a lapse of three centuries. Makrízí, describing the capital of Egypt, quotes from a work of Ibn Sa'íd (*c*. 1250 a.d.), who again cites an older author (Al-Kortobí), who, in speaking of a love affair at the court of the caliph Al-Ámir (1097-1130), says “what is told about it resembles the romance of Al-Battál, or the *Thousand and One Nights ” (Hitat,* Búlák ed., i. 485, ii. 181).

That the *Nights* which we have are not the original trans­lation of the *Hezár Afsáne* is certain, for the greater part of the stories are of Arabian origin, and the whole is so thoroughly Mohammedan that even the princes of remote ages who are introduced speak and act as Moslems. It might be conceived that this is due to a gradual process of modernization by successive generations of story-tellers. But against this notion, which has been entertained by some scholars, Lane has remarked with justice that, much as MSS. of the *Nights* differ from one another in points of language and style, in the order of the tales, and the division into nights, they are all so much at one in essentials that they must be regarded as derived from a single original. There is no trace of a recension of the text that can be looked on as standing nearer to the *Hezár Afsáne.* And the whole local colour of the work, in point of dialect and also as regards the manners and customs described, clearly belongs to Egypt as it was from the 14th to the 16th century. Some points, as De Sacy and Lane have shown, forbid us to place the book earlier than the second half of the 15th century. Galland’s MS. copy, again, was in existence in 1548. Lane accordingly dates the work from the close of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th, but this date appears to be too late. For Abu’l-Mahásin, an Egyptian historian who died in 1470, writing of Hamdi, a famous highwayman of Baghdad in the 10th century, remarks that he is probably the figure who used to be popularly spoken of as Ahmed al-Danaf (ed. Juynboll, ii. 305). Now in the *Nights* Ahmed al-Danaf really plays a part corresponding to that of the historical Hamdi, being now a robber (Lane, ii. 404) and again a captain of the guard (Lane, ii. 249). It would seem that Abu’l-Mahásin had read or heard the stories in the *Nights,* and was thus led to compare the historical with the fictitious character. And, if this be so, the *Nights* must have been composed very soon after 1450.@@1

No doubt the *Nights* have borrowed much from the *Hezár Afsáne,* and it is not improbable that even in the original Arabic translation of that work some of the Per­sian stories were replaced by Arab ones. But that our *Nights* differ very much from the *Hezár Afsáne* is further manifest from the circumstance that, even of those stories in the *Nights* which are not Arabian in origin, some are borrowed from books mentioned by Masúdí as distinct from the *Hezár Afsáne.* Thus the story of the king and his son and the damsel and the seven viziers (Lane, chap. xxi. note 51) is in fact a version of the *Book of Sindbád,@@2* while the story of Jalí'ád and his son and the vizier Shammás (M'Naghten, iv. 366 *sq. ; cf.* Lane, iii. 530) corresponds to the book of *Ferza and Símás.@@3*

Not a few of the tales are unmistakably of Indian or

Persian origin, and in these poetical passages are rarely inserted. In other stories the scene lies in Persia or India, and the source is foreign, but the treatment thoroughly Arabian and Mohammedan. Sometimes, in­deed, traces of Indian origin are perceptible, even in stories in which Hárún al-Rashíd figures and the scene is Bagh­dad or Basra.@@4 But most of the tales, in substance and form alike, are Arabian, and so many of them have the capital of the caliphs as the scene of action that it may be guessed that the author used as one of his sources a book of tales taken from the era of Baghdad’s prosperity.

The late date of the *Nights* appears from sundry ana­chronisms. In the story of the men transformed into fish— white, blue, yellow, or red according as they were Moslems, Christians, Jews, or Magians (Lane, i. 99),—the first three colours are those of the turbans which, in 1301, Mohammed b. Keláún of Egypt commanded his Moslem, Christian, and Jewish subjects respectively to wear.@@5 Again, in the story of the humpback, whose scene is laid in the 9th century, the talkative barber says, “ this is the year 653” (= 1255 a.d.; Lane, i. 332, writes 263, but see his note), and mentions the caliph Mostansir (died 1242), who is incorrectly called son of Mostadí.@@6 In the same story several places in Cairo are mentioned which did not exist till long after the 9th century (see Lane, i. 379).@@7 The very rare edition of the first 200 nights pub­lished at Calcutta in 1814 speaks of cannon, which are first mentioned in Egypt in 1383; and all editions some­times speak of coffee, which was discovered towards the end of the 14th century, but not generally used till 200 years later. In this and other points, *e.g.,* in the mention of a mosque founded in 1501 (Lane, iii. 608), we detect the hand of later interpolators, but the extent of such interpolations can hardly perhaps be determined even by a collation of all copies. For the nature and causes of the variations between different copies the reader may consult Lane, iii. 678, who explains how transpositions actually arise by transcribers trying to make up a complete set of the tales from several imperfect copies.

Many of the tales in the *Nights* have an historical basis, as Lane has shown in his notes. Other cases in point might be added : thus the chronicle of Ibn al-Jauzí (died 1200 a.d.) contains a narrative of Kamar, slave girl of Shaghb, the mother of Al-Moktadir, which is the source of the tale in Lane, i. 310 *sq.,* and of another to be found in M'Naghten, iv. 557 *sq.* ; the latter is the better story, but departs so far from the original that the author must have had no more than a general recollection of the narrative he drew on.@@8 There are other cases in the *Nights* of two tales which are only variations of a single theme, or even in certain parts agree almost word for word. Some tales are mere compounds of different stories put together without any art, but these perhaps are, as Lane conjectures, later additions to the book ; yet the collector himself was no great literary artist. We must picture him as a professional story-teller equipped with a mass of miscellaneous reading, a fluent power of narration, and a ready faculty for quoting, or at a push improvising, verses. His stories became popular, and were written down as he told them,—hardly written by himself, else we should not have so many variations in the text, and such insertions of “ the narrator says,” “ my noble sirs,” and the like. The frequent coarseness of tone is proper to the condition of Egyptian society under the Mameluke sultans, and would not have been tolerated in Baghdad in the age

'@@@1 The hypothesis of gradual and complete modernization is also opposed to the fact that the other romances used by Cairene story­tellers (such as those of 'Antar and of Saif) retain their original local colour through all variations of language and style.

@@@2 On this famous book, the Syriac Sindibán, the Greek Syntipas, and the Seven Sages of the European West, see Syriac Literature (vol. xxii. p. 850) and Spain (vol. xxii. p. 354).

@@@3 De Sacy and Lane suppose that the original title of the Arabic translation of the Ηezár Afsáne was The Thousand Nights. But most MSS. of Mas'údí already have The Thousand and One Nights, which is also the name given by Makrízí. Both ciphers perhaps mean only “a very great number,” and Fleischer (De Glossis Habichtianis, p. 4) has shown that 1001 is certainly used in this sense.

@@@4 Gildemeister, De Rebus Indicis, p. 89 sq.

@@@5 Quatremère, Sultans Marnloucs, ii. 2, p. 177 sq.

@@@6 Lane, i. 342, arbitrarily writes “Montasir” for “Mostansir.”

@@@7 See also Edinb. Review, July 1886, p. 191 sq.

@@@8 See De Goeje in Gids, 1876, ii. pp. 397-411.