translation. With regard to the history of 'Irak in par­ticular he was deemed to have the best lights, and for this subject he is Tabari’s chief source, just as Madáiní, a younger contemporary of Wákidí, is followed by preference in all that relates to Khorásán. Madáiní’s *History of the Caliphs* is the best if not the oldest published before Tabarí ; but this book has quite disappeared and is known only by the excerpts given by later writers, particularly Beládhori and Tabarí. From these we judge that he had great narrative power with much clear and exact learning, and must be placed high as a critical historian. His plan was to record the various traditions about an event, choosing them with critical skill; sometimes, however, he fused the several traditions into a continuous narrative. A just estimate of the relative value of the historians can only be reached by careful comparison in detail. This has been essayed by Brünnow in his study on the Khárijites (Ley­den, 188-1), in which the narrative of Mobarrad in the Kámil is compared with the excerpts of Madáiní given by Beládhori and those of Abú Mikhnaf given by Tabari The conclusion reached is that Abd Mikhnaf and Madáiní are both well informed and impartial.

Among the contemporaries of Wákidí and Madáiní were Ibn Khidásh (d. 223), the historian of the family Mohallab, whose work was one of Mobarrad’s sources for the *History of the Khárijites* ; Haitham ibn 'Adi (d. 207), whose works, though now lost, are often cited ; and Saif ibn 'Omar at- Tamímí, whose book on the revolt of the tribes under Abd- bekr and on the Mohammedan conquests was much used by Tabari. Saif, however, seems to have been little es­teemed ; Beládhorí very seldom cites him, and nothing can be found in Arabic literature about his life and those of his authorities. He is barely mentioned in the *Fihrist,* the writer plainly having nothing to tell of him, and blundering in the one thing he does say by representing his disciple Sho'aib as his master. Hájji Khalifa knows nothing but his name. His narratives are detailed and often tinged with romance, and he is certainly much in­ferior to Wákidí in accuracy. Besides these are to be mentioned Abú 'Obaida (d. 209), who was celebrated as a philologist and wrote several historical monographs that are often cited, and Azrakí, whose excellent *History of Mecca* was published after his death by his grandson (d. 244). With these writers we pass into the 3d century of Islam. But we have still an important point to notice in the 2d century; for in it learned Persians began to take part in the creation of Arabic historical literature. Ibn Mokaffa' translated the great *Book of Persian Kings,* and others followed his example. Tabari and his contem­poraries, senior and junior, such as Ibn Kotaiba, Ya'kúbí, Dínawarí, preserve to us a good part of the information about Persian history made known through such transla­tions.@@1 But even more important than the knowledge conveyed by these works was their influence on literary style and composition. Half a century later began versions from the Greek either direct or through the Syriac. The pieces translated were mostly philosophical ; but the Arabs also learned something, however superficially, of ancient history.

The 3d century was far more productive than the 2d. Abú 'Obaida was presently succeeded by Ibn al-A'rábí (d. 231), who in like manner was chiefly famous as a philologist, and who wrote about ancient poems and battles. Much that he wrote is quoted in Tabrízís commentary on the *Hamása,* which is still richer in extracts from the historical elucidations of early poems given by Ar-Riyáshí (d. 257). Of special fame as a genealogist was Ibn Habib

(d. 245), of whom we have a booklet on Arabian tribal names published by Wüstenfeld (1850). Azrakí again was followed by Fákihí, who wrote a *History of Mecca* in 272,@@2 and 'Omar b. Shabba (d. 262), who composed an excellent history of Basra, known to us only by excerpts. Of the works of Zobair b. Bakkár (d. 256), one of Tabari’s teachers, a learned historian and genealogist much consulted by later writers, there is a fragment in the Köprülü library at Con­stantinople, and another in Göttingen, part of which has been made known by Wüstenfeld *(Die Familie Al-Zobair,* Göttingen, 1878). Ya∙kúbí or Ibn Wádih wrote a short general history of much value, published by Houtsma (Ley­den, 1883). About India he knows more than his prede­cessors and more than his successors down to Bèrúní Ibn Khordádbeh’s historical works are lost. Ibn 'Abdalhakam (d. 257) wrote of the conquest of Egypt and the West. Extracts from this book are given by De Slane in his *Histoire des Berbères,* and others by Karie and Jones, from which we gather that it was a medley of true tradition and romance, and must be reckoned, with the book of his slightly senior contemporary, the Spaniard Ibn Habib, to the class of historical romances (see below, p. 5). A high place must be assigned to the historian Ibn Kotaiba (d. 276), who, as Rosen has well shown, wrote a series of books with a view to raising the scholarship of the large class of *kátibs* or official scribes. To this series belong his very useful *Handbook of History* (ed. Wüstenfeld, Göttingen, 1850) and his '*Oyún al-Akhbár,* though the latter book according to the arrangement falls rather under the class of *litteræ humaniores.* Much more eminent is Beládhorí (d. 279), whose book on the Arab conquest (ed. De Goeje, Leyden, 1865-66) merits the special praise given to it by Mas'údí. Of his great á *al-Ashráf* a large part exists at Paris in the valuable collection of Μ. Schefer and another part was published by Ahlwardt in 1884. A contemporary, Ibn abí Táhir ú (d. 280), wrote on the 'Abbásid caliphs and was drawn on by Tabari. The sixth part of his work is in the British Museum. Of the universal history of Dinawarí (d. 282), entitled *The Long Narratives,* an edition by Girgas is now (1887) in the press.

*Tabarí.*

All these histories are more or less thrown into the shade by the great work of Tabari, whose fame has never faded from his own day to ours, and who well deserves to have this article on early Arabic histories placed under his name. Abú Ja'far Mohammed b. Jarir at-Tabarí (so his full name runs) is described as a tall lean figure, with large eyes, brown complexion, and hair which remained black till his death. His learning was astounding and few could speak so well. Born 224 a.h. (838-9 a.d.) at Amol in Tabaristán, he came to Baghdad as a young man and heard there the most famous teachers of the age. He travelled through Syria and Egypt (where he was in 263), and finally settled down in Baghdad, where he remained till his death in 310 (922 a.d.), always active and surrounded by pupils. He is said to have written forty pages daily for forty years. This no doubt is an exaggeration, but certainly he must have been a man of most persistent industry. His two chief works are a great *Commentary on the Koran* and his *Annals.* There is an anecdote to the effect that each originally filled 30,000 leaves, but that his pupils found them too extensive to be written to his dictation, and that he then resolved to condense them to a tenth of their original size, exclaiming, “ God help us ! Ambition is extinct.” One cannot say how far this story is true, but it is probable enough that his materials, at least for the *Annals,* were many times greater than the book itself.

@@@1 For details see the introduction to Nöldeke’s excellent translation of Tabari’s *History of the Persians and Arabs in the Sasanian Period,* Leyden, 1879.

@@@2 Published in excerpt by Wüstenfeld along with Azrakí, Leipsic, 1857-59.