

Dawla; (b) al-Ṣaḥī Abu'l-Faḍāl b. al-‘Assāl, with the title Ṣaḥī al-Dawla; (c) al-As‘ad Abu'l-Faraj Hibat-Allāh b. al-‘Assāl; (d) al-Mu‘taman Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. al-‘Assāl, with the title Mu‘taman al-Dawla; (e) al-Amdīd Abu'l-Maḥdī b. al-‘Assāl, who was Secretary of the important *Diwān* of the Army. The last two were step-brothers of the preceding two, who are described as full brothers.

The literary figures in the list were al-Ṣaḥī, al-As‘ad and al-Mu‘taman. In spite of their apparent importance, our knowledge of their lives will remain meagre until further data are gleaned from their numerous works, the chief source for any study on the Awlād al-‘Assāl. All had lived approximately in the tumultuous first half of the 7th/13th century, when Egypt resisted successive crusading attacks on its shores, culminating in the fall of Damietta (1248) and the ultimate discomfiture and imprisonment of King Louis IX of France at the famous battle of Manṣūra in 1350. The firm position of the Awlād al-‘Assāl in the Ayyūbid administration during those years reveals the loyalty of the Copts to the reigning dynasty and their hostility to the Crusade — a movement which aimed at their humiliation as being schismatics, and thus worse than heretics.

Both al-Ṣaḥī and al-As‘ad are known from a citation by their third step-brother to have died before 658/1260. The major works of the three are believed to have been accomplished approximately in the decade 627-37/1230-40. All were men of great learning in both the humanities and science. All were masters of Arabic style and in addition well acquainted with Coptic, Greek and Syriac.

Until Ayyūbid times, Coptic was still in use as a language throughout Egypt, though it was increasingly felt that Arabic was becoming a serious menace to its survival. Hence arose a new class of scholars who concentrated on writing Coptic grammars in Arabic and compiled Copto-Arabic dictionaries to ensure the preservation of their ancestral tongue. The Awlād al-‘Assāl distinguished themselves in this school, as may be witnessed from the enumeration of their works below. In addition to their excellence in Coptic philology, they made outstanding contributions to Coptic canon law, theology, philosophy, Christian polemics, homiletics, Biblical studies, exegesis and all manner of enquiry into their own religion.

The church must have meant a great deal to them, since, as archons or lay leaders of the community, they carried high the torch of reform at a moment when the Patriarchate itself fell into the hands of the ungodly. The infamous Cyril ibn Luḥlūḥ (1235-43) occupied the throne of St. Mark by treachery and flourished on simony, while buying royal support by bribery. Finally in 1239 the prelates of the Church forced Cyril to convene a Synod, probably at the Mu‘allaḳa Church in Old Cairo, which reviewed all ecclesiastical evils and prescribed total reform. It is noteworthy that al-Ṣaḥī was the secretary of that Synod and its moving spirit. The Bishops commissioned him to compile what became the greatest and most enduring digest of Coptic canon law and tradition from all the ancient sources available. This tome was named after him *al-Maḥimū‘ al-Ṣaḥawī*, which remains an authority to this day.

The Awlād al-‘Assāl's monumental contributions may be appraised from the number and nature of their manuscripts. The Coptic Museum alone has forty-nine, besides many more that are found in European collections, including the Vatican, Florence, the Bodleian, the British Museum, the Bibliothèque

Nationale and numerous others, public and private, the most elaborate survey of which we owe to the indefatigable diligence of the late Mgr. Georg Graf (see *Bibl.*).

Besides numerous religious and philological works, they also wrote some Arabic poetry of no mean quality, notably the *urđūza* type for homiletics and the formulation of legal rules of inheritance. It may, however, be deduced from the above that al-Ṣaḥī was the canonist and philosopher, al-As‘ad the exegete and grammarian, and al-Mu‘taman the theologian and philologist. Their legacy appears to be the consummation of the Coptic culture in the Islamic Middle Ages, though our comprehension of the depth and breadth of their endeavour is still in its infancy.

Bibliography: G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, ii, Vatican City 1947, 296-7, 387-414; idem, *Die koptische Gelehrtenfamilie der Awlād al-‘Assāl und ihr Schrifttum*, in *Orientalia*, N.S. i (1932), 34-56, 129-48, 193-204; A. J. B. Higgins, *Ibn al-‘Assāl*, in *Journal of Theological Studies*, xlv (1943), 73-5; Laḡinat al-Ta‘rikh al-Kibṭī, *Ta‘rikh al-Umma al-Kibṭiyya*, second series, Cairo 1925, 148-52; A. Mallon, *Ibn al-‘Assāl, Les trois écrivains de ce nom*, in *JA*, 10^{ème} série, vi (1905), 509-29; idem, *Une école de savants égyptiens au moyen âge*, in *Beyrouth Mélanges*, i (1906), 122 ff.; Marcus Smaika and Yassa ‘Abd al-Massih, *Catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic MSS in the Coptic Museum, the Patriarchate, the principal churches of Cairo and Alexandria and the monasteries of Egypt*, 2 vols., Cairo 1939-42, (see Index, ii, 567); E. Renaudot, *Historia patriarcharum alexandrinorum*, Paris 1713, 585 ff.; C. Rieu, *Supplement to Catalogue of Arabic MSS in the British Museum*, London 1894, 18; Ya‘kūb Naḳhla Rufayla, *Ta‘rikh al-Umma al-Kibṭiyya*, Cairo 1889, 185; J. M. Vansleb, *Histoire de l'église copte d'Alexandrie*, Paris 1677, 335 ff.

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IBN ‘AṬĀ’ ALLĀH, TĀḌĪ AL-DĪN ABU ‘L-FADL (and ABU ‘L-‘ABBĀS, see Ibn Farḥūn, *Dibādī*, Cairo 1351, 70) AḤMAD B. MUḤAMMAD B. ‘ABD AL-KARĪM B. ‘AṬĀ’ ALLĀH AL-ISKANDARĪ AL-ṢĀḌHILĪ, Arab mystic, follower of the doctrines of the mystic al-Ṣhāḍhīlī (d. 656/1258) as a disciple of the mystic Abu ‘L-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Anṣārī al-Mursī (d. 686/1287). He wrote a biographical work on the life and teachings of both mystics, entitled *Laṭā‘if al-minan fī manāḳib al-Shaykh Abu ‘L-‘Abbās wa-Shaykhīhi Abu‘l-Ḥasan* (Tunis 1304/1886-87; Cairo 1322/1904, on the margin of *Ṣhā‘rānī's Laṭā‘if al-minan*).

Originally from Alexandria, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh lived in Cairo and died there on 16 Djumādā II 709/21 November 1309 in the *madrasa* al-Manṣūriyya. Brockelmann (see *Bibl.*) lists twenty works by Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, principally on mysticism and asceticism, of which six are in print and the rest in manuscript. By far the most celebrated of his works is a collection of maxims of a distinct beauty of expression, *al-Hikam al-‘Aṭā‘iyya*, with numerous commentaries down to modern times, among them *Ḥayāt al-mawāhib al-‘aliyya* (Būlāḳ 1285/1868) by the Spanish mystic Ibn ‘Abbād al-Rundī (d. 796/1394). He is also said to have written in the fields of Ḳur‘ānic exegesis, traditions, grammar and the methodology of law (see *Dibādī*, 70).

Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh was one of the foremost adversaries of the renowned Ḥanbali juriconsult and theologian, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328). When the

latter was arrested in Shawwāl 707/March-April 1308, it was Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh who made accusations against him for attacks which he had made against Ibn al-'Arabī [q.v.] and other mystics, but none of the accusations was substantiated (according to al-Bīrżālī [q.v.] in Ibn Kaṭṭāb, xiv, 45). Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh no doubt had reason to oppose Ibn Taymiyya, who condemns certain doctrines held by the mystics. Thus for instance, in his *Madīmū'at al-rasā'il wa 'l-masā'il* (5 vols., Cairo 1341-9), v, 86, Ibn Taymiyya condemns as an innovation (*bid'ā*) the formula of *dhikr* [q.v.] mentioning the name of God as a single term, either in the form of a noun or a pronoun (*al-ism al-mufrad muḥṣan wa-muḍmar*). Here, Ibn Taymiyya attributes it to al-Ghazālī [q.v.], but adds that some of his contemporaries were guilty of it (*wa-hādha wa-aṣḥābuhu waḥa'a li-ba'di man kāna fi zamāninā*). We know that this applies to Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh, among whose works is one entitled *al-Kaṣd al-muḍjarrad fi ma'rifa al-ism al-mufrad* (Cairo 1930).

Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh was claimed by the Shāfi'is (Subki, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-kubrā*, v, 176) as well as the Mālikis (Ibn Farḥūn, *Dibāḡi*, 70). At his death he was interred in the Karāfa Cemetery in Cairo where his tomb was for long the object of pious visits. It is located in the south-eastern group of tombs (see L. Massignon, *La Cité des Morts au Caire*, in BIFAO, lviii, 67).

Bibliography: In addition to the works cited above, see Brockelmann, II, 143-4, S II, 145-7; H. Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques d'Ibn Taymiyya*, Damascus 1939, index, s.v.; Abu 'l-Wafā' al-Ghunaymī al-Taftāzānī, *Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh al-Sikandari wa-taṣawwufuh* (with bibliography); *Diamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, A'lām al-Iskandariyya*, Cairo 1965, 213-22.

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IBN AṬḤAM AL-KUFĪ, ABŪ MUḤAMMAD AḤMAD IBN AṬḤAM AL-KUFĪ AL-KINDĪ, Arab historian of the 2nd-3rd/8th-9th centuries, author of the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* (composed 204/819), see Storey, i/2, 1260. The unique manuscript, in two volumes, is preserved in Istanbul, Aḥmad III 2956. Yāqūt (*Irshād*, i, 379) ascribes two other books to Ibn AṬḤAM, both of which are lost. Although little is known about the author, his *K. al-Futūḥ* proves to be a major source for the early history of the Arabs, from the caliphate of 'Uthmān to that of Hārūn al-Rashīd, particularly for events in 'Irāk, the conquest of Khurāsān, Armenia and Ādharbaydjān, the Arab-Khazar wars and Arab-Byzantine relations. The value of the work is enhanced by the list of Ibn AṬḤAM's authorities, which include al-Madā'īnī, al-Wākidi, al-Zuhri, Abū Mikhnaḥ, Ibn al-Kalbī and other lesser traditionists. Although Ibn AṬḤAM explains that he combined their traditions into a connected historical narrative, he fortunately names his authorities for some significant traditions, al-Madā'īnī in this respect being the source most frequently noted. As a contemporary of al-Madā'īnī ([q.v.], 135-225/752-840), Ibn AṬḤAM has the pronounced advantage of quoting this great master in his lifetime. Comparison of the narrative of Ibn AṬḤAM with the traditions of al-Madā'īnī as related by al-Ṭabarī shows that Ibn AṬḤAM not only provides a useful check to the traditions recorded in al-Ṭabarī, but also adds some important details preserved only in the *K. al-Futūḥ*.

It is true that al-Balādhuri in his *Futūḥ al-buldān* gives the most comprehensive account of the advance of the Arab armies into the Sāsānian domains and quotes further authorities, such as Abū 'Ubayda,

not named by Ibn AṬḤAM; nevertheless Ibn AṬḤAM provides more details on the situation of the Arabs in the conquered lands, particularly Armenia and Khurāsān. Moreover, whereas al-Balādhuri was mainly interested in "conquests", Ibn AṬḤAM goes further: his interest in the internal events of 'Irāk reveals a wider historical perspective than al-Balādhuri's.

In 596/1199 Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-Mustawfī al-Harawī translated into Persian the part of *K. al-Futūḥ* which covers events up to the death of al-Ḥusayn. Of this translation there are many copies (see, e.g., Rieu, *Cat. of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, i, 151; Storey, ii/2, 207-9), and at least one published edition (Bombay 1300/1882). This Persian translation has been much discussed, but the real value of the book lies in the Arabic original.

Bibliography: For the Arabic original: A. N. Kurat, *Abū Muḥammad... al-Kūfī'nin Kitāb al-Futūḥ'u*, in *AÜDTCF*, vii (1949), 255-82, and cf. idem, *ibid.*, vi (1948), 385 ff.; M. A. Shaban, *The social and political background of the 'Abbāsīd revolution in Khurāsān*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Harvard University, 1960. For the Persian translation: W. Ouseley, *The Oriental collection*, i, 63, 160, ii, 58; W. Pertsch, *Verzeichnis... Gotha*, iii, 219; Browne, i, 363; H. Massé, *La chronique d'Ibn AṬḤAM et la conquête de l'Afriqiya*, in *Mélanges Gaudefroy-Demombynes*, Cairo 1935-45.

(M. A. SHABAN)

IBN AL-ATHĪR, a family name (borne by a number of apparently unrelated families) which was given great and deserved lustre by three brothers, Maḍjīd al-Dīn, 'Izz al-Dīn, and Dīyā' al-Dīn, who achieved literary fame in the fields of, respectively, philology and religious studies, historiography, and literary criticism. Their father, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm (often but apparently incorrectly: Muḥ. b. Muḥ. b. 'Abd al-Karīm), whose life spanned the largest part of the 6th/12th century, was a high official of the Zangids of Mosul, stationed in Dīazirāt Ibn 'Umar (hence the *nisba* al-Dīazari). His three famous sons were born there. The family was, it seems, well-to-do, owning real estate in Dīazirāt Ibn 'Umar and Mosul and investing in commercial enterprises.

(1) **MAḌJĪD AL-DĪN ABU 'L-SA'ĀDĀT AL-MUBĀRAK** was born in 544/1149. His entire adult life was spent in Mosul, where he worked for the government in the service of Ghāzī b. Mawdūd, Ghāzī's brother Mas'ūd, and the latter's son Arslan Shāh. For a while, he was attached to Muḍjāhid al-Dīn Ḳaymaz, who, formerly of Irbil, had moved to Mosul and been entrusted there by Ghāzī with the running of affairs. Though he was paralysed in his later years, his administrative services and advice were still very much in demand. However, an anecdote reported by his brother, the historian, depicts him as preferring the contemplative quiet of the invalid to the distractions of politics. He died on Thursday, 29 Dhū 'l-Hiḍḡa 606/24 June 1210.

Of his works, a *ḥadīth* collection entitled *Djāmi' al-uṣūl* became a much used standard reference work (autograph copy of the first volume in Istanbul, Feyzullah 299, cf. H. Ritter, in *Oriens*, vi (1953), 71-7). His dictionary of less common words and meanings occurring in the Prophetic traditions, *al-Nihāya fi gharīb al-ḥadīth* (Cairo 1322, also 1963-65), gained especially wide currency from the fact that it was incorporated in the *Lisān al-'Arab*. He wrote on particular kinds of names in the *Kitāb al-Banīn wa-'l-banāt wa-'l-ābā'* wa 'l-ummahāt wa 'l-adhwā'