

I

THE WESTERN IMAGE AND WESTERN STUDIES OF ISLAM

1. *The Middle Ages: the struggle between two worlds*

THE Muslims were a threat to Western Christendom long before they became a problem. There had been a shift of power in the remoter parts of the East, and a turbulent and pillaging people—a non-Christian one to boot—had overrun and ravaged vast territories and snatched them from the grasp of Christianity (for a more detailed discussion of the political and military aspects of this historical process, see below, Chapter IV, pp. 174 ff.). The scourge ultimately reached Spain, the Italian seaboard, and Gaul, and it was always the same wave of marauding barbarians which was responsible. When the venerable Bede revised his ecclesiastical history of the Angles shortly before his death in 735, he summarized the most recent events in these words: 'At that season, that most grievous pest, the Saracens, wasted and destroyed the realm of Gaul with grievous and miserable carnage; but they soon after received and suffered the due punishment of their perfidy.'¹

It seems that few questions were asked about this people. In the eyes of the Christian countries of the West they were merely a scourge like so many other barbarian populations. The alternately successful and disastrous campaigns on the borders of Spain, including even alliances with dissident Umayyads who occasionally came to Aix-la-Chapelle for help; the fight against raiders in Gaul and against pirates off the coasts of Provence,

¹ *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, edited with a translation and an introduction by T. Miller, Part 1, section 2 (London, 1891), p. 477.

Corsica, Sardinia, and Italy; such operations as the landing by Boniface of Lucca in the Tunisia of the Aghlabids in 828: all these things had little effect upon the basic attitude of the Franks. Christians had known about the Saracens long before Islam, and at first the Saracens' change of religion was hardly noticed. An account of the world dating from the fourth century, for instance, stated that the Saracens obtained 'by the bow and by plunder all they need to live'.¹ There was no need to know any more. Scholars alone argued about their name, which was derived from Sarah, Abraham's wife, although they were descended, as their other name *Agareni* showed, from Hagar, the servant who was driven into the desert with her son Ishmael; this discrepancy was a problem.

The only people to look further than this were, for obvious reasons, the Christians in Moorish Spain, the Mozarabs. The Muslim political dominance under which they lived gave free rein to an Arab cultural influence damaging to the Christian faith, and they therefore needed to form a clearer, though perhaps not more exact, image of their masters and of their masters' ideas. As in all the conquered lands of the East, depreciatory and insulting legends were current among the Christian and Jewish masses, mixed with more accurate impressions arising from daily contacts. Again, as was the aim of Eastern Christian apologists like John of Damascus, the goal of scholars in the West was to extend their analysis of Islam, thereby combating any influence it might have. But the militant ardour of Eulogius, Alvarus, and their followers in the short period between 850 and 859, their unavailing attempts to convince the Christian hierarchy and the Christian masses, and their thirst for martyrdom were little conducive to the serious intellectual effort necessary for knowing and understanding their opponents.²

In the eleventh century, the image of the Muslim world be-

¹ *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, xx, ed. J. Rougé (Paris, 1960).

² Cf. summary of events in E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane* (2nd edn., Paris-Leiden, 1950), i. 225 ff.

comes a little more precise, for fairly obvious reasons. The Normans, the Hungarians, and some of the Slavs had been converted. The Muslim world remained the chief enemy. The battles waged against it in Spain, in southern Italy, and in Sicily were no longer purely defensive. The Christian advance, slow and fluctuating as it was, was beginning to entail more frequent political, and even cultural relations with the conquered peoples. Gone were the days of local wars: all Europe was mobilizing to fight side by side with the Spaniards in the *Reconquista*. The Christian unity extolled by the Popes needed consolidating by grandiose schemes pursued in concert under papal guidance. What common task could be more stimulating than the *Reconquista*, if it could be spread over the whole Mediterranean world, a world in which the Italian trading cities were operating with such increasing success in the economic field?

The image of Islam arose, not so much as some have said from the Crusades, as from the slowly welded ideological unity of the Latin Christian world which led both to a clearer view of the enemy's features and also to a channelling of effort towards the Crusades. In the eleventh century, the example set by the increasingly numerous and well-organized pilgrimages to the Holy Land that had already turned into armed attacks against the pillaging Bedouins, the eschatological value of Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre defiled by the presence of infidels, the cleansing value of pilgrimage, the notion that help was due to the humbled eastern Christians, all made of the expedition to the Holy Land a holy task to put before the faithful.

The fight having thus become more concentrated and better focused, the enemy must of necessity be given sharper, more specific features and his image must be simplified and stereotyped. To the pilgrims, the Saracens are little more than faceless super-numeraries and uninteresting infidels, *de facto* rulers among whom one moves unheeding, and the fabulous and satirical *Charlemagne's Pilgrimage* in the eleventh century or at the beginning of the twelfth still shows the Emperor moving about Jerusalem without

making contact with the inhabitants. Yet the *Chanson de Roland* at about the same time and in the same fabulous vein, reveals an Islam that is powerful and rich, whose potentates come to one another's help, admittedly with their numerous pagan bands of mercenaries, Nubians, Slavonians, Armenians, Negroes, Avars, Prussians, Huns, and Hungarians (*Roland*, 3220 ff.), but nevertheless an Islam united in the worship of Mahomet, Tervagant, and Apollo.

Roger of Hauteville set about the recovery of Sicily in 1060, Alfonso VI entered Toledo in 1085, and Geoffrey of Bouillon entered Jerusalem in 1099. These three fronts brought close contact with the Muslims. An image of Islam was in the making and was becoming gradually clearer and more precise. But for many centuries that image was to be affected by the inevitable distortions of ideological rivalry.

In fact, Christian Europe did not have one single image of the hostile world with which it clashed, but several. So far, scholars had dealt mainly with the Europeans' concepts of the Muslim religion, but now it was the whole Muslim world that rose before them, to their bewilderment and shock. Roughly, three aspects of their reaction to it can be discerned. The Islamic world was above all a hostile politico-ideological structure. But it was also a different civilization, and an alien economic region. These various aspects often evoked varying interest and different reactions, even in the same people.

The political divisions of the Muslims were known, often at first hand. But it was also realized that behind these divisions there was basically an underlying solidarity, that unity could at any time be resumed against Christendom, and that a common outlook and faith were the core of this brotherhood. The Muslim states formed a hostile complex of powers. Their rivalries could occasionally be turned to political advantage; a temporary alliance could be made with one of them, and Christians might at times enter the service of Muslim rulers, as related in the *Chanson de Roland*, where the young Charlemagne faithfully serves Galafre,

the Saracen king of Toledo, and marries his daughter (who, of course, becomes a convert). Such things frequently happened in Spain and in the East, but enmity was latent and could always be reawakened.

Statesmen, their officials, their informers, and their spies, must have had a view of the Muslim world that we know little about. It must have been more delicately shaded than that of the religious polemicists or of the masses. Their nearest neighbours, the lords of the Holy Land, must have known a great deal about the internal divisions of the Muslim states. But this treasury of knowledge that the Christian soldiers and statesmen in the East had acquired remained very little diffused outside their own circle. Western chancelleries dipped into it only for the minimum needs of their eastern policy. There was no demand in the West for a detailed account of the political history of Islam, nor was there any wide interest in the political quarrels among the 'infidels'. On the other hand the Crusades created a vast and eager demand for a full, entertaining, and satisfying image of the opponents' ideology. The man in the street desired an image that would both show the hateful character of Islam by presenting it in crude terms and would also be such as to satisfy the literary taste for the wonderful which strikes one so strongly in all the works of that time; the average person wanted a picture of the most outstanding of the exotic traits that had struck the Crusaders in their dealings with the Muslims.

Thus it happened that the Latin authors who, between 1100 and 1140, undertook to meet this need of the common man, directed their attention to Muhammad's life, with little regard for accuracy and, in R. W. Southern's words, gave free rein to 'the ignorance of triumphant imagination'. Muhammad was a magician who had destroyed the Church in Africa and in the East by magic and deceit, and had made his success doubly sure by allowing sexual promiscuity. Legends from world folklore, from classical literature, from Byzantine stories of Islam, and even from Muslim sources (after vicious distortion by Eastern Christians), all these were made to adorn the image. Southern tells us that Guibert

de Nogent acknowledged that he had no written sources and gave only the *plebeia opinio*, having no means of telling the false from the true. And, naïvely laying bare the true basis of all ideologists' criticism, he said in conclusion: 'It is safe to speak evil of one whose malignity exceeds whatever ill can be spoken.'¹

As is always the case, the vision shown in works of popular appeal must have contributed more to the image retained by posterity than that shown in more scholarly and more conscientious works. That image was to be embellished further by many literary works. Pure fiction, whose only object was to spur the reader's interest, was mixed in varying proportions with misrepresentations of belief which inflamed hatred of the foe. The epics reached the greatest heights of fabulous invention. The Muslims were charged with idolatrous worship, even as they themselves accused the Christians of polytheism and associationism (*shirk*). Their chief idol was Muḥammad, whom, with few exceptions, the troubadours thought to be the Saracens' chief god. His statues were of rich substances and of enormous size. Varying numbers of acolytes went with him, the figure reaching 700 in a German author of the thirteenth century, Der Stricker.² Probably on the Christian pattern, these acolytes were at times headed by a trinity in which Tervagant and Apollo joined Muḥammad, to be worshipped in synagogues (thereby bringing Islam closer to the equally unacceptable Jewish belief) or in 'mahomerics'.³

An objective attitude was alone met with in a quite different sphere, which was only loosely connected with the Islamic religion. I am referring to science in the widest sense of the word. From the very beginning of the tenth century, small groups of men had attempted to increase the store of theoretical knowledge about

¹ R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), pp. 28 ff.

² *Karl der Grosse*, I, 4, 205 ed. K. Bartsch (Quedlinburg and Leipzig, 1857), p. 111; cf. H. Adolf, 'Christendom and Islam in the Middle Ages: New Light on "Grail Stone" and "Hidden Host"', *Speculum*, xxxii (1957), 103-15, at p. 105.

³ Cf. Y. and Ch. Pellat, 'L'Idée de Dieu chez les "Sarrasins" des Chansons de geste', *Studia Islamica*, xxii (1965), 5-42.

the world and man that was contained in the few Latin books that had been salvaged from the wreck of ancient civilization. Men in those few groups had learnt that the Muslims possessed Arabic translations of the basic works of the Ancient World, and had access to complete manuals of the sciences that were considered essential.

Gradually, Latin translations of these works appeared, and the wealth of Arab science spread to England, to Lorraine, to Salerno, and above all to Spain, where contact was more easily made. The work of translation grew and became organized in that country after the fall in 1085 of the great city of Toledo, one of several centres of intellectual activity there.¹ Of course, what was being sought in the Arab manuscripts was in no way an image of Islam or of the Muslim world, but the objective knowledge of nature. All the same, something inevitably became known about the Muslim providers of this knowledge; and there was also established a close contact with the translators whose services were used, and who were Mozarabs or Jews or in some cases Muslims with a wide, first-hand knowledge of the Muslim world.

It was inevitable that a more accurate knowledge of this world should be diffused by means of this channel. Therein must be found the explanation of the occurrence in the first half of the thirteenth century of some observations which, by their objective accuracy, stand out from the flood of the fabulous literature of entertainment. The proof is to be found in Pedro de Alfonso, a Spanish Jew, who was baptized at Huesca in 1106 and became physician to Henry I of England. He translated works on astronomy, and he also wrote the first book containing information of some objective value about Muḥammad and Islam.

At the meeting-place of this stream of intellectual interest in the Muslim scientific inheritance with the stream of popular curiosity about Islam, we find the outstanding effort made by Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny (c. 1094-1156), to gain and

¹ Cf. U. Monneret de Villard, *Lo studio dell'Islām in Europa nel XII e nel XIII secolo*, Studi e Testi, cx (Vatican, 1944), pp. 2 ff.

to transmit an objectively based scientific knowledge of the Islamic religion. We can discern several reasons for his astonishing enterprise. There was the knowledge which he had gained, indirectly at least, during his visits to the houses of his order in Spain, of Muslim questions and of the activity of translators. There was his concern to fight the heresies, Judaism and Islam, with valid intellectual arguments, albeit earnestly and charitably towards 'erring' individuals, as befitted the Abbot of Cluny's personal character and as he himself showed on many other occasions. He was also acutely conscious of the dangers which the Church was facing in an age of intellectual turmoil, of threatening schisms, and of spreading unrest. Both from personal conviction and as head of an order that was pledged to this aim, he wished to arm the Church against such perils. Because of his own nature and also perhaps because of the faint light shed by the still very narrow yet new attitudes of mind, he wanted the weapons to be strong, but he did not want a breach of the charity that every ideal Christian owes to all men of good faith. It may also be that unconsciously he was moved by a disinterested curiosity, of which he was ashamed and which he concealed even from himself.

He knew that his initiative would be little understood, and the reception it met, notably from his friend and occasional opponent, Bernard of Clairvaux, confirmed him in that opinion. In his apology, he uses the very arguments that have always been used against the attacks of the pure 'militants' by the intellectual theorists who stand, or seem to stand, aloof from contemporary strife, or at least, consider it with some detachment:

If my work seems pointless because the enemy remains invulnerable to such weapons, I answer that in the land of a great king some things are done for protection, others for adornment, others again for both. Solomon the Peaceful forged weapons for protection which were not needed in his day. David prepared ornaments for the Temple, although they could not be used in his day . . . This work, as I see it, cannot be called useless. If the erring Muslims cannot be converted by it, scholars who are zealous in the cause of justice must nevertheless not fail to forewarn those weak

members of the Church who are easily scandalized and unwittingly moved by insignificant causes.¹

Hence in Spain Peter the Venerable financed a company of translators working as a team. An Englishman, Robert of Ketton, completed his translation of the Koran in 1143. The team translated a series of Arabic texts and produced compilations of their own. They are known as the Cluniac Corpus, and include a synthesis by Peter the Venerable himself. The corpus had a fairly large circulation, but it was not used to the extent to which it could have been; only those parts which were of direct and immediate polemical use were drawn upon and quoted without comment. The material contained in the collection was unfortunately not used as a basis for further study in depth of Islam. No one was interested in such a study. It did not seem to be of any use in the current struggles, all the more so because religious polemic was aimed at fictitious Muslims who were easily annihilated on paper. As a matter of fact, the aim seems rather to have been to provide Christians with sound arguments to shore up their own faith. Furthermore, the Latin West's state of mind was little conducive to an interest in religious systems in themselves, such as existed in the Muslim East.²

There was another field where several streams of interest converged, and where the Latins discovered yet another image of Islam which was strikingly at variance with their religious preconceptions, that is, philosophy. At first philosophy and the natural sciences were hardly differentiated. The approved manuals of the natural sciences were in need of supplementation from works of what we would call scientific methodology, works on logic and on the theory of Man and Cosmos. The same encyclopedic writers had dealt with these last, above all Aristotle and

¹ Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, clxxxix. 651-2. Cf. Southern, *op. cit.*, pp. 38 ff., and Dom J. Leclercq, *Pierre le Vénérable* (Abbaye St. Wandrille, 1946), pp. 242 f.

² Cf. especially, M.-Th. d'Alverny, 'Deux traductions latines du Coran au Moyen Age', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, xxii-xxiii (1947-8), 69-131, and J. Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton, 1964).

then Avicenna. The Latin West only gradually became aware of Aristotle. In the twelfth century, his brief *Categories* and his *De Interpretatione* were already known through old Latin translations by Boethius, while the rest of the Aristotelian corpus was slowly becoming known, but only to a handful of people, through new translations made directly from the original Greek. Gerard of Cremona (c. 1114-87) went to Toledo in search of Arabic versions of Greek texts which he would translate and thereby add to the store of Western philosophy.¹ At about the same time a start was made with the translation of the *Kitāb al-shifā'* ('Book of the Cure'), Avicenna's great philosophical encyclopedia. About 1180 a first corpus of Avicenna's philosophical works was completed and began to circulate in Europe.² Its influence was immense, and translations of other philosophers followed in quick succession.

There was thus an image of the Muslim world as the cradle of philosophers of great stature forming in the minds of western thinkers. This was in violent contrast to its image as a political structure dominated by a hostile and erroneous faith, the image which ridiculous and odious fables had created in the minds of people, and it was difficult to reconcile the two images. Philosopher-theologians managed to transfer to Christianity Avicenna's references to Muslim civilization; for instance, Roger Bacon (c. 1214-92) applied to the exalting of the Pope's office what Avicenna had said of the Muslim Imām.³ In some respects, the Saracens appeared

¹ Cf. L. Minio-Paluello, 'Aristotele dal mondo arabo a quello latino', *L'Occidente e l'Islam nell'alto Medioevo* (Settimane di studio del Centro italiano sull'alto Medioevo XII, 2-8 Apr. 1964; Spoleto, 1965), ii. 603-37.

² Cf. among others M.-Th. d'Alverny, 'L'introduction d'Avicenne en Occident', *Millénaire d'Avicenne, Revue du Caire*, no. 141 (June 1951), 130-9; idem, 'Notes sur les traductions médiévales d'Avicenne', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, xix (1952), 337-58; M. Steinschneider, *Die europäischen Übersetzungen aus dem Arabischen bis Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1904-5, reprinted Graz, 1956), pp. 16-32.

³ *Opus majus*, ed. Bridges, ii. 227f. quoted by R. de Vaux, *Notes et textes sur l'Avicennisme latin aux confins des XII^{ième}-XIII^{ième} siècles* (Paris, 1934; Bibliothèque thomiste, XX), p. 58, n. 9.

to be a philosophical nation. At times, as with Abelard (who died in 1142 and, it should be noted, was a friend of Peter the Venerable) 'philosopher' seems virtually to mean 'Muslim';¹ a century later, it was in practice to the Saracens that Thomas Aquinas addressed the *Summa contra Gentiles*, a treatise in which it is intended to prove Christian theses by the sole light of reason 'because some [of the gentiles], such as the Muslims and Pagans, do not agree with us concerning the authority of any Scripture' (i. 2). We know that the work was written round about 1261-4 at the request of St. Raymond of Peñafort, 'a zealot for spreading the faith among the Saracens',² for use in his evangelizing missions in Spain.

The Muslim world was of interest not only on political or military grounds, or from a religious or scholarly point of view. It also awoke various interests in minds that hungered for strange and exotic tales. Here again, the proliferation of contacts that followed the reconquest of Spain, the conquest of Muslim Sicily, and the setting up of Latin states in the East, necessitated more detailed and more discriminating knowledge; this knowledge did not, however, obliterate simplistic views of Islam as a religion nor the widely diffused fantastic stories of literary entertainment. All the same much information, largely accurate, was gained concerning the geography of the Muslim world, its climate, its towns, its government, its flora and fauna, and its agricultural and industrial production. Much became known also about the ways of the Saracens and the Bedouins, and later of the Tartars, meaning the Mongols.

The same motives actuated the first significant attempts at

¹ Cf. J. Jolivet, 'Abelard et le philosophe (Occident et Islam au XII^{ième} siècle)', *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, clxiv (1963), 181-9. It is a striking fact that Abelard, exasperated by his difficulties with the theologians of his country, was thinking of settling on Muslim soil, where he could earn his living and enjoy a legal status, even though he would be living among enemies of Christ. (Abelard, *Historia calamitatum*, ed. J. Monfrin (Paris, 1959), pp. 97f.; cf. R. Roques, *Structures théologiques de la gnose à Richard de Saint-Victor* (Paris, 1962), p. 261.)

² Monneret de Villard, *op. cit.*, p. 36, cf. p. 37, n. 5.

historical investigation. In the twelfth century, Godfrey of Viterbo, secretary to the German Emperors, included a well-informed sketch of Muḥammad's life in his *Universal Chronicle*.¹ At the beginning of the following century, Cardinal Rodrigo Ximenes, Archbishop of Toledo, wrote the first *History of the Arabs* composed in the West, beginning with Muḥammad and the first Caliphs but centred primarily upon the Arabs' activities in Spain.²

Yet another impulse led to an increased knowledge of the Muslim world; that is, the economic motive, the pursuit of commercial profit, for the Muslim world was an economic area of primary importance to a large number of European merchants.

At first, western merchants traded with the Muslim East through foreign intermediaries, Greeks and Syrians, or semi-foreign ones like the Jews. But as early as the ninth-century, this trade was partly taken over by Italian cities under Byzantine rule, Venice, Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi, which gradually became independent (see below, pp. 227 ff.). The Scandinavians also began to play an important role, and their conversion was to bring them into the orbit of Western Christendom. Finally, the other peoples of the Christian world joined the group. This entailed a small number of common practices which brought the two worlds closer; Moorish money or copies of it circulated in the West, and oriental types of commercial contracts were adopted. Among the Saracens, western merchants first met and feared the Muslim pirates. But the Italians, in the first place, soon became powerful enough to avoid and then to withstand them, later going over to the attack themselves. But much more often, on the strength of guarantees of safe conduct (*amān*; see on this institution, below, Chapter IV, p. 177), they got into direct touch with their opposite numbers, whether Muslims or eastern Christians. This entailed contacts with customs officers and other petty civil servants,

¹ Cf. E. Cerulli, *Il 'Libro della Scala' e la questione delle fonti arabo-spagnole della Divina Commedia* (Vatican, 1949), pp. 417 ff.

² Ed. Thomas Erpenius, *Historia saracenicæ* (Leiden, 1625), following al-Makin's *Chronicle*.

until officials of ever higher standing were reached as the exchanges grew in importance and the power of the western world increased. Very soon trade demanded contacts at government level. It was at such a level that, inevitably, alliances between the cities of the Campagna, notably Amalfi, and the Saracens were concluded in the ninth century, despite the Pope's threats and counter-offers and despite the lamentations of the Emperor Louis II, in whose eyes Naples had become another Palermo or another Mahdiyya.¹ At the beginning of the eleventh century, the Amalfitans must have had such contacts in Palestine for them to restore the church of Santa Maria de Latina in Jerusalem, which the Fāṭimid caliph al-Hākim had destroyed, and to hold an annual market there on 14 September at which anyone could display his wares on payment of two gold pieces.² It is probable that they already occupied a quarter in Antioch before the first Crusade. Of course, these few contacts became more numerous and more important after the Crusades. We know how these Italian trading stations multiplied and came to play an increasingly important role. It is obvious that, whatever their attachment to their Christian faith, the European merchants who had business relations with the Muslim world could not share the sketchy notions of that world current among other European communities. We have sporadic but significant testimony to the existence of friendly relations between Christian and Muslim traders.³

This esteem also sprang up in a very different context, in the fighting itself between Crusaders and Saracens in the East. Despite all the hatred, there were occasions when it was acknowledged that the foe himself recognized the values which medieval chivalry had taught men to hold in high regard. An unnamed Italian Crusader who, at the time, set down his impressions of

¹ A. Schaube, *Handelsgeschichte der römischen Völker des Mittelmeergebiets bis zum Ende der Kreuzzüge* (Munich-Berlin, 1906), pp. 30 f.

² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 296 f.; cf. J. Le Goff, *Marchands et banquiers du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1956), p. 75, and R. S. Lopez, 'L'importanza del mondo islamico nella vita economica europea', *L'Occidente e l'Islam nell'alto Medioevo*, i. 433-60, at p. 460.

the first Crusade, greatly admired the courage, sagacity, and soldierly qualities of the Turks at the battle of Dorylaeum, in which he had fought in 1097. According to him the esteem was mutual and the Turks 'say they belong to the Frankish race and assert that no one, they and the Franks excepted, has the right to call himself a Knight'. Realizing how much audacity was needed to write such words (*veritatem dicam quam nemo audebit prohibere*) he stated that if only they had held fast to the faith of Christ 'none could be found to equal them in strength, in courage or in the science of war'.¹

A century later, the arch-foe Saladin (on whom see below, p. 196) aroused widespread admiration among the people of the West. He had waged the war humanely and chivalrously, albeit with scant reciprocation by the Crusaders, notably by Richard Cœur-de-Lion. During the breaks in fighting at the siege of Acre (1189-91), the opposing forces were seen fraternizing, all dancing, singing, and playing together, not to mention the fact that the loose women of Europe who had come to comfort the Crusaders bestowed their favours equally readily upon some of the Muslims.²

It was in this ambience that tales sprang up, and, after an interval when the Ayyūbid Sultan was regarded rather unfavourably (due to tales which undoubtedly originated among the Levantine Christians, who possessed a sound knowledge of the country), redounded to his glory.³ It came to the point that in the fourteenth century a vast poem, conventionally called *Saladin*, was written in which all the episodes of the former legends about

¹ *Histoire anonyme de la première Croisade*, ed. and tr. Louis Bréhier (Les Classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Age, Paris, 1924), pp. 50-3.

² Cf. R. Grousset, *Histoire des Croisades* (Paris, 1936), iii. 28 f.

³ As early as the second half of the thirteenth century the *Novellino* put forward as a paragon 'Saladino . . . soldano, nobilissimo signore, prode e largo' who, during a truce, admonished the Christians, and, sickened by their disdain of the poor and by their irreverence towards their own religion, took up arms again, whereas in other circumstances he would have become a Christian (§ XXV, ed. E. Sicardi, Strasbourg, n.d., pp. 52 f.). It should be noted that the story had been told earlier.

Saladin were rehearsed.¹ So perfect a knight must of necessity be brought within the Christian fold. Hence his mother is said to be one Countess of Ponthieu who had been shipwrecked on the Egyptian coast, and he himself is said to have been converted on his death-bed.²

In the same way, great Muslims like Zangī and Qilij Arslān were assumed to be of Christian origin, and later Thomas à Becket was credited with a Saracen mother;³ it was indeed true that marriages had been mooted between European and Muslim monarchs.

2. *The growth and decline of a less polemical image*

The accumulation of accurate information about Islam and its origins as well as about the Muslim peoples, the increasing contacts in the political as well as in the commercial sphere, the mutual esteem which in certain cases sprang from them, the deep appreciation of scientific and philosophical doctrines originating in Islamic lands, all these things added to the slow internal evolution of the Western mind and brought about a change in the angle from which the alien world was seen. But the essential factor in this evolution was the transformation of the Latin world and the Western trend towards the secularization of ideologies.

From the brutally polemical image of a diabolical foe there was a gradual change to a more finely shaded concept, at least in some circles; for the image that had been implanted in men's minds during the earlier Middle Ages and cultivated through popular literature, was still influencing the minds of the masses. The concept of the relativity of ideologies was of course still

¹ This poem, the work of an anonymous Flemish author, survives only in substantial fragments. See Gaston Paris, 'La Légende de Saladin', extract from *Journal des Savants* (Paris, May-Aug. 1893); S. Duparc-Quioc, *Le Cycle de la Croisade* (Paris, 1955), pp. 128-30; and N. Daniel, *Islam and the West, the Making of an Image* (Edinburgh, 1960), pp. 199-200.

² Duparc-Quioc, op. cit., pp. 128-30; cf. Daniel, op. cit., p. 199.

³ Cf. D. C. Munro, 'The Western Attitude toward Islam during the Period of the Crusades', *Speculum*, vi (1931), 329-43, at p. 339.

unknown, except in isolated cases like that of the Islamophile Arabist, the Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, who discussed philosophy, logic, medicine, and mathematics with Muslims, was influenced by their Islamic ways and established at Lucera a colony of Saracens in his service, with its own mosque and all the amenities of eastern life.¹

When Pope Gregory IX excommunicated Frederick II in 1239 he charged him, among other misdeeds and displays of friendliness towards Islam, with having asserted that the world had been deceived by three impostors, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad. The charge may have been unfounded, as the emperor claimed, but the fact that it was levelled at all shows at least that the topic, which seems to have originated in the Muslim world, was current at the time in Christian Europe. Moreover, it appears that, shortly before Frederick II, a canon of Tournai was charged with uttering the same blasphemy.² That Muslims were held up to Christians as examples for their piety of worship and their everyday virtues, as happened repeatedly,³ may have come from moralists' guile or have been a barb protruding from the well-known current of medieval anti-clericalism; in either case, it strengthened the tendency to see in Muslims men very much like others, who worshipped God in their own way, even if it were an erroneous one.

At the time of Frederick II, this attitude is best exemplified in the works of the Bavarian minstrel Wolfram von Eschenbach. In his *Willehalm*, he borrows freely from the early twelfth-century French epic, *La Prise d'Orange*, about the siege of Orange, but the fighting between Saracens and Franks, all equally endowed with chivalric virtues, is characterized by an attempt at understanding. The Muslim beauty Arabele, now a Christian by the

¹ Cf. E. Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich de Zweite* (Berlin, 1927-31, reprinted Düsseldorf-Munich, 1963), i. 122, 170f., 321ff., etc.

² Ibid. 455; L. Massignon, 'La légende de tribus impostoribus et les origines islamiques', *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, lxxxii (1920), 74-8, reprinted in idem, *Opera Minora* (Beirut, 1963), i. 82-5; Southern, op. cit., p. 75, n. 16.

³ Cf. Daniel, op. cit., pp. 195ff. et passim.

name of Gyburg, launches an appeal for toleration. The poet comments: 'Is it not a sin to slaughter like cattle people who have never heard of Christianity? I would even say it was a grievous sin, for all the men who speak the seventy-two tongues are God's creatures.' Wolfram's *Parzival* changes in like manner the atmosphere of his model, Chrétien de Troyes. Here we see Parzival's father, Gahmuret, setting out for the East, but in no way within the framework of the Crusades. On the contrary he enlists in the service of the 'Baruc', (*mubārak*, 'blessed one'?) of Baghdad (Baldag) who was, as Wolfram knew, the spiritual leader, the Pope of the Muslims: 'He received life in Anjou, he lost it before Baghdad for the Baruc' (stanza 108). He is buried in the Islamic capital at the Baruc's expense in a sumptuous grave, at which the Saracens venerate and mourn him. The chivalrous Saracen Feirefitz is, as a result of Gahmuret's amorous successes, Parzival's half-brother. Scholars have hazarded many theories, some very daring, concerning Wolfram's eastern sources (see further on this question below, Chapter VII, p. 338). Whatever the verdict on these theories may be, it must be pointed out that our author transcribes fairly correctly the Arabic names of the planets (stanza 782), that he professes that his main source was a Muslim manuscript that the enigmatic Kyôt discovered at Toledo and which goes back to the magician and astrologer Flegetanis (*al-falak ath-thāni*, 'the second heavenly sphere'?), half-Jewish, half-Muslim in origin. It is striking to notice that the acme of the medieval legend of the Grail, one of the highest points reached in the literary expression of the medieval Christian mind, with its well-known Celtic sources, is an epic that is imbued with Muslim elements and is full of gnostic and Manichean tendencies originating in the Eastern world. Wolfram, who seems to have been a good Christian, nevertheless preaches absence of hatred towards pagans (Muslims) who are as they are only because they have not had a chance of hearing Christ's message.¹

¹ Cf. now H. Goetz, 'Der Orient der Kreuzzüge in Wolframs *Parzival*', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, xlix (1967), 1-42; M. Plessner, 'Orientalistische Bemerkungen

Progress in that direction was hastened on the one hand by the realization of the Mongol peril and the discovery of a pagan world beyond Islam; and on the other hand by the unleashing on the Christian world of divisions at a spiritual level, in the universalist ideology of Christianity itself, a more serious matter than the former conflicts between political bodies and national and ethnic ideologies. The feeling that Islam had the same basic conception, religious monotheism, which had occasionally made fleeting appearances before, now grew in strength. In 1254 William of Ruysbroeck, Saint Louis's envoy, took part in a controversy before the Great Khan between Nestorians, Muslims, and Buddhists, siding with the first two against the last.¹

This trend towards a deeper understanding of Muslim thought, which sprang from these conditions, was to be short lived. Roger Bacon and after him Raymond Lull (c. 1235-1316) talked of replacing military endeavour by missionary efforts, based upon the profound study of Muslim doctrine and of the Islamic languages. Bacon took account of Islam's positive contribution to the divine scheme of revelation, just as has recently been done by the more advanced Catholics on the road to ecumenism. Islam must still be fought, of course, but a more profound knowledge of it could only lead to greater objectivity and, in the long run, to greater relativism. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Dante excused from Hell and placed in Limbo Avicenna, Averroes, and Saladin, the only moderns to join the sages and heroes of the Ancient World.² The council of Vienne in 1312 ratified Bacon's and Lull's ideas concerning the learning of languages, particularly Arabic.

But this was too late. The fall of Acre in 1291 put a decisive end to all the hopes which the Crusades had sustained. For a

zu religionshistorischen Deutungen von Wolframs *Parzival*, *Medium Aevum*, xxxvi (1967), 253-66.

¹ *The Journey of William of Rubruck*, tr. from the Latin by W. W. Rockhill (London, Hakluyt Society, 1900).

² *Inferno*, iv. 129, 143 f.

long time, the fight against the infidels in the East had failed to rouse the West to arms any more. The political schemes of individual nations had completely replaced the plan for the expansion of a united Christian Europe. Only in Spain did the *Reconquista* continue, but there also it was made to fit into schemes of this kind.

Latin Europe, intent upon its internal struggles, and advancing on the cultural plane, no longer regarded the ideological conflict with Islam as of prime importance. She was losing interest in it. It was internal ideological strife which was becoming of capital importance. For John Wycliffe (c. 1320-84) the reform of the Church was the first consideration, and the return to the fountain-head of Christendom would suffice to bring about the withering away of Islam. The vices of which Islam was accused were found to be equally rife in Latin Christendom. The Church is Muslim; Greeks, Jews, Muslims are no further from salvation than many Christians.¹ This latter opinion spread just as the witticism about the three impostors had spread.²

From the intellectual point of view, the great Muslim authors whose discovery had been an innovating force were now gradually being assimilated and merged into the common culture. For centuries Avicenna, Averroes, and Algazel in philosophy, Avicenna, Haly ('Alī b. 'Abbās), and Rhazes in medicine, other writers in other sciences, were all to be copied, reprinted, commented upon, and studied. It was indeed a typical physician whom Chaucer (who also compiled a *Treatise on the Astrolabe* after the Latin translation from the Arab Māshā' Allāh) must have met at the Tabard Inn at Canterbury about 1390. He knew little of the Bible but

Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
And Deyscorides, and eek Rufus
Olde Ypocras, Haly and Galyen,
Serapion, Razis and Avycen,

¹ Cf. Southern, op. cit., pp. 77 ff.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 75 f.

Averrois, Damascien and Constantyn
Bernard and Gatesden and Gilbertyn.
(*Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, 429-34.)

Thus in the Middle Ages, the Arabs enjoyed great prestige, but with Aristotle as the dominating figure. This prime emphasis on the Greek classics continued at the Renaissance, and the Renaissance humanists attacked all the medieval translations, whether from Greek or from Arabic, as barbarous medieval Latin versions of the originals; in this blanket condemnation, the Arabic translations of Greek texts came to be regarded as part of this falsification of Antiquity by the 'gothic' spirit of medieval scholars. The new approach was to consist in going back to the original sources; the term 'Arabism' was to become pejorative.¹ The contempt for the barbarian age was now extended to include everything Arabic. Already in the fourteenth century, Petrarch had vigorously expressed his distaste for the Arab poets' style, though he certainly had not read them.²

It was not that this in any way prevented the cultural borrowings from the Muslim East from becoming more numerous than ever, nor the literary borrowings from increasing, no doubt thanks to trade relations which were becoming closer and more regular. But so far as theory is concerned, the earlier eagerness to know and understand Muslim thought was, in certain circles at least, giving way to indifference.

3. *Coexistence and rapprochement: the enemy becomes a partner*

From the end of the fourteenth century, the growth of the Ottoman Empire at the expense of the Christian Balkans re-awakened for a brief while among theologians an interest in the Muslim religion. While the crusading spirit proved difficult to

¹ Cf. H. Schipperges, *Ideologie und Historiographie des Arabismus* (Wiesbaden, 1961).

² Petrarch, *Senila*, XII, Ep. 2; *Opera* (Basel, 1581), p. 913. Cf. E. Cerulli, 'Petrarca e gli Arabi', in *Studi in onore di A. Schiaffini = Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale*, vii (1965), 331-6.

rekindle in the decaying state of the Christian concept itself, some theologians were driven to consider whether the resort to arms could really produce results, whether peaceful missionary endeavour was enough in itself, or even useful in its usual form, or whether the bearers of a common message in substantially identical terms could not be brought closer together. This was the 'moment of vision' mentioned by R. W. Southern which significantly occurred at about the time of the fall of Constantinople, i.e. between 1450 and 1460. In 1454 Juan of Segovia (c. 1400-58) proposed a series of conferences with the Muslim *fuqahā*. That method would be useful, he asserted, even if it did not result in the conversion of the disputants. He undertook a translation (now lost) of the Koran which would avoid the error made in the Cluniac translations of changing the original meaning by adapting it to Latin concepts. Juan of Segovia incurred the disapproval of Jean Germain (c. 1400-61), the bishop of Chalon-sur-Saône, who believed in military action and the revival of the crusading spirit. But he had the approval of Nicholas of Cusa who considered the practical means of carrying out his plans and who attempted in his *Cribratio Alchoran* (1460) an exact philological and historical study of the Koran. Juan of Segovia was also partly responsible for Pius II's letter to Muḥammad II (1460), a masterpiece of skilful dialectic aiming at intellectual persuasion, but the work of a politician and, at bottom, a contrivance completely devoid of sincerity.¹

The Ottoman Turks were a considerable danger, but in the new climate of the fifteenth century they were seen as a political or cultural, rather than as an ideological danger. From then onwards the Ottoman Empire became in the eyes of realists a power like any other, and by virtue of its conquests, even a European power, much less remote than any other Muslim power had been for a long time and with which it was therefore imperative to have political contacts. Alliances, neutrality, war would henceforth depend upon political considerations unrelated to religious ideology. Though this ideology remained a faith staunchly en-

¹ Concerning all this, cf. Southern, *op. cit.*, pp. 86ff.

shrined in men's hearts, it was believed that it could be suspended (temporarily as it was thought) in view of 'momentous' political moves.

Ottoman envoys began to spend long turns of duty in Europe, for instance in Venice. There were negotiations with the Turks. While the fanciful Charles VIII thought he would overrun Italy as a base from which to launch a crusade, the Papacy, from 1490 to 1494, was receiving an annual payment from Bayezid II for keeping his rival brother Jem in prison. In 1493 at Rome, the Grand Turk's ambassador was received with great solemnity at a Secret Consistory by Pope Alexander VI, the meeting being attended by cardinals, bishops, and European envoys. Indeed, the Pope had sent to the Sultan a letter in which he warned him of Charles VIII's projected crusade and asked him to get the Venetians to intervene against the French king, warning him only to abstain 'for a time' from attacking Hungary or other Christian countries, since such an attack might place him in a delicate position. In return, Bayezid urged him to raise Nicholas Cibo to the cardinalate, but first and foremost to put Jem to death in return for the payment of 300,000 ducats and a promise on the Koran not to do anything to harm the Christians.¹ Two years later Milan, Ferrara, Mantua, and Florence agreed to pay the Turks to attack Venice.² Two years later again, with Venice and France preparing to attack Milan, Ludovico il Moro, Duke of Milan, and other Italian princes warned Bayezid that the taking of Milan would be the first step towards the crusade, whereupon the Sultan declared war on Venice.³ A few decades later when Sulaymān the Magnificent was conquering Hungary and was about to turn the Mediterranean into a Turkish lake, Francis I made an alliance with him and joined him in military operations against Charles V (1535). But he took precautions on the ideological plane

¹ J. Burchard, *Liber notarum*, ed. E. Celani (Città di Castello, 1907-13), i. 547 ff., French translation by J. Turmel (Paris, 1932), pp. 175 ff.

² J. R. Hale in *The Cambridge Modern History*, i. *The Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1957), 265.

³ V. J. Parry, in *The Cambridge Modern History*, i. 403.

to defend himself. In 1580 Elizabeth of England denounced the King of Spain to the Sultan as a leader of idolaters. On this occasion, an alliance was proposed on purely ideological grounds.¹

Bargains of the same kind as those of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had been brought about in the East in the days of the Crusader states. But these came under the heading of colonial policy. That such things should happen in the very heart of Europe was quite a different matter. In Italy whole regions made it known to their oppressive governments that they would heartily welcome an eventual Turkish invasion, as some Balkan Christians had done (see further on this point below, pp. 199-201).²

The Turks were thus, at the political level, integrated into the concert of Europe. That is not to say that they were integrated in all respects. However, the bitterness of religious hatred within Christendom itself made Islam look less extraordinary and less repugnant. It had already been looked upon in the Middle Ages as a schism, a heresy within Christianity. It was thus that Dante saw it.

Islam was practically identical with the Turks and 'Turk' was becoming synonymous with 'Muslim'. People were beginning to know the Persians, whose hostility to the Ottoman Empire opened the way for devious and involved political bargainings. Further away, contact was made with the Muslims of India and their splendid rulers the Great Moguls. As for the Arabs, they had practically no influence politically and were of minor significance in the picture people had of the East. They had once again come to be little more than pilfering Bedouins as had been the picture at least from the time of Joinville. The word 'Saracen' gradually dropped out of current speech.

Although pedants had traced their origins back to the Scythian barbarians,³ the Muslim Turks nevertheless remained in control

¹ Cf. Daniel, *Islam, Europe and Empire* (Edinburgh, 1966), pp. 12 f.

² J. Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Basle, 1860), English translation (London, 1944), p. 60.

³ Cf. R. Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent, the Renaissance Image of the Turk (1453-1517)* (Nieuwkoop, 1967), pp. 148, 189, etc.

of the most powerful empire in Europe, and remained in possession of Constantinople and all its wonders, now made more accessible through improved means of communication. The pomp of the Sublime Porte much impressed the Europeans, and its power was imposing. It has been remarked that Louis XIV risked excommunication when he sent a delegation to Rome in 1687 because the Pope dared to ask him to waive the privileges of his embassy, which had been extended to cover a whole district where evildoers sought refuge, yet allowed his ambassadors at Constantinople to be imprisoned, humiliated, and taxed, and their staffs to be subjected to endless vexation.¹

4. From coexistence to objectivity

An objective study of the Muslim East was being made easier by proximity, by close political contacts, by increased economic relations, by the large number of travellers and missionaries who visited the East, and by the decline of the ideological dominance of Christianity in Europe. For statesmen and traders, this 'objective' study was becoming an even more imperious need than formerly. Detailed, precise, sober, and as far as possible objective descriptions proliferated after Arnold von Harff's of 1496.² The way of life was no longer examined from the standpoint of its wider or narrower divergence from Christian morality. The Ottoman Empire's political, administrative, and military system was the object of thoughtful studies which were often critical but equally often praised its efficiency in many respects.³ Considered as a whole, the Muslim East was a rich and prosperous land, with a high degree of civilization, magnificent architecture, and marvellous princely courts of unequalled splendour.

¹ Cf. Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, ch. XIV; F. Grenard, *Grandeur et décadence de l'Asie* (Paris, 1939), p. 130.

² Schwoebel, *op. cit.*, p. 188, cf. p. 180.

³ Cf., for example, Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ch. XIX, for a comparison between the Ottoman form of government and that of the Mamelukes, the latter being compared with the Papacy as an instance of elective monarchy. Cf. also ch. IV and *Discorsi sulla prima Deca di Tito Livio*, bk. II, foreword.

The cosmopolitanism and the encyclopedism of the Renaissance, the mannerisms of its cultural expression, had allowed their share to the Muslim East and to Near Eastern studies. But keen interest in the East had not yet become exoticism, that taste for *dépayement* artificially created in one's own environment either by art or by one's mode of life. Only the first signs of it were discernible, as in the isolated cases of the travellers who, having returned to Europe, wore Turkish dress.¹ But the Eastern world was more often given a Western guise than vice versa, even if it was heightened by magic and marvels as in Ariosto or Tasso, even if some episodes or themes were genuinely of Eastern origin,² and even if the subject-matter came wholly from Eastern history, as in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. Though readers and audiences were enthralled by these fabulous tales, no one looked to them for information about the history or manners of the Muslim East.

But the pressure of the accurate reports that travellers and diplomats brought back gradually made itself felt, and local colour gradually imposed itself. For a long time, in paintings of the lives of Jesus and the martyrs, members of the Sanhedrin and Eastern potentates had been decked out in turbans. Othello retained from his Moorish background only the fatal magic handkerchief that an Egyptian witch had given to his father (*Othello*, III. iv. 53 ff.). But in 1670 Molière took the trouble to insert real Turkish sentences into the burlesque scene of his *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, and in 1672 Racine, in his preface to his *Bajazet*, dwelt upon the care he had taken to inform himself on Turkish history. Corneille and others blamed him for not having put on the stage a single character 'who has the feelings that he ought to have, that people have at Constantinople; they all, though wearing Turkish dress, express the feelings common in France'.³ In later prefaces, Racine thought

¹ Schwoebel, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

² Cf., for example, G. Levi della Vida, 'Fonti orientali dell'Isabella ariostesca', in his *Aneddoti e svaghi arabi e non arabi* (Milan-Naples, 1959), pp. 170-90.

³ *Ségraisiana*, quoted by G. Lanson in *Théâtre choisi de Racine* (7th edn. Paris, 1910), p. 437.

it necessary to retort: 'I have made a point, in my play, of stating accurately what we know of the manners and sayings of the Turks.'

Since the Middle Ages there has been no break in the use of exotic subjects in literature. Some effort to enrich such literary works with accurate details is noticeable in many authors; exoticism broke into art in the seventeenth century and swamped it in the eighteenth. Yet it took a long time to advance from the abstract notion of the relativity of civilizations which was clearly formulated in the eighteenth century to the integration of exotic facts into wholes that were free of all ethnocentrism; perhaps the process is not complete even now.

5. *The birth of Orientalism*

People began to study the languages and to gather materials for purely ideological purposes. In the Middle Ages in Spain, Arabic studies had started in response to the needs of missionary work. These studies lost all their interest with the fall of Granada in 1492, and the survival only of the Romance-speaking Morisco minority. They were resumed, as part of Semitic studies in general, in Rome, where the Curia was interested in the union of the Eastern churches. Humanism, in its search for a world-wide culture, as well as political and commercial interests, widened them into a body of Muslim studies. Guillaume Postel (1510-81) a committed scholar if ever there was one, despite his mysticism, his ardent devotion to the service of the faith, his French patriotism, and even his insanity, contributed richly to the progress of the study of the languages and even of the peoples, at the same time assembling in the East an important collection of manuscripts.¹ His pupil, Joseph Scaliger (1540-1609), a man of encyclopedic learning, pursued Orientalism and gave up his missionary

¹ Cf. J. Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1955), pp. 36ff. Concerning G. Postel, see also more particularly F. Secret, *Les Kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance* (Paris, 1964), pp. 171ff. et passim.

zeal. In 1586 Arabic typography in Europe was to have the use of the printing-works established by the Cardinal Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand de' Medici. Of course, the avowed aim was to help the missionary effort, but from the very first it printed the medical and philosophical works of Avicenna, and grammatical, geographical, and mathematical books. The attempt was to be repeated at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century in Paris, Holland, and Germany, particularly with a view to a better knowledge of Avicennan medicine.

The Papacy and a great many Christians took an interest in the union of the churches and sought an agreement with the Eastern Christians, which meant studying their language and their texts. England, France, and the United Provinces were more concerned with trade and with their political schemes in the East. The increased ease of travel brought learned Maronites to Europe and even Erpenius met a Moroccan Muslim trader at Conflans in 1611. Biblical exegesis, which was one of the chief subjects for discussion between Protestants and Catholics, also led to the study of the philology of Eastern languages. Physicians still kept up an interest in Avicenna, despite the 'anti-Arabist' reaction. The Turkish menace led to a closer study of the Ottoman Empire and of Islam. As it declined the study could be pursued more serenely. The growth of European power and culture caused the Eastern courts to show an interest in the ever more numerous European travellers who brought useful practical information and formulas dealing with a number of activities which were still limited, but which included in particular military science.

Such closer ties and concerns of the time, and the general trend towards the organization of scientific research, account for the appearance of a fine-meshed Orientalist network. The first chair of Arabic was founded in 1539 at the newly established Collège de France for Guillaume Postel, an enlightened, highly typical scholar of the Renaissance, as we have seen, but one who published pioneer manuals and, above all, trained disciples

like Scaliger whose grounding in Oriental scholarship was already of no mean order. Collections of manuscripts in the libraries provided scholars with the materials necessary for serious study. Printing—and particularly printing in Arabic characters, whose beginnings we have noted—began to make each scholar's work available to all others. One specialist after another made it his business to supply such indispensable tools as grammars, dictionaries, and editions of texts. In the very forefront there stand two Dutchmen: Thomas van Erpe or Erpenius (1584-1624) who published the first Arabic grammar and the first edition of a text based on sound philological principles; and his disciple Jacob Golius (1596-1667). In Austria in 1680 a Lorrainer, Franz Meninski, brought out his massive Turkish dictionary. Chairs of Oriental studies became numerous. Paris no longer stood alone. Francis van Ravelingen or Raphelengius (1539-97) was teaching Arabic at Leyden as early as 1593. Urban VIII in 1627 founded at Rome the College of the Propaganda, a lively centre of studies. Edward Pocock was the first holder of a chair of Arabic at Oxford in 1638.

Relativism in belief affected the intellectuals and the cultivated public before the scholars. But the atmosphere which it created opened the way for them. Those whom a very keen personal inclination attracted to the Muslim East could work unhampered. B. d'Herbelot (1625-95), making use of an already fairly rich accumulation of material, wrote his *Bibliothèque orientale* (which was published posthumously by Galland in 1697), the first attempt at an *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

A. Galland helped decisively to foster the taste for things oriental when, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, he published his translation of the *Arabian Nights* (1704-17), the influence of which was to be enormous.¹ Thenceforward Islam was no longer seen as the land of Antichrist but essentially that of an exotic, picturesque civilization, existing in a fabulous atmosphere peopled by good or evil, wayward genies—all this for the

¹ See M. Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland, sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris, 1964).

delight of an audience that had already shown so much taste for European fairy tales.¹

6. *The age of reason*

People could now view the religious faith which competed with Christianity in an impartial light and even with some sympathy, unconsciously seeking (and obviously finding) in it the very values of the new rationalist trend of thought that was opposed to Christianity. In the seventeenth century many authors took up the defence of Islam against medieval prejudices and polemical detractors, and demonstrated the worth and sincerity of Muslim piety. One such author was Richard Simon. He was a sincere Catholic but the soundness of his scholarship made him fight against the dogmatic perversion of objective facts, both in the reading of the Bible and the study of Eastern Christendom. In his *Histoire critique des créances et des coutumes des nations du Levant* (1684) he dealt first with the beliefs and rites of the Eastern Christians, then with those of the Muslims which he expounded clearly and soberly on the basis of a work by a Muslim theologian, without vituperation or disparagement and occasionally with real appreciation and even admiration. When Arnould accused him of having been too objective towards Islam, he advised him to ponder the 'excellent teachings' of Muslim moralists.² A Dutch Arabist, A. Reland, who had a more specialized knowledge of things Islamic than Simon, was to write, in 1705, an objective view of the Muslim religion based exclusively on Muslim sources.³ The philosopher Pierre Bayle, an admirer of Muslim tolerance, gave in the first edition of his *Dictionnaire critique* (1697) an objective account of Muḥammad's life which was

¹ See M.-L. Dufrenoy, *L'Orient romanesque en France, 1704-1789* (Montreal, 1946-7), 2 vols.

² *Histoire critique des créances et des coutumes des nations du Levant*, par le sieur de Moni (Frankfort, 1684), ch. XV; cf. Simon's *Lettres choisies* (Amsterdam, 1730), iii. 245 f., 258 f., and J. Steinmann, *Richard Simon et les origines de l'exégèse biblique* (Paris, 1960), pp. 157 f.

³ *De religione mahomedica libri duo* (1st edn., Utrecht, 1705; 2nd edn. 1717).