inland Syria remained comparatively peaceful first under its own local governors, and, after Darius, as a satrapy, till its subjugation hy Alexander. Alien domination alone has been able to correct the tendency of this long strip of land to break up into hostile belts.

The foundation of numerous Greek cities shortly after Alex­ander’s time was of great importance for Syria (sec *e.g.* Antiocii). The Graeco-Syrian civilization extended far to the south down both sides of Jordan, and, but for the Maccabaean revival, would have absorbed the Jews. The Seleucidac had severe struggles with the Ptolemies for the possession of the southern part of Syria.

After having been reckoned for a short time (from 83 to 69 B.c.) among the dominions of Tigrancs, king of Armenia, the country was conquered for the Romans by Pompey (64-63 b.c.). It is impossible here to follow in detail the numerous changes in the distribution of the territory and the gradual disappearance of particular dynasties which maintained a footing for some time longer in Chaicis, Abila, Emesa and Palestine; but it is of special interest to note that the kingdom of the Arab Nabataeans was able to keep its hold for a considerable period on the north as far as Damascus. In the year 40 b.c. Syria had to endure a sudden but brief invasion by the Parthians. the country soon became one of the most important provinces of the Roman Empire; its proconsulship was from the first regarded as the most desirable, and this eminence became still more marked after­wards. Antioch, adorned with many sumptuous buildings, as the chief town of the provinces of Asia, became in point of size the third city of the empire and an eastern Rome. The high degree of civilization then prevailing in the country is proved by its architectural remains dating from the early Christian centuries; the investigations of De Vogüé, Butler and others, have shown that from the ist to the 7th century there prevailed in north Syria and the IIauran a special style of architecture —partly, no doubt, following Graeco-Roman models, but also showing a great deal of originality in details.

The administrative divisions of Syria during the Roman period varied greatly at different times. Hadrian made three provinces of it, Syria, Syria Phoenice and Syria Palestina. At the beginning of the 5th century we find the following: (1) Syria Euphratensis, which had for its capital Hierapolis *(q.v.).* (2) Syria I., or Coele- syria, having Antioch as its capital. The name Coelcsyria (17 κoιλ⅛ Συρία), no doubt, was applied originally to the valley (“hollow”) between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, but was afterwards ex­tended to the district stretching eastwards from the latter range. (3) Syria II., or Syria Salutaris, with Apanaea as capital. (4) Phoenice Maritima; capital, Tyre. (5) Γhocnice ad Libanum; capital, Emesa (Homs). To this division Damascus and Palmyra belonged; occasionally they were reckoned to Coelesyria, the middle strip of coast being designated Syrophocnicia. (6, 7, 8) Palestina I., II. and III. (9) Arabia (capital, Bostra), which embraced all the region from the l·Jauran to the Arnon, and skirted the Jordan valley, stretching southwards to Petrae. Through the kingdom of the Nabataeans Roman influence pene­trated from Syria far into northern Arabia.

In 616 Syria was subjugated for a brief period by the Persian Choroes II.; from 622 till 628 it was again Byzantine; 636 and the immediately following years saw its conquest by the Mahom­medans (see Caliphate). Moawiya, the first Omayyad caliph, chose Damascus for his residence; but in 750 the capital of the .empire was removed by the Abhasids to Bagdad. Under the early caliphs the Arabs divided Syria into the following military districts *(gonds).* (1) Filistin (Palestine), consisting of Judaea, Samaria and a portion of the territory east of Jordan; its capital was Ramleh, Jerusalem ranking next. (2) Urdun (Jordan), of which the capital was Tabaria (Tiberias); roughly speaking, it consisted of the rest of Palestine as far as Tyre. (3) Damas­cus, a district which included Baalbek, Tripoli and Beirut, and also the Hauran. (4) Homs, including Hamath. (5) Kinnesrin, corresponding to northern Syria; the capital at first was Kin­nesrin (Qinnasrin) to the south of Haleb (Aleppo), by which it was afterwards superseded. (6) The sixth district was the military frontier *Çawäsim)* bordering upon the Byzantine dominions in Asia Minor. During the struggles of the Mahom­medan dynasties for the possession of Syria the country still enjoyed a considerable degree of prosperity.

In the crusading period the kingdom of Jerusalem, whose rulers were never able to establish a foothold to the east of the Jordan, extended northwards to Beirut; next to it lay the countship of Tripoli on the coast; and beyond that in north Syria was the principality of Antioch. Syria suffered severely from the Mongol invasions (1260), and it never recovered its former prosperity. In 1516 the Ottomans took it from the Egyptian Mamelukes. For its subsequent history, see Turkey: *History.* Its medieval importance as an intermediary of trade between Europe and the East was greatly impaired by the opening of the Red Sea route, and finally abolished by the Suez Canal; and Syria is at present important mainly for the sentimental reason that it contains the holiest places of Judaism and Christianity, and for the strategic reason that it lies on the flank of the greatest trade- route of the eastern hemisphere.

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**SYRIAC LANGUAGE.** Syriac is the eastern dialect of the Aramaic language which, during the early centuries of the Christian era, prevailed in Mesopotamia and the adjoining regions. Its main centres were at Edessa and Nisibis, but it was the literary language of practically all the Christian writers in the region east of Antioch, as well as of the Christian subjects of the Persian empire.

AU the Semitic languages@@1 are built up from triliteral roots: that is, the great majority of the words are derived from a simple verhal form, of which the essential elements arc three consonants. This form is seen in the 3rd pers. sing, perf. of the verb, *e.g.* Aram, *q'tal* or ⅞'∕αZ (“ he killed ”), which corresponds to Heb. *qãtal* and Arab, *qatala.* the vowels play no part in differentiat­ing the roots, for the vowels are practically the same in the corresponding forms of every root. the form *q'lal* illustrates one main peculiarity of Aramaic, as opposed to the other Semitic languages, viz. its paucity of vowels: for where Hebrew has two full vowels—a long and a short— in *qãtal,* and Arabic has three short vowels in *qalala,* Aramaic has only one short vowel, the sound \* between *q* and *I* being merely a half vowel which is not indicated in Syriac writing. Another chief characteristic of Aramaic appears in nouns, viz. the entire absence of a prefixed definite article. Aramaic gives to the noun instead an ending *ã,*

@@@1 On the place of Aramaic among the Semitic languages, and of Syriac among the various dialects, see Semitic Languages.