading is *barad* (snow or ice), which the Ghassānids mixed with wine. This is consonant with Ḥassān's description of the Ghassānids mixing their drinks, as in another poem he speaks of honey and water mixed with wine.[111] The term Barīṣ is repeated in verse 16, where it occurs in a phrase, *arḍ al-Barīṣ* ("the land of al-Barīṣ").

Verse 17, following the one that mentions *ʿarḍ al-Barīṣ,* speaks of wine and song involving two places, al-Kurūm and Jizʿ al-Qasṭal. Al-Qasṭal (Latin *castellum*) is the name of a number of places in Oriens, but the one meant in the verse must be in Ghassānland, most probably the one in the region of Damascus.[112] Al-Kurūm (plural of *karm,* Arabic for vineyard) could refer to vineyards, but it could be a proper noun; indeed, in the area not far from Qasṭal there is a locality by that name.[113] The verb in the preceding verse says that the poet "went up" from the *arḍ* of the Barīṣ to al-Kurūm and al-Qasṭal; hence they must have been at an altitude higher than that of the Barīṣ.

Verse 20 has the last toponym in the poem, Qaṣr Dūmat, and this presents

[108] On Labīd and Jalliq, see below, 278–279.

[109] See *Dīwān* II, 75–76.

[110] See al-Naṣṣ, *Ḥassān ibn-Thābit,* 43 note 1. For Khān al-Shīḥa west of Kiswa, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map II, 1A.

[111] See above, 238.

[112] The well-known Qasṭal in Trans-Jordan, also possibly Ghassānid, is too distant from the localities listed in this poem of Ḥassān. It is therefore more profitable to seek it in Phoenicia Libanensis, the site located some 10 km southwest of al-Nabk; see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map XIV, 38. It is on a hill and thus answers to what Ḥassān says, that he went *up* to the Ghassānids from *arḍ al-Barīs.* Moreover, vineyards abound in Qasṭal, to which reference is made in Ḥassān's verse. Examples of other Qasṭals in the region are indicated in the index of Dussaud, *Topographie,* 556.

[113] The chances that al-Kurūm may be a proper noun, a toponym, and not the plural of *karm,* meaning vineyard, could receive some confirmation from Kurūm al-Kanīsa, "the vineyards of the church," which lies close to al-Qasṭal of the preceding footnote, not far from al-Nabk. It may be the toponym Ḥassān has in mind.

a problem in both elements of the phrase. It is not clear whether *qaṣr* here means a palace or a military station. More important is Dūma. There are three Dūmas, all within the Ghassānid sphere of influence or presence: Dūmat al-Jandal, now al-Jawf, at the southern tip of Wādī Sirḥān; Dūma the well-known town northeast of Damascus; and Dūma in Ḥawrān/Auranitis.[114] The Dūma in the verse can be any of these three, but the chances are that it is either the one in Damascene or the one at the southern mouth of Wādī al-Sirḥān, Arabian Dūma. Arguments can be advanced in favor of either.[115]

2. Poem 84 has two verses that describe Ghassānland during the Persian offensive of A.D. 614, with the main emphasis on the occupation of the Ghassānid headquarters in Gaulanitis, al-Jawlān.[116] The occasion on which the poem was composed is not clear, and some verses may be missing. Verse 7 describes how "biṭrīq Faris" occupied the *ghā'iṭ* in the area of the Jawlān and mentions *baql* (herbs, legumes) and *zāhir,* which suggests flowers in that area.[117] The term *biṭrīq* (*patricius*) is incorrectly used of the Persian commander, since this is strictly a Byzantine dignity, but the Arab authors sometimes apply it indifferently. Ḥassān may have had in mind Shahrbarāz himself, the Persian commander in chief, who mounted the offensive against Oriens.

Verse 8 continues the description of the Persian occupation of al-Jawlān, which extended from Muḥbil/Maḥbal (its vocalization is not certain) to Ḥārith al-Jawlān, Mount Arethas. The latter now Jabal al-Ḥāra, presents no problem, but Muḥbil/Maḥbal has defied identification. There is no locality by that name in the Jawlān, the toponomy of which has been carefully studied. It is most probably a corruption of Majdal. The Arabic script makes this perfectly possible: the diacritical mark of the *jīm* in Majdal might have disappeared, and thus the *jīm* became a *ḥa;* the *dal* of Majdal coalesced with the final *lām,* resulting in a "chair" beneath which a diacritical mark was placed, transforming it into a *bā:* مجدل→محبل. This reconstructed Majdal is possibly present-day Majdal Shams. There is no other Majdal in the Jawlān. However, Majdal is not an uncommon name for localities

[114] For Dūma in Ḥawrān/Auranitis, which lies east of al-Shahba/Philippopolis, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map II (opposite p. 24), B2 (Douma). For the Dūma that lies a few kilometers northeast of Damascus, see ibid., map XIV, 4B. Dūma in Iraq is out of the question, while the one at the mouth of Wādī Sirḥān is well known.

[115] Qaṣr Dūmat in the verse is followed by another phrase, *sawā' al-haykal,* which also presents a problem, consisting in whether *sawā'* is a proper or a common noun. For a detailed discussion of the two phrases, see Appendix II, below, 283–87.

[116] *Dīwān,* I, 194–95, verses 7 and 8.

[117] The word *ghā'iṭ* means a depressed piece of land, sometimes a league in extent, with meadows; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon,* book I, part 6. It is not clear whom the poet is addressing in the verse; a lady is mentioned in the preceding verse, apparently still remembered in *lahā* in this one, 7. The verse adds to the list of plants grown in the Gaulanitis, consisting of herbs, legumes, and flowers, and so does the term *ghā'iṭ* add to our knowledge of the topography of the Ghassānid part of the Jawlān.

in Oriens; in Ghassānland there is another Majdal, some 15 km southwest of Shahba (Philippopolis) in Trachonitis. This would make the area of the Persian occupation of Ghassānland more extensive than the one bounded by Majdal Shams. Which of these two Majdals is mentioned in Ḥassān's verse is difficult to tell; however, the recovery of Majdal from the corrupt reading Muḥbil/Maḥbal is a gain for Ghassānid toponymy.[118]

3. Poem 158 is allied to the preceding one in that both are valuable descriptions of Ghassānland, devastated in A.D. 614 by the Persian occupation.[119] The poem contains four toponyms. Verse 1 speaks of al-Ṣammān and al-Mutathallam, place names of uncertain location. They may not be Ghassānid but possibly Ḥijāzi, lying somewhere between the poet in Medina and Kisrā (Chosroes), whom he mentions in the verse as author of this calamity that had befallen the Ghassānids.[120]

Verse 2 refers anonymously to the Ghassānid king or prince who was killed during the Persian advance. The emotion that animates the poem could suggest that it was composed not long after the fall of Oriens to the Persians, possibly before A.D. 622.[121] Verse 3 speaks of the waters of a place called al-Ḥārithān (the dual of Ḥārith). There were at least three Ghassānid Ḥāriths in the sixth century, two of whom evidently gave their names to a locality with water in it. The toponym appears again in the poetry composed during the Muslim conquest of Oriens, but its exact location is not clear.[122]

[118] The corrupt Muḥbil/Maḥbal appears in Yāqūt and Bakrī with no useful indication where this toponym lay. The corruption in the transmission of the toponym clearly goes back to medieval times. For Jabal al-Ḥāra and Majdal Shams, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map I, 2D and 1C; for Majdal in Trachonitis and others, see ibid., map II, 2A and the index, s.v. Medjdel.

Verse 8 also has a corrupt reading, the penultimate word, read variously as *al-shay'* and *al-nayy,* neither of which makes sense. A pejorative is needed to describe the evildoing of the Persian *biṭrīq,* and *al-baghy,* the "aggressive, wrong deed" answers to the desideratum; it also has the same morphological pattern as *al-shay'* and *al-nayy* and is metrically perfect.

The Persians of course occupied the whole of Ghassānland and indeed the whole of Oriens. But the poet is singling out a segment of Ghassānland, bounded by Majdal and Mount Arethas, for some reason, metrical or other. According to S. Dar, "Settlements and Cult Sites on Mount Hermon, Israel," *BAR International Series* 589 (1993), 196, "Majdal Shams has not been properly investigated." The same may be said of other toponyms included in this section; excavations are likely to illuminate their history.

[119] *Dīwān,* I, 316.

[120] One of these two toponyms, al-Mutathallam, appears in the Suspended Ode of Zuhayr, while the other has not been precisely located; Yāqūt (*Mu'jam,* III, 423) speaks hesitatingly of it as lying in the Balqā' region in Trans-Jordan and assigns to the same toponym many localities in Arabia.

[121] The king is described as white in complexion and as one who frowns little and gives generously, all of which suggests that the poet had in mind a patron whose munificence he had enjoyed. On the dating of this poem, see below, note 124.

[122] Members of the Ghassānid royal house gave their names to places in Oriens as did Ḥārith to Jabal Ḥārith (Mount Arethas); this Ḥārith, no doubt, was Ḥārith the Elder, the famous one of the reign of Justinian. The two Ḥāriths commemorated by the toponym al-Ḥārithān are likely to

Verse 5 mentions the spring of al-Juwayya. Again this could be read al-Ḥuwayya or even al-Huwayya; either can be the one Ḥassān had in mind.[123] The former appears in Moabitis (Trans-Jordan), which Ḥassān could have passed by on his way from Ḥijāz to the Ghassānids, while the latter is in Ḥawrān and lies some 15 km northeast of Salkhad. The latter is more likely the one referred to by Ḥassān.[124]

4. Poem 123 has ten toponyms,[125] a feature it shares with poem 13; the two thus are the most informative of all the poems on Ghassānid toponymy. Verse 1 has three toponyms: Maʿān, Yarmūk, and al-Khammān, the location of which are well known. Māʿān is the town in Palaestina Tertia, east of Petra and the Via Nova Traiana; Yarmūk is the name of the famous river or affluent of the Jordan that gave its name to the fateful battle of 636; al-Khammān is in Bathaniyya/Batanaea, already discussed in Ḥassān's poetry.[126] The difficulty that the verse presents is in the poet's placing of Maʿān between the Yarmūk and al-Khammān, while it is actually far away in the distant south, but this problem may be circumvented in three possible ways.

a. It is possible that the toponym referred to in Ḥassān's verse is ʿAmān in Trachonitis.[127] Metathesis that obtained between the first and the second radicals, the *mīm* and the ʿ*ayn,* can explain how it appears as Maʿān in Ḥassān's verse.

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be the younger ones whose names appear toward the end of the 6th century. The weakness of Arabic for forming the dual makes such a toponym possible.

That al-Ḥārithān was indeed a toponym is known from a quatrain of verses by al-Qaʿqāʿ, the famous warrior of the period of the conquest of Oriens. It is in the second verse of that quatrain that he speaks of the al-Ḥārithān in terms that leave no doubt that it was a toponym, most probably a fortress, located near Marj al-Ṣuffar, the site of a well-known engagement in the annals of the Muslim conquest. The quatrain is valuable for establishing the sequence of the battles that finally ended in the decisive victory of Yarmūk; for the verses, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. Yarmūk.

[123] For al-Huwayya, which Musil, in his peculiar transliteration system, renders Hawijje, see A. Musil, *Arabia Petraea,* I, *Moab* (Vienna, 1907), 15, 119, 44, 235, 362; for al-Ḥuwayya see ʿĀ. ʿAbd al-Salām, *Al-Aqālim al-Jagrāfiyya al-Sūriyya* (Damascus, 1997), map, p. 475.

[124] As has already been noted, the two preceding poems are united in their express reference to the Persian offensive and occupation of Oriens in A.D. 614, especially the Ghassānid transverse wedge, and consequently they are definitely datable to the period that followed the Persian occupation of Oriens in A.D. 614. Ḥassān is known to have visited Oriens, now Bilād al-Shām, twice in this third period, after the Persians vacated Oriens in A.D. 629, so the two poems may have been composed then, probably during his first visit shortly after the battle of Yarmūk in A.D. 636. The two poems could also have been composed in the period A.D. 614–622, the eight years that elapsed before the emigration of Muḥammad to Medina and the emergence of Ḥassān as his poet laureate and after the Persian occupation of Oriens in A.D. 614, since communications between Ḥijāz and Oriens were not suspended during that period. So Ḥassān could have visited Oriens then, but there is no evidence for such a visit as there is for the third period after A.D. 629.

[125] *Dīwān,* I, 255.

[126] For Maʿān, see F. M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* (Paris, 1967), I, map X; for al-Khammān, see above, notes 70 and 78.

[127] Dussaud, *Topographie,* 375; it lies east of Koureim (ibid., map I, A1). But according to Dussaud it may be read Ḥammān, and this is how it appears in his map.

ʿAmān does not lie exactly between Yarmūk and Khammān, but at least it is in their region, unlike faraway Maʿān in Trans-Jordan.

b. Alternatively, the reading Maʿān may be corrected through one diacritical mark placed over the ʿ*ayn* into *maghān.* This would yield the term *maghānī,* the plural of *maghnā,* the place where one settles and resides.[128] The difficulty of situating it between Yarmūk and al-Khammān would vanish. The poet would simply be lamenting the deserted settlement of the Ghassānids between these two places. The term is found in the same poem in verse 9, where it is used in the singular, *maghnā,* to refer to a Ghassānid residence.

c. If Maʿān is retained, then one must assume that since this poem was composed probably around A.D. 660, when the poet was very old and also blind, his memory failed him and so he misplaced Maʿān between Yarmūk and al-Khammān.

Verse 2 has four toponyms: al-Qurayyāt, Balās/Bilās, Dārayyā, and Sakkā'. The last three are well-known places around Damascus that have survived to the present day.[129] Al-Qurayyāt as a toponym in this region is unknown.[130] The last phrase in the verse, *al-quṣūr al-dawānī* ("the close, or near, *quṣūr*"), may be descriptive of some *quṣūr;* but Quṣūr could also be a proper noun, a toponym.[131]

Verse 3 speaks of the well-known places Jāsim and al-Ṣuffar, short for Marj al-Ṣuffarayn, already mentioned in poem 13.[132] Verse 5 speaks of the disaster that befell the Ghassānids when they possibly tried to stem the Persian advance at Ḥārith al-Jawlān, that is, the mountain to which Ḥārith had given his name, Mount Arethas.

This poem, so rich in Ghassānid toponyms, is said to have been composed

[128] See *Dīwān,* I, 257.

[129] Bilās/Balās is southwest of Damascus and close to it, as is Dārayyā but closer to Damascus, while Sakkā' is southeast, some 15 km distant. For the three toponyms, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map IV, 2A.

[130] Al-Qurayyāt: as an Arabic word, it is the plural of *qurayya,* the diminutive of *qarya,* "town," "city," in Ḥassān's time, not "village," which it means nowadays. Al-Qurayyāt, as a toponym in Ghassānland in the district of Damascus, is unknown to the medieval geographers. For them al-Qurayyāt is a cluster of three villages or towns in Wādī Sirḥān: Dūmat, Dū al-Qāra, and Sakkāka. So what did Ḥassān have in mind when he spoke of al-Qurayyāt in this context? Perhaps the place has ceased to exist. It was probably a cluster of villages, not a town, since Qurayyāt is the plural of *qurayya,* the diminutive, and not of *qarya* the plural of which is *qurā.* Hence it could be a cluster of five villages, not unlike those denoted in Byzantine Oriens as Pentekomia and Hexakomia, a cluster of villages numbering five and six. Its further qualification in the verse as *min* Bilās/Balās (near Bilās), associated with Bilās, could suggest that the Qurayyāt were a cluster of villages of which Bilas was the *Metrokomia* (μητροκωμία).

L. Conrad thinks the reference might be to al-Qurayya, which is 9 km northeast of Bostra; see his "Epidemic Disease in Central Syria in the Late Sixth Century," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 18 (1994), 36–37. But Ḥassān says it is close to Balas, which thus excludes its identification with al-Qurayya.

[131] For a toponym by the name of Umm al-Quṣūr, the "mother of Quṣūr," see Tlas, *al-Muʿjam al-Jaghrāfī,* I, 536; it lies some 40 km south of Damascus.

[132] For both see above, 240.

by Ḥassān on Yawm al-Yarmūk, that is, the battle of the Yarmūk,[133] presumably when he visited the battlefield on one of his journeys to Oriens sometime after the Muslim conquest.

In addition to the standard texts of the ten-verse poem, other versions contain verses that are missing in the poem as presented in the *Dīwān.* In the discussion of the sources, the manuscripts, and versions, the editor of the *Dīwān* included some of these verses containing some toponyms that purport to be associated with the Ghassānids.[134] They are worth mentioning, especially those that can be identified, namely, Afīq, Bayt Rās, al-Ḥawānī, and Ḥawrān, of which two have been discussed (Ḥawrān and Bayt Rās).

As for the other two, Afīq and al-Ḥawānī, the latter is most probably al-Khawābī, a toponym that lends itself to mutilation by the misplacement of diacritical marks.[135] The other, Afīq, is a well-known place in the Jawlān and may well have Ghassānid associations, related to the *dayr* (monastery) mentioned in one of the verses.[136] Ḥassān would not have strung together these toponyms had they not had some Ghassānid association.

IV. Ḥātim

The *Dīwān* of Ḥātim has five poems that refer to the Ghassānids and their toponyms.[137]

Poem 30: The *Rā'iyya*

The background: a raid by some members of the Ṭayyi', a tribal group, against Ghassānid territory resulted in their capture of the camels of the king, al-Ḥārith ibn ʿAmr, and the death of his son. In retaliation, al-Ḥārith attacked the Ṭayyi' and took captive ninety tribesmen. Ḥātim had been away in Ḥīra and, on his return, was told of what had happened. Thus he made the journey to Ghassān-land to plead for the emancipation of the captives, which he achieved after reciting

[133] Stated by Ibn ʿAsākir, the medieval historian of Damascus, quoted in *Dīwān,* I, 255.

[134] Ibid., 256–57. In verse 9 of this poem (123), the reading *maḥāhu* ("obliterated it," "effaced it") is much better than *wa ḥaqqun,* which does not make much sense. It was not noted by the editor.

[135] On this, see above, note 104 and the text related to it.

[136] For Afīq, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map I, 3C, s.v. Fig. For the *dayr,* see *Dīwān,* II, 256, last verse. Afīq lay in the heart of Ghassānland, the Jawlān, and the Ghassānids, zealous Monophysites, and especially interested in monasteries and monasticism, could have endowed this monastery or patronized it. On the monastery, see A. al-Shābushtī, *Kitāb al-Diyārāt,* ed. G. ʿAwwad (Baghdad, 1966), 204–6. As Dayr al-Khammān, it was still functioning when ʿUmarī wrote in the 14th century; see his *Masalik al-Absar* (Cairo, 1924), 336–37.

[137] For Ḥātim, see Sezgin, *GAS,* II, 208–9; for the *Dīwān,* see *Shiʿr Ḥātim,* ed. ʿĀdil S. Jamāl (Cairo, n.d.?).

this poem.[138] In the second verse the captives appear tied up in ropes and cooped up in *ṣiyar* (plural of *ṣīra*), enclosures for animals. The verse gives a glimpse of how the Ghassānids used to quarter their prisoners of war, in *ṣiyar,* in which sheep and cows were usually kept. The *ṣīra* for animals thus balances *ḥīra,* a term common in this period for the military encampment itself.

In the sixth verse, *more Arabico,* the poet wishes the king well by hoping that rain will fall abundantly and continuously on his territory. The first hemistich speaks of God, Allah, the Lord of mankind, reflecting Ḥātim's Christianity, for which his tribe was known, and establishing rapport with the Ghassānid. More important is the precious reference to Ghassānid toponyms in the second hemistich, which speaks of Ma'āb and Zughar, south of the Sharāt. Although Ḥassān speaks of the Ghassānids of this period ruling from Mount Hermon in the north to Ayla in the south, Ḥātim specifies exactly where in this long strip of territory in Oriens he found the Ghassānid king, in the region south of the Sharāt mountain range.[139] In so doing, Ḥātim added another region of Ghassānid association, Moabitis, to such Trans-Jordanian ones as Gaulanitis and al-Balqā', and thus pinned down one of the areas of their presence in the Jordan valley. He specifies it further when he says that the area extended from Ma'āb to Zughar, a specification that presents two problems.

First, identification: this is not much of a problem since the first is the Arabic/Semitic form of Moab/Moabitis, and in the Arabic sources it refers to its main city, Rabbatmoab/Areopolis, which was east of the Dead Sea. Zughar is Zoar, the well-known toponym since biblical times, which was on the southern shore of the same sea.[140]

[138] Jamāl, *Shi'r Ḥātim,* 187–88; for the poem, a short one of nine verses, see ibid., 188–90.

[139] On Ḥassān's verse, see above, 236. The region extending from Areopolis to Zughar is not exactly south of the Sharāt range. But this is not a serious inaccuracy since the location of the two toponyms to which he referred is known with certainty independently of him. More important is that the name itself, Sharāt, is attested in this pre-Islamic poem and has persisted in Jordan from pre-Islamic times to the present. The reading Sarat instead of Sharāt (*Dīwān,* 190 note 6) has been rightly rejected by the editor. His rejection may be further endorsed by another reference to the Sharāt in a context that makes it clear that Sharāt in Trans-Jordan is denoted in the verses; see *Dīwān,* 194, verse 3.

[140] Areopolis was the main city of Moabitis; this primacy is reflected in the Semitic form of the name, Rabbathmoba/Rabbatmoab/Rabba, "the mistress of Moabitis," as Amman, Philadelphia of the Decapolis, was called Rabbathammon, "the mistress of Ammonitis." On Areopolis/Rabba, see G. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 88, 175, 179, 180, 184, and M. Sartre, in *IGLSYR, Inscriptions de la Jordanie* (Paris, 1993), IV, 11 note 25, 84 note 24. Presumably Areopolis/Ma'āb will be discussed in vol. III, which has not yet appeared, although vols. II and IV have. Until then the reader may consult Abel, *Géographie,* 191–92. Areopolis is listed in the *ND* as where the Equites Mauri Illyriciani were stationed. It received mention as Ma'āb in the verse of one of the Arab Muslim commanders of the expeditionary force sent by the Prophet Muḥammad against Mu'ta in A.D. 628 in which he refers to its being a military post where the Arab federates and the Roman/Byzantine troops were stationed; see 'Abd Allāh ibn-Rawāḥa, *Dīwān,* ed. W. Qaṣṣāb ('Amman, 1988), 149, verse 5.

Second, "from Ma'āb to Zughar": it is not clear whether the poet wants to say that the area of Ghassānid settlement in this region included the two localities or only the region between them. The Arabic emphasizes the region between the two localities but does not necessarily exclude them. When it is recalled that this is a poem composed around A.D. 600, that is, long after Justinian dismissed the *limitanei* that manned the stations listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum,* the natural presumption is that the Ghassānid presence included these two localities, since the Ghassānids took over from the *limitanei* the watch over the frontier, as may be inferred from the certain association of the Ghassānids with other well-known stations of the *Notitia.* What kind of presence can be predicated for the Ghassānids in these two localities is hard to tell; possibly it was only the forts and the encampments that the *limitanei* vacated.

These conclusions receive further confirmation from the fact that the poet visited the Ghassānids not at one of the easternmost stations of the old *limes* but deep in the heart of Oriens near the Dead Sea. A presence so deep in Oriens can only be explained by the Ghassānid takeover of those stations of the *Notitia* that are listed for this region, such as Zughar and Areopolis. Also, after referring to the region "south of the Sharāt, from Ma'āb to Zughar," the poet described it in the following verse as *bilād imri'in,* the *bilād* of the Ghassānid king. The word *bilād* could mean country or region as in Bilād al-Shām, but it could also be the plural of *balad,* meaning "towns," "cities." Furthermore, the use of the plural *bilād* goes better with the two towns Ma'āb and Zughar than with the singular Sharāt.

All this is consistent with the statement of Ya'qūbī, the ninth-century historian, about the Ghassānid presence in the region of 'Arandal not far from these two toponyms, and the remarks of Ḥamza, a historian of the tenth century, about the Ghassānid Abū Karib's building activity in this region. By A.D. 600 the Ghassānids apparently had a strong presence in the vicinity of the Sharāt.[141]

Finally, the eighth verse of the poem extols the virtues of Wahm ibn-'Amr. The medieval commentator on the *Dīwān,* Hishām al-Kalbī, said in his introduction to the poem that Wahm ibn 'Amr was one of the Ṭayyi' tribesmen cap-

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On Zughar/Zoar, see Sartre, *Inscriptions,* 133–34. There is a Jewish community in Zoar, a fact relevant to Ghassānid-Jewish relations; see *BASIC* I.2, 322–25. It is listed in the *ND* as a military post where the Equites Sagittarii Indigenae were stationed.

[141] On Ya'qūbī and 'Arandal, see below, 347. Ya'qūbī refers to 'Arandal as the main city of the Sharāt, thus associating the Ghassānids whom he found there not only with the region south of the Sharāt as Ḥātim does but with the Sharāt itself. On Ḥamza and Abū Karib, see below, 339–40. It is noteworthy that the two toponyms, Ma'āb/Areopolis and Zughar/Zoar, belong to one and the same province, Palaestina Tertia, Areopolis lying just south of the boundary line that separated the Provincia Arabia from the new province, Palaestina Tertia, carved from Arabia. Unlike Nābigha and Ḥassān, the two other panegyrists of the Ghassānids, Ḥātim visited the Ghassānids not in the north, in Arabia, Palaestina Secunda, and Phoenicia Libanensis, but in the south, in Palaestina Tertia. This raises an important question pertaining to the structure of the Ghassānid phylarchate, for which see Appendix V, below, 303.

tured by the Ghassānid king, and modern commentators have not questioned this identification. But it is far from certain that this identification is correct.[142] An equally good case can be made for an identification with the Ghassānid king who conducted the campaign against Ṭayyi', also called by the same patronymic, Ibn ʿAmr, as is clear from the following poem.

In support of the identification of Ibn ʿAmr with the Ghassānid king, the following may be adduced. It is natural to assume that in a short poem of eight verses in praise of the Ghassānid king, his name should be mentioned. Otherwise the king in a panegyrical poem would remain anonymous, an unusual omission in these Arabic panegyrics. Even more important is the immediate context and flow of thought in the poem, which almost requires mentioning the king's name. The poet had referred to him in the previous verse 7, without naming him, in the phrase *bilād imri'in.* In that verse he spoke of his virtues in peace, of his generosity/hospitality, which in the conventions of Arabic poetry is always coupled with the other twin virtue of courage in war. This is well described in this following verse 8, in which his name occurs, and thus the two verses are a couplet welded together by the two virtues they extol. As one of the two verses clearly applies to the Ghassānid, it is only natural to assume that the complementary second verse also applies to him.

Nothing really militates against this interpretation or identification except the word *Wahm,* which preceded the patronymic ibn-ʿAmr and is supposed to be the name of the personage mentioned in this verse. Now the Ghassānid king's name is known to be al-Ḥārith, as evidenced in the introduction to the poem by the medieval commentator and also in the following related poem. But the difficulty is negotiable. Since *Wahm* is practically unknown to the Arabic onomasticon, the word should perhaps be understood as a common noun that expresses a notion or a signification that blends harmoniously with Ibn ʿAmr, the patronymic that follows. An alternative hypothesis is that it be emended or corrected into another proper noun with the same morphological pattern. Either solution would leave the identification of Ibn ʿAmr with the Ghassānid king intact.[143]

[142] That Hishām was not always right in identifying figures in pre-Islamic poetry may be seen in the analysis of ʿAlqama's poem on the Ghassānid Arethas/al-Ḥārith, in connection with the name al-Aws; the poem will be analyzed in *BASIC* II.2.

[143] *Wahm* mostly nowadays means "illusion," a pejorative term, but in this verse it may be the *maṣdar,* the verbal noun, not from the verb *wahima/yawhamu,* meaning "to have illusions," but from *wahama/yahimu* meaning "to imagine, have in mind." So it is most likely the *maṣdar,* the verbal noun, or the *ism,* the noun, related to this signification of recalling or remembering, which goes appropriately with the *taḏakkartu,* the first word in the verse, meaning "I remembered;" for the root *whm* in this sense, see *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut, 1956), XII, s.v. *whm,* 643–44. Alternatively, *wahm* may be a corrupt reading for some other word with the same grammatical pattern, such as *rasm* or *wasm.* A third and final possibility would be that a proper noun such as Ruhm (from the root *RHM*) is the original and correct reading. This is defensible, according to the rules of transcriptional probability where the initial *wāw* and the *rā'* are interchangeable and

So the chances that Ibn ʿAmr in the eighth verse is the Ghassānid king are better than his being the Ṭayyiʾ tribesman. It remains to analyze the verse as a eulogy on the Ghassānid king in order to extract whatever data it can provide. As the poet was specific on toponyms in the sixth verse, so was he in the eighth, where after singing al-Ḥārith's praises previously in general terms he concentrated on two of his warlike qualities, his endurance (*jalādat*) and his *jurʾat.* In addition to meaning courage, the latter quality implies impetuosity in his charge, both being well-known Ghassānid martial qualities, especially the former, for which they were nicknamed *al-Ṣubur* (plural of *Ṣābir*), "those who endure."[144] These warlike qualities are presented as tempered by the further qualification that they were exercised not brutally, but in response to an appeal for help from one in distress.

The poet mentions the name of the Ghassānid king, through the employment of his patronymic, Ibn ʿAmr, "son of ʿAmr," most probably the famous king whom al-Nābigha had eulogized. His given name al-Ḥārith is known from the following poem by Ḥātim. The reference to the Ghassānid king, both to his name and his patronymic, is important for working out a segment of the Ghassānid genealogical tree in this late period. Finally, the poem reflects the involvement of the Ghassānids deep in the heart of northern Arabia, in the territory of Ṭayyiʾ. These *foederati* of Byzantium in the sixth century reached far and wide in northern Arabia to control tribal turbulence. In this poem they reach the territory of Ṭayyiʾ just as they reached that of Dubyān, Nābigha's tribe, when the latter transgressed.

Poem 30: *Al-Bāʾiyya*

The second poem is a *baʾiyya,* a poem that rhymes in the letter *B*, which he composed on his return from the Ghassānid camp in Palaestina Tertia to his home in Shammar, *al-Jabalān* (the Two Mountains) of Ṭayyiʾ.[145] He reminisces on his successful visit and remembers the kindness and virtues of his Ghassānid host almost to the point of being nostalgic. It is a poem of eleven verses which has valuable references to Ḥātim's route from Shammar in northern Arabia to the Ghassānids in southern Oriens. In the first two verses the poet mentions the name

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the one can easily be substituted for the other by a careless scribe. Ruhm is an attested Arabic name, for which see Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqāq,* index, 640–41 and Ibn Razm, *Jamharat,* index, 572. Ghassānids such as Abū Karib had a name, a patronymic, and a nickname, and Ruhm could very well have been a nickname for al-Ḥārith, or he could be a Ghassānid with that name; on Abū Karib's name, patronymic, and nickname, see Ḥamza, below, 316.

[144] On *al-Ṣubur* or *al-Ṣubr,* and the Greek inscription that possibly reflected Arabic *al-Ṣubur,* see "Soboreni" in W. H. Waddington, *Recueils des inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (Paris, 1870), no. 2431.

[145] For this poem, see *Dīwān,* 194–96. As it was a sequel to the *Rāʾiyya,* the poem just discussed, the editor did not give it another number; hence its number, 30, in the subtitle, the same as the preceding one.

of the Ghassānid king al-Ḥārith and his patronymic, Ibn ʿAmr. He assures him that he remembers his kindness and that he is ready to respond should he call on him for anything. The two verses are a good commentary on the sound diplomacy exercised by the Ghassānid king, who manumitted the captives of Ṭayyiʾ and so secured a possible ally in Arabia, the powerful tribe of Ṭayyiʾ, whose relations with the Ghassānids were checkered.[146]

The next three verses are precious; they are almost a travel guide to one who wants to make the journey on the road traversed by Ḥātim from his home in Shammar to the Ghassānids in Palaestina Tertia. The distance from Sharāt to Shammar takes nine days: three from the Sharāt to a place called al-Ḥalbaṭ or al-Ḥallat (as a variant reading); three from al-Ḥalbaṭ/Ḥallat to Taymāʾ; and three more from Taymāʾ to Ḥātim's home in Shammar.[147] Three of the places, Shammar,[148] Taymāʾ and al-Sharāt, are well known, but al-Ḥalbaṭ, the place between the Sharāt and Taymāʾ, is not. This raises the question whether Ḥātim after reaching Taymāʾ traveled through Wādī Sirḥān (from Dūmat to Azraq) and then reached the Ghassānids, or used the more westerly road, the Tabūkiyya, which runs through Tabūk, and thence to al-Sharāt. If the reading al-Ḥallat is correct, as is likely, Ḥātim would have traveled on the Tabūkiyya.[149]

[146] On Ṭayyiʾ and Ghassān, see below, 257–58.

[147] In the *Dīwān,* it is al-Ḥalbaṭ, but in Bakrī's *Muʿjam* and *Aghānī* it is al-Ḥallat, as noted by the editor; *Dīwān,* 194 note 4. This probably correct reading derives support from the fact that modern detailed maps of Arabia show a place called Ḥallat ʿAmr, halfway between Tabūk and Maʿān. The distance between Sharāt and this Ḥallat ʿAmr is the same as between Ḥallat and Taymāʾ and the same as between Taymāʾ and Shammar. This is exactly what Ḥātim says.

Noteworthy is the use of the masculine gender in the case of the number of days in this itinerary: *tisʿ* (nine), *thalāth* (three). This could argue that the poet is thinking of three and nine nights rather than days; if this is what he meant, then this would also argue that the caravans in Arabia traveled by night since it is too hot to travel during the daytime.

The home of Ṭayyiʾ, Shammar, consisted of two parallel mountain ranges called Ajā and Salmā; hence the region is called al-Jabalān, the Two Mountains. They stretch southward from the Nafūd to Wādī al-Rumma. Access to this impregnable location is "possible from the direction of Taymāʾ by the Riʿ al-Salf, which pierces the mountain to the S. W. of Ḥāʾil and by a pass through Jabal Salmā", *EI,* s.v. Shammar, IV, 307 and map.

[148] Shammar is not mentioned by name but clearly implied by the last word of the third verse of the triplet, al-Aʿjāb. This is a *crux* and may be not a common noun, as understood by some commentators, but a proper noun, a place in Shammar.

[149] Ḥātim's itinerary and the days spent in traversing its distances are clearly important to the study of caravans in pre-Islamic Arabia. It is also especially relevant to the itinerary of Imruʾ al-Qays, who came to Taymāʾ and thence reached the Ghassānids. His starting point on the way to the Ghassānids may also have been Shammar, whose Ṭayyiʾ were kind to him and whom he remembered in his poetry; on Imruʾ al-Qays and Ghassān, see below, 259–61.

Note in these three verses the words he used to describe the different speeds necessary for traversing the three distances that he indicated lay between Shammar and the Sharāt, apparently depending on how good each road was. In the verse that follows the triplet (p. 195, verse 6), he speaks of a road, described as *musbaṭirr,* which the commentators explain as long and straight. On

Verses 8 and 9 go back to the Ghassānid al-Ḥārith. Ḥātim expresses a wish to see him again at his residence. Just as the previous poem gives a glimpse of the Ghassānid military encampment with its enclosures for their flocks and herds, so this one alludes to the royal residence. The king apparently received visitors while in a *qubba,* which can mean a domical structure of stone or a pavilion of skins or tanned hides. This is described as having *qilāʿ,* the plural of two nouns—*qalʿat,* meaning a fortress, and *qilʿ,* the sails of a ship; it was in the former that Ḥātim had his audience with the king. The structure is further described as located on an eminence, which is consistent with the location of Maʾāb or a place in the Sharāt range. Finally, al-Ḥārith is described again as *harrāb* (a warrior king) and one who judges men not by their *ansāb* (pedigree) but by their *ahsāb* (achievements).[150] The poet closes his poem with a reference to his abode, impregnable in the heights of Shammar and among the "leonine" warriors of Thuʿal, a clan of the Ṭayyiʾ noted for their skill in archery, perhaps a reprise of his statement at the beginning of the poem that he and his men are at the disposal of the Ghassānid king.

Poem 34: The *Dāliyya*

The third poem is a *Daliyya,* a poem that rhymes in the letter *D.*[151] The background of the poem in the commentary, going back to Hishām al-Kalbī, is not entirely clear. According to him, it involves the emancipation of some captives of the poet's tribe, which suggests the same background as the first poem, but the eulogized Ghassānid is obviously not the same as the one in the first, al-Ḥārith ibn ʿAmr. So this must have been another occasion on which Ḥātim had to make the journey to Ghassānland to plead for the manumission of his fellow tribesmen.

The poem, consisting of nine verses, introduces a new Ghassānid ruler. Unlike the previous one, neither his name nor his patronymic is stated, but his matronymic is introduced and *possibly* his patronymic. So the poem is a contribution to a better understanding of the genealogy of the Ghassānids, not very clear in this late period. In the fourth verse, he says that the king is a son of Umāma. This is a

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this road, the traveler, according to him, can spur his horses to run quickly. The implication may be that this was a Roman road leading to Oriens or within it on which it was easy to travel. The pastoralists from the peninsula must have marveled at the roads laid by the Romans. They had indigenous names for them, in addition to *ṣirāṭ, strata.*

[150] The verb *yadīnu* before *aḥsāb* (achievements) can mean *yaʿizzu* ("be powerful, mighty") or "judge." Either will do in this context. If the former, the reference would be to the king himself and the royal Ghassānid house; if the latter, the reference would be to others whom he judges by their achievements.

The word *harrāb* occurs often in pre-Islamic poetry qualifying kings by the name of Ḥārith, but since both Kinda and Ghassān had kings by that name, it is not always clear to which of the two the epithet belongs. In this context, it clearly belongs to the Ghassānid.

[151] For the poem, see *Dīwān,* 206–7.

welcome addition to the names of Ghassānid princesses and queens, the others being Māriya, the two Hinds, and Salmā. Then the poet says that the king can also count among his ancestors al-Ḥārithān, the two Ḥāriths, a distinctly Ghassānid name that often occurs, related to the dynasty. But it is not clear how he is related to the "two Ḥāriths." One of them could presumably be his father and the other a more distant ancestor, or both may be distant ancestors. His name remains unknown, and it could not have been al-Ḥārith, because in this late period there were three, so called: one of them was Ibn ʿAmr mentioned previously by Ḥātim, and the two al-Ḥārithān referred to in this poem were ancestors. So the Ghassānid in this poem could have been an ʿAmr or Ḥujr such as referred to by Ḥassān, or some other name.[152]

The sixth verse refers to *al-wālidāt,* "the mothers," "those who beget" (plural of *wālida*), but it is not clear whether he is referring to the mothers (ancestresses) of the king or to his own.[153] Reference to the Ghassānid ancestresses was made by Nābigha in the well-known fragment where he mentions the two Hinds, and much depends on the punctuation of the hemistich.[154] In the seventh verse, the poet begs the king to incline to mercifulness toward the captives and to their manumission, since this would be good publicity among the large tribal group Maʿadd, and others in the Arabian Peninsula with whom the Ghassānids were involved. In one of Nābigha's poems, the Ghassānid king is referred to as "the king of Maʿadd," and the verse evidences the role of poetry in spreading the good name of the Ghassānid king among the tribes of Arabia.[155]

The last verse, the ninth, is deemed obscure by the commentator, and so it is in part, but the general tenor of the verse is clear enough. The poet is saying that in setting the captives free, the Ghassānid king will be acting in conformity with the Ghassānid house's glorious tradition of magnanimity. *Tuḥyī judūdan,* literally, "you will make your ancestors live again," can easily be a reference to Arethas, the celebrated ancestor of the king, A.D. 529–569, who composed the differences between the two main branches of the tribe, Jadīla and al-Gawth, after the internecine tribal war, the so-called Ḥarb al-Fasād.[156]

[152] For the three Ḥāriths in this period, see the fragment of al-Nābigha, Nöldeke, *GF,* 34–35.

[153] Ibid.

[154] If *al-wālidāt* ("the mothers") is to be related to Ḥātim's, then the phrase *fidā'an laka al-wālidātu* will be constructed together as one syntactic unit, in which appeal is made to the Arabic phrase *bi'abī anta wa ummī,* an expression of *tafdiya.* If *wālidāt* is taken to be those of the Ghassānid, then *fidā'an* will be the object of the verb *fa-ajmiʿ*, and *laka al-walidatu* will be constructed as one syntactic unit. The *tafdiya* involving his own group Ṭayyi' is employed by Ḥātim in *Dīwān,* 193, verse 2.

[155] On Nābigha's poem, see *Dīwān,* 107, verse 1.

[156] Ḥarb al-Fasād is mentioned by Ḥātim himself in one of his poems; see *Dīwān,* 381 note 3, and below, 258.

Poem 77: The Second *Rā'iyya*

The fourth poem consists of some thirty-two verses.[157] It deals in a large way with tribal politics, but its Ghassānid profile, consisting of two clusters of verses, is unmistakable.

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The first consists of four verses, 5–8: (a) in the opening verse the poet sends a message (*risālat*) to a person who is referred to by his tecnonymic, Abū al-Nuʿmān; (b) in the second he repeats the tecnonymic and makes clear that the addressee in the verse was already dead, since he refers to his grave or tomb (*qabr*); (c) the third verse extols the power and prestige of the deceased person and says that if he had been alive he would have annihilated the enemies of his people; (d) in the fourth and final verse, he gives the content of the *risālat* mentioned in the first verse, namely, that his sons now live in two regions, Ḥawrān and Abā'ir.

The first verse presents the main problem, that of identification. Who is this person whose name is unfortunately not given (only his tecnonymic) and whose sons are to be found in regions associated with the Ghassānids, namely, the Ḥawrān and Abā'ir? The editor and commentator of the *Dīwān* of Ḥātim, A. S. Jamāl, says, without further ado, that he was a Ghassānid king.[158] W. Caskel, the editor and commentator of Hishām's *Jamharat,* says he was a member of the tribe of Ṭayyi' and a *sayyid* in it.[159] Either view would leave the Ghassānid profile of the verses intact, but the latter view is more significant as it enriches the understanding of Ghassānid history in this period.

The German scholar is undoubtedly right in thinking that Abū al-Nuʿmān was a member of the Ṭayyi', although he did not argue the point. Before clinching the argument in favor of his view, the position of the editor, Jamāl, will be examined in detail, remote as it is even as a possibility, and only because, if correct, it might throw some unexpected light on one of the most famous of all Ghassānid kings. The following may be adduced in support of the editor's view that a Ghassānid king is involved in these verses.

Al-Nuʿmān is a resoundingly Ghassānid name that does not appear in the onomasticon of Ṭayyi'. But if Ghassānid, which Ghassānid king of this period who bore that tecnonymic is denoted in the verse? There are two possibilities: the Nuʿmān of the Greek source, of the reign of Maurice, who led the Ghassānid revolt after his father, Mundir, was kidnapped and sent into exile in Sicily in

[157] See *Dīwān,* 274–75; for the Ghassānid verses, see 5–8, pp. 277–78 and verses 26–32, pp. 277–78.

[158] Ibid., 274 note 5.

[159] W. Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-Nasab,* 2 vols. (Leiden, 1966), II, 60.

582;[160] or the Nuʿmān whom Nābigha eulogized,[161] who may have been the same as the first Nuʿmān, the son of the exiled Mundir. So it is possible that the Ghassānid king in Ḥātim's poem, referred to as the "father of Nuʿmān," could have been the famous Mundir. It is known that he returned from exile in Sicily in 602, and his return must have been an event that became well known among the Arabs including Ṭayyi', the tribe of Ḥātim.[162]

The second verse refers to the grave or tomb of Abu al-Nuʿmān, who is obviously deceased. This could enhance the possibility that the Ghassānid was the famous Mundir whose exploits were well known during his lifetime and were remembered after his death. Otherwise, it is difficult to imagine why the poet would appeal to a dead person: he must have been a celebrated figure like Mundir. Unfortunately, the poet does not say where his *qabr* (grave) was.[163] This would have been of great interest as the only reference to Mundir after his return. As has been suggested, he must have died shortly after his return, having spent twenty years of exile in Sicily, in a climate he was not used to.[164]

The third verse that refers to the prowess of the Ghassānid is not particularly informative. It implies an engagement in which the Ghassānids were not victorious or experienced a setback, which, according to the poet, would not have happened if Abū al-Nuʿmān had been alive.[165] This again is consistent with what is known about the always victorious, almost invincible, Mundir.

The fourth verse would be most informative if it were not enigmatic. It contains the message (the *risālat* in verse 5) that the poet wanted to send to the dead person, namely, that his sons have chosen to settle in the distant regions of Ḥawrān and Abā'ir. In what sense are these two regions distant, and why does settlement in these two regions appear as news to be announced to the dead Abū al-Nuʿmān? Ḥawrān has always been associated with the Ghassānids, as in the elegy of Nābigha on Nuʿmān, but in what sense it is distant is not clear; perhaps it was from the

[160] On this Nuʿmān, see *BASIC* I.1, 529–34. For the Greek source, see Evagrius, *Historia Ecclesiastica,* ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898; repr. Amsterdam, 1969), VI. 2.

[161] Above, 224.

[162] On Mundir's return to Oriens from Sicily, see *BASIC* I.1, 618–22.

[163] Unlike the *qabr* of Nuʿmān in Nābigha's elegy, the location of which is exactly given, between Tubnā and Jāsim; see above, 228. If this Ghassānid turns out to be the famous Mundir, then his grave (*qabr*) may have been near that of his son, where Nābigha placed it in his elegy.

[164] On this, see *BASIC* I.1, 620. In spite of the strong possibility that Abū-al-Nuʿmān in Ḥātim's poem may have been Mundir, the possibility must remain open that he was some other Ghassānid, possibly one of the Ḥārithān, "the two Ḥariths," who appear in the history of the dynasty in this late period.

[165] For a similar defeat sustained by the Ghassānids and mentioned by Ḥassān, in which the name of the Ghassānid king (al-Ḥārith) is mentioned, see above, 000. If the two poets are referring to the same defeat, then the Ghassānid of Ḥātim's poem would be al-Ḥārith and Abū al-Nuʿmān would be his tecnonymic; this would exclude the identification of Mundir with Abū al-Nuʿmān.

perspective of Ḥātim himself, living in faraway Shammar. The second question presents similar difficulties and does not admit of a satisfactory answer. The same applies to the other toponym, Abā'ir, a place that appears orthographically in many forms but is none other than the present-day Bāyir.[166] Perhaps the problem of their being distant may be solved by the fact that both Abā'ir and Ḥawrān are distant from the headquarters of the Ghassānids in Gaulanitis. Ḥassān speaks of a Ghassānid presence extending from Mount Hermon to Ayla.[167] When related to this presence from Hermon to Ayla, Abā'ir and Ḥawrān may seem distant.

Despite all these detailed arguments, the case for Abū al-Nu'mān's tribal affiliation with Ṭayyi', not Ghassān, is much stronger. The context is the first and most important argument for this view. The long poem in its entirety deals clearly with internal matters pertaining to the tribe of Ṭayyi'. The tribe apparently was going through a crisis; there was dissension and dispersion, and various groups were threatening to leave their abode in Shammar, including the subdivision al-Gawth, to which the poet himself belonged.[168] Within this context, names of members of the tribe are mentioned. Abū al-Nu'mān's name occurs in this context of internal tribal politics, preceded and followed by names of the Ṭayyi' tribal group. The sudden appearance of the name of a Ghassānid king in the midst of this series of non-Ghassānid names thus becomes suspicious and is indeed a stridently dissonant note in the structure of the poem.

The interpretation of the second and third verses, relating them to Mundir the Ghassānid, can be related also to a *sayyid* from the tribe of Ṭayyi', who may have also been a doughty warrior. It is, however, the fourth verse in this cluster that clinches the argument in favor of Caskel's view with its reference to Ḥawrān and Abā'ir in Ghassānland. It was difficult to present Ḥawrān and Abā'ir as distant places for the Ghassānids, but they are indeed distant when distance is measured from Shammar, the abode of Ṭayyi' in North Arabia. Thus the verse would be consistent with the mood of the poem and Ḥātim's regrets that members of the tribe were departing to various destinations and leaving their home in Shammar; among them were the followers of Abū al-Nu'mān, who chose to settle in parts as distant from Shammar as Ḥawrān and Abā'ir in Byzantine Oriens. This is also consistent with the historical fact that part of Ṭayyi', namely, Jadīla, earlier in the sixth century and during the reign of Arethas (A.D. 529–569) left Shammar and settled in Byzantine Oriens in the region of Qinnasrīn/Chalcis.

Abū al-Nu'mān, therefore, may safely be assumed to be a member of the Ṭayyi' tribe whose sons left their home in Shammar and settled in Byzantine Oriens. This is a gain for Ghassānid history. These verses provide new important

[166] On Bāyir/Abā'ir, Ubayr, see above, 225.

[167] See above, 236.

[168] *Dīwān,* 277, verse 23, in which the poet threatens that his subdivision, al-Gawth, might emigrate to the territory of Maḏḥij in South Arabia.

data on the tribal structure of the multitribal federate Arab phylarchate in Oriens: the Ṭayyi' formed an important part of it, and in addition to the contingent settled in Qinnasrīn during the reign of Arethas, there was a new one distributed between Ḥawrān and Abā'ir in the south, possibly intentionally, lest the Ṭayyi' should grow too strong in numbers if they congregated at one place within the phylarchate.

B

A second cluster of verses that reflect a Ghassānid profile comes at the end of the poem.[169] The poet belonged to the subdivision of Ṭayyi' called al-Gawth, which unlike the other major subdivision, Jadīla, had stayed in Shammar and did not emigrate to Byzantine Oriens. The seven-verse cluster consists of two parts: the poet addresses one group in the first verse and another in the following six verses. In the first verse, which is especially informative on Ghassānid-Ṭayyi' relations, he addresses a group he had apparently addressed earlier in the poem. This particular group was evidently preparing to leave Shammar and trek to a place called Diyāf, which move the poet is deprecating. The verse repays careful analysis.

The toponym Diyāf luckily has survived in Yāqūt in his *Mu'jam.*[170] This clearly indicates that it was not an obscure Arabian locality but one that the group Ṭayyi' found attractive to emigrate to; hence the Byzantine and Ghassānid profile of the verse. This group of the Ṭayyi' opted for Byzantine Oriens. Diyāf is in the Ḥawrān region, evidence of the attraction the Byzantine connection had for the Arab pastoralists in the peninsula. The toponym, as indicated in Yāqūt on the strength of Umayyad verses, was located in the Ḥawrān region. It has survived to the present day, identified with modern Defyane on the eastern side of the Ḥawrān region, east of Bousan.[171] The verse links up with the former verse discussed in connection with Abū al-Nu'mān, whose sons had settled in Ḥawrān. So a part of Ṭayyi' had already been established in Ḥawrān, and another group was preparing to join them; their destination is precisely indicated not only as the district of Ḥawrān, but a locality called Diyāf. The presumption is that the new group, ready to emigrate, had a natural desire to join their fellow tribesmen in Ḥawrān at the same locality or area the other group had settled in.

Yāqūt's description of Diyāf as a place known for its camels and swords is consistent with its being a military station in which federate troops such as the Ṭayyi' were stationed for the defense of the frontier against the raids of the nomads. A verse in one of the Umayyad poets could suggest that it may have been known for its wines. The toponym as a federate station, like Zughar (Zoar) and

[169] *Dīwān,* 277–78, verses 26–32.

[170] See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam,* II, 494–95.

[171] See Dussaud, *Topographie,* 352. For some Greek inscriptions found there, one of which includes the Arabic name Abjar, see PPUAES, III.A, 90–91.

Ma'āb (Areopolis), is known solely from Ḥātim, reflecting his importance as a source for Ghassānid and federate toponymy and the tribal structure of the phylarchate of the Orient, presided over by the Ghassānids.

The following six verses in the cluster are addressed to the subdivision of Ṭayyi' called Jadīla, with whom the poet's own subdivision, al-Gawth, had been almost always on bad terms. In the poem, Ḥātim appears in a mood hostile to Jadīla. The Ghassānid relevance of these verses consists in the fact that after Ḥarb al-Fasād, which was terminated by Ghassānid diplomacy, Jadīla declared for the Ghassānids and emigrated to the region of Qinnasrīn in Oriens.[172] Thus they became *foederati* of the Inner Shield, but apparently some or many of them stayed on in Shammar. After the death of Arethas, the old internecine feud flared up between these two subdivisions of Ṭayyi', as the verses of this second cluster indicate.

Ḥātim's poem recording Ghassānid-Ṭayyi' relations is an important document for the study of the tribal policy of the Ghassānids and their dealings with the Arab groups of the Outer Shield—tribes living outside the Byzantine frontier but friendly through Ghassānid diplomacy. Arethas had tried to impose a *pax Ghassānica* in order to guard the Byzantine frontier better against the raids of the pastoralists, but this could easily be disturbed, as in fact it was after his death, and the poem reflects it. This was a world the Byzantine *dux* could not handle well; hence the wisdom of leaving it to those who could—the Ghassānids. Ṭayyi' Christianity was a bond that united them with the Ghassānids, making them more amenable to Ghassānid influence.[173]

A Triplet on the Ghassānids, a *Nūniyya*

In the *Dīwān* of Ḥātim there is a triplet composed by another member of the tribe of Ṭayyi' after the battle of Yawm Uwāra in which the Lakhmid king 'Amr ibn Hind attacked a group of Ṭayyi', captured their men, and put them in chains.[174] The triplet reflects the Arab perception of the Ghassānids and the edge they had over the Lakhmids in that perception, as faithful and loyal to their allies and neighbors, unlike the Lakhmids. The triplet, which rhymes in *N*, may be assigned to A.D. 554–569, the period during which the Lakhmid 'Amr ruled Ḥīra. In the first verse, the Ghassānid is referred to as Ibn Jafna, which may be the generic name for the Ghassānid dynasty after the eponym Jafna or it may be a true

[172] On Ḥarb al-Fasād, see above, 253.

[173] Verse 29 in this poem refers to al-Ilāh, God, who, the poet says, will be on the side of his group, al-Gawth, against Jadīla, and the poet swears by "God, the Mighty," *al-'Azīz,* in another poem; *Dīwān,* 278, verse 3.

[174] *Dīwān,* 325. The triplet contains no toponyms, but it is analyzed here in this section on the *Dīwān* of Ḥātim in which it occurs. Its references to food and clothes will be discussed in *BASIC* II.2.

patronymic, which would indicate that his father was called Jafna. The former alternative is likely to be correct, since no Jafna is known in reliable sources to have attained fame in this late period. However, the appellation Ibn Jafna as a general name for the dynasty suggests that their description as Jafnids in this period is correct.

The third verse is more informative, as it mentions the gifts the Ghassānids used to give their guests, pastoralists who would visit them from the Arabian Peninsula: gold, which is likely to be Byzantine *solidi,* which the Arabs admired and prized;[175] *rayṭ,* expensive cloth that was light, soft, and fragrant (*rādiʿ*), luxury articles familiar to the Ghassānids who lived in the urban environment of Oriens;[176] and *jifān,* platters of food with the implication of haute cuisine, unlike the customary fare of the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula. The Arabic sources give special recognition to *tharīdat* Ghassān, a dish for which the Ghassānids were famous.[177]

V. Imruʾ al-Qays

The foremost poet of this period came to Oriens after many wanderings in Arabia. In addition to visiting Ghassānland, Imruʾ al-Qays traveled through the entire valley of the Orontes.[178] The former he referred to in various poems in his *Dīwān,* while the latter he mentioned in one of his odes, which describes his journey from Ḥawrān in the south to the Cilician Gates in the north, while on his way to Constantinople.[179]

Ghassānland

Four of the toponyms included in the Muʿallaqa, his famous "Suspended Ode," are claimed for Oriens, but this is far from certain, and they are obscure

[175] Their admiration for the *denarius* and its craftsmanship was reflected in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, although it was the *solidus* that was the standard gold coin since the days of Constantine.

[176] *Rayṭ* (plural of *rayṭa*) denotes fine soft cloth for which Bilād al-Shām was famous in this period. The relatives of the Ghassānids, the Ḥārithids of Najrān, were also celebrated for their textiles. Silk became more plentiful and popular after the introduction of the silkworm from China to Byzantium and Oriens during the reign of Justinian. *Rayṭ* was apparently so attractive that it lent its name to Arab women and so entered the Arab female onomasticon. For Arab women who bore that name, see Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat,* index, 682. For the *Rayṭ al-Shām* and *Dibāj al-Rūm* as choice cloth, see Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab* (Cairo, 1964), I, 369.

[177] The *tharīda* was a soup of sopped bread and meat; for its association with the Ghassānids, see Abu Manṣūr al-Nīsābūrī, *Thimār al-Qulūb* (Cairo, 1965), 122–23. On Arab food, see G. J. van Gelder, *God's Banquet. Food in Classical Arabic Literature* (New York, 1999).

[178] For a short account of his life, see *El*[2], s.v. Imruʾ al-Qays. For a charming chapter on him and his famous Muʿallaqa, or "Suspended Ode," see A. J. Arberry, *The Seven Odes* (London, 1957), 31–66.

[179] For the *Dīwān,* see *Dīwān Imruʾ al-Qays,* ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1958); for manuscripts, editions, and critical studies on the poet, see Sezgin, *GAS,* II, 122–26.

localities.[180] More important is the reference to Adriʿāt in one of his well-known and authentic odes; this place is in Batanaea/Bathaniyya and thus in Ghassānland.[181] The reference suggests that the poet was actually in the town and did not merely see it from a distance. More important is his reference to Bostra in a verse that says his companion on his journey from Arabia to Oriens (named al-Ḥārith al-Sulamī) died and was buried "within Bostra."[182] If authentic, this could indicate an Arab presence in the capital of the Provincia Arabia and may be added to other indications in the source which support such a presumption.

Most important, however, is his reference to Usays in a poem he wrote toward the end of his life in Anatolia.[183] The verse is not clear, but it is clear enough. The poet is sad that he is going to die away from his country and his people and wishes that the *manāya,* "the Fates," had pounced on him in Usays.[184] The mountain of Usays had a military station of which the Ghassānids were in charge. The inscription that referred to Ibn al-Mughīra as the officer appointed by the commander in chief of the federate forces in Oriens to be in charge of it has been analyzed.[185] The name of the station as Sulaymān has been confirmed in Ptolemy's *Geography.*[186] As Imruʾ al-Qays took the Wādī Sirḥān route from Taymāʾ to Oriens, it is quite possible that he met the Ghassānids in the region of Usays (which would have been natural for one who took that route) rather than in the Golan. Whether the Ghassānids had at Usays a court for receiving visitors, especially from

[180] They are al-Dakhūl, Ḥawmal, Tūḍiḥ, and al-Miqrāt, for which see *Dīwān,* 8. The historian of Damascus, Ibn ʿAsākir, says these four are in Bilād al-Shām and well known in the Ḥawrān/Auranitis region; see *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq,* ed. M. Sāghirjī and A. Ḥammāmī (Damascus, 1984), V, 33. But see Ibn Bulayhid, *Saḥīḥ al-Akhbār,* I, 16–17, who argues that they are all in Arabia. It is noteworthy that the tribe of Kalb in Oriens claims that the first five verses in the Suspended Ode were composed by their own poet, Ibn Ḥizām/Ḥidām. If so, these toponyms could have been in Oriens. On this, see Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat,* 456. The same may be said of a mountain called al-Mujaymir in the Suspended Ode, which is claimed for Arabia and yet there is a hill by that name in Oriens, in Batanaea, which I saw and photographed. For al-Mujaymir in the *Dīwān,* see p. 25 and note 72 on its presumed Arabian location. The *Dīwān* also refers to Antiochene clothes, *Anṭākiyya,* which the women of a caravan were wearing; *Dīwān,* 43.

[181] *Dīwān,* 31, verse 2; on Adriʿāt Derʿā, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* 322–26. For the meaning of Ghassānland in this volume, see above, xxxiv. There was a Ghassānid presence in Bathaniyya/Batanaea, represented by such localities as al-Khammān, and it is in this sense that Bathaniyya is referred to as Ghassānland in the text.

[182] *Dīwān,* 347; on Bostra in the poetry of Mutalammis, see below, 266.

[183] *Dīwān,* 214.

[184] The reference to *manāya* occurs on p. 213 but in the singular, *maniyya.* As understood by the commentator (*Dīwān,* 214 note 7), the verb *wāfaqtuhunna* in verse 2, p. 214, with its plural suffix, refers to *maniyya* in the last verse (p. 213), where *maniyya* in the singular could be read *manāya* in the plural without any metrical difficulty.

Usays is the name of a mountain that is still known as such, Jabal Usays, colloquially Seis, about 100 km southeast of Damascus.

[185] See *BASIC* I.1, 117–24.

[186] See H. I. MacAdam, "A Note on the Usays (Jabal Says) Inscription," *Al-Abḥāth* 44 (1996), 51–55.

the Arabian Peninsula, is not clear but is likely. However, a reference in a poet of the Umayyad period, ʿAdiyy ibn al-Riqāʿ, could suggest that they did. In his poem on the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd, he refers to the gift the caliph made to him on Yawm Usays, "the Day of Usays," namely, a number of camels.[187] The clear implication that Walīd held court there is confirmed by the archaeological evidence for the Umayyad period. The Umayyad caliph used the region as one of his residences.[188] The Umayyads took over the Ghassānid establishments in the limitrophe, so it is possible that Usays, which the Umayyads also took over, had been so used in Ghassānid times and that the Umayyad occupation of it was a continuation of the Ghassānid.

The presence of Imruʾ al-Qays at Usays adds one more to the number of poets that flocked to the Ghassānids, but whether the poet composed any panegyrics on his Ghassānid relatives is not known. However, the reference in his *Dīwān* to Usays is valuable as it enables the literary-epigraphic confrontation to be made for Usays as a Ghassānid establishment. The Usays inscription and the *Dīwān* of Imruʾ al-Qays confirm each other.[189]

The Orontes Valley

Even more important than the poems just discussed is a long poem—a *rāʾiyya,* that is, a poem that rhymes in *R*—that might be termed the Caesar Ode in view of the reference to Caesar/*Qayṣar* (i.e., Justinian), in one of its verses.[190] The poet had requested an audience with the emperor in Constantinople, and the poem describes his journey to that destination. The poem, which does not lag far behind the Muʿallaqa aesthetically, is the *pièce de résistance* in the *Dīwān.*[191] Historically it is a mine of information for the history of Arab-Byzantine relations, especially for some Arab presence in the Orontes valley in Oriens.

As has been indicated, the Ghassānids did not extend to him the assistance he had hoped for; thus the poem significantly omits reference to them[192] and

[187] See *The Dīwān of ʿAdiyy ibn-al-Riqāʿ,* ed. N. al-Qaysī and Ḥ. al-Dāmin (Baghdad, 1987), 157.

[188] Most recently excavated and discussed by Klaus Brisch; see above, 187.

[189] For more on Usays in the context of the Byzantine defense system in Oriens, see above, 42.

[190] For the poem, numbered 4, see *Dīwān,* 56–71. Also the text in Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* 128–31 and the variant reading, pp. 63–65.

[191] In his work on the Muʿallaqāt, Nöldeke left out that of Imruʾ al-Qays, no doubt because he wanted to comment on those that were historically, and not only aesthetically, significant. He naturally did not comment on this poem, the *rāʾiyya,* since it was not one of the Muʿallaqāt. For an English version of Imruʾ al-Qays' splendid Muʿallaqa, see A. J. Arberry, trans., *The Seven Odes* (London, 1957), 61–66.

[192] Except in the amatory prelude, where he refers to a lady by the name of Sulayma in the opening verse of the ode and to Ghassān in the second, but only to indicate that Sulayma was a neighbor of the Ghassānids. The description is accurate when he refers to her as a Kināniyya. The editor of the *Dīwān,* M. Ibrāhīm, misunderstood Kināna to be the tribe in Tihama (Ḥijāz).

concentrates on describing his journey from Auranitis/Ḥawrān to the Cilician Gates, the first leg of his trip to Constantinople. Apparently the ode suffered much in the process of transmission, especially in the order of verses, but this is of concern more to the literary critic than to the toponymist.[193] The verses relevant to Arab-Byzantine relations will be commented upon, mainly as they relate to the toponymy and topography of the region.[194]

1. Ḥawrān. This region among those that relate to Ghassān in Oriens appears in one of the verses, although the Ghassānids are conspicuous by their absence.[195] Ḥawrān represents in his itinerary the starting point whence he proceeds to Anatolia through the valley of the Orontes. Appropriately to the failure of his mission to enlist the assistance of the Ghassānids, he speaks of the mirage in connection with Ḥawrān, which may possibly have some implication to his disappointment in the Ghassānids.[196]

2. Madāfiʿ Qayṣar. The phrase occurs in a verse in which he says that he and his party traveled fifteen nights, presumably to reach the Cilician Gates.[197] Qayṣar, the Arabic word for Caesar, stands as always for the Roman emperor. *Madāfiʿ*, the plural of *madfaʿ,* is the noun of place from the verb *dafaʿa,* "to push away, to defend," and so presumably the place whence the Roman army defends Roman territory, no doubt a reference to the line of forts and military stations of the frontier.[198]

3. Baalbek/Heliopolis. This is the first city that he mentions in the Ode.[199] It was visited later in the century by another poet, ʿAmr ibn-Kulthūm, the chief

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But the Kināna meant here is that of Kalb, which lived in Oriens and was close to Ghassān; the further reference to the group Yaʿmur (verse 2) corroborates this since it was a subdivision of Kalb; see Ibn Durayd, *al-Ishtiqāq,* ed. A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1958), p. 14, 540; also Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat,* 456.

[193] The internal rhyme of the two hemistichs in verse 46 of the ode (*Dīwān,* p. 69) could even suggest that this long ode may have been originally two separate poems of the same meter and rhyme that were put together in the process of transmission as one long ode. In Ibrāhīm's *Dīwān,* the ode has fifty-four verses, in Ahlwardt's *Divāns* sixty.

[194] For the cities mentioned in the ode, see A. H. M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (Oxford, 1971) esp. 260–62, 266–67. For these cities in the medieval period, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* 592–96, 598, 604. In addition to such Byzantine authors as Hierocles and George of Cyprus, which Jones used in his work for the Byzantine period, Dussaud used the medieval Arab geographers such as Ibn Khurdādbeh and Yāqūt extensively and well. These two works of Jones and Dussaud are fundamental for providing a background for discussing the cities of the Orontes mentioned in the ode. Hence the reader should refer to these works for background material.

[195] *Dīwān,* 61, verse 4.

[196] The term used by the poet is not *sarāb,* the common one for "mirage," the Fata Morgana of the Arabs, but the term *āl.* For the distinction between the two, see G. J. H. van Gelder, s.v. sarāb, *EI*², IX, 27.

[197] *Dīwān,* 69, verse 2. A variant reading, *mawāqi*ʿ, plural of *mawqi*ʿ, "place," is not as good. It is too general to mean anything in particular; see Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* p. 63 of the *apparatus criticus.*

[198] Other terms in the Arabic military lexicon of this pre-Islamic period are *ḥīra* and *maslaḥa/musaylaḥa/musayliḥa;* see above, 65, 66.

[199] *Dīwān,* 68, verse 1.

of the Taghlib tribe, who refers to the cup of wine he quaffed there.[200] So when two Arab poets independently speak of Baalbek as a place they visited, it is safe to conclude that there was some Arab presence in it in the sixth century. Imru' al-Qays adds further that Baalbek did not receive him well, probably for the same reason that the Ḥimyarites had not: his alcoholism.[201] This additional specificity confirms the conclusion that the poet did in fact visit Baalbek and that the city was not just another name he strung in the list of cities he may have heard about or seen from a distance.

4. Even more significant is his reference to the bad treatment he received in Ḥimṣ/Emesa; he mentions not only the city itself but also an Arab named Ibn Jurayj, who snubbed him.[202] The city's Arabness goes back to ancient and Roman times and was reflected most clearly in the first half of the third century when the empresses of the Severan dynasty were Arab women from Emesa with Arab names.[203] The survival of this Arab character of the city through the Byzantine period is also reflected in the treaty the Muslim Arab commander Abū 'Ubayda concluded with its inhabitants in 635–636; the covenant he wrote was addressed to an Emesa that was tripartite ethnically, composed of Romans, Persians, and Arabs.[204] Just before the end of the Byzantine period, another Arab poet, al-A'shā, visited the city; the clear implication is that it was ethnically Arab, at least in part.[205]

The visit of this prince of Kinda's royal house to Ḥimṣ raises the question whether Kindite Arabs were settled in the city. Around A.D. 530, Byzantine diplomacy arranged for the Kindite chief Qays to accept the *hēgemonia* of Palestine, and many Kindites emigrated with him to Oriens.[206] Some may have been settled in Ḥimṣ itself, far though it was from Palestine. Finally, the Arab commander who was in charge of military operations against Ḥimṣ during the Muslim conquest was a Kindite by the name of al-Simṭ ibn al-Aswad al-Kindī,[207] but whether this was significant in this context is not entirely clear.

[200] On 'Amr, see below, 270.

[201] See *Dīwān,* 111, verse 11.

[202] *Dīwān,* 68, verse 1.

[203] On this, see the present writer in *Rome and the Arabs* (Washington, D.C., 1984), 33–36 and C. Chad, *Les dynastes d' Émèse* (Beirut, 1972).

[204] See Balādurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān,* ed. S. al-Munajjid (Cairo, n.d.), 154. The Persians in Ḥimṣ may have been remnants of those who came to Oriens during the Persian occupation of the diocese, A.D. 614–629. They are attested in the sources during the caliphate of Mu'āwiya (ibid., 175). It is noteworthy that only the covenant with Ḥimṣ of all the cities of the Orontes explicitly refers to an Arab presence in it, sure sign of a strong Arab component.

[205] On al-A'shā's visit to Ḥimṣ, see below, 273. Thus three pre-Islamic Arab poets visited Ḥimṣ: Imru' al-Qays, A'shā, and 'Amr ibn Kulthūm.

[206] On Kinda in Oriens, see *BASIC* I.1, 148–60. Balādurī says that a group of Arabs was in Caesarea Maritima when it was conquered by the Muslim Arabs (*Futūḥ al-Buldān,* 168); perhaps they belonged to Kinda, which came with Qays to Palestine around 530.

[207] Balādurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān,* 155. It is relevant to mention in this connection that the historian Ya'qūbī, writing in the 9th century, states that the inhabitants of Ḥimṣ then were South Arabians of whom Kinda was a component; see Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān,* ed. de Goeje (Leiden, 1892), 324.

The Arabness of Ibn Jurayj is further confirmed by the use of the patronymic "son of Jurayj" rather than his name. He is the last Emesene Arab mentioned in the sources for the pre-Islamic period, after such names of the Severan empresses as Dimna, Maesia, and Soamias.[208] Noteworthy is the preservation of the name in Islamic times from the pre-Islamic Arab onomasticon: such was the name of the *ḥadīth* scholar of Ḥijāz, 'Abd al-Malik ibn-Jurayj. As for Ḥimṣ' rejection of the poet, the cause was probably his alcoholism as well as the amorous propensities for which he was noted.[209] The specificity that informs this reference to Ibn Jurayj confirms the authenticity of the ode as does his candor in not concealing the fact of his rejection.

5. Ḥamāt/Epiphania and Shayzar/Larissa are mentioned in the same verse, apparently as the last two large cities he visited on the Orontes.[210] The verse suggests that he had a good time there ("al-lubānāt wa al-hawā") with no friction between him and the inhabitants. He simply says that the bonds of love were snapped in the evening when he and his party left Ḥamāt and Shayzar. Again the implication is that there was an Arab community in the two cities with which he established intimate rapport. It is noteworthy that Shayzar received the Arab Muslim conquerors with open arms in A.D. 638, perhaps partly due to the Arab element in Shayzar/Larissa.[211]

6. Tādif is mentioned by the poet as a place where he had a good time, *yawm ṣāliḥ,* unlike his days in Baalbek and Ḥimṣ.[212] The town still exists in northern Syria in the district of Aleppo. The details he gives on its location and its vicinity are surprisingly accurate. He refers to it as a place with a *tall,* a hill in a region called Ṭarṭar, and indeed all these topographical features are to be seen in present-day Tādif.[213]

7. Qudārān is an obscure place the location of which is not pinned down by the geographers, who state circularly that it is a place that occurs in the poetry of Imru' al-Qays. The poet says that he found himself and his party there as if they had been on the horn of a white gazelle, a manner of saying that he was in a difficult position.[214]

[208] From the root S-Ḥ-M the Arabic onomasticon can count two names, Soamias (Suḥayma), the Severan empress, and Sohaemus (Suḥaym), the well-known Emesene historical personage. Suḥaym survived as a name into Islamic times.

[209] *Dīwān,* 111, verse 11; 12, verse 2.

[210] *Dīwān,* 62, verse 1. In Ahlwardt, *Divāns,* Ḥamāt is mentioned again in the following verse, p. 130, verse 11.

[211] See Balāḏurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān,* 156. What Ya'qūbī reported of Ḥimṣ and its inhabitants in the 9th century was also said of Shayzar, that its inhabitants were Kindites; Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān,* 324. On reference to Ḥamāt and Shayzar in Umayyad poetry, see below, 304.

[212] *Dīwān,* 70, verse 3.

[213] Ṭarṭar is now pronounced Ṭalṭal. Tādif had a Jewish community whose synagogue I visited in June 1994. Perhaps it goes back to pre-Islamic times. If it did, this might explain the poet's stay in it. A portion of Kinda in South Arabia had adopted Judaism, and this might explain the welcome accorded him as in Jewish Taymā', while he was still in Arabia.

[214] *Dīwān,* 70, verse 4.

8. Barbaʿīs and Maysar are two toponyms he mentions when referring to his horses, which remembered their home in these places.[215] Whether these were places in Oriens or Arabia is not clear, and the Arab geographers are not helpful.

9. Al-Sājūr is one of the affluents of the Euphrates. The poet apparently crossed it or saw it and was inspired to indulge in a simile.[216] When he saw its rushing, foaming waters, he likened what he saw to the paintings on a ceiling supported by marble columns. The poet, whose paternal aunt left the famous Dayr Hind inscription in Ḥīra in the monastery she had established,[217] had obviously seen frescoes on walls or ceilings in Christian churches, which enabled him to conceive the simile.

Of the list of toponyms in their Semitic form referred to in this Caesar Ode, the most important are Baalbek/Heliopolis, Ḥimṣ/Emesa, Ḥamāt/Epiphania, and Shayzar/Larissa. The visit of the foremost poet of pre-Islamic Arabia, Imruʾ al-Qays, the scion of a phylarchal royal family in treaty relationship to Byzantium, suggests that Inner Oriens, the valley of the Orontes, both the upper and the middle, retained segments of some Arab presence in the sixth century and that Arabic was not entirely extinct in these cities.

VI. Al-Mutalammis

Four poems in the *Dīwān* relate to the Ghassānids directly or indirectly, plus two fragments.[218] In these he appears as a refugee from Ḥīra and its Lakhmid rulers, and so he calls on his powerful tribe of Bakr to fight the Lakhmid king ʿAmr ibn Hind, a welcome call to arms against the inveterate enemies of his Ghassānid hosts. The two terms al-Shām (Oriens) and al-ʿIrāq (Babylonia) appear in these poems as the territories of the two rival dynasties, the Ghassānids and the Lakh-

[215] *Dīwān,* 70, verse 2. The geographers are not helpful since they simply say they are places mentioned in the poem of Imruʾ al-Qays. Dr. Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Maymanī informs me that the two toponyms appear in the *Dīwān* of al-Aḥmar al-Bāhilī.

The same verse in which these two toponyms are mentioned is quoted by Yāqūt with a different hemistich in which a new toponymy, Tall Māsiḥ, appears. According to Yāqūt (*Muʿjam,* II, 43), it is a village near Aleppo. Tall Māsiḥ was the second station on the route of Sayf al-Dawla, the Ḥamdānid prince of Aleppo in the 10th century, on his way from al-Rāmūsa to al-Raqqa on the Euphrates; see Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* II, 629.

[216] *Dīwān,* 58, verse 3. The name of the river appears in the verse as al-Sājūm, but it should be al-Sājūr. When I visited the region in 1994 and saw the river, my guide told me that some years before, its waters were more plentiful and its flow could be torrential, exactly as the poet speaks of "the foaming Sājūm." The length of the al-Sājūr River in its entirety from its source in Anatolia is 108 km, and its length in Syria is about 48 km; see the hydrographic chart of the Euphrates and its Syrian affluents in ʿĀdil ʿAbd al-Salām, *al-Aqalīm al-Jugrāfiyya al-Sūriyya* (Damascus, 1990), 28. It flows north of Manbij/Hierapolis and meets the Euphrates near Tall al-Aḥmar.

[217] For this inscription, see the present writer in "The Authenticity of Pre-Islamic Poetry: The Linguistic Dimension," *al-Abḥāth* 44 (1996), 11.

[218] The *Dīwān,* first edited and published by K. Vollers (Leipzig, 1903), has been reedited by H. K. al Ṣayrafī, *Dīwān Shiʿr al-Mutalammis* (Cairo, 1970) with praise for the work of his Austrian predecessor. Ṣayrafī's edition is used in this section and referred to as *Dīwān.* The poems and fragments in question are poems 4, 6, 12, 15 and fragments 1 and 35.

mids respectively; the former, al-Shām, is once referred to as the Gharb, the Occident.[219] In this chapter on Ghassānid toponymy, one poem and one fragment have primary significance.[220]

Poem 4

The poem, which rhymes in *S*, describes his journey on his mount from Iraq to al-Shām, in the manner of the Arab pre-Islamic poet. After lampooning the Lakhmids, he remembers the Ghassānids well and makes reference to Ghassānid toponyms.[221] Verse 6 describes his arrival in Ghassānid territory in Bilād al-Shām and how his mount responded in the quiet of the night, entranced by the sound of bells. As the ancient commentator noted, these peals were associated with the Christian Ghassānids, builders of churches and monasteries. Shortly after the poet arrived there, a contemporary Syriac source revealed the existence of 137 Monophysite monasteries in this region.[222]

In line 11, the poet introduces the names of the two regions that later became conjugates in Arabic, al-ʿIrāq and al-Shaʾām, relating them to the new patrons, the Ghassānids, as opposed to the old ones he left behind, the Lakhmids. In line 12 he addresses his mount and refers to both ʿAmr ibn Hind, the Lakhmid king, and his brother, Ḳābūs. This is internal evidence that the poem was composed during the reign of the former, A.D. 554–569. In line 16 he ridicules the Lakhmid king, saying that the crops are so plentiful in al-Shām that there is enough not only for men but also for *sūs* ("woodworms"). He also refers to al-Qarya, a Ghassānid toponym. The reference to the abundance of crops, of course, indicates the fertility of the regions—Ḥawrān and Bathaniyya—in which the poet found himself.

Line 17 is the most informative on toponymy.[223] The poet refers to Buṣrā/Bostra, Dimashq/Damascus, and possibly to Farādis. As in the poems of Ḥassān, the implication is that these toponyms are related to the Ghassānids in some way, but the poet does not explicitly say so. This, however, is easily arguable. In the case of Bostra, the Arabic sources associate the poet with Bostra, where he and his son, also a poet, by the name of ʿAbd al-Mannān, lived and died.[224] In the case of

[219] *Dīwān,* fragment 1, p. 267. Gharb is only one among several readings.

[220] The other poems contain reference to toponyms irrelevant to the Ghassānids, but one has Ghāwa, which the commentators describe as a place in al-Shām or in Yamāma in eastern Arabia. However, the sources do not indicate exactly where Ghāwa is. For Ghāwa, see poem 6, p. 147, line 3.

[221] Ibid., poem 4; for the text, see pp. 76–102. It is a poem of twenty-two verses; the relevant ones are verses 6, 11, 12, 16, and 17.

[222] On the 137 monasteries of the region referred to in a Syriac document dated A.D. 570, see *BASIC* I.2, 824–38. The Syriac list does not include the Dyophysite monasteries, which in numbers must at least have equaled those of the Monophysites.

[223] For the verse, see *Dīwān,* 97.

[224] On Bostra as a residence for the poet and his son, see Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shiʿr wa al-Shuʿarāʾ,* ed. A. M. Shākir (Cairo, 1966), I, 182; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat,* 293.

Damascus, another contemporary poet, ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm, spoke of time spent there in carousing; the natural presumption is that the poet could do that because there was in Damascus an Arab community or some Arab presence.[225] Neither Damascus nor Bostra was a Ghassānid city or capital since these were the seats of the Byzantine civil and military governors of Phoenicia Libanensis and Arabia, but the Ghassānid federates must have had some presence there, especially after the elevation of the Ghassānid phylarch in A.D. 529 to the *basileia* and the *archiphylarchia,* as will be argued later.

The reading "Farādis" is only one among other readings of this word in the verse.[226] Although it is not certain that it is the correct reading, a good case can be made for it: it comes after Bostra and immediately after Damascus. One of the gates of this city was called Bāb al-Farādis, "the Gate of Farādis," as it faced that place, which the sources locate in al-Shām, possibly even in Damascene.

The second hemistich of a fragmentary verse attributed to al-Mutalammis refers to the well-known Ghassān-related town Jalliq.[227] The hemistich has a comminatory tone and expresses pride in the poet's ability in poetic discourse, namely, that he is eloquent and is no stutterer. What is important is the reference to Jalliq. While the poet's association with Bostra is only implied in the *sīniyya* poem (no. 4), his association with Jalliq is clearly expressed in this fragment, since Jalliq is preceded by the preposition *bi* ("in"), suggesting that the poet stayed in the town and did not merely see it from the outside.[228]

The association of Mutalammis with Bostra is confirmed by that of his son, ʿAbd al-Mannān. Although not much has survived on the son in the sources, there is enough to suggest that Mutalammis, through the Ghassānids, did establish some presence in Bostra. This is reflected in the minimal information that has survived about his son: he too was a poet, his name was the unusual ʿAbd al-Mannān, he lived long enough to span both the Islamic and pre-Islamic periods, and he died childless in Bostra.[229]

As, according to the sources, ʿAbd al-Mannān lived the latter part of his life in the Islamic period, he must have been born not long after or before the arrival

[225] On ʿAmr ibn-Kulthūm and the Ghassānid presence in Damascus, see below, 269–270.

[226] See *Dīwān,* 97–99 for the commentary of Ṣayrafī on the word and for the two other readings, *kadādīs* and *karādīs.* For Farādis near Damascus, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* IV, 242–43. It is noteworthy that in two of the verses of the Umayyad poet Jarīr, the sound of bells and Bāb al-Farādis are mentioned together; see al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* I, 349.

[227] See *Dīwān,* fragment 35, p. 314.

[228] On Jalliq as a Ghassānid town, see above, 107–8.

[229] See above, note 224.

of his father in Bilād-al-Shām.[230] As a poet living in Bostra and the son of a Ghassānid panegyrist, he must have composed poetry on the Ghassānids, which has not survived. This is a veritable loss in view of the fact that he spent almost the whole of his life in Bilād al-Shām, unlike others from Arabia who would come for a short time to eulogize the Ghassānids; moreover, he was a resident poet among the Ghassānids, the patrons of his father and probably of himself as well. His poetry then would possibly have revealed the private life of the Ghassānids on which the sources are not very informative and would have been a source on Ghassānid toponymy.[231]

VII. ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm

The *Muʿallaqa* of ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm, one of the famous Suspended Odes (*Muʿallaqāt*) of pre-Islamic Arabia, contains four toponyms, all of which belong to Oriens. They appear in the *exordium* of the poem, which some critics think may have been an independent poem. It is an attractive wine lyric of sixth-century vintage, and the four toponyms mentioned in it are presented in the context of a visit by the poet. Three of them he explicitly mentions as places where he drank wine, while one, Andarīn, is referred to as a place whose wine he would like to taste.[232]

1. Andarīn. In the first verse, he calls on a maiden to offer him wine from Andarīn. The phrase is "Khumūr al-Andarīn" ("the wines of Andarīn"). This clearly implies that Andarīn, like other towns in Oriens, was noted for its wines. The toponym is preceded by the definite article, which may have been attached

[230] This took place before A.D. 569 when the Lakhmid ʿAmr ibn-Hind was killed by ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm. According to *Aghānī,* ʿAbd al-Mannān was addressed in a poem by his father before he left for al-Shām; *Dīwān,* 198–99.

[231] The name ʿAbd al-Mannān is noteworthy, and it is not clear whether this was his name in the pre-Islamic period given him by his father or a name he adopted in the Islamic period. The name is theophoric and can be either Christian or Muslim. Mutalammis' father had the pagan theophoric name ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā, which on his conversion to Christianity became, according to one account, ʿAbd al-Masīḥ, "the servant of the Messiah," the common Christian name especially in Ḥīra among its Christians, the *ʿibād.* Al-Mannān means the gracious benefactor and is one of the attributes of God in the Koran. If the poet was given the name ʿAbd al-Mannān in pre-Islamic times, the name would be a new one in the onomasticon of Christian Arabs before the rise of Islam.

[232] For ʿAmr, see Sezgin, *GAS,* II, 128–29. For the text of the *Muʿallaqa,* see the well-known medieval commentary of H. al-Zawzanī, *Sharḥ al-Muʿallaqat al-Sabʿ al-Ṭiwāl,* ed. O. Ṭabbāʿ (Beirut, 1995), 189–93. For the *exordium,* the wine lyric in which the four toponyms are mentioned, see p. 189, verses 1–7. The medieval commentator has no interest in the toponyms.

For a delightful work on these poems with studies on their poets, on pre-Islamic poetry in general, and translations of the Arabic texts, see A. J. Arberry, *The Seven Odes* (London, 1957). For the chapter on ʿAmr, see 185–209. For a learned commentary and a translation into German, see T. Nöldeke, *Fünf Moʿallaqat* (Vienna, 1899–1905), 13 ff. Nöldeke (ibid., 13–14) believed that the *exordium* does not belong to it but is an independent poem of ʿAmr's, a matter more the concern of the literary critic and irrelevant to the toponymist.

to it for metrical reasons. The town was situated south of Beroea/Aleppo. The Arabic source, Yāqūt, quotes another, al-Azharī, on its vineyards.[233] It was apparently known to the pre-Islamic Arabs, since the adjective formed from it, *Andariyy,* occurs in the verses of five other pre-Islamic poets, where it is related to strong well-turned ropes, for which the town was apparently well known, presumably because of their relevance to the mounts the poets rode.[234]

These references to Andarīn, whether as a wine- or a rope-producing town, suggest that it was well known to the pre-Islamic Arabs who came from the peninsula and who stopped there to buy and sell. Andarīn was situated in the eastern part of Oriens, very close to the Syrian desert, and the presumption is that it had an Arab element among its population. Whether it was also a military station of the Ghassānids is not clear, but because of its eastern location, it could have been.[235] The other three toponyms occur in the fourth verse. The wording suggests that the poet actually visited them and drank wine. It is not clear, not even by implication, whether these cities were wine-producing or whether he only drank wine in their taverns.

2. Dimashq. This is the Arabic Semitic word for Damascus, which, with Emesa, was one of the two major cities of the province of Phoenicia Libanensis. It became the capital of the jund of Dimashq in early Islamic times and then the capital of the Umayyad empire. The family of the Arab saint John of Damascus came from Damascus going back to pre-Islamic times.[236] Although not an Arab foundation, it became part of the Nabataean state under Arethas.[237] The visit of

[233] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* I, 260–61. Yāqūt says that it is the last inhabited spot in that area, so it must have bordered on the desert. Even in Yāqūt's time, it was already in ruins and nothing was to be seen other than some dilapidated walls.

[234] See Nöldeke's learned note on Andarīn, involving the definite article and the occurrence of the adjective from Andarīn in the verses of four pre-Islamic poets; *Fünf Moʿallaqat,* 32–33. To the four poets may be added another, ʿAmr ibn-Qamīʾa; see his *Dīwān,* ed. H. Ṣayrafī (Cairo, 1965), 140.

[235] It was one of the military posts listed in the *ND* where the Equites Promoti Indigenae were stationed, troops enlisted from the local Arab population; it was also known to the *Itinerarium Antonini,* where it appears in the accusative, Androna, as noted by Nöldeke, *Fünf Moʿallaqat,* 32. So it remains a possibility that when the Arab *foederati* started to take over these military stations, or some of them, from the *limitanei,* Andarīn was one of them; for more on this takeover, see above, 42–48.

[236] On this see J. Naṣrallah, *Saint Jean de Damas: Son époque, sa vie, son oeuvre* (Ḥarīṣa, 1950). His grandfather's name was Manṣūr, and such a name in pre-Islamic times can only imply that he was an Arab. The Greek *vita* is more explicit on the saint's Arab origin; see D. Sahas, "John of Damascus on Islam Revisited," in *Abr-Nahrain* 23 (1984–85), 105–18, esp. 105–7; *ODB,* II, 1063.

The Umayyads were reluctant to reside in the cities established by the Macedonians, where the Greek element predominated; hence the choice of Damascus as the capital of the Umayyads implies that it had enough of an Arab element in it to make it attractive to them.

[237] On the Nabataean Arabs and Damascus, see Jones, *Cities,* 254–55.

the pre-Islamic poet suggests some Arab presence there; otherwise it is difficult to imagine how a tribesman and a chief of his tribe, such as ʿAmr, would have visited it and tasted its wine.

Phoenicia Libanensis was an important province in the system of frontier defense in Oriens, and Arab federate presence was established in it. One of the novels of Justinian refers to more than one phylarch assigned to it.[238] After A.D. 529 these were also placed under one commander in chief, the Ghassānid Arethas. As has been argued in the case of Bostra, the Ghassānid commander in chief became an important member of the Byzantine defense establishment, and so consultations with the *dux* of Phoenicia must have entailed visits to the city.[239] Furthermore, and most relevant to the Arab *foederati,* Damascus was one of the three cities where Diocletian had a factory built for the manufacture of weapons; in the case of Damascus it is explicitly stated that it was for the purpose of warding off the threat of Arab raids.[240] So, in addition to visiting Damascus for consultations with the authorities, the Arab phylarchs and *foederati* presumably received their armor there just as they did at Bostra. All of this suggests an Arab federate presence in it, not extensive but possibly a mansion or a quarter where they could stay while transacting business with the civil and military officials of the province.

A Ghassānid presence in Damascus is therefore not out of the question, and so is the visit of ʿAmr, who was the chief of an important tribal group that had abandoned the traditional enemies of the Ghassānids, the Lakhmids of Persia, and allied themselves as most welcome *foederati* with the Ghassānids and Byzantium. ʿAmr's is the only reference in pre-Islamic contemporary poetry to an Arab federate connection with Damascus; hence its value.

3. Baalbek. Unlike Damascus and Bostra, a Ghassānid presence in Baalbek cannot be presumed; it was too far to the west in Oriens, away from the limitrophe, the stamping ground of the Ghassānids. But an Arab presence, not necessarily phylarchal or federate, is clearly implied in the poem of Imruʾ al-Qays,[241] the Kindite prince who visited it before he died in A.D. 542 in Ancyra in Anatolia.[242] The manner in which Imruʾ al-Qays expressed himself when referring to his visit to Baalbek clearly suggests an Arab component in the population. With this as background, ʿAmr's visit to Baalbek becomes intelligible and not difficult to accept.

4. Qāṣarīn. A town of this name, on the Euphrates near Barbalissus, is the

[238] On this, see *BASIC* I.1, 172–74.

[239] For the Ghassānid presence in Bostra, see above, 266–67.

[240] On this, see Malalas, *Chronographia,* 307–8.

[241] On the Caesar Ode of Imruʾ al-Qays in which there is reference to Baalbek, see above, 262–63.

[242] On his death in Anatolia, see the present writer in "The Last Days of Imruʾ al-Qays," in *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Literature,* ed. I. Boullata and T. De Young (Fayetteville, Ark., 1997), 207–22.

closest of all the four toponyms to the geographical area in which the tribe of ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm settled, the middle Euphrates.[243] So a visit by its *sayyid,* the chief of the tribe, is quite likely, especially after the tribe contracted a federate relationship with Byzantium. This was the view of Nöldeke,[244] but a closer look at the map of the region reveals two toponyms that sound very much like Qāṣarīn: one transliterated Qasrein in the region of Damascus near Baḥrat al-Hijāna and one transliterated Qisrein in the Golan.[245] The first is in Phoenicia Libanensis and the second in Palaestina Secunda, both near Damascus and Baalbek, where the poet had caroused. It is therefore more natural to think of either of these two places[246] rather than faraway Qāṣarīn near Barbalissus, especially as the poet had just mentioned Damascus and Baalbek in Phoenicia Libanensis. If so, this will be a new toponym in Ghassānland that the poem has revealed. Ethnically the village must have been at least partly Arab and possibly had some Ghassānid presence.

A visit by the federate chief ʿAmr to such places as Baalbek (Heliopolis), Damascus, and Qāṣarīn reveals the ease with which the federate Arabs, especially their chiefs/phylarchs, could move in Byzantine Oriens far from the eastern limitrophe in which they were mainly stationed. This was no doubt because, unlike the Germans in the Roman West, they were ethnically related to the Rhomaic inhabitants of these eastern provinces in Oriens, which had been Nabataean and Palmyrene territories before the annexation of both by Rome.[247] Noteworthy also is that two of these toponyms, Damascus and Baalbek/Heliopolis, and possibly the third, Qāṣarīn, belonged to one province, Phoenicia Libanensis. This could suggest that the Taghlib group to which the poet ʿAmr belonged were stationed along the Phoenician limitrophe at one time during its federate existence. It is also possible to conclude that each tribal federate group was assigned to a province, access to whose towns was open to its phylarch but not to other provinces; witness what happened to one phylarch in the fifth century when he crossed over from his province to another.[248] Such restrictions, if they obtained, did not apply to the chief phylarch, Arethas, or his distinguished brother, Abū Karib.

[243] On Qāṣarīn, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. Balis, IV, 328–29. For Qāṣarīn and Heraclius, see the present writer in "Heraclius and the Theme System: Further Observations," *Byzantion* 59 (1989), 242.

[244] Nöldeke, *Fünf Moʿallaqāt,* 34, following Yāqūt.

[245] On Qasrein, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* 309; it is near Tall Mastabe, which according to Dussaud has some ruins. Hījana is about 30 km southeast of Damascus. On Qisrein, northeast of the Sea of Galilee, see ibid., map I, 2C. The modern Hebrew spelling Katzrin for the toponym probably preserves the better vocalic sequence, which brings it close to Qāṣarīn.

[246] More likely the first because of its proximity to Damascus. The three toponyms Damascus, Baalbek, and Qāṣarīn will thus be in one province, Phoenicia Libanensis.

[247] Even the Arabic-sounding names of such districts in Oriens as al-Balqā', al-Sharāt, and al-Jibāl, where the *foederati* were partially settled, would have contributed to the ease with which these federates moved among a Rhomaic population in Oriens that was ethnically Arab.

[248] See *BAFIC,* 48.

The Byzantine connection of the Taghlib group raises the question of the chronology of its relations with the empire. The clearest and most definite date is A.D. 569, when the Taghlibite chief ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm struck with his sword the Lakhmid king ʿAmr ibn Hind and killed him.[249] The regicide naturally brought to an end Taghlib-Lakhmid relations, and the tribe moved away from the Lakhmid orbit and sphere of influence, closer to Byzantium.[250] But apparently Taghlib had relations with Byzantium before A.D. 569. During the reign of the Lakhmid king Mundir (d. A.D. 554), Taghlib had been on good terms with the Lakhmids, but then fell out with Mundir and emigrated to Oriens, Bilād al-Shām.[251] This is consistent with the report that the unruly Taghlib with its equally unruly chief ʿAmr fell out also with the Ghassānid king Arethas.[252]

It is not easy to determine when ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm made the journey to these cities in Oriens where he caroused. It could have been either before or after A.D. 569.

VIII. Al-Aʿshā

Al-Aʿshā visited the Ghassānids in Oriens and refers to them twice in the *Dīwān:* once in a poem addressed to the Ghassānid king, whom unfortunately he calls by his patronymic, Ibn Jafna, rather than by his name.[253] The poem consists of fourteen verses, of which only four are addressed to the Ghassānid, whose prowess in battle is extolled.[254] It is thus toponymically uninformative with the possible exception of a reference to the snake or serpent of Salʿ; if this is a reference to the mountain in Medina/Yathrib, it might indicate personal knowledge of the town and consequently might be supportive of the view that the poet did indeed compose on the Prophet Muḥammad on his way from Najrān in the south to Oriens

[249] On this, see G. Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Laḫmiden in al-Hīra* (Berlin, 1899), 100–101.

[250] From the lower to the middle Euphrates, according to Caskel in *EI*², s.v. Bakr, I, 692. However, the reference to the three places in one province, Phoenicia Libanensis, in his poem could strongly suggest that the Taghlib were stationed somewhere in that province along its limitrophe sector.

[251] See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil,* I, 539. This must have been before A.D. 569 because Mundir the Lakhmid died in 554.

[252] Ibid., 539–40, another indication that this happened before 569, when Arethas the Ghassānid died. The restless tribe, Taghlib, must have returned to the Lakhmid sphere after staying for some time in Byzantine territory. For it is difficult to explain otherwise how ʿAmr killed the Lakhmid king ʿAmr ibn Hind in 569, after the latter invited ʿAmr's mother to visit his own mother, as the story goes.

[253] The standard edition of the *Dīwān* of Aʿshā is that of R. Geyer, *Gedichte von Abû Baṣîr Maimûn Ibn Qais al-Aʿšâ,* Gibb Memorial Series (London, 1928). A later edition with a commentary and introduction by M. Ḥusayn is *Dīwān al-Kabīr* (Cairo, n.d. [1950]). References to Aʿshā's poetry in this section are to the standard edition of Geyer, cited as *Dīwān.*

[254] *Dīwān,* 139, verses 10–14; see p. 130 for Geyer's commentary on the text.

in the north.[255] Al-Aʿshā remembers the Ghassānids again in another poem, a long one in which he refers to the Ghassānids together with other potentates he had visited and speaks of them again as Āl-Jafna, the house of Jafna in al-Shām.[256] Uninformative as the two poems are on the Ghassānids, toponymically they do function as a background for discussing certain toponyms in Oriens, which al-Aʿshā mentions in other poems of his, and which stand for places he obviously visited during his sojourn with the Ghassānids in Oriens.

Oriens

The toponyms are Ṣarkhad, Ḥimṣ (Emesa), and Jerusalem; the last two are not within the Ghassānid area, while the third, Ṣarkhad, is.

1. Ḥimṣ/Emesa. The reference to it comes in a long poem addressed to the Kindite lord Qays ibn Maʿdīkarib in Ḥaḍramawt.[257] What induced the poet to visit Ḥimṣ in particular is not clear. Ḥimṣ must have had an Arab community in the sixth or seventh century, and it is specifically mentioned by Imruʾ al-Qays in the Caesar Ode as one of the cities in the Orontes basin which he visited.[258] Al-Aʿshā, a major pre-Islamic poet, certainly knew Imruʾ al-Qays' ode and may have followed his footsteps when he visited Ḥimṣ and possibly other cities, not mentioned in his poem. Although Ḥimṣ was not a Ghassān-related city, the reference to it in Aʿshā's poem is important as it confirms what Imruʾ al-Qays' earlier poem had evidenced, a sixth-century Arab presence in that city which had been the hometown of the Arab princesses of the Severan dynasty; its Arabness was clearly not extinguished in the sixth century.[259]

2. Jerusalem. Aʿshā calls it Ūrishalim, its biblical name, which might suggest an Arabic version of some biblical pericope wherein its name is retained as such rather than Īliyyā, Aelia, its name in the language of the Roman-Byzantine admin-

[255] For Salʿ, the mountain near Medina in Ḥijāz, see Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* III, 747, where he cites this very verse. Similarly, the Umayyad poet Jarīr speaks of the snake of Jericho in one of his poems, evidence that he visited Palestine; for the verse, see his *Dīwān,* ed. M. al-Ṣāwī (Cairo, 1934–35), 80, verse 2; the new edition of the *Dīwān* by M. Ṭāha is unavailable to me. Yāqūt quoted the same verse in his *Muʿjam,* I, 165, s.v. Arīḥā.

In the second hemistich of the same verse on Salʿ, the poet describes the Ghassānid king, and in his edition of the *Dīwān,* M. Ḥusayn gives the most unlikely interpretation. The hemistich sounds an echo of the famous verse of Nābigha on the swords of the Ghassānids: they are so sharp as to cut through the breastplates of their adversaries. I take *ṣarāma* in the hemistich to refer to the quality of their *ṣārim,* a common epithet of the sword, and *qamīṣ,* meaning not shirt but *sirbal,* the breastplate, and not of the Ghassānid but of the adversary. For Nābigha's verse, see above, 134 note 221. For Aʿshā's poem on Muḥammad, see below, 274–77.

[256] *Dīwān,* 211, verse 13.

[257] Ibid., 33, verse 56.

[258] For the Caesar Ode, see above, 261–65.

[259] For the princesses of the Severan dynasty, see *Rome and the Arabs,* 33–36, 41–42.

istration since the days of Hadrian.[260] As a Christian who paid more than lip service to Christianity and reflected on some of its teachings such as the problem of free will, it was natural for him to visit the holy city since he was so close.[261] Pilgrimage to holy places was a deep-seated Semitic rite or pillar of faith, even in pagan times, a practice that was fortified with the advent of Christianity and directed to *loca sancta* in Palestine since the days of Constantine and Helen.[262] The visit to Jerusalem was certainly not made for lucre since there were no patrons whom he could eulogize there, but it throws light on the religious curiosity of this major pre-Islamic poet. A member of the Christian Arab tribe of Ṭayyi' named al-Burj ibn-Mushir is reported to have made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in this pre-Islamic period.[263] Some evidence for A'shā's visit to Jerusalem may be the reference in another poem to Palestinian wine, which he may have tasted on the spot in Palestine where Jerusalem was located.[264]

3. Sarkhad/Salkhad. This is the only one of the three toponyms that lies within the area of Ghassānid presence in the Ḥawrān of the Provincia Arabia. The reference comes in a panegyric addressed by the poet to the Prophet Muḥammad around A.D. 630. It occurs in the verse in which the poet refers to the distance he covered on his mount between al-Nujayr, a fortress in South Arabia, and Sarkhad in the north in Oriens, a distance that spanned almost the whole extent of the *via odorifera.*[265] That the poet visited Ghassānland is established from other poems in his *Dīwān,* but his visit to Sarkhad is reflected explicitly only in this poem on the Prophet Muḥammad. Sarkhad is a very important military station in Oriens and

[260] For Ūrishalim, see the *Dīwān,* 33, verse 56. In addition to referring to Jerusalem by its biblical name, there are in the *Dīwān* phrases and locutions that suggest an Arabic version of some biblical pericopes, such as *al mann wa al-salwā,* the quails and manna of Exodus 16: 13, 15, 35; see *Dīwān,* 87, verse 64. *Taqarraba* (to offer oblations) is another biblical locution; ibid., verse 69.

[261] There are some fifteen references to God in the *Dīwān.* They have the form not of Allah, but of al-Ilāh, the form favored in the Dayr Hind inscription. So there is no doubt about his Christianity, however thin it might have been. On the discussion of two of his verses as an expression of free will/predestination and his derivation of this from the bishops of Najrān, see what his *rāwiya,* Yūnus ibn-Mattā, a Christian from Ḥīra, says in *Aghānī* (Beirut, 1958), XII, 3–4.

[262] On this, see the present writer in "Arab Christian Pilgrimages in the Proto-Byzantine Period," in *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt,* ed. D. Frankfurter (Leiden, 1998), 373–89.

[263] On al-Burj ibn Mushir, the Christian Arab of the Ṭayyi' who visited Jerusalem, see Ibn Sa'īd al-Andalusī, *Nashwat al-Ṭarab fi Tārīkh Jāhiliyyat al-'Arab,* ed. N. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (Amman, 1982), I, 233.

[264] For the *Filisṭiyyan,* "of Palestine," describing the wine, see *Dīwān,* 60, verse 7.

[265] For al-Nujayr, a fortress in Ḥaḍramawt, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam,* V, 272–74. The fortress was the scene of a famous siege by the armies of Islam during the caliphate of Abū Bakr against the seceders under the leadership of al-Ash'ath, the Kindite chief and son of that Qays whom al-A'shā had praised in his panegyrics. So the poet was moving from one military station belonging to Kinda to another in the north belonging to Ghassān. On al-Nujayr during the *ridda,* the secession of Kinda during the caliphate of Abū Bakr, see M. Lecker, "Judaism among Kinda and the *Ridda* of Kinda," *JAOS* 115.4 (1995), 635–50.

its defense system in this period. The discovery of a Ghassānid presence in it would be important also for the problem of Ghassānid takeover of military stations from the *limitanei.* Hence the importance of a detailed discussion to establish whether the poet did indeed visit Ṣarkhad and whether the Ghassānids were in fact established in the Ṣarkhad that he visited. The argument is complex and involved, principally because doubts have been cast on the authenticity of the Muḥammadan panegyric, in which the reference to Ṣarkhad occurs.

The Panegyric on the Prophet

The poem consists of twenty-four verses which some critics accept as genuine and others reject as spurious, put into the mouth of a major pre-Islamic poet as an expression of a later Muslim piety.[266] R. Blachère's measured judgment is the best starting point for discussing it.[267] He entertained the poem's authenticity seriously but kept some reservations pending a final judgment. A more intensive study of the poem from all angles will elevate Blachère's position in the direction of authenticity.

Aʿshā was the itinerant poet *par excellence,* a restless poet who traveled almost everywhere in the Near East, visiting Ḥīra in Iraq, Oman, South Arabia, Abyssinia, and Bilād-al-Shām (Oriens). He also composed poems on its rulers and such important historical personages as lyās ibn Qabīṣa of Ḥīra, Hawda ibn ʿAlī of Yamāma, Qays ibn Maʿdīkarib in Ḥaḍramawt, Dū-Fāʾish of Ḥimyar, Banū ʿAbd al-Madān in Najrān, and the Ghassānids of Oriens. It would indeed have been strange and unintelligible if he had omitted an address to Muḥammad, who some ten years after his emigration from Mecca and settling in Medina,[268] had emerged as the dominant figure in Ḥijāz and indeed in the whole of the Arabian Peninsula.

There is evidence that Aʿshā was still alive and active in this period, since he composed a poem remembering the victory of Heraclius[269] over Persia at the battle of Sātīdama in 627. The Ghassānids returned to Oriens, Bilād al-Shām, shortly after the victory, and the poet's visit to Ghassānland could have been made in this period. A poem on the Prophet Muḥammad could easily have been composed in this period, while the poet was on his way from Najrān in the south to Ghassān-

[266] *Dīwān,* 101–3. The verse in which Ṣarkhad is mentioned is verse 6 on p. 102. Genuine: argued by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Māniʿ in a paper delivered in Riyādh, Saudi Arabia, at the International Symposium on the History of Arabia. (The volume of the published Acta is not available to me, but his paper is.) Spurious: Ṭ. Ḥusayn, *Fī al-Adab al-Jāhilī* (Cairo, 1933), 250–51.

[267] R. Blachère, *Histoire de la littérature arabe* (Paris, 1964), 322–23.

[268] That he addressed the Prophet while the latter was in Medina is clear internally from the poem where he mentions Yathrib/Medina as his destination; *Dīwān,* 102, verse 8. Sometime after the year 628 is the best date for the composition of the poem, when the Prophet had concluded the Ḥudaybiya Peace with pagan Mecca and before he conquered Mecca in A.D. 630.

[269] See *Dīwān,* 160.

land in the north. He would have passed through Ḥijāz, wherein lay Medina to which he already had made reference in the poem that mentioned one of its mountains, Salʿ.[270]

It is difficult to believe that the preaching of the new faith and its progress in Ḥijāz and Arabia would not have attracted the attention of a poet who was no stranger to religious ideas or to the *loca sancta* in Mecca and its custodians, Quraysh.[271] Furthermore, Aʿshā often visited the fair of ʿUkāẓ, according to one tradition every year and where the Prophet himself used to preach the new faith to the Arabs. So Aʿshā might have met the Prophet during the ten years of his Meccan period.

Critics of the poem's authenticity were influenced by the fact that the last six verses of the twenty-four that make up the poem are palpably spurious.[272] But the first eighteen verses ring perfectly authentic and are very much in the best style of Aʿshā. It is in his style to compose more verses on the she-camel he is riding than on the honorand he is addressing; he does this when he allocates to the Prophet only the last six of the eighteen genuine verses.[273]

Even the *khabar,* the account in the sources that the Meccans tried to deflect Aʿshā from reaching Muḥammad and composing on him by apprising him of the fact that wine is prohibited in the Koran, is not necessarily a fictitious story. A similar tale is told of the conversion in A.D. 986 of the Russian Vladimir, who, when faced with the choice of accepting Christianity or Islam, opted for the former because he was told that wine, beloved of the Russian, is prohibited in Islam. This can hardly be a *topos.*[274]

Finally, the two toponyms in the poem, Yathrib and Ṣarkhad, are noteworthy and confirm authenticity, especially the latter. The former became al-Madīna, "the city," *the* city of the Prophet after he emigrated there. A forger in the Islamic

[270] On Salʿ in his poem on the Ghassānid, see above, note 255.

[271] Fully attested in his *Dīwān,* where he speaks of al-Ḥajūn, al-Ṣafā, Zamzam, the Kaʿba built by Qusay, Quraysh, and the pilgrimage; see pp. 94, 95, 132. For his oath by the Kaʿba, see *BAFIC,* 399. On "the station of the Christian," one of the stops on the pilgrimage route, see *BASIC* I.2, 997.

[272] And so judged by the editor, M. Ḥusayn; *Dīwān,* 329–30.

[273] The poem has stylistic features that are recognizably those of Aʿshā and are detectable in some of his other poems. Connoisseurs of Arabic poetry can easily hear in these eighteen verses the authentic voice of Aʿshā, "The Cymbalist of the Arabs," *Ṣannajat al-ʿArab,* in pre-Islamic times.

[274] For the account involving the Russian Vladimir, see *The Russian Primary Chronicle,* trans. and ed. S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), 96–97. Later embroideries on an account do not invalidate its essential kernel of truth. In the case of Vladimir, he did convert to Christianity and not to Islam, while Aʿshā could very well have written his panegyric without a conversion. He died shortly after, and according to tradition was buried in his native town of Manfūḥa in Yamāma, where his grave was apparently still known in medieval times (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* 214–15). With his rather superficial knowledge of Christianity, he may have thought that Islam as preached by Muḥammad was a version of the same monotheistic Abrahamic faith as Christianity.

period would most probably have used the name Medina rather than Yathrib in his panegyric.[275]

Ṣarkhad speaks for the authenticity of the poem much better than Yathrib because of its non-Islamic associations (unlike Yathrib/Medina), and so can better evidence the pre-Islamic provenance of the poem. Ṣarkhad was not a household word in pre-Islamic Arabia, a toponym hallowed by poetic usage such as Thahmad, al-Dakhūl, and Ḥawmal, which became conventional toponyms used by pre-Islamic (and sometimes by Islamic) poets as part of their repertoire when threading the string of place names, a characteristic feature of pre-Islamic poetry. Its appearance in the poem, therefore, suggests that the poet is referring to a place he knew and visited and not to one that he merely heard about and/or remembered from some other poet.

The Ghassānids

The foregoing section on the Muḥammadan panegyric has argued that Aʿshā visited Ṣarkhad while in Oriens. It remains to discuss the proposition that it was the Ghassānids whom he must have visited in Ṣarkhad. While in Oriens, Aʿshā visited the Ghassānids and eulogized them, as is clear from references to them in two other poems in the *Dīwān.* These two references speak of the Jafnids, the royal house, but do not refer to toponyms that must have been mentioned in poems and in parts of poems that have not survived. The reference to this toponym, Ṣarkhad, by Aʿshā suggests that he visited them in this place among others. This is corroborated by the fact that the court of the Ghassānids would have been the destination of a poet such as Aʿshā, a panegyrist who professionally eulogized rulers and the lords of the pre-Islamic Arabs. When he made the trip to Oriens, the Ghassānids would have been the group he targeted. Of the three toponyms he mentions in Oriens—Ḥimṣ, Jerusalem, and Ṣarkhad—the first two lay outside the area of Ghassānid presence, and so Ṣarkhad remains the only toponym with which the Ghassānids could be associated.

In coming to the court of the Ghassānids, Aʿshā followed in the footsteps of other poets from Arabia, ʿAlqama, Nābigha, Ḥātim, and Ḥassān, and most importantly al-Mutalammis.[276] The latter came to the Ghassānids from northeastern Arabia as did Aʿshā and moreover, was from the same tribe, Bakr; and, most importantly, he was the poet of whom Aʿshā was the *rāwiya,* the reciter and preserver of his poetry.[277] It is natural to suppose that Aʿshā would have visited the places mentioned by Mutalammis in his poetry, the poetry Aʿshā as his *rāwiya* had memorized. One of these was Buṣrā/Bostra, a city that had close relations with

[275] He would have been a very clever forger indeed if he used Yathrib rather than Medina in order to give the air of authenticity to the poem.

[276] On Mutalammis, see above, 265–68.

[277] On this, see Sezgin, *GAS,* II, 174.

Ṣarkhad since Nabataean times and was connected with it through a well-known road.[278] The little that has survived from Mutalammis' poetry does not mention Ṣarkhad, but it is quite likely that he visited it after Bostra and that Aʿshā did the same.[279] Bostra was on Aʿshā's route when he traveled between Emesa/Ḥimṣ in the north and Jerusalem in the south.

The implication of a visit by the poet to the Ghassānids in Ṣarkhad has important implications for the military history of Oriens in this period and for frontier studies. Ṣarkhad was one of the outermost fortresses of the Byzantine frontier, strategically perched on a lofty hill whence it controls the plains that lay beneath. If the poet visited his Ghassānid patrons there, this would mean that these had taken over Ṣarkhad from the *limitanei* and manned it themselves, one military station to be added to those that the Ghassānids took over, when Justinian relieved the *limitanei* of their duties and turned them over to the Ghassānids.[280]

IX. Labīd

Labīd made only one reference to a Ghassānid toponym, an important one, at the end of a long poem in which he mentions the Ghassānids in four verses.[281] The cluster of four verses speak of the death of their king after a forty-year reign, in the well-known Ghassānid town of Jalliq, most probably after an earthquake, as will be argued. Although the name of the king is left anonymous, there is no doubt that he was the famous Arethas of the reign of Justinian.

Verse 1

In this verse the poet says that Ghassān experienced a singular humiliation by the death of its lord, whose prowess and munificent liberality are extolled. The lord of Ghassān that is referred to can only be al-Ḥārith ibn-Jabala, the Arethas mentioned by Procopius, who reigned from 529 to 569.[282] This must be the one, since in the second verse his reign of forty years is mentioned and he is the only Ghassānid of the sixth century whose reign lasted that long. This conclusion is also implied in the fact that the poet does not mention him by name, since this

[278] On this, see the article on Ḥawrān in *EI*².

[279] It is noteworthy that Ṣarkhad was known for its good wines. Both Yāqūt and Bakrī cite verses that refer to it. The almost alcoholic Aʿshā, one of the most celebrated poets of wine in Arabic, would have been attracted by its reputation for wine; on Ṣarkhad, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* III, 401; Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* III, 831.

[280] On this, see above, 42–48. Like many localities in Ḥawrān, Ṣarkhad's ethnic complexion was Arab, a fact reflected in the Greek inscriptions, in which reference is also made to Arab builders (οἰκοδόμοι); see Trombley, *Hellenic Religion,* II, 323–24.

[281] For Labīd, see Sezgin, *GAS,* II, 126–127. *Dīwān,* ed. I. ʿAbbās (Kuwait, 1962), 266, verses 49–52. For a translation of the *Dīwān* into German, see *Die Gedichte des Lebid,* trans. A. Huber (Leiden, 1891). For the cluster of four verses, see p. 42.

[282] For Arethas/al-Ḥārith, see *BASIC* I.1, 63, 338.

Arethas was the most celebrated of all the kings of Ghassān in the consciousness of the Arabs, especially the poets. So it was sufficient to say the lord of Ghassān.

The strong terms used to describe the condition of Ghassān after his death—that it was a form of *ḏul* (humiliation)—is consistent with his prestige and the recrudescence of inter-Arab strife immediately following his death. Immediately after that event, both the Syriac and Arabic sources speak of trouble along the frontier: the attacks of their enemies, the Lakhmids of Persia, when they heard of his death and the return to civil war between the two subdivisions of the Ṭayyi' tribe, which Arethas had once reconciled.[283]

Most important is the phrase *Yawm Jalliq,* the "Day of Jalliq," an adverbial phrase referring to the time of his death. *Yawm* with the *fatḥa* (*a*) is an adverb of time indicating the day on which he died but is also used in classical Arabic to indicate an important event, such as a battle-day of the pre-Islamic Arabs, the plural of which, *ayyām,* is a technical term that indicates their battles.[284] The poet most probably wanted to convey an important event that took place then and caused the death of the lord of Ghassān. As has already been suggested, this most probably was an earthquake that struck the Ghassānid town of Jalliq and caused his death. This is supported by the fact that the area in this period witnessed many earthquakes and also that the lord of Ghassān clearly did not fall in battle but died an old man, after reigning some forty years; otherwise he would have been so described, if he had died fighting.[285]

The reference to Jalliq, an important Ghassānid town, is significant. The verse makes clear that it was in Jalliq that Arethas died and that the cause was probably, as has been argued, an earthquake. Had it not been for this disaster, he might have reigned even longer, since he appeared still robust in the late 560s, presiding over church councils, making trips to Constantinople, and engaging in a campaign in faraway Khaybar in north Arabia.[286] This reference to his death in Jalliq strongly suggests that one of the two tombs or mausolea mentioned by Nābigha in his panegyric on the Ghassānids is that of the famous Arethas, since it was natural that he would have been buried in Jalliq where he died and in a place that was one of the two main headquarters of the Ghassānids.

Verse 2

The second verse speaks of his reign of forty years during which he wore the crown until he died. The number forty is a precious confirmation in a contempo-

[283] Ibid., 337, 340, 338.

[284] See *EI*[2], s.v. *Ayyām.*

[285] On the earthquakes of the area, see K. W. Russell, "The Earthquake Chronology of Palestine and Northwest Arabia from the 2nd to the Mid 8th Century A.D.," *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 260 (1985), 37–59; and Y. Ghawanmeh, "Earthquake Effects on Bilād ash-Shām Settlements," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 4 (1992), 53–59.

[286] *BASIC* I.1, 322–25.

rary pre-Islamic Arabic source of the duration of his reign, exactly forty years, which has been calculated from an examination of both the Greek and Syriac sources.[287] Its accuracy speaks for the reliability of Arabic poetry in the pre-Islamic period for the study of the Ghassānids. The reference to his crown or rather diadem, as in the phrase "kharazāt al-mulk" ("beads, precious stones of kingship"), is a clear confirmation that a diadem was conferred on him by Justinian. The Greek source suggests that this actually took place in the first year of his reign, 529.[288]

This second verse also describes his physical appearance in his advanced age at the end of his reign, when gray hair had completely covered his head; the implication is that he did not lose it, but its color had changed. Labīd is the second author who said something about the physical appearance of the redoubtable Arethas, the first being John of Ephesus, who in a well-known passage in his *Ecclesiastical History* spoke of the impact his physical appearance had made in Constantinople.[289]

Verses 3 and 4

Verse 3 is not informative, as the poet indulges in some reflections on the transitoriness of human life, but it confirms the thought expressed in the first verse that the death of the king entailed a humiliation and a regression in the fortunes of Ghassān. In verse 4 the poet speaks of disasters that followed one after the other, but the important reference is the first, the one that speaks of a *layla,* a night, that brought about the disastrous consequences for the Ghassānids. *Layla* is specific, and the poet would not have used it indifferently; so the presumption is that the disaster struck at night.[290]

Appendix I

A Triplet on the Plague

The date of poem 105 is not entirely clear. It has been suggested that it refers to the famous plague of 'Amwas, which broke out in A.D. 638–9, after the Arab Muslim con-

[287] From Malalas and Procopius on the Greek side and the Monophysite Syriac documents on the Syriac; see *BASIC* I.1, 70–76, 95, 337.

[288] On the crown of Arethas and the Ghassānid crowns in general, see ibid., 95–117, esp. 105–6. On the *basileia* of Arethas, conferred by Justinian, see Procopius, *History,* I.xvii. 47.

[289] *BASIC* I.1, 287–88.

[290] Unlike solar eclipses, earthquakes cannot be calculated precisely. Even though there is no reference to an earthquake in A.D. 569 in the two sources listed above, note 285, this does not preclude the occurrence of one that has not been recorded, or if it was, the source has not survived. Alternatively, the disaster may have been a plague, for which the region as well as the century was well known. For the plagues of this period, the second half of the 6th century (the years 558, 573/4, and 592), see Conrad, "Plague," 120–51, and P. Allen, "The 'Justinianic' Plague," *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 5–20, esp. 13, on a plague in 568/9. The plague associated with the expedition of Abraha against Mecca, traditionally dated the same year as the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad, around A.D. 570, may in this connection be mentioned. However, the chances are that the disaster was an earthquake, since the reference to a *layla* (night) during which the disaster fell is much more appropriate to an earthquake than to a plague.

quest of Oriens, when Ḥassān presumably visited the region.[1] Yet a close examination of the triplet could suggest that it was composed long before that date, possibly even before the Persian occupation of Oriens in A.D. 614. The third verse refers to the area hit by the plague, that is, Bostra and its vicinity, in Oriens, as "*arḍ al-Rūm,*" "the land or territory of the Rūm (the Romans)." It is difficult to believe that Ḥassān, the poet laureate of the Prophet Muḥammad, the prime mover of the conquest of Oriens, after the resounding victory of Islam at the Yarmūk and the Arab acquisition of Byzantine Oriens, would have referred to that region around Bostra as "*arḍ al-Rūm.*" For Ḥassān and the Muslim Arabs, Oriens was Bilād al-Shām, and indeed had been such even before the Arab conquest. After it, Oriens became Muslim Arab territory, and reference to it as "the territory of the Rūm" would have been unthinkable.

Outbreaks of plague in the Near East and presumably in Oriens earlier than 614 have been recorded for 592, 599, 607, and some time between 612 and 617.[2] These plagues have not been specifically related to the area referred to by Ḥassān, but they have been considered pandemic plagues in the Near East; thus the chances are that they also hit this region. This was the period during which Ḥassān visited the Ghassānids and knew them as phylarchs and kings before the Persian occupation of Oriens in A.D. 614. Thus the plague referred to in this poem may well have antedated A.D. 614. Which of these four plagues was the one that devastated Bostra can be determined through reference to al-Khammān in the second verse. In another poem, no. 27, the poet said that he had spent a night in that locality when he was forty.[3] Ḥassān lived to a ripe old age, though not the incredibly long one that sometimes is given in the sources. He is supposed to have died around A.D. 660 after he visited Bilād al-Shām and congratulated Muʿāwiya on his accession to the caliphate. He could not have been more than ninety, since it is difficult to imagine a centenarian traveling the long distance from Medina to Damascus. If this calculation is correct, then Ḥassān would have remembered the plague that broke out in A.D. 607 or 612 shortly after he had stayed in al-Khammān overnight and when that place could receive him for that night, before it was devastated by the plague. So the poem probably should not be dated to A.D. 638–9, the date of the famous plague of ʿAmwas when Oriens became Muslim Arab Bilād al-Shām after its conquest.

In the volume of commentary on Ḥassān's *Dīwān,* two verses are quoted from four manuscripts,[4] related to verse 3 of poem 105. They are supposed to have been composed by a Ghassānid, left anonymous, on a Ghassānid commander by the name of ʿAdī, who was killed in an encounter with the tribe of Asad. In the work of al-Jāḥiẓ, his *Kitāb al-Hayawān,* the two verses are said to have been composed not by a Ghassānid but by a member of the tribe of Asad, while the one who fell in battle is called, not ʿAdī, the

[1] See Conrad, "Plague," 187, and Allen, "'Justinianic' Plague," 14. See also below, 291–302, Appendix IV.

[2] Conrad, "Plague," 154–58; Allen, "'Justinianic' Plague," 14.

[3] Above, 233.

[4] *Dīwān,* II, 172; also noted by Conrad, "Plague," 165 note 102.

Ghassānid, but a certain Ubayy, although the couplet remains addressed to the Ghassānid king al-Ḥārith.[5]

Other sources, including *al-Aghānī,* a reliable one on pre-Islamic Arabia, favor the Ghassānid version involving ʿAdī.[6] However, both versions agree that the Ḥārith addressed is the Ghassānid king, undoubtedly the famous Ḥārith of the reign of Justinian, in whose reign the plague of the early 540s broke out. Corroborations of this come from the *Dīwān* of another pre-Islamic poet, ʿAbīd ibn al-Abraṣ, of the tribe of Asad, one of whose members killed ʿAdī according to the first version. The Asadī poet refers to the victory of his tribe, Asad, over a Ghassānid commander, ʿAdī, at the battle of Yawm Maʾqiṭ.[7] ʿAbīd was a contemporary of Imruʾ al-Qays, the Kindite poet, and so the poem has to be dated to the first half of the sixth century. Moreover, the verse in ʿAbīd's poem, preceding the one that refers to the death of ʿAdī, also mentions the defeat of the Ghassānid king al-Ḥārith by the Asad tribe.

The second verse of the couplet refers to the plague as the "spears of the jinn." This reference makes it possible to relate the battle and the death of ʿAdī to the great plague of A.D. 541–544, to which Imruʾ al-Qays fell victim in Anatolia.[8] Furthermore, it clearly suggests that the Arab conception of the plague, the *ṭāʿūn* as caused by the *jinn,* goes back to pre-Islamic times and antedates the Islamic view of it, elaborated by Muslim writers (including a Muḥammadan *ḥadīth*) on the plague.[9]

This reference to the Ghassānids in these two verses, relating to the great plague in the sixth century, links up with what has been said on it in the course of the second Persian War of Justinian's reign and its not having entirely spared the Ghassānid federate contingent.[10] Furthermore, the reference to the *jinn* as a cause of the plague gives a glimpse of the superstitions prevalent in the region about the origin of the plague, not unlike some of the statements in Procopius' description of it.[11] In another area in which the *jinn* were active, namely, architecture, this reference to the *jinn* is relevant. It was believed that the *jinn* were in the service of Solomon when he built Tadmur/Palmyra in Oriens, a view reflected in the panegyric of Nābigha, the other major poet of the Ghassānids, although the reference to Palmyra and the *jinn* comes in a poem on the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra, al-Nuʿmān.[12]

[5] See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān,* ed. A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1943), VI, 218–19.

[6] On this, see ibid., 218 note 6 and 219 notes 1–3, where the verses are attributed to Fākhita, the sister of the slain Ghassānid ʿAdī.

[7] See the *Dīwān of ʿAbīd Ibn al-Abraṣ and ʿĀmir Ibn al-Ṭufail,* ed. C. Lyall (London, 1913), 59, verse 9. The death of ʿAdī is also mentioned by another poet of the Asad tribe, ʿAmr ibn-Shaʾs; see his *Dīwān,* ed. Y. al-Jubūrī (Najaf, Iraq, n.d.), 37, verse 17. The battle of Yawm Maʾqiṭ is described on p. 15.

[8] On the death of Imruʾ al-Qays in the plague in Ankara/Ancyra in 542, see the present writer in "The Last Days of Imruʾ al-Qays," 207–20.

[9] Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb,* VI, 218–20.

[10] See *BASIC* I.2, 770 note 120.

[11] Ibid.; see the quotation from Procopius, *History* II.xxii.20–21.

[12] For Nābigha on Solomon and Tadmur/Palmyra, see above, 229.

Appendix II

Qaṣr Dūma and Sawā' al-Haykal

While the other toponyms in poem 13 are identifiable and present no insuperable difficulties, the reference to Dūma in verse 20 does, and it raises some important questions. The first problem is the multiplicity of Dūmas in the Fertile Crescent and north Arabia. There is one in Iraq, another at the southern entrance of Wādī Sirḥān in the Arabian Peninsula, a third in Trachonitis in the Provincia Arabia, and a fourth in Damascene in Phoenicia Libanensis. Two of them are out of the question—Dūma in Iraq and Dūma in Trachonitis—and so by process of elimination the choice must lie between Dūma of Wādī Sirḥān and Dūma of Damascene.[1]

The verse that precedes the one in which Dūma occurs provides an important context for discussing Dūma.[2] In it the poet says that although he is now an old man with graying hair, yet in olden times his adversaries would view him as if he were in Qaṣr Dūma, with the implication that he would be protected and patronized by its powerful lords.[3]

Arguments can be advanced in favor of either of the two Dūmas: the Arabian one in Wādī Sirḥān and that in Damascene in Phoenicia Libanensis. The Arabian Dūma is the more famous of the two; the name itself goes back to biblical times. Its strategic position at the southern entrance of one of the major gateways of Oriens, Wādī Sirḥān, naturally encouraged concerned powers to fortify it. Indeed in the Arabic historical tradition, it witnessed the construction of the celebrated fortress of Mārid, which became proverbial for its impregnability and is said to have withstood the assault of the army of Zenobia, the queen of Palmyra.[4] The Islamic sources on Islamic history (better than on pre-Islam)[5] clearly confirm the strongly fortified position of Dūma, called Dūmat al-

[1] See also the article in *EI*², s.v. Dūmat al-Djandal, in which Dūma in the Provincia Arabia in Trachonitis is not mentioned. This is a minor Dūma, but it is important in the context of the evacuation order issued by the caliph Omar to its inhabitants (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* II, 487). This Dūma may have been the place whither the inhabitants of old Dūma emigrated after they left the one in Wādī Sirḥān and which they named after the town they had vacated. Cf. Najrān in the same region, possibly named after South Arabian Najrān, also after an evacuation. For Dūma in Trachonitis (Provincia Arabia), see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map II, 2B; for Najrān, ibid., map II, 2A. Yāqūt, however, says that the inhabitants of Dūma, whom ʿUmar asked to leave, settled in Ḥīra in Iraq.

[2] For the correct identification of Dūma, the context is essential; it was well understood by A. Barqūqī, the most perceptive commentator on Ḥassān's *Dīwān,* although he was not interested in its toponymy; see *Dīwān,* ed. A. Barqūqi, 310 note 4.

[3] The poem is a panegyric on the Ghassānids, who are explicitly referred to in verses 6–18; the presumption is that they would be his patrons there as well. This presumption is not necessarily true, since the patrons might be other federate Arabs in possession of Dūma, who formed a part of the complex multitribal federate phylarchate presided over by the Ghassānids.

[4] For this, see Dūmat al-Djandal in *EI*², II, 624, and the forthcoming article on Zenobia, al-Zabbā', in *EI*² by the present writer, where the relation of the queen to the fortress will be further discussed.

[5] These Islamic sources on the pre-Islamic period cannot be entirely disregarded. Many of them derive from a sound historical tradition but have been plagued by exaggerations, embroider-

Jandal, which could fall only to the generalship of Khālid, "the Sword of God," who personally led the assault against it and captured it.[6] Its importance as a strong Christian center is reflected also in the decision of the caliph Omar who is said to have asked its inhabitants to emigrate for the greater security of the nascent Islamic state, as those of Najrān were asked, and before them, the Jews of the oases of Ḥijāz during the Prophet's lifetime.[7]

This quick review of Dūma as a well-known stronghold in north Arabia is the most persuasive argument in its favor as the Dūma that Ḥassān had in mind, since this is what the content provided by the preceding verse requires.[8] It does not diminish the strong case that can be made for Dūma that its connection with his patrons—the Ghassānids whom he lauds in the poem—is not as strong as that of Kalb or Kinda, since these were all federate tribes of the Inner and Outer Shields. As a prominent poet of the period and an Azdite from Medina, Ḥassān would have been welcome at a residence of either Kalb or Kinda.[9] Slightly more important is the geographical location of Dūma, somewhat removed from Ḥassān's natural route to the Ghassānids, which probably was the Tabūkiyya. But it is perfectly possible that he visited Dūmat, since it was a well-known center in Ḥijāz, that part of northwestern Arabia to which Ḥassān, a peripatetic poet, belonged. Finally, it may be pointed out that the use of *ka'anna* ("as if"), before Dūmat, suggests that Ḥassān was not thinking so much of an actual visit to Dūma as of the impregnability

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ies, and inaccuracies, which have laid them open to the charge of spuriousness. Often they contain a small kernel of truth.

[6] On the three attempts to occupy it during the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the problems these raise, see *EI*², s.v. Dūmat al-Djandal, II, 625.

[7] On this, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* II, 487. The caliph would not have ordered an evacuation if Dūmat had not been deemed too powerful and thus too dangerous a post to be left unoccupied and within striking distance of Medina, the capital of the Muslim state.

[8] Parenthetically, its designation as Dūmat al-Jandal, "Dūma of the stone or rock," speaks for itself, reflecting its character as a stronghold, built of stone rather than dry mud or baked clay. Euting made a sketch of the stone fortress and the wall surrounding it in 1883, but much of the fortress had disappeared when a century later a Saudī scholar visited the site to find only disappointing remains; see Dūmat in *EI*², II, 624 and H. Jāsir, *Fi Shāmal Sharq al-Jazīra* (Riyadh, 1981), 142–47 with photographs and reference to the description of another traveler, Lady Blunt (pp. 143–144).

The impressive structure of the fortress of Dūma, in the Arabic tradition called Mārid, is reflected in the remarks of Jāḥiẓ, the 9th-century discriminating encyclopaedic writer, namely, that it was one of the four monuments of pre-Islamic times, with which the Arabs emulated the Persians in architecture; quoted by al-Nuwayrī in *Nihāyat al-Arab* (Cairo, 1963), I, 384.

[9] More associated with Dūma than Ghassān, although the latter are said to have shared control of its famous *sūq* (fair) with the Kalb; on Kalb and Kinda and the subdivision of Kalb, Kināna, that possessed Dūma, see *EI*², II, 625.

De Goeje's argument related to the Ghassānid princess Layla, that the episode involved Dūma in Damascene, not Dūmat al-Jandal nor Dūma in Iraq, is far from being final or entirely cogent; see *EI,* II, 625, col. 2. De Goeje argued that, according to Balāḏurī, Layla was captured in a "village" that belonged to Ghassān, so he concluded that this was Dūma in Damascene, the land of the Ghassānids. But the term in Balāḏurī that de Goeje translated as "village" is *ḥāḍir,* a technical military term of the period, which does not mean village, but rather a military camp. The Ghassānids, however, could very well have had a military camp in Dūmat al-Jandal, together with their ally Kalb, with whom they shared the *sūq* of Dūmat.

of its position, which he thus referred to only to illustrate his own unassailability vis-à-vis his adversaries.

In support of Damascene Dūma, the case for which may not be as strong as for Arabian Dūma, the following may be adduced. The poet remembers toponyms that are recognizably Ghassānid in the area around Damascus: al-Khawābī, al-Buḍayʿ, Marj al-Ṣuffarayn, Jāsim, Jalliq, al-Kurūm, and al-Qasṭal. Dūma belongs geographically to this cluster of towns and localities mentioned by Ḥassān.[10]

It does not militate against this argument that Dūma does not seem to have been an important center in this period or as important as the Arabian Dūma. It is not included among the monasteries that appear in the list of Monophysite abbots, dated A.D. 570, although the monastery of Nahr al-Quṣayr may be the monastery of Dūma.[11] Its nonvisibility in the sources, however, may be due to the familiar problem of source survival. This argument for Damascene Dūma could receive some fortification from a reference to a Dūma in Umayyad times by the poet al-Raʿī, who mentions it in a verse that provides some details, namely, that it had a *rāhib* (monk), around whom were to be found *tajr* (merchants) and *hajīj* (pilgrims).[12] This is likely to be Damascene Dūma, since further on in the poem the poet speaks of Ghassānid toponyms such as Ḥuwwārīn and Ḥārith al-Jawlān.[13] Also the caliph Omar is said to have ordered the inhabitants of Dūma to vacate it; so it is difficult to visualize a *rāhib* in later Umayyad times in *Arabian* Dūma to which the poet could refer.[14]

[10] On the other hand, the verse (no. 20) in which Dūma occurs belongs to the second half of the poem, which comes after the first that lauded the Ghassānids and mentioned their towns and other localities, ending in verse 18. So a Ghassānid association with Dūma was not imperative for the poet to emphasize.

[11] For Nahr al-Quṣayr, the Arabic form of the Syriac Nahrā d'Qasṭrā, in the list of Monophysite monasteries, see T. Nöldeke, "Zur Topographie und Geschichte des Damascënischen Gebietes und der Ḥaurāngegend," *ZDMG* 29 (1876), 423–24.

Nöldeke thought that the monastery listed in the Syriac Monophysite document took its name from the nearby village of al-Quṣayr known to Yāqūt, IV, 367. Dūma then may have been inhabited not by a Monophysite community but a Dyophysite one, hence its exclusion from the list of Monophysite monasteries. Whether it had any Ghassānid associations is not clear. In spite of its possible doctrinal affiliation as Dyophysite, it may have had a Ghassānid presence, since, as has been noted in *BASIC* I.2, 849, there was a group among the Ghassānids that became Dyophysite.

[12] For this verse, see *Der Dīwān des Rāʿī An-Numairi,* ed. R. Weipert (Beirut, 1980), 24, verse 14; for Ḥuwwārīn and Ḥārith al-Jawlān, see 25, verses 25, 26. For the toponymy of the *Dīwān,* see G. Ọman, "Un poeta pastore: al-Rāʿī: II, Versi continenti toponimi," *AIOUN* 16 (Naples, 1966), 89–100. The verse in which Dūma occurs is not included in the list of those the author has assembled. I thank Gianfranco Fiaccadori for supplying me with a copy of this article, which was unavailable to me.

[13] See Rāʿī, *Dīwān,* 25, verses 25–26.

[14] The reference to pilgrims in Dūma is noteworthy. These are likely to be Muslim pilgrims on their way to Mecca from Syria, who congregated at Dūma as one of the many stations on their pilgrimage route. But they could also have been Christian pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem, since in those early times the pilgrimage as a Christian act of piety among the inhabitants of the region was still widely performed, and the tolerant Umayyads would not have interfered with its performance. Reference to a monk in the verse could suggest that the pilgrims were Christians rather than Muslims.

The reference in the same verse to merchants suggests that Dūma was an important trading center as, in fact, it is nowadays. If it was such in Umayyad times, it probably was also an important center slightly before, when Ḥassān was composing. But it does not seem to have been associated with a *qaṣr* (fortress), or with one as famous for its strength and impregnability as that of Arabian Dūma.

"Qaṣr Dūma" in Ḥassān, therefore, is probably Arabian Dūma; indeed the phrase "Qaṣr Dūma" may be Ḥassān's own literary version of the famous "Hiṣn Dūma," which the poet avails himself of in order to reflect his own impregnability, an interpretation supported by the context of the two verses that surround the toponym Dūma. This makes practically certain that Qaṣr in Ḥassān's phrase "Qaṣr Dūma" must mean a fortress and not a palace or mansion.[15]

Difficulties also beset the phrase that follows Qaṣr Dūma, namely, "sawā' al-haykal," whether *sawā'* should be construed as a common noun or as a proper noun, Sāwā'. Commentators take *sawā'* to be a common noun meaning, among other things, "the center of" and translate the phrase, "the center of the *haykal*." *Haykal* refers to a religious building, either a church or monastery, and so the phrase is interpreted "in the center of the church or temple." This is possible but is open to the following objections.[16] The context noted in the previous section for the verse suggests a place in which Ḥassān says he was unassailable and protected, such as Qaṣr Dūma, "the fortress of Dūma." The disjunction expressed by *aw* suggests that *sawā' al-haykal* is of the same order of impregnability as Qaṣr Dūma, an unlikely characterization of the center of a church/temple. It might be argued that a case for a church or monastery can be made on the ground that the poet was thinking of the sanctity that attached to a Christian church as an impregnable place, alternative to the secular one, the Qaṣr, fortress of Dūma. But this is weakened considerably by the fact that the holy of holies in the Christian church is the apse and this does not lie in the center of the church. Furthermore, neither of the two Dūmas was famous for a religious structure that could balance the famous Qaṣr, as did Bostra with its cathedral.

The use of a proper noun (Dūma) in the first part of the disjunction suggests that the second one should also be of the same order—a proper noun.[17] Detailed maps of the Damascus region have revealed the existence of a toponym called Sawā', apparently unknown to the commentators, which could be the Sawā' of the verse.[18] The *iḍāfa* con-

[15] This reference to Dūma as an impregnable fortress in Ḥassān's verse is an important *contemporary* testimony to the importance of Dūma in the military posture of Arab federate power in the service of Byzantium. Dūma was a vital outpost for the defense of Oriens in Byzantine times, and its strength explains the difficulty that early Islam had in occupying it.

[16] In addition to the fact that *sawā'* is not the normal word for center in Arabic. Appeal is made to its occurrence in the Koran in the phrase *sawā' al-Jaḥīm,* but this has its own difficulties in Koranic exegesis. Furthermore, the notion of center seems to be odd in the verse and irrelevant to the context in which the phrase occurs.

[17] It may even require it for literary effect—balance.

[18] It appears in the compound Beit Sawā'; see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map IV, 2A. This is to be distinguished from the term where it occurs as part of the name of a monastery, Dayr al-Sawā', in faraway Iraq, and to be distinguished from Suwā of Wādī Sirḥān, made famous by Khālid's

struction involved in Sawā' al-Haykal implies that the *haykal* was so famous that the place Sawā' became known through it—the Sawā' of the Haykal.[19] It is possible that the locality Sawā' was famous for a shrine or temple of which no record has survived. That Sawā' was well known in this period is clear from reference to it in one of the verses of the Umayyad poet ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt.[20]

So if Sawā' turns out to be a proper noun, one has to assume that it had a shrine, church, or monastery that was so famous it made the town Sawā' also famous and that it acquired its identity through it. This shrine might be one at which refugees and others could feel safe because of its sanctity.

If, on the other hand, *sawā'* is retained as a common noun in the context of inviolability, the phrase, especially because of the use of the word *haykal* rather than *dayr* (convent) or *bīʿa* (church), may then refer to a cathedral such as that of Bostra, which was famous especially among the Monophysites, where Ḥassān could justifiably say that he was or would have been unassailable because of the sanctity of the place.

Appendix III

Jāḥiẓ and al-Hamaḏānī on Ḥassān's Ghassānid Odes

Before he became the Prophet Muḥammad's poet laureate, Ḥassān had been such for the Ghassānids, his relatives for a long time until the Persian occupation of Bilād al-Shām/Oriens in A.D. 614. After that year he continued to remember them before the Muslim conquest of Bilād al-Shām and after, even till the end of his life. Yet only a few of his poems on them have survived, many in a fragmentary state. The question then arises: is it possible that a poet who spent the first half of his long life as the poet laureate of the Ghassānids could have composed only those few poems? The ancient critics who examined Ḥassān's *Dīwān* compared what he wrote before and after the rise of Islam and concluded that what he wrote before was better than what he wrote after; such a judgment could not have been made on the strength of a few extant fragments. Critics also noted that much poetry had been fabricated and circulated, ascribed to Ḥassān on Islamic subjects, since he was the poet laureate of the Prophet and various vested interests in the years that followed the death of Muḥammad wanted to rest their claims or pretensions on the firm foundation of poetry composed by the Prophet's own poet. But these critics never voiced any doubts or reservations on the authenticity of the pre-Islamic odes most of which were on the Ghassānids. These conclusions on the abundance and authenticity of Ḥassān's poetry on the Ghassānids receive confirmation and fortification from the judgment of two of the foremost men of letters of medieval Islamic times, namely, al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 868/9) and al-Hamaḏānī (d. 1008).[1]

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march from Iraq to Bilād al-Shām. For the Dayr al-Sawā', see Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* II, 587 and Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* II, 517–18.

[19] For this type of *iḍāfa,* see *BASIC* I.1, 121 note 300. "Tayma al-Yahūdiyy," "Taymā' of the Jew," may be added to the list; see Aʿshā, *Dīwān,* 146, verse 7.

[20] See *Dīwān ʿUbayd Allāh ibn-Qays al-Ruqqyyāt,* ed. M. Najm (Beirut, 1986), 19, verse 19, where Sawā' is mentioned with al-Qaryatayn, the well-known toponym in Phoenicia Libanensis.

[1] On Jāḥiẓ, see the article by C. Pellat in *EI*², II, s.v. Djāhiz, 385–87. On Hamaḏānī, see the article by R. Blachère, ibid., III, s.v. Hamaḏānī, 106–107.

Al-Jāḥiẓ

In his *Epistle, Al-Radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā,* the "Response to the Christians," Jāḥiẓ spoke of the Christianity of the Ghassānids and how well known it was among the genealogists, to which he added: "Had it not been for this, I should have demonstrated it with the well-known poems (*al-ashʿār/al-maʿrūfa*) and the authentic accounts (*al-akhbār al-saḥīḥa*)."[2]

The passage has been noticed briefly in another context,[3] but it repays careful study in connection with Ḥassān. The Christianity of the Ghassānids has been recorded in the poetry of two of their poets, Nābigha and Ḥassān, but only two poems, one by each of these two, have survived on this theme with only brief references, even though the two poets visited the Ghassānids frequently. It is impossible to believe that Jāḥiẓ would have made that statement and used the plural "well-known poems" on the basis of two poems, one by each by these two poets. Furthermore, Jāḥiẓ was a Muslim writing a polemical Epistle; thus he would not have ascribed to the Ghassānids' poets compositions that praised Christianity and its patrons the Ghassānids, unless there were many such poems available to him that were authentic (unlike much Islamic poetry that was ascribed to Ḥassān but was rightly rejected by critics as unauthentic). Ḥassān is not mentioned by name in this passage on Jāḥiẓ, nor is Nābigha, but it is certain that Jāḥiẓ had in mind poems composed by these two since these were the two celebrated poets of the Ghassānids, and Ḥassān was their relative and chief poet.

The other phrase, the true authentic accounts about the Ghassānids (*al-akhbār al-saḥīḥa*), suggests that not only pre-Islamic poetry on the Ghassānids is authentic and well known but also the prose accounts in which Jāḥiẓ reposed confidence. The Ghassānids played their role in Oriens not in the distant past but in the full light of history on the eve of the rise of Islam, and so accounts about them have survived, well documented and preserved partly by their descendants, who remained in Oriens/Bilād al-Shām and did not emigrate to Anatolia after the Muslim conquest.

Jāḥiẓ was one of the foremost men of letters of the Golden Period of Arabic letters, a polymath and connoisseur of Arabic poetry. He was also a sound and severe critic of it, ready to dismiss and reject poetry that seemed to him spurious.[4] So his highly prized judgment on authenticity is welcome. His *floruit* was in the ninth century, and so the poems of Ḥassān, composed in the sixth and seventh centuries, obviously were still extant and well known in the ninth, although most of his work is now lost. Ḥassān became the chief poet of the Prophet of Islam, and the *ruwat* (transmitters) of his poetry were naturally more interested in his Islamic than in his Christian poetry. Christianity was the official religion of the main adversary of Islam, and the Ghassānids were the allies of the adversary and had fought at Islam's great battle, al-Yarmūk, with the Byzantines against the Muslims. The nonsurvival of these poems that remembered their Christianity is understandable but also a great loss. The poems would have preserved features of the Ghassānids' religious life that were not noticed by the Syriac writers who recorded their

[2] See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ,* ed. A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1979), III, 312.
[3] See the section on "Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān," below, 364–74.
[4] See *BAFIC,* 347–49.

Christianity, significant features that are so pitiably few in the poems that have survived, such as their festive moods at Easter and Palm Sunday.[5]

Al-Hamaḏānī

Al-Hamaḏānī, in one of his Epistles addressed to a certain Muḥammad ibn Ẓahīr, the chief of the city of Balkh in central Asia (ancient Bactria), had occasion to refer to the Ghassānids. While reciting the virtues of this chief, al-Hamaḏānī remembered his hospitality and referred to his platter, which was passed among his guests. The term for platter in Arabic, *jafna,* led him, as a verbal artist and *more Arabico,* to indulge in punning the term, which happens to be the homonym of Jafna, the dynastic name of the Ghassānid royal house, who were often referred to as the Jafnids, the Sons of Jafna. This is turn led him to refer to Ḥassān and to laud him as follows. "And he composed for them (the Ghassānids) the beautiful poems (*al-qaṣā'id al-ḥisān*); time grows old and is worn out, while these poems remain new, and those bones (either of Ḥassān or the Ghassānids) decay in the earth, while these beauties (of the poems) remain alive among men, and God does not allow hospitality to remain unattended by a tongue that will advertise and propagate its virtue, which men will remember in their conversation."[6]

Hamaḏānī was the master of rhymed prose in Arabic, but, even when due allowance is made for his weakness toward verbal artistry,[7] the passage remains a remarkable testimony to Ḥassān on the Ghassānids and calls for the following observations. Unlike the passage in Jāḥiẓ, this one specifically refers to Ḥassān, the panegyrist of the Ghassānids. He is also specific on the kind of poetry he is associating Ḥassān with. Just as Jāḥiẓ referred to those poems that documented the Christianity of the Ghassānids, al-Hamaḏānī refers specifically to panegyrics. This is consonant with what is known about Ḥassān as *the* panegyrist of the Ghassānids even more so than the other poet who composed on them, al-Nābigha. Hamaḏānī speaks about them in superlative terms, and even if allowance is made for the fact that he is a literary artist and might have resorted to hyperbole just as he employed homophony in *ḥisān* and *Ḥassān,* enough remains to suggest that these poems were indeed *ḥisān,* beautiful.[8]

The conclusions that may be drawn from the analysis of this passage may be pre-

[5] Above all, these poems may have had references that explicitly documented the existence of an *Arabic* version of the Bible in pre-Islamic times. Only one phrase in a poem of Nābigha has survived, but it has been controversial for a long time because of its silence on the language of the Ghassānid holy book, the Bible. This will be discussed in great detail in the next volume, *BASIC* II.2.

[6] See Hamaḏānī, *Rasā'il Abī al-Fadl Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamaḏānī* (Cairo, 1898), 300–301. The last sentence beginning "and God . . . " is a paraphrase of the Arabic, so turned in the interest of intelligibility.

[7] For his virtuosity and versatility, see H. A. R. Gibb, *Arabic Literature* (Oxford, 1963), 100–101. He died young when he had hardly reached the age of forty and because of his brilliance was called Badī' al-Zamān, "the Prodigy" or "the Wonder of the Age," which recalls "Stupor Mundi," the nickname of the Hohenstaufen emperor, Frederick II.

[8] This is confirmed beyond doubt in another of his *Epistles,* in which he was expressing his gratitude to a patron in Nīshāpūr and could not find a better expression of that sentiment than a verse composed by Ḥassān, see *Rasā'il,* 207.

sented as follows. Much of Ḥassān's pre-Islamic poetry has disappeared, and Hamaḏānī's passage is testimony to this fact. What has been inferred from the passage in Jāḥiẓ is *a fortiori* true of this inference from the passage in Hamaḏānī, since it is doubtful that whole poems would have been composed by Ḥassān on Ghassānid Christianity, which must have been included in his poems only incidentally and occasionally. But panegyrics are different: they constitute a recognized poetic genre in Arabic poetry, especially addressed to powerful patrons such as the Ghassānids, and this was actually Ḥassān's function as their poet laureate. These panegyrics that have not survived thus balance those that have, which are mostly elegies and reminiscences on the Ghassānids after their fall.

As for the aesthetic value, there is also no doubt about the truth of his statement, since al-Hamaḏānī even more than Jāḥiẓ was a man of letters. As a practitioner of verbal artistry, he is rightly credited with the invention of the literary genre called *Maqāmāt*[9] (Séances), and few have played with the Arabic language more cunningly than this medieval Persian figure. He was also a great connoisseur of poetry, witness his *maqāma* on poetry, although his own attempts to compose were not as successful as his prose work. He thus confirms what other critics had said: Ḥassān's poetry was of the best in pre-Islamic times (*min ajwad al-shi'r*)[10] but deteriorated in the Islamic period.

Jāḥiẓ was a ninth-century figure, but al-Hamaḏānī's *floruit* was the tenth/eleventh centuries, and so these poems of Ḥassān, the panegyrics, were still extant in that period. That they were lost since then or shortly after may be due to more of the same causes that have been referred to in describing their loss after the ninth. The Crusades that were soon launched against the Muslim world must have contributed toward much antipathy to poems that lauded the Christian Ghassānids who were allies of the main adversary, Christendom. An account of an episode involving Ḥassān during the caliphate of Omār (634–644) corroborates this conclusion. Ḥassān, so goes the account, had received some gifts from the Ghassānid king Jabala while the latter was in Constantinople after he decided to emigrate to the Rūm, the Byzantines, and Ḥassān is moved to remember his former patron with some laudatory verses to which one of those present objected, saying, "How do you praise and remember kings who were infidels and whom God has annihilated?"[11] This may be an embroidery in the account, but such a *hadīth* is still valuable in that it illustrates the mood of the Muslim community after the rise of Islam and the Muslim conquests.

For the social and cultural history of the Ghassānids, the loss of these panegyrics on the Ghassānids is especially unfortunate. The *madā'iḥ* in true Arab fashion would have lauded their *muru'a* and its twin virtues among the Arabs in war and peace: prowess and hospitality. Enough has survived about their prowess in war but not so much on their virtues in peace. The *madā'iḥ* (panegyrics) would have referred to intimate details

[9] For these "novelettes" in rhymed, rhythmical prose, see Pellat in *EI*[2], s.v. Maḳāma, VI, 107–15.

[10] The judgment of the famous medieval critic, al-Asma'ī, for which see M. Darwīsh, *Ḥassān ibn-Thābit* (Cairo, n.d.), 503. The judgment is slightly unfair to Ḥassān's Islamic poetry, some of which is not far behind his poetry on the Ghassānids.

[11] For the episode in its entirety, see Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *Al-'Iqd al-Farīd,* ed. A. Amīn and I. al-Abyārī (Beirut, 1982), II, 56–62. The quotation is on p. 62, line 4.

that the social historian would like to have at his disposal, such as their food, drink, and clothes, glimpses of which are sporadically and intermittently vouchsafed by the pitiable remains of what has survived of poetry on the Ghassānids.

Appendix IV

Ḥassān in Recent Scholarship

Lawrence Conrad has done very useful work on early Arabic historiography, not so much when he allied himself with the skeptical school of Hamburg, represented by the late Albrecht Noth, but in the study of texts such as Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Shām,* an excellent study of this historian of the early Arab conquests.[1] Although he deals mainly with the Islamic period, Conrad has ventured into the pre-Islamic era occasionally, a world he is not so familiar with; as a result he has made a number of unfortunate mistakes in interpreting the texts. He seems to have been drawn into it through his doctoral dissertation on the plague in which a fragment, a triplet of verses by Ḥassān, is involved, and this seems to have led him to further sporadic observations on pre-Islamic times.[2] As Ḥassān is one of the primary sources on the Ghassānids, it is necessary to examine Conrad's observations on Ḥassān and other problems pertaining to the pre-Islamic period.[3]

The Triplet

One of the triplets in Ḥassān's *Dīwān* describes the plague in Bilād al-Shām and its devastating effects in Ghassānland. The location of the incidence of the plague is clearly referred to as Arḍ al-Rūm, "the Land of the Romans/*Rhomaioi*." In his discussion of this triplet, Conrad concluded that this must refer to the plague (*ṭāʿūn*) of ʿAmwās, usually dated A.D. 638–639.[4] Surely this must be a reference to a plague *antedating* the Arab conquest. No Arab poet, let alone the chief poet of the prime mover of the Arab conquest of Bilād al-Shām, would have referred to that region after the resounding victory of Yarmūk as "the Land of the Romans."

Thirteen years later, Conrad realized his mistake and redated the triplet to the pre-Islamic period. He did well trying to identify some of the obscure toponyms,[5] but his translation of the triplet is open to two objections, involving the terms *shaʿāʾir* and *qaṣr*.[6]

[1] See A. Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source Critical Study,* in collaboration with L. I. Conrad, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 3 (Princeton, N.J., 1994), and idem, "Al-Azdī's History of the Arab Conquests in Bilād al-Shām: Some Historiographical Observations," in *Proceedings of the Second Symposium of the History of Bilad al-Shām* (Amman, 1987), I, 28–62.

[2] See Conrad, "The Plague in the Early Medieval Near East"; for reference to this fragment from Ḥassān on the plague and the triplet, see p. 187.

[3] For his views on *qaṣr,* see above, 67–75.

[4] On the *Ṭāʿūn* of ʿAmwās in A.D. 638–639, see Conrad, "Plague," 167–246. For dating the triplet and relating it to the plague of ʿAmwās, see ibid., 187.

[5] See idem, "Epidemic Disease in Central Syria in the Late Sixth Century. Some New Insights from the Verse of Ḥassān ibn Thābit," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 18 (1994), 12–58; for the correction, see 21–22, for the toponyms, 22–26.

[6] For *shaʿāʾir* and *qaṣr* in the Arabic text and the English translation, see Conrad, "Disease," 18, verses 1 and 2.

Of the plague, he says that its banners descended on Buṣrā, translating Arabic *shaʿāʾiruhu* as "banners," a translation that does not make sense. The term may not be crystal clear, but whatever it is, it cannot be "banners," even on grammatical grounds. The term, a plural, is used for the rites in a religious context as in the Muslim *ḥajj,* where it means the rites performed by the pilgrims. Conrad seems to think that it is the plural of *shiʿār,* "emblem," "password," or "slogan," but the plural of this is *ashʿur, shiʿārāt,* or *ashʿira.* The term must, however, be related to something appropriate to the plague and its devastating effect, and so it should be related either to the verb *ashʿara* "to wound" or to *shaʿīra,* the plural of which is *shaʿāʾir,* the same plural used by Ḥassān, and which means the "pin that enters the tang of a knife," a signification perfectly consonant with the term *wakhz* in the third verse, the "stinging" of the Jinn.[7]

In a poem on the Ghassānid *foederati* of Byzantium, the term *qaṣr* in the second hemistich of the second verse can only mean "fort" or "mansion," and, as has been stated in this volume, where the triplet was discussed, it is practically certain that it means here "mansion" or some such signification.[8]

In a couplet cited by Conrad in which the plague is also involved, there is a mistake in translating the Arabic phrase *muqayyidati al-ḥimār* as whose "warriors bridle asses."[9] The root in *muqayyidati,* that is, *qayyada,* means to tether the ass, not to bridle it, for which the term is *aljama.* What is involved is the foot or leg of the ass and not its head.

Ḥassān's *Nūniyya*: The Rhyme in *N*

In the same article in which he corrected his previous dating of Ḥassān's triplet, Conrad discusses at great length another poem of Ḥassān's, a celebrated *nūniyya,* the poem rhyming in *N.* He makes the startling assertion that it too "offers equally valuable insights into the impact of epidemic disease, again probably the plague, in the central districts of Syria in the last years before the rise of Islam." He also says that a second version of the poem suggests that this version was not Ḥassān's but that of another poet, who was a contemporary or almost one. And as he once misdated the triplet, clearly pre-Islamic, to the Islamic period, he misdated this poem, clearly Islamic, and declared it pre-Islamic.[10] All these views should be rejected, as well as his mistranslations of the Arabic text of the poem.

These are serious errors about this important poem, which to my knowledge have gone unchallenged. Moreover, they have influenced others,[11] and for all these reasons they must be corrected. It is best to begin with Conrad's translation of the *nūniyya.*

[7] For these terms, see E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863–93), book I, part 4, 1559, 1561.

[8] Above, 235, and also on Conrad's views on *qaṣr* above, note 3.

[9] Conrad, "Disease," 19, verse 2.

[10] For all this, see ibid., 29–52; quotation on p. 29. These conclusions are included in an article by Conrad that was translated into German by A. Noth: "Die Pest und ihr soziales Umfeld im Nahen Osten des frühen Mittelalters," *Der Islam* 73 (1996), 96–97, based on a paper Conrad read at a meeting of the "Study Group on Urbanism in the Roman-Byzantine Period" at the Institute for Advanced Study of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

[11] See below, note 35.

A

For those who must depend on Conrad's English version[12] for understanding this poem, here are some observations and corrections.

1. The first verse is translated as follows: "To whom belongs the abode, rendered desolate in Maʿān/From the heights of al-Yarmūk unto al-Khammān." The toponym, Maʿān, makes no sense in this context as noted by Conrad. He, however, missed the editor's perfectly acceptable emendation of Maʿān as a common noun, *maghānī,* plural of *maghnā,* made possible by the deletion of the diacritical mark over the *ʿayn.*[13] So *maghānī* ("settlements," "places of residence") and "abode" (*al-dār*) in the verse would be located within these *maghānī.* The translation of "aʿlā al-Yarmūk" as "the heights of al-Yarmūk" is unacceptable. The phrase means the upper region of the course of the Yarmūk River at its source as opposed to the region where it flows into the Jordan, as in Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt, related to the course of the Nile. This would be more relevant and useful for Conrad's own position on this poem, erroneous as it is, because it would indicate the *extent* of the effect of the plague, from the source of the Yarmūk to al-Khammān. "Heights" as a translation of Arabic *aʿlā* is also inaccurate. The Arabic form is in the singular, which apparently Conrad was forced to translate in the plural since apparently he thought it meant the high cliffs or mountains through which the river flows, while the singular would not convey that signification.

2. Verse two is translated as follows. "The al-Qurayyāt down from Balās, then Dārayyā,/then Sakkā', then the compounds close by." The translation of *quṣūr* by "compounds" is consonant with Conrad's view on the etymology of *quṣūr,* weighed and found wanting,[14] and so it must be rejected in favor of the accepted etymology of Arabic *qaṣr* as Latin *castrum,* Greek *kastron,* here used in the plural, *quṣūr.*

3. Verse three is translated as follows: "Then the hinterland of Jāsim, then the wadis of al-Ṣuffar,/where herds of horses and fine white thoroughbreds feed?" The "hinterland of Jāsim" is a good and elegant translation of Arabic *qafā Jāsim. Hijān* in the verse should clearly be translated "noble white *camels,*" contrasting with horses, and not only "fine thoroughbreds," which could suggest horses rather than camels. The distinction between the two animals should be kept since it is informative on the two types employed by the Ghassānids in their campaigns, each of the two performing a different function from the other as components in the Ghassānid contingent of the Byzantine *exercitus comitatensis.*[15]

4. Verse four is translated as follows: "That was the abode of the one whose tent is raised on lofty poles/The one dear unto me beyond the measure of his friendship and favour." The translation of this verse is utterly unsatisfactory, especially so because it is an informative verse on one aspect of Ghassānid life and not merely one full of literary

[12] For this version, see Conrad, "Disease," 30. All nine verses of this translation examined in the following pages are to be found on that page.

[13] See W. ʿArafāt, *Dīwān* (London, 1971), I, 257.

[14] Above, note 8.

[15] On the use of the camel and the horse by the Arabs in Islamic times, see D. R. Hill, "The Role of the Camel and the Horse in the Early Arab Conquests," in *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East,* ed. V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp (London, 1975), 32–43.

locutions to be found in panegyrics. With the exception of the first six words, "that was the abode of him," there is no trace in the Arabic text of anything like the rest of its English translation, which sounds like a very free paraphrase of what Conrad thought the Arab poet had meant. What the poet said and meant was something completely different. He was remembering and referring to his patrons, the Ghassānids, to both their rulers and structures. In three perfectly clear Arabic words, *ḥulūl,* *ʿaẓīma,* and *al-arkān,* he described their "structures the pillars or corners of which are imposing or great." In two epithets, *ʿazīz* and *anīs,* he described the lords of these structures: the first term means "powerful" or "mighty"; the second can be expressed in English only paraphrastically, "the one who puts his guest at ease and makes him feel comfortable through his kind hospitality." The two epithets constitute the two arms of Arab *murūʾa,* in war and in peace. One of the two epithets, *ʿazīz,* goes well with the description of the structures, mighty rulers of powerful structures.

It is not entirely clear what made Conrad treat the verse the way he did, despite the fact that the Arabic of this particular verse should have presented no insuperable difficulty. For his mistranslation of what the poet said on the Ghassānid rulers, he was misled by the modern meaning of *ʿazīz* ("dear"),[16] and this possibly led him to translate *anīs* as "beyond the measure of his friendship and favour," of which there is no trace in Arabic *anīs.*

Much more serious is his mistranslation of the second hemistich, which incidentally he transposed and made the first, and which he strangely renders "whose tent is raised on lofty poles" of which again there is no trace in the Arabic text. He apparently understood *arkān* (plural of *rukn*), which means pillar or corner of a building, as "poles," and *ḥulūl* as "tent," and so he produced the "tent with lofty poles."[17] Lofty, too, is a mistranslation of *ʿazīma,* which means "great," "impressive," but Conrad changed the meaning to "lofty" apparently in order to make it appropriate to his mistranslation of *ḥulūl* by tent, which also is in the plural, not singular "tent," as he translates it. In so rendering the verse, Conrad projected a view utterly rejected by the Arab historians[18] on the Ghassānids that they are people of *ʿamad,* poles, the very term he chose to employ in describing Ghassānid structures.

Conrad's flagrant violation of Arabic semantics, which yielded such a mistranslation, is contradicted by the archaeological remains of the Ghassānids as represented in Sergiopolis, and by Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, which do, indeed, answer to structures described by Ḥassān as so powerful that they have resisted the passage of time and are still standing. The key to Conrad's mistranslation has then to be sought in the view that the Ghassānids were pastoralists and so could not have built such structures as described by

[16] See H. Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic,* ed. J. M. Cowan (Wiesbaden, 1979), 713.

[17] The Arabic for poles and pegs, related to tents, *khiyām,* are *ʿamad* or *ʿumud,* and *awtād,* plurals of *ʿamūd* and *watid* respectively.

[18] These refer to the Ghassānids as *ahl-madar. Madar* is the clay or loam used in making the bricks from which buildings are constructed. The term *ahl-madar* used for settled, sedentary peoples is the antonym of *ahl-ʿamad* or *ahl-wabar,* the pastoralists; see also the section on the sedentariness of the Ghassānids, above, 1–15.

the poet, a view expressed earlier in his article. The translation of this verse is therefore more an interpretation than a faithful translation.

5. Verse five is translated as follows: "Their mother was bereaved and was bereaved of them./On the day they stopped to camp at Ḥārith al-Jawlān." The English version of this verse is a literal one. The first two words, *habilat ummuhum,* is rendered "their mother was bereaved." This literal translation makes the following sentence unbearably tautological and is a mistranslation, although not a serious one. *Habilat ummuhum,* however, admits of an idiomatic translation. In classical times, this Arabic phrase was often used as an expression of admiration or praise, and most likely it is so used in this verse. This should be pointed out, even in a literal translation; the poet is not stating the fact of bereavement as much as he is expressing admiration through the concept of bereavement. Modern dictionaries of Arabic do not include this idiomatic rendering of *habilat ummuhum,* not even Lane,[19] but it is found in the medieval Arabic lexicons.

6. Verse six is translated as follows: "Easter approached, so the young girls sat/to arrange garlands of coral." This verse is correctly translated, although *quʿūdan,* as the girls "sat," is not as good as another variant reading, *sirāʿan,*[20] "hurriedly," which goes better with the verb *danā,* indicating that Easter was near at hand. The maidens were hurriedly "arranging" the garlands so that they would be ready for Easter, which was fast approaching. The Arabic term *yanẓimna,* translated by Conrad as "to arrange," is more strictly "to string," and so the girls were stringing the coral rather than arranging it.

7. Verse seven is translated as follows: "Gathering saffron in finely perforated cloths,/wearing saffron-dyed gowns of linen." The English "in finely perforated cloths" translates one version of the Arabic text, which makes no sense despite Conrad's truly gallant attempt to make sense of it.[21] Conrad was unaware of another variant reading or an emendation of which also the editor, W. ʿArafāt, was unaware, namely, that the crucial term *thuqub* is a corruption of *nuqab,*[22] the plural of *niqāb,* meaning veil, which makes perfect sense. It is easy to see how *nuqab* became *thuqub* through the addition of two diacritical points over the first letter of the word. This reading, in addition to making sense, is welcome since the verse thus indicates how women of the Ghassānid royal house dressed, a combination of *nuqab, rayṭ,* and *majāsid* of *kattān,* linen.

8. Verse eight is translated as follows: "And not busying themselves with resin, nor with gum,/Nor with the seeds of the colocynth." This verse is correctly translated, although the English "busying themselves" does not quite catch and reproduce the fine nuance inherent in Arabic *yuʿallalna.*

9. Verse nine is translated as follows: "That was the home of the Āl Jafna when calamity struck,/As the vicissitudes of the ages claimed their due." The translation of *fi al-dahr* in the first hemistich as "when calamity struck" is unacceptable. The poet is

[19] See Lane, *Lexicon,* I, part 18, under the letter H. The verse is important as evidence for a military engagement involving the Ghassānids either during the Persian or the Muslim offensive against Bilād al-Shām.

[20] The reading to be found in what Conrad calls Version II ("Disease," 31, verse 4) and so translated by Conrad as "hastened."

[21] Ibid., 32.

[22] See I. al-Naṣṣ, *Ḥassān ibn-Thābit* (Beirut, 1965), 122.

simply saying that this was the *maghnā,* the abode of the Ghassānids at one time (*al-dahr*) and then it became desolate through the vicissitudes of time.[23] *Waḥaqqun* in the second hemistich, translated "claimed their due," passes muster as being consonant with Conrad's interpretation of *al-dahr,* meaning calamity, which is unacceptable. If the reading *waḥaqqun* is retained in the text, it should be translated by its natural signification: "it is right, sure, true." But a better reading is *maḥāhu,*[24] meaning "annihilated" or "erased," which makes perfect sense; the vicissitudes of the ages have annihilated or erased the abode of the Ghassānids.

10. Verse ten is translated as follows: "I did indeed consider that there I behaved as a resolute man should,/When the place where I stayed was in the presence of the wearer of the crown." The first hemistich of the verse in the English translation speaks of the poet as a "resolute man," a concept alien to the spirit and letter of the poem, a panegyric, and not found in the Arabic text. All that the poet is saying is that his position at the Ghassānid court was strong, *makīn,* due to the fact that not only was he their poet laureate (whatever that meant in those days and that region), but that he was also their relative, the two power bases he had at their court. The second hemistich is a new independent sentence and not a subordinate clause as in the English version, and it repeats or even illustrates the strength of his position with the Ghassānids by pointing out that he sat close to the Ghassānid crowned king.

B

After translating this poem, the *nūniyya,* Conrad presented another Arabic "version" of it and called it Version II with another English translation. The second version contributes four more Ghassānid toponyms, but its main interest for Conrad is verse five (not found in Version I), which comes after the verse in which the poet describes the Ghassānid maidens as they were "arranging" the garlands of coral. Conrad renders verse five as follows: "Vying with one another in raising supplication to God—/But each supplication went (instead) to the demon." Conrad tries to give a literal translation of the Arabic original and translates *al-shayṭān* in the Arabic as "demon" instead of the normal way of rendering it Satan.

Why Conrad chose to treat the verse in this unorthodox way, indeed why he emphasized the "second version" of the poem instead of noting its variant readings as part of a single poem, will become evident from his analysis of verse 5. He identifies *al-shayṭān* with the demon because the demons were "the forces responsible for the calamity which has afflicted the region." The insertion of "instead" helps Conrad say that maidens "vied with one another in raising supplication to God but their supplication went instead *li-l-shayṭān,*" "to *al-shayṭān.*" The sequence of thought is not clear, and the translation and analysis raise the following objections.

1. The identification of *al-shayṭān* with "demon" is utterly unconvincing. It is the

[23] See Conrad, "Disease," 32–33, for the explanation of *al-dahr,* which may have meant fate or destiny, but at this time and in this context can only be what it normally means, "time."

[24] I have lost the reference for the source that has this excellent reading, which improves the text considerably. But I draw attention to it here for any future study of this important poem. The editor, ʿArafāt, was also unaware of this reading; *Dīwān,* I, 258.

biblical Satan, contrasted with God in the Gospels as in the verse. Furthermore, the employment of the singular, *shayṭān,* rather than the plural, *shayāṭīn,* considerably weakens Conrad's proposed identification. It is not one demon but the demons in the plural that in the Arab perception were the cause of the plague.

2. The poem breathes the spirit of a true Christian community preparing for Easter and praying to God, and suddenly its girls are said to be praying to Satan or the demons. As Christians, they are expected to supplicate God against the demons or *al-Shaytān* and not pray to him. And it is not even clear how Conrad thinks that the Christian maidens would change their religious allegiance from God to Satan in order to ward off the plague. One would expect them to pray to God to help them against Satan/the demon. The preposition *li* (to) presents insuperable difficulties for Conrad.

3. The poem also breathes the spirit of a happy community not haunted by the ghosts of an imminent plague of which there is no trace whatsoever in the poem. Only Conrad's preoccupation with the plague made him give the curious interpretation to *shayṭān,* who in turn is made the agent of the plague.

4. It also made him give a peculiar twist to the translation of the first verse in the second version. That verse only says, "Jāsim is desolate and so is Bayt Rās and the region between them," *not* "Wiped out are *those* who lived from Jāsim to Bayt Rās," a translation that transfers the desolation from the toponyms to those who dwelt there, and, according to him, that was due to the plague, reference to which there is no trace of in the poem. Besides, the term *ʿafā* is strictly the term used of desolate *places,* not of human beings.

All these difficulties suggest that in this verse the reading *shayṭān* may be a corrupt one. It is possible that the original word was an epithet of God such as *al-Raḥmān* or *al-Mannān* and that through some scribal error, but more likely through some facetious critic or scholar, *shaytān* was substituted for it in later Islamic times.[25] Alternatively, Shayṭān does not have to be a later substitute for Rahmān or Mannān. It may be retained and some other word may have been changed, such as *kullu* for which *laysa* may be substituted, and so the verse would mean they pray to God and not to Satan. Such is the standard Islamic *basmala,* which has Rahmān followed by *istiʿāḏa,* taking refuge in God from Satan, *al-Shayṭan.*

[25] This is not uncommon in ancient poetry, especially pre-Islamic, where sometimes pagan Allāt becomes Allah, which may not be an exact parallel, but in a society in which a profound change of religious affiliation came about in the 7th century, such substitutions, facetious and other, were possible.

The proposed term, Raḥmān, rhymes perfectly. Although it became with Islam the most important of the "beautiful names" of God, *al-asmāʾ al-ḥusnā,* it was also used by the Christians and, in fact, it was *the* name of God in Christian South Arabia, attested in the Sabaic inscriptions.

The poetry of Ḥassān experienced a substitute reading that is most apposite in this context. During the well-known encounter with the Tamīm group, who came to accept Islam in Medina, their poet al-Zibriqān recited a poem that expressed pride in his tribe, Tamīm, among whose members Christianity had spread before the rise of Islam. The opening verse of the poem reflected this and ended with the word *al-biyaʿ,* churches, the reading preserved in the *Sīra.* This term was changed later into *al-rufuʿ*, which obliterated reference to Christianity in the poem; on this reading, see *Dīwān,* II, 98, note 6.

Thus on the basis of one verse, which is either corrupt through a scribal error or tampered with by a facetious editor or transmitter, the entire poem was interpreted by Conrad in terms that not a single word in the Arabic text can support or even suggest.

C

A return to the questions posed in the introductory part of this section on the *nūniyya* may now be made, namely, Conrad's hypothesis that Version II is the work of a poet contemporary with Ḥassān or almost, that the poem is a reflection of the effects of a plague that hit Bilād al-Shām, and that it should be dated to the pre-Islamic period. The *nūniyya* is one of the most important poems of Ḥassān, and so these questions must be addressed in detail.

Conrad has worked with the prose sources for early Arab Islamic history, such as Azdī, Ṭabarī, and Balāḏurī, in which the prose is straightforward and presents little difficulty. The language of classical Arabic poetry, especially its pre-Islamic period, is almost *sui generis* and difficult. In trying to analyze Ḥassān's poetry, Conrad is on unfamiliar territory. The examination of his attempt to analyze specimens of this poetry—a short fragment and a triplet—has revealed the limitation of his grasp of the lexicon and conventions of early Arabic poetry.[26] Hence this does not qualify him to draw general conclusions on Ḥassān's poetry or this particular poem. Ḥassān has been studied by a number of very competent scholars, one of whom has devoted a lifetime to that endeavor, and not one of them has drawn any of the conclusions that Conrad has.

When Conrad says that this second version to be found in *Aghānī* is the work of another contemporary poet, he seems to be oblivious to the structure of Arabic poetry, the manner of its transmission, and to its inclusion in anthologies and other works of literature, such as *al-Aghānī.* The structure of Arabic verse is atomic rather than organic, in that each verse is a self-contained unit, syntactically and semantically, and this makes possible the transposition of verses within one poem and selectiveness in the choice of verses by anthologists. One may choose certain verses and leave out others for presentation in an anthology or a literary work, while another may follow other principles of choice and rejection. The two versions then represent two different attempts by two different anthologists and men of letters working on one poem by Ḥassān, not the work of two different poets, and when rearranged and remarried to each other, they produce a more satisfactory and informative poem. Furthermore, there is in the second version a feature that precludes its being an independent poem by another poet. This feature comes in the opening verse which does not rhyme internally, as normally the opening verse, the *maṭlaʿ,* does, and this suggests that the poem is not a different one. In fact, this opening verse of Version II comes very appropriately after the opening verse in Version I, which does rhyme internally, and it provides four welcome new place names to the toponymy of Ghassānland.

The Plague: an examination of the second poem, the *nūniyya,* in a close search for a

[26] Two mistakes in the translation of the triplet and some fifteen in that of a fragment of ten verses, the *nūniyya,* mistakes of various sorts, not all significant, but some are quite serious.

single indication that could suggest a plague as the background for the poem has revealed nothing of the kind.[27] This fragment, on the other hand, is the standard lament of the Arab poet over deserted encampments, a convention that went back to pre-Islamic times, and by the time of Ḥassān it had been hallowed in the composition of Arabic poetry, a convention observed by Ḥassān himself in his other poems, the familiar *Ubi sunt qui ante nos in urbe fuerunt?*

No editor or scholar of Ḥassān's poetry has ever said that the background of the poem was a plague. Ḥassān's poem is a lament over the Ghassānid scene that had vanished, memories of which he cherished as a former poet laureate. Conrad, as already argued, based his conclusions on the plague on a single verse in Version II, namely, verse 5, which has been closely examined in the preceding section and found completely irrelevant to an epidemic. He may have become preoccupied with the theme of the plague on which in 1981 he had written his doctoral dissertation, later published in the form of various articles,[28] while his subsequent affiliation with the Wellcome Institute could only have enhanced his interest in the plague.

Conrad's preoccupation with the plague finally led him to antedate the poem from the Islamic period in Bilād al-Shām to the pre-Islamic era, within a duration of some ten years ranging from ca. 610 to ca. 620, thus again running against the consensus that assigned it to the Islamic period. The historian of Bilād al-Shām, Ibn ʿAsākir, ventured the view that Ḥassān composed it on al-Yarmūk, without detailing exactly what he meant by this statement. Conrad took exception to this as "impossible" without saying why.[29] There is no way of telling exactly when and how Ḥassān composed the poem, but there is no doubt that in the chronology of Ḥassān's Ghassānid odes, it belongs to the Islamic period in Bilād al-Shām, and he must then have composed it on one of his visits there. If reference to al-Yarmūk is to be retained, one could say that the historic battle that opened a new era in the history of Bilād al-Shām could well have been on the mind of Ḥassān, especially as it decided the fate of the Ghassānids, his former patrons. Memories of it could easily have been on his mind when he composed the poem as a *laudator temporis acti;* so, in the chronology of his Ghassānid odes, this poem must stay where the critics have placed it, in the Islamic period, and it does not matter much exactly when it was composed. The poem exudes nostalgia, and so could easily have been inspired by the fateful battle; most probably, this is all that Ibn ʿAsākir meant when he associated the poem with Yarmūk.

Conrad's detailed discussion of the verses of Version II is followed by some thirteen pages that contain a very useful account of the historical geography of the toponymy of the poem, not all of it sound, but much of it valuable.[30] The discussion, however, is

[27] Especially when contrasted with the triplet, in which reference to a plague is beyond doubt.

[28] The last of which to my knowledge was in *Der Islam;* see above, note 10.

[29] See Conrad, "Disease," 34 note 63. Conrad had spoken well of Ibn ʿAsākir, calling him "an authority on the history of Syria," for which, see "Plague," 178.

[30] The discussion of Jawābī (above, 240) has deleted it as a fictitious toponym, a corrupt reading for Khawābī, and so this *hapax legomenon,* Jawābī, as it appears in the *lāmiyya* of Ḥassān, no longer presents a problem, for Conrad's view on this, see "Disease," 46. As for Ḥārith al-Jawlān

vitiated by his view that the poem was inspired by the plague and also by the myth of Ghassānid nomadism, to which Conrad apparently subscribes.[31] However, as far as Ghassānid toponymy is concerned, this is not affected by whether the poem was inspired by nostalgia or the plague. It remains a mine of information for the Ghassānid physical presence in the transverse wedge.

The *nūniyya* of Ḥassān is a very important poem for Ghassānid toponymy. Conrad has imparted to it a new dimension of relevance and importance, related to the plague in Bilād al-Shām, as he thought. In the last portion of his article,[32] he stated his position vis-à-vis what was said by such scholars as Maurice Sartre and Jean Durliat. He prefaced this last portion by saying: "From the two poems by Ḥassān ibn Thābit we may conclude that epidemic disease was present through much and perhaps all of the Golan and Ḥawrān region in the late sixth century." He goes on to quote from Maurice Sartre and Jean Durliat, who downplayed the importance of the sixth-century plagues: "Maurice Sartre has suggested that in the Ḥawrān, especially Buṣra, the plague may not have played the seriously disruptive role historians have often assigned to it and Jean Durliat has pursued this line of argument further, and has proposed that the impact of the plague in general has been overestimated both by Medieval authors and in modern research."[33]

Conrad countered through three objections,[34] all based on his interpretation of the two poems of Ḥassān, and concluded by saying: "To the extent that its ravages can be known for the Ḥawrān, Golan, and former Decapolis regions, this will in no small part be due to the poems of Ḥassān ibn-Thābit." This detailed examination of Conrad's views on the two poems has shown that only the triplet is relevant, while the second poem, the *nūniyya,* which for Conrad is the much more important one, has nothing to do with the plague but is a lament over the Ghassānids.[35]

Four years after the publication of his article on Ḥassān, Conrad returned to the Ghassānids in a short article for the *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature.*[36] Although he specializes in early Islamic historiography, in this work Conrad ventures to write on the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids.[37] In the article on the Ghassānids occurs the following startling statement: "The Ghassānids also inspired *much early Islamic verse circulated in the name*

(ibid., 48–49), this has been identified with Tall al-Ḥāra, above, 224, which is not related to what Ḥamza says as quoted by Conrad (ibid., 49). In Ḥamza, Ḥārith al-Jawlān occurs in a verse of Nābigha, quoted by Ḥamza on the Ghassānid king, and has little or nothing to do with what Ḥamza says on *al-Ghawr al-Aqṣā,* before he quotes the verse.

[31] See what he says on Jābiya, the Ghassānid capital ("Disease," 46–47) and cf. with the section on it above, 96–104.

[32] Conrad, "Disease," 51–58.

[33] Ibid., 55.

[34] Ibid., 54–57.

[35] Conrad's view on Ḥassān's two poems found their way into E. K. Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain,* for which see above, 000.

[36] *The Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature,* ed. J. S. Meisami and P. Starkey (London and New York, 1999), I, 248–49.

[37] Ibid., 462–63.

of Ḥassān and other poets, as well as folklore recalling their personal lives, affairs of court and military exploits."[38] What is relevant here is the first part of the sentence involving Ḥassān, an utterly untrue statement that is in flat contradiction with his own judgment on the value of Ḥassān's poetry expressed in the article on the plague in which he analyzed Ḥassān's two poems.[39] It also contradicts the previous statement in the same article in the *Encyclopaedia* (at least its implication) where he speaks of Ḥassān as one of the two principal poets of the Ghassānids "who traveled extensively between the Ḥijāz and Syria." The *few* poems that have survived from the poetry of one who traveled *extensively,* and presumably composed much poetry, cannot breed suspicion in the critic but confidence, which would not be the case if this poetry that has survived had been *abundant.*

The previous section in this appendix has revealed that Conrad has no true knowledge of the language of early Arabic poetry, a limitation that has vitiated his analysis of Ḥassān's two poems, especially the second. The same limitation and the failure of his endeavor at *Quellenkritik* in the case of Ḥassān's poetry may be invoked in rejecting his startling *general* statement on the circulation of much Islamic poetry on the Ghassānids. It is just possible that this judgment may be derivative from his curious view, examined and utterly rejected in the previous section, that the second poem of Ḥassān was worked over by another poet later in the Islamic period. Such a statement contradicts the consensus of all scholars who have dealt with Ḥassān's poetry, and no one has expressed any doubts about his Ghassānid odes.[40] They all, however, did express doubts about his poetry on Islamic matters, a view that the ancient critics had also expressed.

European scholars have endorsed what Arab and Muslim scholars have said on the undoubted authenticity of these *Ghassānid* odes. One of Nöldeke's permanent contributions to the better understanding of the history of the Ghassānids was his brilliant analysis of the verses of the two principal poets, Ḥassān and Nābigha, from which he extracted so many certain facts on that history.[41]

Finally, two large literary figures in medieval Islamic times, Jāḥiẓ (d. 868/9) and Hamaḏānī (d. 1008), spoke specifically on Ḥassān's poetry. Both lauded his poetry, and one of them went out of his way to speak of its authenticity.[42] It is relevant here to note that they were discussing not his poetry in its entirety but specifically the *Ghassānid* odes; as Muslims, neither one had any special reason to laud the Christian Ghassānids. What Jāḥiẓ says is especially important since he vouches for the truth not only of Ḥassān's poetry but also of reports (*khabar*s), the *prose* accounts about them. Although he does not mention Ḥassān by name, it is practically certain that he was thinking primarily of him, as the poet who was most intimately related to the Ghassānids and who must have

[38] Ibid., 248–49 (emphasis added). *BASIC* I.1 and 2, published in 1995, are the most detailed account of the Ghassānids, yet they do not appear in his bibliography on them but in his article on the Lakhmids!

[39] Conrad, "Disease," 17, where he vouches even eloquently for the authenticity of Ḥassān's Ghassānid odes.

[40] And they have all been Muslims with no particular interest in accepting poetry assigned to him in praise of the Ghassānids, who were zealous Christians, and, what is more, who sided with the main enemy, Christian Byzantium, at Islam's historic victory, al-Yarmūk.

[41] For Nöldeke on these two poets, see his *GF,* 33–44.

[42] See the preceding Appendix III, above, 287–91.

written most of the poetry that had survived on them and was still extant when Jāḥiẓ wrote in the ninth century.[43]

Conrad's sudden shift in his attitude to Ḥassān's Ghassānid odes may be accounted for in two ways. First, he may have confused what was said on Ḥassān's Islamic poetry with the pre-Islamic verses on the Ghassānids. Much spurious poetry on Islamic matters has been assigned to Ḥassān, and this fact has been understood by both ancient and modern critics, the latest of whom spent a lifetime on Ḥassān and his poetry subsequent to his doctoral dissertation on the subject.[44]

Conrad's specialty is early Islamic historiography, and in the debate that has been raging on its authenticity, he has allied himself with the Hamburg school, represented by the late Albrecht Noth. The latter took a skeptical view of this historiography, and Conrad collaborated with him in the reedition of his work. This is hardly the place to discuss such a large and thorny problem.[45] A more sober view of early Islamic historiography has been presented by a work that has appeared since then.[46]

Perhaps Conrad was led unconsciously from skepticism regarding early Islamic historiography into skepticism directed against Ḥassān's Ghassānid odes because of the curious spectacle that these odes present, through the accidents of survival. Most of these extant Ghassānid odes were indeed composed in the Islamic period by Ḥassān as elegies and reminiscences on their departed glories, while most of the panegyrics composed on them before their fall have not survived. In so doing, Conrad possibly was responding to current influences on him by the Hamburg school just as his affiliation with the Wellcome Institute may have inclined him to inject the plague into one of Ḥassān's celebrated odes. Although I regret Conrad's unfortunate adventures into the pre-Islamic world and take exception to his handling of difficult pre-Islamic sources, such as Ḥassān's poetry, I appreciate his contributions to early Islamic historiography, not in his general conclusions on its authenticity, but in his analysis of individual works such as Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Shām,* which is very good source criticism, applied to an important Arabic source.[47]

[43] The reports (*khabar*s) on the Ghassānids are irrelevant in the context of this appendix, which deals with the *poetry* of Ḥassān as a historical source. These prose accounts, however, need and deserve treatment specially devoted to them, and they present problems of their own. Rarely is poetry quoted in them, and when it is, it is of no great importance historically. Such is the account involving Jabala, the last Ghassānid king, his encounter with Caliph Omar, and his gifts to Ḥassān after he emigrated to Anatolia; see the present writer in "Ghassān post Ghassān," 324 and notes 3 and 4. When stripped of embroideries that accumulated around them in later times, these prose accounts have some value for writing the social history of the Ghassānids to which *BASIC* II.2 will be partly devoted.

[44] Walīd 'Arafāt; see his article, which has summarized his lifework as a scholar of Ḥassān's poetry, in *EI*[2], s.v. Ḥassān ibn-Thābit, III, 271–73. Strangely enough, Conrad had subscribed to the distinction between Islamic poetry attributed to Ḥassān and the authentic Ghassānid odes in "Disease," 14–17.

[45] See the measured judgment of this book as the expression of "hypercritical skepticism" in M. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton, N.J., 1984), 573.

[46] F. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writings* (Princeton, N.J.: 1998).

[47] The plague and its relation to the federate Ghassānids will be treated in *BASIC* II.2. Conrad's contributions to an understanding of the plague, expressed in his doctoral dissertation and his various articles, have made me even more aware of its importance.

Appendix V

The Ghassānid Presence in Palaestina Tertia

Just as Palaestina Tertia had been separated from the Provincia Arabia in the fourth century, so was the phylarchate of Abū Karib apparently separated from that of Arethas in the north, although the latter remained the commander in chief of the entire federate Arab force in Oriens. This was the situation around A.D. 529 when Abū Karib was endowed with the phylarchate of Palaestina Tertia by Justinian for perhaps the same reason that inspired the creation of the new province, Palaestina Tertia, in the fourth century. This province, comprising as it did the entire Sinai Peninsula, that part of the Provincia Arabia east of Wādī ʿAraba, and part of northern Ḥijāz, was a vast area and a world of its own, as it faced the western part of the Arabian Peninsula and part of north Arabia. Its problems, internal and external, were many and thus called for a special federate command, which, moreover, left the federate commander in chief in the north free to attend to the more important task of containing the Lakhmids of Ḥīra and their Persian overlords. Thus the Ghassānid phylarchate in Oriens presented the spectacle of a "dyarchy" but with Arethas as *primus inter pares.* After the one reference to Abū Karib in Procopius during the reign of Justinian, the administrative structure of the Ghassānid phylarchate as far as Palaestina Tertia is concerned receives little or no mention in the Greek, Latin, and Syriac sources. But the visit of Ḥātim to the Ghassānids, not in the north in Gaulanitis but in the south in Palaestina Tertia around A.D. 600, suggests that the Ghassānid dyarchy was still alive around that date and that Palaestina Tertia was still enjoying a separate Ghassānid administrative phylarchal existence. This conclusion receives further confirmation from a poem by Ḥassān, the one in which he *expressly* speaks of the two Ghassānid kings "ruling" the region from Jabal al-Shaykh (Mount Hermon) to Ayla (Eilat).[1]

It is difficult to imagine that the two Ghassānids ruled simultaneously from the same headquarters; the more natural explanation is that the dyarchy established during the reign of Justinian persisted till the last days of the dynasty before the Persian occupation of Oriens in A.D. 614, although the chief phylarch remained or must have remained the one in the north whose headquarters were in Gaulanitis. According to this reasoning, the Ghassānid mentioned in Ḥātim's poem, al-Ḥārith Ibn ʿAmr, would have been the phylarch/king of Palaestina Tertia, so far the only name in the phylarchal list of that province that has survived after that of Abū Karib. In the discussion of the members of the royal Ghassānid house in this period, attention must be paid to the possibility that there were two royal lines existing side by side, one in Palaestina Tertia and the other in the north in Gaulanitis. Whether their members were lineally or collaterally related to each other is not clear. There is a reference in one contemporary poet that suggests collateral rule—phylarchs, kings, descended not from the same father but from two brothers and possibly from a more distant ancestor.[2]

[1] For Ḥassān's poem, see *BASIC* I.1, 624–26. For the visit of the poet and *sayyid* of Ṭayyiʾ to the court of the Ghassānids, see above, 246–59.

[2] For this, see Nābigha's poem in his *Dīwān,* 42, verse 9, which speaks of the royal cousins (*Banu ʿAmmihi*) of the Ghassānid, eulogized in the poem.

Appendix VI

Additional Toponyms

The Caesar Ode, like Imru' al-Qays' more famous "Suspended Ode," was well remembered by posterity. Echoes of the former are possibly audible in an Umayyad poet of the seventh century. ʿUbayd Allāh al-Ruqayyāt,[1] who reproduces Ḥamāt and Shayzar, strung together at the end of one of his verses,[2] exactly as Imru' al-Qays had done in his ode. The collocation of the two toponyms is striking and may be an echo of the Caesar Ode. What is more important is reference in two verses of another poem of his to five toponyms—al-Farādis, al-Ghūṭa, Ḍumayr, al-Māṭirūn, and Ḥawrān—which raise the question of a Ghassānid association.[3]

The poet, who belonged to the Meccan tribe of Quraysh, his clan being ʿĀmir ibn-Lu'ayy, laments that he is away from them without a protector. His reference to these toponyms is preceded by a verse in which the word *mulūk*[4] ("kings") occurs, related to those who had occupied these places, whom he had departed from, and who were no longer there. The word *mulūk* brings to mind the Ghassānids rather than his clan, who were not *mulūk.* The poet is careless, however, in applying such terms; he applies them to the Umayyads,[5] who were not kings but caliphs. Besides, the poet was too young to have visited the Ghassānids before their fall after the disastrous battle of the Yarmūk in A.D. 636. What is important are the place names.

The string of five toponyms is reminiscent of Ḥassān's string of Ghassānid toponyms. The area is Ghassānland, and the poet may have been enumerating these places which he had read in Ḥassān, or as toponyms associated with his own clan, which may have settled in these places, formerly settled by the Ghassānids, as the Umayyads did after the Muslim conquest of the region.

Two of these toponyms are recognizably Ghassānid: al-Farādis and Ḥawrān; al-Ghūṭa, too, as has been indicated in the case of toponyms in Ḥassān that lay in the vicinity of Damascus, had some Ghassānid presence. In a different category and more important is reference to al-Māṭirūn and Ḍumayr. The latter is definitely a Ghassānid site, since al-Mundir, the Ghassānid king, built his tower there and the Greek inscription clinches its Ghassānid association. The reference to it in this Umayyad poet confirms the epigraphic attestation and its continued existence as a flourishing place in the Umayyad period.[6] Al-Māṭirūn, one of these five toponyms, is also likely to have had some Ghassānid association. It is, of course, none other than the Arabicized form of the Greek *martyrion,* clearly a place where some martyrs were buried, who thus gave their name to

[1] For ʿUbayd Allāh al-Ruqayyāt, see *EI*², s.v. Ibn-Qays al-Rukayyat; Sezgin, *GAS,* II, 166.

[2] Quoted by Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* III, 383, s.v. Shayzar.

[3] For this poem, see *Dīwān ʿUbayd Allāh Ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt,* ed. M. Y. Najm (Beirut, 1986), poem 46, pp. 112–16, verses 14 and 15, p. 114.

[4] Ibid., 113, verse 13.

[5] Ibid., 4, verse 15.

[6] For Ḍumayr, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* III, 463–64, where it is said that it was a *ḥiṣn* ("fortress," "fort") in the region of Damascus. Apparently it continued to be a fortress in Byzantine times, as suggested by the tower erected by Mundir. On Mundir and his tower at Ḍumayr, see *BASIC* I.1, 495–501.

the site. Its etymology was not clear to the Arab Muslim geographers, as Jalliq also was not.[7] It was located in the environs of Damascus, as a village that apparently grew around the tombs of some martyrs; thus the word *martyrion* was extended from the tomb to the village itself, in much the same way that the word *dayr* ("monastery") developed into the name of a village in Oriens, as many villages in this region are so called. The possible association of al-Māṭirūn with the Ghassānids is predicated on its being mentioned in a set of place names that are related to the Ghassānids, on its being occupied by Muslim Arabs in Umayyad times, and on the fact that Yazīd, the Umayyad caliph and son of Muʿāwiya, refers to it and then to Ghassānid Jalliq in a poem.[8] It is known that he stayed often in many of these Ghassānid settlements of which Jalliq was one. So al-Māṭirūn was mentioned twice, associated with two Ghassānid toponyms, with Ḍumayr in ʿUbayd Allāh's poem and with Jalliq in Yazīd's, and so the chances are that it witnessed some Ghassānid presence.

Appendix VII

Theodor Nöldeke and Julius Wellhausen on Labīd

This valuable cluster of verses was unknown to Nöldeke when he wrote his monograph on the Ghassānids, but was noted in his *Nachlass* as verses applicable to Arethas, al-Ḥārith ibn-Jabala, on whom he wrote in his monograph. Wellhausen apparently wrote to him suggesting that the verses may refer to the disaster that befell the Ghassānids during the Persian invasion of Oriens in A.D. 614. But Nöldeke must be right in concluding that the reference is not to the Persian invasion: the reign of forty years given to the "Lord of Ghassān" is applicable only to the well-known Arethas of the reign of Justinian. When Ghassānland fell to the Persians in A.D. 614, no Ghassānid king would have reigned then for forty years. This completely rules out Wellhausen's suggestion. One could also argue that the third and fourth verses may retain an echo of the disasters that befell the Ghassānids such as the Persian invasion caused. This, too, is ruled out, since the poem in which the cluster of verses occurs was an elegy on the last Lakhmid in the service of Persia, al-Nuʿmān, who was treacherously killed by Chosroes Parvīz around 602, long before the Persian invasion. The setbacks of the Ghassānids during the reigns of Tiberius and Maurice are more likely to have been denoted by this succession of disasters, coming as they did after the death of Arethas, lamented in the first verse. Whatever these disasters were, the reference in the first verse is firmly established on Arethas and on his death in 569.

In connection with this first verse, it is just possible that the verb in it that implied the "humiliation" (*ḏul*) that Ghassān experienced after Arethas' death may be *zallat* ("stumbled"), which seems to be more appropriate, since *ḏallat* sounds too strong.

[7] For al-Māṭirūn, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* V, 42–43. It was also noted in Marāṣid al-iṭṭilāʿ, of Safiyy al-Dīn, the epitomator of Yāqūt, III, 32, as noted by Guy Le Strange in *Palestine under the Moslems* (London, 1890), 508. The word *martyrion* was Arabicized in two different ways in this early period: once as *martūr,* for which see the Ḥarrān inscription (*BASIC,* I.1, 327), and again as *māṭirūn* in Umayyad poetry.

[8] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* V, 42, verse 4.

The Sources
Part B: Prose Writers

The two principal prose writers on Ghassānid structures and toponyms are Ḥamza and Yāqūt, as noted in the introduction to this volume. In addition, there are several minor authors whose works are discussed in this chapter: al-Yaʿqūbī, the ninth-century historian and geographer; al-Bakrī, the eleventh-century Andalusian geographer; al-ʿUmarī, the fourteenth-century Damascene author; Ibn Saʿīd, the thirteenth-century Andalusian author; Abū al-Fidāʾ, the thirteenth–fourteenth century Ayyūbid prince of Syrian Hamāt; and Ibn Khaldūn, the fourteenth-century Andalusian historian-philosopher.

I. Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī

Ḥamza was a tenth-century Persian author who lived most of his life in his native Iṣfahān (d. 961) and whose interests ranged from history to literature and lexicography. His most famous work is the *Chronography* or *Annals,* titled in Arabic *Tārīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa al-anbiyāʾ,* a chronology of pre-Islamic as well as Islamic dynasties, which has attracted the attention of Orientalists since the eighteenth century.[1] He had not been fully appreciated and studied when Theodor Nöldeke used him in his monograph on the Ghassānids; and, despite his dependence on him for his chapter on Ghassānid buildings, Nöldeke had no great appreciation for him as a historian or philologist.[2]

[1] On Ḥamza and his work, see Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 335–37. The edition of Ḥamza's *Tārīkh* used here is that of I. M. E. Gottwaldt (repr. Berlin, 1921–22, 1340 Hijrī). The manuscript of *Tārīkh* in the collection of the Leiden University Library (Cod. Or. 767) does not contribute to a better text of Ḥamza, except in one instance; see below, note 20. It is written in a large, clear, and attractive hand; the chapter on the Ghassānids is on pp. 265–280. I should like to thank Dr. Emre van Donzel for providing me with a photocopy of these pages.

[2] Nöldeke, *GF,* 49–50. Nöldeke's ambivalence toward him was due to his emphasis on establishing Ghassānid chronology and sequence of rulers, Ḥamza's weakest points. Nöldeke's puzzlement at his account of Ghassānid buildings was justified because he wrote before such Ghassānid structures as Mun̲dir's *praetorium extra muros* at Sergiopolis were announced to the scholarly world by A. Musil. Nöldeke would have had a different appreciation of Ḥamza had he written his monograph after archaeology had confirmed Ḥamza on Ghassānid structures.

Since then Ḥamza's stock has been in the ascendant, and the final judgment on him by Franz Rosenthal, who wrote the standard work on Muslim historiography, must be accepted as a measured one: "His works prove him to be a thorough and, to a degree, original scholar who always looks for the best sources and the most authentic information available, using, for instance, Jewish and Byzantine informants on Jewish and Greco-Roman chronology, who always probes deeply and intelligently, and who reports many unusual and highly interesting matters which give a greater insight into the immense variety and curiosity of Muslim intellectual life in the ninth and tenth centuries. His importance was acknowledged by later Muslim scholars through the wide use they made of his works, in particular, his chronological history and the collection of *af'al* proverbs."[3]

The rehabilitation of Ḥamza as a respectable historical source is consonant with similar recent efforts in Byzantine scholarship to rehabilitate the work of chronographers who have suffered from comparisons with historians.[4] Thus what has happened to Malalas, George the Synkellos, Theophanes, and George the Monk has happened to Ḥamza, chroniclers who have no axe to grind (as historians sometimes do) and who have preserved some precious data not found in the historians.[5] Their data are not suspect since they are not presented from a particular perspective, often tainted with the *ira* and *studium* in the historians. Although he was a Muslim, who wrote in Arabic, Ḥamza's *Chronography* has a significant Byzantine profile, since he recorded valuable information on the buildings of the Ghassānids, the *foederati* of Byzantium in Oriens in the sixth century, and thus he shares with Hishām[6] his relevance to the history of Byzantium. Just as Malalas now can serve as a check on Procopius, and in fact has been so used when the latter evinces his prejudice against the performance of the Ghassānids in the Persian Wars, so also Ḥamza serves as a check on Procopius, who has presented the Ghassānids as "Saracens" roaming in Oriens without any fixed dwellings.[7]

This discussion concentrates on only one chapter in Ḥamza, that on the Ghassānids, and analyzes it intensively from every possible point of view. It is a chapter on Ghassānid structures, unique in all extant sources, hence most relevant to Arab-Byzantine relations; the analysis presented here confirms the judgment of

[3] F. Rosenthal, *EI*², s.v. Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī.

[4] See J. N. Ljubarskij, "New Trends in the Study of Byzantine Historiography," *DOP* 47 (1993), 131–38. This lucid short article will lead the reader to more extensive literature on the subject.

[5] In Ḥamza this may be illustrated by his references to the clothes and colors of the Sasanid kings, to the Marzpans/Marzubāns of South Arabia after the Persian occupation of South Arabia around A.D. 570, and to the Kinda interregnum in Ḥīra in the 520s; see *Tārīkh,* 34–43, 90–92, 70–72.

[6] On Hishām as the historian of pre-Islamic Arabia, see *BAFOC,* 349–66, and *BAFIC,* 233–42.

[7] For Malalas as a check on Procopius, see *BASIC* I.1, 168–71, 297–306; on Ḥamza as a check on Procopius, see below, 363–64.

those who have vouched for Ḥamza's essential reliability and place in Muslim historiography. The value of the chapter on the Ghassānids is enhanced by the realization that it was based on an earlier reliable source that specifically dealt with the Ghassānids, titled *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.*[8] Ḥamza's chapter may be divided into two parts: the story of the emigration of the Ghassānids from South Arabia, their wanderings in the Arabian Peninsula, and finally their entry into the Byzantine orbit when they overturned the Salīḥid federates and became the *foederati* of Byzantium at the beginning of the sixth century; and a list of Ghassānid kings in the service of Byzantium, given in chronological order, together with the buildings they erected, the duration of each reign in years and months, and other reports of a political and military nature on some reigns.[9]

A

Ḥamza's interest in the Ghassānids and his inclusion of a chapter on them in his *Tārīkh* call for the following observations. Ḥamza gives special attention to the Ghassānids among all those who ruled in Bilād al-Shām, not excluding the later Umayyads, who ruled not only Bilād al-Shām (including the limitrophe of the Ghassānids) but also a vast empire that extended from India to Spain.[10] He did this despite the fact that he was a Muslim, openly proud of Islam vis-à-vis other religions and a Shuʿūbī,[11] not partial to the Arabs, although he understood and appreciated their cultural role. The Ghassānids were both Christian and Arab. He also did this although he was a Persian, naturally interested mostly in the eastern half of the empire, which had been Sasanid Persia before the Muslim conquest, and to which he devoted a chapter of thirty-six pages, the longest in his *Tārīkh.*[12] His compatriot Ṭabarī was in this Persian tradition and was naturally more interested in and partial to matters Persian. Thus in his account of the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam he gave the lion's share to the Lakhmids of Ḥīra, because of their Persian connection, and almost completely ignored the Ghassānids. In this Ḥamza showed his independence from the great Muslim Persian historian whom he met when he visited Baghdad.

Most important is the list of buildings he attributed to the Ghassānids and the places he associated with them, unique in his own *Tārīkh* and in the extant sources. The Lakhmids were also great builders, and Ḥīra was full of structures of various orders; yet Ḥamza assigns them a marginal role in this and mentions the

[8] For this early source, see below, 364–74.

[9] For the first part, see *Tārīkh,* 76–77; for the second, 77–81.

[10] For the *en passant* treatment of the Umayyads, see *Tārīkh,* 102–2.

[11] On his pride in Islam, see *Tārīkh,* 101–2, and on his *Shuʿūbiyya,* see Goldziher's reply to Brockelmann, quoted in Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 336. His *shuʿūbiyya,* his *shiʿism* and Islam are taken up in a different context, below, 320–21.

[12] *Tārīkh,* 9–45.

builders among them only three times. This is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that Ḥamza was primarily interested not in structures but in chronology, as the very title of his book clearly indicates: *Tārīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa al-anbiyāʾ,* "The History of the Years of the Kings of the Earth and the Prophets." Indeed he does pay special attention to chronology and calendars[13] and gives the number of months as well as years for the reigns of many of the kings of the dynasties he discussed.

The conclusion that may be drawn from these observations is that Ḥamza's source on the Ghassānids must have described their structures in such detail that it made a vivid and powerful impression on him and so he could not help remembering them in this light as great builders. In so doing, he put the Ghassānids on the same pedestal as the Sasanids, whom he also presented as such. These observations are also relevant in that some of his antipathies or reservations deriving from his background may explain certain features of his presentation of Ghassānid history. One final observation in this context: his impressive list of more than thirty structures must have been only a selected one. Ḥamza wrote a *Tārīkh* of world dynasties, and his volume is a very slim one, unlike that of Ṭabarī. So he could only summarize what he had found in his source, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.* This suggests that Ghassānid structures were more numerous than Ḥamza has chosen to include in his summary, as confirmed by other incontestable sources.

B

The historicity of the chapter on the Ghassānids will become evident as the various data in it are discussed, but a few introductory observations are appropriate. The account that traces Ghassānid history back to its South Arabian origin has retained some technical terms that the Ghassānids brought with them from the Sabaean south, such as *Musannāt,* and *Maṣnaʿ*, and some names such as Abū Shamir, Abū Karib, and Sharāḥil, Sabaic South Arabian, rather than Arabic.[14] Many of the data in Ḥamza's chapter are confirmed by contemporary Arabic poetry, composed for the Ghassānids in the sixth century, and by other contemporary sources, mainly Syriac. As has been indicated, the account of Ḥamza derives from an earlier reliable source on the Ghassānids, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.* The crucial test for the list of structures is afforded by archaeology. Some impressive Ghassānid structures have survived to the present day, such as the *praetorium extra muros* at Sergiopolis and the monastery tower at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī; the tower at Ḍumayr has disappeared only recently.[15]

[13] *Tārīkh,* 6–12, 130–43.
[14] For a discussion of these terms, see below, 321–23.
[15] See the frontispiece and finispiece in *BASIC* I.1, and 495–501, 524–26.

C

Ḥamza's chapter on the Ghassānids is valuable for the many dimensions of their history that it reveals. It documents the sedentary lifestyle of the Ghassānids in a clear manner as it enumerates in detail the areas of their settlement and residence. In so doing, it confirms concretely the evidence of other Arab historians who distinguish the Ghassānids as a sedentary group from others that were not. Thus the unveiling of their *Lebensraum* in Oriens supplies what is missing in Procopius and the Greek authors who omitted all reference to Ghassānid toponyms, an omission that contributed to the perpetuation of the myth of their nomadism. The chapter testifies to the *extensive* Ghassānid presence in the whole limitrophe, extending from the south, the vicinity of Ayla and the Gulf of Eilat, to the north near the Euphrates, a fact that corresponds to Justinian's extension of Ghassānid hegemony over most or all of the Arab federates in Oriens. Above all, it gives detailed and specific information on their structures within the cities, towns, or localities where they lived, which is partially confirmed by the archaeological evidence. Finally, in its many references to their structures of various categories, Ḥamza's chapter reflects the participation of the Ghassānids in the spiritual as well as the political and military aspects of Byzantine life, a fact documented by the Syriac and Greek sources respectively.

Ḥamza's *Tārīkh*

I. Ghassān's Arabian Peninsular Phase

Although the second part of Ḥamza's chapter on the Ghassānids, the list of structures, is the more valuable part, the first is also important to analyze because of certain elements that speak for the general authenticity of the entire chapter, derivative from an earlier reliable source. Ghassān's wanderings in Arabia, both in the south and during their march in western Arabia before they crossed the *limes,* have been told in various sources, often romanticized and embroidered. The most sober and succinct is that of Ḥamza, who gives the essential features of this phase. So it deserves some analysis for extracting the elements that may be accepted as historical.[16]

The South Arabian origin of the Ghassānids is established beyond doubt. It is vouched for by one of their relatives, the sixth-century poet Ḥassān, and is reflected in their onomasticon, in some of the terms that have survived in the narrative, and in their very name, "Ghassān," supposed to be a body of water, a spring between Zabīd and Rumaʿ in South Arabia.[17] The cause of their emigration

[16] For a more extensive treatment of the Arabian phase in Ghassānid history, see above, 17–20.

[17] For Ḥassān, see above, 232–46; for the spring of Ghassān, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v.; terms such as Ṣarḥ and Maṣnaʿ (see below, 321–23) and Shamir, Sharāḥīl, Shuraḥbīl, and Abkarib/Abū Karib are Sabaic/South Arabian.

from South Arabia is given as the breakdown of the Ma'rib dam (or its imminence). This, certainly, is a historical fact, attested in the Koran and in sixth-century pre-Islamic poetry.[18] It is not clear when this happened since the dam crumbled more than once.[19] It is also not clear exactly in what way it affected the Azd group to which Ghassān belonged and so caused it to emigrate. The emigration may have had more than one cause, besides the breakdown of the Ma'rib dam. However, this is the cause that has survived in Ghassānid memory and is reflected in the fact that, according to some historians, the Ghassānids dated their history from the breaking of the dam.[20]

A segment in the genealogical list of the royal house of Ghassān is given as ʿAmr ibn ʿĀmir (ʿAmr the son of ʿĀmir). This has to be accepted as genuine since it is attested in pre-Islamic sixth-century Arabic poetry, by their own panegyrist al-Nābigha, who would not have made an untrue genealogical statement while addressing them. Two sobriquets are given in connection with ʿAmr and ʿĀmir respectively: the first was called by the curious term *Muzayqiyā'*, which has not been satisfactorily explained; the other, ʿĀmir, was nicknamed Mā' al-Samā' ("the Water of Heaven") after he provided for the Azd during a famine or drought.[21]

The conflict with Salīḥ, when the Ghassānids reached the Roman frontier, and how they replaced them as the dominant federate group of Byzantium in Oriens, are established historically and have been analyzed in detail in a previous volume of this series.[22]

Finally, one of the most important data in Ḥamza is the *foedus* with Byzantium during the reign of Anastasius, which gives the crucial *terminus a quo* for their Byzantine federate connection.[23]

[18] For the reference in the Koran, see *sura* XXXIV, verses 15–17; for the 6th-century poet, Aʿshā, see his *Dīwān,* 34, verses 67–72.

[19] The breakdown is recorded in the Sabaic inscriptions of South Arabia; for the three breakdowns that are epigraphically attested, see C. Robin, *L'Arabie antique de Karib' îl à Mahomet* (Paris, 1992), 65–67.

[20] The term for the bursting of the dam appears as *intiqaṣ* in *Tārīkh,* 76, line 8, which makes no sense. The Leiden manuscript has the correct reading *intiqaḍ,* the only instance where this manuscript is helpful; see Cod. Or. 767, p. 266. In his *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf,* the historian Masʿūdi states that the Ghassānids dated events in accordance with the era that began with the breaking of the Ma'rib dam. He states that they also dated according to the kingship of the house of Abū Shāmir (their dynasty), presumably the *foedus* of A.D. 502 with Byzantium or A.D. 529 when Arethas was promoted to the supreme phylarchate and kingship. For this, see *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf,* BGA VIII, ed. M. J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1894), 202; for the French version, see *Le livre de l'avertissement et de la revision,* trans. B. Carra de Vaux (Paris, 1896), 272. The whole chapter is important as it collects the various eras that the Arabs are said to have used for dating events.

[21] *Tārīkh,* 77; for the Ghassānid onomasticon, see the dynastic tree in *BASIC* I.1, 664.

[22] *Tārīkh,* 76; for a discussion of Ghassānid-Salīḥid relations, see *BAFIC,* 282–89.

[23] For the *foedus,* see *BASIC* I.1, 3–12. Greek names appear mutilated in Arabic sometimes, and so does Anastasius who appears as Nestorus; *Tārīkh,* 77.

II. The List of Kings

A

The list of kings in Ḥamza is much less important than the list of toponyms and structures. It presents many difficulties and problems but has its value. Nöldeke analyzed it intensively, together with the lists of Ghassānid kings in other authors.[24] As he was mainly interested in establishing the chronology of the Ghassānids and the sequence of their rulers together with the duration of each, he was both attracted and repelled by the list. What repelled him was the span of 616 years that Ḥamza gives to the Ghassānid dynasty and its thirty-two rulers, which did not seem to fit with what he had established from incontestable sources on the duration of this dynasty, approximately a century and a half beginning with the reign of Anastasius.

Another look at the list is called for in view of the advances made in Byzantine and Ghassānid historiography in the century or so since Nöldeke wrote. The incidental information that it conveys on some of the rulers is worth recovering, since it is now established that Ḥamza's source was an early and reliable one, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.* The study of the list, as the study of the entire chapter on Ghassān, is an attempt to salvage the facts from an author who was not particularly well disposed to the Ghassānids, was writing a very short history of the dynasties of the world, and hence had to compress his material severely, making omissions and errors in the process.

The main question that arises is why Ḥamza, who drew his material from a reliable source on the Ghassānids, presented a chronology of the dynasty that endowed it with thirty-two kings and a duration of 616 years, figures unlikely to have come from *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.* In addition to what has been said on his ambivalence toward the Ghassānids and his desire to give only an outline, the following may be suggested as an explanation. It is possible that the list is not only that of the Ghassānid kings *after* they crossed the Roman *limes* and entered the service of Byzantium, but includes those of the obscure Arabian period after they emigrated from South Arabia. A Sabaic inscription dated to the second or third century in which Ghassān's king is mentioned, together with the well-known reference to the Assanitae in Ammianus Marcellinus for the reign of Julian (361–363), could make the long span more palatable.[25] Even within the Byzantine context, the phylarchate of Amorkesos of the reign of Leo I (457–474), almost certainly a Ghassānid, is relevant in this connection.[26] Ḥamza, after recording the new Byzantine phase in Ghassānid history, would have reverted to list all their kings, starting from and including the Arabian phase. This is not entirely satisfac-

[24] See Nöldeke, *GF,* 53–60, where he analyzed the lists of Hishām, Masʿūdī, Jurjānī, Yaʿqūbī, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, and Ibn Qutayba.

[25] See *BAFOC,* 120 note 58 and 119–23.

[26] *BAFIC,* 60–113.

tory since he assigns to many of these kings a building activity that was within Byzantine territory. Thus the reason behind the confusion in Ḥamza's chronology may have to be sought in other areas as well.

The most likely explanation is that the kings he listed did not follow one another diachronously but some, perhaps many, of them ruled synchronously as phylarchs or lesser princes. This could easily have been the case, but Ḥamza unwittingly listed them diachronously. Such a mistake could easily have been made. The recurrence of the same names in the annals of the dynasty could have contributed to this confusion: Ḥārith recurs five times, Nuʿmān six, and Jabala six.[27] Also, the sons of one Ghassānid king may have been phylarchs simultaneously. In his list, Ḥārith ibn Jabala has six sons who ruled one after the other in succession to their father—quite unlikely.

That the Ghassānid phylarchate/*basileia* was represented not only by the supreme phylarch and king, but also by minor Ghassānid phylarchs who ruled or functioned simultaneously is reflected in various ways in the sources: some three or four Ghassānid phylarchs took part in the expedition against the Lakhmid Mundir in 528; more than one phylarch was stationed in one province, such as in Phoenicia Libanensis, reflected in Justinian's edict on that province; fifteen of them are referred to in 584 when the Ghassānid phylarchate was temporarily suspended; and two Ghassānids campaigned against Persia simultaneously in the first decade of the seventh century.[28]

The sources reveal that the Ghassānid royal house was genealogically related not to one clan, the Jafnids, sons of Jafna, but to others. At an early stage around A.D. 500, they were called Banū Thaʿlaba; then there was the clan of Imruʾ al-Qays, to which apparently the adventurous phylarch of the reign of Leo belonged, Amorkesos; and finally the sources speak of Banū ʿAwf. Members of these various clans could easily have functioned simultaneously.[29]

Finally, there is the question of the era or eras that the source of Ḥamza used, especially confusing since *Akhbār* was composed soon after the fall of the dynasty when the Muslim conquest brought a new era, the Islamic Hijrī, into being. Adding to the complexity and confusion is that *Akhbār* must have drawn on pre-Islamic records of the Ghassānids who used pre-Islamic eras. The inscriptions clearly indicate that they used in those inscriptions the era of Bostra. The Arabic sources say they dated their records by the breakdown of the Maʾrib dam in South Arabia. The pre-Islamic records of the Ghassānids could also have used the Seleu-

[27] In his discussion of the Sasanid kings, Ḥamza noted the recurrence of the same name among the Sasanid kings and how this led to confusion in chronology. He instanced the name "Yazdgard" and himself added three names to the list of kings which he thought the sources had dropped; *Tārīkh,* 16, line 8.

[28] For all these, see *BASIC* I.1, 70–76, 198–200, 540–48, 622–30.

[29] See *BASIC* I.1, 11.

cid era and even may have dated by indictions. It is not difficult to understand how all this may have confused Ḥamza.

B

Before discussing the most valuable part of Ḥamza's chapter, the list of structures and their builders, some general observations on the list of kings will conduce to a better understanding of both lists. All the names of the kings mentioned in the list are confirmed by references in incontestable literary and epigraphic sources, Greek, Syriac, and Arabic. Such are Ḥārith, Nuʿmān, Jabala, Jafna, ʿAmr, and Ḥujr; al-Ayham, who appears twice in the list, may have been a *laqab,* or sobriquet, under which his real name is hidden.[30]

Ḥamza himself is sometimes doubtful of the accuracy of the duration of a king's reign and appends the Muslim phrase "God knows better or best." It is not clear why he chose certain reigns for that qualification to the exclusion of others. Noteworthy is that the duration of each reign is calculated not only by years but also by months, a sure sign that he derived this from a document such as was used in the composition of *Akhbār.* This especially interested him, since his *Tārīkh,* as he conceived it, was a chronology, as reflected in the title which has the word "years" in it.

Some of the rulers or kings are described as al-Akbar (the great or greatest) and al-Aṣghar.[31] The two sobriquets were applied to the Ghassānid kings by their contemporaries and are attested in a pre-Islamic poetic fragment,[32] whence *Akhbār,* Ḥamza's source, possibly derived it. It is also noteworthy that, unlike the Lakhmids whose city, Ḥīra, was their capital, Ḥamza does not indicate one particular town as the capital of the Ghassānids but assigns various locales to various kings, such as Jābiya, Tadmur, and Ṣiffīn. The Ghassānids were responsible for security over a vast arc from the Euphrates to Eilat; hence they had to inspect the whole frontier and had to stay in various places along this frontier. They did, however, have a capital or two, that is, principal locales that developed into towns

[30] Al-Ayham seems to be strictly and exclusively a Ghassānid name. Its meaning is not clear, however, since it has at least five significations. It has been remembered in later Islamic history because it appears in the patronymic of the last Ghassānid king, Jabala, whose encounter with Caliph Omar has made him famous. If Ḥamza's source, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* used some Syriac chronicles that included an account of these Ghassānid kings, this might also explain the confusion about their number and the duration of their reigns. The 8th-century Syriac "Zuqnīn Chronicle" employs some eight different dating systems; see W. Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Maḥrē* (Uppsala, 1987), 119 ff. See Addenda.

[31] Al-Akbar is applied to al-Mundir (*Tārīkh,* 78) strangely enough, and not to Ḥārith, the Arethas of the Greek sources during the reign of Justinian. Al-Aṣghar, strictly speaking, means the smallest, but in this context it is not pejoratively used; it is simply contrasted with al-Akbar, only to distinguish al-Aṣghar from the more famous or greater figure; "junior," "younger" would be a good translation of it.

[32] For Nābigha's fragment, see Nöldeke, *GF,* 34–35.

or cities—Jābiya and Jalliq. The reference to these various places could also reflect that these Ghassānid figures whom Ḥamza was speaking about functioned simultaneously.

Although the list of toponyms/structures represents the most precious part of Ḥamza's chapter, yet there are certain statements on the kings that have significance for Ghassānid history. He says that Jafna al-Aṣg̲har burned Ḥīra, capital of the Lakhmids, and was *sayyārat* and *jawwāb.*[33] The first statement may be considered erroneous since the one who burned Ḥīra was al-Mund̲ir, son of Arethas, in the 570s. As for the second statement, that he was an itinerant king who wandered from one Ghassānid place to another, this may be true of the Ghassānid kings since they had to inspect the various stations of the long frontier over which they watched. Also, they possibly liked to live in various parts of the limitrophe as the Umayyad caliph Hishām was to do, or ʿAbd al-Malik, who wintered in one place and summered in another, a mobility that is often confused with nomadism.

Of al-Nuʿmān ibn ʿAmr,[34] he says that his father was not a king, which suggests that succession was not always lineal from father to son but could be collateral, as when a nephew or a cousin or one from another clan succeeded. A previous discussion indicated that in addition to the Jafnids, there was the Thaʿlabid royal clan and that of Imruʾ al-Qays. Ḥamza goes on to say that his father, ʿAmr, did not reign but was a general who used "to campaign with the armies" ("yaghzū bi al-juyūsh"). After the elevation of the Ghassānid phylarch Arethas in 529 to the supreme phylarchate and kingship over the federate Arabs of Oriens, both Ghassānid and non-Ghassānid, the supreme phylarch became a commander in chief in whose hands resided the power and responsibility for the large federate military establishment and the direction of operations from his headquarters, detailing other commanders to take on certain military assignments. In the Usays inscription he sends Ibn al-Mughīra to take up his position at the fortress of Sulaymān.[35]

Ḥamza says that al-Nuʿmān ibn al-Ḥārith repaired the reservoirs of Ruṣāfa and built its "greatest" *ṣihrīj* (reservoir).[36] This is a most important statement in Ḥamza: it made possible the establishment that the source of Ḥamza was *Akhbār,* in addition to revealing the role of the Ghassānids in the construction of the water supply system of Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis. He also says that al-Ḥārith ibn Jabala defeated the tribal group, Banū Kināna.[37] In 529 the Ghassānid king became the commander in chief of federate forces in Oriens, Ghassānid and non-Ghassānid, and so he encountered opposition from non-Ghassānid contingents of tribal groups settled in Oriens. The Banū Kināna in this context were not the better-

[33] *Tārīkh,* 78.
[34] Ibid., 79.
[35] For the Usays inscription, see *BASIC* I.1, 117–24.
[36] *Tārīkh,* 79.
[37] Ibid., 80.

known tribal group in Ḥijāz but a subdivision of Kalb, one of the tribes of Oriens.[38]

On another Ghassānid, whom Ḥamza calls al-Nuʿmān ibn al-Ḥārith, he is very informative.[39] His account of this king bears a detailed analysis, which will be undertaken later in this volume. Suffice it to say here that if he is the Abū Karib of Procopius, Ḥamza will have given us his real name, Nuʿmān,[40] while Abū Karib, by which he is better known, was only his *kunya,* his tecnonymic. He further says that his *laqab* (nickname) was *qaṭām,*[41] "falcon," not inappropriate to the warrior Abū Karib. So he would be the only Ghassānid in Ḥamza who is privileged with his full appellation, the *tria nomina* of the Arabs: the real name, the tecnonymic, and the cognomen or nickname. The duration of his reign as thirty-seven years and three months is welcome since this makes his regnal longevity almost equal to that of his brother, the more famous Arethas, who reigned for forty years; if true, this would mean that the powerful and influential phylarch Abū Karib of Palaestina Tertia remained alive until the mid-560s. The very important statement on his building activity in al-Ghawr al-Aqṣā, the farthest *Ghawr* (depression), will be analyzed later.

Of al-Ayham ibn-Jabala:[42] in addition to what he built,[43] Ḥamza says that he sowed the seeds of dissension or drove a wedge between the two tribal groups, Banū al-Qayn ibn-Jasr and ʿĀmila.[44] The Ghassānid phylarch apparently found it

[38] For Kināna, the subdivision of Kalb, see Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansāb al-ʿArab,* ed. A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1962), 456. Kalb moved in the orbit of Byzantium in Oriens. Traces of tension between Kalb and Ghassān are detectable at Dūmat al-Jandal in connection with the *sūq,* the fair that was held there; Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh,* I, 270.

[39] *Tārīkh,* 80.

[40] This would be consonant with the evidence from the Greek source, Malalas, who lists the phylarchs (under Arethas, Ḥārith) who took part in the expedition against the Lakhmid Mundir in 528. One of them, called Nuʿmān, who took part in the expedition was possibly the brother of Arethas; see *BASIC* I.1, 72. Ḥamza, however, gives as his patronymic ibn al-Ḥārith, rather than Jabala, who was the father of both.

[41] Nöldeke (*GF,* 44) discounted the statement in Ḥamza on Qaṭām as a *laqab* of Nuʿmān on the ground that Qaṭām was a woman's name in Arabic. Apparently he was unaware that Qaṭām can also mean *ṣaqr,* "falcon."

[42] *Tārīkh,* 80.

[43] On the buildings, see below, 323–41.

[44] The reading *al-qabrayn* was emended by Nöldeke into *bi-banī,* and so he understood the sentence to mean that al-Ayham knocked about the two tribal groups al-Qayn ibn-Jasr and ʿĀmila. This makes sense, but the corrupt word may be emended *bayna banī,* and so the verb would be the prepositional *awqaʿa bayna* (not *awqaʿa bi*), meaning "sow dissension" between the two tribes. This seems to be the better emendation since two tribal groups, al-Qayn and ʿĀmila, are involved, not one. If this had been the case, the verb could only have the meaning given to it by Nöldeke when he translated the sentences "und der die Banul Qain b. Gasr" and "die ʿÂmila übel zurichtete" (*GF,* 52 note 1). That the correct reading is *bayna* and not *bi* is supported by a statement in Ibn Khaldūn quoting Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī to the effect that this Ghassānid king used to sow dissension among the tribes, and he specifically cites Banū Jasr and ʿĀmila. So presumably Ibn Saʿīd had a better manuscript before him, where the reading was clear with the preposition *bayna.*

necessary to do this in order to keep the tribal groups, who were non-Ghassānid, under his control. In so doing he was applying the classical Byzantine principle of "divide and rule." Al-Ayham's resort to such a move reflects the difficulties that the supreme phylarch must have had in controlling the various tribes put under his command after 529.

Of the last king of Ghassān, Jabala ibn al-Ayham,[45] Ḥamza briefly repeats the statement in the Muslim sources that he embraced Islam, then returned to Christianity and took refuge with the Romans. In so saying, Ḥamza was only repeating the erroneous statement, common in the late sources, on Jabala's adoption of Islam and his encounter with Omar. If this statement is derived from *Akhbār* and not from some other source, then *Akhbār* could not have been written by a Ghassānid but by one who accepted the familiar story of Jabala's encounter with Omar. The anecdote acquired a wide and immediate vogue because of its moral, the egalitarian principle preached by Islam which Jabala did not accept in his quarrel with the Arabian pastoralist who trod on the hem of his garment and whom he slapped, refusing Omar's judgment that the injured pastoralist must take his revenge and pay him in the same coin.

III. Further Observations on the List of Kings

The list of toponyms/structures in Ḥamza presents many problems. Before each toponym/structure is discussed in detail in the following section, it is well that some general observations on the list be made.

The Builders

Of the thirty-two kings that Ḥamza lists for the Ghassānid dynasty, he singles out thirteen with whom he associates buildings and towns.[46] Of the rest, he says of some that they did not build anything; on the others he remains silent. For a dynasty such as the Ghassānid and in the sixth century, which witnessed a feverish building activity in Oriens, it is surprising to be told by the historian that nineteen of the Ghassānid kings did not build anything. That the last Ghassānid kings during the reigns of their Byzantine overlords, Phocas and Heraclius, did not build at all or extensively may not be surprising in view of the Persian War, especially during the reign of Heraclius when Byzantium and the Ghassānids lost Oriens for some twenty years to the Persians; but it is surprising for the other reigns. It is, therefore, possible that Ḥamza's ambivalence toward the Ghassānids disinclined him to report exhaustively on their building activity or that, since he was writing a short account of the Ghassānids, he did not think it necessary to be exhaustive.

See Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1956), I, 586–87. For tensions between the tribes of Byzantine Oriens, see Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat,* 454, on al-Qayn ibn Jasr and Kalb.

[45] *Tārīkh,* 81.

[46] Already noted by Nöldeke, *GF,* 49.

This, however, does not apply to certain reigns when he explicitly says that a particular king "did not build anything." This may be the case; alternatively, this may derive from the source on which he depended, itself possibly not exhaustive on Ghassānid building activity.

It is noteworthy that al-Ḥārith (Arethas), son of Jabala, the most celebrated king and phylarch, and four of his sons were among those who built. They all lived during the reigns of Justinian and Justin II. The two surviving Ghassānid structures were erected respectively by Arethas and his son Mundir: the tower of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī and the *praetorium extra muros* of Ruṣāfa.[47] So in spite of some inaccuracy or selectiveness in Ḥamza's reporting, the general picture he drew of Ghassānid involvement in building is correct and true. These two structures, *praetorium* and tower, incidentally are among others that the Ghassānids built but were not mentioned by Ḥamza, a sure sign that he or his source did not list all their buildings.

Φιλοκτίσται

Since the multitude of buildings erected by the Ghassānids attracted the attention of Ḥamza, it is well that their interest in buildings be accounted for. The Ghassānids had come from the most sedentary and urbanized part of the Arabian Peninsula, South Arabia.[48] After the period of migration in the peninsula[49] and their settlement within the Roman *limes* as *foederati* in Oriens, they again belonged to a sedentary and urban ambience, to which they had been used in South Arabia and to which they quickly responded. Their new responsibilities and the challenges of the new environment were such that it called for building activities on two fronts. First, secular buildings: as *foederati* entrusted with the defense of the frontier (especially as they started to take over from the *limitanei* and be associated with the defense of Oriens in a large way), they engaged in building or repairing forts along the old *limes* and other structures related to frontier defense. As zealous Christians, they engaged in building churches and monasteries, especially after the resuscitation of the Monophysite Church in 540s, a fact known from incontestable contemporary Syriac sources, and partly from Ḥamza himself, who speaks of their *adyar* ("monasteries").

[47] Ḥārith (Arethas) visited Constantinople more than once. So in addition to the architectural splendors in Oriens, especially the Decapolis, which lay within the Provincia Arabia and Palaestina Secunda, he must have been affected by what he saw in the capital during the famous reign of Justinian; and he, too, may have been "fond of building" (φιλοκτίστης) as Justinian was; see Procopius, *Buildings,* I.i.12, 17–19; *Anecdota,* VIII.7.8.

[48] On this, see above, 2.

[49] On the Arabian phase in Ghassānid history and their association with urban centers in western Arabia, see above, 2–3. These two features of Ghassānid background—their South Arabian origin and their migration period in western Arabia—are treated with more details in the section on the sedentariness of the Ghassānids, above, 17–18.

The sixth century, especially the reign of Justinian, witnessed that artistic explosion that found one of its expressions in architecture to such an extent that the chief historian of the reign found it necessary to write a book exclusively devoted the emperor's building campaign.[50] This architectural policy may have reached the diocese of Oriens, where the Ghassānids were settled, and where vassal imitated lord.

Memory and competition must also have played a part in the Ghassānid passionate interest in building. The limitrophe in which they settled had been the area of settlement for the Nabataean and Palmyrene Arabs, whose impressive buildings have survived to the present day in Petra and Palmyra. It is difficult to think that the Ghassānids, who lived so close to these two cities, would not have been aware of the architectural monuments of their Arabs and would not have built in their wake.[51]

Likewise the Lakhmids, their rivals and deadly enemies, the lords of Ḥīra and vassals of Byzantium's secular enemy, Sasanid Persia, had adorned Ḥīra and its environs with monumental buildings,[52] even more famous in Arabic literature than the Ghassānid. It is impossible to believe that the Ghassānids would not have competed with their enemies and rivals in the area of architecture, just as they had done in the domain of literature, when the dynasties vied with each other in attracting the Arab poets of the peninsula in order to receive their panegyrics.[53]

In connection with the Ghassānids as Monophysite builders, it is well known that their man in Constantinople, John of Ephesus, whom Justinian employed for

[50] Procopius' *Buildings.* The book expressed adulation toward Justinian and may have credited him with buildings for which he was not directly or personally responsible, but the buildings were real and not imagined; see below, 357–62.

[51] The Nabataeans and the Palmyrenes spoke Arabic in everyday life but used Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the region at one time, as the language of their inscriptions. Memories of Palmyra as the city of the Arab dynasty of Odenathus survived in the 6th century, and its architectural splendor was remembered in a poem of Nābigha, one of the court poets of the Ghassānids. Some poetry on Palmyra is even attributed to the Ghassānid Ḥārith; see *al-Manāqib al-Mazyadiyya,* II, 377. According to Theophanes, the architect of the church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem was a certain Zenobius, but nothing more is said about him; *Chronographia,* ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), p. 33, lines 13–14. Zenobius is a name that recurs in the Palmyrene onomasticon. Could this Zenobius have been a Palmyrene, whose ancestors built the imposing monuments of Palmyra, destroyed by Aurelian not long before Zenobius appeared in Jerusalem as the architect of the church in A.D. 335/6? This thought on the possible Palmyrene origin of Zenobius was stimulated by John Wilkinson; see his "Jerusalem under Rome and Byzantium," in *Jerusalem in History,* ed. K. J. 'Asalī, rev. ed. (London-New York, 1997), 94. Some two centuries later, Stephanus from Ayla/Eilat, presumably an Arab, was the architect of the church of the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. His name may be read on the inscription still extant on a ceiling beam; see I. Ševčenko, "The Early Period of the Sinai Monastery in the Light of its Inscriptions," *DOP* 20 (1966), 257, 262.

[52] Such as the two palaces, al-Khawarnaq and al-Sadīr; for the first, see *EI*², s.v. al-Khawarnaḳ; for al-Sadīr, thought by some to be al-Ukhaydir, see *EI,* s.v. Ukhaiḍir.

[53] Such were Ḥassān, Nābigha, and Ḥātim, among others.

missionary activity in Anatolia, used to extend financial aid for the erection of Christian places of worship.[54] This type of funding may have reached the Ghassānids to whom the Monophysite church owed so much, or it may have reached them from other sources. It must also be remembered that this activity was not the jealously guarded privilege of the supreme Ghassānid phylarch and king, but was engaged in by the many other phylarchs stationed in the limitrophe provinces of Oriens. One such phylarch, Sharāḥīl, is known to have built a church for St. John the Baptist, whose bilingual commemorative inscription has survived.[55] So the proliferation of structures dotting the limitrophe and other Ghassānid areas of settlement is explicable by the structure of the Ghassānid phylarchate itself, where each province of the limitrophe had its own phylarch, about fifteen, according to the Armenian version of Michael the Syrian.[56] Generations of these phylarchs, in the course of about one hundred and fifty years, could easily have erected a multitude of buildings, partially reflected in Ḥamza's list and supplemented by references in other reliable sources.

To sum up: the Ghassānids hailed from a highly sedentarized region, Sabaean Arabia Felix, and moved to another highly sedentarized region, Byzantine Oriens. Even their trek from the former to the latter region was punctuated by halts in urban milieus such as Najrān, Mecca, and Yathrib. Once settled in Byzantine Oriens for roughly a century and a half, they naturally engaged in building activities that were inspired by their secular as well as their religious responsibilities.

Ḥamza's Silence

Ḥamza's source, or his chief source, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* must have been an extensive work, yet Ḥamza does not seem to have been exhaustive in what he drew from it. Perhaps his source omitted certain details, or Ḥamza himself may be responsible. If so, the following may account for his omissions. Ḥamza wrote a comprehensive history of the dynasties of the world, but it was a slim, skeletal compendium which consequently did not allow him to be expansive, let alone exhaustive, in listing all that the Ghassānids had done. His treatment of the reign of al-Nuʿmān ibn al-Ḥārith in Ruṣāfa reflects this unmistakably, when contrasted with Yāqūt, who reproduced the *khabar* in its entirety from the source common to both of them, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.*[57]

[54] On this, see F. R. Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World at the End of Antiquity: The Case of Rural Anatolia and Greece," *Harvard Theological Review* 78.3–4 (1985), 332–33.

[55] On this, see *BASIC* I.1, 330.

[56] See *BASIC* I.1, 242, 243.

[57] This is traceable also in his accounts of other dynasties including the Sasanids. The most important event in the reign of Chosroes Parvīz, which proved to be ecumenical in its impact, was the fateful war with Byzantium, which led eventually to the demise of Sasanid Persia at the hands of the Arabs. Yet in his account of that reign (*Tārīkh,* 41–42) there is not a word on it. Perhaps it was owing to this severe selectiveness in his method that many mistakes and inaccuracies occur in

Besides being more of a philologist than a historian, Ḥamza was interested primarily in chronology, in the duration of dynasties and reigns, in calendars, and in the various systems of calculation.[58] Thus it is not surprising that he should have bypassed many references to Ghassānid buildings. Finally, it must be remembered that Ḥamza was a Shīʿite Muslim. His partiality to his confession as opposed to Sunni Orthodox Islam is clear in his work and so is his pride in Islam as the true religion vis-à-vis others such as Christianity. Although he bequeathed to the student of Ghassānid history the most precious data about them—their buildings—he remained rather ambivalent toward them as Christians, while his *shuʿūbiyya* (anti-Arab feeling) disinclined him toward them as Arabs.[59] He mentioned their monasteries, but not their churches. The monastery was more acceptable to Muslim authors than the church, perhaps partly because of the Koran's friendly references to monks and monasteries, and possibly also because of the unobtrusive presence of the monastery in the Muslim landscape.

IV. Technical Terms

The number of structures and localities with which Ḥamza associates the Ghassānids comes to about thirty-five. Some of them are names of towns in Oriens, while others are structures, both religious and secular. This most valuable list, however, is plagued by many problems, such as identification, uncertain readings,[60] and the need for correct understanding of some terms that Ḥamza uses in connection with these buildings or toponyms. Such terms may be listed as follows.

The simplest and easiest to understand, *banā* ("he built") is far from clear

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his *Tārīkh.* In the chapter on the Ghassānids this may account, among other things, for the inaccuracies in the onomasticon, the patronymics being particularly liable to confusion in view of the identity of names that the Ghassānid kings assumed. Selectiveness is also traceable in the work of Yāqūt, a most extensive geographical dictionary of mainly the Islamic world. His entries on *dayr*s (monasteries) are numerous, and yet in the introductory paragraph Yāqūt explains that he is presenting only a selection of the multitude of monasteries; see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. *dayr.*

[58] In this connection, mention may be made of his concept of human history as that of *duwal,* plural of *dawla* (Arabic for the revolution of a wheel), discussed in W. Madelung, "Assumption of the Title Shāhānshāh by the Buyids," in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 28 (1969), 93–96.

[59] Pride in Islam vis-à-vis other religions may be found in *Tārīkh,* 101–2. The embroidered account of the encounter of the last Ghassānid king, Jabala, with the caliph Omar became a favorite with Muslim writers, and Ḥamza no doubt accepted it, as the episode advertised the superiority of Islam with its egalitarian ideal. Furthermore, Christianity was the religion of the political and military archenemy of Islam, Byzantium, unlike Zoroastrianism, which declined with the demise of the Sasanid state. Ḥamza's ambivalent attitude to the Ghassānid Christian kings is reflected in his lexicon. Instead of using the neutral term "he died" or the euphemistic *tuwuffiya,* Ḥamza chose *halaka* ("perished") in some eleven instances when speaking of the death of the Ghassānid kings.

[60] Some of these are due to *taṣḥīf,* the misplacement of diacritical marks or points, an ironic development, since Ḥamza wrote a book on the subject. Yet his work, at least in this chapter, was fated to suffer from this ill that manuscripts are liable to, through the process of transcription; see his *al-Tanbīh ʿalā Ḥudūth al-Taṣḥīf,* ed. M. Ṭlas (Beirut, 1991), a most entertaining book (p. 10 would have embarrassed Mrs. Malaprop herself).

whether it means "built" a town or "in a town" or simply "restored," as the term οἰκοδομέω is sometimes used in Greek inscriptions. Also unclear is "*ṣāḥib,*" which means literally "friend," "companion," in expressions involving a construct such as "ṣāḥib Tadmur" (Palmyra), the meaning is not clear, as it can mean "master," "lord" in this context. Also, the term *ghadīr* can mean a pool of water left by a torrent, or a rivulet, river, stream.

Additionally, there are terms that may be described as technical, some of which came from the Sabaic of South Arabia, whence the Ghassānids had hailed. Their exact signification sometimes is not entirely clear. The term *qaṣr* is often used, recalling Latin *castrum* and Greek *kastron;* it is in this military sense that the term may be understood in Ḥamza. Its later semantic development in Arabic to mean palace may already have begun in Ghassānid times, when *qaṣr,* originally "fort," "fortress," may have become a fortified palace after the Ghassānid king would reside in it.[61]

Ṣarḥ is attested in the Sabaic of South Arabia, where it seems to mean "cult building." Semantically it is in Arabic more allied to the term *qaṣr* when the latter means "palace."[62] *Maṣnaʿ* and *maṣnaʿa* is a *nomen loci* from the verb *ṣanaʿa,* which in Arabic as well as Sabaic[63] means "to construct," but is nuanced to mean "power," "strength" in Sabaic and "skill" in Arabic. *Maṣnaʿ* thus means "fortress," "castle" in Ḥamza.

Qaṣṭal, like *qaṣr,* is Latin *castellum.* In Ḥamza this is the name of a locality; the Latin common noun *castellum* developed into a proper noun, the name of a town, with the Arabic definite article *al* attached to it. In the same way *maṣnaʿ* developed into a proper noun in Oriens.

Ṣihrīj is the Persian word for "reservoir," "cistern" (plural, *ṣahārīj*), whereas the native Arabic term *biʾr* signifies well. *Qanṭara* is a word of uncertain etymology meaning aqueduct. Like *qaṣṭal* it has journeyed semantically from a common noun to a proper noun and its meaning in the sources is not entirely clear.[64]

Ṣafāt, Ṣafā, in the sense of "rock," also seems to be used in this period and region as a technical term. Some uncertainty attends its use when a building or a toponym is involved, as will be noted later when its occurrence in Ḥamza is

[61] L. I. Conrad has argued for Arabic *qaṣr* as an Arabic term derivative from the root *qaṣara.* See his "The Quṣūr of Medieval Islam" in *Al-Abḥāth* 29 (1981), 7–23; for the Arabic derivation, see pp. 7–11. Some Arabic terms are conceivably derived from this root, but the term in the Byzantine context, used of the structures of the *foederati* in defense of the frontier, must be the Latin/Greek term. Nowadays the term *qaṣr* practically means "palace," Latin *palatium,* which appears in Arabic as *balāṭ,* meaning either "palace" or a "paved road," depending on whether it is derived from Latin *palatium* or Greek πλατεῖα.

[62] See *Sabaean Dictionary,* ed. A. F. L. Beeston, M. A. Ghul, W. Müller, and J. Ryckmans (Beirut, 1982), 144. The Arabic *ṣarḥ,* attested in the Koran in contexts that suggest an impressive building, is associated with royalty.

[63] See *Sabaean Dictionary,* 143.

[64] It has been used even in the diminutive form, *Qunayṭira;* such is the present-day town in the Golan Heights. For the etymology, see the entry in the *EI*², s.v. *Ḳantara.*

treated. With these cautionary notes and explorations of Ḥamza's lexicon, his list of buildings may now be discussed.

V. The Toponyms and Structures

Identification will be the principal aim here, together with the correction and emendation of certain corrupt readings, the necessary prolegomena for writing the historical geography of the many items in Ḥamza's list. The discussion follows the order of Ghassānid rulers as given in Ḥamza.

Jafna

Ḥamza attributes to Jafna the construction of Jalliq, al-Qarya, and al-Maṣāniʿ, introduced by the verb *wabanā,* "and he built."[65] Nöldeke was incredulous that Jafna, the first Ghassānid king to be a federate of Byzantium, could have built Jalliq.[66] But now this attribution can be accepted without much difficulty. As argued in this volume, Jalliq is the Byzantine military station taken over by the Ghassānid federates after the Roman troops gave it up. Jalliq apparently had been a station of the former *foederati* of Byzantium whom the Ghassānids replaced, namely, the Salīḥids;[67] it was evidently restored by the Ghassānids, if we understand the term *banā* in this sense. Indeed one of the Arabic sources understands the Ghassānid association with Jalliq only in such terms. Its location must be sought in the district of Damascus.[68] Thus Jalliq emerges as one of the earliest localities with which the Ghassānids are associated, even before Jābiya, which together with Jalliq appear in the sources as the two main towns of the Ghassānids, their "capitals." Apparently it had also been a principal town of Salīḥ.

Al-Qarya, unlike Jalliq, may be a Ghassānid foundation. It could be vocalized as al-Qurayya or al-Qurayyāt, the latter of which is attested in the poetry of Ḥassān as a place near Bilās, in the district of Damascus, and thus not far from Jalliq, the other toponym associated with Jafna. It could also have been the toponym located by Wetzstein in the southern Ḥawrān, a view entertained by Nöldeke, but its inscriptions antedate the advent of the Ghassānids in Oriens; however, they could have built "in" it.[69]

Al-Maṣāniʿ: *maṣāniʿ* in this context is clearly a common noun, since it is preceded by the word *ʿiddata* ("many") and so must here mean "fortresses." Jafna

[65] *Tārīkh,* 77.

[66] Nöldeke, *GF,* 50.

[67] Some verses have survived on the transmission of federate power from Salīḥ to Ghassān which mention Jalliq. They may or may not be authentic; see above, 106 note 108.

[68] For Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī on Jalliq, see below, 351; for more on Jalliq and its location, see above, 110–15.

[69] Nöldeke, *GF,* 50; for al-Qurayyat in Ḥassān, see above, 245 note 130. For inscriptions in al-Qurayyat, see W. H. Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (repr. Rome, 1968), nos. 1962–68, pp. 470–71. A. Musil speaks of Qurayyat in Moabitis; see his *Arabia Petraea* (Vienna, 1907), I, 133, 242; he transliterates it el-Krejjat, and it is a *khān.*

was a warrior federate king for whom the building of forts and fortresses would be appropriate activity. It is not clear whether the phrase *ʿiddata maṣāniʿa* represents the very words of Ḥamza's source or a paraphrase by Ḥamza. If the latter, his source may have given the names and locations of the *maṣāniʿ,* which Ḥamza in his selective epitome did not care to enumerate but simply mentioned collectively as "many *maṣāniʿ*."[70]

ʿ*Amr ibn Jafna*

Ḥamza says that ʿAmr ibn Jafna "built the monasteries Dayr Ḥālī, Dayr Ayyūb, and Dayr Hunād."[71]

1. Dayr Ḥālī. This has been identified by Nöldeke with Dayr al-Khall, the "Monastery of Vinegar."[72] Its *exact* location is not clear. However, there is no doubt that the *dayr* existed in the sixth century with the name Ḥālī, since it is attested in this form by a contemporary Syriac document.[73] If the identification with Dayr al-Khall is correct, this could suggest that Ḥamza's source followed the Syriac orthography of the name, not the Arabic al-Khall.

2. Dayr Ayyūb, the Monastery of Ayyūb (Job). The term *dayr,* "monastery," is ambiguous when it is part of a compound noun as in Dayr Ayyūb. Many toponyms in the area have *dayr* as the first part of a compound, and it is not clear sometimes whether only a monastery is meant or a village/town of that name, as in Dayr Ayyūb itself, a well-known village. In this particular case, Dayr Ayyūb is preceded in Ḥamza by the general term *adyār,* "monasteries," of which Dayr Ayyūb is one item in the appositional phrase that follows, but it is possible that the village rather than the monastery is meant. This is only a suspicion since Ḥamza is not always careful in drawing his data from his source, and he may have thought that Dayr Ayyūb must mean a monastery. If a monastery by that name had been built by the Ghassānids, it would have been included in the list of monasteries in the Syriac Monophysite document of 570, but it is not. So Ḥamza's Dayr Ayyūb could be either a monastery or the village that later assumed the name Shaykh Saʿd. But Ghassānid association with either a *dayr* or the village is certain, since Ayyūb (Job) was invoked by them in their military encounters.[74]

3. Dayr Hunād. This name sounds and looks like the plural of Hind, or it may be a corrupt and mutilated form of it. Hind was a well-known Ghassānid royal name, one of their queens, and the *dayr* may have been constructed by her

[70] The term *maṣnaʿ* as a proper noun appears in both Syria and Trans-Jordan; for the Syrian one, between Damascus and Palmyra, see R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique* (Paris, 1927), 263; for the Trans-Jordanian one, see N. Glueck, below, note 89.

[71] *Tārīkh,* 77.

[72] Nöldeke, *GF,* 49 note 1, with reference to his article on the Monophysite monasteries, "Zur Topographie," *ZDMG* 29 (1876), 436.

[73] Ibid.

[74] On the war slogan of the Ghassānids involving Ayyūb (Job), see above, 120 note 170.

or for her, probably the former. The geographers locate Dayr Hind near Damascus in the district called al-Ābār (the wells). Yāqūt considers Dayr Hind a village, not a monastery; if true, this would be another instance of how a *dayr* developed into a village in much the same way that Dayr Ayyūb had done.[75]

Nöldeke's incredulousness that the Ghassānids could have built these monasteries is thus unjustified.[76] As the careful examination of the Syriac list of sixth-century Monophysite monasteries has shown, the Ghassānids were builders of many monasteries. Nöldeke may be right, however, in doubting the attribution of these monasteries to this particular king, ʿAmr ibn Jafna, but this is a minor point. The Ghassānids, as will be shown later, built more monasteries than Ḥamza has attributed to them. The term *banā* here, "he built," must be understood in its literal meaning of building, not restoring.

Thaʿlaba ibn ʿAmr

Ḥamza says that Thaʿlaba ibn ʿAmr "built ʿAqqa and Ṣarḥ al-Ghadīr in the extremities of Ḥawrān, next to or adjoining al-Balqāʾ."[77] The two toponyms have been difficult to identify, but the further description that the two lay somewhere between Ḥawrān and the Balqāʾ can help in identifying them.

1. ʿAqqa. E. Herzfeld declared it "unbekannt," but it is clearly a corrupt reading[78] which may be corrected or emended to Baqqa, Raqqa, or Shaqqa. The first two are excluded because of their distance from the region between Ḥawrān and Balqāʾ. Shaqqa in Trachonitis, northeast of Shahba, is the most likely correction of the corrupt reading: بقه – شقه. It is roughly where Ḥamza locates it in the Ḥawrān-Balqāʾ region. It is not difficult to see how an Arabic *shīn* can become an ʿ*ayn;* the three dots, the diacritical marks, over the *kursī,* the chair of the *shīn,* may have coalesced and connected with the *kursī,* thus yielding an ʿ*ayn* or what looked like one.[79]

2. Ṣarḥ al-Ghadīr. This structure presents two problems: the exact meaning of Ṣarḥ, which is an architectural term in early Arabic, and the exact meaning of Ghadīr, which may mean a pool of water or a rivulet. Whatever the two terms specifically denote, the general meaning is clear: Ṣarḥ implies a stately mansion, while al-Ghadīr implies a body of water. The definite article in al-Ghadīr suggests that the common noun *ghadīr* has in this case become a proper noun, a specific

[75] See Dayr Hind in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v.; in Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* s.v.

[76] For his ambivalent attitude toward the monasteries attributed to the Ghassānids, see *GF,* 50, 51, but perhaps he was thinking mainly of the attribution of the three monasteries to ʿAmr ibn Jabala, while not doubting their Ghassānid provenance.

[77] *Tārīkh,* 77.

[78] As Herzfeld suspected; see *Maḥaṭṭa,* 114 note 1, no. 7.

[79] Not unlike Khall and Ḥālī in the case of Dayr Ḥālī. Shaqqa is, of course, the Semitic name of Maximianopolis; hence *banā* ("built") said of Thaʿlaba can only mean built "in" or "near," possibly a *praetorium extra muros* as an audience hall, not unlike the one Mundir built outside Ruṣāfa.

place by that name. So the problem is where to locate al-Ghadīr, at which the mansion was built.

As the term *ghadīr* is common, the solution of this problem may be facilitated by the fact that one of the monasteries in the list of Syriac Monophysite establishments is called by Dayr al-Ghadīr, which suggests that Ḥamza's al-Ghadīr could be the same as the location at which the monastery was built. The order of the monasteries in the list may help locate al-Ghadīr, but not necessarily; it is, however, the only possible guide to its location. Wetzstein, who visited the area more than a century ago and looked for these toponyms, said it is a rivulet that flows into Wādī al-Buṭm, and he calls it Ghadīr al-Ṭayr. Wādī al-Buṭm is one of the affluents of the Yarmūk, southwest of Bostra. So Ḥamza's Ṣarḥ al-Ghadīr may have been located at this affluent of the Yarmūk, Ghadīr al-Ṭayr.[80]

A recently published geographical dictionary of Syria has two entries that include the term *ghadīr:* Ghadīr al-Bustān and Ghadīr al-Nuḥās, both in the Golan. The former is described as a village 2 km south of the road that connects Nawā with Qunayṭira; the latter is described as a *qal'a,* a fortress in the district of Qunayṭira, which lies on the northern bank of Wādī Ghadīr al-Nuḥās where there is a natural lake or pool; to the south of the fortress is a tower. No detailed maps are attached which would help in exactly locating these two toponyms. The latter of the two might conceivably be related to Ḥamza's Ṣarḥ, if the fortress goes back to Byzantine times.[81]

Jabala ibn al-Ḥārith

Ḥamza says that Jabala "built (*banā*) al-Qanāṭir, and Adruḥ, and al-Qasṭal."[82]

1. Al-Qanāṭir. This is the plural of *qanṭara,* "bridge," "aqueduct," a term that entered Arabic at least as early as the sixth century, but whose etymology is uncertain.[83] Although the term, especially in the singular, is found as a place name of various towns and villages in the region, the term here used in the plural most probably means aqueducts. When it is a place name, Qanṭara is used in the singular and sometimes is followed by a descriptive addition. Qanāṭir in the plural and without a descriptive addition does not suggest a place name.

[80] It is noteworthy that Ḥamza refers to al-Ghadīr again when he is speaking of the structures of al-Mundir ibn al-Ḥārith, in such a way as to suggest that al-Ghadīr was a well-known name; *Tārīkh,* 78. In connection with the other meaning of *ghadīr,* as a pool, not a stream or an affluent, the pool near the 'Allan affluent of the Yarmūk is noted and well described by G. Schumacher, *Across the Jordan* (London, 1886), 73–74. This pool, which I have seen, would be a romantic setting for a *ṣarḥ.* As to Ghadīr al-Ṭayr mentioned by Wetzstein, I was unable to visit it, not having found a reference to it in any of the maps at my disposal. For the Monastery of Ghadīr in the Syriac document published by Nöldeke, see his "Topographie," 439, line 7.

[81] For the two entries, Ghadīr al-Bustān and Ghadīr al-Nuḥās, see M. Tlas, *al-Mu'jam al-Jughrāfi li al-Quṭr al-Sūrī* (Damascus, 1992), IV, 426, 427.

[82] *Tārīkh,* 77.

[83] On *qanṭara,* see *EI,* s.v. Ḳantara.

Wetzstein identified the al-Qanāṭir in Ḥamza with the well-known *qanāṭir* in southern Syria, which extends for some 96 km, from the foot of the western Trachonitis, and runs in a southwestern direction as far as Gadara. It is commonly known as Qanāṭir Firʿawn, "the aqueducts of Pharaoh." Nöldeke rightly rejected the notion that an early Ghassānid king such as Jabala could have built such impressive public works.[84] The association of the Ghassānid Jabala, however, with these *qanāṭir* can be argued easily when the term *banā* is understood to mean that he repaired them, an interpretation of *banā* Nöldeke himself suggested for translating this verb in Ḥamza's account of the Ghassānids.[85] The Ghassānid al-Nuʿmān's restoration of the water supply system of Ruṣāfa was an item Nöldeke accepted in Ḥamza's account of the building achievements of the Ghassānids. The Ghassānids had special interest and competence in water supply systems, and so their association, on a modest scale, with Qanāṭir Firʿawn may be accepted.

On the other hand, al-Qanāṭir of Ḥamza may be sought in a different location in Trans-Jordan. This hypothesis may be supported by the fact that the two other places associated with the Ghassānid builder Jabala are al-Qasṭal and Aḏruḥ, both in Trans-Jordan.[86] These are a much more modest series of *qanāṭir* than those of Firʿawn and could very well have been constructed by the Ghassānid Jabala.

2. Aḏruḥ. This is a locality commonly identified with Augustopolis of the *Notitia Dignitatum;* hence it could not have been "built" by the Ghassānids, and the term *banā,* "he built," in this context has to be understood as "he built in" or "restored" something within the town. As one of the military stations listed in the *Notitia,* now associated with the Ghassānids, Aḏruḥ may be added to the list of those stations that were taken over by the Ghassānids after Justinian dispensed with the services of the *limitanei* who had manned such stations along the *Limes orientalis.*

3. Al-Qasṭal. This is an Arabicized form of the Latin *castellum,* which became a proper noun, indicating a locality, instances of which are to be found in various parts of Oriens. It is practically certain that the one meant here is near Amman, in Trans-Jordan, occupied in later times by the Umayyads. Again as in the case of Aḏruḥ, but more clearly because of the term *castellum* itself, it suggests a Ghassānid takeover of a Byzantine military station after Justinian's dismissal of the *limitanei.*

Al-Ḥārith ibn Jabala

Ḥamza says of him: "and his residence was in the Balqā', and he built in it al-Ḥafīr and *maṣnaʿahu/maṣnaʿat, bayna,* between Daʿjān and Qaṣr Ubayr and Maʿān."[87]

[84] Nöldeke, *GF,* 50.
[85] Ibid., 51.
[86] Suggested to me by Dr. Ghāzī Bisheh.
[87] *Tārīkh,* 78.

1. The text presents many difficulties turning largely round the term *maṣnaʿahu/maṣnaʿat:* should the term be construed and read as *maṣnaʿahu,* its *maṣnaʿ,* or *maṣnaʿat,* a *masnaʿ,* and should it be translated as fortress, castle, or cistern? The term can sometimes have the latter meaning,[88] although not always, as pointed out by Nöldeke. The meaning of the term is the easiest of the three problems. *Maṣnaʿ* normally means a strong, fortified place and has already been used to describe the structures built by his ancestor Jafna, his *maṣāniʿ,* or fortresses. This interpretation is supported by the further statement, specifying its location in relation to the three toponyms that follow. It would be more natural to give this detailed specification for a fortress than for a well or cistern. As for the correct reading of the term, it can be read as *maṣnaʿahu,* "its *maṣnaʿ,*" that is, that of al-Ḥafīr, to which it was attached, or *maṣnaʿat,* "a *maṣnaʿat*" with the latter the more likely reading since the three toponyms that follow to specify its location would be redundant if it had been already described as near al-Ḥafīr. Besides, this would leave the preposition *bayna* egregiously otiose.

Archaeology has revealed the existence of a structure that still goes by the name of al-Maṣnaʿ, 3 km northeast of al-Rabba, Areopolis.[89] This is far from both Daʿjān and Ubayr, but Ḥamza may not have been accurate in his description of its location. What matters in this process of identifying Ḥamza's toponym is the reality and the existence to the present day of Maṣnaʿ/al-Maṣnaʿ in the very area of Ghassānid federate presence. The Arabic name *Maṣnaʿ,* rather than *Qaṣṭal,* Latin *castellum,* or *Qaṣr, kastron,* is another indication of the Ghassānid provenance of the structure.

2. Al-Ḥafīr. The first of the group of toponyms associated with the famous Ghassānid king al-Ḥārith is easily identifiable. Wādī al-Ḥafīr is one of the affluents of the Arnon, and Arabic Ḥafīr is the Ufer of the *Notitia Dignitatum,* where the Cohors Tertia Arabum was stationed at Castra Arnonensia (al-Qaṭrāna).[90] The Ghassānid presence at al-Ḥafīr vouched for in Ḥamza's list represents another instance of a Byzantine military station taken over by the Ghassānids sometime after the reorganization of the *Limes orientalis* by Justinian in 529.

3. *Bayna.* The preposition *bayna,* "between," in the text may now be discussed. As already indicated, it presents problems for identifying *maṣnaʿat* between the three toponyms that follow, while the possible association of *maṣnaʿat* with al-Ḥafīr as *maṣnaʿahu,* "its *maṣnaʿ*" suggests that *bayna* is suspect and cannot be retained in the text as such. It must either be deleted as a dittograph of *wabanā,*

[88] See Nöldeke's correction of Wetzstein, *GF,* 51 note 1.

[89] On this structure, its description, and a sketch plan of it, see N. Glueck, "Explorations in Eastern Palestine I," *AASOR* 14 (1934), 62, sketch plan on p. 102.

[90] See the illuminating passage in Abel, who described his visit to Wādī al-Ḥafīr and identified it with the station in the *ND;* F. M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* (Paris, 1976), II, 190. Two localities have been noted in Wādī al-Ḥafīr, Qaryat al-Ḥafīr and Qaṣr Mushaysh, either of which can also be associated with the Ghassānids.

"and he built", or emended into *wabanā,* which transcriptionally is very possible, since all it involves to make it *banā* is a metathesis between the second and the third radical of *bayna.* So the three toponyms that follow may be construed as governed by the verb *wabanā,* whether the first one in the text, or the second, the emended reading of *bayna.*

The release of the three toponyms, Daʿjān, Ubayr, and Maʿān from their purely ancillary function as markers specifying the location of Maṣnaʿ is called for because it does justice to the Ghassānid al-Ḥārith, the most celebrated of all the Ghassānid kings, who reigned some forty years.[91] Hence an association of Ḥārith with these three localities is justified. It will be argued that he built two of them, Daʿjān and Ubayr, while restoring, adapting, or adding to Maʿan.

1. Daʿjān. An impressive structure, a fortress with the name al-Daʿjāniyya, has survived in present-day Jordan on the Jurf al-Darāwīsh road. No inscriptions have been found, but the precious reference to Daʿjān in Ḥamza solves the problem of its provenance,[92] a conclusion supported by the easterly location of the fortress, not unlike the other toponym, Ubayr.

2. Ubayr. This toponym, too, has survived in a structure that is still standing in present-day Jordan, to the east of Daʿjān. Unlike Daʿjān, it is associated with the Ghassānids in contemporary poetry.[93]

3. Maʿān. It is impossible to accept the statement in Ḥamza that al-Ḥārith built it, since this is a town well known before the Ghassānids.[94] It may, however, have been one of the military stations taken over by the Ghassānids when they relieved Roman *limitanei* of their duties. So "built" here has to be understood in the sense of restored or added.

In addition to listing these toponyms, Ḥamza says that Ḥārith's residence was in al-Balqāʾ, a statement supported by the Ghassānid court poet Ḥassān, who refers to the district in his panegyrics on the dynasty. The region still has that name in Jordan in which the capital Amman lies, and it lay in the Provincia Arabia, the headquarters of the Ghassānid Ḥārith, who was indeed its phylarch, as indicated by Procopius when Arethas was promoted to supreme phylarch and king in 529.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the five toponyms mentioned by Ḥamza and attributed to al-Ḥārith are all near one another and are identifiable, indicating that this part of the list derives from a reliable document.

[91] On al-Ḥārith son of Jabala, see the section on the list of builder kings, above, 318.

[92] Daʿjān's association with the Ghassānids has already been noted in G. W. Bowersock, "Limes Arabicus," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 80 (1976), 227 note 1. The 6th-century dating suggested by Bowersock has been doubted by S. T. Parker, *Romans and Saracens: A History of the Arabian Frontier,* ASOR Dissertation Series 6 (Winona Lake, Ind., 1985), 94.

[93] On this toponym in the poetry of Nābigha, see above, 225.

[94] It goes back to biblical times; see A. Musil, *The Northern Ḥegāz* (New York, 1926), 243–48. The Graeco-Roman name of Semitic Maʿān is uncertain. For Ḥassān on the Balqāʾ, see above, 235; for Procopius, see *History,* I.xvii.45–48.

Al-Mundir ibn al-Ḥārith

Ḥamza says of al-Mundir that "he built (*banā*) HRBA and ZRQA near al-Ghadīr,"[95] a statement that has survived in a very corrupt state, owing to the erroneous placement of diacritical marks. The reference to al-Ghadīr, already met with in Ṣarḥ al-Ghadīr, is helpful, since its location between Balqā' and Ḥawrān is indicated in the section on Tha'laba ibn 'Amr. Thus the two localities must be sought in this area.[96] HRBA is most likely to be al-Kharba', a locality associated with the Ghassānids by the geographers.[97] ZRQA is most likely to be Zarqā', which may be identified with the well-known town in northern Jordan. The first is in al-Bathaniyya (Batanaea) west of Trachonitis, while the second is in the Balqā', both of which may roughly be said to be near al-Ghadīr, situated between Ḥawrān and al-Balqā'.[98] The two toponyms may be categorized as small villages that grew from initial Ghassānid settlements.

Jabala ibn al-Ḥārith

Ḥamza says of Jabala: "and his residence was Ḥārib, and he built Qaṣr Ḥārib and MḤARBA and MANI'AT."[99]

1. Ḥārib is well attested as a Ghassānid locality in the Golan by the poet Nābigha, although it is not clear whether he conceived it as a mountain or a town or village. It has survived in the Arabic Kafr Ḥārib and Hebrew Kfar Ḥarūv in the Golan.[100]

2. At Ḥārib, whether a mountain or a town, Jabala built a *qaṣr,* which became known as Qaṣr Ḥārib. Whether this *qaṣr* was a military establishment (*kastron*) or a palace, an official residence (*palation*), is not clear.

3. MḤARBA is hopelessly obscure. It suggests *maḥārib,* the plural of *miḥrāb,* without the final *aliph,* and this in turn suggests an Umayyad poet's reference to one of the residences of the Umayyads which they took over from the Ghassānids, namely, al-Qasṭal in al-Balqā'. The poet Kuthayyir 'Azzat[101] speaks of al-Qasṭal

[95] *Tārīkh,* 78.

[96] On the Ghassānid king Tha'laba, see above, 325–26.

[97] Bakrī, *Mu'jam,* s.v.; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam,* s.v.

[98] The boundaries of these regions changed and shifted throughout the ages; hence what was true of one period was not true of another. Thus what today may not seem quite accurate as the description of a certain location in any of these regions may have been accurate in former times.

[99] *Tārīkh,* 78.

[100] The toponym appears in the work of the Arab Muslim geographers, who evidently were unaware of its antiquity and simply cited the Arabic verse of Nābigha to attest it; on its occurrence in Nābigha's panegyric, see above, 228; see also Bakrī, *Mu'jam,* s.v., and Yāqūt, *Mu'jam,* s.v.

[101] Noted in E. Herzfeld, "Mshattā, Hira und Badiya," *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 42 (1921), 115, no. 15. *Dāt* preceding a noun, as in Kuthayyir's Dāt al-Maḥārib, is not unusual in the list of Ḥamza since another Ghassānid king, al-Ayham ibn Jabala, is credited with a structure or place called Dāt Anmār. Ḥamza may have used an abbreviated form of Dāt al-Maḥārib, dropping Dāt.

as "Dāt al-Maḥārib," "al-Qasṭal of the Maḥārib," that is, niches of mosques or temples or churches. As this is a Ghassānid structure, *maḥārib* is likely to be churches or monasteries and implies a monastic complex.

Despite all ingenuity in the process of identification, it is possible that the statement in Ḥamza is confusingly conflated. The crucial pointer in this direction is the repetition three times of words formed from the root ḤRB. After Ḥārib comes Qaṣr Ḥārib and then Maḥārib, although the root in Maḥārib is only homophonous and nonsynonymous.[102] The building of Qaṣr Ḥārib is suspect, since it comes right after Ḥārib.[103] Qaṣr Ḥārib with which Jabala is credited is also attributed later in the list to al-Nuʿmān ibn ʿAmr.[104] Consequently all that can be said is that Jabala was involved in some building activity, related to Ḥārib in the Golan, but the number or nature of the structures he erected is not clear. MḤARBA may be included in these structures. Alternatively, it may be retained as a structure in the Balqāʾ, not in the Golan in which Ḥārib was situated. If so, it will be a valuable addition to Ghassānid religious structures, evidenced in Ḥamza's list by reference to the six monasteries. Also, in this case, the name in Ghassānid times would have been simply al-Maḥārib, a religious, possibly monastic, complex in the Balqāʾ.

4. MANĪʿAT is capable of being emended or corrected into one of two possible readings, either as Minya/Munya or Mayfaʿa; alternatively it may be left alone as Manīʿat (منيعه ميفعه← منيه/). As Minya/Munya, it may be identified with the structure on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, which, it has been argued, was Ghassānid.[105] This is possible, in view of some relations the Ghassānids may have had with Galilee,[106] so close to their settlements and capital Jābiya in the Golan. As Mayfaʿa, it can be identified with Mayfaʿa, Umm er-Raṣās, the now celebrated locality in Trans-Jordan, the correct name of which has been established epigraphically as Mayfaʿa.[107] It was a military station listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum,* and was garrisoned by the Equites Promoti Indigenae, Rhomaic Arabs of the former Nabataea. So, it could be added to the number of such military units taken over from the *limitanei* by the Ghassānids. Furthermore, the sixth-century Christian churches discovered there as well as the Arabic onomasticon, reflected in the names of the benefactors, artists, and priests, suggests strong Arab participation

[102] The one in Kafr Ḥārib/Kfar Ḥarūv is related to carobs.

[103] In Ḥamza's list it may derive from another confusion: a reference to Qaṣr Ḥārib in a verse by Nābigha, which Ḥamza cites later when he discusses al-Nuʿman ibn ʿAmr, clearly a mistake since the word should be read *qabr* (grave/tomb), not *qaṣr,* as discussed in the section on Nābigha; above, 226, 228.

[104] *Tārīkh,* 79.

[105] See A. Alt, "Ein Ghassanidenschloss am See Genezareth?" *ZDPV* 59 (1936), 214–26.

[106] On the possible relation of the Ghassānids to Galilee, see above, 221.

[107] See M. Piccirillo and E. Alliata, *Mayfaʿa: Gli scavi del complesso di santo Stefano* (Jerusalem, 1994).

in the architectural monuments of Mayfaʿa.[108] The Ghassānids, who had a strong presence in the area, were zealous Christians and may have built the tower at Mayfaʿa to protect the religious community. Two towers not unlike the one at Mayfaʿa/Umm er-Raṣās have survived and are incontestably Ghassānid, since the Greek inscriptions that attribute their construction to the Ghassānids al-Ḥārith and al-Mundir have survived, those at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī and Ḍumayr respectively, both in Syria. As the Ghassānids had a strong presence in Trans-Jordan, the tower at Umm er-Raṣās can arguably be Ghassānid.

If Maniʿat is left unchanged, it might be identified with biblical Timna, west of Wādī ʿAraba, which gave its name to the little *wādī,* where it is located some 20 km northwest of Eilat.[109] The *wādī,* now called Timna valley, was formerly called Wādī Meneʿiyeh, the local Arabic name for biblical Timna. Meneʿiyeh is said to be the colloquial form for standard Arabic *manīʿat,* or *munayʿat.*[110] If so, this toponym is closer to the one in Ḥamza's list, and one of its forms, *maniʿat,* is identical with Ḥamza's toponym. A Ghassānid presence west of Wādī ʿAraba is possible since the Ghassānids were the phylarchs of Palaestina Tertia in which Timna was located. So the toponym given up by Herzfeld as "unbekannt" could be one of the three possibilities above discussed. Most probably it is the second, Mayfaʿa, the military station listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum.*

Al-Ayham ibn al-Ḥārith

Ḥamza says of al-Ayham: "and he built the monasteries: Dayr Dakhm and Dayr al-Nubuwwat and Saʿf."[111]

1. Dayr Dakhm has not been identified with anything that sounds like Dakhm.[112] It is most probably Ḍajʿum, a *dayr* that the Ḍajāʿima, the *foederati*

[108] See *BAFIC,* 322–24, where I was inclined to think that the Salīḥids of the 5th century might have been involved in Mayfaʿa. Although it is still a possibility, the Ghassānids of the 6th century are the better candidates as federate participants in the fortunes of Mayfaʿa.

[109] On Timna, see B. Rothenberg, *Valley of the Biblical Copper Mines* (London, 1972).

[110] Ibid., 18, 242.

[111] *Tārīkh,* 78.

[112] Also declared by Herzfeld "unbekannt;" "Mshatta," 115, no. 19. It is pertinent to remark in the context of possible amicable relations between Salīḥ and Ghassān that the cousins of the Salīḥids (Dajāʿima, Zokomids), the two subdivisions, ʿĀyid and ʿĀyida, descended with the Salīḥids from a common progenitor, ʿImrān, affiliated themselves with the Ghassānids; see Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat,* 450.

The house of Dujʿum, the Zokomids, were the kings of the Salīḥids and the dominant *foederati* of Byzantium in the 5th century. Their king Dāwūd (David), known as al-Lathiq, built Dayr Dāwūd or Dayr al-Lathiq, a monastery that may well have been the one built or restored by the Ghassānids. The authenticity of the term al-Lathiq in the Arabic sources on Dāwūd is confirmed by a Greek inscription. The convent survived long after the Salīḥids and Ghassānids disappeared. The name al-Lathiq apparently became the name of the village that grew near the *dayr,* as many villages in Oriens did, which derived their names from those of the monasteries; hence many are called Dayr such-and-such a saint, as Dayr Ayyūb (Job). Noteworthy is the Greek inscription left by the *periodeutes* John from the village or Dayr al-Lathiq, which he inscribed in

whom the Ghassānids replaced, had built, just as they had built Dayr Dāwūd, and that the Ghassānids simply restored; Arabic ضخم can easily be read for ضجعم. If so, the restoration work could argue that amicable relations finally obtained between the two groups of *foederati* in spite of initial hostility.

2. Dayr al-Nubuwwat. As pointed out by Wetzstein, this is most probably Dayr al-Labwat,[113] which incidentally is attested in the Syriac list of Monophysite monasteries.

3. Sa'f is not preceded by Dayr as in the case of Dakhm and Nubuwwat, and so it may not be in apposition to *adyār* ("monasteries"), with which Ḥamza opens his statement on al-Ayham; perhaps only Dakhm and Nubuwwat are.[114] If so, Sa'f may then be a locality. Wetzstein, who visited the area, located it in eastern Ḥawrān on the top of a hill.[115] So Sa'f may be either a *dayr* built there or a locality, a village, which could have developed around the *dayr* as in the case of Dayr Ayyūb, the Monastery of Job. However, the locality is not called Dayr Sa'f, and so it may have grown without the addition of *dayr.* The reading is clearly not Sa'f but Sha'f, as Wetzstein pointed out, as it is called in Yāqūt.[116]

'Amr ibn al-Ḥārith

Of this Ghassānid king, Ḥamza says that "he resided in al-Sadīr and he built Qaṣr al-Faḍā and Ṣafāt al-Ajalāt, and Qaṣr Manār."[117]

1. Al-Sadīr. Commentators on this toponym were incredulous that a place with such a name would be associated with the Ghassānids. Wetzstein emended it to al-Ghadīr, which he had identified with Ghadīr al-Ṭayr, as already mentioned, while Nöldeke was at a loss on how to locate or identify it and suggested that Ḥamza confused it with the well-known structure of the Lakhmids near Ḥīra.[118]

A closer look at the sources and better maps than were at the disposal of both scholars have revealed a Sadīr in southern Trans-Jordan, which may well have been

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the chapel of Qal'at Sim'ān in Telanissos and in which he calls on the Lord to remember him; for the inscription, see *IGLSYR,* XII, no. 421 (Paris, 1929). For other references to al-Lathiq, Ἀλθάκων, see E. Honigmann, "Historische Topographie von Nordsyrien im Altertum," *ZDPV* 46 (1923), 156, no. 28; and R. Dussaud, "La Palmyrène et l'exploration de M. Alois Musil," *Syria* 10 (1929), 54.

Dāwūd and his *dayr* were discussed at length in *BAFIC,* whose frontispiece is the plan of the monastery. It was drawn by Musil who identified it with al-Turkmaniyya, situated halfway between Ruṣāfa and Isriye. The history of this important *dayr* has yet to be written.

[113] As has been suggested by Wetzstein and accepted by Nöldeke in "Topographie," 435 and Herzfeld, "Mshattā," 115, no. 19.

[114] In the case of the three *dayrs,* monasteries erected by 'Amr ibn Jafna, the word *dayr* is repeated after each of them; above, 324.

[115] J. W. Wetzstein, *Reisebericht uber Haurân und die Trachonen* (Berlin, 1860), 126.

[116] Ibid., and Yāqūt, *Mu'jam,* s.v. Wetzstein's correction has been accepted by Nöldeke and Herzfeld, "Mshattā," 115, no. 21.

[117] *Tārīkh,* 78.

[118] Nöldeke, *GF,* 52 note 1.

the one meant by Ḥamza as a residence for the Ghassānids. One of the meanings of *sadīr* is grass or a water spring, a place that would have attracted a Ghassānid settlement. In the vicinity there are until now the Ḥammāmāt ʿAfrā or Sadīr ʿAfrā (the baths of ʿAfrā) with abundant water. The literary sources associate al-Sadīr with the Ghassānids, as in the death of Farwa ibn ʿAmr al-Judāmī at the hands of the Ghassānid king near Ḥammāmāt ʿAfrā and also in the verse of one of the Muslims at the battle of Yarmūk referring to al-Balqāʾ and al-Sadīr as areas of the federate Arabs.[119]

Sadīr ʿAfrā and Ḥammāmāt ʿAfrā are located in the Wādī al-Ḥasā region where Byzantine sherds and a hermitage have been found by the excavators of the site; thus archaeology has confirmed the Byzantine background of al-Sadīr. Consequently the reading al-Sadīr has to be retained and not changed to Ghadīr, nor should it be confused with the more famous Lakhmid Sadīr in Ḥīra. It thus emerges as a new Ghassānid toponym which witnesses to a Ghassānid presence in that part of Trans-Jordan.[120]

2. Qaṣr al-Faḍā. This has not been identified with any known place[121] and is likely to be a corrupt form of al-Ṣafā, easily effected by metathesis and a diacritical

[119] Wādī ʿAfrā is one of the affluents of Wādī al-Ḥasā. Ḥammam ʿAfra is located in the northern segment of Wādī ʿAfrā, 3 km south of the confluence of the latter with Wādī al-Ḥasā, biblical Zered, the frontier between Moab and Edom.

For the Ghassānid associations with Sadīr ʿAfrā in the Arabic Islamic literary sources involving Farwa ibn ʿAmr al-Judāmī and a verse recited at the battle of Yarmūk, see *Sīrat al-Nabiy,* ed. M. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1937), IV, 261–62, esp. 262; and *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of Bilād al-Shām during the Early Islamic Period,* ed. M. Bakhīt and I. ʿAbbas (Amman, 1987), Arabic volume, II, 509.

In the literary embroideries describing the movements of the Ghassānids during their migration period in Arabia, the priestess names al-Sadīr as one of the choice places where the Azd (to whom Ghassān belonged) might settle; see Nuwayri, *Nihayāt al-Arab,* I, 372, lines 3–4. The account is legendary, but what matters here is its association of al-Sadīr with the Ghassānids, no doubt deriving from their later settlement in it, after they became federates of Byzantium. Sadīr is also a place in South Arabia (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v.), and it is not impossible that the Sadīr in Trans-Jordan may have been so named by the South Arabian Ghassānids in much the same way that Najrān in Trachonitis was so called after Najrān in South Arabia.

[120] For excavations in Wādī al-Ḥasā, see B. MacDonald, *The Wādī el Ḥasā Archaeological Survey 1979–1983, West-Central Jordan* (Waterloo, Ontario, 1988); for the description of the Byzantine hermitage, Ḥammām ʿAfrā, located in Wādī ʿAfrā, see ibid., 242. For another hermitage in Wādī al-Ḥasā and the inscriptions, see M. Sartre in *IGLSYR. Inscriptions de la Jordanie.* IV (Paris, 1993), 129–32, under the title Ḥammām ʿAfrā; for a more detailed description of the first hermitage, see B. MacDonald, "The Hermitage of John, the Abbot at Ḥammām ʿAfra, Southern Jordan," *Liber Annuus* 30 (1980), 351–64. Hermitages strongly confirm the Byzantine and Ghassānid presence at the site. ʿAfra/ʿAfro was one of the military posts listed in the *ND* where the Cohors Duodecima Valeria was stationed. This is significant in the context of the Ghassānid takeover of military posts occupied previously by the *limitanei.* It could also suggest that the Ghassānids may have been stationed as *foederati* at a post near the Byzantine military unit at ʿAfra before they took it over. This then may be added to the list of Byzantine military posts taken over by the Ghassānids after Justinian dismissed the *limitanei;* see above, 42–48.

[121] Also declared by Herzfeld "unbekannt;" "Mshattā," 119, no. 22.

mark displacement: قصر الصفا→قصر الفضا. Whether it refers to a palace or a castle in the limitrophe region of al-Ṣafā is not clear. If al-Ṣafā is a palace, the term *Ṣafā* would then be the Arabic term for pleasantness, some form of a Sans Souci Ghassānid palace. If, on the other hand, it is a castle, *Ṣafā* would simply mean the region. It might be identified with Khirbat al-Bayḍā, which according to one view was a Ghassānid castle in the Ṣafā region.[122]

3. Ṣafāt al-ʿAjalat. This toponym presents two problems: the meaning of *ṣafāt* and the identification of the place called al-ʿAjalat. The place must be the village in Ḥawrān called al-ʿUjaylāt in which old inscriptions going back to pre-Islamic times were found.[123] Nöldeke expressed doubt that ʿAmr could have built this place, but he did not rule out Ghassānid association with it. He suggested that the term "built" in this case should be understood in the sense of restoration of an old building there or the erection of a mansion in it. This must be the case, since the inscriptions found there go back to times antedating the advent of the Ghassānids in Oriens.[124] The toponym is now pronounced in the diminutive as al-ʿUjaylāt.

Ṣafāt which precedes al-ʿAjalat could indicate what type of building the Ghassānids erected, since it is better to understand the compound noun as a building in al-ʿUjaylāt rather than the village itself. The term is sometimes applied to the whole region of al-Ṣafā/al-Ṣafāt, but in this case it is more likely to have the term's normal meaning in Arabic, a rock; hence this signification could point to the erection of a fortress as strong as a rock.[125] It is noteworthy that the Ṣafā/Ḥawrān region may have had two structures by this Ghassānid king, that is, if Qaṣr al-Ṣafā is a correct emendation of Qaṣr al-Faḍā.

Qaṣr Manār. This is difficult to pinpoint since there is more than one compound toponym in which Manār is an element, such as Kūm Manār and Dāt Manār: one in the north, near Bostra, and the other in the south of Palaestina

[122] See H. Gaube, *Ein Arabischer Palast in Südsyrien, Hirbet El-Baida* (Beirut, 1974). He later hesitated between an Umayyad and a Ghassānid provenance, but the two views can be reconciled since, as maintained in this volume, many Umayyad structures had a Ghassānid substrate or substructure.

I have a typescript of the paper H. Gaube delivered on this problem at the workshop held at the University of London in 1991, but apparently the paper was not included in the collection of papers delivered and printed later in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East, Land and Settlement Patterns,* ed. G. R. D. King and Averil Cameron (Princeton, N.J., 1994).

[123] Wetzstein was the first to identify it; see his *Ausgewählte Griechische und Lateinische Inschriften* (Berlin, 1864), 268–69, no. 19; followed by Waddington and PPUAES III, as noted by Herzfeld, "Mshatta," 115, no. 23.

ʿAjlan in Yāqūt (*Muʿjam,* s.v.) must be this toponym since it was known to the Arab poet Saʿd ibn-Jaḥdar from the Hudayl tribe, who refers to it together with Shaʿf, in eastern Ḥawrān, close to it; for Shaʿf, see above, note 116.

[124] Nöldeke, *GF,* 51 note 1.

[125] Suggestive is the entry Ṣafā in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* III, 411–12.

Tertia, in northern Ḥijāz.[126] *Manār* itself could help in the process of identification, since it means lighthouse, which suggests a watchtower or a place for lighting fire as a signal of an imminent attack. So it is likely to be located not in the interior of Oriens but in the eastern part of the *limes.* It is possibly either Kom Manārah in southern Ḥawrān, described as a "solitary watchtower" where a Latin inscription was found,[127] or Dāt Manār where the southern boundary of Palaestina Tertia meets Ḥijāz. The term *Qaṣr* preceding *Manār* also suggests a military establishment. The compound, especially the second element, *Manār,* suggests one aspect of the military duties of the Ghassānids, who watched over the frontier against the attacks of the pastoralists, lighting fires in case of an emergency.

The building activity of ʿAmr ibn-al-Ḥārith apparently ranged far and wide from al-Sadīr in the south to Ṣafāt al-ʿAjalat in the north; this raises the question of whether these structures could have been built by one and the same phylarch/king. This is not impossible to accept since toward A.D. 600 the sources mention two Ghassānid kings ruling as in a "dyarchy" extending from the north, near Mount Hermon, to the confines of Ayla in the south. Alternatively Ḥamza may have attributed to ʿAmr buildings constructed by more than one Ghassānid king.

Al-Nuʿmān ibn ʿAmr

Of this Ghassānid king, Ḥamza says: "and he built Qaṣr al-Suwaydā and Qaṣr Ḥārib."[128]

1. Qaṣr al-Suwaydā. There is no problem of identification in this case; al-Suwaydā, currently the capital of Jabal al-ʿArab, the ancient Ḥawrān, is Dionysias. Like other cities that had been founded before the advent of Alexander and Pompey, it had been a Semitic foundation, which later acquired a Greek name. Ḥawrān was one area where the Ghassānids were settled and is mentioned as such in one of the elegies on the Ghassānid al-Nuʿmān. So it is quite likely that the Ghassānids built there a *qaṣr,* whether a fortress or a palace, either in the town or its environs.

2. Qaṣr Ḥārib. Doubts have been cast on the erection of a structure by the name of Qaṣr Ḥārib when the toponym was discussed in the section on the Ghassānid king Jabala ibn al-Ḥārith.[129]

In the case of this king, al-Nuʿmān ibn-ʿAmr, there is much confusion in Ḥamza's statement. He cites a hemistich from one of the verses of Nābigha, a panegyrist of the Ghassānids,[130] in which this toponym seems to appear, although

[126] For these, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v.

[127] For this "solitary watchtower," transliterated as Kom Il-Manarah, see PPUAES II.A.2 (Leiden, 1907), p. 100, where it is well described.

[128] *Tārīkh,* 79.

[129] Above, 330.

[130] The incomprehensible word *MSR* which precedes the hemistich must surely be *misrāʿ,* hemistich, which indeed follows; *Tārīkh,* 79, line 7. On Nābigha, see above, 228.

the two words Qaṣr and Ḥārib are separated. The truth is that in this famous hemistich the correct reading is not *qaṣr* but *qabr* (grave, tomb), since the poet had spoken of two graves and this was the second one in the enumeration. The reference here to Qaṣr Ḥārib thus duplicates the previous one attributed to Jabala ibn-al-Ḥārith; the *qaṣr* could not have been built by both but must have been built by one of them.

Jabala ibn al-Nuʿmān

Ḥamza speaks of only one toponym in connection with this Ghassānid king, of whom he says: "and his residence was in Ṣiffīn."[131] Ṣiffīn is the well-known place on the Euphrates, between Callinicum and Barbalissus, where the famous battle between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya took place in A.D. 657. Nöldeke thought it hardly probable that a Ghassānid could have resided there.[132] But now this skepticism cannot be accepted, and it seems very likely that a Ghassānid presence can be predicated there. The extension of the authority of the Ghassānids to the Euphrates is now established, a fact unknown to Nöldeke when he wrote his monograph.[133] Most important is the discovery in the sources that the Lakhmids, Persia's *foederati* against whom the Ghassānids were set by Byzantium, were installed by the Persians at a fortress called al-Dawsariyya, exactly opposite where Ṣiffīn was on the Persian side of the Euphrates. The toponym al-Dawsariyya has not survived, but the fortress has, as Qalʿat Jaʿbar, "the Fortress of Jaʿbar," carrying the name of the commander who occupied it in later Islamic times.[134] It is therefore perfectly natural that the Byzantines, who conceived of the Ghassānids as countervailing the Lakhmids, should also have installed their own *foederati* opposite the Lakhmids in order to forestall any surprise attack.[135]

[131] *Tārīkh,* 79.

[132] Nöldeke, *GF,* 52, where his incredulity with regard to Ghassānid residence in Ṣiffīn is related to John of Ephesus' confusing phrase on the camp, the *ḥirthā* of the house of Arethas, which, as has been pointed out, has been misunderstood. On the term "camp," *ḥirthā,* used by John of Ephesus, see above, 5, 10, 14. Curiously enough, Nöldeke ("Topographie," 421 note 1) had entertained a Ghassānid presence in Ṣiffīn and its region and cited it as an episcopal see in Socrates, *HE,* iii.25. Herzfeld, on the other hand, had no difficulty in accepting a Ghassānid presence in Ṣiffīn; "Mshatta," 113, lines 8–9. For Ṣiffīn, see *EI*², s.v.

[133] Attested in the letter of Peter of Callinicum of 587, which mentions the Ghassānid Jafna and his station in Hierapolis; see the present writer in "The Restoration of the Ghassānid Dynasty, A.D. 587: Dionysius of Tellmaḥre," *ARAM* 5 (1993), 491–503; and *BASIC* I.1, 927–35.

[134] On Qalʿat Jaʿbar, see *EI*², s.v. Ḳalʿat Djaʿbar. The name al-Dawsariyya speaks for itself as a resoundingly Lakhmid name. Ḥīra had two divisions at the disposal of its Lakhmid rulers, al-Shahbāʾ and al-Dawsar; perhaps troops from the al-Dawsar division garrisoned the fortress.

[135] The Lakhmid maintenance of a military presence not only in Ḥīra but in those regions of the Euphrates is reflected in the fact that ʿAmr ibn Hind, the son of Mundir, the famous Lakhmid king and adversary of Arethas, son of Jabala, was appointed by his father to be the governor of Baqqa, between al-Anbār and Hīt, and no doubt had another son or general command at al-Dawsariyya. Arethas acted similarly when he appointed his son and future successor, Mundir, to watch the frontier with Persia and the Lakhmids. Both the Lakhmid Mundir and the Ghassānid

Al-Nuʿman ibn al-Ḥārith

Of this Ghassānid, Ḥamza says: "and he repaired the *ṣahārīj* (plural of *ṣihrīj*), reservoirs, of Ruṣāfa after one of the Lakhmid kings had ruined them."[136] In this case there is no problem of identification. Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis is well known, and Nöldeke accepted this *khabar,* or report, as authentic. He went on to conjecture that the reservoirs of Ruṣāfa were damaged by the Lakhmid king during the second Persian War of Justinian's reign during the siege of Ruṣāfa by Chosroes, the Persian king, in 524, and that the Ghassānid who repaired the *ṣahārīj* was possibly al-Ḥārith ibn-Jabala, not al-Nuʿmān. Nöldeke thought that the *ṣahārīj* were built by Justinian and that the Ghassānid repaired aqueducts, not reservoirs.[137]

The association of the Ghassānids with Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis is established firmly and needs no argument. Nöldeke's comments are sound, including possibly even his shift in the translation of *ṣahārīj* from water supply system (*Wasserversorgung*) to aqueducts (*Wasserleitung*). He must have wondered whether *ṣahārīj* could be translated reservoirs, since these were within the walls; the Lakhmids never captured Ruṣāfa and consequently could not have destroyed a water supply system that lay within the town. So he interpreted *ṣahārīj* as aqueducts constructed outside the walls in order to carry water within; these the Lakhmids could have destroyed while attacking the city from without.

The statement in Ḥamza on al-Nuʿmān and the *ṣahārīj* of Ruṣāfa is, of course, the crucial one in his chapter, since (1) it confirms that he was selective in the inclusion and exclusion of material on the Ghassānids, hence his list is far from being complete on the Ghassānid achievement;[138] and (2) it establishes a link between him and Yāqūt in their dependence on a common source for Ghassānid buildings, namely, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* the biggest gain in the study of the sources for Ghassānid history.[139]

Arethas were commanders in chief and so could detail subordinates for certain duties. For ʿAmr at Baqqa, see Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī* (Beirut, 1957), IX, 90, line 13. For Mundir the Ghassānid as watchman over the *limes,* see *BASIC* I.1, 285, 425–27.

This is a new dimension of the Ghassānid-Lakhmid relationship in the military sphere, related to Procopius' well-known statement that the supreme phylarchate of Arethas was created in order to balance that of the Lakhmid Mundir. So the two rival federate groups, one for Persia and the other for Byzantium, faced each other along the Euphrates front; Ṣiffīn and al-Dawsariyya, the two fortresses facing each other, illustrate the point.

[136] *Tārīkh,* 79.

[137] Nöldeke, *GF,* 51. Nöldeke speaks of aqueducts (*Wasserleitung*) built by Justinian, although the term was not used by Procopius. As has been argued, the Ghassānid role in the construction of the water supply system of Ruṣāfa was more extensive than Nöldeke thought and Procopius related; see above, 127–33.

[138] On this, see above, 320–21.

[139] On the identical but fuller statement in Yāqūt involving *al-ṣihrīj al-aʿẓam,* see *Muʿjam,* III, 47. As has been pointed out, Nöldeke missed the fuller statement in Yāqūt, and consequently the source of Ḥamza, which he was anxious to identify (*GF,* 49, 51, 56, 58) remained unknown

Al-Ḥārith ibn Jabala

Ḥamza says that al-Ḥārith "used to reside in al-Jābiya,"[140] a statement that needs no discussion since Jābiya was the capital of the Ghassānids, a fact for which contemporary Arabic poetry vouches as well as Syriac contemporary documents. It is strange that Nöldeke doubted the Ghassānid residence in al-Jābiya.[141] Perhaps he was swayed by a certain train of thought that induced him to express his doubts; he was noting the attempt of historians of the Ghassānids to deduce historical facts from some verses without confirmation from other sources such as the Syriac. These, however, have established the association of the Ghassānids with Jābiya, where their king Mundir had his church dedicated to St. Sergius, in addition to other pieces of evidence. Together with Jalliq, it was one of the two main headquarters of the Ghassānids. According to Ḥamza's list, there were others, such as Ṣiffīn.

Al-Nuʿman ibn al-Ḥārith

Of this al-Nuʿmān, Ḥamza says that "he built *mā ashrafa* on al-Ghawr al-Aqṣā,"[142] a most important statement but one that presents problems.

1. Al-Ghawr al-Aqṣā, literally "the farthest, outermost depression, rift." The most natural interpretation of al-Ghawr is the depression covered by the Jordan River and Wādī ʿAraba, from Mount Hermon to the Gulf of Eilat. Al-Ghawr al-Aqṣā would then be Wādī ʿAraba, as al-Ghawr al-Awsaṭ (the Middle Ghawr) would be the segment extending from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, and al-Ghawr al-Adnā (the Nearest Ghawr) would be the segment from Mount Hermon to the Sea of Galilee.

Such an interpretation of al-Ghawr al-Aqṣā is consonant with the phylarchal jurisdiction of this Ghassānid king, whose tecnonymic is Abū Karib, the only one with that *kunya,* and known as such to both Ḥamza's list and incontestable non-Arabic sources. Ḥamza, who is not always accurate in his attributions, may well be right in the case of this Ghassānid, to whom he assigned the building of the area that is close to or looks down on al-Ghawr al-Aqṣā. His phylarchate indeed was coterminous with Palaestina Tertia within which Wādī ʿAraba falls.

2. *Mā ashrafa,* "that which is close to or looks down on." The relative pronoun *mā,* suggests that this was a line of defense and not a single fortification. The verb *ashrafa* could mean "close to" or "looks down on," referring to a line

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to him. If he had been aware of it, this would have considerably changed his views on Ḥamza and his list.

[140] *Tārīkh,* 80.

[141] *Bedenklich* is his word (*GF,* 52), despite the fact that in his previous article ("Topographie," 430) he accepted it.

[142] *Tārīkh,* 80.

near Wādī ʿAraba; naturally it would look down, in the literal sense, on the *wādī* since the latter is a depression. A Petra papyrus finds Abū Karib in Ṣadaka, one of the military stations in the *Notitia Dignitatum* not far from Wādī ʿAraba.[143] Ḥamza's statement on Abū Karib is of some importance for understanding the defense system of Byzantium in Oriens and the share of the Ghassānids in shouldering it after A.D. 529.

Al-Ayham ibn Jabala

Of this Ghassānid king, Ḥamza says: "and he was the *ṣāḥib,* the lord, of Tadmur (Palmyra) and Qaṣr Birka and Dāt-Anmār."[144]

1. *Ṣāḥib* Tadmur. The problem here is not identification, since Tadmur/Palmyra is a well-known city. It is the meaning in this context of *ṣāḥib,* usually translated as lord or master.[145] Nöldeke thought that the Ghassānid presence in Tadmur was limited to some building activity and not in their having ruled there.[146] However, references in the sources associate the Ghassānids with Palmyra, although not explicitly as rulers.[147] With the considerable extension of Ghassānid power in Oriens and their taking over the military stations of the *Notitia Dignitatum* from the *limitanei,* it is possible that one of the Ghassānids exercised some federate power from Tadmur itself, as Ḥamza or rather his source says, even though he may not have "ruled" there as a federate king/phylarch solely in charge of the defense of the city.

2. Qaṣr Birka. It is not clear from the text whether he built Qaṣr Birka or only resided there. But whatever the exact meaning, Qaṣr Birka remains a place with Ghassānid associations. The question is the whereabouts of Birka.[148] The region has pools and lakes, bodies of water, each of which qualifies as *birka.* A toponym, with the proper noun Burayka (*birka* in the diminutive), located in

[143] On the Petra Papyrus, see above, page 46, note 55. What Abū Karib built near Wādī ʿAraba may turn out to be some sort of internal *limes* for security purposes; on this, see above, 31–32.

[144] *Tārīkh,* 80.

[145] Clearly the correct translation, since *ṣāḥib* also goes with the lesser-known toponyms Birka and Dāt Anmār, where it can only mean "lord" or "master." On the difficulty of translating this term as used in the Arabic sources, see above, 322. Note that it is used by Ḥamza (*Tārīkh,* 79) in connection with Jabala ibn al-Nuʿmān when he was describing his participation in the battle of ʿAyn Ubāgh, at which his adversary, the Lakhmid king Mundir, was killed. In that context, *ṣāḥib* deviates from its natural meaning of either companion or lord/master.

[146] Nöldeke, *GF,* 52 note 1.

[147] In 540, Arethas, the Ghassānid supreme phylarch, was defending the *Strata,* which was north of Palmyra, against the Lakhmid king Mundir, the vassal of Persia. The clear implication is that the Ghassānid was in charge of defending the region of Palmyra. A reference to Palmyra in the two well-known verses in Nābigha's panegyric on a Ghassānid king of ca. A.D. 600 implies that the poet visited his Ghassānid patron in that city. On the *Strata* dispute, see *BASIC* I.1, 209–18; on Nābigha and Tadmur/Palmyra, see above, 229.

[148] Together with Dāt Anmār, it was declared by Nöldeke "unbekannt;" *GF,* 52 note 1.

Ghassānid territory, the Ḥawrān,[149] is possibly the one attributed to al-Ayham by Ḥamza.

3. Ḍāt-Anmār. The problem here is that of identification. Anmar's root N-M-R means "sweet, abundant drinkable water";[150] hence in an arid area such as the limitrophe, the proliferation of sites with names that derive from the root NMR in one form or another, the most famous of which is the Namāra in al-Ṣafā where the famous inscription of Imru' al-Qays was found. Toponyms derivative from this root are many[151] in Ḥawrān, Bathaniyya, and the Golan, one of which, Namir/Nimre, appears in the list of Monophysite monasteries[152] patronized by the Ghassānids. It is therefore not impossible that Dāt-Anmār in Ḥamza is the one mentioned in the Syriac source, in spite of the different morphological pattern that the name of this monastery presents.

II. Yāqūt

Next to Ḥamza, Yāqūt is the thirteenth-century author whose work provides the most information on Ghassānid structures and settlements. He is the distinguished author of the *Geographical Dictionary, Muʿjam al-Buldān,* which has been recognized as a major Arabic source and the most important of its kind.[153] This discriminating scholar drew on the best of authorities, whom he enumerates and discusses in his introduction. His passion for precision caused him to write a smaller work, *al-Mushtarik,*[154] in which he discussed homophonous place names in order to guide the reader and put him on his guard against mistakes in identifying toponyms that sound alike. Yāqūt includes material not mentioned by Ḥamza; especially important is his reference to his source and the bearing of this

[149] For Burayka in Ḥawrān, see F. Villeneuve, "L'économie rurale et la vie des campagnes dans le Hauran antique," in *Ḥauran,* I (Paris, 1985), 96, 99, 117, s.v. Breikeh. If *birka* in Qaṣr Birka has not lost its natural meaning of pool, the beautiful body of water in the Golan, Lake Ram, known to Josephus as Lake Phiale, could also be where the Ghassānid al-Ayham built his *Qaṣr,* which, too, may mean either castle or palace, in this case, probably the latter because of its association with a pool. Another pool, called al-Ghadīr, lies "in the bed of the ʿAllan (affluent of the Yarmūk) near Beit Akkār"; for these two pools, see G. Schumacher, *Across the Jordan* (London, 1886), 110–13, 73–74.

[150] The Arabic word for tiger, *namir,* is a nonsynonymous homophonous root. Dāt Anmār could mean literally "that of the tigers" and could suggest a place where wildcats roamed or prowled. The fact that Anmār is in the morphological pattern of the plural could suggest that its root is more allied to "tiger" than "water," but the pattern of forming "broken" plurals in Arabic is unpredictable and Anmār could equally well mean "a collection of bodies of water."

[151] See *EI*², VII, 944–47, s.v. Namāra.

[152] See Nöldeke, "Topographie," 437, where he reads the Syriac term, either Namir or Nimre.

[153] The standard edition of Yāqūt's *Muʿjam* is still the 19th-century *Jacūt's geographisches Wörterbuch* of F. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig, 1866–73), in six volumes, of which volume 5 is devoted to the variant readings of the text, while the sixth is a *Register* in three parts, for places, tribes, and persons (hereafter *Muʿjam*). A later edition of *Muʿjam* (Beirut, 1957), without variant readings or indices, is in five volumes. For Yāqūt, see *EI,* s.v. Yāqūt al-Rūmī.

[154] Also edited and published by F. Wüstenfeld, *Jacūt's Muschtarik* (Göttingen, 1846).

on Ḥamza's work; so the two authors complement each other. This section discusses the many aspects of Yāqūt's importance for the history of the Ghassānids: his sources for them; the relation of Yāqūt to Ḥamza; the material he provides on them; and, finally, Yāqūt's main source on the Ghassānids, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.*

Yāqūt's Sources

Yāqūt himself prefaced his *Muʿjam* with an account of the sources he used for writing his work. These have been examined closely and competently in a work that appeared a century ago but is still standard and fundamental as it provides a background for discussing Yāqūt's sources on the Ghassānids.[155]

Since the Ghassānids wandered in Arabia before reaching the Roman *limes* in the fifth century, and since Yāqūt's general dictionary of places included Arabia, the author consulted among other writers those of South Arabia, who had a natural interest in the Ghassānids as a South Arabian group that had emigrated from that region. One such writer was Ibn Hishām, known as the author of the famous *Sīra,* a biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, which Yāqūt used as well as another of his books, *Kitāb al-Tījān.* Another of his main sources was the north Arabian Hishām al-Kalbī; Yāqūt draws on four of his books, sometimes without specifying to which work of that polymath he was referring. He also drew on the works of al-Aṣmaʿī and al-Ḥāzimī, ninth- and twelfth-century authors, respectively.[156]

His main source, however, for the Ghassānids was undoubtedly the work titled *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān;* unfortunately he does not give the name of the author, the presumption being that the book was well known. The solitary reference to this work occurs in his entry on Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis, with a verbatim quotation: "And I have found in *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān:* 'then al-Nuʿmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn al-Ayham reigned, and it was he who repaired the *ṣahārīj* (the reservoirs) of al-Ruṣāfa and constructed its greatest/biggest (al-Aʿẓam) reservoir.'"[157]

The detailed and extensive coverage of Ghassānid settlements and toponyms in Yāqūt points to some such source devoted exclusively to the Ghassānids as the title of this book suggests. Another indication that *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* was Yāqūt's main source on the Ghassānids is that he includes in his entry on place names historical materials that qualify as *khabar*s. This immediately relates his coverage to the title of the book, which was not primarily a book on structures and toponyms but a chronicle of *akhbār,* reports, information, almost the *res gestae*

[155] F. Justus Heer, *Die historischen und geographischen Quellen in Jaqūt's Geographischem Wörterbuch* (Strassburg, 1898).

[156] For Yāqūt's dependence on these four authors, see ibid., 4–5, 6–9, 26 respectively. On these four authors, see *EI*², s.v. Ibn Hishām's *Sīra* derives from the earlier and fuller work of Ibn Isḥāq as does *Kitāb al-Tījān* from the earlier work of Wahb ibn-Minabbih. Yāqūt's dependence on these four authors may be illustrated by his entries on places associated with the Ghassānids such as Maʾrib, Ghassān, al-Zawrāʾ and al-Marrūt.

[157] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. Ruṣafat Hishām.

of the Ghassānid kings.[158] That the material on the Ghassānids in Yāqūt can thus be related to a specialized book on the Ghassānids endows this material with a high degree of authenticity, since its provenance is thus a book specially written on the Ghassānids and not incidental references to them deriving from miscellaneous sources of doubtful or unequal value. The quotation cited verbatim enables us to return to Ḥamza, the other major source on Ghassānid structures and settlements, and solves the problem of his source for the impressive array of settlements and structures that his *Tārīkh* has preserved, which was a puzzle to Nöldeke.[159] The anonymity that plagued Ḥamza's account concerning his source and its author had disinclined Nöldeke to entertain seriously Ḥamza's account of Ghassānid structures. But he raised the right question when curiosity about the list of structures made him long to know Ḥamza's source, a desire that now may be said to be consummated by Yāqūt.

It is strange that Nöldeke should have missed this reference to *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* despite the fact that years before he wrote his monograph on the Ghassānids, he referred to Yāqūt's entry on Ruṣāfa in his *Topographie.*[160] Even stranger is the fact that his own student, J. Heer,[161] who made a very thorough study of the sources of Yāqūt, also missed this one. It was left to an art historian/archaeologist, Ernst Herzfeld,[162] to notice it briefly in a footnote and conclude that *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* was also the source of Ḥamza's chapter on the Ghassānids.

Yāqūt and Ḥamza

That *Akhbār* was also the main source of Ḥamza may be argued from an examination of the crucial statement on the reservoirs of Ruṣāfa quoted from *Akhbār* by Yāqūt. The statement, almost word for word, is the same as in Ḥamza with the exception that Ḥamza adds "and one of the kings of Lakhm had destroyed them," which Yāqūt omits but adds "it was he who built the greatest/biggest reservoir." Moreover, both authors have the opening word *thumma,* "then," which suggests a chronicle such as *Akhbār* probably was. Furthermore, the reference to some of the kings of Ghassān as al-Akbar and al-Asg̲har also suggests that the two authors derived from the same source, that is, a chronicle that had recorded the *res gestae* of the entire dynasty. As the same names recur, assumed by different kings,

[158] Such as the *khabar* on the Ṭā'ī, Zāmil, and al-Ḥārith, the Ghassānid king, in the entry "Sha'm," in Yāqūt.

[159] Nöldeke, *GF,* 56, lines 18–19.

[160] Nöldeke, "Topographie," 421 note 1.

[161] Heer, in his *Lebenslauf,* says he studied for one semester at Strassburg with Nöldeke; Heer, *Quellen,* 113.

[162] See F. Sarre and E. Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat und Tigris Gebiet,* I (Berlin, 1911), 138 note 5, continued on 139.

the author of the chronicle found it necessary to say that one Ghassānid king was al-Akbar to distinguish him from al-Asghar, another who was his namesake.[163]

Although both Yāqūt and Ḥamza used the same source, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* for writing on the Ghassānids and had much in common, they wrote from different perspectives. The works of both dealt with universal themes: Yāqūt wrote a geographical dictionary mainly of the world of Islam and the East, whereas Ḥamza wrote a general chronography of the dynasties of the world. For this reason, they had to be severely selective of what they had found in *Akhbār* and the other sources on Ghassān, as Yāqūt expressly says in his entry on the monasteries, al-Adyār.[164] So, much material on the Ghassānids that was to be found in *Akhbār* has thus been lost irretrievably. Furthermore, neither author had a special interest in the Arab Christian Ghassānids, as can be understood from their respective backgrounds. Ḥamza was a Persian and a Muslim of the Shī ʿite persuasion, while Yāqūt was a *Rhomaios* (he was called al-Rūmī) who became an enthusiastic convert to Islam. The Ghassānids were Arab and Christian, and neither affiliation made their history of special interest to the two authors. In spite of this lack of enthusiasm and their consequent selectiveness, they have preserved much on the Ghassānids that reflected their importance in Byzantine Oriens.

Ḥamza merely names Ghassānid structures and toponyms with only rare explanations of their location, whereas Yāqūt gives precision to Ghassānid places and structures. Ḥamza is more interested in Ghassānid structures, and Yāqūt is more interested in their villages and towns. Furthermore, Ḥamza limits himself to naming structures, but Yāqūt goes out of his way to add some historical information on the Ghassānids. So the two different frames of reference explain some of the differences in each of their accounts of the Ghassānids.

While Ḥamza limits himself to Ghassānid places in Bilād al-Shām, Yāqūt labors under no such restrictions. Consequently, he refers to places associated with the Ghassānids in the Arabian Peninsula, important for understanding the Arabian policy of the Ghassānids and their relations with the peninsular pastoralists. In this way Yāqūt provides information on toponyms not mentioned by Ḥamza in Bilād al-Shām as well as in the Arabian Peninsula, and thus reflects more adequately the immense area of the Ghassānid presence in both Oriens and north Arabia.

[163] For Yāqūt's employment of the term al-Asghar and al-Akbar, as applied to the Ghassānid kings al-Nuʿmān and Arethas respectively, see the entries in his *Muʿjam* on "Uqur" and "Ḥalīma," also the entry "Sha'm" for al-Akbar. The two terms al-Akbar and al-Asghar are also used in Ḥamza and are applied to two Ghassānid kings, each of whom was the namesake of the other—al-Mundir; *Tārīkh,* 78, lines 4, 8. Another point of similarity between the *Muʿjam* of Yāqūt and the *Tārīkh* of Ḥamza in their accounts of the Ghassānids is the regular employment of the term *thumma* ("then") before the reigns of each king in Ḥamza's *Tārīkh,* the same *thumma* that appears in Yāqūt's account of al-Nuʿmān, the one associated with the reservoirs of Ruṣāfa.

[164] See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. Dayr.

Finally, it may be pointed out that Yāqūt does not depend on Ḥamza for his account of Ghassānid structures and towns, since he could go back to the source whence both derived their accounts.[165] But Yāqūt does depend on Ḥamza in his account of Iṣfahān, whose history Ḥamza wrote (he was a native of that Persian city), and also in philological matters, where he could benefit from Ḥamza's knowledge of Persian.[166]

Despite the difference in perspective that influenced Yāqūt and Ḥamza in their accounts of the Ghassānids, the two authors and their works are in complementary relationship to each other and together give the best account of Ghassānid structures and federate sites. Yāqūt is more comprehensive in his coverage since his account encompasses the Ghassānid presence in both the Arabian peninsula and Bilād al-Shām and provides unique information on certain federate sites and protected areas (*aḥmā'*) in Arabia. Most importantly, Yāqūt's reference to *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* not only enhances the reliability of his own account of the Ghassānids as deriving from a specialized primary work, but also throws a flood of light on Ḥamza's valuable chapter on the Ghassānids. Without Yāqūt's reference to *Akhbār,* Ḥamza's chapter would have remained under a cloud, as in fact it had been from the time Nöldeke wrote his monograph until Herzfeld noticed it some forty years later and rescued it from obscurity. With Ḥamza's source identified, the provenance of his chapter on the Ghassānids, a more specialized account than Yāqūt's and limited to the Ghassānid presence in Bilād al-Shām, becomes clear.

Now that the various dimensions of Yāqūt's coverage of the Ghassānid presence in Oriens and the Arabian Peninsula have been explored, a final word may be said on the value of Yāqūt as a historical source in the comparatist context. Although his *Muʿjam* is a geographical dictionary, Yāqūt's value as a historical source has been recognized. Scholars have understood his contribution to the history of early Russian and Slavic history, that of Sicily, Persia, India, China, the Crusades, and sub-Saharan Africa,[167] as well as various aspects of pre-Islamic Arabian history. Now the *Muʿjam* has been shown to be a substantial contributor to the history of yet another group, the Ghassānids.

Ghassānid Toponymy in Yāqūt

Ghassānid toponymy is well represented in Yāqūt, but it is scattered in various parts of the *Muʿjam* since it is a dictionary arranged alphabetically, unlike

[165] Except apparently once, as already pointed out by Heer, when Yāqūt discusses "Sindād"; see Yāqūt, s.v.

[166] On this, see Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 337. Ḥamza wrote a book *Kitāb al-Taṣḥīf wa al-Taḥrīf,* a contribution to precision in the etymology of words and toponyms of Persian origin that have passed into Arabic and were given sometimes folkloristic etymologies in the Arabic sources. Ḥamza wanted to correct all this, and Yāqūt understood his value in this respect.

[167] See W. Juwaideh, *The Introductory Chapters of Yāqūt's Muʿjam al-Buldān* (Leiden, 1959), x–xi.

Ḥamza's *Tārīkh,* which gathers together all reference to the Ghassānids in one chapter. As Yāqūt's data on the Ghassānids are drawn upon continually in this volume, it will suffice here to indicate the various categories of places included in the *Muʿjam* that are associated with the Ghassānids in order to show the extent of his contribution to a better understanding of Ghassānid history. These categories are: (1) regions in Oriens in which the Ghassānids settled or with which they were associated, although that association is not sometimes explicitly stated, that is, Ḥawrān/Auranitis, al-Ṣafā, al-Bathaniyya/Batanaea, al-Jawlān/Gaulanitis, al-Balqāʾ, al-Sharāt, and Ḥismā; (2) towns like al-Jābiya and Jalliq that were "capitals" of the Ghassānids and larger than the many villages with which they were associated; (3) villages such as al-Marrūt and ʿAqrabāʾ and others that are not explicitly associated with the Ghassānids in Yāqūt but indeed were, a fact known from other sources, that is, Ḥuwwārīn, Dārayyā, Maʾāb, Zughar, Gharandal, and Dūma; (4) monasteries such as Dayr Hind, in the region of Damascus, although Yāqūt does not go out of his way to indicate its Ghassānid character; (5) battlefields famous in the Ghassānid-Lakhmid conflict, such as Ḥalīma, ʿAyn Ubāgh, and al-Ḥiyār; and (6) *aḥmā*ʾ (plural of *ḥimā*), protected places with water and pastureland, in north Arabia such as Uqur, and Abraq al-Naʿʿār, which it shared with Ṭayyiʾ.

III. Three Arabic Sources

The three authors discussed in this section lived centuries apart and in various parts of the Muslim world, as distant as Iran was from Andalusia. But they are gathered together here because of their importance to Ghassānid toponymy and structures.

Al-Yaʿqūbī

Ghassānid toponymy receives mention in the works of the ninth-century historian and geographer Yaʿqūbī in his historical work *Tārīkh* and the geographical *Kitāb al-Buldān,* "The Book of Countries."

Tārīkh

In this historical work, three toponyms are of importance, one of which, Al-Mukhaffaf, has not been identified.[168] This place where the Ghassānids fought the Salīḥids after their first military encounter at Bostra has so far defied identification. Furthermore, Mukhaffaf admits of more than one reading, depending on

[168] For al-Mukhaffaf, see *Tārīkh,* I, 207. On Ghassānid-Salīḥid relations at this stage, see the present writer in "The Last Days of Salīḥ," *Arabica* 5 (1958), 45–158. The edition of *Tārīkh* used in this chapter is that published by Dār Ṣādir in Beirut (n.d.). It was originally edited by M. T. Houtsma and published by Brill in 1884.

where the diacritical marks are placed; Al-Muḥaffaf is one other possible reading of this toponym.

Damascus is presented as the seat of Jabala, the last Ghassānid king. Ghassānid association with cities rather than villages in Oriens has been doubted by scholars. But in the case of the later Ghassānid kings and especially Jabala, who played an important role in the last days of Byzantium in Oriens, it is not altogether incredible that he established some presence in cities, such as Damascus and Bostra.[169]

The third toponym is Dūmat al-Jandal, the strategic fortress at the southern end of Wādī Sirḥān. Yaʿqūbī associated the Ghassānids with it together with the federate tribal group Kalb in connection with the famous fair (*sūq*) at Dūmat.[170]

Kitāb al-Buldān

In this work, Yaʿqūbī states that the Ghassānids settled in the Ghūṭa of Damascus and in ʿArandal in Trans-Jordan, east of Wādī ʿAraba. Al-Ghūṭa, the region around Damascus (Damascene), as a place of Ghassānid presence and settlement is consonant with that presence as reflected in the poetry of Ḥassān and specified in a number of localities around Damascus. It is also consonant with Yaʿqūbī's reference in *Tārīkh* to the Ghassānid presence in Damascus itself.[171] More valuable is his reference to al-Jibāl (the Gabelene of Eusebius, the region east of the Dead Sea) and to its main city, ʿArandal, which he says was settled in the ninth century by Ghassān and the tribal group Balqayn.[172]

Yaʿqūbī collected material for his *Kitāb al-Buldān* partly from conversations with travelers; on his way to Egypt, he might even have passed through al-Jibāl and visited the Ghassānids in ʿArandal. If so, his report would be the result of autopsy. His remarks on ʿArandal and Ghassān are consistent with what the pre-Islamic poet Ḥātim says on the Ghassānids whom he visited around A.D. 600, and who, he says, lived in the area from Moab to Soghar.[173] This is very close to ʿArandal in Jibāl where the Ghassānids of the ninth century lived, and could even suggest that ʿArandal was probably one of their towns even in pre-Islamic times when Ḥātim visited them. Alternatively, they might have emigrated to it after the Muslim conquest. This raises the question of the name itself, ʿArandal, the namesake of the Arandal of the *Notitia Dignitatum* located in Wādī ʿAraba, one of the Byzan-

[169] On Damascus as the seat of Jabala, see *Tārīkh,* I, 207. For Arab federate association with Damascus and Bostra, see the references in the poets ʿAmr ibn-Kulthūm and al-Mutalammis, above, 266–67, 269–70.

[170] *Tārīkh,* I, 270.

[171] For Ghassān in al-Ghūṭa, see *Kitāb al-Buldān,* BGA 7, ed. M. J. de Goeje, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1967), 326.

[172] Ibid.

[173] On Ḥātim in Ghassānland, see above, 246–59.

tine military stations.[174] Was this military station garrisoned by the Ghassānids after they started taking over from the *limitanei*? It is a possibility; at some later date, they moved from the Wādī ʿAraba location to this one, to the northeast, and called it by the name of the former one in Wādī ʿAraba. There are analogous cases in this very same area of Ghassānid toponyms that are namesakes of others that the Ghassānids had occupied before they moved to the new locations.[175]

Al-Bakrī

Like Yāqūt, the eleventh-century Andalusian geographer Bakrī had apparently no special interest in the Ghassānids. However, his equally famous *Geographical Dictionary* has five important references to the Ghassānids and their toponymy.[176] (1) Bakrī gives valuable information on the retreat of Jabala, the last Ghassānid king, to Anatolia, together with many Christian Arabs. He says that they settled in a city that until his time had Arab inhabitants and was called the "City of the Arabs," Madīnat al-ʿArab. It has been argued that this was Arabissos.[177] (2) Ḥismā: this rugged and mountainous region of southern Trans-Jordan and northern Ḥijāz is well described in two verses, important for understanding one of the campaigns of the Ghassānid king in this region.[178] One verse refers to two *dayrs,* monasteries, in Ḥismā: Dayr Ḥismā and Dayr Ḍamḍam. The first is clearly in Ḥismā, and the other is likely to have been near it.[179] (3) Al Kharbā: although it is mentioned by Yāqūt, Bakrī adds some data that relate to the Ghassānids.[180] (4) Kullān: Bakrī cites a verse involving this name, which refers to a Ghassānid mounted party whose clothes are white. Whether the toponym was Ghassānid or associated with them is not clear, nor is its location known.[181]

[174] If this turns out to be correct, ʿArandal (Arindela in the *ND*) will be one more station added to others that the Ghassānids took over from the *limitanei.* Nowadays it is pronounced Gharandal, not ʿArandal as in Yaʿqūbī and in Balādurī, who says ʿArandal capitulated peacefully to Yazīd ibn-abī-Sufyān; see Balādurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān,* ed. S. Munajjid (Cairo, 1956–57), 150.

[175] Such as Sakkā and al-Ḥuwayya; these toponyms, found in the *Dīwān* of Ḥassān and associated with the Ghassānids in the region of Damascus, still exist in southern Trans-Jordan. Since they are very rare names, the natural presumption is that their appearance in the toponymy of southern Trans-Jordan is not to be explained by accidental homonymity but by a relation to a Ghassānid provenience, just as the Ghassānids, after they emigrated to Andalusia in Muslim times, called one of their settlements Ghassān.

There were road signs pointing to Sakkā and al-Ḥuwayya when I visited the region east of Wādī ʿAraba and the Dead Sea in April 1994.

[176] *Muʿjam mā Istaʿjam,* ed. M. al-Saqqā, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1945–51).

[177] Ibid., I, 75. On Arabissos, see *BAFIC,* 327–28 and *BASIC,* 610–11.

[178] *Muʿjam,* II, 446–48; on this campaign, see above, 224.

[179] For the two *dayrs,* see the section on monasteries, above, 192–93. Bakrī was rather confused on the location of Dayr Ḥismā.

[180] See *Muʿjam,* II, 490. Something is missing in the entry in Yāqūt (*Muʿjam,* II, 355) but is supplied by Bakrī, namely, why Ghassān killed al-Ḥārith ibn-Ẓālim. The toponym is vocalized al-Kharabat in Yāqūt.

[181] Ibid., IV, 1133–34. The clothes of the Ghassānid party were probably of linen.

(5) Maqad/Maqadd: a village known for its good wines, especially appreciated by the kings of Ghassān.[182]

Al-ʿUmarī

The fourteenth-century author al-ʿUmarī has two important references to Ghassānid toponyms, one of which appears nowhere else in the Arabic sources: Qunayyat al-Sallār.[183] He places this first toponym in the region of the Yarmūk, but without stating its precise location.[184] ʿUmarī says that he entered a mosque in Qunayyat al-Sallār, which in ancient times was settled by Ghassān, then by a group called Āl-Yasār, and finally by Banū (Sons) al-Sallār, who were "noble princes" and "distinguished lords." He saw on the walls of the mosque some verses that fondly remembered Banū al-Sallār and their activity as builders, to which he added some verses of his own, in which he commemorated the three groups that had settled in Qunayyat al-Sallār: the Ghassānids, then Āl-Yasār, and finally Banū al-Sallār.

ʿUmarī's account calls for the following observations. As for the name Qunayyat al-Sallār, the first term is the diminutive of *qanāt* (canal), not inappropriate for this place, situated near the Yarmūk, associated with the Ghassānids, known for their interest in water conservation.[185] The second term is not Arabic but suggests Persian *sālār,* meaning "chief," "leader." It is tempting to think that these Banū al-Sallār were Persians who occupied this Ghassānid village or town during the Persian offensive against Oriens in A.D. 614, which was luckily recorded by the contemporary poet Ḥassān. The Persian word *sālār* appears in such compounds as *sepahsālār,* or *sālār-i-laskhar,* "army commander."[186] A verse of Ḥassān mentions the Persian army commander who devastated Ghassānland during the offensive of A.D. 614.[187] He would have been referred to in Arabic as *the* commander, *al-Sālār,* with the Arabic definite article prefixed to the Persian term. If

[182] Ibid., 1250. From Bakrī's statement, the Ghassānids appear as connoisseurs of wine. Yāqūt (*Muʿjam,* s.v.) is more expansive on Maqad and its wines in the Umayyad period. His authorities locate it sometimes near Ḥims (Emesa) and sometimes near Aḏriʿāt, but the latter view is more likely. The toponym appears in 1 Maccabees 5:26, 36; see Dussaud, *Topographie,* 336–37; and Abel, *Géographie,* II, 10–11. The latter has identified it with Tall Miqdād, 11 km north of Shaykh Miskīn.

[183] In his *Masālik al-Abṣār,* ed. A. Zaki Pasha, I (Cairo, 1924). For a good critical appreciation of the work, see Ḥ. al-Zayyāt, "Adyār Dimashq wa Barrihā," *al-Machriq* 42 (1948), 294–316.

[184] See his *Masālik al-Abṣār,* I, 251–52.

[185] On the Ghassānids and hydrography, see above, 15–20.

[186] Persian military terms passed into pre-Islamic Arabic such as *sepahbād,* which appears as *ṣabahbad,* especially among members of the tribe of Tamīm in northeastern Arabia. One of these Arab chiefs who had that title was none other than the Aspebetos of Cyril of Scythopolis, who became the bishop of the Parembole in 5th-century Palestine; see *BAFIC,* 40–49.

[187] On this, see above, 242. The term used there was *biṭrīq* (*patricius*), which the Arabs used indiscriminately and not only for Byzantine personages.

so, this may be one of the traces of the Persian conquest and occupation of Bilād al-Shām during the reign of Heraclius, which is retrievable from the later Islamic sources on Bilād al-Shām.

The mosque (*masjid*) that ʿUmarī saw and commemorated in verses has vanished. Thus it is not possible to know whether it was built on some Ghassānid structure such as a church or monastery, which happened often in this region where Islam superseded Christianity.[188] As for its location, ʿUmarī states that Qunayyat is in the region of the Yarmūk, which has two localities called Qunayyat. One lies between Ṣanamein and Maḥajja; the other is northeast of Aḏriʿāt/Derʿa. Both are close to the Yarmūk (river and affluent), but the latter is closer to the main course of the river and is more likely to be the one referred to by ʿUmarī.[189]

Dayr al-Khammān

Perhaps even more important is the second toponym, Dayr al-Khammān. ʿUmarī describes it as follows: "It is a monastery in the region of Aḏriʿāt, built of black stones, on an eminence or hill, and it overlooks the Fawwār pool. It is an ancient Rhomaic (Rūmī) building." He goes on to say that he visited it many times and once saw a young man going out of its church.[190]

Although ʿUmarī says nothing about its Ghassānid connection, the *dayr* was associated with them, as we learn from their court poet Ḥassān, who lists in his poetry the places associated with his patrons, the Ghassānids. He mentions al-Khammān twice without indicating what al-Khammān was.[191] Because ʿUmarī provides the information that al-Khammān was a *dayr,* Ḥassān may have stayed overnight at the monastery there on his way to his patrons in Jābiya or Jalliq, since monasteries served as hostels for travelers.

ʿUmarī describes the color of the stone of which it was built, black basalt,

[188] Such as the Umayyad mosque of Damascus, formerly the cathedral of St. John the Baptist.

[189] For the two Qunayyats, see Dussaud, *Topographie,* map II, A1 and A2 (Qouneye). I visited both in June 1994. The name Qunayyat and the Ghassānid presence in it noted by ʿUmarī both suggest a return to the list of 137 Monophysite monasteries in the letter of the archimandrites of A.D. 570. One of the monasteries in that list was located in a place that had the same name, Syriac Qounīta. Nöldeke ("Topographie," 432) recognized Syriac Qounīta as Arabic Qunayyat but suggested it was the Qunayyat that lay between Ṣanamain and Maḥagga because the presbyter of Maḥagga signed for that of Qounīta in the 137 subscriptions of the archimandrites. Qunayyat near the Yarmūk is further from Maḥagga than the other Qunayyat, and if proximity is the decisive factor in the identification, then Nöldeke's argument is the plausible one, but it does not have to be so. The presbyter of Maḥagga could have signed for that of Qunayyat near the Yarmūk. If the Qounīta of the list of 137 monasteries turns out to be the Qunayyat mentioned by ʿUmarī with its Ghassānid presence, then Qounīta may be added to the monasteries in that list associated with the Ghassānids; for these, see *BASIC* I.2, 825–35.

[190] *Masālik,* 384–85. For the church in the monastery, he uses the word *bīʿa,* the Syriac term usually used for churches in the Arabic of this period.

[191] See above, 233, 235, 244.

typical of the region; he adds that it was built on top of a hill that still exists, known as Tall al-Khammān, the hill of Khammān. He further indicates that the pool of Fawwār (*birkat al-Fawwār*) was visible from the *dayr.* All this is consistent with what the Arab authors say about the Christian monasteries and churches that the three royal houses of Lakhm in Ḥīra, Ghassān in Jābiya, and Balḥārith in Najrān had built in attractive surroundings. ʿUmarī noted the antiquity of the *dayr* and rightly dated it to the Byzantine period. His report on its church and the young man that he saw going out of it indicates that the *dayr* was still functioning in the fourteenth century as a center of Christian worship.

IV. Late Arabic Sources

References to Ghassānid structures and towns appear sporadically in later Arabic sources, but three may be singled out, all secondary and derivative ultimately from Ḥamza's account. But some of the data they provide is of relevance to Ḥamza's list of kings and buildings.

Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī

The earliest of these late writers is the Andalusian Ibn Saʿīd (1213/4–1286/7), who has a chapter on the Ghassānids in his history of the pre-Islamic Arabs, *Nashwat al-Ṭarab.*[192] In his account of al-Ayham ibn-Jabala he states that he was behind the war that broke out between the two tribal groups, al-Qayn ibn-Jasr and ʿĀmila.[193] This confirms the emendation of the text of Ḥamza initiated by Nöldeke, then revised and refined by the present writer.

Ibn Saʿīd speaks of the Ghassānids' renewal of Jalliq after it had declined and lay in ruins, which supports the view that even before the Ghassānids became its masters, it had been associated with the previous *foederati* of Byzantium in the fifth century, the Salīḥids.[194] He is informative on the toponym Barīṣ, which appears in the poetry of Ḥassān on the Ghassānids, saying that it is a village in Wādī al-Shaqrāʾ, outside Damascus.[195] Although what he says on Jafna, the Ghassānid king

[192] For Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī, see Muḥammad A. Ḥasan, *Ibn Saʿīd al-Maghribī* (Cairo, 1969); and the entry in *EI*[2], s.v. Ibn Saʿīd al-Maghribī. For his book *Nashwat al-Ṭarab,* see Naṣrat ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, *Nashwat al-Ṭarab fi Jāhiliyyat al-ʿArab,* 2 vols. (Amman, 1982) (hereafter *Nashwat*). It had been edited partially by Manfred Kropp, who did the part on the South Arabian "al-ʿArab al-ʿĀriba" as a doctoral dissertation, published later as *Die Geschichte der "reinen Araber" vom Stamme Qaḥṭān aus dem Kitāb Našwat al-Ṭarab fī Tārīḫ Ǧahiliyyat al-ʿArab des Ibn-Saʿīd al-Magribī* (Frankfurt am Main-Bern-New York, 1982). I should like to thank Dr. Kropp for sending me a copy of his Heidelberg dissertation of 1975.

[193] *Nashwat,* I, 204; see above, 216–17; Kropp, *Geschichte,* 149.

[194] *Nashwat,* 207; Kropp, *Geschichte,* 150. On the association of Salīḥ with Jalliq, see above, 106–7.

[195] *Nashwat,* 208; Kropp, *Geschichte,* 150.

in Ḥassān's triplet, which he quotes, cannot be verified, his localization of al-Barīṣ may be correct, since he was probably speaking from autopsy.[196]

Ibn Saʿīd traveled to the Muslim Orient from Andalusia and stayed for a while in Bilād al-Shām close to its Ayyūbid ruler of Aleppo, al-Nāṣir. His interest in the Ghassānids must have been aroused by his friendship with a Ghassānid in Andalusia who converted to Islam and became the *qādī* (judge) of Malaga, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAskar al-Ghassāni. When the *qāḍī* heard that Ibn Saʿīd was on his way to the Muslim Orient, he asked him to recite a poem of his at the tomb of the Prophet Muḥammad in Medina.[197] So he may have inquired of some Ghassānids who stayed on in Bilād al-Shām about Ghassānid places he had read about in his sources, in much the same way that he made inquiries of some Bakris about Diyār Bakr in the Jazīra (the Euphrates in Mesopotamia) when he visited it.[198]

Finally, while speaking of the last Ghassānid king in the service of Byzantium, Jabala, he says that one of the kings of al-Andalus, al-Barjalūnī, was one of his descendants.[199] Ibn Saʿīd's statement has to be taken seriously since he came from Andalusia. It is striking that he refers to al-Barjalūnī as one of the *Christian* kings of Andalusia. If true, it will remain a curiosity how one of the descendants of Jabala found his way to Andalusia after being thoroughly Byzantinized in Anatolia whither the Ghassānids had emigrated after the battle of Yarmūk.

Abū al-Fidā'

Abū al-Fidā' (1273–1331) mentions Ghassānid toponyms and structures at length in his *Universal History,* which covered the pre-Islamic period and depended mainly on Ibn al-Athīr.[200] He was an Ayyūbid/Syrian prince who was a geographer, historian, and man of letters, and thus had a natural interest in Bilād al-Shām and the Ghassānids. In his history *Mukẖtaṣar Akẖbār al-Baṣẖar,* he practically reproduces Ḥamza.[201] Nevertheless, he has one valuable statement in his account of the Ghassānid king al-Ayham ibn Jabala, otherwise a confused report.[202] He says that "he built in the wilderness a great *qaṣr* (palace or fortress), and I think it is Qaṣr Burquʿ." The interest of the statement derives from the fact that Qaṣr

[196] On autopsy as one of the methods of Ibn Saʿīd in writing his works, see Ḥasan, *Ibn Saʿīd,* 121–28.

[197] *Nasẖwat,* 8.

[198] *Nasẖwat,* 10; Kropp, *Geschichte,* 150.

[199] Ibid., 207; Kropp, *Geschichte,* 150.

[200] For Abū al-Fidā', see the entry by H. A. R. Gibb in *EI*², s.v.

[201] The relevant pre-Islamic part of his *History* was edited with a Latin translation and notes by H. Fleischer, *Abul Fedae Historia Anteislamica* (Leipzig, 1831); for the chapter on Ghassān, see pp. 128–30.

[202] Ibid., 130, lines 2–3. The confusion in the statement relates to the reading of ʿĀmila, the name of the tribal group, as a common noun, *ʿāmil,* which thus deprives the statement of its value for tribal politics within the Ghassānid phylarchate.

Burquʿ, which still stands in Jordan and has been associated with the Ghassānids, was known as such in the fourteenth century. Abū al-Fidāʾ was also interested in geography, on which he wrote his *Taqwīm al-Buldān.* He knew Bilād al-Shām well since he belonged to it and was invested by the Mamlūk ruler of Egypt with the sultanate over Syria. His reference to Burquʿ, one of the *quṣūr* of Syria, could suggest personal knowledge of the *qaṣr* and the possibility that in the fourteenth century the *qaṣr* was still functional as a military post and not just a ruin.

Ibn Khaldūn

Ibn Khaldūn, the philosopher-historian of the Arabs, also has a chapter on the Ghassānids in his *Tārīkh,* in which he enumerates his sources, such as Hishām al-Kalbī, al-Masʿūdī, al-Jurjānī, and Ibn Saʿīd.[203] His account is thus entirely derivative but noteworthy for the following points. On the reign of al-Ayham ibn Jabala, he confirms the emended text of Ḥamza, as Ibn Saʿ īd had done before.[204] In the paragraph on Jabala, the last Ghassānid king in the service of Byzantium, he gives the year of his death as the twentieth of the Hijrī Islamic era, which corresponds to A.D. 640/641, the year of the death of Heraclius, which sounds right.[205] Ibn Khaldūn also confirms that the Ghassānid ruling house was not limited only to one branch, the Jafnids, "the sons of Jafna," and cites the case of al-Ḥārith al-Aʿraj as a non-Jafnid king whom the Romans installed in the late sixth century.[206]

Most important is the information he provides on the fortunes of the Ghassānids who went over to the Byzantines in Anatolia after the battle of Yarmūk. He says that they stayed on in Anatolia, which he calls loosely "ard al-Qusṭanṭīniyya," but upon the fall of the *Qayāṣira* ("the Caesars"), that is, the Byzantine emperors, they emigrated to "Jabal Sharkas," "the mountain of the Čerkes," the Circassians in the Caucasus.[207] This is perfectly possible, and the account may turn out to be

[203] The literature on Ibn Khaldūn is extensive; see the entry in *EI*², s.v. for the basic facts and bibliography. The standard translation into English is that of F. Rosenthal, *The Muqaddima* (New York, 1958). The text of *Tārīkh* used here is *Tārīkh,* II (Beirut, 1956).

[204] See *Tārīkh,* 586–87.

[205] Ibid., 587. Both lord and vassal had fought strenuously, first the Persians for almost twenty years and then the Arabs in the thirties, and must have been exhausted by their exertions in the two momentous conflicts, especially as the one followed so close on the heels of the other.

[206] *Tārīkh,* 588. This is consonant with the identification of other branches within the royal Ghassānid house, such as that of Imruʾ al-Qays and Thaʿlaba. Whether al-Aʿraj was indeed a non-Jafnid awaits corroboration, but it sounds credible since he belonged to the Ghassānid kings who reigned toward the end of the 6th century, after the rebellion of the Ghassānids and the temporary suspension of the Ghassānid dynasty by Maurice. Al-Aʿraj may have belonged to that branch of the Ghassānid royal house who were not Monophysite and so were favored by Chalcedonian Byzantium; on all this, see *BASIC* I.1, 547.

[207] *Tārīkh,* 588–89. The fall of the *Qayāṣira* in the text would refer to the fall of Constantinople, more likely to be A.D. 1204, the year of the Latin conquest of Constantinople, than A.D. 1453, when it fell to the Turks.

the missing link in the chain of data for the Ghassānid presence in the world of Islam when the Ghassānids of Anatolia entered the service of the ʿAbbāsids and appeared in both Egypt and South Arabia.[208]

The question arises: whence did Ibn Khaldūn derive this valuable information on the Ghassānids, not to be found anywhere else in the Arabic sources? His presence in Egypt after leaving the Islamic West in A.D. 1382 could easily explain it. He spent the last twenty years or so of his life in Egypt, right after the Burjī Mamlūks superseded the Baḥrī as the rulers of Egypt in 1382. These were not Turks like the Bahrī Mamlūks, but Circassians with strains of Ghassānid blood, according to Ibn Khaldūn. Being so close to their sultans (he accompanied al-Nāṣir when the latter set out to campaign against Timūr/Tamerlane), Ibn Khaldūn could easily have derived his information on the Ghassānid origin of the Circassians from them.[209].

[208] For this, see the present writer in "Ghassān Post Ghassān," in *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis,* ed. C. E. Bosworth, C. Issawi, R. Savory, and A. L. Udovitch (Princeton, N.J., 1989), 331–33.

[209] There must have been an element of truth in the claim of the Circassians that they were related genealogically to the Ghassānids, in Ibn Khaldūn's words, "and many of the Circassians allege that they are related to the Ghassānids," literally, "belong to the same genealogy as the Ghassānids"; *Tārīkh,* 589, lines 2–3. The fragments of evidence fit together. If the Ghassānids departed Byzantine Anatolia after the Latin conquest of Constantinople and joined the Čerkes in the Caucasus after A.D. 1204, they would have lived with the Čerkes for some two centuries, after which the Čerkes appeared in Egypt as the Burjī Mamlūks, still aware of their Ghassānid connection. The Ghassānids had been Christian, and the Čerkes, as the Muslim rulers of Egypt, would not have claimed association with a Christian group unless that association was a fact they did not or could not conceal.

In "Ghassān Post Ghassān," note 34, I did not elaborate on the Ghassānid profile of the Burjī Mamlūk genealogy. I am now more inclined to entertain a Ghassānid profile for that genealogy in light of the analysis of Ibn Khaldūn's statement undertaken here.

VI

Historiographical Observations

I. Procopius and the Ghassānids

Procopius is the chief historian not only of the reign of Justinian but also of the Ghassānid dynasty in the most important phase of its relation with Byzantium. That history would have remained obscure and unintelligible had it not been for him. He is also known for the *ira et studium* that infect his work. He rarely makes untrue statements outright but, instead, indulges in series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi.* The student of the reign and of the dynasty has to comb his statements and relieve them of these two sentiments before reaching the element of truth which his work undoubtedly has.

The Ghassānid dynasty, represented by its king and chief phylarch Arethas, did not fare well with Procopius when he wrote the *History* of the wars of Justinian, despite the great services the dynasty rendered to Byzantium. His prejudice against its king, Arethas, in the political, military, and religious spheres has been examined in various articles and has been attributed to *Kaiserkritik; ira* against Justinian and *studium* for Belisarius, while the two previous volumes of this series have documented the services of the Ghassānids to Byzantium.[1]

The themes of the present volume, however, have opened new vistas for exploring two other dimensions of Procopius' art in expressing his prejudices against the Ghassānid dynasty. The first pertains to the overhauling of the entire defense system in Oriens by Justinian, of which the Ghassānids were a part. This is dealt with in his *History,* which previous articles have treated but not in this context. The second one, related to the first but distinct from it, pertains to the structures associated with the *Limes orientalis* and presented in Procopius' other work, the *Buildings.*

Much has been said on these two themes in relation to Procopius in the course of this volume, in order to extract from him the truth about events in Oriens in the reign of Justinian. This chapter, on the other hand, returns to the

[1] For this see *BASIC* I.1, 219–26, 297–307, with its bibliography of the articles that appeared before its publication.

historian himself, not to extract more facts, but to illustrate his misrepresentations in this new context. In addition to uniting in one place the many facts that appear dispersed in various parts of this book, this chapter presents a synoptic view of the nature and extent of his misrepresentations. As these two areas in which Procopius deployed his skill are related to events of major historical significance in sixth-century Oriens, this examination will be of relevance to students of historiography in this period, of which Procopius is the chief historian.

The *History*

The examination in a previous chapter of the reorganization of the Oriental *limes* by Justinian has revealed omissions and suppressions of Procopius on major historical events. This reexamination of the overhaul of the defense system has made necessary the reevaluation of the year 529 when the Ghassānid Arethas was elevated to the *archiphylarchia* of all *foederati* in Oriens. The passage in which this was recorded in the *History* is more significant in the new context related to the entire overhaul of the *Limes orientalis* and the very important changes that Justinian introduced. This was the second and middle phase in the development of this *limes* from Diocletian to Heraclius, and the role of the Arab *foederati* in its reorganization was considerable, nothing less than their gradual replacement of the *limitanei* for the defense of Oriens. All this was obscured by Procopius, a serious flaw in the structure of the *History,* which purports to be the official, faithful history of the crucial reign.

Most of the defense of the Ghassānids against the account of Procopius has been conducted with Arethas holding the center of the stage. But more intensive research has revealed that Procopius not only presented untruths on Arethas but drew a flattering picture of Abū Karib, who appears in the *History* as a good "Saracen" in the service of Byzantium. This complimentary picture in the *History* probably served as a foil against which the "incompetence" of Arethas was set. More important was the misrepresentation of Abū Karib's importance and the belittling of the significance of his appointment. The truth, however, was the contrary. The sources, all incontestably authentic and significant documents, witness to his importance: a Sabaic inscription in South Arabia, a prayer for him and his brothers in a Syriac document, a Greek inscription that associates him with a church in the Provincia Arabia, and a Greek papyrus involving him as an arbitrator in a dispute in the region of Ṣadaqa in Palaestina Tertia.[2]

The two Ghassānid figures were brothers, the sons of that Jabala who appeared on the Byzantine frontier around the year 500 and who died fighting for Byzantium at the battle of Thannūris in 528, and he must have been known to

[2] For these four sources on Abū Karib, see above, 29–30.

Procopius.[3] The two brothers worked well together, especially after they were charged with the important command around 529 for the defense of the Arabian portion of the *Limes orientalis.* The role of Abū Karib was almost as important as that of Arethas, although it related to another world, that of southern Oriens and western Arabia. All this is obscured by Procopius in his account of the events of 529, the overhaul of the *limes.* Just as he obscured the promotion of the *foederati* and their preparation for taking over the responsibilities of the *limitanei,* Procopius also obscured the fact that the two agents chosen to oversee this fundamental change in the defense system were brothers. Procopius drew a picture of the frontier, overseen by two Saracens unrelated to each other, the one in the north, "Arethas," was "incompetent" and "treacherous," while Abū Karib was a good man but of no great significance, energetic as he was, yet he was merely engaged in defending the frontier against the raids of Saracen bands. Procopius' separation of one Ghassānid figure from the other obscured the fact that the two were brothers who were working harmoniously for the defense of the frontier, and their elevation could only have enhanced their loyalty to the empire that promoted them.

Thus the figure of Abū Karib emerges from the sources as one who played an important role in the history of southern Oriens and western Arabia, but he was obscured by the art of Procopius and reduced to the status of just another phylarch engaged in repelling the incursions of some Saracens. The student of Procopian historiography can now compare what he says on Abū Karib with the testimony of other sources and draw his or her own conclusions on the historian's objectivity. The thrust of the previous articles on Procopius and the Ghassānids was on the *prodosia* theme which Procopius trumped up against Arethas. Now his prejudice may be seen with regard to the overhaul of the entire defense system in Oriens as explained in this volume. Hence the historian of the reign emerges as one who did not give a true account of the reign as it related to the East, which in the seventh century turned out to be Byzantium's weak spot.

The *Buildings*

Although he appears in the *Buildings* as a fulsome panegyrist and ascribes to Emperor Justinian more than the latter had achieved, the data that Procopius provides are most valuable, since the historian availed himself of important documents that are no longer extant.[4] The *Buildings* complements the *History* in its

[3] For Jabala and his death at the battle of Thannūris, see *BASIC* I.1, 48–49, 69–70, 76–79. The Byzantine commander who conducted the operations at the battle of Thannūris was Belisarius to whom Procopius had been appointed *symboulos,* and in this capacity he accompanied Belisarius to Oriens when the latter was appointed to the command in that diocese; see ibid. So Procopius knew who Jabala was and who his sons were, and when he recounts the appointment of Arethas as supreme phylarch, he refers to him as "son of Jabala"; *History,* I.xvii.47.

[4] On the *Buildings* and its problems, see Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1985), 84–112.

narrative of wars by providing a description of the fortresses and other related structures that the emperor erected for the defense of the empire, but in addition pays attention to nonmilitary structures such as churches, palaces, and monasteries.

One of the surprises of the *Buildings* is the silence of Procopius on a long segment of the *Limes orientalis.* After enumerating in detail the many constructions of the emperor on the *limes* from the Black Sea to the Euphrates and slightly beyond it, he incomprehensibly stops at Palmyra, leaving out the long segment of the *limes* from Palmyra to Ayla on the Gulf of Eilat. The author jumps to discuss buildings in Palestine, mainly religious, and then moves on to Egypt.[5] Surely no emperor anxious for the security of his frontiers, least of all Justinian, whose attention to detail was so conspicuous, would have neglected that long Arabian segment, especially after he had so intensively fortified the adjacent sector in Mesopotamia and Osroene. The Arabian segment of the *limes* was exposed to the raids of the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula and also the risk posed by the new threat to Oriens, Mundir the Lakhmid, especially appointed by the Persians to terrorize the Byzantine frontier.[6] So this profound silence of Procopius on a vital segment of the *limes,* which might be termed the "enigmatic gap,"[7] calls for an explanation. Surely the emperor must have provided for the protection of this Arabian segment of the *limes,* facing the Arabian Peninsula, dotted in the *Notitia Dignitatum* with military stations, the names of which are given as well as those of the units that manned them.

The only hint as to how Justinian may have addressed this problem comes not in the *Buildings* but in the *History,* in that crucial passage that describes the elevation of the Ghassānid Arethas to the *basileia* and the *archiphylarchia* for the more effective protection of the *limes* against the raids of the Lakhmid king Mundir. The way he presented the Justinianic solution of the problem of this segment was typically Procopian when the Ghassānids are involved. He spoke in

[5] The second book of the *Buildings* describes the fortifications in the East from the Persian border and stops at Palmyra, for which, see II.xi.1–12; he returns to Palmyra in book V.I.ii. The frontier from Palmyra to Ayla remains a blank in his work. When he takes up the southern part of Oriens, it is to refer to religious architecture in Jerusalem and Sinai—the Nea Ecclesia and the fortress at Sinai; for which, see ibid., V.v.2–26 and V.viii.4–9.

[6] The seriousness of the pastoralist threat from Arabia is difficult to assess, and there is no way of measuring accurately in the 21st century what happened in the 6th. Two scholars in frontier studies, David Graf and Thomas Parker, hold opposite views, the former minimizing it and the latter maximalizing it. For a recent statement by the former, see "The *Via Militaris* in Arabia," *DOP* 51 (1997), esp. 276–77, 280–81. However, it should be borne in mind that in the first half of the 6th century there was a serious threat to the *Limes Arabiae* posed by the Lakhmid Mundir who terrorized the frontier for half a century, a fact vouched for by a 6th-century witness, Procopius himself (*History,* I.xvii.40–48).

[7] I borrow this phrase from the dialogue between Thomas Parker and David Graf concerning the *Limes Arabicus.*

terms of tribes (*phylai*), over which he made Arethas lord, and then he hastened to tell the reader that this policy was a complete failure, since the man in whom Byzantium reposed its trust turned out to be either incompetent or treacherous, or both.

Various articles that discussed the series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* in Procopius concerning the Ghassānids have exposed these untruths. In 554 the Ghassānids turned the tide against the Lakhmids in an encounter in which the Lakhmid king Mundir not only lost the battle but also his life. This then is the first clue as to what happened along the *Limes Arabiae* after Justinian's decision to elevate the Ghassānid Arethas. The emperor left the long line that faced the Arabian Peninsula from Palmyra to Ayla in the hands of the Ghassānids, who now took over the defense of this segment of the *limes,* the *Limes Arabiae*.[8] But the *military* victories of the Ghassānids on the battlefield do not answer the question posed on the "enigmatic gap" and the fortifications along the *Limes Arabiae,* which, as has already been stated, was dotted with military stations and garrisons, documented in the *Notitia Dignitatum.* What happened to these military stations? Were they allowed to decay or not? Is it possible to believe that the new *limitanei,* that is, the Arab *foederati,* would have been able to protect this long *limes* without the help of forts and fortresses, vigorous, tough, and mobile as these *foederati* were?

Procopius has already denied the Ghassānids any share in frontier fortifications when he spoke of the *foederati* as tribes, *phylai,* with no reference to structures, *ktismata.* By constantly referring to them as Saracens, he implied that they were nonsedentary allies with whom structures and fortifications could not be associated. The reality, however, is that the Arab *foederati* gradually moved into the stations of the *limitanei,* repaired them if necessary, adapted them to their own methods of desert warfare, and built some new fortresses, now that the defense of the *Limes Arabiae* was unified under the command of the two brothers who were working harmoniously together and no doubt had their own concepts of how to run the defense of the *limes,* so well known to them.

So the Ghassānids contributed toward the fortifications of the *Limes Arabiae* as the emperor had done for the portion of the *limes* in Mesopotamia and Osroene. They were a highly sedentary people, and this aspect of their life includes their expertise in hydrography, an extremely relevant skill in an arid area where the structures cannot be viable without water, made available through hydraulic engineering. They themselves were knowledgeable, and they also availed them-

[8] A term is needed to indicate the frontier not in its entirety from the Black to the Red Sea or from Edessa to Ayla, but from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat (from Circesium to Ayla), the segment that faced the Arabian Peninsula and the threat of its pastoralists, as distinguished from the threat posed to Byzantium by Persia and its imperial armies farther to the north, along the Euphrates. The term *Limes Arabiae* is suggested and used in this volume. *Limes Arabicus,* which is under fire by some scholars, is applied to the *limes* only in the southernmost portion of Oriens.

selves of the skill of their congeners in the area, the Nabataeans and Palmyrenes, who had left impressive structures that are still standing in Petra and Palmyra. They could also avail themselves of the skills of Byzantine architects and engineers well known from the sources.[9] The Ghassānids who built churches, monasteries, and palaces surely were capable of erecting structures such as forts which were needed for their new duties along the *limes.* All this Procopius concealed.

As has already been indicated, many of the structures listed by Procopius were not actually erected by the emperor but by others and the name of the emperor was associated with them as an expression of *pietas* by a subject to his sovereign for a benefaction, the exact nature of which is not quite clear. However, the listing of these structures and toponyms along the frontiers provides valuable data for the Roman static defense system in the sixth century. Those structures along the *Limes Arabiae* did not merit the attention of Procopius, in contrast to Malalas, who mentions the initiative of the emperor with reference to the defense system.[10] The passage in Malalas is relevant in this context for another reason, as it clearly indicates that the Ghassānid and Arab *foederati* were certainly not the only defenders of the Byzantine frontier in Oriens; the *duces* of the various limitrophic provinces were still at their posts, and so were the *stratiōtai* who were withdrawn into the interior. The passage reflects Justinian's interest in the security of Phoenicia Libanensis and the Holy Land[11] and suggests how much has been lost when Procopius left unrecorded the work that must have been done along the *Limes Arabiae.* Malalas did not write a specialized work on the buildings of Justinian as did Procopius, and yet he preserved valuable evidence on the military interest of the emperor in Oriens.

Closer examination of the narrative of Procopius could lead to the conclusion that Justinian may have left in the hands of the Ghassānids the segment of the *limes* that extended not only from Palmyra to Ayla but also the longer one that began at Circesium. Within this segment lay two cities, Palmyra and Sergiopolis, which were of special interest to Justinian, according to the historian.[12] The accounts of the two cities in Procopius encourage further probing into his narrative,

[9] Procopius has preserved the names of the master-architects who were employed by Justinian for the fortification of military posts along the Euphrates: Isidore of Miletus, John of Byzantium, and Chryses of Alexandria; *Buildings,* II.viii.25, I.ii.17, II.iii.2. In the 4th century, Zenobius was the architect of the church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and it has been suggested that he came from Palmyra. The architect of the church at the monastery on Mount Sinai was Stephan of Ayla, an Arab city in Palaestina Tertia, and so he was presumably an Arab. Mundir made use of the services of an *epitropos* whose Arab name was Seos for building the mansion at Hayyat; for these, see *BASIC* I.1, 489–94.

[10] Malalas, *Chronographia,* ed. L. Dindorf (Bonn, 1831), 425–26.

[11] For Justinian's interest in Phoenicia Libanensis, a province of Oriens, and its reflection in Malalas and also his own edict on the provinces, see *BASIC* I.1, 172–73 and 198–200.

[12] On his interest in Palmyra, see above, 127.

which may lead also to a better grasp of the extent of the responsibility thrust on the shoulders of the Ghassānids as they watched over the Arabian *limes.*

1. Sergiopolis. Justinian's interest in the city derived from the fact that the city housed the shrine of the famous St. Sergius, the palladium of Byzantium in its Persian Wars. Its defense against the enemy was entrusted to the Ghassānids, witness the *praetorium extra muros* of Mundir. As has been argued earlier, in the section on the city, the one who was credited with the building of the "great cistern" was a Ghassānid and not Justinian. If Ghassānid guardianship of Sergiopolis started earlier, in the reign of Justinian, then Procopius may have concealed the fact that the Ghassānids contributed to the welfare of the saint and his city, while giving all the credit to the emperor upon whom he fawned in the *Buildings.*

2. Palmyra. Again, Justinian's interest in the city was probably partly related to its being a biblical site (erroneous though that was, resting on a textual error) associated with King Solomon. Justinian had a Solomon complex, which drove him to want to appear as a builder, greater than the Israelite king who built the Temple in Jerusalem.[13]

Procopius' prejudice against the Ghassānids and the Arabs is reflected in the way he refers to Palmyra and the Saracens. Twice in the paragraph on the fortification of Palmyra, Procopius refers to the Saracens in his usual pejorative manner and even suggests that the foundation of Palmyra was due to the necessity of protecting the region from the raids of the Saracens. This is in spite of the fact that the Arab prince of Palmyra, Odenathus, had avenged the captivity of the Roman emperor Valerian and saved the empire from the aggressive policies of Shāpūr, thus earning the titles of *imperator, dux Romanorum,* and *corrector totius orbis.*[14] So when a reliable Arabic source associates the Ghassānids with Palmyra and states that one of them resided there, one could be justified in suspecting that Procopius concealed the truth about the Arab involvement in its *renovatio.* However, he gave himself away in the *History* when he discussed the *Strata* dispute between the Ghassānid Arethas and the Lakhmid Mundir, in which the former appears as the protector and defender of the region south of Palmyra, which suggests some important connection with the city.[15]

So the enigmatic gap in the *Buildings* may have extended from Circesium on

[13] On Justinian and Palmyra, see *BASIC* I.1, 198–200. That Solomon was associated with Palmyra in the 6th century is attested by Malalas, *Chronographia,* 425–26, who transmits the erroneous tradition. For Procopius on Justinian and Palmyra, see *Buildings,* I.xi.10–12.

[14] See *BASIC* I.1, 437–39. In this context, three articles involving the eastern Roman frontier may be consulted with profit: J. Long, "Two Sides of a Coin: Aurelian, Vahballathus, and Eastern Frontiers in the Early 270's"; J. Eadie, "The Transformation of the Eastern Frontier, 260–305"; and W. E. Kaegi, "Reconceptualizing Byzantium's Eastern Frontiers in the Seventh Century"; all in *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity,* ed. R. W. Mathisen and H. S. Sivan (Brookfield, Vt., 1996), 59–71, 72–82, 83–92 respectively.

[15] On the Ghassānids and Palmyra, see above, 340; on the *Strata* dispute, see above, 42–43.

the Euphrates or near it, all the way to Ayla, which is the more logical segment to separate from the *Limes orientalis* and entrust to the Arab *foederati,* since the river is the more *natural* terminus of this segment. But even if the enigmatic gap started from Palmyra, the silence of Procopius on this long segment of the frontier could indirectly evidence the Ghassānid presence along the *Limes Arabiae,* thus dovetailing with the account in the *History* of the elevation of the Ghassānids to the supreme phylarchate for the defense of the frontier against the Lakhmids.

Checks on Procopius

The checks on Procopius' image of the Ghassānids, especially Arethas, as it is transmitted in the *History* in respect to his performance in war and the defense of Oriens, derived from a literary source, Malalas, who contradicted him, and the fact that Arethas and his Ghassānids remained in the service of Byzantium throughout the reign of the emperor who employed them, and even longer. With regard to their image as "Saracens," nomads in the service of Byzantium but with no fixed abode, and with no reference whatsoever in the *Buildings* to their having taken part in any of the defense projects described in detail in that work, there are two checks on Procopius.

1. Archaeology. This is the most decisive of checks since the evidence from it is literally visible. This evidence, represented by some structures, has fortunately, even miraculously, survived to the present day. They alone without help from other sources clearly imply other structures erected by the Ghassānids since these could not have been isolated cases. The monumental structures of the tower of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī and the *praetorium extra muros* at Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis have been discussed often in other contexts in this volume. To these two, the tower at Ḍumayr may be added, which was still standing in the early part of the twentieth century but has since disappeared.[16]

2. Literary sources. These are the contemporary odes of the Ghassānid panegyrists and later literary sources that derive from earlier ones, notably *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* a monograph on the Ghassānids going back possibly to the seventh

[16] On the tower of Ḍumayr, see *BASIC* I.1, 495–501. The list of Ghassānid monuments referred to above is limited to structures that are incontestably Ghassānid, which have survived with their inscriptions to the present day. For others that had to be extracted from the Arabic sources, and others that are still standing and have been suspected of being Ghassānid by archaeologists and art historians, see above, 60–62.

Not only Ghassān but also Kinda, the other important federate group in the service of Byzantium, suffered from Procopius' animadversions on its status as a sedentary Arab federate group. The group has been even more fortunate than Ghassān as for surviving physical traces of its presence. Saudī archaeologists have discovered one of their cities in Inner Arabia, Qaryat al-Faw, which invalidates the image of Kinda as a group of nomads projected by Procopius (see above, 3 note 8). As the thrust of this volume is on Ghassān and as Kinda receded into an Arabian Peninsular existence after the death of its chief, the phylarch Arethas in 528, it will be treated in *BASIC* II.2.

century.[17] Above all, there is the *Chronicle* of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, a ninth-century author, who availed himself of *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* and singled out the Ghassānids as the Arab dynasty most associated with architecture, that erected not only military structures but civil and religious ones as well. Noteworthy is that the lion's share in Ḥamza's list of structures built by the Ghassānids goes to Arethas (and his sons), the very king whom Procopius had presented as a Saracen with no fixed abode. The *Chronicle* emerges as a diminutive *Buildings* on the architectural achievements of the Ghassānid dynasty, which Procopius credited with nothing at all. So it is the counterpart on a small scale of the *Buildings* and indeed its antidote that counteracts Procopius' silence as far as the Ghassānids are concerned.

In all fairness to Procopius, it is possible that he did not know of any structures erected by the Ghassānids, but this is doubtful. As has been long recognized, he could not have seen the entire list of structures he attributes to Justinian. He must have availed himself of archival material in Constantinople which would have contained the data pertaining to the *Limes Arabiae.* The long line of this *limes* with its many forts and fortresses experienced restorations, renovations, and entirely new construction. Accounts of these must have been prepared by the phylarchs and their Ghassānid archiphylarch and conveyed to the *magister militum* in Antioch and through him to Constantinople.

Ḥamza and Procopius

Various sections in this volume have made amply clear the importance of Ḥamza for the history of Ghassānid construction. Just as Malalas corrected and even invalidated Procopius on the political and military history of the Ghassānids, and as the Syriac sources have recorded the important contribution of the Ghassānids to Monophysite Christianity in Oriens, so does Ḥamza rectify Procopius' omission of any reference to their towns or structures. In so doing, Ḥamza explodes the myth popularized by Procopius and inherited by his descendants in the spirit that the Ghassānids were homeless "Saracens." His *Tārīkh, Chronicle,* provides abundant material on their homes and structures and thus enables the student of Byzantine Oriens in the sixth century to examine their role in both the urbanization and defense system of that diocese. After Malalas and the Syriac sources, the *Tārīkh* of Ḥamza puts a third and new perspective on the prejudice against the Ghassānids in Procopius' works. It is well, therefore, that the two authors be briefly compared and contrasted.

Like Malalas, Ḥamza was primarily a chronographer, who lived long after the Ghassānids ceased to exist as *foederati.* His presentation may be dull, but he provides many facts,[18] unlike Procopius, the "historian" who indulged in a series

[17] For all these Arabic sources, see above, 220–354, and below, 364–74.

[18] On the rehabilitation of chronographers such as Malalas, Synkellos, and Theophanes, see J. N. Ljubarskij, "New Trends in the Study of Byzantine Historiography," *DOP* 47 (1993), 131–

of misrepresentations concerning the Ghassānids, inspired by *ira* toward Justinian and *studium* toward Belisarius for whom he acted as *praeco.* No such moods can be attributed to the author of *Tārīkh,* in which Ḥamza cannot be accused of partiality toward the Ghassānids when he credited them with this long series of structures. Procopius, according to the most plausible view, wrote the panegyrical *Buildings* after the preferment he had coveted was granted him, possibly as the city prefect of Constantinople. Although Ḥamza was a Persian Muslim, he did not allow his identity to deny the Arab Christian Ghassānids their due as a force in the urbanization of Oriens.

Kaiserkritik/Samaritanism

The two sentiments that have been much discussed in the examination of the prejudice of Procopius against the Arabs in general and the Ghassānids in particular have been his *ira* toward Justinian and his *studium* toward Belisarius. Yet another motive may now be suggested, that Procopius may have been a crypto-Samaritan.[19] It will be remembered that in the suppression of the dangerous Samaritan revolt that broke out in Palestine in 529, it was the Arab Ghassānid phylarch Arethas, Abū Karib, or both that finally crushed the revolt mercilessly and, captured, according to the chronographer, twenty thousand Samaritans, who were sold as slaves in Indika, possibly the Red Sea area.[20] If Procopius was a Samaritan, memories of what these federates had done to his people would have remained alive in his consciousness and thus could easily have influenced him when he referred to the Ghassānids.

II. *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān*

The bald statement in Yāqūt[21] that he derived his information on the reservoirs of Ruṣāfa from a book titled *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* leaves the book isolated without any reference to its author or the period of its composition. It is therefore desirable to determine the period of its composition and the various possibilities for its authorship. Yāqūt was a thirteenth-century writer, but the conclusion drawn in a previous section that *Akhbār* was also the source of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī pushes back the existence of *Akhbār* to the tenth century.[22] One of the data in Ḥamza that, it has been argued, comes from *Akhbār* is that the Ghassānids crossed the *limes* during the reign of Emperor Anastasius.[23] But this statement is also found in the

38. Ḥamza is in this company as a reliable chronographer, already appreciated by Franz Rosenthal; see *EI*[2], s.v.

[19] See K. Adshead, "Procopius and the Samaritans," in *The Sixth Century, End or Beginning?,* ed. P. Allen and E. Jeffreys (Brisbane, 1996), 35–41.

[20] See *BASIC* I.1, 82–95.

[21] See above, 342.

[22] See above, 308.

[23] Above, 311.

ninth-century historian Ya'qūbī, a solid spot in his work, as Nöldeke noted,[24] and this suggests that *Akhbār* was known and available to scholars of his time. It is reasonable to suppose that it was not written in the ninth century since in that late period memories of the Ghassānids would have faded, but that it goes back to a more remote period, that of early Islam, the Umayyad seventh and eighth centuries. In that period, memories of the Ghassānids were still green, especially as many of them stayed on in Bilād al-Shām/Oriens, in the service of the Umayyads and indeed became one of the supports of the first Muslim dynasty, whose first capital was that of the Ghassānids, Jābiya in the Golan.

I

Such a book written in the early Islamic period must have relied on sources for the Ghassānids that go back to pre-Islamic times. It is not altogether inconceivable that there was a work that recorded the achievements of the dynasty in this pre-Islamic period. However, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* as used by three Muslim authors, Yāqūt, Ḥamza and Ya'qūbī, was most likely a product of the Umayyad period, although its sources must have been mostly pre-Islamic. These are sources of various kinds, Syriac, Greek, and Arabic, and have been analyzed intensively in *BASIC* I.1–2. What matters in this connection are the Syriac and Arabic sources that are likely to have been used by the writer of *Akhbār* in the Umayyad period.

The most precious account of the Ghassānid dynasty was written in the sixth century in Syriac by the Monophysite bishop John of Ephesus as a chapter in his *Ecclesiastical History.* Unfortunately, only the title of this chapter on the history of the dynasty has survived, in the table of contents of the third part of his *History.*[25] It has been argued that he received his information on the Ghassānids mainly from their king Mundir during the latter's residence under house arrest in Constantinople in the 580s. Mundir was naturally well informed about the history of the dynasty and its achievements and could have passed this information on to John of Ephesus.[26] If the *History* of John of Ephesus was known to the Monophysite community in Umayyad Syria, this chapter would have been used by the author of *Akhbār.*[27]

Sixth-century inscriptions both in Greek and in Arabic must have provided

[24] See Nöldeke, *GF,* 9. This solid spot in the later Islamic sources is, of course, confirmed by the Greek passage in Theophanes for ca A.D. 500; see *BASIC* I.1, 3–12. Further on Ya'qūbī, see above, 346–48.

[25] See *BASIC* I.1, 583–92.

[26] Ibid., 588.

[27] It should be remembered that Mundir returned from his Sicilian exile to Oriens in A.D. 602. His return must have been an event of some importance in federate Oriens and may have given an impetus to the composition of a work on his experience in Constantinople and Sicily while under house arrest in the former and in exile in the latter. He also may have drawn attention to the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus and its chapter on the dynasty.

valuable information on the dynasty. Few of them have survived: six in Greek and two in Arabic, the latter being more significant. These must have been inscribed mostly on their buildings and more importantly on their tombs in much the same way that Imru' al-Qays' *res gestae* were commemorated in a long Arabic inscription carved on his tomb in Namāra.[28] These royal tombs, now lost, were well known in pre-Islamic times; they attracted the attention of the poets even while they were eulogizing living Ghassānid rulers.[29] Their inscriptions must have contained much information on the achievement of each reign.

More relevant as a source for the Arabic *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* but also more controversial, are two genres of Arabic writings, *Ayyām al-ʿArab* and *Dīwān al-Qabīla. Ayyām al-ʿArab* are the "Battle Days of the Arabs" in which the inter-tribal wars of the pre-Islamic Arabs were related together with the poetry that was composed on these occasions. The Ghassānids, as wardens of the frontier against the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula, engaged in many encounters with the Arabian tribes, and so part of their peninsular history was enshrined in the poetry of the *Ayyām,* composed in pre-Islamic times. Works on the *Ayyām* may have been composed in the Islamic period, but most of the poetry of the "battle days" certainly goes back to pre-Islamic times.[30]

Dīwān or *Kitāb al-Qabīla,* "the Dīwān of the Tribe," is another source related to the *Ayyām;* it is the more capacious term that included an account of the tribes—a series of *khabar*s (reports) on its doings and not only on its battle days.[31] Reference has survived to about sixty of these *Dīwān*s or *Kitāb*s, but *Kitāb Ghassān* is not one of them. However, the list of sixty may not be complete, and a *Kitāb,* an account of the Ghassānids in pre-Islamic times, may have found its way into a later work such as *Tafarruq al-Azd,* "the Dispersion of the Azd," attributed to Hishām al-Kalbī.[32]

The court of the Ghassānids was a venue for the poets of the Arabian Peninsula at which they recited their panegyrics on the dynasty, which included their military victories and campaigns. It is possible that these poems were collected by the Ghassānids in much the same way that tradition has it that their enemies the Lakhmids collected the panegyrics advertising their glory in a *dīwān* that survived until early Islamic times.[33] The two hostile dynasties engaged in a vigorous rivalry

[28] See *BAFOC,* 31–53.

[29] On the Ghassānid royal tombs mentioned in the poetry of Nābigha, see above, 226–28.

[30] On the *Ayyām,* see the entry in *EI*², s.v. One of the Ghassānid *Ayyām* is mentioned by name together with the technical term *Yawm* (singular of *Ayyam*) in one of Nābigha's poems, where he speaks of *Yawm Ḥalīma,* the "battle day of Ḥalīma"; see *BASIC* I.1, 255 note 117, 263.

[31] On *Dīwān al-Qabīla,* see Sezgin, *GAS,* II, 36–46, and N. al-Asad, *Maṣādir al-Shiʿr al-Jāhilī* (Beirut, 1988), 481–572.

[32] Further on this, see below, 368.

[33] For this *Dīwān* of panegyrics on the Lakhmids, see al-Asad (*Maṣādir,* 160–61), who has collected what Ibn Jinnī and Ibn Sallām have said on the subject.

with each other, and it is unlikely that the Ghassānids would have lagged behind the Lakhmids in having their panegyrics collected in a *dīwān.*

As vassals of Byzantium who moved in its cultural orbit, the Ghassānids were aware of the vogue of chronicles/chronographies which encompassed various kinds of historiography, on dynasties, reigns, and so on.[34] Their own dynasty was chronicled in Syriac by John of Ephesus, while the Chronicle of Edessa, of sixth-century vintage, narrated events associated with Edessa, the city of the Arab dynasty of the Abgarids. It is therefore not unlikely that the Ghassānids were the subject of a chronicle recording their achievements and contribution to the military and ecclesiastical history of the Byzantine and Christian Orient.

A pointer in that direction is a poetic fragment ascribed to one of their major panegyrists, Nābigha, around A.D. 600 in which he speaks of some leading figures of the dynasty, the three Ḥāriths, one of whom he calls al-Akbar, the other al-Asghar, both dead at the time when he was reciting the poem at the court of the Ghassānids.[35] This conception of the dynasty, involving the relative importance of its members, could point to the fact that observers of the Ghassānid scene were aware of the role of the dynasty in the history of the region. It is natural to suppose again that this would be reflected in a work on the dynasty in pre-Islamic times, before its demise at the battle of Yarmūk in 636.

Whether such a work on the dynasty was written in Arabic in pre-Islamic times, or whether its history remained recorded sporadically in a chapter in John of Ephesus, in inscriptions, and in panegyrics, is a question for which there is no definite answer yet. But at least the fragments, especially the poetry, were still available for the writer of *Akhbār* if he wrote in the Islamic period, together with memories of the Ghassānids, who had such a strong presence, military, religious, and cultural, in the recent past of Oriens in the sixth and seventh centuries.

II

Who in this early Islamic period would have been interested in writing a book on the Ghassānids titled *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān*?[36] And what region in the Fertile Crescent, with its two centers of learning and scholarship, the eastern and the western, could have witnessed the composition of such a book?

[34] On *Chronicles,* see Ljubarskij, "Trends."

[35] Three of the Ghassānid kings within a half century were namesakes of one another; this homonymity was conducive to confusion, which was sorted out by Nöldeke's perceptive analysis, *GF,* 34–36; for the fragment and its German translation, see ibid., 33–34.

[36] Especially as a work on the Ghassānids in this period would have presented a problem to its author, in view of their role during the Muslim conquest of Bilād al-Shām, when they fought with the Byzantines against the Muslim Arabs and figured prominently in the battle of the Yarmūk fighting against the Muslims. The Umayyads would have been more tolerant than the Abbāsids of such a composition, as indeed they were toward those of the Ghassānids, who decided to stay on in Bilād al-Shām and served the Umayyads well. Further on this during the reign of Muʿāwiya, see below, 370–71.

A

The first word in the title of the book, *Akhbār,* suggests the category of books that appeared in this early Islamic period, that is, books of *Akhbār,* reports, pieces of information written by *akhbāriyyūn,* rather than true historians, who belonged to both the Umayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods.[37] As for the provenance of *Akhbār,* the contents of the chapter in-Ḥamza with its long list of structures suggests that the author did not live in Iraq but in Bilād al-Shām, where the Ghassānids lived in pre-Islamic times and where some of them continued to reside even after their defeat at the Yarmūk. The author could have been a Ghassānid, proud of his ancestors, or an Azdite who looked at the Ghassānids as Azdites in the larger sense. A third possibility must, however, be entertained, that the author was Hishām al-Kalbī, the foremost Muslim *akhbārī,* author of *khabar*s, on the history of the pre-Islamic Arabs. The case for his authorship of *Akhbār* may be presented as follows.

Hishām wrote many monographs on pre-Islamic groups. Especially relevant are those on the enemies of the Ghassānids, the Lakhmids, on whom and on whose city Ḥīra and its *ʿibād,* or Christian residents, he wrote more than one monograph. He also wrote on the predecessors of the Ghassānids as *foederati* in Byzantine Oriens, that is, the Tanūkhids of the fourth century and possibly on the Salīḥids of the fifth.[38] He also wrote *Akhbār Mulūk Kinda,* on the third power in pre-Islamic Arab history, the other two being the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids.[39] It would seem odd if Hishām did not write on the Ghassānids, who thus would be conspicuous by their absence in the corpus of his writings.

Hishām's father, Muḥammad, was the well-known Koranic commentator and exegete. Among the events in pre-Islamic Arabia mentioned in the Koran that attracted the attention of the commentators, one of the most important was the breaking of the Ma'rib dam in South Arabia, which, according to the Koran, caused the dispersion of the Azd and their wanderings in Arabia.[40] As the son of the commentator who must have written on this event, it is natural to suppose that Hishām would have written on the Ghassānids, who wandered in Arabia, then finally entered the Byzantine orbit after the breaking of the dam. As he wrote a monograph specifically on this, called "Tafarruq al-Azd" ("the Dispersion of the Azd"), it is possible that Hishām included his account of Ghassān in this general book on the Azd to whom Ghassān belonged. He may have limited himself, how-

[37] On the *akhbāriyyūn* in these two periods, see Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 257–74 and F. Rosenthal, *HMH,* 59–63.

[38] On Hishām, see ibid., 268–71. On Hishām as the "historian" of the *foederati* and of pre-Islamic Arabia, see *BAFOC,* index, 615; for Hishām on the Tanūkhids, ibid., 369; on the Salīḥids, *BAFIC,* 233–37.

[39] For his book on Kinda, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist,* ed. G. Flügel (repr. Beirut, 1964), I, 96, line 17, repeated by Yāqūt, who draws on Ibn al-Nadīm in his *Muʿjam al-Udabā'* (Beirut, 1980), XIX, 289.

[40] Koran, XXXIII, verses 15–19.

ever, to the migration period in their history, that is, the Arabian period and not the Byzantine one, pursuant to the exegetical interest of his father.[41]

Hishām is thus a possibility, but the authors who list the extensive number of his monographs do not refer to one titled *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.* Other considerations seem to distance the authorship of the book from Hishām. The detailed list of structures in *Akhbār* suggests that the author was living in Oriens, in the region of the toponyms and structures referred to in the book. But Hishām, although affiliated with the tribe of Kalb, which belonged to Oriens, spent his life in Iraq under the early ʿAbbāsids. His affiliation with Iraq explains his monographs on Ḥīra and the Lakhmids, inspired by his visits to their capital. Apparently, he had no precise knowledge of Ghassānland such as would have enabled him to write a list of their buildings—the one to be found in Ḥamza—as he did for the churches and monasteries of Ḥīra in a work that has not survived but is known to have been written by him.[42]

Furthermore, the world of the ʿAbbāsids centered around Baghdad in former Sasanid territory and not far from Ctesiphon, the Sasanid capital. This influenced Arabic Islamic historiography and made it partial to the eastern half of the Fertile Crescent and Iran, not the western Bilād al-Shām and the Mediterranean basin, including Byzantium. Ṭabarī, who gave a detailed account of the Lakhmids and of Iranian history, hardly mentions the Ghassānids, who, moreover, were the clients of the Christian Roman Empire of Byzantium, which became the chief enemy of the Islamic caliphate.

B

The reservations expressed concerning Hishām's authorship of *Akhbār* in Iraq in the early ʿAbbāsid period strongly suggest a return to the western half of the Fertile Crescent in Bilād al-Shām during the earlier period of the Umayyads. It is only natural that a book such as *Akhbār* on Bilād al-Shām should have been written in that region and at a time when memories of the Ghassānid kings whose achievements are recorded in that book were still fresh, and where resided descendants of these kings in the employ of the Umayyads. This early Umayyad period in Bilād al-Shām also witnessed the rise of one of the four schools of Islamic historical writing, the others being in Iraq, Ḥijāz, and Yaman. This school in Bilād al-Shām

[41] For his monograph *Tafarruq al-Azd,* see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Muʿjam,* 289, line 18. His general account of the Ghassānids forms part of his large comprehensive work on all the Arabs, *Jamharat al-Nasab,* where Ghassān is treated as part of the larger group al-Azd. There is hardly anything there on Ghassān as federates of Byzantium; see *Jamharat al-Nasab,* ed. N. Ḥasan (Beirut, 1986), 615–19.

[42] For his monographs on the Lakhmids and on Ḥīra, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Muʿjam,* 97, lines 11, 12, 13, 16, to which may be added his monograph on Ḥīra's foremost poet, ʿAdī ibn Zayd al-ʿIbādī, ibid., 96, line 28.

emphasized that aspect of Arab history that dealt with the *Futūḥ,* the conquests, and the pre-Islamic history of the Arabs to which Ghassān belonged.[43]

Against this historical background, which was favorable for the writing of such a book as *Akhbār,* one may hypothesize actual Umayyad involvement in its composition. A close examination of Umayyad policy toward Bilād al-Shām and their search for legitimacy after the bloody encounters with the ʿAlids[44] could suggest that the composition of the book may have been promoted by the Umayyads, perhaps even by the first Umayyad caliph, Muʿāwiya (A.D. 661–680). The Umayyads, especially Muʿāwiya, promoted the image of Bilād al-Shām at the expense of Ḥijāz, presenting it as the Holy Land, al-Arḍ al-Muqaddasa, mentioned in one of the chapters of the Koran.[45] It was the Umayyad metropolitan province, whence the caliph ran his vast empire, but it had also been Ghassānland in its limitrophe and the transverse wedge comprising Golan, Batanaea, Auranitis, and Trachonitis.

Muʿāwiya developed a special interest in pre-Islamic Arab history and in that of South Arabia—the country of the Yamanite party in the tribal politics of the Umayyad period on whom the Umayyads mainly depended rather than on the north Arabs. Ghassānid history in the sixth century belonged both to pre-Islamic Arab history and to that of Yaman. Muʿāwiya's interest in the Ghassānids in this context is reflected in the work of the Yamanite ʿUbayd ibn-Sharya, whom he invited to Damascus.[46] Although no special chapter on the Ghassānids is to be found in his book, which may not have survived in its entirety, yet he refers to their kings together with kings of other dynasties, in his dialogue with Muʿāwiya.[47]

In addition to being a Yamanite South Arabian tribe, the Ghassānids had been the dominant Arab group in Bilād al-Shām immediately before the Umayyads for about a century and a half. Hence Muʿāwiya's special interest in them. Their strong presence in the region persisted in Umayyad times when their capital Jābiya was the Umayyad capital for some time. The Umayyads settled in many of the sites that the Ghassānids had occupied in the limitrophe and reoccupied and developed some of their structures.[48] The Ghassānids had been the vassals of Byzantium, which Islam had defeated but not wiped out, as it had Sasanid Persia.

[43] On these four schools and the characteristics of each, see S. Muṣṭafa, *al-Tārīkh al-ʿArabī wa al-Muʾarrikẖūn* (Beirut, 1983), I, 116–18.

[44] See P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs,* 10th ed. (New York, 1970), 179–83 and 190–91.

[45] Koran, V, verse 21.

[46] For ʿUbayd ibn Sharya, see Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 260, where the other form of his name, ʿAbīd, is chosen. His book has been variously titled. In *GAS* it is *Kitāb fī Akhbār al-Yaman wa Ashʿārihā wa Ansabihā,* as edited by F. Krenkow. More recently it has been given a long title, the first part of which is *Akhbār ʿUbayd ibn Sharya al-Jurhumī;* it is printed in the same volume as Ibn Hishām's *Kitāb al-Tījān* (Sanʿā', Yaman, 1979).

[47] Ibid., 326.

[48] On the Ghassānid substrate in the Umayyad urban and palatial establishment, see below, 375–91; also the present writer in "Ghassān post Ghassān," in *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times. Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis* (Princeton, N.J., 1989), 328–31.

Since Byzantium remained the chief adversary of Islam, Ghassānid knowledge of and experience with Byzantium was of obvious interest to Muʿāwiya, who repeatedly tried to bring about the collapse of the Byzantine state through the capture of Constantinople.

The Ghassānids faced the problem of controlling other non-Ghassānid Arab *foederati* in Oriens, especially after the appointment in A.D. 529 of Arethas as supreme phylarch and king over all these *foederati.* This was a problem that, *mutatis mutandis,* also faced Muʿāwiya, who rested his power on the former Byzantine *foederati,* or rather those who stayed on in Bilād al-Shām, mainly southern Arabs. Friction with the northern Arabs was inevitable and sometimes occurred within the same group. Thus both the Umayyads and the Ghassānids ruled heterogeneous tribal groups among whom tensions and dissensions were recurrent. The Ghassānid experience in the sixth century must have been valuable to the Umayyads of the seventh, in demonstrating how to deal with a similar situation that obtained in the same region, Oriens, now Bilād al-Shām.[49] Above all, the Ghassānids were *kings* in Bilād al-Shām. Muʿāwiya was the first Muslim caliph who converted the elective Islamic caliphate into a hereditary *mulk,* a kingship, when he introduced the principle of dynastic succession and appointed his son Yazīd as his successor. Yazīd completed and cemented the Ghassānid connection when he married a Ghassānid princess, who bore him his daughter Ramla.[50]

Muʿāwiya is credited with giving an impetus to historical writing in Bilād al-Shām. He summoned the Yamanite ʿUbayd ibn Sharya to Damascus and would spend time listening to him on pre-Islamic and Yamanite history; he encouraged him to write it down, which the latter did.[51] Even before his emirate and his caliphate in Bilād al-Shām, Muʿāwiya had been involved in writing and recording documents, since the Prophet Muḥammad had him as one of his secretaries/scribes after he converted to Islam.[52]

A well-known passage in the historian Masʿūdī confirms Muʿāwiya's interest in historiography.[53] Masʿūdī says that the caliph would spend a goodly portion of the night listening to *akhbār,* accounts of the Arabs and their *ayyām* (battle days), and also of the non-Arabs, accounts of their kings, wars, stratagems, and governance of their subjects. Further on in the passage, he says that the biographies, the

[49] Traces of this in Ghassānid history can be detected in their relation with Kalb and Salīḥ. Sometimes they apparently had to sow dissension between two tribal groups in order to keep them under control, e.g., between Balqayn and ʿĀmila, as recorded by Ḥamza; see above, 316–17, and *BASIC* I, 138–39. For tribal politics and wars in the Umayyad period in Bilād al-Shām, see I. al-Naṣṣ, *al-ʿAṣabiyya al-Qabaliyya* (Ḥarīṣa, Lebanon, 1963).

[50] On this, see Balāḏurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf,* ed. I. ʿAbbas (Wiesbaden, 1979), IV.1, 290.

[51] On the role of Muʿāwiya in encouraging the writing down of *Akhbār,* see Muṣṭafā, *Tārīkh,* 123–26.

[52] On Muʿāwiya in his capacity as a scribe for the Prophet, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1962), III, 173.

[53] See Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-Ḏahab,* ed. C. Pellat (Beirut, 1970), III, 222. For Masʿūdī, see *EI*^{2}, s.v.

siyar of kings, their *akhbār,* reports, and their war stratagems would be read to him from *dafātir* (plural of *daftar,* "notebook," "record," "document") by *ghilmān,* young men who were officially charged with keeping these *dafātir* and reading them to him.

The relevance of the passage in Masʿūdī to *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* is clear, especially its lexicon which employs the terms *akhbār* and *mulūk,* while reference to *dafātir* indicates that compositions in Arabic on both Arab and non-Arab history were available at his court.[54] When this paragraph in Masʿūdī is combined with that in the book attributed to Ibn Sharya in which reference to *Mulūk Ghassān* is explicit, the association of *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* with Muʿāwiya becomes very strong indeed.

As to who composed this book, the question must remain open, and possibly *Akhbār* will remain forever anonymous. On the analogy of the *Akhbār* of Kinda to whose '*ulamā*' and authorities reference is sometimes made in the sources,[55] it is possible to suggest that the book was written by a Ghassānid who stayed on in Bilād al-Shām after the battle of Yarmūk.[56]

In the last analysis, what matters in this context is not so much the inspiration behind the composition of *Akhbār* or the discovery of the identity of the one who composed it. What matters is the realization that this is a very early work that must have been composed in the seventh century and in Bilād al-Shām itself.

[54] This is a crucial passage in Masʿūdī for the rise of Arabic historical writing, well analyzed by Muṣṭafa, *Tārīkh,* 124–25. He rightly observes that Muʿāwiya would have been well informed about Islamic history of which he was one of the makers, and so he must have preferred to listen to tales of the non-Arab past and of the Arab *pre*-Islamic past, such as ʿUbayd ibn Sharya narrated. This circumscription of the range of these accounts to the pre-Islamic past—Arab and non-Arab—makes *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* even more closely related to the circle of Muʿāwiya.

Muṣṭafā's views were noticed by ʿAbd al-Waḥīd Ṭāha in "Nash'at ʿIlm al-Tārīkh fi al-ʿAṣr al Umawī," in *The First International Conference on the History of Bilād al-Shām during the Umayyad Period,* ed. M. A. Bakhīt (Amman, 1989), Arabic section, I, 72, where he rightly questions Muṣṭafā's view that the *ghilmān* may have interpreted and translated the accounts in the *dafātir* from Syriac or Greek and did not read them from an Arabic text. If the accounts or *Akhbār* had not been written in Arabic but were translated for Muʿāwiya, this would have attracted the attention of the usually curious Masʿūdī, and he would not have omitted reference to it. The text of Masʿūdī leaves no doubt whatsoever that the language involved in the *dafātir* and the reading was Arabic. Muṣṭafā ventured his view because these accounts in the *dafātir* have not survived and have left no trace in the Arabic historical tradition. This is not a valid argument, since the problem of source survival is a well-known one and the archaeological dictum "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence" is equally applicable to the field of literary research.

[55] As, for instance, in *al-Fihrist,* where Hishām quotes his father, who says that for the genealogy of Kinda he drew on one of its members, Abū al-Kināṣ al-Kindī, just as for the genealogy of Iyād he drew on one of them, ʿAdi ibn-Rathāth al-Iyādī; see *al-Fihrist,* 95, lines 22, 24.

[56] If so, his name has not survived. Some of the federate tribes in Oriens produced learned men in this period. Such was Kalb, to which belonged the two Kalbīs, Hishām and his father, Muḥammad, and ʿAwāna. It is difficult to believe that Ghassān did not produce such. They counted one in later times, Abū Mushir, for whom see Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 100–101. For ʿAwāna, see ibid., 307–8.

Consequently, its surviving information, although scanty, is reliable and trustworthy and of the utmost importance for reconstructing the history of the Ghassānid dynasty. It is tantalizing to think that when the ninth-century Muslim encyclopedic genius Jāḥiẓ spoke of the well-known Ghassānid poems and their trustworthy, authentic *akhbār* (reports),[57] he may have had in mind this book, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān;* it was certainly available in the time of Jāḥiẓ, since it was still available to the much later geographer Yāqūt. In the history of early Arabic historiography, the lost *Akhbār* may emerge as one of the earliest Arabic prose historical compositions, and much more reliable than the mostly legendary work of ʿUbayd ibn Sharya and Wahb ibn Munabbih.[58]

Appendix

Theodor Nöldeke and *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān*

The question has been raised why Nöldeke and his student F. J. Heer missed the precious reference in Yāqūt to *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* as his source for Ghassānid history, especially toponyms and structures associated with them.[1] It has been suggested that they might have thought, in the absence of the term *Kitāb* before *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* in the text of Yāqūt, that these *akhbār* were only "reports" on the *mulūk* (kings) of Ghassān such as the ones Ḥamza included in his *Tārīkh.* Furthermore, this thought might have led them to the conclusion that such *akhbār,* "reports" or data on the Ghassānid kings as were found in Ḥamza, were actually the source of Yāqūt. The question needs to be addressed in its two parts. It will be argued that *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* was indeed a book, a *kitāb,* and that this was the source of Yāqūt, not Ḥamza.

I

That *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* was indeed a *kitāb* is clearly implied by Yāqūt's use of "wajadtu": "I have found (*wajadtu*) in *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.*"[2] The term can only refer to a written document, a *kitāb,* since otherwise the careful Yāqūt would have used such a term as *samiʿtu* ("I have heard") or "ḥaddathanī" ("someone or so-and-so told me").[3] The word *wajadtu* is decisive and can only mean that the source involved is definitely a written one. This can be supported by Yāqūt's use of the same verb in contexts in which

[57] For the phrase on the Ghassānids, *al-Akhbār al-Saḥīḥa,* "true and trustworthy reports," see his "al-Radd ʿlā al-Naṣārā," in *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ,* ed. ʿAbd al-Salam Hārūn (Cairo, 1979), III, 312. Noteworthy is his use of the term *Akhbār,* the same that appears in the title of the book *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.* For more on this passage in Jāḥiẓ, see above, 288–89.

[58] For Wahb ibn Munabbih and his *Kitāb al-Tījān,* edited and transmitted by Ibn Hishām, see Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 305–7 and *BASIC* I.1, 25–26, on the migration period in the history of the Ghassānids.

[1] I thank Professor Franz Rosenthal for drawing my attention to the desirability of writing this appendix.

[2] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* ed. Wüstenfeld, II, 784, lines 15–16.

[3] As he does ibid., II, 888, 10, and VI, 94.

there is no question about the nature of the document involved; the reference to the written document is explicitly stated and follows the *wajadtu.*[4]

The employment of the appropriate verb by Yāqūt before the source is consonant with the various categories of sources he enumerated in his introduction, where he speaks of books, *kitāb*s, from which he derived his information and oral tradition, the *afwāh al-ruwāt,* "the mouths of the ruwāt."[5] The verb *wajadtu,* "I have found," clearly allocates the source, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* to the category of books, even though the term *kitāb,* which might have preceded the title, is missing. Yāqūt sometimes omits *kitāb,* as he does in the case of *Jibāl Tihāma,* a book authored by al-Kindī, and included in the list of books he consulted as mentioned in his introduction.[6] That the word *book* is often omitted before the title may be illustrated copiously in the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm, where often only the title of a book and, more relevantly to this discussion, the title of books that fall within the category of *akhbār,* appear as such without being preceded by the word *kitāb.* The most outstanding example of this is the section on al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār, where some twenty books of *akhbār* authored by him are mentioned without the word *kitāb.*[7] So it is certain that *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* was a *kitāb* on the kings of Ghassān in much the same way that a book such as *Kitāb Mulūk Kinda* was on the kings of Kinda.[8]

II

This discussion should be sufficient to dispel any notion that the source of Yāqūt was Ḥamza, since Yāqūt explicitly states that his source was *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān.* But other arguments may be advanced to confirm this conclusion. First, Yāqūt depended on Ḥamza for matters pertaining to Iṣfahān and to the Persian language on which Ḥamza was an authority, being a Persian and a native of Iṣfahān. He did not use him for anything else. Second, a comparison of the two statements in Yāqūt and Ḥamza on the cisterns of Ruṣāfa should also clearly establish the nondependence. The two statements are identical in their presentation of the achievements of the Ghassānid kings at Ruṣāfa, and this establishes that both used the same source. But their reports are not identical. Yāqūt, in addition to saying that the Ghassānid king repaired the cisterns, makes the further statement that he built its biggest/greatest *ṣihrīj,* a statement not found in Ḥamza. Finally, Yāqūt is more detailed on various Ghassānid toponyms not mentioned by Ḥamza that are in various parts of Oriens as well as in Ḥijāz and in the Arabian Peninsula, all unknown territory to Ḥamza. Consequently, *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* not Ḥamza, is the source of Yāqūt on the Ghassānids.[9]

[4] Ibid., I, 9, line 17, I, 499, line 22, and IV, 75, line 1, especially the second and the third where the term *bi khatt* and *kitāb* follow immediately the verbs *wajaddtuhu* and *tajiduhā* respectively.

[5] Ibid., 7–8; for *afwāh al-ruwāt,* see 8, line 13.

[6] Ibid., I, 7, line 16.

[7] See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist,* ed. G. Flügel (repr. Beirut, 1964), I, 111, lines 9–13. For other instances of the use of *Akhbār* without *kitāb* preceding it, see ibid., pp. 58, 101, 103, 105, 107, 109, 113, 114.

[8] On *Kitāb Mulūk Kinda,* attributed to Hishām al-Kalbī, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Al-Fihrist,* 96, line 17.

[9] For documentation of the statements on Yāqūt and Ḥamza in this section of the appendix, see above, 341–45.

Epilogues

I. Ghassānid Structures and Umayyad *Quṣūr*

The surviving Ghassānid structures in Oriens have been studied by many scholars from various perspectives, such as frontier studies, late antique art of the proto-Byzantine period, and Islamic art of the Umayyad period. Islamic art historians of the Umayyad period in Bilād al-Shām have drawn various conclusions with regard to Ghassānid structures and their relation to the Umayyads. Some have argued for a strong Ghassānid presence in the various monuments of Bilād al-Shām in the Umayyad period, while others doubt it. The problem is still unresolved.[1] As the history of the Ghassānids unfolds with intensive research, this problem becomes easier to address, but before suggesting answers and drawing conclusions it is well that issues that faced scholars when discussing the Ghassānid presence and substrate be explained.

Those who doubted the importance of the Ghassānid presence had the fol-

[1] The literature is extensive since the problem has been discussed for almost a century by scholars such as A. Musil, H. Lammens, E. Herzfeld, and J. Sauvaget and more recently by others, notably Oleg Grabar. Heinz Gaube, "Die syrischen Wüstenschlösser. Einige wirtschaftliche und politische Geschichtspunkte zu ihrer Enststehung," *ZDPV* 95 (1979), 182–209, gives a lucid account of the problem and important bibliographical references. See also O. Grabar, "Umayyad Palaces Reconsidered," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1992), 93–107; G. King, "Settlement Pattern in Islamic Jordan: The Umayyads and Their Use of Lands," *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 4 (1992), 369–75; and H. Innes MacAdam, "Settlements and Settlement Patterns in Northern and Central Transjordania, ca. 550–ca. 750," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East II,* Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, I (Princeton, N.J., 1994), 49–93. The most recent literature is represented by the work of two Byzantinists: J.-P. Sodini, "La contribution de l'archéologie à la connaissance du monde byzantin (IVe–VIIe siècles)," *DOP* 47 (1993), 139–84, and C. Foss, "Syria in Transition, A.D. 550–750: An Archaeological Approach," *DOP* 51 (1997), 189–269, which bear directly on the Ghassānid thesis and rightly set it within the context of Byzantine history. Both appeared before the publication of *BASIC* I.1–2, the detailed history of the Ghassānids, as did my own article "Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures: A Case of *Byzance après Byzance,*" in *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam, VIIe–VIIIe siècles,* Institut Français de Damas (Damascus, 1992), 299–307.

In this epilogue, the convenient term *quṣūr* is used to indicate the Umayyad as distinct from the Ghassānid structures.

lowing difficulties with it. First, the Ghassānids were declared to have been a group of nomads by those who have written on them. If they were such, how could they have constructed such impressive buildings as al-Mushattā, which according to some was a Ghassānid structure? Second, monumental structures, such as have been attributed to the Ghassānid kings, imply rich and powerful historical personages. But the Ghassānids were a small group of Arab allies living on the fringes of Oriens, and it is difficult to associate them with more than modest structures. Such scholarly concerns are understandable. These two negative views of the Ghassānids were those of the father of Ghassānid history, Theodor Nöldeke, who wrote his classic work before the discovery of important Ghassānid structures and before more came to be known about both Byzantium and the Ghassānids. His work was a series of short notes and footnotes mainly directed to the chronology of the dynasty and the correct sequence and identity of its rulers.

The lapse of more than a century has made a revision of Nöldeke's work possible and desirable. The two previous books in this series, *BASIC* I.1–2, have presented the history of the Ghassānids in detail, describing their power and influence in the politics, wars, and religious life of Oriens; so they have answered the second question. The first chapter in the present volume has answered the first one, and various other chapters have drawn attention to the particular interest of the Ghassānids in building and to their being *philoktistai,* reflecting the spirit of the age, which witnessed an explosion of Byzantine art and architecture.

The affirmative answers to the two questions posed here do not solve the problems of the Umayyad art historian since they can be construed as an argument from the general to the particular. These affirmative answers can cause certain arguments against the Ghassānid provenance of this or that particular structure, such as al-Mushattā, to collapse but they do not necessarily entail declaring as Ghassānid any particular building in question. The Ghassānid *Lebensraum,* the limitrophe, was occupied by the Umayyads, who like the Ghassānids were *philoktistai,* and as such they both took over the old Ghassānid structures and also built new ones. Hence the rise in the complexity of the problem, one dimension of which is to ascertain what is strictly Ghassānid and what is strictly Umayyad and what is compounded of both.

The complexity of the problem is also enhanced by the differences that obtained between the Ghassānids and the Umayyads and how these differences were expressed architecturally. This becomes especially difficult to observe in structures that had witnessed Ghassānid presence and a later Umayyad occupation. Disentangling the one from the other becomes the first major challenge in the study of such a monument.

This may be illustrated by a quick reference to two structures or sites that have witnessed first a Ghassānid presence and then a later Umayyad occupation, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī and the *praetorium extra muros* at Sergiopolis/Ruṣāfa. The

strictly Ghassānid element in the first, the tower, has never been seriously discussed in its own right as a Ghassānid structure, nor the implications as to what the original Ghassānid structure might have been before the Umayyad superstructure of later times engulfed it. Such a treatment would have revealed both the nature and extent of the Ghassānid element in the later Umayyad superstructure.[2]

The *praetorium extra muros* at Sergiopolis/Ruṣāfa has fared better than the tower of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr since it is an independent structure. Its evidence on Ghassānid presence in that region is now made clearer after the long chapter on the builder, Mundir, in *BASIC* I, parts 1 and 2. Even more important is the emergence of another non-Ghassānid federate Arab group, Bahrā', allied to the Ghassānids, as one of Ruṣāfa's guardians and a new interpretation of its *sharak* (path) around the city.[3] Such a strong and varied Arab federate presence in and around Ruṣāfa in pre-Islamic times has to be taken into account in understanding why the place became one of the main Umayyad residences during the reign of the caliph Hishām. The extensive Umayyad establishment could retrospectively throw light on the Ghassānid complex in pre-Islamic times, of which only glimpses are vouchsafed to the modern scholar because of the problem of source survival. The flourishing Umayyad establishment at Ruṣāfa could suggest that the Ghassānid one had been flourishing too (but not to the same extent) and that the choice of Ruṣāfa by the caliph Hishām had been inspired by the fact that the Arab federates had, in pre-Islamic times, developed it as a veritable oasis and thus had prepared it for later Umayyad takeover.

These preliminary observations may be helpful in treating the Ghassānid-Umayyad architectural relationship. But the correct assessment of this relationship can be fruitful only (1) when the Ghassānid elements are treated independently in their own right with the full implications of their Ghassānid character; (2) when the similarities and dissimilarities that obtained between the old masters of the limitrophe, the Ghassānids, and the new ones, the Umayyads, are clearly described; and (3) when the symbiosis between the two groups is fully appreciated. The Ghassānids were beaten by the forces of Islam, and Yazīd, the brother of the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, was one of the commanders whom Abū Bakr had dispatched for the conquest of Oriens. Nonetheless, later a *modus vivendi* ensued.

Of these elements, the third is the most important for dealing with the Ghassānid-Umayyad architectural relationship, and it is the one least understood so far. It is, therefore, the element that needs most discussion, after a brief treatment of the first two. (1) Various chapters in this volume have discussed Ghassānid struc-

[2] On this, see above, 203–11.

[3] For Bahrā' and *sharak,* see above, 116–17. For the detailed history of Mundir, see *BASIC* I.1, 339–540, and I.2, 860–921.

tures of all types in their own right without attention to the later Umayyad ones and have revealed an extensive range of Ghassānid architecture. (2) The Umayyads were lords in Oriens and not vassals like the Ghassānids. They were also much more affluent and powerful, since they were the rulers of a vast empire from Central Asia to Western Europe. They were Muslim, while the Ghassānids were Christian. These dissimilarities pose the question of whether this led to a departure in architectural and artistic expression by the Umayyads, the official representatives of the new order of the Islamic caliphate which replaced in Oriens the *basileia* of Christian Byzantium of which the Ghassānids formed a part. Despite all this, the Ghassānids and the Umayyads shared many values since they were Arabs, an important element in the symbiosis between them that persisted throughout the Umayyad period. (3) The third element, the most important and least appreciated, is the all-pervasive Ghassānid presence in the structure of the Umayyad state which might be termed the Ghassānid heritage. This is the right context for understanding the Ghassānid-Umayyad architectural relationship, only one part of a multidimensional relationship. In spite of the initial hostilities, the Umayyads respected the Ghassānids and admired them, as did the Arabs in general, especially the Meccans to whom the Umayyads belonged. This was true in pre-Islamic as well as Islamic times.

The powerful Ghassānid presence in the consciousness of the Umayyads and the Meccans may be presented as follows.

1. Mecca. The Ghassānids had a strong presence in Mecca itself through one group of the Azd to which Ghassān belonged, Khuzāʿa, which played an important part in the history of Mecca and was even the custodian of the Kaʿba. Quṣayy, the great figure in the history of Mecca and ancestor of the Prophet Muḥammad, finally married the daughter of its chief and then relieved Khuzāʿa of its dominant role. However, it remained a power in Mecca.[4]

2. One of the important clans of the Quraysh in Mecca was Banū Asad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā, the clan to which belonged Ḵhadīja, the first wife of the Prophet Muḥammad, and Waraqa ibn Nawful, the Christian who figured prominently in the early accounts of Muḥammad's call to prophethood. The clan was the *halīf,* the ally of Ghassān in Mecca.[5]

Meccans including Muḥammad before his prophetic call and Abū Sufyān, the father of the future caliph Muʿāwiya, conducted caravans from Mecca over the *via odorifera,* the *termini* of which were Gaza and Bostra. The Ghassānids played an important role in the history of this caravan trade as their phylarchate in Palaestina Tertia and the Provincia Arabia lay astride the two branches of this route that

[4] For Khuzāʿa, see *EI*², s.v. For Quṣayy, see *BAFIC,* 350–60.

[5] On this clan and its two personages, see R. Aigrain, "Arabic," *DGHE* III, 1255–56, and W. Montgomery Watt, *Muḥammad at Mecca* (Oxford, 1953), 50–52.

reached these two cities. These caravan leaders must have had vivid recollection of the power of the Ghassānids at the frontier posts and also in the various fairs (*sūqs*) that they presided over, the most important of which were those of Bostra, Aḏriʿāt, and Ayyūb, all in the Provincia Arabia.[6]

These relations were ruffled during the period of the conquests of Oriens/Bilād al-Shām. Now the Meccans and the Umayyads were fighting the Ghassānids, who were finally vanquished together with the Byzantines at the battle of Yarmūk. However, almost immediately a period of reconciliation followed; the way was prepared for a *modus vivendi* and for a later fruitful symbiosis, which went through the following stages. After the completion of the conquest of Oriens, Caliph Omar made his famous journey to Oriens, now Bilād al-Shām, to see it for himself and to draw up the broad lines of its administration. He chose Jābiya, the capital of the Ghassānids, for his headquarters, and it was there that came to him all the Arab commanders who took part in the conquest and heard his speech, *Khuṭbat al-Jābiya,* on the famous *Yawm al Jābiya,* the Day of al-Jābiya. The choice of the capital of the Ghassānids by the caliph laid the foundation of the later Umayyad association with Jābiya as the capital or headquarters of the Umayyad rulers of Bilād al-Shām.[7] What this particular caliph said and did became authoritative in early Islamic history, and his choice of Jābiya was not fortuitous. He had known the distinguished position of the Ghassānids in Bilād al-Shām when he came to it in pre-Islamic times with the Meccan caravans, and he expressed it powerfully during the Medinese period of Muḥammad's prophethood.[8]

However, it was Muʿāwiya, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, who laid the foundations of the Ghassānid-Umayyad relationship. This great statesman understood the crucial value of the Ghassānids for his plans to establish Umayyad power on sound secular bases first in Syria and then in the nascent Islamic caliphate. For the first twenty years of his governorship of Bilād al-Shām, the Ghassānid capital, Jābiya, was his capital whence he ran the whole of Bilād al-Shām.[9] In addition to the choice of the capital, he availed himself of both the Ghassānid establishment in Bilād al-Shām and the many Ghassānids who had decided to stay on and not emigrate with Jabala to Anatolia. In order to run a region that had seen an efficient Byzantine administration for some three centuries, he could not depend on administrative expertise from Arabia. He chose to depend on what had survived of the Byzantine administrative system and its bureaucrats,[10] but naturally

[6] These *sūq*s (fairs) will be treated in detail in *BASIC* II.2.

[7] On Jābiya, see above, 96–104.

[8] See *BASIC* I.1, 649, iii.

[9] On this, see the section on Jābiya, above, 100–101.

[10] The most outstanding of these Byzantine bureaucrats was Manṣūr ibn-Sarjūn of the reign of Heraclius, who ran for the Umayyads one of the most important departments in the administration, the revenue bureau. He was not a federate but a Rhomaic Arab. His grandson Yūḥanna, better known as St. John of Damascus, also served the Umayyads before he took the monastic

he depended especially on his Arab congeners, the Ghassānids, who played a significant role in serving Muʿāwiya and the Umayyad state as did other federates such as Kalb and Judām. The description of the Umayyad state as a "succession-state"[11] to Byzantium is an exaggeration, but the element of truth in it is obvious. However, the main instrument that mediated this Byzantinism was the federate Arab.

The *ajnad* system, which turned out to be the backbone and solid foundation of Umayyad power, had been applied to Oriens in pre-Islamic times. It was formed immediately after the Byzantine victory of Heraclius over the Persians, and the Ghassānids played a major role in it.[12] During the Umayyad period, they remained deployed in Jund al-Urdunn and Dimashq, not far from Muʿāwiya's capital, Jābiya. Ghassānid expertise in warfare was needed by the new masters of Oriens, both internally in Oriens and externally in the campaigns in Anatolia against Byzantium and other fronts. Its most visible and concrete manifestation was the employment of Ḥassān ibn-al-Nuʿmān, the Ghassānid, for the conquest of North Africa.[13]

Umayyad dependence on the *foederati* in the administration was no less important and is reflected in the list of their officials who held important posts. Some of them were federate Arabs who belonged to the Salīḥids, as has been pointed out in a previous volume of this series, but the even more impressive number of the Ghassānids reflected the all-pervasive Ghassānid presence in the structure of the Umayyad state.[14]

A more concrete expression of the Ghassānid and Arab federate presence in the Umayyad state under Muʿāwiya is the number of innovations that the founder of the dynasty introduced in the administration of the region, so that he may be considered one of the *awā'il,* "the firsts." A long list of them may be compiled,

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garb and retired to the monastery of St. Saba in the Judean desert. On the family of Manṣūr ibn Sarjūn and their services to the Umayyad state, see J. Naṣrallah, *Saint Jean de Damas: Son époque, sa vie, son oeuvre* (Paris, 1950), 9–85.

[11] On this and on Umayyad adaptations and adoptions from the Byzantine administrative system, see H. A. R. Gibb, "Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate," *DOP* 12 (1958), 223–24, 232.

[12] The term *theme* has been avoided in this paragraph because it has been contested as the Greek equivalent of Arabic *jund.* But both sides in this controversy are agreed that the *jund* system, whether or not it is based on the theme system, was pre-Islamic and inherited by the Umayyads from the Byzantine military system that had prevailed in Oriens; see the present writer in "Heraclius and the Unfinished Themes of Oriens: Some Final Observations," *Byzantion* 64 (1994), 352–76, and "Heraclius and the Theme System Revisited: The Unfinished Themes of Oriens" (forthcoming).

[13] For Ḥassān ibn al-Nuʿmān, see *EI*[2], s.v., III, 271.

[14] On the Salīḥid Usāma ibn-Zayd, who served so many Umayyad caliphs in most important capacities, see *BAFIC,* 305–6. The astounding number of Ghassānids who served the Umayyads in all walks of life has been pointed out by Muḥammad Khuraysāt, "Dawr Ghassān fi al-Ḥayāt al-ʿĀmmah," in *Proceedings of the Third Symposium: The Fourth International Conference on the History of Bilād al-Shām during the Umayyad Period,* ed. M. A. Bakhīt (Amman, 1989), 191–217.

for some of which a Byzantine provenance may be predicated. It is natural to assume that some of those innovations were mediated by the *foederati,* especially the Ghassānids.[15]

The Christianity of the Ghassānids as well as their South Arabian origin attracted the attention of Muʿāwiya, who, as is well known, rested his power on an astute handling of tribal politics, supporting the South Arabian tribal groups against those of north Arabia; of the former, the trio Ghassān, Kalb, and Juḏām were the most prominent. Muʿāwiya's friendliness to the Christian population in Oriens is also well known. He had been rejected by the religious party, which in Ḥijāz favored the house of the Prophet, represented by his rival for the caliphate, ʿAlī. He was thus naturally more inclined toward the Christian Arabs of Oriens, who even possibly hailed him as deliverer from Orthodox Chalcedonian Byzantium. Muʿāwiya started the glorification of Jerusalem at the expense of Mecca and Medina, and it was there that he had declared his caliphate.[16] It is not altogether impossible that the Muslim tradition that considered Jābiya a holy city may go back to the period of his governorship of Oriens during which Jābiya was his capital.[17]

The revival of Arabic poetry under the Umayyad dynasty, after a short period of eclipse, was due to Muʿāwiya, a great connoisseur of Arabic poetry himself. The Ghassānid model may have been his inspiration. It was in Jābiya that the foremost poets of pre-Islamic Arabia recited their panegyrics of the Ghassānid kings and advertised in Arabia their prowess and the splendor of their court. Muʿāwiya needed supportive poets who would reflect and advertise his policies and state his case for legitimacy. Hence the revivification of a poetry that served the Umayyad state.[18] In this, Ḥassān the poet who had been the panegyrist of the Ghassānids was a model. After the emigration of Muḥammad to Medina, he became the poet laureate of the prophet of Islam. So here was a poet in whose panegyrics were united praise for the kingdom of Ghassān and the new world of Islam, poetry that was in the interests of the two political entities. Muʿāwiya, of course, knew Ḥassān in Medina, and about A.D. 660 the poet, old and blind, came to Damascus to pay homage to the newly elected caliph, installed in Ghassānland, the same region that Ḥassān had visited in pre-Islamic times, and which now he remembered so touchingly in his panegyrics as *laudator temporis acti.*[19]

The revolution effected by Muʿāwiya in Arab Islamic history was the intro-

[15] For these innovations, some of which are attributed to others, see P. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (New York, 1970), 195, 198, 260–61; more can be added to Hitti's list.

[16] On this, see ibid., 189.

[17] See "The Golan: A Holy Mountain," above, 86–96.

[18] On tribal politics and the poetry that fueled it in the Umayyad period, see the massive work by I. al-Naṣṣ, *al-ʿAṣabiyya al-Qabaliyya wa Āṯāruhā fī al-Shiʿr al-Umawī* (Ḥarīṣa, Lebanon, 1963).

[19] On Ḥassān, see above, 232–46.

duction of the hereditary principle instead of the elective one that had previously prevailed in the period of the orthodox caliphs. He is credited with the introduction of *mulk,* kingship, instead of *khilāfat,* which resulted in the succession of his son Yazīd and the establishment of the hereditary dynastic principle in Islamic history. Surely the model for that must have been the Ghassānid dynasty whose capital he occupied for twenty years, in which the dynastic hereditary principle was observed and hailed in the poetry of their panegyrists.

A section in this volume has examined in detail the work titled *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* suggesting that the book was composed during the governorship of Muʿāwiya in Jābiya or his caliphate in Damascus, or even was inspired by him.[20] The book told the story of the *mulk,* the kingship of the Ghassānids, which apparently he considered his model. German scholarship has appropriately described the Umayyad state, not as a caliphate nor an Islamic state, but as *Das Arabische Reich.* Whether or not *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān* was inspired by Muʿāwiya, it is almost certain that the Ghassānid kingship and dynasty were before his eyes when he revolutionized Arab-Islamic history by the introduction of *mulk* and the hereditary principle of succession. Julius Wellhausen's title *Das Arabische Reich* is equally applicable to the Ghassānid kingdom, which was an *imperium in imperio* in Oriens. So it might with much truth be said that the Umayyad state was a successor state to the Ghassānid kingdom.

The foregoing paragraphs have stated the case for a pervasive Ghassānid presence in the Umayyad state as established by Muʿāwiya. Umayyad history till the end developed along the lines drawn up by this first caliph of the dynasty, and so the Ghassānid presence persisted to the end of the Umayyad period. When he was declared caliph, after some twenty years of residence in Jābiya, Muʿāwiya moved the capital to Damascus, as was natural. His own status had changed from governor of Bilād al-Shām to caliph of an empire that extended from India to Spain; Damascus was better known internationally than Jābiya.[21] The change of capitals did not dilute the Ghassānid presence, which was traceable also in Damascus but even more so in its environs, in Damascene, witness its many Ghassānid settlements and the proximity of the other Ghassānid capital, Jalliq, the haunt of Yazīd, the Umayyad successor of Muʿāwiya. As indicated in the section on Jābiya, the town retained its prestige even after Muʿāwiya moved to Damascus. It was here that the second Umayyad line, the Marwānid, established its power in A.D. 683 with a second "Day of Jābiya." The town retained its importance and Ghassānid prestige throughout the reigns of the caliphs of the Marwānid branch.

These arguments are the background for engaging with the main theme of

[20] For *Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān,* see above, 364–74.

[21] For more on the transfer of the capital from Jābiya to Damascus, see H. Lammens, "Kafya Ṣarat Dimashq ʿĀṣima," *al-Machriq* (1931), 892–96.

this section, the *quṣūr* of the Umayyads. Muʿāwiya himself, who moved between Damascus and Jābiya, apparently had little to do with these *quṣūr* which were located in the limitrophe away from these two towns. He was a serious ruler who was totally absorbed in the all-consuming task of founding a new Arab state not entirely along Arab and Islamic lines. However, it was his reign that witnessed the establishment of the strong Ghassānid presence in the structure of the Umayyad state in Bilād al-Shām, the important backdrop against which the problem of the *quṣūr,* may now be set.

As already indicated, these were far removed from the axis, Jābiya-Damascus, along which Muʿāwiya moved. It was his Sufyānid and Marwānid successors that were responsible for the curious phenomenon of a peripatetic Umayyad dynasty very often residing away from Damascus. The caliph who started this tradition was Muʿāwiya's son and successor, Yazīd, both as crown prince and as caliph. Unlike Walīd II, who was a profligate playboy, Yazīd was a serious and capable ruler, but he also wanted recreation. He played hard and worked hard. It was he who began the movement of the Umayyads away from Damascus to the old Ghassānid limitrophe in the Damascene for purposes of sport and relaxation. Yazīd was a poet and hedonist; as a crown prince he spent some time in the other Ghassānid capital, Jalliq, where he hunted, caroused, and courted women. He continued his father's association with Ghassān when he not only chose Jalliq as his favorite haunt but also married a Ghassānid princess who gave birth to his daughter Ramla, in the same way his father had married from the federate Christian tribe Kalb a woman, Maysūn, who gave birth to him. In addition to Jalliq, he spent much time at another place associated with the Ghassānids, Evaria/Ḥuwwarīn, where he rode and hunted. It was at Ḥuwwarīn that news of his father's death and his own elevation to the caliphate reached him, and it was there that he died. Yazīd then was the first Umayyad caliph to start this movement that acquired momentum with his successors and that led to the strong Umayyad presence in these *quṣūr* that dot the length and breadth of the limitrophe.[22]

This movement of Umayyad caliphs and princes away from Damascus needs to be explained because it is not only a problem in Umayyad history but also relevant to the Ghassānid-Umayyad relationship. The area they moved into and where they built these *quṣūr* was the old Ghassānid limitrophe which these Umayyads now appropriated after occupying their Jawlān and its capital, Jābiya. Attention will be drawn here to the identical or similar motives that were operative in the two groups—Umayyads and Ghassānids—in their occupation of roughly the same area.

It was only natural that the Umayyads should have moved to the Ghassānid

[22] On Yazīd, see H. Lammens, "Yazid B. Muʿāwiya," *EI,* s.v., with its bibliography, especially his own valuable contribution, vol. IV, 1162–1163; see also above, 108–9.

Lebensraum in the limitrophe. Oriens was tricultural, triethnic, and trilingual, consisting of the Greek, Aramaic, and Arab sectors. The last was roughly the limitrophe peopled by Nabataeans, Palmyrenes, and then the *foederati,* the last of whom were the Ghassānids. It was natural for the Umayyad Arabs to have chosen the Arab sector of Oriens, the Ghassānid, rather than the more alien Greek and Aramaic regions. Although the Umayyads arrived as conquerors, yet they were also immigrants who naturally gravitated toward the Ghassānid Arab sector with which they had a natural affinity. The map of Umayyad presence and habitat coincides roughly with that of the Ghassānids. The choice of this Ghassānland was initiated and hallowed by the visit of the caliph Omar, and was clinched by Mu'āwiya, who chose their capital Jābiya as his own. The occupation of the remaining part of Ghassānland ensued.

In the case of the Ghassānids, they *had* to live in this zone since this is what the lord, Byzantium, dictated to its vassal, Ghassān. The Umayyads, on the other hand, who could have occupied any part of Oriens they pleased, *chose* to live in the arid limitrophe. A variety of reasons must have impelled them to do so. First, it has been noted that the epidemics that broke out in Bilād al-Shām in this period, such as the one at 'Amwas, gave Jābiya much visibility since the Umayyads moved there attracted by its salubrious air. But other epidemics drove them to the limitrophe, as can be illustrated by the well-known accounts related to the caliph Hishām and his move to Ruṣāfa. Epidemics broke out also in the sixth century, which witnessed the most severe of them all, the famous plague of around A.D. 540 described so well by Procopius.[23] The climate may have been arid in the limitrophe, but the air at least was salubrious.

The Ghassānids, as has been previously explained, made the arid limitrophe prosperous and developed its water systems through their hydrographic skills. So they contributed to the rise of a number of "oases" in the limitrophe. The Umayyads, it has been maintained, had an agricultural policy when they settled in various parts of the limitrophe. This is difficult to accept, since they had already at their disposal the fertile valleys of the Nile and the Two Rivers.[24] It is more likely that they rendered the region surrounding their *quṣūr* green and fertile for purely environmental reasons. They did not wish to live in an arid desert atmosphere, and so they surrounded the *quṣūr* with greenery to make the terrain more attractive to them, more comparable to the green district of a place such as Damascus. The development of agricultural settlements was more typical of the Ghassānids,

[23] On these epidemics, see the section on Ḥassān, above, 234–35.

[24] Conceivably there are cases where this theory may be valid, but it is very doubtful that it was a policy of the Umayyads to develop agriculture around their *quṣūr* in the limitrophe. The system of irrigation in the *ghūṭa* of Damascus completed by Yazīd I was truly the expression of an Umayyad agricultural policy.

who thus prepared the limitrophe as an attractive region for later occupation by the Umayyads.

Although the dour and serious Muʿāwiya had no time for relaxation and for withdrawing to these resorts, many of his successors resembled his son, who wanted to both play and work. Even the most serious, such as Hishām, went out to the limitrophe and spent more time there than at Damascus. These Umayyads who had hailed from Mecca must have found the limitrophe a congenial place. Like the Arabs of the sixth century, their recreation included hunting, horseback riding, and horse racing. These had been the pleasures of the Ghassānids who lived in the limitrophe and developed hunting lodges in many of their settlements.[25] The Umayyad caliphs could not relax in the Greek- and Aramaic-speaking cities of inner Oriens, so they did in the limitrophe.

There was another related reason for the Umayyad choice of the limitrophe. The Umayyad ruler was also a caliph and a commander of the faithful, his official title. The head of a state with such titles, if he happened to be a hedonist who wanted, among other things, to drink wine (which was forbidden in Islam), would have found it much more convenient to indulge in this in the limitrophe, away from the eyes of his Muslim subjects, than in Damascus in the shadow of the Great Mosque. Not all the caliphs were drunkards, but some were. This leads to the conclusion that it is difficult to give a single explanation for the Umayyad *quṣūr.* Each caliph has to be studied separately. The serious, responsible Hishām was entirely different from the profligate and irresponsible Walīd II. Hence his choice of such places as Ruṣāfa had different motives than the choice of Walīd of his many residences.

The Ghassānid way of relaxation was not much different from that of the Umayyads, but in their case they could not relax elsewhere in Oriens because it was the limitrophe that was allocated to them. So, as they could not swim in the Mediterranean, they hunted and rode in the limitrophe. The Umayyads did

[25] On the hunt in Oriens, see G. Fowden, "Desert Kites: Ethnography, Archaeology, and Art," in *JRA* Supplementary series 31, *The Roman and Byzantine Near East,* II (1999), 107–36. In the same article (113–15), the author disagrees with the section in *BAFOC,* 483–85 on the *maṣāyid,* enclosures. I had only *tentatively* followed Poidebard's conclusions that these *maṣāyid,* so-called hunting traps, were rather defensive structures allied to the defense system in Oriens set up by Diocletian. I then argued that they might have been the *ḥīras* and the *hādirs,* the paremboles of the Arab federates. Throughout my discussion I said that this is contingent on whether the conclusions of Poidebard were correct. Fowden has argued persuasively for his view of these structures and may well be right, but I await the judgment of scholars more knowledgeable about hunting than myself. The description of these *maṣāyid* by Poidebard as enclosures encircled with walls whose salients are fortified with round towers still indicates to me that these structures seem more related to a defense strategy than to hunting gazelles. It is not altogether unlikely that these structures, even if they had been *maṣāyid,* may have been "recycled" for defense purposes by the Ghassānids, the new *limitanei* of Oriens.

roughly the same, although they could have swum in the Mediterranean if they wanted to. The limitrophe thus must have had facilities such as hunting lodges which the Ghassānids constructed and which the Umayyads with similar tastes inherited.

Equally important was the problem of tribal politics that engaged both dynasties, the Ghassānids and the Umayyads, with some differences, and necessitated their presence in the limitrophe.

The Ghassānid phylarchy was multitribal in nature after Justinian put Arethas and his brother Abū Karib in command of all the *foederati* in Oriens who belonged to various tribes. It was a difficult task to keep them in control, and so the Ghassānids had to watch closely the situation within Oriens among the tribes of the Inner Shield. They also had to keep watch over the frontier for their relations with the allied tribes of the Outer Shield and the pastoralists who would raid the frontier. The rise of the *praetorium* at Ruṣāfa illustrates a Ghassānid presence inspired at least partly by a desire to attend to the tribal problem.

Even more than the Ghassānids, the Umayyads had a special interest in tribal politics. As usurpers of the caliphate in the perception of the religious party in Ḥijāz, they rested their power on tribal politics, the support of the South Arabian tribes against those of north Arabia, a very delicate balance. The structure built by Muʿāwiya along these lines endured, although it started to show cracks in the reign of the Marwānid caliph Walīd I and reached its climax in the reign of the last Umayyad, Marwān ibn Muḥammad.[26] Therefore, a caliphal presence on the limitrophe in the territory of the tribes was all-important, whether in the southern limitrophe in Trans-Jordan or in the northern in Euphratensis. It brought the caliph near the two regions that were hostile to his house, Iraq and Ḥijāz, and facilitated his vigilance and watch over this delicate political situation.

The Muslim conquest of Oriens succeeded in uniting the two sides of the Byzantine frontier, which formerly had a foreign power, Byzantium, ruling Oriens to protect it against the raids of the pastoralist Arabs from the peninsula. Now even though the rulers of Oriens were Arabs, the Arabs outside the frontier remained unfriendly to the new government. The two extremities of the limitrophe contiguous with Ḥijāz and Iraq had to be constantly watched against possible trouble from these two areas of anti-Umayyad sentiments. That the ʿAbbāsid revolution, which brought about the downfall of the Umayyads, started in al-Ḥumayma in the southern end of the limitrophe at one of the former military stations of the Romans, possibly occupied by the Ghassānids in the pre-Islamic period, speaks for itself.

The Umayyads thus preferred to live in the capital Jābiya, the main "province" of Golan, and the limitrophe of the Ghassānids, the Arab rather than the

[26] See al-Naṣṣ, *al-ʿAṣabiyya,* and Hitti, *History,* 279–87.

Greek and Aramaic sectors of Oriens. The first part of this section treated the pervasive Ghassānid presence in the Umayyad state institutionally and ideologically. The problem of the *quṣur* will now be discussed against this background. Ghassānid architecture consisted of military, civil (palaces and mansions), and ecclesiastical structures (churches and monasteries), all of which have been discussed in this volume. It is natural to suppose that the Umayyads, who inherited the legacy of the Ghassānids in so many respects, should, as conquerors, have possessed themselves of some of these structures. Umayyad scholars have concentrated on the *quṣūr* of the limitrophe (fortresses), of which many developed into mansions, when the Ghassānids took them over as *kastra* and *castella* from the *limitanei* and developed the limitrophe, indeed urbanized it. Yet the two other categories of architectural remains, the civil and the ecclesiastical, surely deserve some attention.

A previous chapter in this volume discussed the monasteries and churches of the Ghassānids and other *foederati.* In the Provincia Arabia alone there were 137 Monophysite monasteries under the patronage of the Ghassānid Arethas, some of which were strictly Arab Ghassānid. Others no doubt existed in the other provinces of Oriens. These Christian monasteries were of special interest to the Muslim Arabs of both the Umayyad and the ʿAbbāsid periods. As Christian religious structures, Islam normally accepted their existence in *Dār al-Islām* and respected their independence, but there were exceptional cases, however, and some monasteries were taken over by the caliphs. Such was the monastery at Haliorama associated with Arethas the Ghassānid; it was developed extensively by the Umayyad caliph and became Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī.

Most of these monasteries were left alone, as places of Christian Arab monasticism. Some were frequented by the caliphs themselves, Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid. It is relevant to mention that the one who started the movement away from Damascus into the limitrophe, that is, Yazīd, Muʿāwiya's son, also initiated this interest in the monasteries as retreats for relaxation. Dayr Murrān appears in anecdotes associated with him, as does Jalliq, to whose religious establishments he refers in his poetry. He died at Ḥuwwārīn (Evaria), another place associated with the Ghassānids, which also had its religious structures.[27] These monasteries were convenient venues for the caliphs and their associates to relax and drink wine, in surroundings more appropriate than secular taverns for a caliph. The monastery had some attractive power over and a fascination for the Umayyad caliphs and princes, two of whom, Walīd I and ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, died at monasteries; the latter was even buried at Dayr Samʿān.[28]

[27] For Yazīd and Ḥuwwārīn, see *EI*², s.v. Ḥuwwārīn.

[28] For the death of Walīd I at Dayr Murrān and ʿUmar at Dayr Samʿān, see *EI*², s.vv. Muʿāwiya, son of Caliph Hishām, died at Dayr Ḥanīnā'; Bakrī, *Muʿjam,* II, 580.

Ḥamza, the writer to whom is owed the long list of Ghassānid buildings, and also contemporary Arabic poetry on the Ghassānids, refers to their palaces and mansions.[29] These have been difficult to identify, with rare exceptions, such as al-Qasṭal in Trans-Jordan. The Ghassānids must have had a number of such palaces, especially in the two capitals Jābiya and Jalliq, which have disappeared without any chance of retrieval. But a cluster still exists in Trans-Jordan, of which Qasṭal is only one in the Balqā', a region closely associated with the Ghassānids in the poetry of the period. This raises the questions of whether palaces such as al-Mushattā were Ghassānid structures before the Umayyads took them over. The same question may be raised in connection with other structures in the Trans-Jordan region.

Conclusions on these structures are plagued by the absence of inscriptions and by the fact that when the Umayyads took them over they must have developed them beyond recognition. The Ghassānids were affluent and powerful but could not compete with the Umayyads who were lords in Oriens and ruled an empire that extended from the Pamir to the Pyrenees.

The military stations along the *limes,* the *quṣūr,* had been occupied by the Ghassānids as *foederati* after they took over from the *limitanei* the defense of Oriens. Unlike the case of the monasteries, the occupants of these forts deserted them after being defeated by the Muslim Arabs in the various battles of the thirties, the climax of which was Yarmūk in 636. Many chose to join the Ghassānid king Jabala in leaving Oriens for Anatolia and living in Byzantine territory.

It is natural to suppose that the new masters of the Near East and Oriens in particular moved into these military stations vacated by the defeated Ghassānids. It is true that the Muslim conquest of Oriens effected important changes in the function of the old Roman *limes,* the frontier, which had been principally fortified against the Arab pastoralists of the Arabian peninsula. Now the Arabs were masters of Oriens, and so both sides of the *limes* were in the hands of the same people. Yet the old frontier did not cease to challenge the central government in Damascus, the Arab Umayyads, who rested their power on the severe tribal rivalries that obtained in Umayyad Bilād al-Shām. Since caliphal presence along the frontier and residence there was an important instrument of Umayyad policy in Bilād al-Shām, these old Ghassānid structures along the *limes* did not outlive their usefulness. The new tenants were Umayyads, much more affluent and powerful than the Ghassānids, and so these *castella* of the old Roman *limes* became more palatial, adapted by the Umayyads to their tastes. There is no way of telling how many of these Ghassānid stations the Umayyads occupied, but the natural presumption is that they must have occupied at least some.

Another question arises as to whether the Umayyads only occupied and de-

[29] On this, see above, 306–41.

veloped the old stations or built ones that were completely new. The Umayyads, as newcomers, must have celebrated their advent to power with new structures entirely their own. But there is no doubt that they must have moved into the old Ghassānid establishments along the *limes.* The factor that must have induced them to do so was water. In this arid area, the availability of a water spring is a *sine qua non* of any establishment. The Ghassānids had spent a century and a half in that region during which they must have discovered the limited water supplies of the region. Even before their advent, the Romans had paid attention to this problem since the days of Diocletian, who established the series of forts along the *limes* for the protection of Oriens. The Umayyads may have discovered a few new water sources, but surely they would have been happy to move into establishments where the problem of water had been solved for them by the Ghassānids. Some concrete examples will illustrate some of the problems discussed earlier.

In a standard work on Islamic architecture, a list of some admittedly Ghassānid structures is given, no more than six with some reservations about two. They are the well-known Ghassānid buildings associated with Ruṣāfa, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr, Ḍumayr, and Hayyāt; reservations are expressed with regard to the cruciform building in Amman and the Trans-Jordanian Qasṭal.[30] The list illustrates the importance of epigraphy in attributing structures to the Ghassānids, since the first four are epigraphic while the last two are anepigraphic. It is difficult to believe that these were the only monuments left behind by the Ghassānids on this segment of the *limes,* almost half of the length of the whole frontier from the Euphrates to Ayla. The presumption is that the Ghassānids who replaced the *limitanei* and imparted a new energy to the *limes* had a much more extensive presence along it, represented by other structures that have not survived. This hypothesis is now supported by the discovery of the Usays inscription, the importance of which for Ghassānid structures had not been fully appreciated.[31] The inscription clearly associates the Ghassānids as early as 529 with the strategic position of Usays where there was a fortress named Sulayman of which the Ghassānids were in charge. Now Usays (Seis) has long been studied by art historians and archaeologists as a flourishing Umayyad establishment under Walīd I with no reference whatsoever to a previous Ghassānid occupation, even though a verse by Imru' al-Qays could have drawn attention to that presence.[32] The inscription attests that presence, and the presumption is that it was more than a fortress and that it might have developed into a Ghassānid reception hall for receiving poets, such as Imru' al-Qays. The remains of a church or monastery there also suggest that Ghassānid Usays had other uses besides being a fortress.[33]

[30] See K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* (New York, 1979), I.2, 636–37.
[31] For this inscription, see *BASIC* I.1, 117–24.
[32] On the verse of Imru' al-Qays, see above, 260–61.
[33] On this, see above, 187.

The addition of Usays to the list of Ghassānid military stations on the *limes* is a matter of some importance for arguing for more possible Ghassānid sites along this outer frontier. Qaṣr Burquʿ, associated by inscription with the Umayyad Walīd, is not far from Usays and like it witnessed an Umayyad presence. In the case of Usays, the inscription has associated it definitely with the Ghassānids, thus making Usays, like Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, a Ghassānid establishment that was taken over by the Umayyads, who developed it beyond recognition as an originally Ghassānid site. The possibility that Qaṣr Burquʿ was a Ghassānid establishment taken over by the Umayyads may likewise be suggested for Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī, a most impressive and patently Umayyad structure. Is it credible that the Ghassānids, who had an established presence in Ruṣāfa, with a *praetorium* north of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī, and another at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, southwest of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī, would not have had a presence in the Sharqī (East), which lay so centrally between two Ghassānid structures, Ruṣāfa and al-Ḥayr Gharbī, especially when set against the Ghassānid takeover of the *limes* from the *limitanei*? The line of Ghassānid military stations, which now included Usays, extends considerably to the south, reflecting the reality of their takeover from the *limitanei.* Hence the value of drawing attention here to the very relevant background of the new duties of the Ghassānids as a backdrop against which to set the future search for an answer to the question of a possible Ghassānid presence in a particular site.

The literary sources are not entirely silent on the Ghassānid-Umayyad relationship. They reveal at least two relevant toponyms.

1. Ḥuwwārīn/Evaria. This was the famous site at which Mundir, the Ghassānid, was trapped and betrayed by Magnus in 581, when he had come for the consecration of a church. Ḥuwwārīn was also the episcopal see of the Monophysite bishop John, exiled by Justin I in 519. It has been argued that the federate Arabs over whom John was bishop were the Ghassānids.[34]

Before he became caliph, Yazīd, son of Muʿāwiya, sought relaxation at Ḥuwwārīn, where he later died and was buried. He left behind him a mansion that still exists, called Qaṣr Yazīd.[35] So Ḥuwwārīn has had associations with both the Ghassānids and the Umayyads.

2. Ḥarlān in Damascene is the place where John, the Monophysite bishop of the Ghassānids, died after being exiled by the Chalcedonians. It was inhabited by some Umayyad nobles.[36]

An Umayyad association with these two toponyms does not establish beyond doubt a Ghassānid presence there but is suggestive. When the Umayyad crown prince and some nobles decided to spend some time at these sites, the presump-

[34] For Mundir and Bishop John, see *BASIC* I.1, 455–61, and I.2, 717–22.
[35] On Qaṣr Yazīd in Ḥuwwārīn, see Ḥuwwārīn, *EI*², s.v.
[36] On this, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam,* s.v. Ḥarlān.

tion is that they were following in the steps of the Ghassānid royal house who developed both places in such a way as to be worthy of royalty.

The Umayyad association with Ghassānid structures is also reflected in an episode involving the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz who passed by a Ghassānid *qaṣr*. His companion recited some poetry on the transience of human life with reference to the Ghassānids who were masters no more. The caliph retorted by saying it is better to recite verses from the Koran on this theme.[37]

Conclusion

A return to the question posed at the beginning of this section is appropriate after this complex argument. The Ghassānid substrate in later Umayyad Islamic structures, it has been maintained, was considerable, and only archaeological research can reveal its extent. The truth of this statement derives from the pervasive presence of the Ghassānids in the consciousness of the Umayyads and in the structure of the Umayyad state. It follows that the Umayyads moved into the three main categories of Ghassānid architecture, religious, secular, and military. As the Umayyads were much more affluent and powerful than the Ghassānids, they developed the old Ghassānid establishments almost beyond recognition, so that the Ghassānid substrate when such obtained was completely dwarfed and more often than not obliterated. Many of these structures that have survived stand anepigraphic, leaving their affiliation an open question. Only more intensive archaeological research may be able to reveal the identity of the builders if inscriptions are found. The ʿAbbāsids contributed to this obliteration when they destroyed many of the Umayyad establishments.

Finally, the strong Ghassānid presence in the Umayyad state and in the architectural achievements of the Umayyads is relevant for the Islamic art historian who is concerned with foreign influences on Umayyad art—Byzantine, Roman, and Sasanid. The Umayyads constructed their buildings in what had been formerly Byzantine Oriens, a diocese that in the sixth century had witnessed an explosion of Christian Byzantine art. Surely this Byzantine influence must have been the dominant one on the Umayyads. But the Umayyads did not receive this influence directly; it was filtered to them. They occupied almost exactly the same *Lebensraum* as the Ghassānids in pre-Islamic times. It follows that the Byzantine element entered the Umayyad structure not always directly, but filtered through the mediation of the Ghassānids, perhaps adapted by these to Arab tastes. Jorga's felicitous phrase *Byzance après Byzance* for the Byzantine heritage in southeastern Europe may with equal truth be applied to the Oriens of the Umayyads. Because of the mediation of the Ghassānids, this heritage may more truthfully and revealingly be termed *Ghassān après Ghassān.*

[37] Ibid., s.v. Sindād.

II. ʿAbbāsid Caliphs and Lakhmid Ḥīra

The Lakhmids were the counterparts of the Ghassānids in pre-Islamic times in almost every aspect of their life and history.[1] They were *foederati* of Sasanid Persia in much the same way that the Ghassānids were those of Byzantium. Both their capitals, Ḥīra and Jābiya, were respectively the two great Arab centers of pre-Islamic times. Both had a strong Arab identity, but as vassals of the two world powers, Byzantium and Persia, they were subject to strong influences, cultural and other, that emanated from the two overlords. Finally, both exercised some influence on the two Arab Islamic dynasties that came to power after the brief patriarchal period of the four orthodox caliphs, namely, the Umayyads and the ʿAbbāsids. These fell heir to dominion over territories in the Fertile Crescent in which the Ghassānids of Jābiya and the Lakhmids of Ḥīra had flourished. In their respective capitals resided initially and for a short time the caliphs of the two Arab Muslim dynasties, the Umayyads in Jābiya and the ʿAbbāsids intermittently in Ḥīra. Hence what has been recorded of one of these pre-Islamic federates or dynasties, the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids, illuminates the history of the other.

The Arabic sources have been kinder to the Lakhmids. Historians such as Ṭabarī and Balāḏurī have allotted much space to the Lakhmids but little to the Ghassānids. The detailed narrative of Ṭabarī on the Lakhmids and their overlords the Sasanids enabled Theodor Nöldeke to reconstruct the history of both lord and vassal in a substantial volume that is still a standard work.[2] Ṭabarī and Balāḏurī were Persians who naturally were interested in the eastern half of the lands of the Islamic caliphate, in which Sasanid Persia had been and remained the region of dominance. As the Lakhmids were the vassals of the Persians, they naturally received the lion's share of attention from Ṭabarī to the detriment of the Ghassānids, the vassals of Byzantium, which, moreover, as the Christian world power, was and remained the principal adversary of Islam, and Ghassānid history consequently suffered by association.

The data for the art and architecture of the Ghassānids has been extracted from exiguous extant sources for this volume and for archaeologists and art historians to work on. But any fresh and relevant data on this dimension of Ghassānid history, however indirect, are very welcome. Such are two passages in the historians Ṭabarī and Masʿūdī, not on the Ghassānids but on the Lakhmids. They illuminate some important aspects of Arab federate history, architectural and other, in the Fertile Crescent with special relevance to the problem of Sasanid and Byzantine influences on their respective federates, the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids, and

[1] On the Lakhmids, see G. Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Laḫmiden in al-Hīra* (Berlin, 1899) and more recently, the present writer in *EI*², s.v.

[2] *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (Leiden, 1879; repr. Graz, 1973), which C. E. Bosworth has brought up to date in his admirable edition and translation of Ṭabarī's narrative, *The History of Tabarī,* V (Albany, N.Y., 1999).

the influence of these on the Arab successor states of the Umayyads and the ʿAbbāsids. What Ṭabarī and Masʿūdī say on the ʿAbbāsids and Lakhmid Ḥīra parallels what has been said on the Umayyads and the Ghassānids of Jābiya and confirms it.

Ḥīra remained for a long time a flourishing cultural center in the Islamic period, especially for music and song.[3] Since it was a city of many churches and monasteries,[4] it could not be a capital for the representatives of the new Muslim order, the Islamic caliphate. Hence the building of an entirely new Muslim city, Kūfa, nearby. However as Ḥīra remained a major Arab center in the newly acquired territory of lower Mesopotamia, the Arabs, both Umayyads and ʿAbbāsids, could not ignore it in this early Muslim period. When the ʿAbbāsid dynasty came to power and established itself not in Umayyad Bilād al-Shām but in Iraq, the early caliphs often gravitated to this Arab center, and it was in this early period that its celebrated palace, al-Khawarnaq, was enlarged and reused by the ʿAbbāsids.[5]

Three of the early ʿAbbāsid caliphs were associated with Ḥīra where they spent some time before and after the foundation of their new capital, Baghdad: al-Saffāḥ, al-Manṣūr, and Hārūn al-Rashīd.[6] And it was not only to Ḥīra that they journeyed. In this early period during the reigns of al-Saffāḥ and al-Manṣūr, the ʿAbbāsids hovered among no fewer than four capitals[7]—al-Hāshimiyya, al-Kūfa, al-Anbār, and Qaṣr or Madīnat ibn-Hubayra—all of which were not far from Ḥīra. This restless search for a capital has puzzled scholars, leading one ʿAbbāsid specialist to write: "The proclivity of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs for this constant moving is still unexplained; but it does suggest that they were searching for a site which would satisfy certain particular needs."[8]

Surely the Umayyad parallel in Bilād al-Shām/Oriens is instructive and could provide the key to this problem, since the problem that faced both dynasties was roughly the same. Just as the Umayyads had moved to a region in Bilād al-Shām that had been dominated by the Graeco-Roman establishment and also by the Aramaeans, so the ʿAbbāsids, when they chose Iraq as their metropolitan province, moved into a region that had been dominated by Persian and Aramaean elements. Both dynasties naturally inclined to that part of the newly acquired territory in which their congeners, the Arabs of Ghassān and Lakhm, had settled and where

[3] In Islamic times, Ḥīra is better known as the home of Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, the translator of Greek philosophy, science, and medicine into Arabic, who worked at Bayt al-Ḥikma, founded in Baghdad by the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Maʾmūn (813–833).

[4] This is visually reflected in the city map of Ḥīra, drawn by Ārif ʿAbd al-Ghanī, *Tārīkh al-Ḥīra fī al-Jāhiliyya wa al-Islām* (Damascus, 1993), 698, where some thirty-nine monasteries and four churches may be counted.

[5] During the caliphate of al-Saffāḥ (750–754) when one of the ʿAbbāsid supporters, Ibrāhīm ibn Salama, built over the palace a dome; see Balāḏurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān,* 352.

[6] For the involvement of al-Saffāḥ, al-Manṣūr, and Hārūn al-Rashīd in Ḥīra, see ʿĀrif ʿAbd al-Ghanī, *Tārīkh,* 645–47, 654–55.

[7] As noted by J. Lassner in al-Hāshimiyya, in *EI*², s.v., III, 266.

[8] Ibid.

they would have felt more at home. The problem that faced the ʿAbbāsids was more complex. Iraq had been for more than a century an Umayyad province where some distinguished governors, such as Ziyād ibn Abīh, Khālid al-Qasrī, and al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf had left remarkable landmarks of a strong Umayyad presence. In addition, there were the ʿAlids, whose martyrs, ʿAlī and Ḥusayn, were buried in Najaf and Karbalāʾ; there was no love lost between these Arab groups and the ʿAbbāsids. Ḥīra presented the ʿAbbāsids with no problem of this nature, since it was free of all associations with the Persians, the Aramaeans, the Umayyads, and the ʿAlids.[9]

Ṭabarī on Ḥīra

Although the three early ʿAbbāsid caliphs visited and stayed in Ḥīra, it was the third, Hārūn al-Rashīd, who apparently considered Ḥīra seriously as a capital or at least as a major caliphal residence. A passage in Ṭabarī illustrates Hārūn's intention.[10] In giving an account of the events of the year 180 of the Hijra/A.D. 796, the historian was describing the itinerary of the caliph after his return from the pilgrimage to Mecca. In the English version the passage reads as follows. "Then he set out for al-Ḥīrah, he established himself there, had residences built there and allotted parcels of building land (*khitat*) for his retinue, remaining there about forty days. The people of al-Kūfah rose up against him and made his position in the neighborhood uncomfortable, so he traveled to the City of Peace. From there, he set out for al-Raqqah."[11]

This crucial passage in Ṭabarī on Hārūn and Ḥīra has never been analyzed, and it deserves careful study.[12] It is clearly divisible into three parts: (1) what Hārūn did when he was in Ḥīra; (2) the reaction of the people of Kūfa to Hārūn's stay in Ḥīra; and (3) the sequel to all this when the caliph departed and wended his way to Baghdad, thence to Raqqa. The significant word in the passage is *khiṭaṭ.* As in Claude Cahen's explication, *khiṭaṭ* signifies: "the various quarters of the newly-founded early Islamic towns which the Arab-Islamic chiefs laid out (root *kh ṭ ṭ*) for the population groups which they attracted thither or for their respective leaders."[13]

Both quotations from Ṭabarī and Cahen leave no doubt about the intentions for Ḥīra on the part of Hārūn, a caliph possessed by a strong sense of Arab identity.

[9] Such Persian presence as had existed in pre-Islamic times had come to an end with the fall of the Sasanids.

[10] For Hārūn in Ḥīra, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1966), VIII, 267; also Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* (Beirut, 1965), VI, 152–53.

[11] *The History of Tabarī,* trans. Bosworth, XXX, 164.

[12] Since, if Ḥīra had become an ʿAbbāsid capital, it might have effected some change in the course of early ʿAbbāsid history.

[13] See *EI*[2], s.v. *Khiṭaṭ,* V, 22.

Ḥīra was the greatest *Arab* urban center in the Land of the Two Rivers with a continuous existence of some five hundred years and a distinguished history in both pre-Islamic and Islamic times. The way in which it provided the answer to the pressing problems that must have haunted the mind of the caliph may now be detailed as follows.

Hārūn in Ḥīra, Khiṭaṭ, and Forty Days

As has already been intimated, the ʿAbbāsids found themselves established in a territory that was far from sympathetic to them. The Arabs had overturned the Persian Sasanid empire. The anti-Arab sentiment (*shuʿūbiyya*) among the subject peoples was already in full swing. Baghdad itself, which Hārūn's grandfather had founded, bore a possibly Persian name, and the administration was practically run by a family of Persian vizirs, the Barmakids. His own grandfather al-Manṣūr (754–775) had the Persian leader and commander Abū Muslim killed as well as a leading Persian intellectual and man of letters, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ. One of his own court poets, the Persian Abū Nuwās, had ridiculed the Arabs in some scathing verses. Hārūn's elimination of the Barmakids was the most concrete expression of his fear of Persian influence; although it has remained something of a mystery, this is the most plausible explanation. If this is what he feared, his apprehension came true in the following century, when the Persian Buwayhids/Būyids occupied Baghdad and terminated the dominant position of the Arabs in ʿAbbāsid history.[14] Ḥīra, on the other hand, was an Arab foundation and in this period had no Persian element that might be construed as a threat.

Iraq with its flourishing centers such as Kūfa and Baṣra had been developed from military camps by the Umayyad governors such as Ziyād ibn-Abīh, Khalid al-Qasrī, and al-Ḥajjāj. The ʿAbbāsids had practically annihilated the members of the Umayyad dynasty, but memories of their predecessors remained fresh in Iraq, witness the anecdote surrounding Ḳaṣr ibn-Hubayra, a site that the first ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Saffāḥ had to desert because he could not tolerate the people's insistent calling it by the name of the Umayyad governor, Ibn Hubayra, rather than al-Hāshimiyya.[15] Ḥīra was free from Umayyad associations.

The revolt to topple the Umayyads began as an ʿAlid movement by the descendants of the Prophet through his daughter, Fāṭima; however, those who ended up as the successors of the Umayyads were not his descendants but those of his uncle al-ʿAbbās. The ʿAlids were firmly entrenched in Iraq, with the *maṯẖhad*s, the *martyria* of both ʿAli at Najaf and his son Ḥusayn at Karbalāʾ, and there were

[14] For references in this paragraph to *shuʿūbiyya,* Baghdad, Abū Muslim, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, the Barmakids (Barāmika), and the Buwayhids, see *EI*², s.vv. Articles in *EI*² will be cited frequently here because they are an excellent succinct guide to matters pertaining to the ʿAbbāsid dynasty.

[15] See *EI*², s.v. Ḳasr Ibn Hubayra, IV, 729.

revolts, such as those that al-Manṣūr had put down violently.[16] Ḥīra had no ʿAlid associations.

All these considerations must have weighed heavily with a caliph such as Hārūn, the grandson of al-Manṣūr who had dealt harshly with both the ʿAlids and the Persians. Indeed Hārūn seems to have followed in his footsteps in being anti-ʿAlid, anti-Persian, and anti-Umayyad, and it is significant that he died in Ṭūs in Khurāsān. He had taken the field personally against a rebel, Rāfiʿ ibn al-Layth, who had raised the standard of revolt in central Asia. Before he died, Hārūn subjected to a gruesome death the rebel's brother, perhaps because the rebel happened to be the grandson of Naṣr ibn Sayyār, the last Umayyad governor of Khurāsān, who had kept sending alarming reports to his Umayyad master in Damascus on the successes of the ʿAbbāsid cause in Khurāsān against the Umayyads.[17]

In addition to its freedom from Persian, Umayyad, and ʿAlid associations, Ḥīra had positive features that commended it to Hārūn's attention. The ʿAbbāsids, like the Umayyads, were nervous about urban centers that did not enjoy healthy climates. The memory of the *ṭawāʿīn,* the plagues of Umayyad Bilād al-Shām, were fresh in their minds, and they often referred to them in their conversations. The Arabs could not endure the climate of Ctesiphon/Madā'in, and so Saʿd, the victor of al-Qādisiyya over the Persians in A.D. 638, founded al-Kūfa, and he also could not stand al-Anbār because of the fever and the fleas that infested it.[18] Ḥīra, on the other hand, was celebrated for its climate—the dry, salubrious air for which it became proverbial: "One day and one night in Ḥīra is better than a medicine of one year."[19]

Hārūn prided himself on being a pilgrim (*ḥājj*) and a *ghāzī* (campaigner, warrior), two terms said to have been written on his *qalansuwa* (headgear). In this period, they were two of the pillars of Islam.[20] He accorded much attention to the two holy cities, and his wife, Zubayda, constructed the famous Darb Zubayda to help pilgrims reach their destinations easily and comfortably. Ḥīra was one of the important stations of the route that led from Iraq to Ḥijāz for the pilgrimage and was so used by the early ʿAbbāsid caliphs. Hārūn himself came to stay in Ḥīra on his way back from the pilgrimage to Mecca.[21]

[16] On Manṣūr's elimination of the two ʿAlid claimants to the caliphate, see *EI*², s.v. al-Mansūr, VI, 427–28.

[17] For Rāfiʿ ibn al-Layth, see *EI*², s.v., VIII, 385–86.

[18] See *EI*², s.v. Anbar, I, 485, and s.v. Kūfa, V, 345.

[19] On this, see Rothstein, *Die Dynastie,* 13–15.

[20] To the canonical Five Pillars of Faith in Islam, *jihad* (holy war) was added as sixth, after the Muslim conquests started, although it has remained noncanonical.

[21] Leading the pilgrimage was one of the important caliphal duties which reflected prestige on the caliph, and the Umayyads were aware of this. But the ʿAbbāsids had a special interest in the pilgrimage in view of the fact that their ancestor, al-ʿAbbās, was that member of the tribe of Quraysh in Mecca, whose function was the provision of water to the pilgrims in pre-Islamic times, a privilege that was confirmed by the Prophet Muḥammad after al-ʿAbbās' conversion to Islam in

The orthodox caliph, Omar, said to one of his commanders in Iraq, "Let no sea come between me and the Muslims," that is, he wanted a spatial continuity to obtain between the Arabs in the newly conquered territories and the Cradle of the Arabs and Islam—the Arabian Peninsula. Unlike Baghdad, al-Manṣūr's foundation around which the Persian Sasanid presence was ubiquitous, Ḥīra looked to Arabia, especially the northeastern portion of that ethnic reservoir of the powerful tribes that had been the sinews of the Arab conquests, *māddat al-Islam,* as Omar called them. An ʿAbbāsid empire with a capital in Ḥīra or nearby would have looked considerably different from one whose capital was Baghdad, not far from Ctesiphon on the Tigris.[22]

Finally, Hārūn was a great connoisseur of Arabic poetry. He recited it on various occasions, and his court was the rendezvous of outstanding poets whom he rewarded with splendid liberality, unlike his model and grandfather, al-Manṣūr, who, on account of his stinginess, was called Abū al-Dawāniq, "father of farthings." It is significant in this connection to mention that just before he died, he chose to describe his condition through a verse of Arabic poetry.[23]

Hārūn was certainly aware of the fact that Ḥīra had been in pre-Islamic times the great center of Arabic poetry, with which were associated at least five of the poets of the Muʿallaqāt, the "Suspended Odes," of pre-Islamic Arabia, while its rulers, the Lakhmids, had been the recipients of some odes that are still in the front rank of Arabic poetry. Since none of the new urban centers in Iraq could emulate Ḥīra in this respect, it is just possible that Hārūn had also this in mind when he toyed with the idea of making Ḥīra, or some locale in its environs, his capital.

The Reaction of Kūfa

The reaction of the people of Kūfa to Hārūn's stay in Ḥīra and his allocation of *khiṭaṭ* to his followers confirms what has been said in the preceding section. Their violent reaction against so powerful a ruler as Hārūn can only be explained in the following terms: the furious Kūfans considered that he had done something monstrous, as when one of the ʿAbbāsid supporters, Ibrāhim ibn Salama, enlarged the Ḥīran palace of Khawaranaq and built a dome onto it.[24]

A.D. 630. Panegyrics on Hārūn by the poets referred to this. In a panegyric on him, the ʿAbbāsids are referred to as *banī sāqī al-hajīj,* "the sons of the one who provided water to the pilgrims"; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* VIII, 348, line 14.

[22] A reflection of Hārūn's strong sense of Arab identity was his reliance on Arabs as commanders in chief of his armies. Such was Yazīd ibn-Mazyad, who belonged to the tribe of Bakr through its subdivision, Shayban; Yazīd's son Khālid continued in the same capacity after his father's death.

[23] On all this, see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* VIII, 347–48 and 345. To Marwān ibn abī-Ḥafsa, one of his poets, he gave in response to his panegyric five thousand golden dinars, a robe of honor, and ten slave girls, then sent him away riding one of his own choice horses; ibid., 349.

[24] See above, note 5.

The resentment and uprising must be related to the fact that the Kūfans considered Hārūn's actions a snub to their city and an attempt to obscure it as the foremost city in Muslim Iraq and the first Arab Muslim foundation after the conquest.[25] It was now more than one hundred and fifty years since Kūfa had been founded, and in the meantime it had become with Baṣra the oldest center of Muslim civilization in Iraq, boasting an impressive array of scholars in various branches of Islamics, especially grammar and jurisprudence. The caliph's attempt to make Christian Ḥīra rather than Muslim Kūfa a capital or caliphal residence of a Muslim empire must then have been the cause behind their violent resentment, to which may be added the strong ʿAlid presence in Kūfa, antipathetic to the ʿAbbāsids on well-known grounds. Thus the Kūfan reaction was a compound of ʿAlid and Muslim anti-ʿAbbāsid sentiments; its intensity is explicable only by their correct understanding of what Hārūn's *khiṭaṭ* and forty-day stay in Ḥīra implied.

The Sequel: Raqqa

The sequel of Hārūn's departure from Ḥīra also confirms what has been said about this choice of Ḥīra as a possible capital in the year 180 of the Hijra (A.D. 796). His trip took him from Mecca to Ḥīra, to Baghdad, and finally to Christian Raqqa, where he lived for twelve years from 796 until his death in 808.

As has been noted by historians of Raqqa, "the extensive residential city was evidently founded in 796 by Hārūn al-Rashīd and continuously further enlarged for over a decade."[26] All this clinches the point that after meeting with disappointments at Ḥīra and rejecting Baghdad, the caliph in the *same* year finally fixed on Raqqa and made it his capital. His construction activity in Raqqa could suggest how he would have built his capital in Ḥīra. Raqqa was an old pre-Islamic foundation. The Hellenistic city was built and enlarged by the Seleucids, Seleukos Nikator and Seleukos Kallinikos. In Byzantine times, it was a flourishing Christian city, an episcopal see with monasteries and churches. The name of one of its suburbs, Tall al-Bīʿa, "the Tall of the Church," speaks for itself.[27] Its Islamic period began after its conquest by ʿIyād ibn Ghanm in 639, and a Christian-Muslim symbiosis obtained well into the twelfth century when it was still attested as an episcopal see. Its development in the ʿAbbāsid period could throw light on how Christian Ḥīra, too, could have developed as an ʿAbbāsid capital. A new city called al-Rāfiqa, "the Companion of Raqqa," about 200 meters west of Raqqa, was built in the reign of the first two ʿAbbāsid caliphs. Thus the twin cities of Raqqa and Rāfiqa

[25] Together with the twin city of Baṣra.

[26] See M. Meinecke, *EI*², s.v. al-Raqqa, VIII, 412.

[27] For the area that Tall al-Bīʿa occupies in the topography and plan of Raqqa, see the map ibid., between pp. 412 and 413. The famous monastery, Dayr Zakkā, was built in Tall al-Bīʿa; ibid., 410.

existed side by side, ready to receive in 796 Hārūn, during whose reign the extensive residential city was founded and enlarged. Its geographical position, not far from the Byzantine border, made Hārūn more of a *ghāzi* than a *ḥājj,* or pilgrim, and so its strategic position invited him to perform the new function suggested by the "sixth" pillar of faith, *jihād,* against the Byzantines.[28]

The case of Raqqa-Rāfiqa is illuminating. Hārūn was able to settle in Raqqa as his capital although it had a strong non-Arab and non-Muslim background and presence. Ḥīra, on the other hand, while not Muslim, was an entirely Arab city with no *shuʿūbī,* Persian, ʿAlid, or Umayyad presence in it; but unlike Raqqa, it had Kūfa nearby. The reaction of the people of Kūfa thus may have changed the course of early ʿAbbāsid history.

The case of Lakhmid Ḥīra and ʿAbbāsid Hārūn invites comparison with Ghassānid Jābiya and Umayyad Muʿāwiya, and confirms that the two Arab dynasties naturally moved to the area where their Arab congeners had settled in the Fertile Crescent before the rise of Islam. In the case of Ḥīra, this resettlement did not happen because of the hostility of the Kūfans; in the case of Jābiya, it did, and the Umayyad occupation of many other Ghassānid sites was extensive. These occupied the Ghassānid sites immediately after the conquest while these sites were still ready for occupation. The ʿAbbāsids, on the other hand, appeared in Lakhmid territory more than a century after the conquest during which the cultural map of Iraq had been dramatically changed to the detriment of what must have been an extensive Lakhmid presence. Their capital Ḥīra, however, remained an Arab Lakhmid landmark, so that Hārūn considered making it the capital of the ʿAbbāsid Muslim empire.

Masʿūdī on Ḥīra

While Ṭabarī is so informative on the question of Hārūn's choice of Ḥīra as a possible capital, Masʿūdī provides more specific information on a purely artistic question, involving Ḥīra.[29] In their accounts, historians have not neglected Ḥīra's structures—palaces, castles, churches, and monasteries—but they wrote in general terms. The historian Masʿūdī (d. 957), however, discusses in a precious passage the architectural features of one of these Ḥīran palaces.

In his *Murūj al-Ḏahab,* while writing of the reign of the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Mutawakkil (847–861), he discussed his palaces in Sāmarrā', the new ʿAbbāsid capital, built in A.D. 834/5 by one of his predecessors, al-Muʿtaṣim (833–842). A passage about one of these palaces, already noted in passing by K. A. C. Creswell, reads as follows:

[28] And it was from Raqqa that Muʿtaṣim started on his campaign against Amorium in A.D. 838. For Raqqa until the end of Hārūn's reign, see ibid., 410–12.

[29] For Masʿūdī, see Sezgin, *GAS,* I, 332–36.

> Al-Mutawakkil in his day newly introduced a building which the people did not know [before]. It was known as al-Ḥīrī, and [also] as "the two wings [lit. sleeves] with the *riwāqs.*" The idea was suggested to him by one of his courtiers who, during an evening conversation, told him that one of the Kings of al-Ḥīra, of the family of an-Nuʿmān, of the Banī Naṣr nearby introduced a construction in the place where he stayed, and that is al-Ḥīra, after the fashion of a battle array; for he loved it and had an inclination for it, so that the memory of it would not be far from him when he was in different circumstances. The *riwāq* in it was the sitting-place [*majlis*] of the king, and this was the centre [*ṣadr* = breast], and the two sleeves were to right and left. And in the two dwellings, namely the two sleeves, were those of his courtiers who stood nearest to him. To the right was the wardrobe and to the left was everything necessary for drinking. The open court of the *riwāq* was common to the *ṣadr* and the two sleeves, and the three doors led to the *riwāq.* This building up to the present was called al-Ḥīrī, with the two sleeves, attributing it to al-Ḥīrā. The people followed al-Mutawakkil in this respect, imitating his creation. It is famous down to this day.[30]

Creswell wrote *Early Muslim Architecture* before research on the Ghassānids, and to a lesser degree on the Lakhmids, took a correct measure of their cultural significance. Thus he remained unclear on the Ghassānid and Lakhmid contribution to the art and architecture of the Arabs in Bilād al-Shām and in Iraq in the pre-Islamic period. He did, however, note that the plan of Dār al-Imāra in Kūfa, the mansion of Ziyād ibn-Abīh, the Umayyad governor of Iraq, followed that of this Lakhmid palace in Ḥīra.[31]

The full significance of this passage, however, was brought out by James W. Allan, who revised and supplemented what Creswell had written. In *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture,* where the passage in Masʿūdī appears under "Architectural Origins," Allan was able to identify the key architectural unit in the description of this palace complex as a triple-aisled hall. In addition, he drew attention to its Sasanid origins: "This is a standard Sasanian architectural unit and is found for example at Qaṣr-i-Shīrīn, Dāmghan, Kish, and Qaṣr Muqātil." Allan concluded by saying that "it seems likely enough that the plan for Dār al-Imāra at Kūfa came directly from the palace at Ḥīra nearby, which also provided the baked bricks."[32] Now that the full significance of the passage in Masʿūdī has been

[30] K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* (Oxford, 1969), I.1, 53 note 4. For the Arabic text and a French version, see C. Barbier de Meynard and A. Pavet de Courteille, *Les Prairies d'Or* (Paris, 1929), VII, 192–93. For the text in the most recent and authoritative edition of Masʿūdī, see *Murūj al-Ḏahab,* ed. C. Pellat (Beirut, 1974), V, 6.

[31] Creswell, *Architecture,* 53. He was, however, aware that Lakhmid art and architecture followed Sasanid models; ibid., 24 note 7.

[32] See J. W. Allan, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture* (Aldershot, 1989), 15.

examined, it is appropriate to set it within the context of Arab federate art in both halves of the Fertile Crescent with special reference to the Ghassānids.

A

The passage is a unique *ekphrasis* of a federate structure in the Fertile Crescent in the late antique period. Normally, references to such federate structures in the sources hardly go beyond their names. For Najrān, there is a description of its Kaʿba, the *martyrion,* that was erected after the persecutions of its Christians around 520. But Najrān was in distant South Arabia.[33] The passage clearly indicates that the Lakhmid kings of Ḥīra, a sedentary Arab group, did reach a certain degree in architectural sophistication that caused them to have structures that reflected stylistically their tastes as Arabs. The explanation given by Masʿūdī, the courtier of the ʿAbbāsid caliph, was possibly fanciful, although it may have contained an element of truth.[34] Some of these Lakhmid kings were great warriors: such were the founder of the dynasty, ʿAmr ibn-ʿAdī; his son, Imruʾ al-Qays, the celebrated king, buried at Namāra, whose military exploits are blazoned forth in the oldest Arabic inscription of A.D. 328, a third was al-Munḏir of the fifth century; a fourth was al-Nuʿmān, the father of the formidable Munḏir, the Alamoundaros; who terrorized the Roman limitrophe for some fifty years according to Procopius.[35]

Possible as it is that the architectural style of this palace reflected the tastes of an Arab warrior king, there is no doubt that the key architectural unit identified by Allan had Persian antecedents, and so its stylistic provenance has to be sought in the tradition of the Sasanid overlords of the Lakhmid vassals. The name of one other palace in Lakhmid Ḥīra documents the influence of overlord over vassal, namely, Khawarnaq, which according to one etymology is Persian, Huvarna ("with a beautiful roof") or Khawarnar ("place of feasting").[36]

[33] For this, see the present writer in "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP* 33 (1979), 70–74.

[34] As a military aristocracy, their Ghassānid counterparts dedicated many churches to the military saint Sergius, and as horsemen may have contributed to his image as *rider*-saint. On Sergius as rider-saint, see E. K. Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain* (Berkeley, 1999), 35–44.

[35] For all these warrior Lakhmid kings, see *BAFOC, BAFIC,* and *BASIC,* s.vv. in the indexes.

[36] For Khawarnaq and its etymology, see *EI*^{2}, s.v. and Rothstein, *Die Dynastie,* 16–17, 144–45. Less famous is another structure in Ḥīra, al-Sadīr, the name of which has been assumed to be Persian, although al-Sadīr in Oriens, the Ghassānid site, as has been argued, is an Arabic term; see above, 333–34. Those who etymologized it as a Persian term thought that the first syllable in it involves the Persian word *sih* ("three") and consequently thought the structure had three domes, one within the other, which may be pure guesswork. However, if the first syllable turns out to be truly the number three, it is then possible to think of the palace called Ḥīrī, referred to by Masʿūdī, which was a triple-aisled hall, and so the number three may be a reference to three halls rather than three domes. Ibn Manẓūr in *Lisān al-ʿArab* compared the two but did not identify the one with the other; see Ṣ. al-ʿAlī, "Mintaqat al-Ḥīra," *Majallat Kulliyat al-Ādāb* (Baghdad, 1962), 21.

B

The value of the passage in Masʿūdī is not limited to tracing Lakhmid architectural styles to Sasanid origins. It is valuable in that it shows the influence of Lakhmid architectural styles on those of the Arab dynasties in Islamic times, both Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid. It is an established fact that the new Muslim foundation of Kūfa, near Ḥīra, was built from materials that were taken from Ḥīra, and that included the Great Mosque, its bricks and columns, a fact recognized by all historians.[37] It is within this context that Creswell has argued that Dār al-Imāra, the mansion of the Umayyad governor of Iraq whose capital was Kūfa, was styled on Ḥīran structures, such as this palace described in Masʿūdī.

Even more remarkable was the longevity of Ḥīra as a Christian center after the rise of Islam. It was conquered by Khālid ibn-al-Walīd in 633, but two centuries later in the reign of al-Mutawakkil a caliphal palatial residence was built in the style of a Ḥīran palace. The palace of Mutawakkil was called al-Ḥīrī, after the city in which it was built. Masʿūdī adds that this Ḥīrī style with its tripartite structure appealed to the Arabs of the new ʿAbbāsid capital, Sāmarrā', and so they built their houses following the caliph in that style.[38] Al-Ḥīrī was still standing a century later when Masʿūdī died in A.D. 957, some three centuries after the demise of Ḥīra as a vassal state of the Sasanids, testimony to the remarkable *Nachleben* of Ḥīra's architectural styles in the consciousness of the Arabs of Iraq, styles that ultimately derived from Sasanid models. Thus Ḥīra emerges as the center through which Sasanid art reached the Arabs of Islamic times, not directly, but mediated through other Arabs, the Lakhmid vassals of Sasanid Persia. The journey of these artistic styles may be expressed in terms of urban centers, as emanating from Sasanid Ctesiphon to Lakhmid Ḥīra, and thence to Umayyad Kūfa and ʿAbbāsid Sāmarrā'.[39]

The relevance of the preceding sections on the Lakhmids to the Ghassānids, their counterparts as vassals of Byzantium, should by now be clear. The Ghassānids were vassals of an empire that was superior to Persia in art and architecture. The Ghassānid willingness and readiness to assimilate features from Byzantium was even greater than that of their Lakhmid counterparts. These were pagan and sometimes Christian, while Persia was not, so the Lakhmids followed the Sasanid

[37] See Balāḏurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān,* ed. S. Munajjid (Cairo, n.d.), 350; Jawād ʿĀli, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-ʿArab qabl al-Islām* (Baghdad, 1971), VIII, 87–88; and Creswell, *Architecture,* 24.

[38] Thus the capital of the Lakhmids, Ḥīra, lent its name to a certain architectural style, just as it lent it to a certain style of Arabic calligraphy, which in Islamic times was called Kūfic, of Kūfa. In fact, this style derived from that of nearby Ḥīra, which had been an Arabic adaptation of the Syriac Estrangela by the Christian Arabs of Ḥīra. The association of Kūfic with Ḥīra is recognized, but only partially in the article on Kūfa, in *EI*², V, 350.

[39] I leave out Mushattā in Transjordan, whither the Ḥīran architectural style is said to have migrated. On this controversial question involving Ernst Herzfeld, see F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *Die Araber in der alten Welt* (Berlin, 1964), I, 595.

model in secular architecture, both civil and military, but not in the religious.[40] Ḥīra was in pre-Islamic times the great center of Arab Christianity; its churches and monasteries must have followed models in the Christian Roman Empire rather than in fire-worshiping Persia. The Ghassānids, on the other hand, were zealous Christians who lived in the shadow of the Christian empire. Thus they were much more receptive to Byzantine models, both secular and religious, than the Lakhmids to the Sasanid. Their receptivity has been argued at length in this volume within the Byzantine and Ghassānid framework, but a text that explicitly stated this relationship was missing. Hence the value of this text in Masʿūdī on the secular architecture of their counterparts, the Lakhmids, which explicitly states how a Lakhmid warrior king chose for his palace a style that reflected his idiosyncratic tastes, a style whose key architectural unit went back to Sasanid models, of which the Ḥīran tripartite style was only an adaptation. This was the road that Ghassānid structures took, in both religious and secular architecture, following Byzantine models but in a much more intimate manner because of the religious affinity that obtained between Ghassān and Byzantium.

Appendix

On the Ghassānid-Umayyad Relationship

Ignacio Peña's *The Christian Art of Byzantine Syria*[1] provides an excellent background for this volume. In addition to the main text with its many illustrations, his discussion entitled "The Contribution to Islamic Civilization"[2] is of particular relevance to Epilogue I on Ghassānid structures and Umayyad *quṣūr.* The author, following Oleg Grabar, has rightly emphasized the debt of proto-Islamic art and architecture in Bilād al-Shām to the Byzantine monuments built in the three centuries that elapsed before the Islamic conquest of Oriens. Architectural elements such as the horseshoe arch, the *qubba,* the *miḥrāb,* and the minaret, together with decorative elements, both lineal and vegetal, have been related to their Byzantine antecedents.[3] In the rise of this proto-Islamic art in Bilād al-Shām, the role of the Umayyad caliphs was given recognition, especially al-Walīd, the builder, the Arab Muslim *philoktistēs.* Peña, like other scholars before him, spoke in very general terms about the process of this artistic transmission and its agents or mediators,[4] and consequently it has remained shrouded in the obscurity of anonymity.

[40] When the Persian king Kawād asked the Arab vassal king Mundir of Ḥīra to adopt Mazdakism, in the 520s, the latter refused and had to flee his ancestral home, Ḥīra; on this, see Rothstein, *Die Dynastie,* 89–90.

[1] Published in England in 1996 and translated into English by Eileen Brophy and Francisco Reina.

[2] Ibid., 217–25.

[3] The paragraph on the Arabic script (221–22), on which there is an extensive literature, is inadequate and could be misleading on its genesis. The problem of the rise of an Arabic script in the western half of the Fertile Crescent as distinct from the eastern, in such places as Ḥīra, was treated in *BAFIC,* 409–22. But there is no doubt, as Peña points out, that Christianity played a major role in the final stages of the development of the Arabic script in pre-Islamic times.

Previous volumes in this series have elucidated the history and role of the Arab element in Oriens, that of the Byzantinized and Christianized federate Arabs in the course of the three centuries of the Byzantine period in Oriens, which preceded the Islamic conquests.[5] The last two studies, *BASIC* I, parts 1 and 2, paid special attention to the latest of these federates, the Ghassānids, in the political, military, and ecclesiastical history of the region and period. This present volume has revealed the extent of the involvement of the Ghassānid Arabs in the artistic/architectural life of Byzantine Oriens, and the "Epilogue" has revealed the extent of the relationship that obtained between the new masters of Oriens, the Umayyads, and the previous Arab federates of Byzantine Oriens, the Ghassānids. The former settled in the area that had been occupied by the latter and took over some of their establishments and structures in the limitrophe. The Umayyads were well disposed toward their predecessors and accepted them both as Arab congeners and as Christian monotheists, followers of Jesus of Nazareth, a hallowed figure in the Koran, availing themselves of Ghassānid expertise acquired during the latter's many years of service to Byzantium.[6]

This strong Ghassānid presence in the Umayyad state is a missing link in the process of transmission from late antique Byzantine art and architecture in Oriens to the early Islamic period in Umayyad Bilād al-Shām. It was not the only channel through which the transmission flowed, but it was a significant one. Its recognition will help illuminate this process of transmission. The extent of impact of this Ghassānid presence is an open question that must be left to the art historians and archaeologists, especially the latter, who, one hopes, will excavate these Ghassānid sites.

Perhaps this volume will contribute toward that goal once the involvement of the Ghassānids in the art and architecture of Byzantine Syria is better known, with the excavation of Ghassānid sites in Bilād al-Shām. Already the names of Arab mosaicists have started to appear in the monuments uncovered by M. Piccirillo in Byzantine Trans-Jordan, which had been the provinces of Provincia Arabia and Palaestina Tertia, both predominantly Arab in their ethnic complexion.[7]

[4] Cf. the author's very valuable chapter 15 (pp. 227–41), "Contribution to European Civilization," in which he discusses the role of the various individuals and personalities who mediated Syrian art to western Europe. The specificity that characterizes this chapter contrasts starkly with its lack in the chapter titled "Contribution to Islamic Civilization."

[5] The author may have been unaware of these volumes; witness his note 4 on p. 224, in which he refers to the Tanūkhids and the Ghassānids discussed in outdated works, while *BAFOC* and *BASIC* I.1–2 have treated both extensively.

[6] The author draws attention to the fact that the Umayyad caliph Yazīd, the son of Muʿāwiyya, entrusted the education of his son Khālid to a monk named Istephan (p. 124). He might have added that Yazīd himself was the son of a Christian mother, Maysūn, from the Arabs of Kalb, and he married a Christian Ghassānid princess.

[7] See his "Jordan Mosaicists," (forthcoming). I should like to thank Fr. Piccirillo for sending me the typescript of this article.

Addenda

(1) Two Sabaic inscriptions document the Ghassānid presence in the Arabian Peninsula during their migration period away from Yaman, discussed on pp. 2–3. See W. Müller, "Ergebnisse neuer epigraphischen Forschungen im Jemen, *ZDMG* (1977), Supplement, III, i, p. 732; and C. Robin in *L'Arabie antique de Karib'îl à Mahomet,* (Paris, 1992), p. 64. The second inscription is the more informative one as it locates the Ghassānids not far from Mecca, thus confirming what the literary sources say on their halt in Mecca during their wanderings in Western Arabia before they reached the Byzantine frontier.

(2) The *Festschrift* for Paul Speck, referred to on p. 6, n. 19 and elsewhere, has now appeared in print: *Novum Millenium: Studies on Byzantine History and Culture Dedicated to Paul Speck,* ed. Claudia Sode and Sarolta Takács (Ashgate, Aldershot, UK, 2001). For the article "Sigillography in the Service of History: 'New Light'" see pp. 369–77.

(3) Further on the Petra Papyrus involving the Ghassānid Abū Karib, referred to on p. 46, n. 55, see M. Kaimio, "P. Petra inv. 83: A Settlement of Dispute," in *Atti del XXII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia,* ed. I. Andorlini et el. (Florence, 2001), II:719–24.

(4) *The Chronicle of Zuqnīn,* edited by P. Chabot for the *CSCO,* and referred to on p. 314, n. 30, has now appeared in an English translation with an introduction and commentary: see Amir Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnīn, Parts III and IV, A.D. 488–775,* Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies (Toronto, Canada, 1999).

(5) The unfair offensive mounted by the Hamburg School against Julius Wellhausen and his perception of the Umayyads and the Umayyad State does not affect what the title of his book expresses and implies, discussed on page 382; see Albrecht Noth and Laurence Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: a Source-Critical Study.* Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, 3, trans. Michael Bonner (Princeton, N.J., 1994).

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In addition to the six Greek inscriptions discussed at length in *BASIC* I.1, and listed ibid., 1009–10, there are two new Greek inscriptions involving the Ghassānids, found at Sammā' and Dakīr in the Provincia Arabia: M. Sartre, "Deux phylarches arabes dans l'Arabie Byzantine," *Le Muséon* 106 (1993), 145–53.

Papyri

Reference to the Ghassānid phylarch Abū Karib occurs in one of the Petra Papyri, P. Petra inventory no. 83 of the Scroll archive, now named Papyrus Petra H. M. King Ḥussein bin Ṭalāl and H. M. Queen Noor al-Ḥussein on the occasion of their visit to the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman, Jordan. The Finnish scholar Maarit Kaimio is in charge of deciphering the papyrus; see *ACOR Newsletter* 8.2 (Winter 1996). See also L. Koenen, "The Carbonized Archives from Petra," *JRA* 9 (1996), 177–88.

Seals

A seal of a Ghassānid *patricius* is in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Münzkabinett, Vienna. It was noted by W. Seibt, *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel in Österreich* (Vienna, 1978), no. 129, p. 262; for the obverse and reverse of the seal, see ibid., pl. 8, no. 129. It has been identified by the present writer as the seal of the last Ghassānid king and phylarch, Jabala; see I. Shahîd, "Sigillography in the Service of History: New Light," in *Festschrift Paul Speck* (see Addenda).

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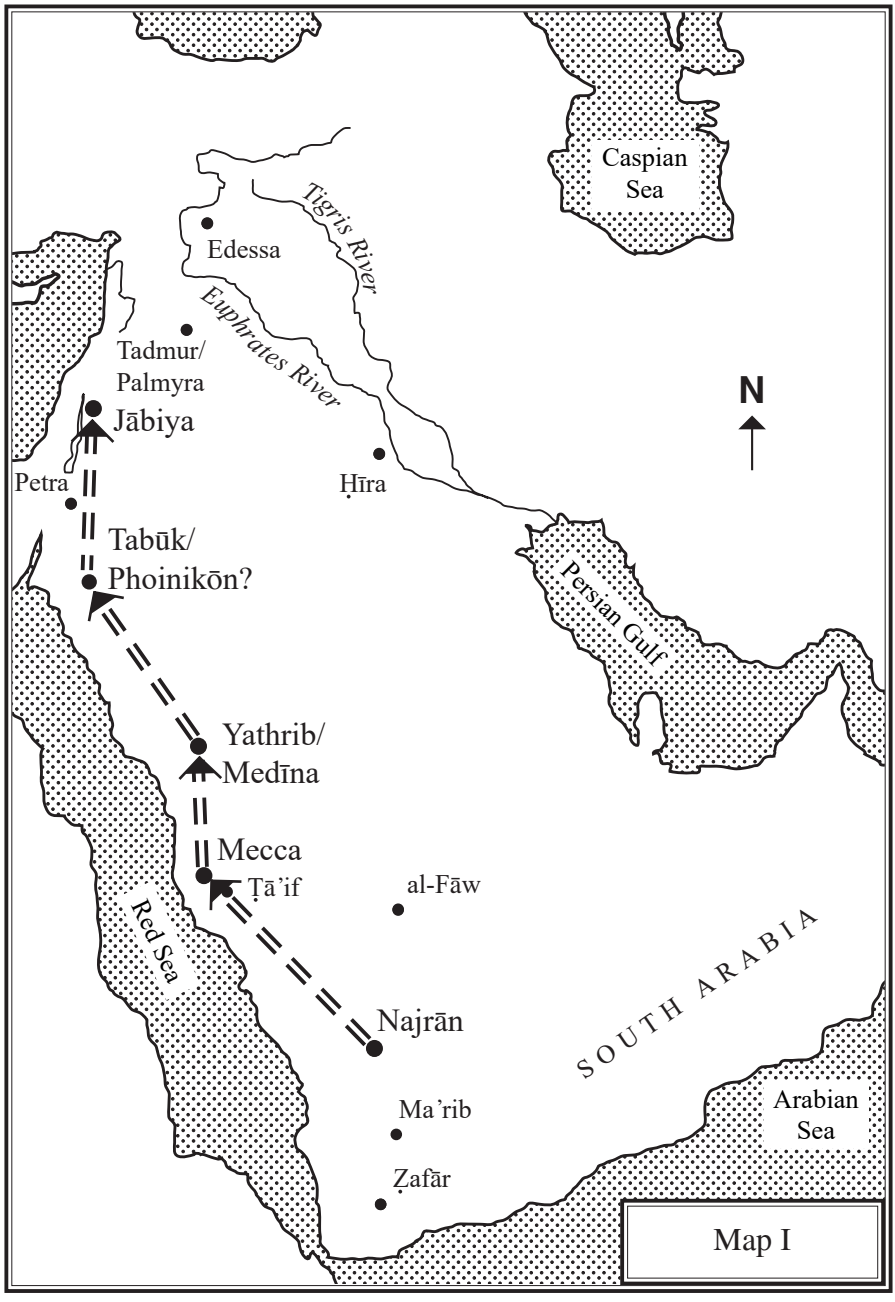
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Maps

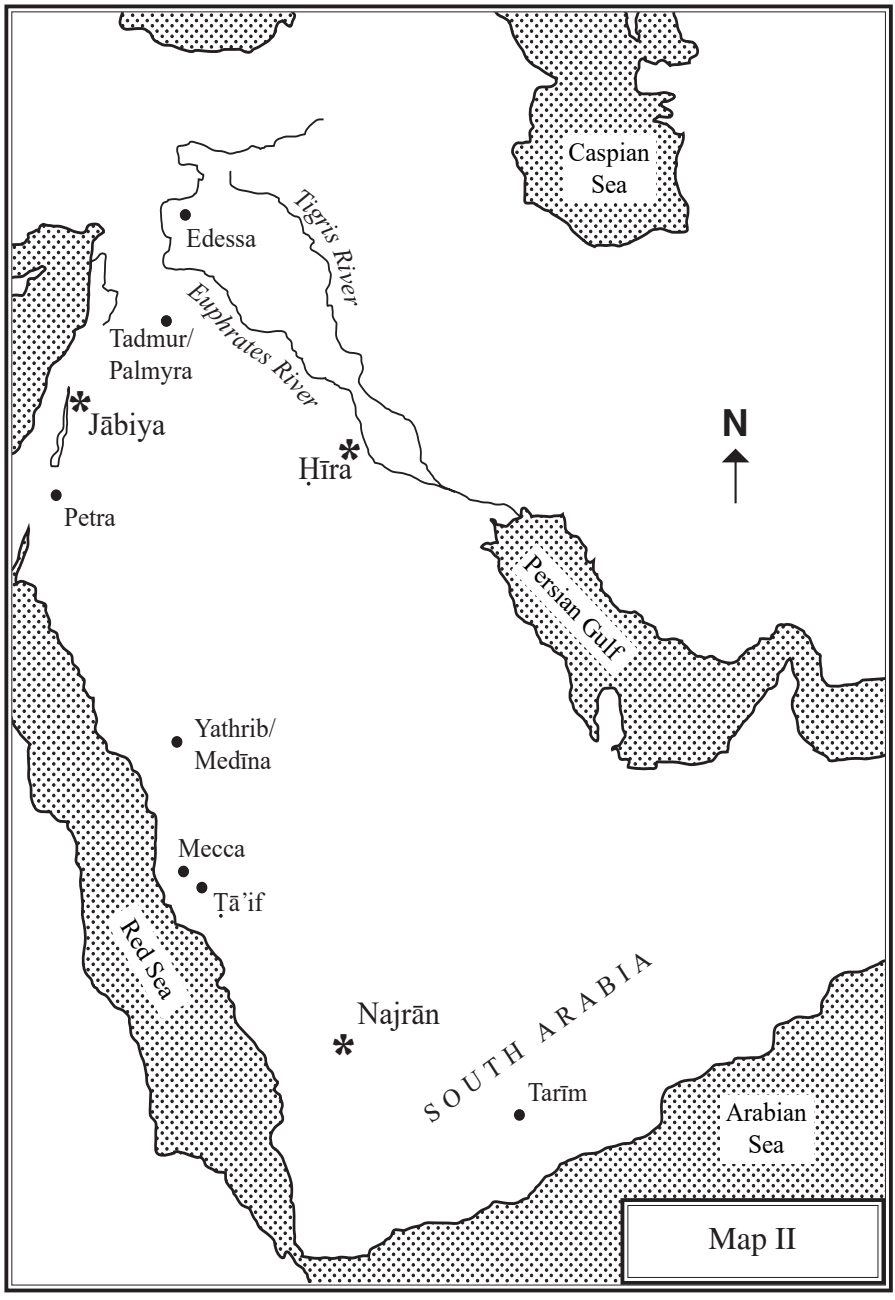
The fifteen sketch maps presented here illustrate the various themes of this volume on the Ghassānids and should be set against the background of *BASIC* I.1–2. They focus on the toponymy of the Ghassānids in Oriens and on the regions in that diocese that witnessed Ghassānid settlement, reflected in the account of Ḥamza, medieval geographical dictionaries, contemporary poetry, and Arabic and Greek inscriptions. The maps represent the first attempt at Ghassānid cartography in its entirety in the hope that it will inspire more detailed mapmaking by surveyors and archaeologists.

The purpose of these sketch maps is to isolate Ghassānid toponymy from that of other groups who settled in Oriens in various periods, such as presented in the invaluable maps of Dussaud's *Topographie.* The latter obscure the Ghassānid presence by the multitude of toponyms they include, whereas these maps, by their concentration on Ghassānid toponymy, reflect much more clearly that presence in Oriens. For the sake of clarity, some of the maps omit certain toponyms that are included in other maps. In addition to strictly Ghassānid toponyms, certain others are indicated, such as Damascus, Antioch, and Jerusalem, in order to orient the reader to the geographical position of these toponyms in Oriens by relating them spatially to better-known ones.

Map I, relevant to the sedentariness of the Ghassānids (chapter 1), illustrates their migration from South Arabia to Oriens, indicating the urban centers of western Arabia (Najrān, Mecca, and Medina) where they settled temporarily along the way. It is not clear whether they settled in Tabūk, possibly identifiable with the Phoinikōn of Abū Karib, hence the question mark. Jābiya in the Golan was not where they settled when they first arrived in Oriens but eventually became the Ghassānids' capital.


Caspian Sea
Tigris River
Edessa
Euphrates River
Tadmur/ Palmyra
Jābiya
N
Petra
Ḥīra
Tabūk/ Phoinikōn?
Persian Gulf
Yathrib/ Medīna
Mecca
Ṭā'if
al-Fāw
Red Sea
SOUTH ARABIA
Najrān
Ma'rib
Arabian Sea
Ẓafār
Map I

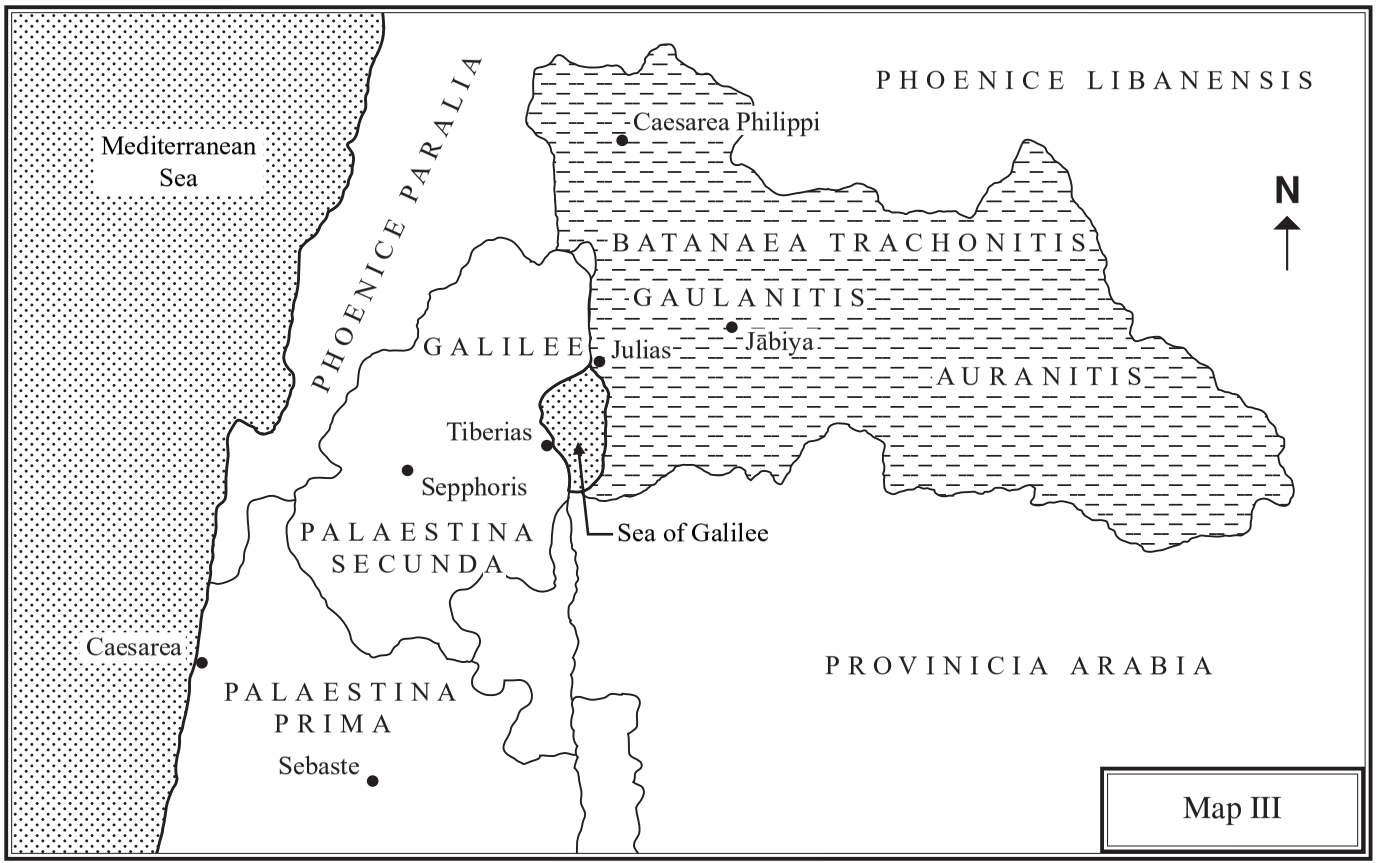
Map II indicates the three main urban centers of Arab Christianity before the rise of Islam: Ḥīra of the Lakhmids, Jābiya of the Ghassānids, and Najrān of Balḥarith. It also shows cities associated with the Christian Arabs of the period, such as Edessa in the far north, whose rulers, the Arab dynasty of the Abgarids, adopted Christianity as their state religion as early as ca. A.D. 200. At Tarīm, in the far south in Arabia Felix, the cult of St. Sergius, most probably carried there by the Ghassānids, survives in the Muslim mosque of al-Nabī Sarjīs.


Caspian Sea
Tigris River
Edessa
Euphrates River
Tadmur/ Palmyra
Jābiya
Ḥīra
Petra
N
Persian Gulf
Yathrib/ Medīna
Mecca
Ṭā'if
Red Sea
Najrān
SOUTH ARABIA
Tarīm
Arabian Sea
Map II

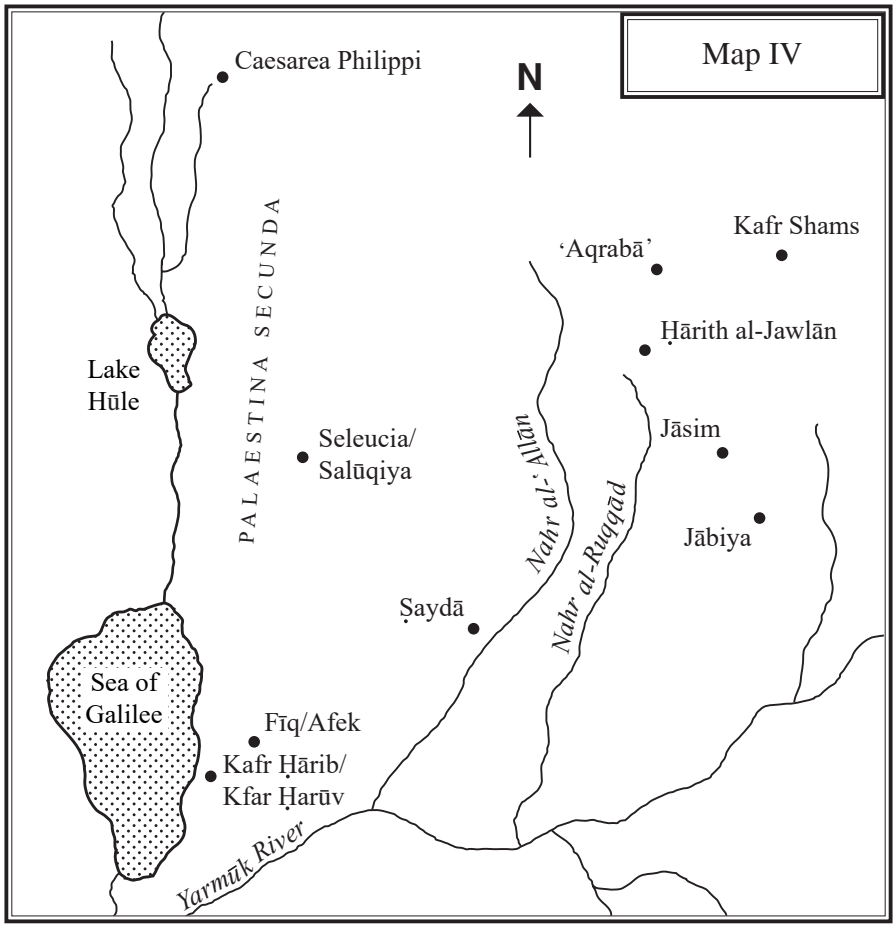
Map III illustrates the so-called transverse wedge, Ghassānland proper. This is the region where the Ghassānids lived and had their capital Jābiya, where they held court to which the poets of pre-Islamic Arabia gravitated, and where their social, economic, and cultural life has to be sought, as will be discussed in *BASIC* II.2. The transverse wedge, comprised of four regions, was transprovincial, not limited to the Provincia Arabia to which three of its regions belonged, but also extending into Palaestina II, which included the Golan. Al-Ṣafā, the most easterly of the regions, has been left out because it was primarily a region where the Ghassānids functioned as soldiers on the watch against the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula (for al-Ṣafā, see Map VIII).

Accurate detail is not the primary aim of this map but rather the presentation of the Ghassānid presence. The regions that constituted the transverse wedge—the Golan/Gaulanitis, Batanaea/Bathaniyya, Auranitis/Ḥawrān, and Trachonitis/al-Lajā—did not have well-defined boundaries, even in Herodian times. Hence certain toponyms appear on more than one map when two regions are contiguous or intersect. Hayyāt on Map VII is a good example of the imprecision related to the shifting boundaries of these regions. W. H. Waddington placed Hayyāt in Batanaea; see *BASIC* I.1, 492, where I followed him (for p. 596 in note 299 on p. 489, read p. 500). M. Sartre (*TE,* 182) corrected the location and placed it east of Trachonitis.

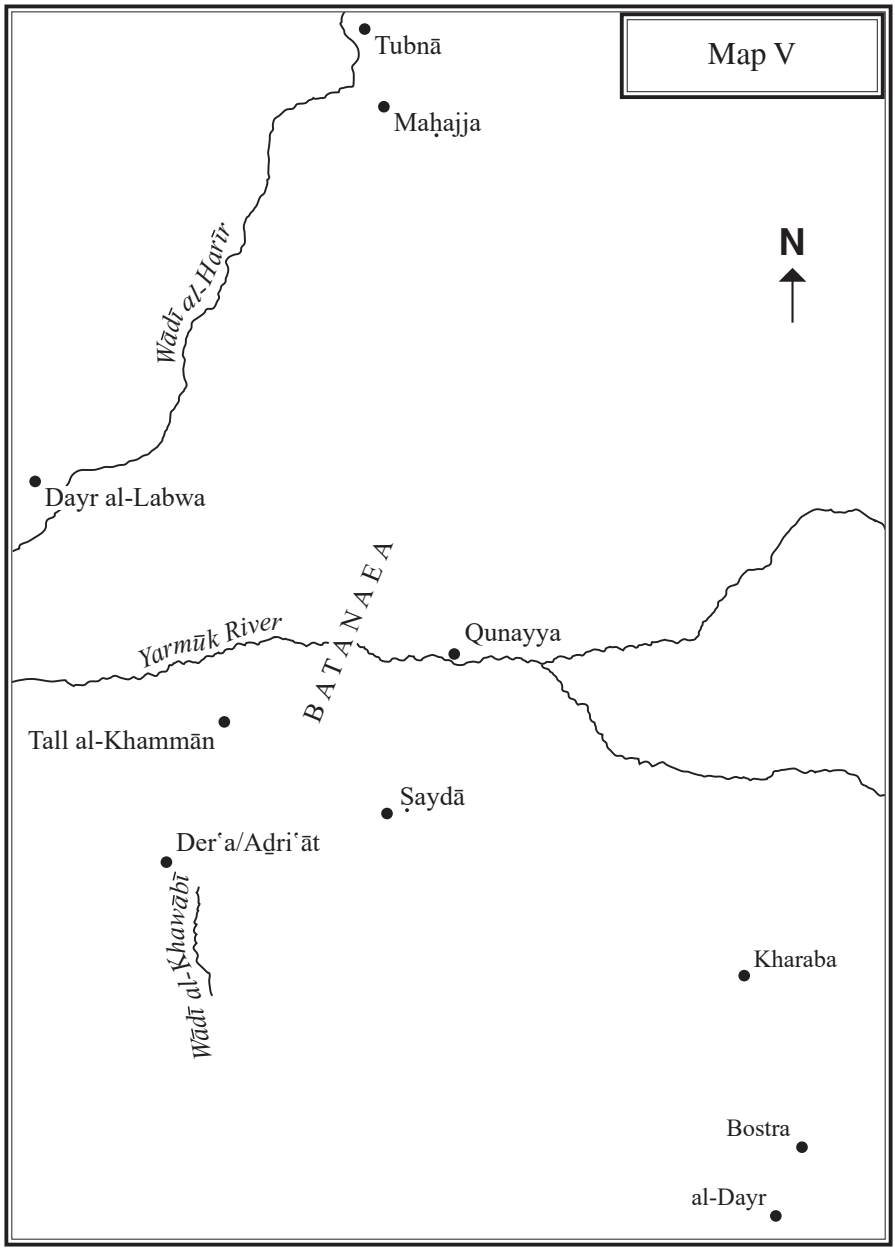
Although the transverse wedge constituted the main part of Ghassānland, in Oriens, the region around Damascus in which their second capital, Jalliq, was located represented another strong Ghassānid presence (see Map XI).


Mediterranean Sea
PHOENICE PARALIA
PHOENICE LIBANENSIS
Caesarea Philippi
N
BATANAEA
TRACHONITIS
GAULANITIS
Jābiya
GALILEE
Julias
AURANITIS
Tiberias
Sepphoris
PALAESTINA SECUNDA
Sea of Galilee
Caesarea
PROVINICIA ARABIA
PALAESTINA PRIMA
Sebaste
Map III

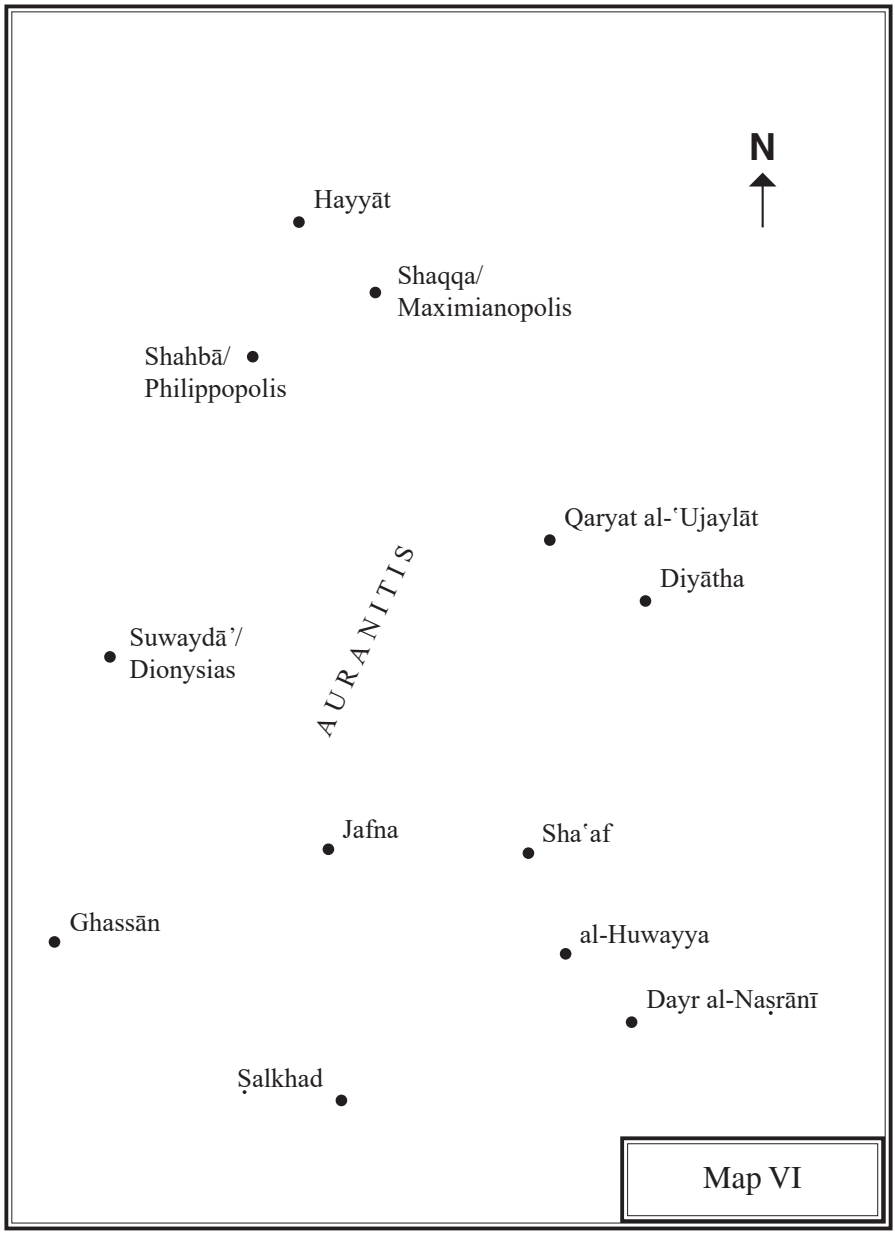
Map IV, relevant to the Golan (chapter 3), shows Jābiya, the main capital of the Ghassānids, and other toponyms associated with them in pre-Islamic poetry. Within the transverse wedge, this region with which the Ghassānids were most associated lay not in the Provincia Arabia but in Palaestina Secunda. It had clearly defined boundaries: on the north, Mount Hermon, on the west, the Jordan River, on the south, the Yarmūk River, and on the east, its tributary, al-Ruqqād.


Map IV
N
Caesarea Philippi
PALAESTINA SECUNDA
Lake
Hūle
Seleucia/
Salūqiya
Sea of
Galilee
Fīq/Afek
Kafr Ḥārib/
Kfar Ḥarūv
Yarmūk River
Ṣaydā
Nahr al-'Allān
Nahr al-Ruqqād
'Aqrabā'
Kafr Shams
Ḥārith al-Jawlān
Jāsim
Jābiya

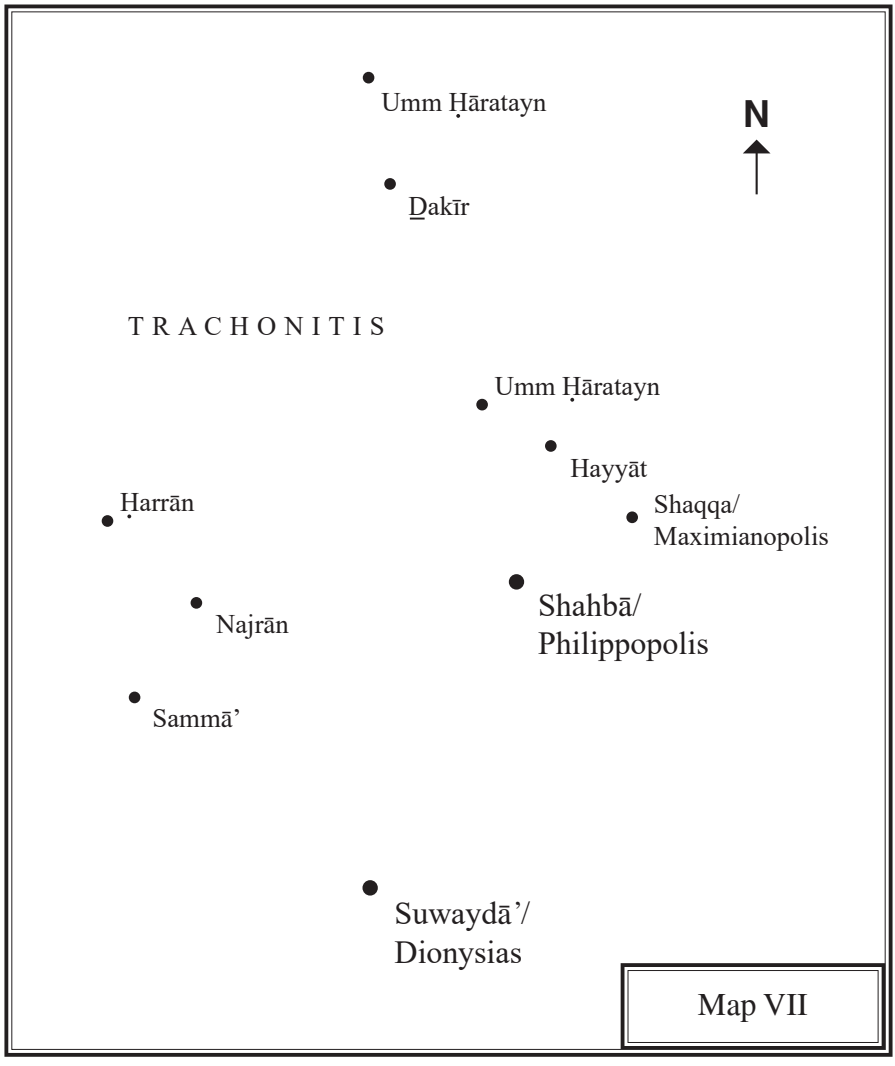
Map V shows al-Bathaniyya/Batanaea, the region in the transverse wedge that lies east of the Golan, also associated with the Ghassānids. It indicates Ghassānid toponyms mentioned in pre-Islamic poetry, especially Wādī al-Khawābī, the toponym (Khawābī) that has solved the mystery of al-Jawābī (the plural of Jābiya), a *hapax legomenon* that is a transcriptional error due to the misplacement of one diacritical mark. Al-Khawābī and especially Tall al-Khammān may prove to be fruitful sites for prospective excavators of Ghassānid structures.


Map V
Tubnā
Maḥajja
Wādī al-Ḥarīr
N
Dayr al-Labwa
BATANAEA
Yarmūk River
Qunayya
Tall al-Khammān
Ṣaydā
Derʿa/Aḏriʿāt
Wādī al-Khawābī
Kharaba
Bostra
al-Dayr

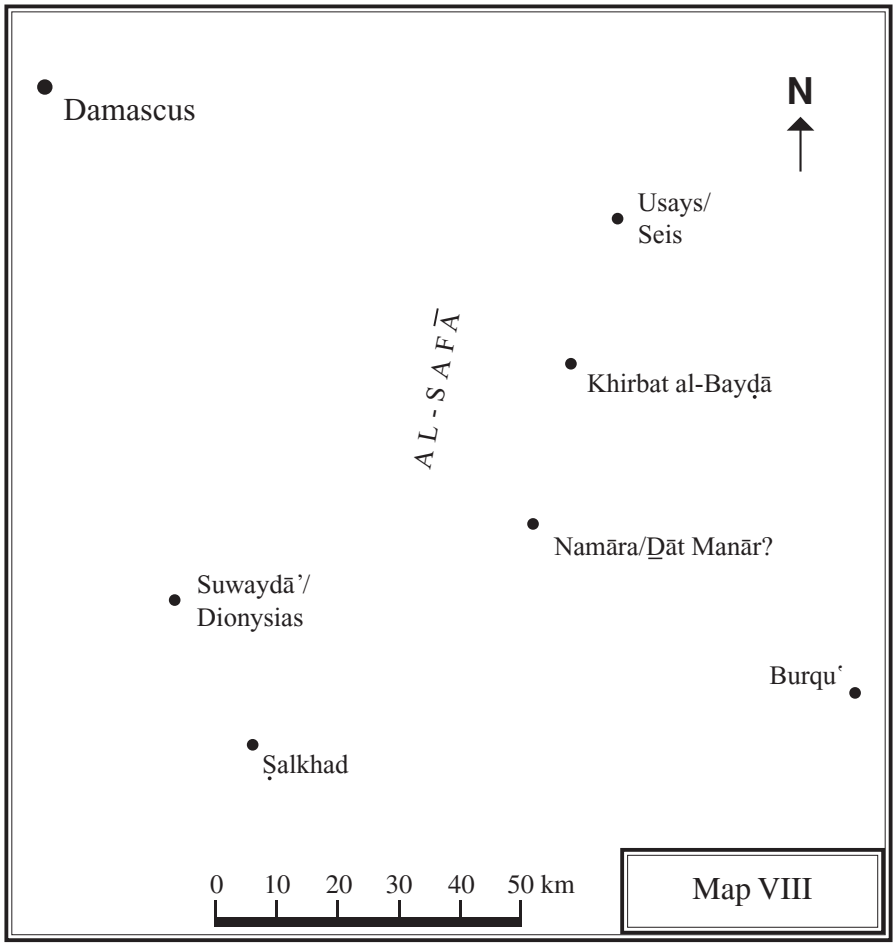
Map VI indicates toponyms in Auranitis/Ḥawrān, also a region in the transverse wedge associated with the Ghassānids (see Map III). Contemporary poetry contains one precious reference to Ḥawrān, an expression of the "pathetic fallacy" in an elegy by the poet al-Nābigha (see above, 224). Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, the main source for Ghassānid structures, associates some of them with this region, thus confirming the *hapax legomenon* in the ode of Nābigha.


N
Hayyāt
Shaqqa/
Maximianopolis
Shahbā/
Philippopolis
Qaryat al-ʿUjaylāt
Diyātha
AURANITIS
Suwaydāʾ/
Dionysias
Jafna
Shaʿaf
Ghassān
al-Huwayya
Dayr al-Naṣrānī
Ṣalkhad
Map VI

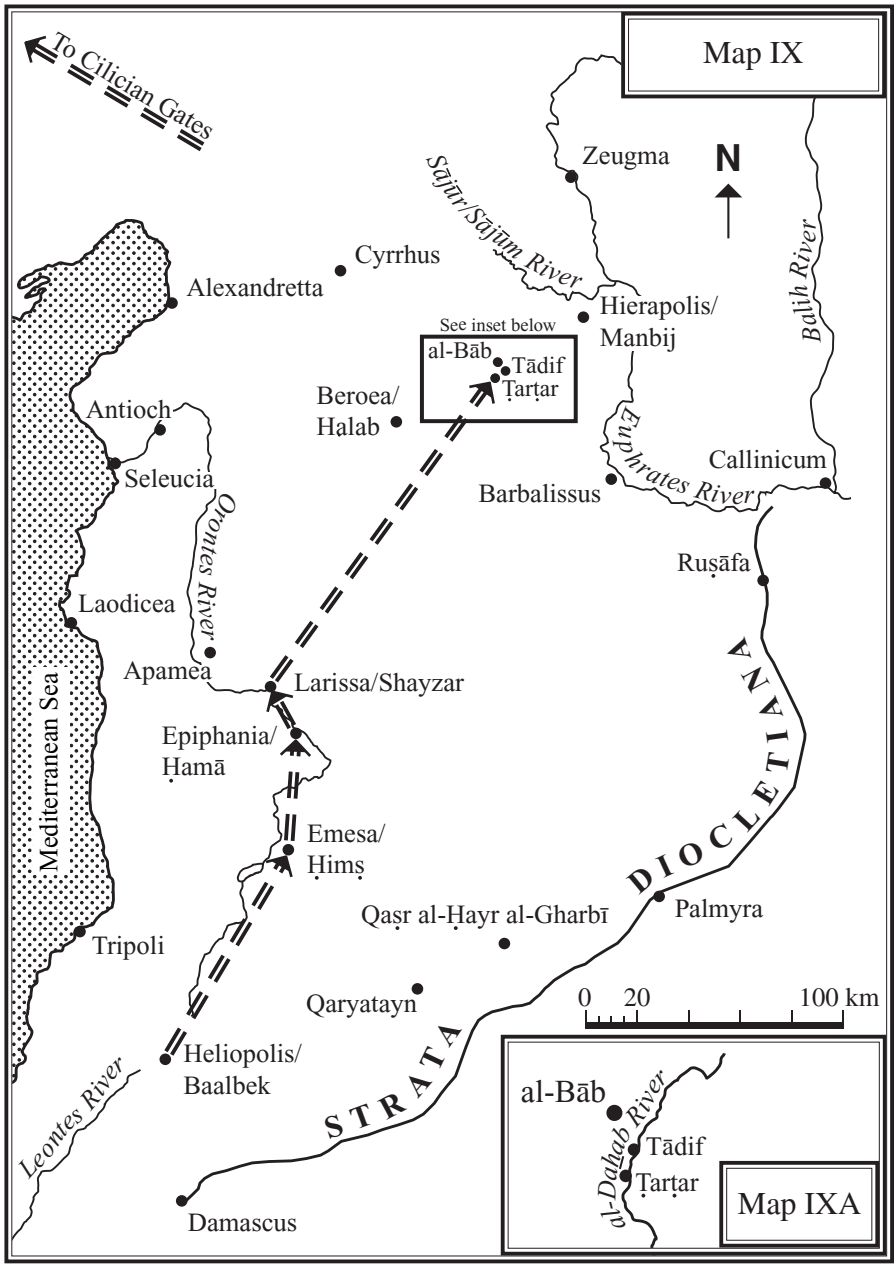
Map VII shows Trachonitis, Arabic al-Lajā, a region within the transverse wedge contiguous with both Bathaniyya/Batanaea and Auranitis, Ḥawrān (see Map III). Some important Ghassānid inscriptions in Greek were found at Ḏakīr and Sammā', and a bilingual inscription in Greek and Arabic was found at Ḥarrān. Hayyāt, near the region of Trachonitis, is where Flavius Seos, an *epitropos* possibly at the Ghassānid court, built his hall (αὐλή), according to the inscription, during the reign of the Ghassānid patrician Mundir.


Umm Ḥāratayn
N
Ḏakīr
TRACHONITIS
Umm Ḥāratayn
Hayyāt
Ḥarrān
Shaqqa/
Maximianopolis
Shahbā/
Philippopolis
Najrān
Sammā’
Suwaydā’/
Dionysias
Map VII

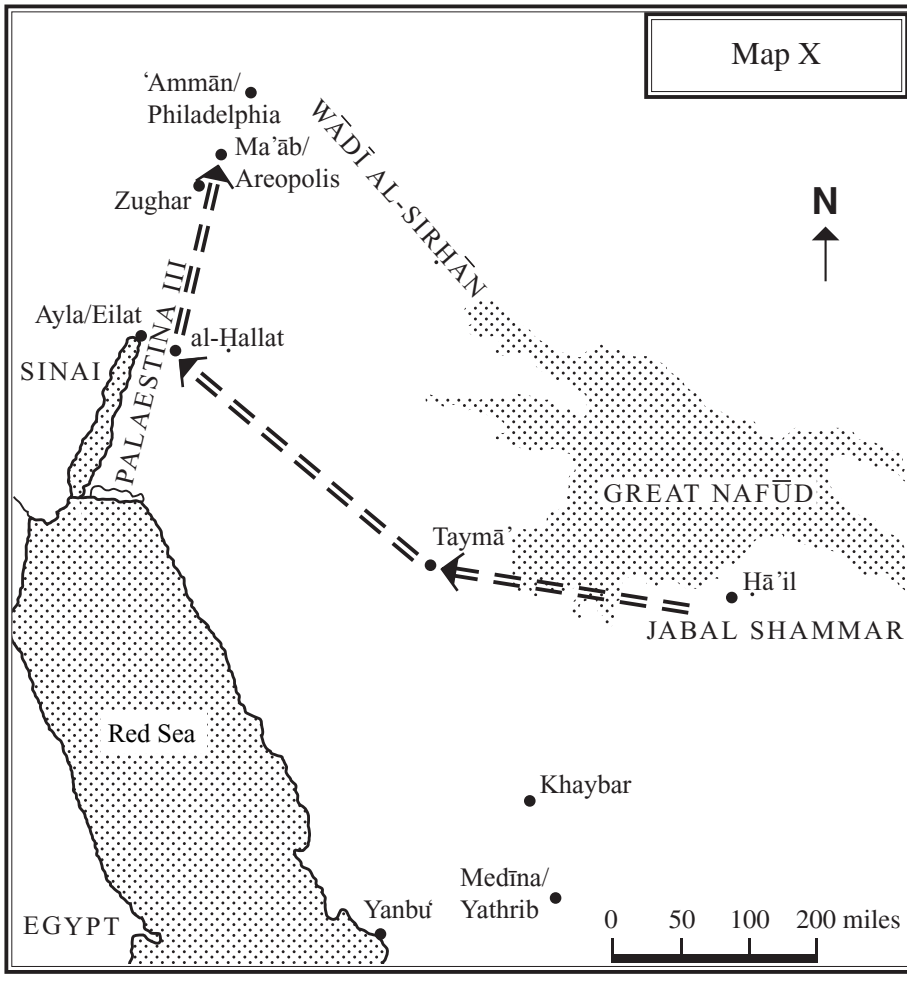
Map VIII shows al-Ṣafā, the most easterly region of the transverse wedge (see Map III), in which lay outlying military posts and stations such as Usays, Khirbat al-Bayḍā, and Qaṣr Burquʿ, the last of which has been suspected by the historian Abū al-Fidā as Ghassānid. Namāra, the famous site of the inscription of the Lakhmid king Imruʾ al-Qays, dated A.D. 328, is also located in this region.


Damascus
N
Usays/
Seis
AL-SAFĀ
Khirbat al-Bayḍā
Namāra/Dāt Manār?
Suwaydā'/
Dionysias
Burquʿ
Ṣalkhad
0 10 20 30 40 50 km
Map VIII

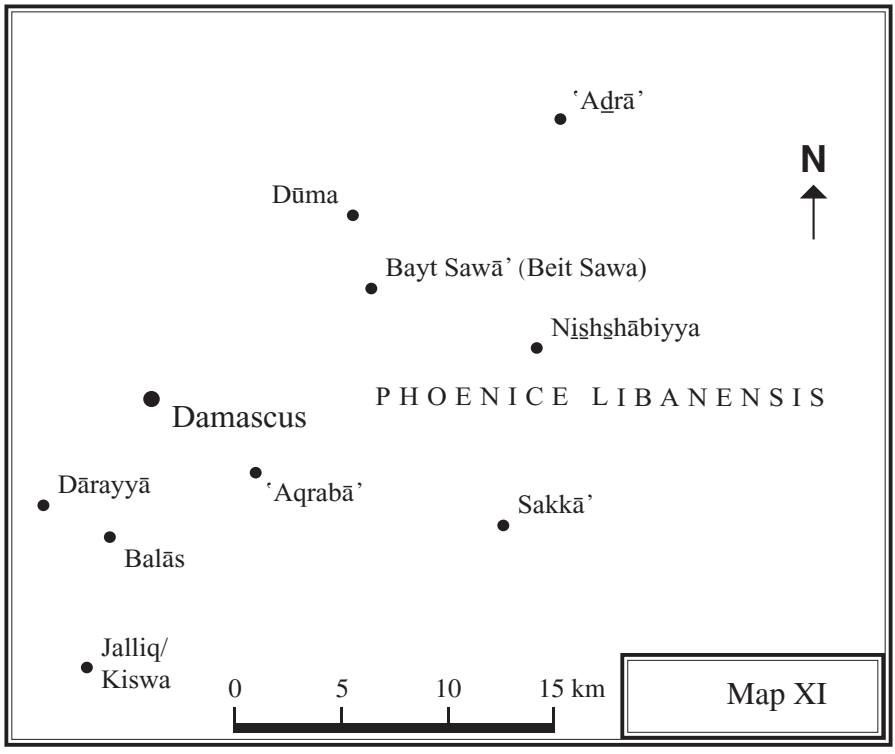
Map IX begins a series of three illustrating the journeys of three poets to Oriens and the Ghassānids: Imruʾ al-Qays, Ḥassān, and Ḥātim (chapter 5A). Imruʾ al-Qays visited the Ghassānids at Usays (see Map XII). The arrows show his itinerary in the basin of the Orontes River, where he passed through Baalbek, Ḥims, Ḥamā, and Shayzar. Tādif and Ṭarṭar, where he apparently spent some time, are much less known than the four cities of the Orontes and are very close to each other. They are located in present-day Syria, near al-Bāb, which is nowadays the main town; in the vicinity is a small stream, Nahr al-Ḏahab, which passes through Tādif. The Sājūr/Sājūm River, mentioned by Imruʾ al-Qays in the Caesar Ode, flows into the Euphrates northeast of the cluster of these three localities. How the poet traveled into Anatolia through the Cilician Gates is not clear. He may have gone westward after Tādif, passing through the Syrian Gates first and then the Amanican Gates. Hence his route from Tādif to Anatolia is left unmarked.


Map IX
To Cilician Gates
Zeugma
N
Sājūr/Sājūm River
Balīh River
Cyrrhus
Alexandretta
Hierapolis/
Manbij
See inset below
al-Bāb
Tādif
Ṭarṭar
Beroea/
Halab
Antioch
Seleucia
Euphrates River
Callinicum
Barbalissus
Orontes River
Rusāfa
Laodicea
Apamea
Larissa/Shayzar
Mediterranean Sea
Epiphania/
Ḥamā
DIOCLETIANA
Emesa/
Ḥimṣ
Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī
Palmyra
Tripoli
Qaryatayn
0 20 100 km
STRATA
Heliopolis/
Baalbek
Leontes River
al-Bāb
al-Dahab River
Tādif
Ṭarṭar
Map IXA
Damascus

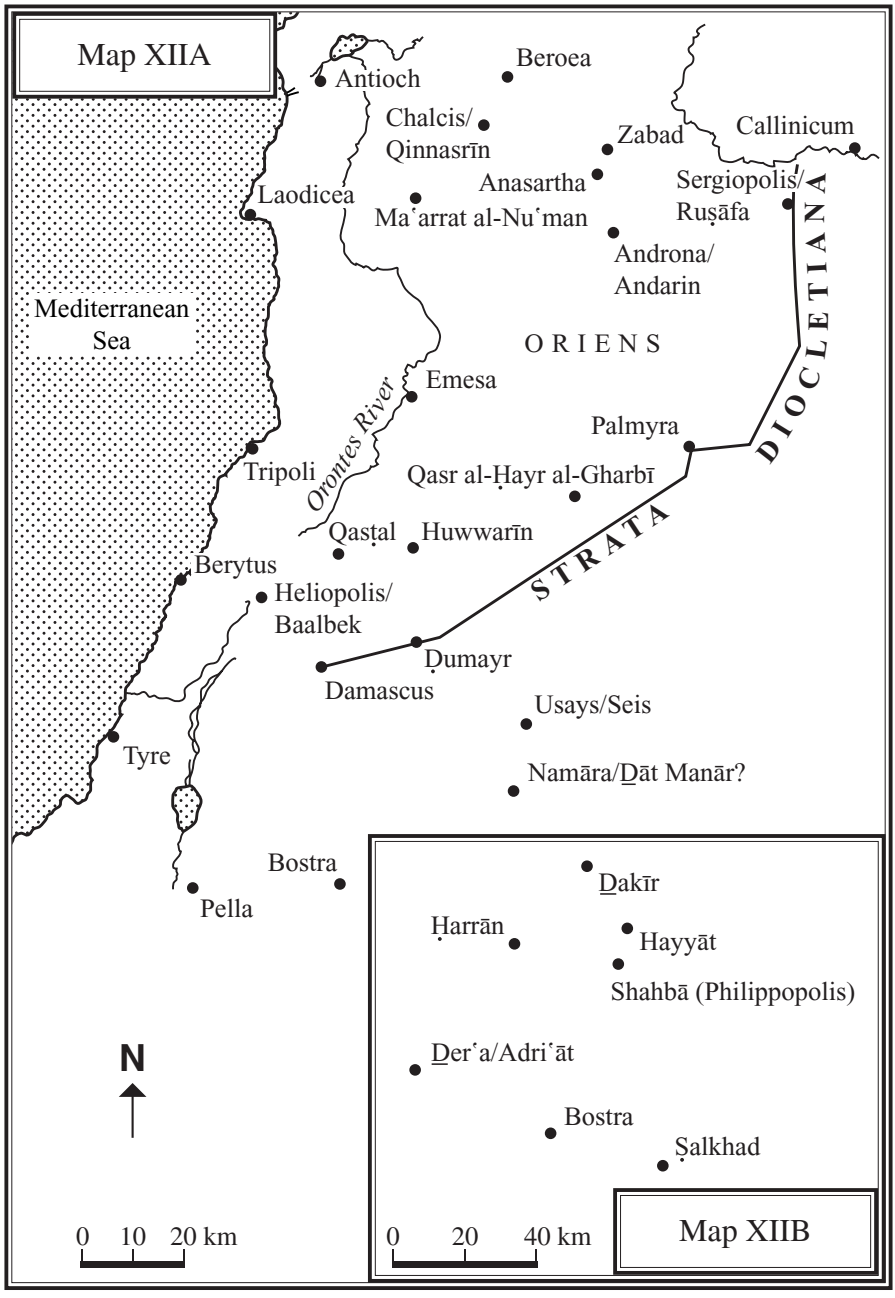
Map X illustrates the journey of the poet Ḥātim, of the tribe of Tayyi' in north Arabia, to the court of the Ghassānids ca A.D. 600. Ḥātim is the most helpful of the three poets for drawing the map of his itinerary, since he says in his ode that his journey went through three stages, each of which took three nights of travel, and he indicated the various localities. The map shows the relevant toponyms: starting from the region of Jabal Shammar near present-day Ḥā'il, he reached Taymā (whither the neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus retreated) in three nights; another three nights saw the poet in al-Ḥallat, and a third saw him in Ghassānland at Ma'āb/Areopolis and Zughar/Zoara.


Map X
ʿAmmān/
Philadelphia
Maʾāb/
Areopolis
Zughar
WĀDĪ AL-SIRḤĀN
N
Ayla/Eilat
al-Ḥallat
SINAI
PALAESTINA III
GREAT NAFŪD
Taymāʾ
Ḥāʾil
JABAL SHAMMAR
Red Sea
Khaybar
Medīna/
Yathrib
Yanbuʿ
EGYPT
0 50 100 200 miles

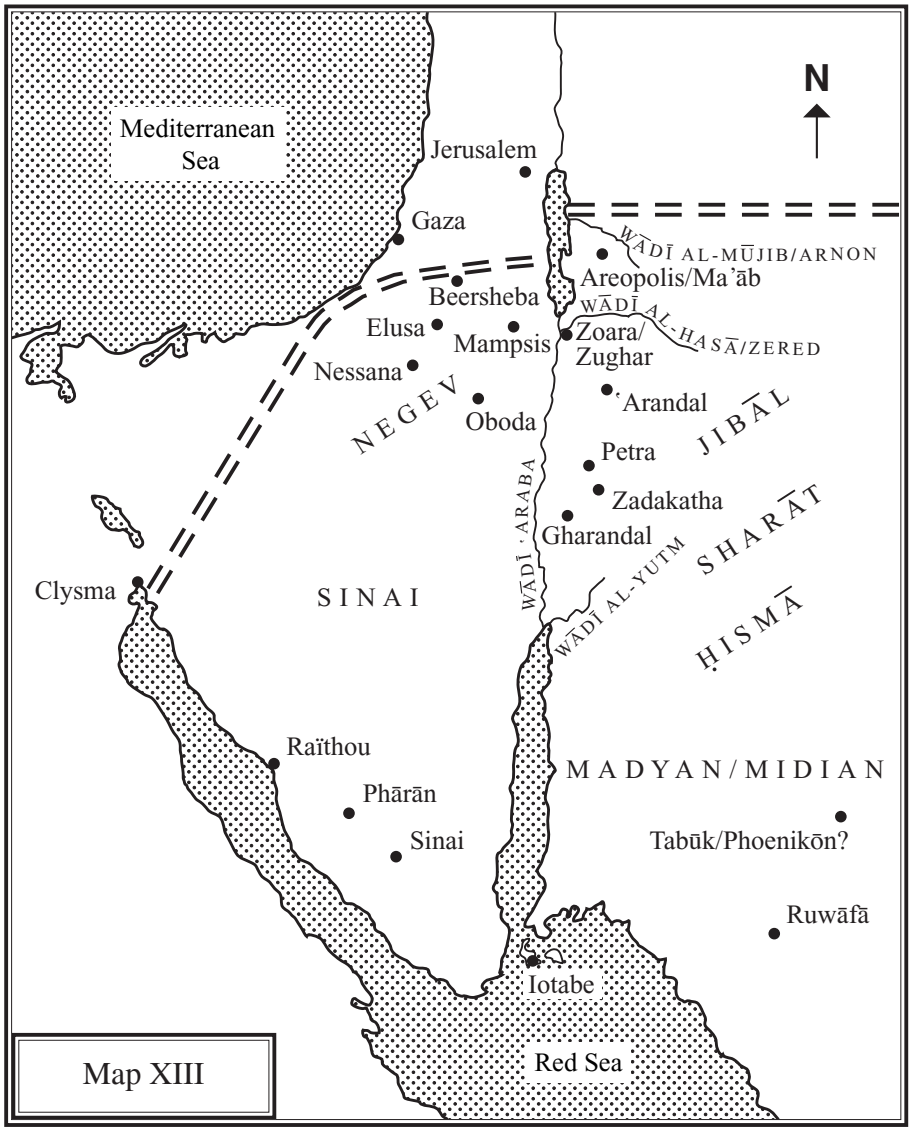
Map XI, relevant to Ḥassān (chapter 5A), the court poet of the Ghassānids, indicates the toponyms in the region of Damascus mentioned in his odes. The toponyms document a strong Ghassānid presence in the region of Damascus in Phoenicia Libanensis, not those with which they are usually associated, the Provincia Arabia or Palaestina Tertia (see Maps III and XII B). In so doing, it evidences the extension of the power of the Ghassānids, reported by Procopius for the year A.D. 529, not only militarily. The toponyms shown on the map represent villages and towns where the Ghassānids lived and where Ḥassān used to tarry when he visited them. It also shows Jalliq, their second capital after Jābiya in the Golan, where one of their kings was buried in the royal mausoleum.


ʿAḏrāʾ
N
Dūma
Bayt Sawāʾ (Beit Sawa)
Niṯhṯhābiyya
PHOENICE LIBANENSIS
Damascus
Dārayyā
ʿAqrabā
Sakkā
Balās
Jalliq/
Kiswa
0
5
10
15 km
Map XI

Map XII shows the northern portion of Oriens as it reflects the Ghassānid presence after the phylarchal jurisdiction of the Ghassānids was extended by Justinian in 529. It reached the Euphrates, mostly along the old *limes* and the *Strata Diocletiana.* Arethas received the lion's share of this extension of Ghassānid power and was put in charge of this northern sector, while his brother Abū Karib was entrusted with the southern portion in Palaestina Tertia. Zabad, between Anasartha and the Euphrates, is the site of the famous Trilinguis Zabadaea inscription (see *BASIC* I.2, 699–702).


Map XIIA
Antioch
Beroea
Chalcis/
Qinnasrīn
Zabad
Callinicum
Anasartha
Sergiopolis/
Ruṣāfa
Laodicea
Maʿarrat al-Nuʿman
Androna/
Andarin
Mediterranean
Sea
ORIENS
DIOCLETIANA
Emesa
Orontes River
Palmyra
Tripoli
Qasr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī
STRATA
Qasṭal
Huwwarīn
Berytus
Heliopolis/
Baalbek
Ḍumayr
Damascus
Usays/Seis
Tyre
Namāra/Dāt Manār?
Bostra
Pella
Dakīr
Ḥarrān
Hayyāt
Shahbā (Philippopolis)
Derʿa/Adriʿāt
Bostra
Ṣalkhad
N
0 10 20 km
0 20 40 km
Map XIIB

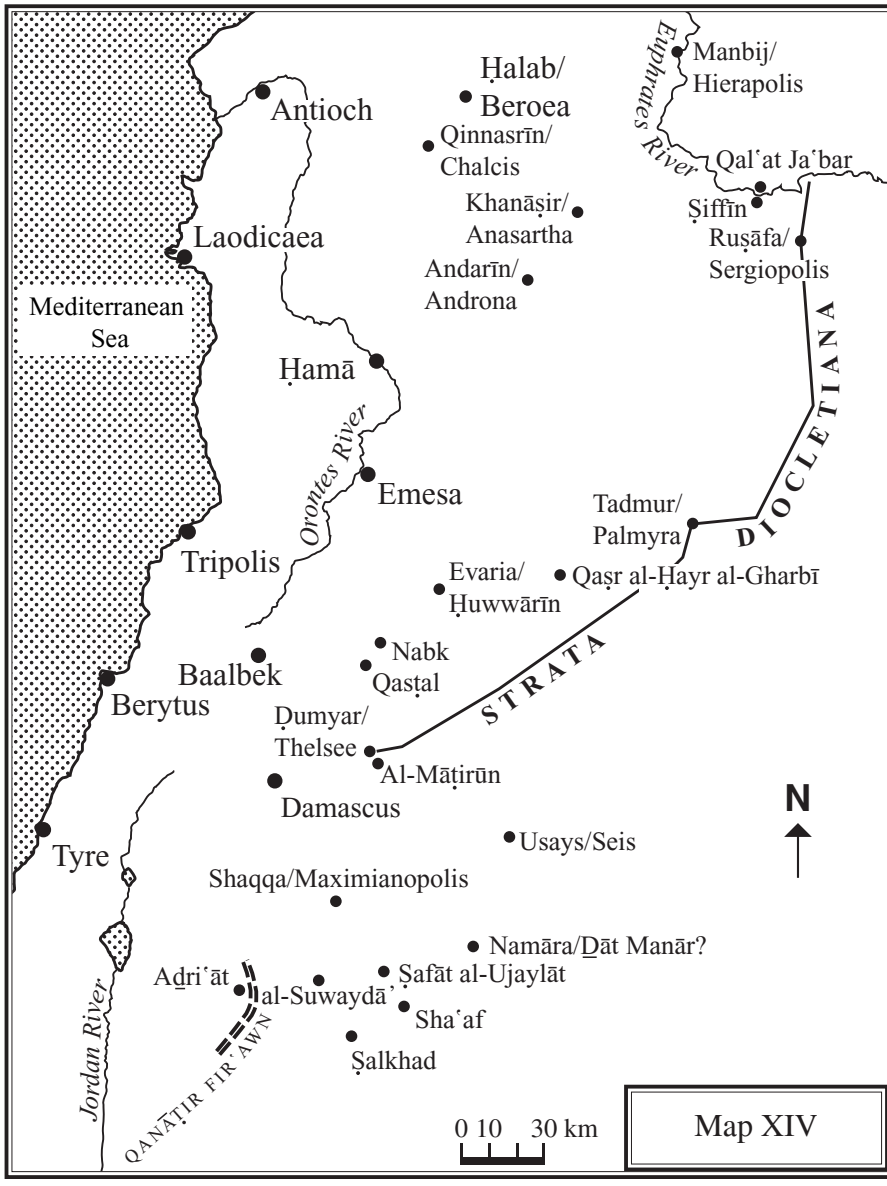
Map XIII illustrates the phylarchal jurisdiction of Abū Karib, the lesser-known brother of the Ghassānid Arethas, but almost as important in the history of Oriens in the sixth century. Two inscriptions (Sabaic and Greek), a papyrus, and a manuscript have now thrown much light on this phylarch and have made him better known. The map shows the vastness of his territorial phylarchal jurisdiction, comprising as it did Sinai, the Negev, part of the Provincia Arabia south of the Arnon, and northern Ḥijāz. It also presents the various regions that constituted it, Ḥismā, Sharāt, Jibāl, and others, known for their harsh geography, climatically and topographically. It was a world of its own, hence the separation of this region from the other in the north. The map reflects visually the wisdom behind this separation.

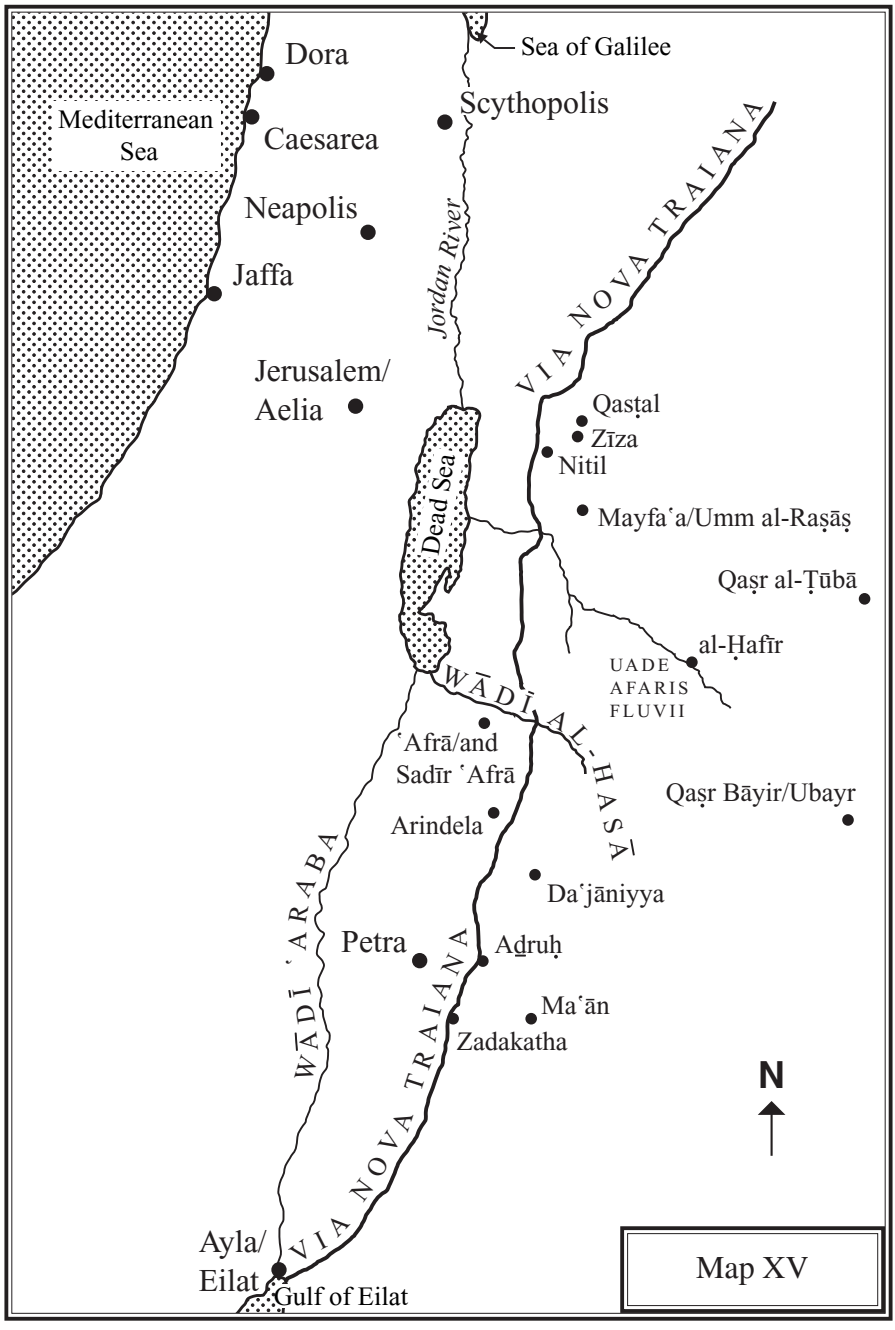

N
Mediterranean Sea
Jerusalem
Gaza
WĀDĪ AL-MŪJIB/ARNON
Areopolis/Ma'āb
Beersheba
WĀDĪ AL-HASĀ/ZERED
Elusa
Mampsis
Zoara/ Zughar
Nessana
Arandal
NEGEV
Oboda
JIBĀL
Petra
WĀDĪ 'ARABA
Zadakatha
Gharandal
SHARĀT
Clysma
SINAI
WĀDĪ AL-YUTM
ḤISMĀ
Raïthou
MADYAN/MIDIAN
Phārān
Sinai
Tabūk/Phoenikōn?
Ruwāfā
Iotabe
Red Sea
Map XIII

Maps XIV and XV illustrate the extent of the Ghassānid military presence in Oriens after their elevation in 529 to the supreme phylarchate over all the federate Arabs of Oriens. Most of the toponyms in Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī's *Tārīkh* have been identified (chapter 5B) and are included here. As the area of Ghassānid diffusion was vast, two maps are devoted to Ghassānid topography in its fullest extent form the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat.

Map XIV reveals the northern half of Oriens, with such places as Ṣiffīn, Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis, and Tadmur/Palmyra, formerly considered inaccessible to the Ghassānids, since they represented stations where not *foederati,* but regular Roman *stratiōtai* were stationed. But after the examination of the relevant passage in Procopius and the comparison with Ḥamza's *Tārīkh,* Ghassānid occupation of such places, especially after they took over the duties of the *limitanei,* can no longer be denied. The map also shows other lesser-known toponyms that Ḥamza associates with the Ghassānids such as Shaqqa, al-Suwaydā'/Dionysias, Shaʿaf, Ṣafāt al-Ujaylāt, and Qanāṭir-Firʿawn.

Map XV reveals the Ghassānid presence in the southern half of Oriens as reflected in some of the toponyms recorded in Ḥamza's *Tārīkh*: Qasṭal, al-Ḥafīr, Ubayr, al-Daʿjāniyya, Aḏruḥ, and Maʿān.

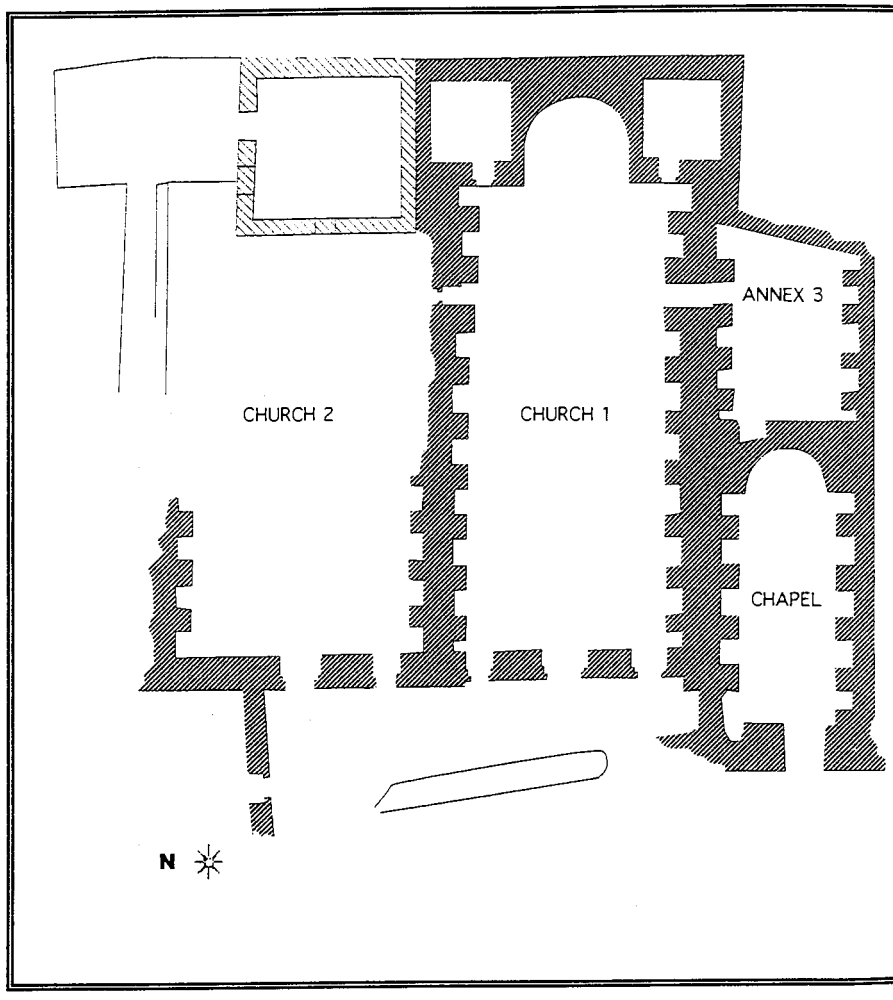

Ḥalab/
Beroea
Antioch
Qinnasrīn/
Chalcis
Manbij/
Hierapolis
Euphrates River
Qalʿat Jaʿbar
Khanāṣir/
Anasartha
Ṣiffīn
Laodicaea
Ruṣāfa/
Sergiopolis
Andarīn/
Androna
Mediterranean
Sea
DIOCLETIANA
Ḥamā
Orontes River
Emesa
Tadmur/
Palmyra
Tripolis
Evaria/
Ḥuwwārīn
Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī
Nabk
Baalbek
Qasṭal
STRATA
Berytus
Ḍumyar/
Thelsee
Al-Māṭirūn
Damascus
N
Tyre
Usays/Seis
Shaqqa/Maximianopolis
Namāra/Dāt Manār?
Aḏriʿāt
Ṣafāt al-Ujaylāt
al-Suwaydāʾ
Shaʿaf
Jordan River
Ṣalkhad
QANĀṬIR FIR AWN
0 10 30 km
Map XIV


Dora
Sea of Galilee
Mediterranean Sea
Scythopolis
Caesarea
Neapolis
Jordan River
VIA NOVA TRAIANA
Jaffa
Jerusalem/ Aelia
Qasṭal
Zīza
Nitil
Dead Sea
Mayfaʿa/Umm al-Raṣāṣ
Qaṣr al-Ṭūbā
al-Ḥafīr
UADE AFARIS FLUVII
WĀDĪ AL-ḤASĀ
ʿAfrā/and Sadīr ʿAfrā
Qaṣr Bāyir/Ubayr
Arindela
Daʿjāniyya
WĀDĪ ʿARABA
Petra
Aḏruḥ
Maʿān
Zadakatha
VIA NOVA TRAIANA
N
Ayla/ Eilat
Gulf of Eilat
Map XV

The Plates

Of the Ghassānid monuments, the two most impressive are the Tower of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī and the *Praetorium* or *Ecclesia* outside the walls of Sergiopolis/Rusāfa. They should appear in this volume, devoted as it is in large part to Ghassānid monuments, but as they have already been reproduced in the preceding one, the reader can examine them in *BASIC* I, 1, where they appear as the frontispiece and the finispiece. The plates of this volume are, therefore, limited to the newly excavated Ghassānid church complex, dedicated to the patron saint of the Ghassānids, St. Sergius, at Nitil, which lies some ten kilometers to the south of Madaba in Jordan.

The newly excavated sixth-century Ghassānid church complex dedicated to the patron saint of the Ghassānids, St. Sergius, at Nitil, consists of two large parallel churches, a chapel, and a diaconicon, as is clear from its general plan. The southern church, numbered 1 on the general plan, the chapel, and the diaconicon all have fairly well preserved floor mosaics and inscriptions: an acclamation to a Ghassānid king/phylarch, Arethas, son of al-Ḥārith; and a funerary inscription of another Ghassānid phylarch, the Thaʿlaba who was buried in the southern church. The ecclesiastical complex with its inscriptions throws much light on Ghassānid cultural life, to be discussed in BASIC II.2. I thank Father Michele Piccirillo for his kindness in providing me with photographs of the complex at Nitil and permission to reproduce them here as the frontispiece, finispiece, and the four plates that follow.



General plan of the sixth-century church complex dedicated to St. Sergius, discovered at Nitil in the Madaba region, Jordan



Plate One
The southern Church 1, seen from the west



Plate Two
Aerial view of Church 1



Plate Three
Interlaced motif in the eastern panel of Church 1



Plate Four
Aerial view of Church 1 with a service room and a chapel on the south side



Plate Five
Ornament from al-Jābiya



Plate Six
The door of the mill at Tall al-Jābiya

Index

ʿAbbāsids, 7, 95, 102, 109, 149, 162, 369, 387, 391, 392–403
ʿAbd al-Malik, Umayyad caliph, 101–2, 315
ʿAbd al-Mannān, poet, 266, 267–68
ʿAbīd ibn al-Abraṣ, poet, 282
Abraha, South Arabian ruler, 29
Abraham, Byzantine diplomat, 33–34, 42, 55
Abū Bakr, caliph, 377
Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Aghānī,* 143, 157, 159–64, 185, 282, 298
  Kitāb al-Diyārāt, 159–60
Abū al-Fidāʾ, 306, 352–53, 432
Abū Karib, Ghassānid phylarch, son of Jabala, xx, xxix, xxxii, 28–33, 34, 46, 52, 60, 136, 144, 147, 148, 189, 191–92, 203, 248, 271, 303, 339, 356–57, 364, 386, 418, 442 (Map XII), 444 (Map XIII)
  Christianity/Monophysitism of, 29, 31, 153, 191–92
  and Palaestina Tertia, 28, 29–32, 34, 46, 52, 147, 189, 191–92, 303, 339, 356, 442 (Map XII)
  and Phoinikōn, 28–29, 420 (Map I)
  titles of, 30, 316; *see also* Petra Papyri
Abū al-Makārim, historian, 157
Abū Nuwās, poet, 95, 395
Abū Qays ibn al-Aslat, poet, 222
Abyssinia, 275
ʿAdī, Ghassānid commander, 281–82
ʿAdī ibn Zayd, poet, 213
ʿAdiyy ibn al-Riqāʿ, poet, 261
Adrianople, battle of (378), 4, 59
Agathias, 5
Aghānī, see Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī
aḥmāʾ (plural of *ḥimā*), protected pastures, 57–60, 66–67, 79–80, 231, 345, 346
Aḥūdemmeh, Monophysite bishop of Takrīt, 167, 177–82
Aigrain, Raymond, 8
ajnād (pl. of *jund*), Umayyad military divisions, xxxi, 54, 86, 101, 269, 380
Akhbār Mulūk Ghassān, xv, xxvi, xxviii, 122–23, 125–26, 128–29, 158–59, 162, 308, 309, 312, 313–15, 338, 342–43, 344, 345, 362–63, 364–74, 382
  authorship and genre, 367–73
al-Akhṭal, poet, 109
Aleppo, 102, 133, 157, 264, 269, 352
ʿAlī (caliph), ʿAlids, 337, 381, 394, 395–96, 398, 399
Allan, James W., 400–1
ʿAlqama, poet, 117, 277
ʿĀmir, Ghassānid ancestor, 19
ʿAmman, xiv, 327, 329
Ammianus Marcellinus, on Arabs, 4, 312
Amorkesos, 5th-cent. Ghassānid phylarch, 312, 313
ʿAmr, Ghassānid king, 225, 236, 253, 270, 271, 303, 311, 314, 315
  monasteries associated with, 324–25
  toponyms associated with, 333–36
ʿAmr ibn Hind, Lakhmid king (554–559), xxxiv, 258, 265, 266, 270, 272
ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm, poet, xxviii, 262–63, 267, 268–72
Anastasius, emperor, 18, 33, 140, 311, 312, 364
Antioch, 37, 51, 99, 100, 134–35, 206, 363, 417
  battle of (540), 37
Antony, saint, 166
Arab Christianity, xxix, 12–13, 29, 54, 90–91, 123–24, 137–39, 143–44, 159, 162, 171, 274, 297, 344, 364, 381, 387, 404, 422 (Map II)
  liturgy, xxx, 117–18, 130, 131, 163–64, 185, 212, 289, 295, 377
  monasticism in, 164–76 passim

Arab conquests, of 7th cent. *See* Muslims, conquests (7th cent.); Oriens, Muslim conquest of
Arabia Felix. See South Arabia
Arabian Peninsula, xiii, xvii, xxx, 2, 6, 31–32, 33, 55, 57, 75, 165, 167–68, 269, 275, 283, 303, 308, 310–11, 344–45, 374, 397
  Christianity/monasticism in, 167–68; *see also* Ḥijāz
Arabic sources, xvi, xxvi, xxvii–xxviii, xxxii, 13–14, 34, 42, 49, 57–60, 61, 63–75, 89, 91–93, 111, 116–17, 143, 157–64, 171–73, 220–354 passim, 392–403, 405–7
  see also inscriptions, Arabic; Koran; *individual authors and works*
Arabs, Rhomaic, 9, 19n, 26, 46, 69, 186, 271, 331
archimandrites, letter of the, 87–88, 92, 98, 113, 138, 147, 150, 156, 177, 183–84, 186–87, 202, 203, 205, 207, 218, 229, 266, 285, 324, 326, 333, 341, 387
Arethas (al-Ḥārith), Ghassānid phylarch, son of Jabala (529–569), xxvii, xxxix–xxx, xxxii, xxxiv, 11, 21, 24, 26–28, 33, 41, 49, 52, 55, 60, 63, 98, 107, 108, 113–14, 127–28, 140–41, 144, 147, 148, 176, 191, 199, 202, 208, 234, 249–53, 256, 270, 271, 278–80, 282, 303, 305, 313, 314, 316, 355–57, 361, 364, 386
  Christianity/Monophysitism of, 149, 208, 387
  inscriptions of, 6, 20, 80, 114, 332, 450 (Plate 1)
  kingship (*basileia*) and supreme phylarchate of, 24, 26–27, 30, 41, 51, 136, 140, 267, 279–80, 313, 315, 329, 356, 358, 362, 363, 371, 442 (Map XII), 446 (Map XIV)
  Monophysite Christian faith of, 149, 208, 387
  patriciate of, 6, 26
  toponyms associated with, 80–81, 183, 224, 243, 245, 285, 295, 318, 327–29, 339
  visit to Constantinople (563), 146, 279
Arethas, Kindite chief, son of ʿAmr, 25, 33–35, 362n
Armenia, 21–24, 26, 32
ʿArqala, poet, 154
al-Aʿshā, poet, xxviii, 213, 220, 263, 272–78
al-Aṣmaʿī, 342
Aspebetos, 5th-cent. phylarch of the Parembole, 125, 170
Aswad, Kindite general, 33, 263
asylum, right of, 286–87
Auranitis, *see* Ḥawrān
al-Ayham, Ghassānid, 314, 316–17, 351
  toponyms associated with, 332–33, 352–53
Azd, Arab tribal group, xxvii, 2, 18, 31, 73, 138, 284, 311, 366, 368, 378
Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām,* 291, 298, 302
al-Azharī, 269

Baalbek, 262, 263, 265, 270, 271
Baghdad, 7, 102, 149, 369, 393, 397, 398
Baḥīra, supposed monk, 186–87, 188–89, 215
Bahrāʾ, Arab tribal group, 116–19, 124, 130, 133, 137, 377
al-Bakrī, geographer, 157, 161, 171–72, 211, 212, 213, 306, 348–49
Balāḏurī, historian, 298, 392
Balḥārith, Arab tribal group, 2, 7, 145, 151, 171, 200, 422 (Map II)
  Christianity/Monophysitism of, 200, 351
al-Balqāʾ, xxx, 108, 111, 187, 223, 235–36, 239, 247, 325, 327, 329, 330, 331, 334, 346, 388
Bar-Hebraeus, 149
al-Bathaniyya (Batanaea), xv, xxxiv, 49, 78, 83, 85, 95, 106, 112, 169, 175, 186, 202, 212, 221, 227, 228, 229, 233, 240, 244, 260, 266, 341, 346, 370, 424 (Map III), 428 (Map V), 432 (Map VII)
Belisarius, 24, 66, 355, 364
Bilād al-Shām (Oriens, Syria), xiv, xxviii, 54, 63, 68, 83, 86, 91, 96, 100, 101, 108, 157, 191, 248, 265–66, 268, 272, 275, 281, 287, 291, 299, 308, 344–45, 352, 365, 368, 369–72, 375–91, 393
Blachère, Régis, 275
Bostra (Buṣra), 32, 43, 83, 98, 106, 107, 134, 135, 136, 145, 146, 147, 189, 215, 230–31, 235, 236, 260, 266–68, 270, 277–78, 281, 292, 300, 326, 335, 346–47, 378–79
  churches at, 287
  era of, 44, 45, 313
  monasteries at, 186–87, 188–89, 214, 217
  sūq (fair) at, 147, 215
Bowersock, Glen, 62

Brands, Gunnar, 129
Brinker, Werner, 122–23, 127
Brisch, Klaus, 187
Brünnow, Rudolph, 13, 47, 102, 103–4
Butler, Howard Crosby, 216–17
Byzantine art, reflected in Oriens, xxx, 147–48, 161–62, 213, 214n, 265, 319, 376, 391, 403–4
Byzantium, allied to Arabs, 4, 27, 33–35, 41–42, 51–57, 69, 144, 311; *see also foederati* army of, 10, 51, 63–66, 78, 110, 118, 132–33, 175, 205; *see also* cavalry, *comitatenses,* Justinian, Legio III Gallica, *limitanei, magister militum*
  wars with Persia, 21, 24, 31, 32, 33, 37–39, 42, 49, 78, 131, 132, 135–36, 140, 146, 275, 282, 313, 317, 380

Cahen, Claude, 394
caliphate, 379–81, 385, 386, 393
Callinicum, battle of (531), 24, 49, 53, 54, 66
camels, 57, 67, 119–21, 125, 131, 229–30, 238, 246, 257, 261, 276, 293
Caskel, Werner, 254, 256
cavalry, 10, 48–49, 53, 57–60, 66, 78–80, 135, 221; *see also* horses
Chabot, J.-B., 11
Chosroes I Anūshravān, 34, 182, 338
Chosroes II Parviz, 124, 126, 132, 243, 305
Chronicle of Edessa, 367
Chronicle of Zuqnīn, 314n, 405
Chronographia (Malalas), 23–24, 32
Circassians, 7, 104, 353–54
comitatenses, exercitus comitatensis, xxxii, 10, 32, 48, 49, 57, 293
Conrad, Lawrence, views on qaṣr/quṣūr, 67–75, 141, 291, 292
  views on Ḥassān, 291–302
Constantine, emperor, xxix, 38, 77, 90, 176, 274
Constantinople, 4, 5, 77, 85, 102, 131, 145, 146, 173, 174, 197, 199, 259, 261–62, 290, 319, 363, 364, 365, 371
Cresswell, K. A. C., 399–400, 402
Crone, Patricia, 214n
Crusades, 7, 109, 290
Cyril of Scythopolis, 89, 125, 156, 166
  Vita Euthymii, 125, 166

Dakīr, Greek inscriptions at, 44–46, 47, 48
Dam inscription, 29; *see also* Abraha; inscriptions, Sabaic
Damascus, 7, 11, 12, 29, 42, 47, 86, 94, 100, 101, 102, 105, 110, 111–12, 113, 134–35, 149, 154, 189–90, 195, 200, 217–19, 238, 240–42, 245, 266–67, 269–70, 271, 281, 283–86, 304–5, 323, 346–47, 351, 370, 371, 381, 382–83, 384, 385, 387, 419, 440 (Map XI)
Damian, Monophysite patriarch of Alexandria, 98
Danaba, 110, 111, 112, 113
Daras, battle of (530), 57, 66
Dāwūd (David), 5th-cent. Salīhid king, 106, 170, 174, 197, 201, 333
Dayr. See Ghassānids, monasteries of, *and individual sites*
al-Dimashḳī, geographer, 109, 110
Diocletian, emperor, xxix, xxxii, 21, 35, 37, 38, 68, 134, 135, 270, 356, 389
Diodorus Siculus, 16
Dionysius of Tell Maḥre (Syriac historian), *Chronicle,* xxvii, 51, 98
Domaszewski, Anton von, 47
Druzes, 7
Dubyān, tribe, xxvii, 56, 58, 220, 222, 225, 226, 231–32, 250
Dūma, 242, 283–87
Dūmat, fortress, 35
Ḍumayr, tower at, built by Mundir the Ghassānid, xv, xxxii, 12, 15, 47, 60, 131, 133, 175, 184, 190, 195, 206, 304, 305, 309, 332, 362, 389
  inscription, 12, 131, 304, 332
Dura Europos, 229
Durliat, Jean, 300
Dussaud, René, xxiii, 14, 97, 102, 110, 112, 208, 226, 419

Edessa, 17, 134, 165, 168, 367, 422 (Map II)
Egypt, 64, 85, 95, 165, 174, 195–96, 293, 347, 353, 354, 358
Eilat (Ayla), xvii, xxii, xxv, xxxi, xxxiv, 17, 19, 43, 44, 49, 60, 61, 68, 118, 125, 144, 155, 169, 192, 221, 236, 247, 256, 303, 310, 314, 332, 336, 339, 358, 359, 360, 362, 389, 446 (Map XIV)
Emesa (Ḥimṣ), 263–64, 265, 269, 273, 277, 278, 436 (Map IX)
Ephraim, Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch, 11
Eudocia, empress, 197
Euphratensis, 30, 52, 62, 133, 386
Euphrates, xiv, xvii, xxi, xxii, xxv, xxxi, xxxiv, 3, 17, 19, 43, 44, 47, 60, 61, 68, 118,

Euphrates (*continued*)
121, 125, 132, 134, 144, 155, 221, 223, 265, 270–71, 310, 314, 337, 358, 362, 389, 436 (Map IX), 442 (Map XII), 446 (Map XIV)
Evagrius Scholasticus, 5
Evaria. *See* Ḥuwwārīn
Ewliya Čelebi, xxiii

al-Faw, 3, 362n
foederati, Arab, of Byzantium, 3, 4, 14, 27, 32, 33, 34–35, 51–57, 78, 86, 96, 100, 115, 125, 131–32, 135, 143–44, 270–71, 303, 308, 310, 311, 337, 359, 360, 371, 392; *see also* Ghassānids, Inner Shield, Kinda, Outer Shield, Salīḥids, Tanūkhids
conflicts among, 43–44, 106, 224, 253, 258, 279, 311, 316–17, 346, 351
of Persia, 38, 44, 52, 53, 279, 303, 305, 308, 319, 337, 358, 392; *see also* Lakhmids
Foss, Clive, 62, 155–56
Fowden, Elizabeth, views on Ruṣāfa and nomadism/sedentarism, 129–30, 136–42

Gabala, Ghassānid leader, in Theophanes, 6, 140; *see also* Jabala
Gabita, 5; *see* Jābiya
Galilea, 49, 78, 86, 87, 221–22, 227–28, 331
Gaube, Heinz, 62
Gaulanitis (Jawlān, Golan), xiv, xxi, xxv, xxxi, xxxiv, 5, 6, 7–8, 29, 34, 42, 43, 49, 57, 76–96 passim, 102, 120, 124, 132, 133–36, 147, 149, 174, 175, 210, 221–22, 224, 226, 228, 229, 236–37, 238, 242, 247, 256, 271, 285, 295, 300, 303, 330–31, 341, 346, 365, 370, 383, 424 (Map III), 426 (Map IV), 428 (Map V)
churches in, 149–50
monasteries in, 87–96, 147, 169, 185, 186, 202, 212, 246
Gaza, 32, 186, 215, 234, 378
George of Cyprus, Byzantine geographer, *Descriptio,* xxx, 100
George the Monk, 307
George the Synkellos, 307
Gerasa, 146
Ghassānids,
ancestors of, 19, 108
Christianity/Monophysitism of, xxv, xxvii, xxviii, xxx, 19, 29, 31, 50–51, 76, 77, 84, 95, 98, 111, 130–31, 138, 141, 144, 148, 171, 173, 175–76, 188, 229, 288–91, 308, 318, 319–20, 332, 363
churches of, xiii, xv, xx, xxviii, xxx, 19, 138, 144, 148–56, 304–5, 318, 351, 360, 387; *see also individual sites*
federates (*foederati*) of Byzantium, xiii, xvi–xvii, xxv, xxix, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv–xxxvi, 6, 19, 25, 41, 45, 51, 78, 86, 96, 100, 113, 125, 168, 175, 186, 217, 250, 357, 359, 392, 404
fortifications of, xiii, xxv, xxviii, xxx, 20, 47–48, 60, 103, 209–10, 269, 323–24, 328–29, 335–36, 359–60, 363, 387, 389; *see also* Ḍumayr, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, Uṣays
historiography, 4–6, 306–54, 355–74 passim; *see also* Procopius; *individual authors and works*
horses of, 10, 49, 66, 78–80, 115, 124, 125, 131, 135, 221, 293
serving as *limitanei,* xxix, xxxii, xxxiv, 35–51, 60, 61, 118, 133, 136, 176, 248, 275, 278, 318, 328–29, 331, 340, 348, 356–57, 359, 388, 389, 390, 440 (Map XI), 442 (Map XII), 446 (Maps XIV–XV)
lovers of building (φιλοκτίσται), xxv, xxix, xxxii, 69, 84, 159, 160–61, 308–9, 317–20, 376
military terms, use of, 63–66, 175
monasteries of, xiii, xxviii, xxx, 19, 80, 87–96, 144, 156–76, 183–200, 201–19, 266, 318, 325, 346, 351, 360, 387; *see also* archimandrites, letter of the; *individual founders and sites;* Simeon of Bēth-Arsẖām
name, 19, 83, 138, 310
phylarchate, 9–10, 135, 442 (Map XII); *see also* individual phylarchs
poetry, xxvi, xxx, 6, 65, 77, 95, 99, 121, 133–34, 156, 160, 174, 220, 243–46, 289–91, 366–67, 381, 424 (Map III); *see also* Ḥassān, Ḥātim, Nābigha, *and other individual poets*
residences of, xxv, xxviii, 19, 330, 335, 360, 377, 387
sedentarism of, xxv, xxxiii, xxxv, 1–15, 97, 123, 137–40, 294–95, 300, 310, 318, 359, 376, 420
survival in period of Umayyad rule, xxviii, xxxi, 83, 365, 369, 371, 377–82; of ʿAbbāsid rule, 347, 354

tombs of, 108, 113–14, 226–29, 254, 255, 279, 337, 366, 440 (Map XI)
toponyms associated with, 80–86, 87–96, 194–95, 285, 417, 426 (Map IV), 440 (Map XI), 446 (Maps XIV–XV)
towns of, xiii, xxv, xxx–xxxi, xxxv, 49, 115, 248, 346–47, 364, 422 (Map II), 440 (Map XI); *see also* Jābiya, Jalliq
water engineering abilities of, 17–20, 103, 104, 122–29, 131, 210–11, 243, 311, 315, 326–27, 338, 359, 389
weaponry of, 134–36
Ghassānland, 5, 6, 87, 88, 145–46, 147, 175, 200, 222, 233–34, 238, 242–43, 246, 259–61, 274, 275, 291, 304, 369, 381, 384, 424 (Map III)
defined, xxxiv–xxxv, 424 (Map III)
vines in, 234, 236–37, 268–69
Ghūṭat Dimashq, 217–19
Goths, 32, 39
Graf, David, 62
Greek sources, xxvi, 9, 29–30, 131–32, 156, 310, 407–8. *See also* inscriptions (Greek); Petra Papyri; Procopius; *individual authors and works*

Ḥaḍramawt, 2, 150, 273, 275
Hagia Sophia, at Constantinople, 146
Haliorama, *see* Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī
al-Hamaḏānī, 287, 289–91, 301
Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, xiv, xxii, xxiii, xxvi–xxvii, xxviii, 5, 11, 45, 48, 49, 61, 66, 69, 93, 125–27, 143, 158–59, 162, 174, 185, 188, 198, 200, 201–2, 229, 248, 306–41, 343–45, 351, 364, 365, 374, 388, 419, 430 (Map VI)
Tārīkh (*Chronicle*), xiv, xxii, xxviii, xxxii, 49, 122–23, 158–59, 172–73, 183, 306–41, 363–64, 373, 446 (Maps XIV–XV)
Ḥarbaqa, 20
al-Ḥārith, *see* Arethas
Ḥarrān, bilingual inscription at, 131, 149, 191, 432 (Map VII)
Ghassānid church at, xxviii, 141, 149, 191
Hārūn al-Rashīd, 393, 394–99
Ḥassān ibn Thābit, Ghassānid poet, xxvii, 1n, 18, 19, 56, 69, 81, 85, 95, 99, 108, 111, 121, 131, 141, 156, 160, 162, 184–85, 210, 212, 217, 220, 222, 226, 231–46, 277, 281, 284–86, 287–302, 310, 329, 349, 350, 351–52, 381, 436 (Map IX), 440 (Map XI)
Ḥassān ibn al-Nuʿmān, Ghassānid general, xxxi, 380
Ḥātim, poet, xxvii, 55, 220, 246–59, 277, 303, 347, 436 (Map IX), 438 (Map X)
Ḥawrān (Auranitis), xiv, xxv, xxxiv, 6, 19, 49, 78, 83, 169, 175, 186, 201, 202, 210, 212, 221, 229, 239, 242, 254, 255–56, 259, 262, 274, 300, 304, 323, 325, 330, 335, 336, 341, 346, 370, 424 (Map III), 430 (Map VI), 432 (Map VII)
monasteries in, 212, 216–17
Hayyāt, 389, 422
Mundir's inscription at, 131, 432 (Map VII)
al-Ḥāzimī, 342
hēgemonia, 34, 55, 263
Heraclius, emperor, xxix, 5, 6, 37, 54, 86, 113, 126, 136, 146, 239, 275, 317, 350, 353, 356, 380.
See also Persia, wars with Byzantium
Hermon, Mount, 84, 90, 236, 256
Herzfeld, Ernst Emil, xxii, xxvi, 61–62, 325, 332, 343, 345, 375n
Hierapolis (Mabboug, Manbij), xxvii, 44, 51, 132
Hierocles, *Synecdemos,* xxx, 100
Ḥijāz, 2, 18, 28, 30, 34, 52, 55, 56, 66, 144, 150, 151, 155, 167, 169–70, 173, 177, 183, 191, 192, 193, 197, 204, 211, 215, 217, 221, 224, 231, 233–34, 275, 276, 284, 301, 316, 336, 348, 370, 374, 381, 386, 396, 444 (Map XIII)
Christianity in, 144, 150–51, 167, 169–70, 173, 177, 191, 192–93, 197, 204, 215
Ghassānids in, 18, 56, 284, 301, 348, 374
Persian influence in, 34
Hijra, era of the, 313, 353, 394, 398
Hill, Donald, 16–17
Ḥimyar, Ḥimyarites, 2, 17–18, 19, 167, 263, 275
Hind, Ghassānid queen, 324–25
Hind, Lakhmid queen, 172, 198–99, 265, 272
Ḥīra, Lakhmid capital, 33, 73, 74–75, 97, 102, 107, 138, 144, 157, 159–60, 161, 162, 163–64, 171, 172, 175, 221–22, 239, 246, 258, 265, 275, 282, 308, 314, 315, 319, 333, 334, 351, 368, 369, 422 (Map II)
churches in, 161–64, 393, 399, 403

Ḥīra (*continued*)
monasteries in, 157, 159, 168, 170, 198–99, 351, 393, 399, 403; *see also* Hind; Hishām al-Kalbī
under ʿAbbāsids, 392–403
hirthā, camp, 5, 10–11, 14, 65, 247
Hishām, Umayyad caliph, 6, 116, 119, 206, 315, 377, 384, 385
Hishām al-Kalbī, historian, 157, 159–60, 162, 168, 248–49, 252, 307, 342, 353, 366, 368–69
Honigmann, Ernst, 208
horses, of Ghassānids, 56, 57–60, 115, 124, 125, 131, 135, 221, 224, 293
pasturage for, 56, 67, 78–80, 135, 221. *See also aḥmā'*
in war, 78–80, 86, 224, 293. *See also* cavalry
hospitality, Arab ideal of, 211, 249, 289, 290, 294
Ḥujr, Ghassānid king, 236, 253, 314
Ḥuwwārīn (Evaria), 152, 153, 223, 383, 387, 390
hydrography. *See* water

Ibn al-ʿAdīm, 129
Ibn ʿAsākir, 299
Ibn Hishām, 342
Ibn Jubayr, 218
Ibn Khaldūn, 306, 353–54
Ibn al-Mughīra, Ghassānid commander, 42, 56, 260, 315
Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist,* 374
Ibn Saʿīd, 306, 351–52, 353
Imru' al-Qays, 4th-cent. federate king, 14, 52–53, 114, 230, 313, 315, 341, 366, 389, 401, 434 (Map VIII)
Imru' al-Qays, 6th-cent. poet, 196–97, 199, 220, 259–65, 270, 273, 282, 304, 436 (Map IX)
Inner Shield (federate), 52–54, 116, 124, 133, 137, 225, 258, 284, 386
inscriptions, Arabic, xxviii, 14, 42, 53, 114n, 131, 172, 187, 198, 365–66, 407, 417
Dayr Hind, 172, 198
Ḥarrān, xxviii, 131, 149, 191
Namara, 14, 53, 114, 341, 366, 401, 434 (Map VIII)
Usays, 42, 47, 48, 66, 131, 187, 261, 315, 389–90
bilingual, 131, 149, 151, 191, 320, 432
of Sharāhīl, 151, 320; *see also* Ḥarrān
dating of, 313–14. *See also* Bostra, era of
Greek, xv, xx, 6, 12, 20, 26, 29, 44–46, 48, 131–32, 191, 207, 216, 304, 332, 356, 365–66, 408, 419, 432 (Map VII), 444 (Map XIII)
Dakīr, 44–46, 47, 48
Dayr al-Naṣrānī, 216
Ḍumayr, 12, 131, 304, 332
Ḥarrān, 131, 149
Ḥayyāt, 131
Nitil, xv, xx, 450–55 (Plates 1–4), finispiece
Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, 6, 20, 206–7, 332
Ruṣāfa, 48, 131–32
Sammā', 29
Sabaic, 14, 29, 30, 297n, 312, 356, 444 (Map XIII)
Dam inscription, 29
trilingual (Zabad), xxviii, 442 (Map XII)
Isaac, Benjamin, 77
Islam, xiii, xxix, 54, 63, 84, 91–93, 160, 214, 290, 308, 321, 350, 396
conversion to, xxvii, 149, 151, 220, 297n, 317, 344, 371. *See also* Koran, Muḥammad, Muslims
Islamic art, 376, 391, 400–2

Jabala, Ghassānid phylarch (d. 528), xxvii, 25, 27, 80, 81, 146, 199, 290, 313, 314, 356
toponyms associated with, 81–82, 326–27, 330–31, 337
Jabala, son of Arethas, 144, 202
Jabala, last Ghassānid ruler, 302n, 317, 348, 352, 353, 379, 388
Jābiya, Ghassānid capital, xv, xxvii, xxx, xxxv, 15, 42, 43, 49, 76, 79, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 96–104, 109, 111, 115, 124, 132, 133, 141, 145, 149–50, 155–56, 161, 162, 174, 184, 186, 200, 202–3, 226, 238–39, 314, 315, 331, 339, 346, 350, 365, 370, 388, 392, 393, 399, 420 (Map I), 422 (Map II), 424 (Map III), 426 (Map IV), 428 (Map V), 440 (Map XI)
churches in, 97, 98, 99, 203, 351
monasteries in, 98, 99, 203, 351
under Umayyads, 96, 100–2, 379–81, 382–84, 386–87
Jacob Baradaeus, 11, 177, 181
Jafna, Ghassānid phylarch, 51, 83, 108, 132, 183, 198, 258–59, 272–73, 277, 289, 295, 313, 314, 315, 328, 351–52, 353
toponyms associated with, 323–24

al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān,* 281–82
al-Radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā (Response to the Christians), 288–90, 301–2, 373
Jalliq, Ghassānid capital, xxx, xxxv, 6, 15, 49, 62, 96, 105–15, 226, 235–36, 241, 267, 278–79, 285, 305, 315, 323, 339, 346, 350, 351, 388, 424 (Map III), 440 (Map XI)
church(es) at, 111, 152
etymology of name, 105–6, 110–14, 305
monasteries at, 184
tombs at, 108, 113–14. *See also* Ghassānids, tombs of
under Umayyads, 105, 108–9, 383, 387
Jamāl, A. S., 254
James, Simon, 135–36
Jarīr, poet, 188
Jerusalem, 77, 85, 102, 129, 191, 197, 233, 273–74, 277, 278, 381, 419
captured by Persians (614), 85, 232
pilgrimage to, 87, 129, 197, 274
Jews, 18, 55, 78, 84, 123, 151, 189, 284
in Ḥijāz, 55, 151, 284
in Yathrib (Medina), 18, 123
and Samaritan revolt, 78
John, Ghassānid Monophysite bishop, 218, 390
John of Damascus, saint, 269, 379n
John of Ephesus, church historian, *Ecclesiastical History,* xxviii, 5, 10–11, 14, 124, 127, 131, 145, 148, 156, 174–75, 280, 319–20, 365, 367
on Arethas, 280
on Ghassānids as nomads, 5, 10–11, 14
on Ruṣāfa, 124, 127
John Moschus, 141
Jordan River, 49, 84, 89–90, 147, 170, 173, 174, 247, 293, 339, 426 (Map IV)
Jordan Valley, monasticism in, 170, 173, 174, 197, 211
Judām, Arab tribe, 53, 192–93, 224, 234, 380, 381
Julian, saint, cult of, by Ghassānids, 13, 155, 175, 206
Julian (the Apostate), emperor, 312
al-Jurjānī, 353
Justin I, emperor, 39, 41, 146, 218, 390
and Monophysites, 218, 390
and Persian wars, 146
Justin II, emperor, 28, 132, 149, 318
and Arethas, 28
and Monophysites, 149
and Mundir, 132
Justinian, emperor, xxv, xxx, xxxii, 28, 122, 127–28, 136, 145–47, 176, 189, 191, 261, 278, 280, 318, 319, 337, 355, 357–61, 363, 364
building activity, 146. *See also* Procopius, *Buildings*
legislation, 46, 136, 270
military reorganization by, 21–25, 30, 32, 34, 39–40, 60, 115, 135, 248, 278, 303, 310, 313, 327, 328, 355–57, 386, 438 (Map XI), 442 (Map XII). *See also limitanei*
religious policy, 173, 174, 319–20

Kābūs, Lakhmid, 266
Kalb, Arab tribal group, 52, 55, 222–24, 231, 284, 316, 347, 369, 380, 381
al-Kalkashandī, 109, 110
Kathelogos, Ghassānid phylarch, 44, 107n
Kennedy, David, 51, 62
Khālid ibn-al-Walīd, Muslim general, 35, 55, 75, 118, 164, 284, 402
Khirbat al-Bayḍā, xxi
Khuzāʿa, Arab tribal group, 2, 31, 73, 378
Kinda, Arab tribe, 2, 3, 33–35, 51, 53, 55, 196, 198, 199, 218, 263, 270, 273, 282, 284, 368, 372
sedentarism of, 362n
al-Kindī, 374
Koran, 63, 65, 66, 72, 85, 150, 158, 162, 237, 276, 311, 368, 370, 391, 404
on monks, 166–67, 213, 215, 321
Kūfa, 3–4, 67, 92, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397–98, 400, 402

Labīd, poet, xxiii, xxviii, 107, 109, 220, 278–80
Lakhmids, xxxiv, 8n, 38, 75, 78, 87, 97, 107, 119, 124, 125–26, 164, 171, 172, 220, 258, 265–66, 272, 279, 303, 308, 314, 315, 319, 333, 334, 337, 338, 351, 359, 362, 368, 369, 422 (Map II)
poetry, 366–67, 397
under ʿAbbāsids, 392–403
See also Ḥīra, Mundir, Nuʿmān
Lammens, Henri, 96–97, 110, 214n, 375n, 382n
Lassus, J., 196
Legio III Gallica, 105, 107, 110–12, 113, 114
Leo I, emperor, 312, 313
limes, xvi–xvii, xxxiii, 64, 115, 262, 388–89, 442 (Map XII)

Limes Arabiae, xvii, xxx, xxxiii, 359, 360, 362, 363
Limes Arabicus, xvii; *see also Limes Arabiae*
Limes orientalis, xvii, xxix, xxxii, xxxiii, 21, 28, 30, 32, 60, 61–62, 135, 136, 223, 236, 312, 328, 355–58, 362
limitanei, xxix, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv, 32–33, 35–51, 60, 61, 74, 115, 126, 133, 176, 248, 275, 278, 357; *see also* Ghassānids
limitrophe, xv–xvi, xxv, xxix, xxxiii–xxxiv, 3, 18, 42, 62, 115, 123, 144, 173, 175, 186, 204–5, 223, 271, 308, 310, 319, 360, 370, 383–87, 401

Maʿadd, Arab tribal group, 33, 34
Mabboug, *see* Hierapolis
Madaba, xv, xx, xxx, 450 (Plate 1)
magister militum, Byzantine, xxxiii, xxxvi, 26–27, 33, 50, 51, 124, 132, 205, 363; *see also* Sittas
Malalas, John, xxxii, 23–24, 25–26, 32, 90, 134–35, 307, 360, 362, 363
  on Paneas statue, 90
  on Seleucia arms factory, 134–35
  on Sittas, 23–24, 25–26, 27
al-Manāqib al-Mazyadiyya, xxviii
Maʾrib, dam, 18, 19, 123, 311, 313, 368
martyrion, 154–55
Martyropolis, 24
Marwān, Umayyad caliph, 101, 386
Mary, Virgin, veneration of, 194, 196
Massignon, Louis, 4
al-Masʿūdī, historian, 353, 371–72, 392, 393, 399–403
Maurice, emperor, 83, 126, 132, 254, 305
Mavia, 4th-cent. Arab queen, 4, 59, 170
Mayfaʿa (Umm al-Raṣāṣ), churches and monasteries at, xx, 188–89, 202, 210, 331–32
Mecca, 2, 31, 67, 73, 85, 167, 186, 189, 194, 214–15, 217, 232, 237–39, 275, 276, 304, 320, 378–79, 381, 394, 396, 398, 420 (Map I)
  pilgrimage to, 67
Medina, *see* Yathrib
Menander Protector, Byzantine historian, xxxiv, 5
Mesopotamia, 38, 43, 52, 73, 167–68, 170, 177, 358, 359
Michael the Syrian, *Ecclesiastical History,* 11, 53, 98, 149, 320
migrations, of Arab tribes, 2–4, 18, 308, 310–11, 312, 318, 342, 368, 420 (Map I)
Moabitis, 247–48
monasticism, 156–75, 183–212 passim, 387. *See also* Ghassānids
  influence on Islam, 91–92, 215–16
  for women, 195–200
Mongols, 7
Monophysitism, xxv, 87, 92, 95, 98, 112, 130, 131, 138, 141, 144, 147, 156, 173–74, 177, 194, 199, 287, 363, 365. *See also* archimandrites, letter of the; Ghassānids, Christianity/Monophysitism of; John of Ephesus; Theodore
Moses, Arab bishop, 170
Muʿāwiya, Umayyad caliph, xxviii, xxxi, 86, 96, 100, 101–2, 108, 232, 233, 281, 305, 337, 370–71, 378, 379–80, 381–83, 384–85, 386, 390, 399
Muḥammad, Prophet, xxvii, 2, 59, 67, 72, 150, 151, 162, 186–87, 188–89, 214–15, 220, 232, 234, 237–39, 272, 274–77, 281, 284, 287, 288, 342, 352, 371, 378, 379, 381
multiculturalism, in Oriens, xxix, 165, 263, 384
Mundir, Ghassānid king (569–582), xxi, xxviii, xxxiv, 12, 15, 47, 50–51, 119, 124, 126–27, 130, 138, 144, 150, 152, 175, 190, 201, 254–56, 315, 318, 361, 365, 377, 390. *See also* Ḍumayr
  Christianity/Monophysitism of, 50–51, 130–31, 138, 144, 175, 339
  exile of, 254–55, 365, 390
  inscriptions of, 12–13, 132, 142, 206, 304, 332
  and Ruṣāfa, 15, 47, 119, 124, 126–27, 130, 138, 201, 318, 361
  toponyms associated with, in general, 330
Mundir III, Lakhmid king (d. 554), 26, 29, 33, 34, 38, 39, 40–41, 44, 50, 54, 63, 69, 173, 175, 198, 206, 208, 272, 313, 358, 359, 361, 401
  battles of, 50, 173, 175, 206, 208, 359
  and Kinda, 26, 33
  and Persia, 34, 38, 40–41, 44, 358
  and *Strata* dispute, 63, 69, 361
al-Muqaddasī, geographer, 91–93, 194
murūʾa, concept of virtue, 2, 290, 294
al-Mushattā, 376, 388
Musil, Alois, xxvi, 74–75, 116, 129, 201, 223, 226, 306n, 375n
Muslims, 5, 35, 85, 109, 160

attacks on Byzantium, 5, 102, 371, 399
conquests (7th cent.), 6, 52, 54, 55, 57, 60, 64, 68, 73, 83, 84, 99–100, 111, 113, 118, 134, 370, 377, 397
see also Islam, Koran, Muḥammad
al-Mutalammis, poet, xxviii, 107, 220, 265–68, 277–78
al-Mutawakkil, caliph, 75, 399–400, 402

Nabataean culture, Nabataeans, xxix, 9, 15, 16–17, 18, 19, 26, 123, 186, 230, 269, 271, 278, 319, 331, 360, 384. *See also* Bostra, Petra
Nābigha, Ghassānid poet, xxvi, 56, 58, 59, 80, 81, 93, 106, 108, 119–20, 121, 124, 126, 131, 134, 135, 184, 199, 220, 250, 253, 255, 277, 279, 282, 288, 289, 301, 311, 336, 367
on Ghassānid toponyms, 221–32, 330, 430 (Map VI)
Najrān, in South Arabia, 2, 7, 31, 102, 145, 150, 151, 161, 162, 168, 172, 188, 199–200, 272, 275, 284, 320, 351, 401, 418 (Map I), 422 (Map II)
martyrs of, 95, 98, 145, 148, 152, 154, 171, 200, 401
Najrān, in Trachonitis, 151–52
Namāra, xxi; inscription, 14, 53, 114, 341, 366, 401, 434 (Map VIII)
Nasẖwat al-Ṭarab fī Tārīkh Jāhiliyyat al-ʿArab, xxviii, 351–52; *see also* Ibn Saʿīd
Nestorians, 174
Nicephorus, chronographer, 99
Nineveh, battle of (628), 54, 99
Nisibis, 33
Nitil, church at, xv, xvi, xx, xxx, 148n, 188n, 450–55 (Plates 1–4); frontispiece; finispiece
Nöldeke, Theodor, xxii, xxvi–xxvii, 45, 96, 123n, 126n, 271, 285n, 301, 305, 306, 312, 323, 324, 325, 327, 328, 333, 335, 337, 338, 339, 343, 345, 351, 365, 373–74, 376, 392
on Ghassānids, 8–11, 13–15, 305, 306, 312, 337
nomadism, xvi, xxv, xxxiii, 1–15, 27, 96, 129, 137–40, 294–95, 300, 307, 315, 362, 376; *see also* pastoralism, sedentarism
Nonnosus, Byzantine diplomat, 33, 55
Noth, Albrecht, 291, 302
Notitia Dignitatum, 46, 60, 68, 69, 110, 115, 116, 118, 133, 135, 188, 248, 327, 328, 331, 332, 340, 347, 358, 359
Nuʿmān, Ghassānid phylarch, son of Mundir, 26, 59, 82–83, 119–20, 122–23, 126, 141, 153, 224, 228–29, 239, 254–57, 313, 314
campaigns of, 59, 119–20
revolt of, 153
and Ruṣāfa, 122–23, 126
titles of, 26
tomb of, 224, 228–29, 254–56
toponyms associated with, 82–83, 336–37, 338, 339–40
Nuʿmān, son of Arethas, 315, 316, 320
Nuʿmān II, Lakhmid king (499–503), 401
Nuʿmān IV, last Lakhmid king, 75, 163, 199, 212, 221–22, 229, 282, 305

Odenathus, 361
Omar, caliph, 66, 100, 101, 103, 151, 284, 285, 290, 302n, 317, 379, 384, 397
Oriens, diocese of, xiv, xxix, xxxv–xxxvi, 21, 41, 48–49, 51–54, 85, 110, 134–35, 168–71, 186, 220, 230, 247–48, 310, 320. *See also* Bilād al Shām
Muslim conquest of, 6, 54, 83, 111, 134, 233, 235, 240, 246, 263, 264, 280–81, 287, 291, 304, 377, 379, 386, 388
Persian occupation of, 6, 85, 232, 242–43, 281, 287, 303, 305, 317, 349–50
Osroene, 43, 52, 168, 358, 359
Outer Shield (federate), 54–57, 59, 194, 197, 258, 284, 386

paganism, 147, 402
Palaestina Prima, 53, 85, 87, 169, 183, 190–91, 234
monasteries in, 190–191
Palaestina Secunda, 34, 49, 53, 78, 85, 86, 87, 88, 147, 155, 169, 174, 183, 189, 221, 271, 424 (Map III), 426 (Map IV)
Palaestina Tertia, xxx, xxxii, 28–32, 33, 34, 46, 52, 53, 56, 62, 136, 147, 150, 153, 155, 169–70, 183, 224, 234, 244, 251, 303, 316, 332, 336, 339, 378, 404, 442 (Map XII)
monasteries in, 191–94, 215
Palmyra (Tadmur), xxix, xxxii, 15, 17, 29, 43, 44, 50, 51, 52, 61, 62, 119, 121, 186, 206, 229, 271, 282, 283, 314, 319, 322, 340, 358, 359, 360, 361–62, 384, 446 (Map XIV)
papyri, *see* Petra

Parembole, in Palaestina, 34, 125, 156, 169, 211
Parker, S. Thomas, 62
pastoralism, xvii, 1–15, 74, 87, 124, 137–40, 153–54, 205, 257, 258, 259, 294–95, 336, 344, 386, 388; *see also* nomadism, sedentarism
Paul the Black, Monophysite patriarch, 149
Persia, war with Byzantium, 21, 24, 31, 32, 33, 37–39, 42, 49, 85, 99, 124, 126, 131, 135–36, 140, 146, 171, 182, 313, 317, 338. *See also* Oriens, Persian occupation of under Muslim rule, 308, 395–96
Peter of Callinicum, xxvii, 98, 150
Petra, 15, 17, 186, 244, 319, 360; papyri, xx, 29–30, 46, 61, 340, 356–57, 408, 444 (Map XIII)
philoktistai (φιλοκτίσται), *see* Ghassānids, lovers of building
Philoxenus of Mabboug, 146
Phocas, emperor, 317
Phoenicia Libanensis, 52, 62, 64, 88, 133, 149, 154, 155, 169, 189–90, 223, 267, 270, 271, 283, 313, 360, 440 (Map XI)
  monasteries in, 189–90
Phoinikōn, in Ḥijāz, 28–29, 420 (Map I)
phylarchate, Arab, xv, xx, 9–10, 26, 125, 135, 189, 224, 257, 271, 303, 313, 320, 336, 353, 378, 386. *See also* Abū Karib, Arethas, Ghassānids
pilgrimage, 31, 77, 86–87, 90, 91, 95, 117–18, 120–21, 124, 129, 130, 154, 184, 274, 291, 396. *See also* Jerusalem, Mecca, Ruṣāfa, Sinai
plague, in Oriens, 235–36, 280–82, 291–92, 297, 298–300, 301, 302, 384, 396
poetry, Arabic, xiii, 77, 131, 162, 220–305 passim. *See also individual authors and works*
Procopius, xxv, 38–39, 44, 48, 49, 63, 127–28, 133, 278, 303, 310, 316, 329, 355–64, 401, 440 (Map XI), 446 (Map XIV)
  Anecdota, 9, 36
  antipathy to Arabs/Ghassānids, xxv, xxxii–xxxiii, 4–5, 9–10, 21, 24, 25–30, 35–37, 40–42, 59, 61, 127, 128, 137, 307, 355–64
  Buildings, 48, 61, 127–28, 319, 355, 357–62, 363
  History, 25, 26, 28–29, 35, 38, 40–41, 63, 355–57, 358, 362
  Kaiserkritik, 37, 41, 355, 364
  on plague, 282, 384
  Wars, 9, 49
Provincia Arabia, xvii, 27, 30, 43, 52, 86, 88, 146, 147, 150, 151, 169, 217, 260, 274, 283, 303, 329, 378–79, 424 (Map III), 444 (Map XIII)
  churches in, 147, 151, 153, 155, 356, 404
  monasteries in, 148, 169, 173, 177, 182, 185–89
Ptolemy, *Geography,* 260

qaṣr (pl. *quṣūr*), xxxi, 67–75, 242, 286, 292, 322, 336, 353
  ʿAbbāsid, 75
  etymology, 63–64, 67–73, 293
  Ghassānid, 69, 72, 93
  Umayyad, xxxi, 67, 74, 375, 382–91, 403
Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, xxviii, xxxii, 6, 14–15, 20, 47–48, 60, 65, 100, 124–25, 129, 143, 156, 162, 175, 184, 195, 201, 202, 206–10, 218, 294, 309, 318, 332, 362, 376–77, 387, 389, 390
  inscription at, 6, 20, 206–7. *See also* Arethas; inscriptions, Greek
  name, 208–9
Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī, 7, 206, 390
Qays, of Kinda, 34–35, 263, 273
Qinnasrīn/Chalcis, 55, 113, 144, 149, 256–58
  battle of (554), 44, 50
Quraysh, Arab tribe, 214–15, 239, 276, 304, 378

al-Rāʿī, poet, 231, 285
Raqqa, 398–99
Rhomaioi, see Arabs, Rhomaic
Rosenthal, Franz, xxii, 307
Ruṣāfa (Resafa, Sergiopolis), xxi, xxvi, 60, 61, 110, 113, 115–33, 229–30, 294, 315, 320, 360–61, 384, 389, 446 (Map XIV)
  pilgrimage to, 117–18, 120–21, 124, 129, 130, 179, 181
  praetorium extra muros at, xxi, xxviii, xxxii, 15, 47, 48, 51, 116, 119, 124, 127, 129–33, 142, 143, 162, 201, 206, 309, 318, 361, 362, 376–77, 386, 390

reservoir (cistern) at, 122–29, 315, 327, 338, 342, 361, 364, 374
under Umayyads, 384, 385, 390

Sabaeans, 2, 167, 309, 320
Sabaic language, 14, 29, 30, 65, 66, 297n, 309, 312, 322, 356. *See also* inscriptions, Sabaic
Sack, Dorothée, 116
Ṣadaqa, 29, 46, 48, 60, 61, 356
Ṣalīḥids, 5th-cent. Arab federates of Byzantium, xxxv, 11, 18, 34, 52, 69, 106, 111, 112, 140, 143, 144, 149, 168, 170, 171, 308, 311, 323, 351, 368, 380
monasteries of, 169–70, 174, 191, 196, 201–2. *See also* Dāwūd
Salūqiya (Seleucia), 133–36
Samaritans, revolt of (529), 26, 31, 78, 364
Saracens, 4–5, 9, 24, 25, 27, 37, 39, 40, 52, 137, 307, 356–57, 359, 361–62, 363
Sartre, Maurice, 153, 300
Sasanians, *see* Persia
Sauvaget, Jean, 62, 129, 375n
Schumacher, Gottlieb, 78–79, 81–82, 95–96, 102–3, 106
sedentarism, xvi, xxv, xxxiii, 1–15, 97, 123, 137–40, 294–95, 310, 318, 320, 359. *See also* Ghassānids
Seleucid Era, 313–14
Sergiopolis, *see* Ruṣāfa (Resafa)
Sergius, saint, cult of, in Arabia, 168, 179, 181, 420
by Byzantines, 361
in Gaulanitis, 87, 88, 98–99, 124, 149–50
by Ghassānids, 115, 118, 124, 133, 137, 140, 155, 208n, 216, 339, 361, 420, 448
by Persian king, 124, 126
in Ruṣāfa, *see* pilgrimage, Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis)
Severus, Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, 146
Shābushtī, 160
Sharāhīl, Ghassānid phylarch, 141, 151, 310n, 320
Shawqī, Aḥmad, poet, 109
Ṣiffīn, 61, 62, 337, 339, 446 (Map XIV)
Ṣimeon of Bēth-Arshām, Monophysite bishop, xxvii, 49n, 98, 145, 199–200
Simeon the Stylite, saint, cult of, 169, 170–71, 205–6
Simeon the Younger, saint, cult of, by Ghassānids, 145, 173, 206
Sinai, 30, 31, 146, 147, 169, 173, 191–92, 204, 211, 444 (Map XIII)
Sittas, *magister militum per Armeniam,* xxxiii, 22–28, 32, 60
Sodini, Jean-Pierre, 62
South Arabia, 2, 3–4, 18, 29, 31, 98, 123, 145, 167–68, 171, 218, 274, 275, 308, 309, 310–11, 312, 318, 320, 342, 370, 381, 386, 420 (Map I)
Stein, Ernst, 50–51
Strata Diocletiana, xvii, 37, 43, 63, 442 (Map XII)
Strata dispute, 42–44, 63, 69, 361
stratēlatēs, 26–27, 132
stratiōtai, 32, 34–35, 51, 115, 133, 360, 446 (Map XIV)
stylites, 205–6. *See also* Simeon the Stylite, saint
Sulaymān, Umayyad caliph, 101, 102
Syme, Ronald, xxiii
Syria Prima, 153
Syriac sources, xvi, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii, 5, 9, 10–11, 29, 30, 49, 80, 89, 98, 126, 132, 177, 189, 219, 288–89, 309, 310, 314n, 339, 356, 363, 408–9; *see also* Dionysius of Tell Maḥre, John of Ephesus, Michael the Syrian, Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, *and other individual authors and works*

Ṭabarī, 64, 298, 308, 309, 369, 392, 393, 394–99
Tadmur, *see* Palmyra
Taghlib, Arab tribal group, 271–72
Tall al-Khammān, xv, 351, 428 (Map V)
Tamīm, Arab tribal group, 297n
Tanūkhids, 4th-cent. Arab federates of Byzantium, xxxv, 4, 18, 52, 69, 106, 139–40, 143, 144, 149, 153, 168–69, 171, 190, 368
monasteries of, 170, 191, 196
Ṭarafa, poet, 73–74
Ṭayyi', Arab tribal group, xxvii, 52, 55, 56, 59, 220, 239, 246, 248–50, 252, 254–58, 274, 279, 346, 436 (Map X)
Thaʿlaba, Ghassānid phylarch, 313, 325–26, 330, 450, finispiece
Thannūris, battle of (528), 25, 27, 356
themes, Byzantine, 54, 380n
Theodora, empress, 199

Theodore, Ghassānid Monophysite bishop, 87, 91, 98, 99, 144, 150, 153–54, 173–74, 176–82, 186, 190, 191–93, 194, 217
Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Ecclesiastical History,* 156, 171
Theophanes of Byzantium, historian, xxxiv, 5, 99, 140, 220, 307
Theophylact Simocatta, 5
Tiberius, emperor, 132, 305
Trachonitis (al-Lajā), xxxiv, 44, 46, 78, 81, 83, 145, 149, 151, 221, 229, 244, 283, 325, 330, 370, 424 (Map III), 432 (Map VII)
  monasteries in, 169, 202
trade, 78, 119, 146–47, 214–15, 217, 232, 239, 269, 276, 347, 378–79. *See also* Bostra, *sūq* at
  in incense, 31–32, 56, 163, 215, 274, 378
transverse wedge, xxxv, 3, 49, 78, 83, 106, 169, 221, 229, 424 (Map III), 426 (Map IV), 428 (Map V), 430 (Map VI), 432 (Map VII), 434 (Map VIII)
  defined, xxxiv, 49, 78, 202, 424 (Map III)
Tritheism, 87, 98, 112, 148–49, 150, 177
Turcomans, 7

ʿUbayd Allāh ibn-Qays al-Ruqayyāt, poet, 287, 304, 305
ʿUḏra, Arab tribe, 55, 59, 187, 194, 197–98
ʿUmar, caliph, *see* Omar
ʿUmar ibn-ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Umayyad caliph, 190, 387, 391
ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-Abṣār,* 161, 172, 185, 306, 349–51
Umayyads, xxviii, xxix, xxxi, xxxv, 54, 55, 69–70, 73, 86, 96–97, 100, 101–2, 105, 108–9, 115, 132–33, 304, 308, 369–70, 392, 393, 395, 404
  reworkers of Ghassānid structures, xvi, xxxi–xxxii, 1, 6–7, 15, 69, 100, 109, 154, 162–63, 187–88, 195, 206–7, 209–11, 218, 225, 261, 305, 327, 330, 365, 375–91, 399, 404
Umm al-Jimāl, churches at, 146
Umm al-Raṣāṣ, *see* Mayfaʿa
Usays, xxviii, 42, 133, 220, 260–61, 389–90, 434 (Map VIII)
  fort, 47, 260, 389
  inscription, 42, 47, 48, 66, 131, 187, 261, 315, 389–90
  monastery, 187, 389
via odorifera, see trade in incense

Wādī Sirḥān, 35, 55, 247, 283
al-Walīd, Umayyad caliph, 188, 261, 385, 386, 387, 389, 403
water, 15–20, 67, 103, 104, 122–29, 210–11, 243, 311, 315, 325–26, 334, 340–41, 359, 389; *see also* Ghassānids, water engineering abilities of; Ruṣāfa, reservoir (cistern) at
Wellhausen, Julius, 305, 382
Wetzstein, Johann Gottfried, xxii, 11–14, 217, 323, 326–27, 333

xenodocheia, monastic, 211, 212, 217

Yaman (Yemen), 3–4, 161, 370, 371
Yaʿqūbī, 248, 306, 346–48, 365
Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān,* xxviii, 5, 105, 110, 112, 113, 122–23, 125–27, 151–52, 154, 157, 161, 184, 186, 189–90, 218, 225, 233–34, 257, 269, 306, 320, 333, 338, 341–46, 364, 365, 373–74
  al-Mushtarik, 341
Yarmūk, battle of the (636), 6, 54, 55, 68, 81, 86, 99, 103, 238, 244, 246, 281, 288, 291, 299, 304, 334, 352, 353, 367, 368, 372, 379, 388
Yathrib (Medina), 2–3, 18, 31, 56, 59, 66, 69, 73, 123, 150, 162, 194, 220, 232, 238–39, 243, 272, 275, 276–77, 281, 284, 297n, 320, 352, 379, 381, 420 (Map I)
Yazīd, Umayyad caliph and poet, 108, 109, 115, 152, 190, 305, 371, 382, 383, 387, 390

Zabad, trilingual inscription, xxviii, 442 (Map XII)
Zacharia of Mytilene, *Chronicle,* 27
Zakariyyā, Aḥmad Waṣfī, xxii–xxiii, 190
Zayyāt, Ḥabīb, 219
Zenobia, 283
al-Zibriqān, poet, 297n
Zokomos (Dujʿum), Salīḥid founder, 106, 174, 201, 231
Zosimus, 59
Zughar (Zoar), 55, 247–48, 257, 347–48



Epitaph of the Ghassānid phylarch Tha'laba, buried in a hypogeum tomb in the central nave of Church 1