

largely of the Syrian type, whether Jacobite or Nestorian. In the kingdom of Ghassān the dominant party appears to have been Monophysite,<sup>1</sup> though some, under Byzantine influence, became Melkite.<sup>2</sup> In al-Ḥīra also many important Christian families would seem to have been Monophysite, if we can believe the accounts of the mission of Simeon of Beth Arsham,<sup>3</sup> though the predominant party there was Nestorian.<sup>4</sup> The Christian community in S. Arabia at Najrān, which was perhaps the oldest Christian community in Arabia,<sup>5</sup> and whose persecution by the Jewish king Dhū Nawās is mentioned in the Qur'ān,<sup>6</sup> appears to have been a mixed community. There is no doubt that many of them were Nestorians,<sup>7</sup> while others as clearly were Monophysites more or less related to the Monophysite Church of Abyssinia.<sup>8</sup>

Vocabulary of Syriac origin was already coming into use in Arabia in pre-Islamic times. The court of al-Ḥīra was a rendezvous of the poets and litterateurs of the day, and many of the pre-Islamic poets, such as Imrū'ul-Qais, Mutalammis, and 'Adī b. Zaid, were Christians. Their poetry, naturally, was impregnated with Christian words and ideas, but even in the extant poetry of such non-Christians as an-Nābigha and al-A'shā,<sup>9</sup> who spent much time at al-Ḥīra, we find the same strong influences of Syrian Christianity.<sup>10</sup> The trade routes again were channels whereby Syriac vocabulary entered Arabic. The wine trade,<sup>11</sup> e.g., was largely in the hands of these Christians,<sup>12</sup> and so

<sup>1</sup> Noldeke, *Ghassanischen Fürsten*, pp. 20, 21.      <sup>2</sup> Andrae, *Ursprung*, 31.

<sup>3</sup> See "Lives of the Eastern Saints", by John of Ephesus, in *Patr. Orient.*, xvii, p. 140. These converts of Simeon are said to have been brought back to the orthodox faith by the preaching of Maraba (Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'Empire perse*, p. 191). Assemani, *Bibl. Or.*, iii, 2, 606, mentions Monophysite Bishops of al-Ḥīra.

<sup>4</sup> Andrae, *Ursprung*, 25; Lammens in *ROC*, ix, 32 ff.

<sup>5</sup> See the long account of them in Andrae, *Ursprung*, 7-24.

<sup>6</sup> Sūra, lxxxv, 4 ff. It is only fair, however, to state that Western scholars are not unanimous in accepting this as a reference to the persecution of Najrān, though the weight of probability is strongly in its favour.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the "Histoire Nestorienne", in *Patr. Orient.*, v, 330 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Littmann, *Deutsche Aksum.-Expedition*, i, 50.

<sup>9</sup> There is a tradition that an-Nābigha was a Christian, on the strength of which Cheikho includes him among the Christian Arab poets, but Nicholson (*Literary History*, 123), rightly rejects the tradition as without authority. Al-A'shā also is frequently claimed as a Christian, and is included by Cheikho in his collection, but see Nicholson, p. 124.

<sup>10</sup> Wellhausen, *Reste*, 234; Lyall, *Ancient Arabian Poetry*, pp. 92 and 119; von Kremer in *SBAW.*, Wien (1881), vol. xeviii, 555 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Jacob, *Altarabisches Beduinenleben*, 99, has an interesting note hereon, referring to *Aghānī*, viii, 79; cf. Wellhausen, *Reste*, 231.

<sup>12</sup> Though Jews also engaged in the trade, cf. Goldziher, *ZDMG*, xli, 185.