

# Hama

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## HAMA

Hama, also called Hamat, is a city in central Syria 54 kms north of Hims and 132 kms south of Aleppo on the road which connects these two towns.<sup>1</sup> It is built on both sides of the Orontes river (Nahr al-Asi), the larger part of the town being on the left bank, which in places rises as high as 120 feet above the river. Three bridges connect the two sides. No traces today remain of the medieval citadel and only a mound of ruins found early in the 20th century marked the site of the palace.<sup>2</sup> The steppe plateau which surrounds the town is in part made into ploughed land for cereals. Mediterranean orchards and market gardens thrive thanks to the hydraulic installations which bring water from the river to its fertile soil.<sup>3</sup>



Hama old town<sup>4</sup>

In the year 16 Al-Hijrah, Hama was taken by the Muslims and remained for nearly four centuries under the administration of the jund (military district) of Hims. During the reign of the Hamdanid Sayf al-Dawla, the town of Hama was incorporated into the district of Aleppo, and until the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century its destiny was to be linked with that of this town, which at that time was going through a troubled period.<sup>5</sup> It is known that after the raid by the Byzantine Nicephorous Phocas in 968, during which the Great Mosque of Hama was burned down, Hama had been under the nominal domination of the Fatimids, who allowed the Mirdasids to ravage it<sup>6</sup> (hence the Fatimids exacted revenge on Hama in the same way they had treated of the Maghreb - allowing unruly tribes to devastate areas that had ceased to follow them). The Seljuks wrested what had survived of Hama from the Fatimids.<sup>7</sup> In 1127 it was incorporated in the administrative district of Aleppo, in which it remained until the death of Ridwan.<sup>8</sup> In the year 1133, the crusaders, taking advantage of an eclipse of the moon, penetrated the town's suburbs but were forced to retire without taking the town. In the years following 1137, the city experienced a period of turmoil before it passed completely under the rule of Imad ud-din Zangi, who placed a strong army unit there to guard it.<sup>9</sup> It remained safe in Muslim hands under his son Nur-ud-din, who was followed by Salah-ud-din. Then the town passed under the rule of the Ayyubids, who were the ancestors of the greatest figure of Hama's history - the scholar-ruler, Abu'l Fida. The ruler, historian and warrior, Abu'l Fida, had the closest links with the Mamluks and when the latter defeated the Mongols, they appointed him as Sultan of his former family fief,

<sup>1</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; New Series; vol 3; pp. 119-21.; at p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1<sup>st</sup> series, 1915; vol 2; pp. 240-1. at p. 240.

<sup>3</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; op cit; p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.damascus-online.com/Photos/hama.htm>

<sup>5</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; p. 120.

<sup>6</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; p. 120.

<sup>7</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; p. 120.

<sup>8</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; op cit; p. 240.

Hama, and its region.<sup>10</sup> Under the rule of Abu'l Fida, Hama enjoyed great prosperity, its unusual appearance was stressed by both Eastern and Western travellers, and in particular by Ibn Jubayr.<sup>11</sup> Abu'l Fida's son, Al-Mali al-Afdal, was however extremely incompetent, and drew upon himself the wrath of the Mamluks who banished him to Damascus. After his death, Hama was directly ruled by the Mamluks through a governor appointed by them.<sup>12</sup> In the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, Hama suffered extreme devastation at the hands of Timur Lang, to whom the destruction of the citadel is attributed.<sup>13</sup> The Mamluk administration built or rebuilt two of the most important norias (*waterwheels*) of the town and also the largest aqueduct.<sup>14</sup> They maintained their rule until centuries on, Mamluk power faded and was followed by the rise of the Ottomans.



Hama's waterwheels - largest in the world<sup>15</sup>

## The Magnificence of Hama

Sourdel notes Hama's own particular charm which it was said was only appreciated by those who explored its various quarters.<sup>16</sup> This charm is appreciated by all medieval writers. Hama in the Hims province, write al-Istakhri and Ibn Hawqal `is a small town, but very pleasant to live in, having plenty of water and trees, and fields and fruits.<sup>17</sup>

The traveller Ibn Jubayr spent some days in Hama during the year 1185, and has given a long description:

*"Hamah is a very celebrated, ancient, populous and fruitful city. To the east thereof a great river runs broadly along its bed, and on it are water wheels (dulab) in great numbers for irrigating the fields. On the river bank, in the suburb, are well fitted latrines, with a number of cells through*

<sup>9</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; p. 241.

<sup>10</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; p. 241.

<sup>11</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; op cit; at p. 120.

<sup>12</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; op cit; p. 241.

<sup>13</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; op cit; p. 120.

<sup>14</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; op cit; p. 120.

<sup>15</sup> (<http://www.syrianstudents.com/pages/syria%20photos/hama/hama.htm>)

<sup>16</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; p. 120.

<sup>17</sup> Istakhri; p. 61; Ibn Hawqal; p. 116 in G. Le Strange: *Palestine under the Moslems*; Alexander P. watt; London; 1890. p. 357.

*which water flows coming from the water wheel. On the other bank of the river, near the lower town is a small Jami Mosque, the eastern wall of which is pierced with windows, and above are arcades through which you get a magnificent view. Opposite the passage of the river, and in the heart of the town is the castle hill. In the castle they have their water from the river by a channel which comes up there, so that there is no fear ever of thirst. The situation of the city is as though it lay above a low valley with broad extended lands, from which you go up on both sides as from a deep ditch to the city itself, which is perched on the slope of the hillside. Both the upper and lower town are small. But the city walls are high and go right round, enclosing the upper shoulder of the hill. The lower city is surrounded by walls on its three sides, the fourth being defended by the river. Over the river is a great bridge built of solid blocks of stone. This goes from the lower town to the suburb. The suburb is large, with many khans, and there are the shops of all manner of artificers and merchants, where travellers may find all they require, and so do not need to enter the town. The markets of the upper town are more numerous and richer than those of the lower, and they are places of gathering for all manner of merchants and artificers. The upper town has the Jami mosque, larger than the Jami of the lower town, and three madrasas. There is a hospital on the river land opposite the Jami as Saghr (the small mosque). Outside the city are gardens with trees and places of pleasant resort on either side of the river bank. The river is called al-Asi, the rebel, because apparently it runs from below upwards, its course being from south to north. To the south of Hama it passes Hims, and in this southerly direction lies the centre of Hama. On leaving Hama (on the way to Hims) after half a stage, we crossed the river al-Asi by a great bridge of stone arches, across which lies the town of Rastan.*<sup>18</sup>

Yaqut describes Hama in the 13<sup>th</sup> century as a large town of the Hims province, surrounded by a wall very strongly built:

*"outside the wall is a most extensive suburb, in which are great markets and a mosque that stands above the river Al-Asi. This suburb, too, has a wall round it, and it extends along the bank of the river Al-Asi where are Na'aurahs (water wheels), which water the gardens and fill the tank of the jami Mosque. This suburb they call as Suk al-Asfal (or the lower market), for it stands lower than the town, and the walled town above it is called As Suk al-Ala (for the upper Market). In this suburb also are many madrasas, which stand on the south bank of the Asi. Beside the city stands an ancient castle wonderfully fortified and constructed. Al-Malik al-Mansur dug a ditch there of 100 ells and more in length. In the year 884 Ahmad Ibn Tayibb describes this castle from eye witness as a village with a stone wall in which were large stone buildings with the Asi flowing in front of them, watering the gardens and turning the water wheels, but it is to be noted that he calls it a village. Besides the lower market also is a castle called Al-Mansuriya. It stands rather above the suburb, and to the left. In this lower market are many shops and houses for merchants and bazaars.*<sup>19</sup>

Yaqut also tells us, `Kurun Hama (the horns of Hama) are two peaks standing opposite each other. They are the summits of a hill overhanging Hama'.<sup>20</sup> On the right bank of the Orontes, there extended a quarter which Ibn Jubayr describes as suburb and which, joined to the other bank by an arcaded bridge, was especially remarkable for its khans; it was there that travellers stayed.<sup>21</sup> The town proper was situated on

<sup>18</sup>-Ibn Jubayr: *Rihla*; W. Wright edition; Leiden; 1852. pp. 257-8.

<sup>19</sup>Yaqut al-Hamawi: *Mu'Ajam al-Buldan*; Wustenfled Edition; in six volumes; Leipzig; 1866. II; p. 330.

<sup>20</sup> Yaqut II; p. 332.

<sup>21</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; op cit; p. 120.

the left bank, which was higher, reaching in places as much as 40 meters above the level of the river, and dominated by a line of mountains; it consisted of a lower and upper town both surrounded by a wall and also a citadel, built along the bank of the river on an isolated eminence overlooking the lower town; each of these towns had a mosque, that of the lower town built by Nur Eddin and that of the upper town being the original Great Mosque and suqs. The lower town possessed in addition a hospital and three madrasas (one of which had been found by Nur-ud-din for the great jurist Ibn al-Asrun.<sup>22</sup> The Great Mosque, the Haram has been evolved from a Christian basilica of unusual form: 3 naves of different breadth, 8 supports with five cupolas in the centre and covered by five cross vaultings on each side. The west wall seems to have been the narthex wall of the church. The south wall dates from the pre-Christian period. In the east, standing alone, is a four cornered minaret with Kufic inscription of probably the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup> The beautiful court is surrounded by vaulted halls, an estrade with two mihrabs before the haram, a second with a basin and isolated mihrab at the north hall, a khazna on eight ancient pillars. In the east hall a turbe and a hall of prayer with heavy bronze windows of the Mamluk period. A peculiar feature of the architecture of Hama finds marked expression in the mosque: the adornment of the walls by mosaic effects in colour by the alternation of black basalt and white limestone.<sup>24</sup>

The Jami Nuri built on the left bank of the Orontes on sloping ground and high substructions was founded by Nur-ud-din Zangi, the long haram, the cross vaulting of which belong to later period.<sup>25</sup> The lower part of the minaret with its square white blocks is perhaps also old. The mosque, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, contained the beautiful remains of a wooden minbar given by Nur-ud-din, and a richly decorated mihrab with decorated marble pillars given by the Ayyubid ruler Malik al-Muzaffar Taki Eddin, and in the eastern ante room a mihrab of marble columns the capital of which bears an inscription of Abu'l Fida.<sup>26</sup>

The water wheels of Hama, according to Sarton, are some of its great glories<sup>27</sup>. All travellers saw and marvelled at these giant water wheels. Nasir Khusraw in 1047 writes in his diary:

*"The City of Hama is well populated; it stands on the bank of the River Asi (Orontes). This stream is called Asi (meaning the Rebel), for the reason that it flows towards the Greek territory, that is to say, it is a rebel to go from the lands of Islam to the lands of the Infidel. They have set up numerous water wheels on its banks."*<sup>28</sup>

Dimashqi, in 1300, says:

*"Hama is a provincial chief town, and seat of government. A fine city, and well fortified and with excellent provisions. The Nahr Asi flows between the two halves of the town, and the two are connected by a bridge. Along the Asi banks are huge water wheels called Naurah, such as you see nowhere else. They raise the water from the river to irrigate the gardens. The place has many fruits, especially apricots, called Kufuri Lauzi (camphorated with almond flavour), which you will see nowhere else."*<sup>29</sup>

<sup>22</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; p. 120.

<sup>23</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; op cit; p. 241.

<sup>24</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; p. 241.

<sup>25</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; p. 241.

<sup>26</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; p. 241.

<sup>27</sup> G. Sarton: *Introduction to the History of Science*; 3 vols; The Carnegie Institute of Washington; 1927-48. vol 2; p. 623.

<sup>28</sup> Nasir Khusraw; p. 5. in G. le Strange; op cit; p.357.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Dimashki: *Kitab nukhbat al-dahr fi ajaib al-barr wal bahr (Selection of the age on the wonders of the land and the Sea)*.

The water of the Orontes is led into the gardens and fields through aqueducts, to which it is raised by water wheels, the sound of which has a peculiarly soporific effect.<sup>30</sup> Alongside the river 32 water wheels or norias of various sizes, the tallest of which being 22 metres high, raised water to aqueducts which supplied both sections of the town and irrigated the surrounding gardens; drinking water was provided, it is not known exactly from which date, by a special aqueduct which came from the region of Salamiya.<sup>31</sup> There are also similar water wheels in Antioch. The crusaders brought them to Germany where they are still used in a little valley in Franken near Bayreuth.<sup>32</sup>



Hama's norias<sup>33</sup>

During Abul'Fida's time, in the late 13<sup>th</sup>-early 14<sup>th</sup> century, there were 32 of such water wheels in Hama, by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century their number fell to nine, hence a rich heritage has been lost.<sup>34</sup>

Sourdél notes how in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, there remain in Hama several monuments worthy of note. The most important is the Great Mosque which dates from the Umayyad period as is proved by the presence in the courtyard of a pavilion on columns intended as the local *bayt al-mal* (finance office).<sup>35</sup> The hall of prayer is of an original plan: its three naves are in fact each of different width and its eight pillars support five cupolas. The courtyard is surrounded by vaulted porticoes with semi circular arches, some of which appear to date from the time that the mosque was built.<sup>36</sup> On the right bank of the Orontes is the Jami al-Nuri, the mosque of the lower town, founded by Nur-ud-din Zangi, in which survive important parts of the original building and which is particularly famous for the interesting minbar which belongs to the first foundation. On the opposite bank of the Orontes is the Jami al-Hayyat, or mosque of the snakes, so called

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edited by A.F. Mehren; quarto, 375 p. St Petersburg; 1866.

<sup>30</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; op cit; p. 240.

<sup>31</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; op cit; p. 120.

<sup>32</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; op cit; p. 240.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.syrianstudents.com/pages/syria%20photos/hama/hama.htm>

<sup>34</sup> M. Sobernheim: Hama; op cit; p. 240.

<sup>35</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; op cit; ; at p. 121.

<sup>36</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; op cit; p. 121.

because of the form of the small columns which frame one of the windows of the hall of prayer and which resemble intertwined snakes.<sup>37</sup>



One of Hama's mosques<sup>38</sup>

## The Scholars of Hama

**Usama Ibn Munqidh** (fl. 1138-1188 CE) was born in the castle of Shayzar (Caesarea ad Orontem) in the valley of the Orontes, fifteen miles north of Hama.<sup>39</sup> His chief literary work was probably done during the years 1164-1174, a period of relative peace. He wrote many poems, a treatise on rhetoric, *Kitab al-badi*, etc.<sup>40</sup> At the age of ninety lunar years (that is, about 1182), he composed, or at any rate completed, an autobiography called *Kitab al-ittibar* (Learning by example), which is regarded as being historically important and is one of the first larger works of its kind.<sup>41</sup>

Usama witnessed the first decades of Crusader onslaught and settlement in the Muslim lands, and was himself a fighter against them just as his own father was. His experiences are found in his *Kitab al-Itibar* (Learning by example) - editions and translations of which have been composed by Derenbourg in French,<sup>42</sup> Shuman in German;<sup>43</sup> Porter in English<sup>44</sup> and from an Escorial (Spain) manuscript,<sup>45</sup> Philip Hitti<sup>46</sup> delivered a good version of Usama's observations of crusader life.

<sup>37</sup> D. Sourdel: Hama; p. 121.

<sup>38</sup> <http://alfatihoun.edaama.org/Fichiers/Syrie/Histoire/web/images/GrandMosque%20Hama.jpg>

<sup>39</sup> G. Sarton: *Introduction to the History of Science*; 3 vols; The Carnegie Institute of Washington; 1927-48. vol 2; p. 446.

<sup>40</sup> G. Sarton: Introduction; vol 2; p. 446.

<sup>41</sup> G. Sarton: Introduction; vol 2; p. 446.

<sup>42</sup> H. Derenbourg: *Ousama ibn Mounkidh*, 2 vols, publications de l'Ecole des Langues Orientales, Paris 1886-1893.

H. Derenbourg: *Anthologie de textes arabes inedits par Ousama et sur Ousama*; Paris, 1893.

H. Derenbourg: *Souvenir historiques et recits de chasse*, Paris 1895 (French version of *Kitab al-Itibar*.)

<sup>43</sup> G. Shumann, translation of *Kitab a-ittibar*, Innsbruck 1905.

<sup>44</sup> George R. Porter: *The Autobiography of Ousama ibn Munqidh*, London, 1929.

<sup>45</sup> G. Sarton: Introduction, op cit, vol ii, at pp 446-7.

<sup>46</sup> P.K. Hitti: *An Arab-Syrian gentleman and warrior in the period of the Crusades. Memoirs of Usamah ibn Munqidh*,

Usama tells many stories of the Muslim East under crusader rule, such as Frankish ordeal by water in which the victim was a Muslim man accused with his mother of murdering Christian pilgrims:

*"They installed a huge cask and filled it with water. Across it they set a board of wood. They then bound the arms of the man charged with the act, tied a rope around his shoulders and dropped him into the cask; their idea being that in case he was innocent, he would sink in the water and they would then lift him up with the rope so that he might not die in the water; and in case he was guilty, he would not sink in the water. This man did his best to sink when they dropped him in the water, but he could not do it. So he had to submit to their sentence against him - may Allah's curse be upon them! They pierced his eyeballs with red hot awls [an awl is a punching tool used to make a hole in paper, leather and other soft materials]."<sup>47</sup>*

Usama also tells how the old crusaders who settled for very long amongst the Muslims, gradually lost their barbaric ways by acquiring Islamic values such as depicted in the following:

*"There are some Franks who settled in our land and taken to living like Muslims. These are better than those who have just arrived from their homelands, but they are the exception, and cannot be taken as typical. I came across one of them once when I sent a friend on business to Antioch, which was governed by a friend of mine: Todros Ibn As Safi (Theodoros Sophianos, the Greek commander of the municipality of Antioch). One day he said to my friend: 'A Frankish friend has invited me to visit him; come with me so that you can see how they live.' I went with him," said my friend, "and we came to the house of one of the old knights who came with the first expedition. This man had retired from the army, and was living on the income of the property he owned in Antioch. He had a fine table brought out, spread with a splendid selection of appetising food. He saw that I was not eating, and said: 'Don't worry please, eat what you like, for I don't eat Frankish food. I have Egyptian cooks and eat only what they serve. No pig's flesh ever comes into my house! So I ate, although cautiously, and then we left. Another day, as I was passing through the market, a Frankish woman advanced on me, addressing me in her barbaric language with words I found incomprehensible. A crowd of Franks gathered round us and I gave myself up for lost, when suddenly this knight appeared, saw me and came up. 'What do you want with this man?' 'This man,' the woman replied, 'killed my brother Urso.' This Urso was a knight from Apamea who was killed by a soldier from Hama. The old man scolded the woman: 'This man is a merchant, a city man, not a fighter, and he lives nowhere near where your brother was killed.' Then he turned on the crowd, which melted away, and shook hands with me. Thus the fact that I ate at his table saved my life."<sup>48</sup>*

**Yaqut al-Hamawi (d. 1229)** - early scholarly activities consisted in copying and selling manuscripts, whilst studying Arabic and grammar.<sup>49</sup> Yaqut could not settle in one place though and travelled much, first as a merchant, then as a geographer fascinated by places and their diverse populations, dress and ways. 50 He reached Merv, where he stayed for two years. What attracted him there, were the libraries; ten wealthy libraries, two in the chief mosque and the remainder in the madrassas.<sup>51</sup> In 1218, he moved on to Khiva

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Columbia University, New York, 1929;

<sup>47</sup> Usama in P. K. Hitti: *An Arab/Syrian*; op cit; p. 168.

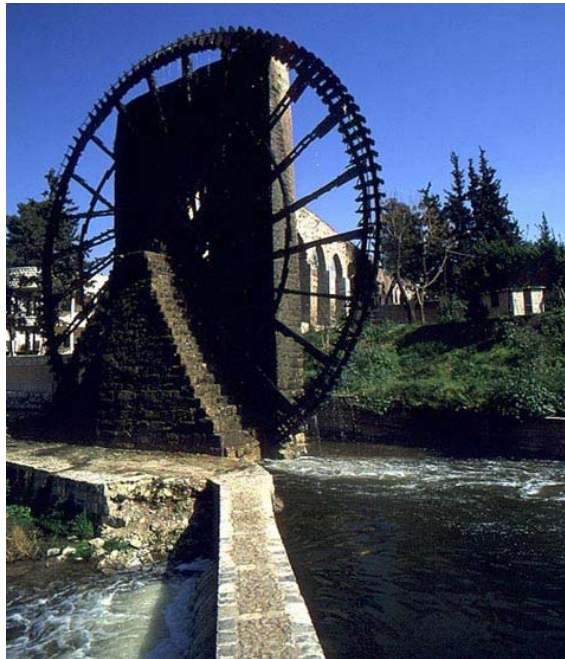
<sup>48</sup> Usama; p. 103-4.

<sup>49</sup> S. M. Ahmad: *Yaqut al-Hamawi; Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, Charles Scribener's Sons; New York; Vol 14; p. 546.

<sup>50</sup> W. Durant: *The Age of faith*, Simon and Shuster, New York; 6<sup>th</sup> printing; 1950. p. 329.

<sup>51</sup> In J. Pedersen: *The Arabic Book*, (1928) trans by G French; Princeton University Press; Princeton, New Jersey (1984). p.

and Balkh; but it was the wrong time. In 1219, the Mongols, led by Genghis Khan from their eastern kingdoms, went on the move west and devastated the whole of eastern Islam (see entries on Merv, Bukhara, Khwarizm). Yaqut himself was nearly caught on one occasion by the first wave of invading Mongols in 1220; he fled, wearing no clothes, but clutching his manuscripts, across Persia to Mosul.<sup>52</sup> From Mosul, he went back to Aleppo, where he remained under the patronage of Al-Qifti, until his death in 1229. During such stay, he still managed to make trips to Palestine, Egypt, Iraq and other parts.<sup>53</sup> Whilst working as a book-seller, Yaqut also worked as an author, but only four of his many works have survived time, best known being his *Mu'ajam al-Udaba* (Dictionary of the learned men); and *Mu'ajam al-Buldan* (Dictionary of countries.) These two works were altogether 33 180 pages long.<sup>54</sup>



One of Hama's large waterwheels<sup>55</sup>

*Mu'jam al-Buldan* is a vast geographical encyclopaedia which summed up nearly all medieval knowledge of the globe, and in which Yaqut includes almost everything from archaeology, ethnography, history, anthropology, natural sciences, geography, giving coordinates for every place, etc.<sup>56</sup> For every town and city, he gives every name, describes every part with its monuments and wealth, its history, its population, and its leading figures. To obtain information, Yaqut travelled to Persia, Arabia, Iraq and Egypt, and whilst established in Aleppo (in Syria), he built relations and friendships with scientists and historians, including al-Qifti, then a minister, to whom he dedicated his dictionary. Yaqut's dictionary of countries is not just a collection of facts from other historians, geographers and travellers, but also facts gleaned from his many long travel experiences and from people he met during such travels.<sup>57</sup> That Yaqut was fully conversant with the various concepts of Muslim geographers relating to

128.

<sup>52</sup> W. Durant: *The Age of Faith*; op cit; p. 329.

<sup>53</sup> S. M.Ahmad: *Yaqut al-Hamawi*; op cit; p. 547.

<sup>54</sup> Yaqut, ibn-' Abd Allah al-Hamawi, *Irshad al-Arib ila Ma'rifat al-Adib*, also referred to as *Mu'jam al-Udaba*, (Dictionary of learned men,) edit., D.S. Margoliouth (Luzac, 1907 ff);

*Yaqut, Ibn Abd Allah al-Hamawi, Jacut's Geographisches Worterbuch, ed. F. Wustenfeld. 6 vols. Leipzig, 1866-70.*

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.flat3.co.uk/levant/pages/990310.htm>

<sup>56</sup> W. Durant: *The Age*; op cit; p. 329.

<sup>57</sup> S. M.Ahmed: *Yaqut*; op cit; p. 547.

mathematics and physical and regional geography is well documented in his introduction, which also includes discussions of the geographical and legal terms in the work.<sup>58</sup> Yaqut also used works that came before him, and did not fail to correct them whenever it was judged necessary. Throughout, his work and sources submit to strict observation, and all that was unchecked by facts were removed, Yaqut insisted thereby on the accuracy and rigour of his information.<sup>59</sup> *Mu'Adjam al-Buldan*, thus remains to our day, as Miquel notes, an excellent source for reference.<sup>60</sup>

Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Abd Allah, Al-Hamdani Al-Hamawi, Shihab Eddin was born in Hama in 1187-8, where he flourished and where he died in 1244-5. He is a Shafiite Qadi (judge) historian who wrote *Tarikh* (History) of the Prophet and of the caliphs down to 1231.<sup>61</sup> He dedicated to the Ayyubid prince Al-Muzaffar Ghazi (ruled 1230-1244/5) an elaborate history of Islam in six volumes (*Al-Tarikh al-Muzaffari*).<sup>62</sup> A good number of Italian authors have made use of the relevant extracts from this work, which they have especially used in their works on Sicily. Hence, Agostino Inveges (1595-1677) has translated into Italian extracts dealing with Palermo.<sup>63</sup> A century after Inveges, Carusius made translations into Latin of the same extracts.<sup>64</sup> The famed historian of Sicily, Muratori, and Gregorio also made similar usages.<sup>65</sup>

Dating from the thirteenth century several signed celestial globes are preserved today. The earliest and in many ways the loveliest was made in 1225-1226 CE for a nephew of Salah-ud-din in Egypt. The globe has the full set of 48 constellation figures engraved and damascened with copper, with approximately 1025 stars indicated by six different sizes of inlaid silver points corresponding to the various magnitudes.<sup>66</sup> The globe also has a scale showing the sizes of silver points used for the first five magnitudes.<sup>67</sup> The inscriptions, which are in Naskhi script rather than the commonly used Kufic script of this period, are damascened with silver or inlaid with silver wire.<sup>68</sup> According to inscription, the globe was made for al-Malik Kamil, the Ayyubid sultan of Egypt from 1218 to 1238, and the maker of the globe was ('Alam al-Din) Qaysar ibn Abi al-Qasim ibn Mu-safir al-Ashrafial-Hanafi, who was born in upper Egypt in 1178-1179 CE, studied in Egypt, Syria, and finally in Mosul (where the expertise for globes and metals was probably the best in Islam), before turning to Syria where he entered the services of Muzafar II Taqi-ud-din, ruler of Hama from 1229-1244.<sup>69</sup> He was a renowned mathematician and architect<sup>70</sup> and it is reported that the historian, Qadi, Jamal-ud-din Ibn Wasil put it on record that with his help, Qaysar constructed a celestial globe of wood and gilt.<sup>71</sup> In 1225, Qaysar made a brass globe on the order of the Ayyubid ruler al-Malik al-Kamil. This globe is unusual in that the horizon ring and stand, which are probably the ones originally made

<sup>58</sup> W. Jwaideh: *The Introductory Chapters of Yaqut's Mu'ajam al-Buldan*; Leiden; 1959; p.19.

<sup>59</sup> C Bouamrane-L Gardet: *Panorama de la pensee Islamique*, Sindbad; 1-3 Rue Feutrier; Paris 18, 1984 at p. 260.

<sup>60</sup> A.Miquel: Geography, in *Encyclopaedia of the History of Arabic Sciences*; Edited by R.Rashed; Routledge; London; 1996; pp 796-812 at p 809.

<sup>61</sup> G. Sarton: introduction; vol 2; p. 683.

<sup>62</sup> G. Sarton: introduction; vol 2; p. 683.

<sup>63</sup> A. Inveges: *Annali della felice citta di Palermo*; Vol 2; 659; Palermo; 1650.

<sup>64</sup> J. B. Carusius: *Bibliotheca historica regni Siciliae*; vol 1; Panormi; 1723; pp. 19-23.

<sup>65</sup> L. A. Muratori: *Rerum italicarum scriptores*; vol 1; part 2; p. 251; and R. Gregorio: *Rerum Arabicarum quae historian Siculam spectant*; panormi; 1790; pp. 53-68.

<sup>66</sup> E. Savage. Smith: *Islamicate Celestial Globes*; Smithsonian Institute Press; Washington, D.C, 1985. p. 25.

<sup>67</sup> ESS: *Islamicate*; p. 25.

<sup>68</sup> ESS: *Islamicate*; p. 26.

<sup>69</sup> G. Sarton: introduction; vol 2; op cit; p. 623.

<sup>70</sup> L.A. Mayer: *Islamic astrolabists and their works*; Albert Kundig; Geneva; 1956. p. 80.

<sup>71</sup> L.a.Mayer: *Islamic*; p. 80.

for this globe, have incorporated into them two gnomons and graduated arcs making them elevation dials.<sup>72</sup> The sphere itself is unusual in having Latin zodiacal names and Latin numerals engraved on it, but these may have been added later.<sup>73</sup> That globe was kept until 1809 in the cabinet of Cardinal Borgia at Velletri but is now in the Museo Nazionale of Naples.<sup>74</sup>

It is with regard to the water wheels that Qaysar is most associated with Hama, water wheels which, as Sarton holds, constitute one of the glories of Hama.<sup>75</sup> These water wheels are huge in size as described above, and served to feed homes and farms with water. Only few of them survive today. It is likely that water wheels existed in the West before the crusades, but it is after the crusaders returned from the East that they brought with them the better ones, and much improved ones, from the east, and also a clear understanding of their usefulness.<sup>76</sup> As noted above, these Eastern (Syrian) water wheels can still be seen in Germany in Franconia near Bayreuth.<sup>77</sup>

Abu Abdallah Muhammad Ibn Salim Ibn Wasil, Jamal-ud-din, better known as Ibn Wasil, was born in 1207-8. He flourished in Hama, and between 1260-1 before he was called to Cairo by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars (ruled 1260-1277) who sent him as an envoy to King Manfred of Sicily (ruled from 1258 to 1266).<sup>78</sup> Ibn Wasil remained for a long time at Manfred's court, then returned to Hama, where he was appointed as a chief Qadi and professor in the madrasa, and where he died in 1298.<sup>79</sup> He was a Shafiite doctor, historian, philosopher and mathematician, who also taught Abu'l Fida mathematics and prosody.<sup>80</sup> He dedicated to Manfred a treatise on logic, which he called in his honour *Al-impirurya*, then re-titled *Nukhbat al-Fikr fil mantiq* (selected thoughts on Logic.)<sup>81</sup> He also wrote a history of the Ayyubids, entitled *Kitab Mufarridj al-Kurub fi akhbar bani Ayyub* (the book which dispels sadness with the tales of the Ayyubids). This work was continued down to 1295-6 by Ali Ibn abd al-Rahman, secretary to al-Muzaffar III, Abu'l Fida's predecessor as prince of Hama.<sup>82</sup> Finally, Ibn Wasil composed a commentary on the treatise of prosody of Ibn Hadjib (d. 1249), *Sharh al-Maqsad al-Jalil*.

Salah-ud-din bin Youssef al-Kalal bi Hama (i.e. the eye doctor of Hama) was a Syrian oculist who flourished in Hama in 1296. He wrote for his son a very elaborate treatise of ophthalmology entitled *Nur al-Uyun wa Jami al-Funun* (light of the eyes and collection of rules).<sup>83</sup> The manuscripts in Paris of this treatise remained the only one known by the time Leclerc was writing in 1876, and includes 178 pages of 27 lines each.<sup>84</sup> Salah-ud-din composed this work following a request from his son.<sup>85</sup> The treatise is divided into ten books as follows:

Deontological introduction;

1. Definition of the eye anatomy in 22 chapters, including a schematic section (*taqatu al-salibi*) of the eye;
2. Vision, including the geometrical theory of it. Discussion of various theories of vision;

<sup>72</sup> E. Savage Smith: *Islamicate*; op cit; p. 26.

<sup>73</sup> ESS: *Islamicate*; p. 26.

<sup>74</sup> L. Mayer: *Islamic astrolabists*; op cit; p. 80.

<sup>75</sup> G. Sarton: introduction; vol 2; p. 623.

<sup>76</sup> G. Sarton: introduction; vol 2; p. 623.

<sup>77</sup> M. Sobernheim: *Hama*; op cit; p. 240.

<sup>78</sup> See Adolf Friedrich von Schack: *Poesie und Kunst der Araber in Spanien und Sizilien*; 2 Vols; Berlin; 1865.

<sup>79</sup> G. Sarton: introduction; vol 2; op cit; p. 1119.

<sup>80</sup> See H. Suter: *Mathematiker und astronomer der Araber*; 1900; p. 157.

<sup>81</sup> G. Sarton: introduction; vol 2; op cit; p. 1119.

<sup>82</sup> G. Sarton: introduction; vol 2; p. 1119.

<sup>83</sup> G. Sarton: introduction, vol 2; p. 1102.

<sup>84</sup> L. Leclerc: *Histoire de la Medecine arabe*; vol 2; Paris; 1976; p. 205.

<sup>85</sup> L. Leclerc: *Medecine arabe*; vol 2; p. 205.

- 3 Eye diseases, their causes, treatment, drugs;
4. Hygiene; affections of the eye lids;
5. Affections of the canthi;
6. Affections of the conjunctiva;
7. Affections of the cornea;
8. Affections of the uvea, and cataract;
9. Intangible affections;
10. Simple drugs after Ibn al-Baytar.<sup>86</sup>

This plan is identical to that of the *Tadkhirat al-Kahallin* of Ali Ibn Isa of Baghdad, and also contains many borrowings from Ammar Ibn Ali al-Mosuli.<sup>87</sup> The author does not either refrain from citing his predecessors, as well as his master. He also gives an abundance of pictures of instruments, reminding us of al-Zahrawi who is also amply cited.<sup>88</sup> In book seven, the author cites two cases of cancer, one of which, affecting Emir Azz-ud-din of Hama, he treated with great success.<sup>89</sup> In book eight we find again the different operations described in good detail. He refers to the location of the cataract and describes minutely and lengthily the operation.<sup>90</sup> He describes the special syringe used for the operation, which is often made of glass and which sucks up the cataract, and also dwells on vision, from near or far, and on objects of diverging sizes.<sup>91</sup> The work also cites the authorities upon which the author has relied, and then gives ethical advice, such as that the physicist must be discrete, promoting good, dedicated in his study, detached from the pleasures of the body, and seeking the company of the scholars and the patients.<sup>92</sup>

Abu'l Fida (b. 1273-d. Hama 1331) belongs to the Ayyub family. Salah-ud-din having given as a fief Hama and some neighbouring parts to his nephew Taki-ud-din Omar, a descendant of whom is Abu'l Fida.<sup>93</sup> With Usama Ibn Munqidh we find ourselves precisely in the same situation: Another great historian and would-be warrior, just as Abu'l Fida, but after a hundred year gap. Nevertheless we have the same struggle against the same crusader enemy, but this time, in the time of Abu'l Fida (13<sup>th</sup> century, the conflict also involved Mongols on the Christian side, and Mamluks as fighters for Islam.<sup>94</sup> At the time of the birth of Abu'l Fida, his father had been expelled from his Hama principality by the second Mongol invasions (began 1258) under Hulagu, (the first invasions occurred in 1219-22 under Genghis Khan). Abu'l Fida was educated therefore, in Damascus. It was remarkable for him, as noted by de Vaux, to receive any education for at the age of twelve he was already fighting against the crusaders alongside his father and the Mamluks at the taking of the crusader castle of Markab from the Knight Hospitallers.<sup>95</sup> At the age of sixteen, he was still fighting alongside his father and cousin at the recovery of Tripoli from the crusaders (that is roughly a century and half after it was taken by the crusaders from the Muslims in 1109).<sup>96</sup> Years after, he was still fighting the crusaders with another Muslim army for the conquest of the Castle of Roum, which controlled the Euphrates

<sup>86</sup> See J. Hirschberg: *Die arabischen Augenärzte*; vol 2; Leipzig; 1905..

<sup>87</sup> G. Sarton: introduction, vol 2; p. 1102.

<sup>88</sup> L. Leclerc: *Medecine arabe*; vol 2; p. 206.

<sup>89</sup> L. Leclerc: *Medecine arabe*; vol 2; p. 206.

<sup>90</sup> L. Leclerc: *Medecine arabe*; vol 2; p. 206.

<sup>91</sup> L. Leclerc: *Medecine arabe*; vol 2; p. 206.

<sup>92</sup> L. Leclerc: *Medecine arabe*; vol 2; p. 205.

<sup>93</sup> See Paul Chaix: *Etudes sur Aboulfeda; Nouvelles annals des Voyages*; 1; 1862; pp. 5-46.

<sup>94</sup> Paul Chaix: *Etudes sur Aboulfeda*; pp. 5-46.

<sup>95</sup> Carra de Vaux: *Les Penseurs de l'Islam*; Geuthner; Paris; 1921; vol 2; pp. 139-47; at p. 140.

<sup>96</sup> Carra de Vaux: *Les Penseurs*; at p. 140.

River, and years on, he was under the orders of the Mamluk Sultan Ladjyn fighting the Christians in lesser Armenia.<sup>97</sup> Abu'l Fida tells the story of this Sultan Ladjyn who was of German origins and of the Teutonic Order of Knights; he fought first for Christianity in Italy against the pagans, then came to Syria to fight the Muslims, then converted to Islam, joined the Mamluks, and gradually rose in rank until he became Sultan.<sup>98</sup> In the year 1309, we find Abu'l Fida fighting in Armenia against the Mongol-Armenian alliance, having just returned from pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>99</sup> In 1316 he was in Mamluk Cairo, appointed as lieutenant for the Sultan, then two years later he was appointed Prince of Hama, thus recovering his ancestors' title. Abu'l Fida narrates his return to his ancestral city:

*"All the troops who were there came to meet me. My entry into the city took place on Monday 23 Jumada second, in the afternoon, and lecture was made to the population of my appointment."*<sup>100</sup>

Abu'l Fida then went on pilgrimage again in the year 1321, he went into military campaign once more to fight in Asia Minor. It is amidst these military campaigns that Abu'l Fida used to write. In the year 1323, he was back in Hama writing on his Geography and still found time to converse with the learned, and even to undertake some commercial activity.<sup>101</sup> Abu'l Fida's life is thus nothing less than extraordinary. His whole life from childhood is only a series of military campaigns, besides accomplishing pilgrimage to Mecca three times, devoting much time to the embellishment of his capital, and the patronage of learned men, and, of course, writing.<sup>102</sup> It is at the height of glory and power that Abu'l Fida died in Hama in 1331. The poet at his death said:

*"He is a prince, to whose home  
Glory rushes just as pilgrims do to Mecca  
So many marvels were born out of his hand  
When this hand held the pen."*<sup>103</sup>

Abu'l Fida's main work are *Mukhtassar tarikh al-Bashar* (The Concise History of Humanity or Chronicles) and the *Taqwim al-Buldan* (A Sketch of the countries). Other than his chronicles, and his geography (*Taqwim*), Abu'l Fida was also well learned in many fields such as botany and *materia medica*.<sup>104</sup> He wrote a work in many volumes on medicine titled *Kunash*, and a book on the balance.

His historical *Mukhtassar*, written in 1315 and continued by the author to 1329, is a universal history dealing with pre-Islamic and Islamic history down to 1329.<sup>105</sup> The author relies very much on the great historian of Mosul preceding him, Ibn al-Athir, but also on his own sources, and his own experiences: he was after all at the front of events as a fighter. Such is the importance of this work, it was continued by many after him, including by Ibn al-Wardi who continued it to 1348, by Ibn al-Shihna al-Halabi who continued it to 1403, and of course was appreciated by early Western orientalisists.<sup>106</sup> Many partial editions

<sup>97</sup> Carra de Vaux: Les Penseurs; at p. 141.

<sup>98</sup> Carra de Vaux: Les Penseurs; at p. 141.

<sup>99</sup> Carra de Vaux: Les Penseurs; at p. 143.

<sup>100</sup> Carra de Vaux: Les penseurs; at p. 144.

<sup>101</sup> Carra de Vaux: Les penseurs; at p. 145.

<sup>102</sup> G. Sarton: Introduction; vol 3; p. 794.

<sup>103</sup> Carra de Vaux: Les penseurs; op cit; p. 146.

<sup>104</sup> G. Sarton: Introduction; vol 3; p. 797.

<sup>105</sup> The first edition of the *Mukhtassar* was published in Constantinople in 1869-70, in 2 vols.

<sup>106</sup> G. Sarton: Introduction; vol 3; p. 794.

of the work were made in the West, the first by John Cagnier (1670-1740).<sup>107</sup> It was published in 1754 by Reiske, and has been for a very long time the most important Muslim historical work known in the West.<sup>108</sup>

Abu'l Fida's geographical treatise *Taqwim al-Buldan (A Sketch of the countries)* has been known quite early in the Latin West, with many translations of it, either partial or complete.<sup>109</sup> It includes twenty eight chapters, with a prologue which contains interesting observations such as the gain or loss of day according to the direction in which one goes around the earth, and the assertion that three quarters of the earth's surface is covered with water.<sup>110</sup> The chapters, each, deal with a definite part of the world in the order indicated:

1, Arabia; 2. Egypt; 3. Maghrib; 4. Equatorial Africa; 5. Spain; 6; Islands of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic; 7. Northern regions of Europe and Asia; 8 Syria; 9 Jazirah; 10. Iraq Arabi'; 11. Khuzistan or Ahwaz; 12. Fars; 13. Kirman; 14 Sijistan; 15: Sind; 16: Hind; 17. China; 18 Eastern islands; 19 Rum (Asia Minor); 20. Armenia....<sup>111</sup>

The 28 chapters are very unequal in length, but are arranged in the same order, that is each is in two parts, the first of which is devoted to a general account of the country (its boundaries, physical peculiarities, political and ethnical divisions, manners and customs, monuments, main roads, etc...) and the second given in tabular form a series of data concerning the main cities: names, sources of information, longitude, latitude, mathematical climate (as indicated by coordinates), physical climate or province, orthography, short description.<sup>112</sup> Abu'l Fida took great pains to establish the orthography and orthophony of place names. His frequent quotations of diverging data (e.g. for coordinates) is typical of his honesty; this was due to his using different sources which he had no means of checking.<sup>113</sup>

A Turkish abbreviated translation in alphabetical order of this geographical treatise was made by Ali Sipahizade in 1588-9. In the mid 17th century it had an unedited translation by Schickard, and Gravius published in London extracts relating to Khwarizm and Transoxonia.<sup>114</sup> A Latin translation was made in Leiden in 1746 by Reiske,<sup>115</sup> whilst Reinaud and de Slane edited the complete text.<sup>116</sup> The French translation by Reinaud and Guyard was completed in 1883.<sup>117</sup> Possibly one of the most important aspects of Abu al-Fida's work is in his observations on the spherical shape of the earth.<sup>118</sup>

A later scholar of Hama is yet another instrument maker. **Shihab Eddin Ahmed B. Abi Bakr as-Sarraj al-Hamawi** (d. 1328-9) is the author of several books on scientific instruments and geometrical problems.<sup>119</sup> He wrote a treatise on geometrical problems *Masail handasya*, which is found in Cairo (Riyada

<sup>107</sup> J. Cagnier: *De Vita et rebus gestis Mohamedis*; Oxford; 1723.

<sup>108</sup> J. Reiske: *Abulfedae Annales Moslemici*, Lat. Ex. Ar. Fecit. J. J. Reiske; Leipzig; 1754; Arabic text published in 1789.

<sup>109</sup> C. de Vaux: *Les Penseurs*, op cit, p. 13.

<sup>110</sup> G. Sarton: *Introduction*; vol 3; p. 797.

<sup>111</sup> G. Sarton: *Introduction*; vol 3; p. 794.

<sup>112</sup> See R. Blachere: *Extraits des geographes Arabes*; Beirut; 1932; pp. 290-8.

<sup>113</sup> G. Sarton: *Introduction*; vol 3; p. 797.

<sup>114</sup> J. Greaves or Gravius; (1602-52); London; 1650.

<sup>115</sup> J. J. Reiske; Leipzig; 1266; reprinted 1286.

<sup>116</sup> J.T. Reinaud and Baron de Slane; Paris; 1840.

<sup>117</sup> J.T. Reinaud and S. Guyard eds: *Geographie d'Aboulfeda*, 2 vols. Paris, 1848-83.

<sup>118</sup> Carra de Vaux: *Les Penseurs*, op cit; pp 21-2.

<sup>119</sup> L.A. Mayer: *Islamic astrolabists*; op cit; p. 34.

694), a treatise on the hidden astrolabe and hidden sine quadrant (*Risalat al-amal bi rub al-muqantarar*), which is located in Berlin (5869).<sup>120</sup> He is the inventor of a quadrant called *al-muqantarar al-Yusra*, and in the year 1328-9, he constructed an *amila*, which is a universal lamina for Mohammed b. Mohammed at-Tanukhi, which is now found in the Benaki Museum of Athens.<sup>121</sup> The treatise on this instrument, *Risala al-ala al Sarrajija fi istikhraj al-amal al-afaqiya* (Treatise on the instrument of Ibn Sarraj on determining operations on horizons) is located in Cairo (Miqat 291/1).<sup>122</sup> He wrote *Risala al-amal bi rub al-musattar* (Treatise on operations with the hidden quadrant, which is kept at Rampur (147)).<sup>123</sup> Abi Bakr As-Sarraj also wrote a book on sinus quadrants, *ad Durr al-Gharib fil amal bi dairat al-tayyib* (Rare pearls on operations with the circle for finding sines), which is today at Leyden (187b/4), and which was dedicated to the Turkish Sultan Bayazid I.<sup>124</sup> Ibn al-Sarraj also wrote *Risala fi'l rub al-mujannah fi ma'arifat jayb al-qaws wa qaws al-jayb* (Treatise on the winged quadrant for finding the Sine of an arc and an arc of a sine, which is kept in both Cairo (miqat 64/5, 138/7) and Istanbul (SM AS 1719)).<sup>125</sup> Other works by Ibn al-Sarraj include a treatise on the operations with the quadrant, which is kept in Cairo (Miqat 138/8), a smart treatise on operations with the 'Chest of goose', also available in Cairo (Miqat 242/10), a treatise on an astronomical instrument, and finally he wrote a treatise on operations with balance for change gold, which is also located in Cairo (Fadil Riyada 30/6).<sup>126</sup> Despite this scholar's accomplishments, especially in the field of scientific instrument making, there has been no single study of him and his works, which, once more highlights the shortcomings of efforts directed at recovering Islamic heritage.

## Great Events of History through the Historians of Hama

The Historians of Hama, Abu'l Fida, Ibn Wasil, the author of the *Kitab Tarikh al-Mansuri*, and Usama Ibn Munqidh, of the neighbouring Castle of Shayzar, 15 kms north of Hama, have left us some remarkable elements of history, some of which are unique. Brief outlines of some such accounts are looked at herein. Firstly we begin with Usama Ibn Munqidh contrasting Islamic and Christian learning, mostly in regard to medical practice.

*Kitab al-ittibar* of Usama contains many medical anecdotes concerning unusual wounds and cures.<sup>127</sup> Usama's account tells of the crudities of Western treatment.<sup>128</sup> The writer's uncle, a Muslim prince, had sent a doctor to a Frankish neighbour at the latter's request. When the doctor returned after a surprisingly short period, he had a remarkable tale to tell.

*They brought before me, he said, a knight in whose leg an abscess had grown; and a woman afflicted with imbecility. To the knight I applied a small poultice until the abscess opened and became well; and the woman I put on a diet and made her humour wet. Then a Frankish physician*

<sup>120</sup> B. Rosenfeld and E. Ihsanoglu: *Mathematicians, astronomers and other scholars of Islamic civilisation*; Research Center for Islamic History, art and Culture; Istanbul; 2003; p. 250.

<sup>121</sup> L.A. Mayer: *Islamic astrolabists*; op cit; p. 34.

<sup>122</sup> B. Rosenfeld and E. Ihsanoglu: *Mathematicians*, op cit; p. 250.

<sup>123</sup> B. Rosenfeld and E. Ihsanoglu: *Mathematicians*; p. 250.

<sup>124</sup> L.A. Mayer: *Islamic astrolabists*; op cit; p. 34.

<sup>125</sup> B. Rosenfeld and E. Ihsanoglu: *Mathematicians*; p. 250.

<sup>126</sup> B. Rosenfeld and E. Ihsanoglu: *Mathematicians*; p. 250.

<sup>127</sup> G. Sarton: *Introduction*; op cit; vol 2; p. 447.

<sup>128</sup> In W. Montgomery Watt: *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe*, Edinburgh, 1972. p. 65. C. Hillenbrand: *The Crusades, Islamic Perspectives*, Edinburgh University Press; 1999. p. 352.

came to them and said, "This man knows nothing about treating them". He then said to the knight, "Which wouldst thou prefer, living with one leg or dying with two?" The latter replied, "Living with one leg". The physician said, "Bring me a strong knight and a sharp axe." A knight came with the axe. And I was standing by. Then the physician laid the leg of the patient on a block of wood and bade the knight strike his leg with the axe and chop it off at one blow. Accordingly he struck it - while I was looking on - one blow, but the leg was not severed. He dealt another blow, upon which the marrow of the leg flowed out and the patient died on the spot. He then examined the woman and said, "This is a woman in whose head there is a devil which has possessed her. Shave off her hair." Accordingly they shaved it off and the woman began once more to eat their ordinary diet-garlic and mustard. Her imbecility took a turn for the worse. The physician then said, "The devil has penetrated through her head." He therefore took a razor, made a deep cruciform incision on it, peeled off the skin at the middle of the incision until the bone of the skull was exposed and rubbed it with salt. The woman also expired instantly. Thereupon I asked them whether my services[were needed]; and got a negative answer and returned home.<sup>129</sup>

Another clash of cultures of a different sort is related by Usama, who had obtained through Nur-ud-din Zangi the Frankish oath that he would cross their territory safely with his family, the Frankish King giving his cross, which ensures the bearer's safety by the land and sea. At Damietta, Usama and his family transferred to a Frankish ship, and set sail. But near Acre, the Franks intercepted the boat and pillaged it all, looting everything in it, including 4000 volumes of his private collection, which he will mourn until the end of his life.<sup>130</sup> Usama was mostly scandalised not just by the lack of respect by the Franks for their word, but also the fact that the king had gathered everybody in a house, and even fondled women's bodies to take all they had, which, of course, to Muslims is inconceivable.<sup>131</sup>

Abu'l Fadail who wrote *Tarikh al-Mansuri*, tells of a letter sent by Frederick II, the Sicilian ruler, who was very much imbued with Islamic culture, and the problems he encountered with the Papacy on his return to his country after his sojourn in the East due to his closeness to Muslims. In the year 1229, an ambassador to Sultan al-Kamil carried from the Emperor to the Sultan a letter, extracts of which went:

*"In the name of God the merciful, the forgiving....*

*We inform you that as we explained in Sidon, the Pope has treacherously and deceitfully taken one of our fortresses, called Monte Casino, handed over to him by its accursed Abbot. He has promised to do even more harm but could not because our faithful subjects expected our return. He was forced, therefore, to spread false news of our death, and made the Cardinals swear to it and to say that our return was impossible. They sought to deceive the population by these tricks and by saying that after us no one could administer our estates and look after them for our son so well as the Pope. So on these men's oaths who should be High priests of the Faith and successors of the Apostles, a rabble of louts and criminals was led by the nose. When we arrived at the gates of well defended Brindisi we found that King John (of Brienne who during Frederick's absence in the East had invaded and devastated his kingdom) and the Lombards had made hostile raids into our*

<sup>129</sup>In W. Montgomery Watt: *The Influence of Islam*; p. 65.

C. Hillenbrand: *The Crusades*, p. 352.

<sup>130</sup>E. Weber: Quelques aspects de l'image de l'autre chez Usama ibn al-Munqid: in *De Toulouse a Tripoli*; Colloque held between 6 and 8 December, 1995, AMAM, University of Toulouse. 1997. pp 93-114.p. 97.

<sup>131</sup>E. Weber: Quelques aspects de l'image de l'autre chez Usama; p. 107.

*domains, and doubted even the news of our arrival because of what the Cardinals had sworn to them..... Meanwhile we had collected a large army of Germans who were with us in Syria and of those who left the Holy land before us but whom wind had cast upon our shores, and of other loyal men and officials of our state; with these we have marched off by long stages towards our enemy's territories.*

*Finally, we inform your Highness of our desire for frequent letters from you revealing your happy state, your interests and your needs, and of the salutations that we have transmitted to the commanders of your army and to all your pages, mamluks and courtiers. On your health be God's blessing and mercy."*

Written at Barletta 23 August 1229.<sup>132</sup>

Despite pressures from the popes, Frederick refused to annihilate his Muslim subjects, and instead had them transferred from Sicily to Lucera, where they formed the last colony of Muslims in the region. However, the pressures by the Popes remained very strong for the removal of the Muslims from the midst of Christians as they might infect them with their appalling beliefs (see entry on Sicily). The successors of Frederick had to sustain the same pressures for the removal of the Muslims. This theme is picked further on by Ibn Wasil, who relates to events following the death of Frederick. These are important events, for they explain well the fate of the Muslims of Sicily, who were extinguished soon in the wake of the events described by Ibn Wasil. Ibn Wasil tells that:

*"The Emperor, Frederick, died in 1250, and was succeeded by his son Conrad. When he too died, his brother Manfred came to the throne. All three were hated by the Pope because of their sympathy for the Muslims; the Pope and Emperor Manfred went to war. Manfred was victorious."*

The Qadi Jamal-ud-din (Ibn Wasil), Chief Qadi of Hama, says in his history:

*"I went as ambassador to Manfred from Sultan Baybars of blessed memory in Ramadhan 1261, and was entertained by him in the highest honour in a city called Barletta in Apulia.... Near where he lived was a city called Lucera, whose inhabitants were all Muslims from the Island of Sicily; they hold public prayer on Friday and make open professions of the Muslim faith. This has been so since the time of the Emperor's father, Frederick. He had undertaken the building of a scientific institute there for the study of all the branches of speculative sciences; most of his officials and courtiers were Muslims, and in his camp the call to prayer, and even the canonic prayers themselves, were openly heard.*

*When I returned home, news came that the Pope, together with the brother of the King of France (Charles of Anjou, brother of St Louis), was gathering an army to attack him. Rome was five day's journey from the town where I had stayed. The Pope had already excommunicated Manfred for his Muslim leanings and for having dishonoured Christian religious Law. His brother and his father, the emperor, had also been excommunicated by the Pope of Rome for the same thing. They say that the Pope of Rome is for them the vicar of the Messiah, and his representative, with authority to decide what is permitted and what is forbidden, to cut off and to separate. It is he who crowns their kings and sets them on the throne, and everything in their law needs his approval. He is a priest, and when he dies he is succeeded by the man who is endowed as he was with this sacerdotal quality....*

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<sup>132</sup> Tarikh al-Mansuri in *Bibliotheca Arabo-Sicula*; Second Appendix; Leipzig; 1887; pp. 34-7.

*The Pope and the King of France's brother attacked Manfred and in a pitched battle destroyed his army and took him captive. The Pope ordered that he should be killed, and it was done. The King of France's brother reigned over the lands that had belonged to the Emperor's son and held possession of them.*<sup>133</sup>

This is a remarkable witness account by Ibn Wasil, for it fills gaps in the understanding of the history of Sicily (as seen in the article on the said island). Under the new regime (the Papal-French rule in Sicily), the Muslims were exterminated in their last colony of Lucera.

Finally here, with Abu'l Fida, we look at a decisive event in the history of Islam: the Muslim re-conquest in 1291 of the last crusader stronghold: Acre, taken by the Mamluk ruler Al-Malik Al-Ashraf, son of Qalawun, who had succeeded Baybars. 1291 thus marks the culmination of two centuries of endless war between Muslims and Christians in the Crusades era (1096-1291). A war fought on the Muslim side by the Seljuks of Mosul first from 1096 to 1127 and then, Imad and Nur-ud-din Zangi until 1173, with Mosul and Aleppo sharing the leading role in this period. Then Salah-ud-din from 1173 to 1193, leading from Damascus and Cairo mainly. From then onwards Cairo and Egypt played the leading role, under the Ayyubids first from 1244 to 1291, then under the Mamluks and it was their mighty ruler Baybars (d. 1277) above all, who terminated the Crusader presence in the Muslim East.

Abu'l Fida narrates:

*"In 1291, Sultan Malik al-Ashraf marched on Acre with his Egyptian troops and sent word to the Syrian army to join up with him and bring the siege engines. The ruler of Hama, al-Malik al-Muzafer, set out with his uncle al-Malik al-Afdal and the whole army of Hama for Hisn al-Akrad where we collected a huge catapult called the Victorious. A hundred wagons were needed to transport it. It was dismantled and the pieces distributed through the army. The part consigned to me was only one wagon load, since at the time I was an Emir of ten. It was the end of winter when we marched off with wagons; rains and snowstorm struck us between Hisn al-Akrad and Damascus, causing great hardship.... It took us a month to reach Acre, usually an eight day ride. The Sultan ordered all the other fortresses to send catapults and siege engines to Acre, and in this way a great number of large and small artillery concentrated under its wall, more than had ever been assembled in one place. The battle began in May 1291, and raged furiously.... God granted the Muslims victory on Friday 10 Jumada II, 17 June 1291....*

*An amazing coincidence occurred: The Franks seized Acre from Salah-ud-din at midday on 17 Jumada II 587 AH, and captured and then killed all the Muslims therein; and God in his prescience destined that this year it should be re-conquered at the hand of another Salah-ud-din, Sultan Malik Al-Shraf (who too was named Salah-ud-din).... Neighbouring towns soon fell to the Muslims.*

*With these conquests the whole of Palestine was now in Muslim hands, a result that no one would have dared hope for. Thus the whole of Syria and the coastal zones were purified of the Franks,*

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<sup>133</sup> Ibn Wasil... from the Arabic manuscript; 1702; Caetani collection; pp. 121-3.

who had once been on the point of conquering Egypt and subduing Damascus and other cities.  
Praise be to God!<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Abu'l Fida in *Receuil des historiens des croisades, Historiens Orientaux*; Vol 1; Paris; 1872. pp. 163-5.

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