

BAGHDAD 767-1258 A.D.

Melting Pot for a Universal Renaissance

by Hussein Askary

Author's note: During the days of preparation for this report, and while listening to a live webcast from Washington by Lyndon LaRouche on Nov. 16, 2006, I received a phone call from Baghdad informing me that a cousin of mine had been kidnapped and killed in one of the neighborhoods of Baghdad. He happened to have the "wrong" family name driving in his car through the "wrong" neighborhood.

To my cousin Sabah and all those innocent Iraqis who have fallen victims to this evil war (that started with the invasion of Iraq in March 2003), and to those fighting together with LaRouche to change the course of history, I dedicate this humble report.

—November 2006¹

From its conception in the mind of the Abbasid Khalifa Abu Jaafar Al-Mansour in 767 A.D., until the day of its *first* destruction by the Venice-allied Mongol hordes in 1258, Baghdad became the cradle of a his-

torical scientific and cultural renaissance, and a melting pot of a rich Islamic-Christian-Jewish-Arab-Persian-Greek-Indian collaboration.

Al-Mansour, standing in his camp one fresh Summer morning on the spot that *became* Baghdad, said, after consulting with the monks in a nearby Christian cloister: "This is a good location; here is the Tigris, nothing stands between us and China. Everything comes to us through it from the sea; goods reach us here from Al-jazira (southern Antolian region), Armenia and their surroundings. There is the Euphrates; through it we receive goods from Al-Sham (Syria and Eastern Mediterranean) and its surroundings" (*Chronicles of Al-Tabari*, Vol. 7).

According to the chronicler Al-Tabari, Al-Mansour drew the general map of the city, and ordered architects and professionals to come from all parts of the Muslim state to plan and build the city. Later, the cloister and its monks became neighbors of Al-Mansour and his Al-Khuld Palace. It was in such dimensions, (China and the Mediterranean) that the leaders of the Islamic state at the time were thinking, but not as an empire. Haroun Al-Rashid, successor of Al-Mansour, established strong diplomatic relations with the great European leader Charlemagne (r. 800-814).

Diplomatic relations with China were established more than a century before that date, when Prophet Mohammed's companion Saad ibn Abi-Waqqas visited the Chinese Tang Dynasty Emperor in 650. The Chinese Emperor Yung-Wei, according to writer Yusuf Abdul

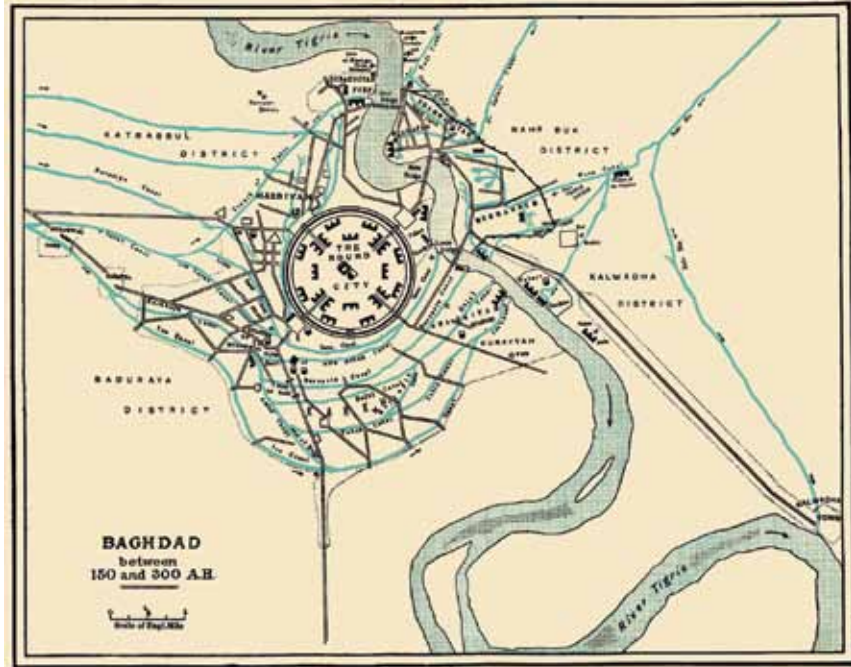
1. This report was not published at the time of its first writing. When it was updated for publication in 2013, another "cradle of civilization" had come under attack, and is facing total destruction. Syria, which until today, has been the most mixed society in the region, and probably the world, is suffering tremendously from the same New-Dark-Ages forces, that have been unleashed by the Anglo-Saudi and American powers. The coexistence among the religious and ethnic groups which continued over centuries, and produced cultural and scientific miracles in the region is almost completely destroyed. Only a miracle can restore that previous state of peace among religions to this region. But let the readers know: We still believe in miracles in this part of the world! —Hussein Askary, Sept. 27, 2013.



nationalonline.org

Above: A recent view of Baghdad.

Right: Baghdad, 150-300 A.D.: the circular city, as drawn during the reign of Al-Mansour. The lines in blue surrounding the city are canals of different sizes. Some were designed by the Banu Musa and their collaborators.

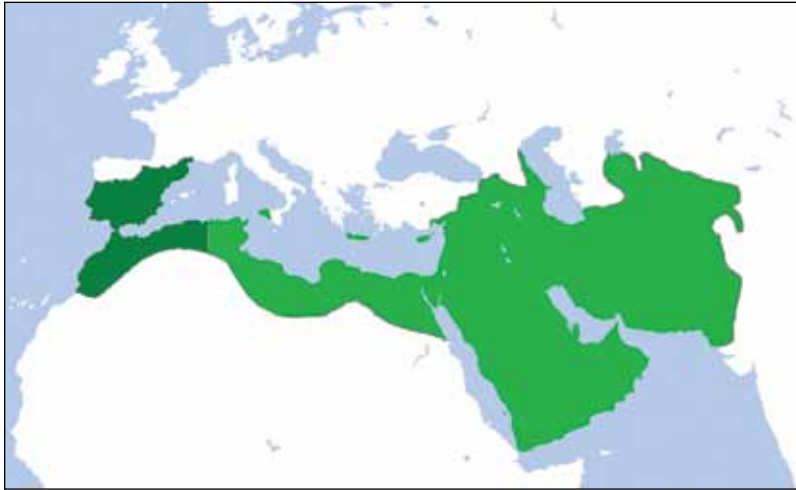


Rahman, “respected the teachings of Islam and considered it to be compatible with the teachings of Confucius.” To show his admiration of Islam, the Emperor approved the establishment of China’s first mosque, reportedly Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou. That mosque still stands there today.

Prophet Mohammed’s commandment to Muslims (the same as the one he received from God/Allah through divine inspiration), from the outset of his mission, was to encourage Muslims to learn reading and writing, and to acquire knowledge, no matter how far they had to travel and how hard they had to work. It is recorded in one of his Hadeeths (verbal traditions), that he said: “Pursue knowledge even if it were in China!” For that reason, it became imperative for all Muslim leaders and citizens to look for knowledge everywhere, not

simply and only in the religious scriptures, as some fanatics today assert.

With the building of Baghdad, Al-Mansour escaped the bloody intrigues in the former capital Al-Kufa, south of Baghdad, and paved the way for a new era of economic, scientific, and cultural development. Comparing the living standards and population density of the 9th-Century and early 20th-Century Iraq, one is amazed to find out that they were much higher at that



The Abbasid Caliphate at its greatest extent in the 9th Century. Most of North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula were under Umayyad Dynasty rule.



Chronicle of John Skylitzes/Madrid National Library

Painting (12th/13th century) depicting John the Grammarian during his diplomatic mission (820s) in an attempt (which was ultimately unsuccessful) to reach a peace accord between the Abbasid Caliph Al-Ma'mun and the Byzantine Emperor Theophilos. John appears twice, once on the left with Al-Ma'mun, and again on the right with Theophilos. He is said to have taken with him a drawing of the Palace of Baghdad, of which he built a replica in Constantinople.

time than recently. That development was made possible by the assimilation of scientific knowledge and culture from Persia, India, China, and ancient Greece into one unprecedented melting pot.

Most of the translating, rediscovering, and assimilating of this knowledge was done by members of several religions and language cultures working together

under one mission. Christians and Jews were already integrated into the structures of the Islamic society. The Islamic state, by the middle of the 8th Century, had extended from Tibet, across the Indus and Oxus (Amu Darya) rivers in Asia, all along the Mediterranean, to North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula.

The Translation Feat

The earliest attempts to translate Greek medical records were undertaken by the Umayyad Prince Khalid bin Yazid and Omar bin Abdul Azizi in the latter part of the 7th Century. However, the translation work was not institutionalized before the building of Baghdad.

Arabic chronicles and history books tell the story of the sickness of Al-Mansour sometime in the 770s, and how an Assyrian-Christian physician was summoned from Persia to successfully treat him. The physician's name was Georges bin Bakht-yashua. He lived in the city of Gundi-Shapur in Southwest Iran (today's Khuzestan Province). That city had become a center for Assyrian Greek-speaking Christians, since the reign of the pre-Islamic Persian Sasanid Emperor Khosro Anushirwan (531-579), who used to assemble Roman prisoners-of-war in that city.

A school of medicine had developed there. But when Al-Mansour asked bin Bakht-yashua to move with his family to Baghdad to build a hospital and educational center there, Baghdad became the new center for medical science. Many books on medicine were translated from Assyrian and later Greek language. The books of the Greeks Galen and Hippocrates became a central object of translation and study.

The Abbasid Khalifas became the patrons of sci-

ence and philosophy. The most important of them was Haroun Al-Rashid (r. 786-809) and his son Al-Ma'moun (r. 813-833). Under Al-Rashid, the humanist academy, the House of Wisdom, was established with his direct patronage and sponsorship. In the beginning, the academy was focusing on gathering all available manuscripts and books from all different languages and translating them into Arabic, the official language of the Islamic State and the language of the Holy Qu'ran. Greek had the lion's share of attention and appreciation.

As the work developed, and the economic and cultural needs of the expanding and growing nation increased, the translators had to move beyond the work of translation. They were expected to teach the subject matters of the books being translated, replicate all the previous discoveries, and comment on them, as well as to teach the Khalifa, his children, and all the students. Al-Ma'moun ordered the building of an astronomical observatory as an annex to the House of Wisdom. There, the translators themselves became scientists and teachers.

One very early such translator-mathematician-physician was Yahya bin Al-Batrik, who translated and taught the books of Euclid. He also made the first Arabic translation of Plato's *Timaeus* dialogue, which became one of the most important works of philosophy throughout the 400 years of the Islamic Renaissance, and the most widely read and commented on.

The astronomical observatory in the House of Wisdom itself became another institution in which some of the most brilliant Muslim astronomers were educated and worked; these included Kusta bin Luqa and the Banu Musa brothers, Ali bin Isa Al-Ustorlabi (The Astrolabe-maker), Mohammed bin Musa Al-Khawarizmi (founder of Algebra, who dedicated his first book on the subject to Al-Ma'moun), and Al-Battani.

The Search for Manuscripts

In order to find manuscripts of the works of Plato and other Greek philosophers, which were available in the neighboring and often hostile Byzantine Empire, Haroun Al-Rashid and Al-Ma'moun used both diplomacy, and sometimes military means, to acquire manuscripts. In one of his battles with the Byzantines, Al-Rashid suggested exchanging Roman prisoners and officers for Greek books! However, the most effective

way to secure these prized possessions was to send "intelligence agents" to hunt for the books and recruit Greek-speaking translators from within the Byzantine Empire.

The renowned Muslim historian Ibn Al-Nadim writes in his book of chronicles *Al-Fihrast*: "When Al-Ma'moun defeated the Roman king, he wrote to him demanding that he disclose all the books he had been keeping in secret places in Rome (Constantinople). The Roman king who first refused, agreed later to do that. Al-Ma'moun sent some of his scholars, including Al-Hajjaj bin Matar, Ibn Al-Batrik, Salam, the head of the House of Wisdom, and others. When the books were brought to him, he [Al-Ma'moun] ordered the books to be translated immediately. It is said that Yohanna bin Masaweh was among them too."

Another historian, Ibn Nabateh writes in his book *Sharh-ul Uyoon* about one Sahl ibn Haroun: "He was appointed by Al-Ma'moun as the guardian of the chest of books at the House of Wisdom. This chest contained the books of the ancient philosophers that were brought back to Al-Ma'moun from Cyprus. The story was, that when Al-Ma'moun reached a truce with the ruler of that island, he sent messengers to him asking for the chest of the books of the Greeks that were kept in a special chamber where nobody could have access to them. When Al-Ma'moun received the books, he became very happy and excited, and he appointed Sahl bin Haroun as a guardian for these books."

It is obvious from those stories that the books on Greek philosophy and science were intentionally kept away from the public in the Eastern Roman Empire, for clear political and ideological reasons. Educating the public, and allowing foreign powers to acquire knowledge is always deemed a "threat" by anti-human imperial powers.

Another prominent translator was Yohanna bin Masaweh (d. 857), who also came from Gundi-Shapur. He established a hospital in Baghdad. Yohanna was a Nestorian Christian. Haroun Al-Rashid assigned him to translate Greek books that were taken as plunder from Byzantine cities conquered by the Muslim army. He was also made the chief translator, verifying other translations and training translators. Al-Ma'moun later named him the director of the House of Wisdom. In addition to translation, Yohanna wrote books on geometry, medicine, and optics. He also car-

ried out medical experiments on animals, such as monkeys, to test new medicines. One of his most well-known students was Hunayn ibn Ishaq, who mastered the Assyrian, Arabic, Greek, and Persian languages.

Hunayn ibn Ishaq (808-873) is among the most famous of the translators, having translated 100 Greek books into Assyrian, and 37 into Arabic. He was trained in medicine, and made original contributions to that field. However, as the leading translator in the House of Wisdom, he came to have an enormous influence on the mathematicians of the time. Hunayn, who was a Nestorian Christian, learned Greek in Alexandria as a young student, and became an expert on the Greek language. He took part in the travels in the Byzantine Empire and parts of the Muslim world to find books and recruit translators and scholars. Hunayn personally translated books of Plato and Aristotle.

Other prominent translators in the House of Wisdom were the Astronomer Thabit bin Qurra, Yusuf Al-Khouri Al-Qas, who translated Archimedes' now lost work on triangles, and Kusta bin Luqa, a Syrian Christian who translated Hypsicles' works on astronomy, Theodosius' *Sphaerica*, Heron's *Mechanics*, Autolycus Theophrastus' *Meteora*, Euclid, and other works of Greek origin. The son of Hunayn, Ishaq ibn Hunayn, strongly influenced by his father, is famed for his revised Arabic translation of Euclid's *Elements*.

A problematic aspect of this process of translation was that, from the outset, no real distinction was made regarding the different methods of scientific reasoning within the Greek culture. That was probably due to two factors: One is the corruption of scientific thinking during the Roman Empire's centuries-long Dark Age; the other is the eagerness to collect and digest as much as possible of whatever was available from the ancients, in accordance with the recommendation of the Prophet Mohammed and the Holy Qur'an.

In the beginning, almost all Greek books on science and philosophy were given equal weight. For example, both Aristotle and Plato were held up as great thinkers, with the distinction that Plato is the "Divine Philosopher," due to his monotheistic view of the Universe and its Creator, a view compatible with the beliefs of Islam. Aristotle, on the other hand, was regarded as the "First Scholar" due to his "down to earth" empirical approach to knowledge.

Another example was the treatment of astronomy and geometry from both the fraudulent Ptolemaic

method and the saner Pythagorean method of "Sphaerics." The verification and the sorting process took some time, when Muslim scientists started to replicate and examine both the axiomatic and experimental aspects of what was delivered to them. Through the interventions of such great Muslim scientists and philosophers as Al-Kindi, Al-Razi, Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, in the 9th and 10th centuries, and even later, the dividing line started to become clearer. Critiques and outright refutations of Ptolemy's astronomy, Euclid's geometry, and Aristotle's methodology began to become a key aspect of the "dissertations" of upcoming scholars.

Sorting out this crucial aspect of the history of the epistemological fight within the Islamic Renaissance has not been undertaken yet in any serious manner. Its time has come now. And with the type of historical work being carried out by LaRouche's young associates, it seems appropriate now to accomplish this unfinished mission.

The Banu Musa Brothers: A Youth Movement

The three brothers collectively known as Banu Musa (the sons of Musa) became orphans following the death of their father, Musa bin Shakir, a brilliant mathematician and astronomer in the court of Al-Ma'moun in the early 9th century. The three boys, Mohammed, Ahmad, and Hasan, were taken by Al-Ma'moun under his custody. He ordered the governor of Baghdad, Ishaq bin Ibrahim, to find a suitable home for the three boys. In his turn, the governor delivered them to Yahya ibn Mansour, a prominent scholar-astronomer and dean of the House of Wisdom. The three brothers grew up inside that great academy, which became their private kindergarten, school, and university.

The Banu Musa brothers (lived between 803 and 873), lived and worked with such great philosophers as Al-Jahidh, Al-Kindi, and Al-Khwarizmi, and translators and scholars such as Hunayn bin Ishaq, Ishaq bin Hunayn, Kosta bin Luqa, and Thabit bin Qurra. The three brothers learned Greek, and studied many of the books that were translated. However, as they became young adults, they participated in all kinds of political, economic, and scientific missions that were assigned to them by Al-Ma'moun.

One of the closest collaborators of the Banu Musa was the astronomer and mathematician Sanad bin Ali. Sanad was from a Jewish family that had its origins

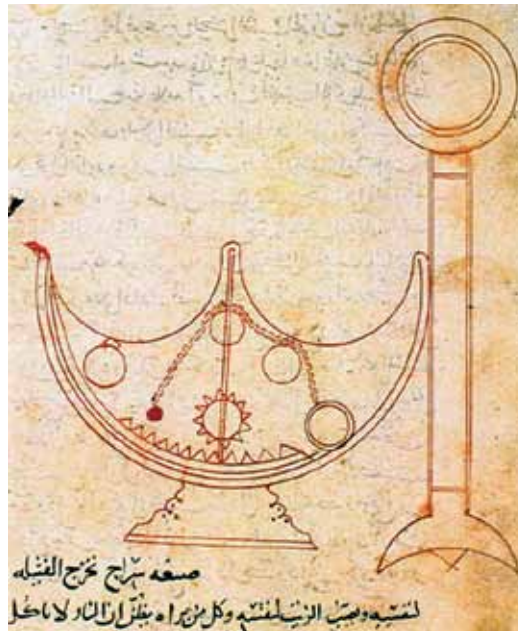


A Syrian postage stamp dedicated to the Banu Musa brothers. The stamp, issued in 1996, commemorates Science Week in Syria.

Banu Musa: The Sons Of Musa ben Shaker

The Sons of Musa ben Shaker or the Banu Musa brothers (Mohammed, Ahmad, and Hasan), and their depth of knowledge, creativity, and playfulness, are true representatives of the early Islamic Renaissance. Their work extended into almost every field of science, and they used that knowledge to improve the living conditions of their nation. They represent the true humanist renaissance spirit, which takes whatever its predecessors achieved and lifts it to greater heights, to deliver it to present and future generations far more enriched than when they received it.

Baghdad and Aleppo, a tragic tale of two cities: It is painful to compare the glorious state of the City of Baghdad during the Islamic Renaissance, with the situation today, when tragedy is revisiting city. It was even more painful for this author to both enjoy the work of the Banu Musa book, and at the same time, grieve for the people who edited and published this unique work. A team of



An original drawing of one of the “devices” described in the book of Banu Musa: a mechanical oil lamp that automatically extends the lamp’s wick and refills the oil. When placed on city streets, as it was in Baghdad at the time (9th Century), it did not need to be serviced during the night.

lands.

Now, Syria and Aleppo are engulfed in the fire of the sectarian bloodshed that was started in Iraq by the Anglo-Saudi terrorist groups, following the U.S.-British invasion of Iraq. The University of Aleppo itself became a horrific crime scene on Jan. 15, 2003. Several explosions, caused by rockets, or a combination of rockets and a car bomb, targeted the buildings of the university, killing more than 89 students and others who had taken refuge there from the sectarian slaughter. While the opposition quickly accused the

Syrian government of firing the rockets, and the Western media immediately backed that claim, the government accused the terrorist militias who were besieging the city. The government troops were in control of the university and the area around it, so they had no good reason to attack it. Whatever the source of the rockets, it is still a tragedy caused by international geopolitics. The victims are not only the innocent people of Syria, but also culture and civilization itself.

The distance between the greatness of the Arab-Islamic Renaissance of the 9th Century and the current dark age is not only a distance of years, but of thought and appreciation of human life and potential.



Painting depicting the Siege of Baghdad by the Mongol hordes in 1258, which led to the city's near total destruction. All the books that the Mongols could get their hands on were burned or thrown in the Tigris River.



The British Gen. Stanley Maude leads the empire's colonial troops into Baghdad in March 1917. The British occupation of Iraq, and its policy of "divide and conquer," started the phase of tragedies that have haunted Iraq to this day.



The initial U.S. bombardment of Baghdad on March 19, 2003 that started the British-American invasion and destruction of the modern nation-state of Iraq.



UNESCO/Mounir Bouchenaki

An American tank at the gate of the National Museum in Baghdad. The museum, which housed artifacts recording the history of Iraq since the time of the Sumerians in 5,000 B.C., was looted the same day that the U.S. troops entered Baghdad.

in India, but migrated to Baghdad, according some Arab chronicles. He worked with the brothers on a large number of crucial scientific and economic projects, such as building canals around Baghdad, connecting the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, and other hydraulic works, such as urban water pumping and transport systems.

One fascinating mission he undertook with Banu Musa brothers was the measurement of the circumference of Earth. In the 820s, Al-Ma'moun had received a number of Greek documents, referencing Eratosthenes' magnificent and creative method of measuring the circumference of Earth.

Al-Ma'moun wanted that verified, or rediscovered, to find out the truth. He assigned to the Banu Musa and Sanad the mission of rep-

licating and rediscovering the principle that guided Eratosthenes. A number of the prominent astronomers and mathematicians joined the brothers in the desert south of Mosul. Sanad recorded the mission.

The brothers came up with a new method of measurement. Rather than measuring the difference of the angle of the shadow cast by the Sun's rays on two poles located in two different locations along the meridian (Eratosthenes' method), Banu Musa used the celestial sphere as a reference point.

They measured the angle of declination from the first location, in relation to the North Pole in the celestial sphere, and moving north until the angle in relation to the North Pole changed by one degree, all the time measuring the distance between the first location and the second. Knowing that each degree on the celestial sphere corresponds to one degree on the meridian circle of the surface of Earth, they came to the conclusion that the distance between the two locations, A and B, multiplied by 360° would give them the measure of the circumference of Earth. The result they reached was 40,253 km (in today's units), missing only by about 133 km.

They took the measurement once again, going south from the first location, and reached a figure very close to their first conclusion. With that accomplished, Al-Ma'moun was satisfied, and Muslim astronomy gained a new discovery of principle. The discovery was not that the Earth was spherical, a fact that was common knowledge then, but that the principle of proportionality between the celestial sphere and the sphere of the Earth, reflects the proportionality between the Platonic "Reason in the Heaven and reasoning that is within us" (*Timaueus* 47.C).

Most of those working in the House of Wisdom were young people. Not only the Banu Musa brothers, but also Ishaq ibn Hynayn, and Kusta bin Luqa, Al-Khwarizmi, and Thabit bin Qurra, were all in their teens and 20s when they studied and worked inside that institution. Like the young LaRouche associates today, they were involved in political and economic affairs of the state, as economic and scientific advisors to the Caliphate. They also traveled to recruit other youth from different parts of the Islamic state, and even from Byzantium.

One important example was the recruitment of Thabit bin Qurra by Mohammed bin Musa. Mohammed was on his way back from one of his exploration

journeys in Greece and met Thabit in the town of Harran (southern Turkey today). He organized Thabit, who was a Mandaean, not a Muslim, to accompany him back to Baghdad to work together.

Thabit was much younger, but showed signs of genius. The three brothers adopted him as a fourth brother and made sure that he got the best education. Thabit grew up to become one of the most important translators and astronomers in Islamic history. He translated dozens of Greek books of Plato, Archimedes, Hippocrates, Euclid, and others. He authored 150 books in Arabic on mechanics, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and medicine. The books on mechanics by Archimedes and Heron of Alexandria that he translated opened the eyes of the Banu Musa to this important science, which played a great role in their participation in the economic development of Iraq, in particular, and the Islamic state in general. Water works, canals, fountains, tools, and urban water systems were designed by the Banu Musa. They even designed and built mechanical toys for children and amusing tricks for the entertainment of the public.

The Banu Musa always worked as a team. One of the joint projects they undertook together was on mechanics. That book is still available in the University of Aleppo, Syria, which is now under fire from the new-dark-ages forces of the Anglo-Saudi "jihadists." It also includes geometrical studies and commentaries on Archimedes' two works *On the Sphere and the Cylinder*, and *On the Equilibrium of Planes*. The book includes illustration of the tools and constructions they designed, in a way that reminds us of Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks.

The Banu Musa selflessly served the spreading of knowledge and always gave credit to the Greek scientists whose works they reworked and improved. The irony of the Banu Musa brothers is that they acquired the measure of the circumference of the Earth from a relationship to a celestial sphere that could not be measured mathematically, simply because that sphere does not exist. So, the result of the Earth's measurement was discovered through a defect of perception, an inferential shadow that the mind used to discover the reflection of an ordering principle of the universe, a principle that is higher than mathematics, and that mathematics cannot account for, nor compute.

Transmission to Europe

Some of the works translated by the House of Wisdom were later translated into Latin by scholars in Toledo, Spain (Andalusia), which, from the 10th Century onward, was a center of Muslim-Jewish-Christian collaboration in philosophy and science.² From Toledo, these translations, as well as original writings by Islamic scholars like Ibn Sina and Al-Farabi, including the rich treasure of Arab medicine, were disseminated throughout Europe. Commentaries on Plato by Al-Farabi were among the first works on Plato to be known in Europe. Only the *Timaeus* dialogue was known in Europe at the time, and that, only to a very limited extent.

Many ancient Greek works were translated into Latin from Arabic. The example of the famous Apollonius of Perga is typical. His *Conics*, which played a crucial role in the development of modern astronomy, was translated from both Greek and Arabic. Its first four books were translated from Greek, and books five, six, and seven, from Arabic. Johannes Kepler would later revolutionize astronomy when he hypothesized that the planets moved along the pathways of elliptical orbits described by Apollonius in the *Conics*.

The influence of Islamic science on developments in the West is a greater subject than could be dealt with in this short report. Therefore, it will remain as a separate subject for future attempts.

Religious Tolerance in Abbasid Baghdad

It becomes clear from the above-mentioned prominent and crucial involvement of Assyrian and Nestorian



Mina Haizoun

The author reading a copy of the Banu Musa book.

Christians in both medical care and studies and the work of the House of Wisdom, that they were regarded as an integral part of the Islamic society. The Christians had special privileges in Baghdad, allowing them to have many churches in the city and a residential quarter called Hay Ar-rom. The patriarchs of the Eastern Churches chose to have their holy seat in Baghdad. Unlike in the the Roman Empire, Christian archbishops were elected by the church, and approved later by the Khalifa. In addition to their professional positions, Christians were appointed in political positions too. Some of them such as Abdoon bin Sa'id and Nasr bin Haroun

were appointed as ministers in the time of Khalifa Al-Muttaqi, and under the Buwaihid Dynasty, in the 10th Century.

Less known, is the situation of the Jews in that period. In Baghdad, Jews had a thriving quarter, which remained so until the fall of Baghdad under the Mongol invasion in 1258. This quarter was visited in 1169 by Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish traveler and historian who traveled from Spain through the Islamic world to Baghdad. He left a book called *The Journey of Benjamin of Toledo* (available in Arabic, Hebrew, and Spanish today). In that book, Benjamin states that there were about 40,000 Jews living in Baghdad at the time. He also reports that there were 10 Torah schools and 28 synagogues.

Benjamin described in his book the great hospitality and respect the Grand Rabbi enjoyed there from the Muslims, who considered him the heir of King David and chief of the Mosaic nation. The Grand Rabbi had both religious and legislative authority among the Jewish community in Baghdad. His authority was protected by the Khalifa. Arab chronicles describe the Grand Rabbi when he was summoned to meet the Khalifa as: "dressed in silk with a white turban orna-

2. For more on the Andalusian Renaissance, see Muriel Mirak-Weissbach, "Gateway to the Golden Renaissance," *Fidelio*, Fall 2001; and Bonnie James, "Al-Andalus: A Renaissance Melting-Pot Culture," *Fidelio*, 2004, both available at www.schillerinstitute.org/.

mented with diamonds. He was accompanied by armed guards, with a page running ahead of his entourage shouting ‘make way for our master, son of King David.’”

The Khalifas, since Haroun Al-Rashid, enjoyed having open debates in their court, where they had a weekly gathering of representatives of all religions and schools of thought. Christian and Jewish leaders had the full freedom to defend their faith in front of the Khalifa against any challenger. A famous such debate was witnessed in the court of Al-Ma'moun between the Muslim Imam Al-Ridha and the Christian Patriarch and Grand Rabbi. The debate was about Imam Al-Ridha's argument to prove that in both the Bible and the Torah there is evidence of the coming of the Prophet Mohammed, quoting extensively from the two holy books.

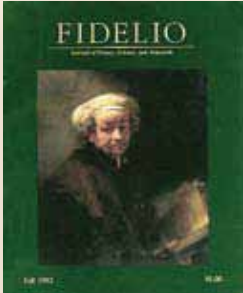
The Mandaeans were also integrated and tolerated in the Islamic state, and received the same good treatment as Christians and Jews. Some of the most brilliant astronomers and other scientists in the Abbasid era were Mandaean, such as Thabit bin Qurra, Al-Battani, and the famous chemist Jabir bin Hayian.

Conclusion

Every great renaissance movement starts with the gathering, translation, and assimilation of the best works that have been produced by other great cultures and individuals. However, each time in history, one culture had to bear the burden of lifting civilization from the mud of corruption, and building something which would last into the future for the sake of all cultures and all humankind.

However, today, with the world having changed completely, and with the initiatives of the LaRouche Movement and the Schiller Institute for a Eurasian and planetary renaissance, all cultures can work together based on the principled view of Man's original sublime and creative character as created in the image of the Creator of the Universe, as the Judeo-Christian tradition states in Genesis, and as represented by the Khalifa (vicegerent of Allah on Earth), into whom the Supreme Creator breathed his own spirit, when shaped into human form in accordance with the Holy Qu'ran.

Pierre Beaudry reviewed and made contributions to this report.



FIDELIO

Journal of Poetry, Science, and Statecraft

From the first issue, dated Winter 1992, featuring Lyndon LaRouche on “The Science of Music: The Solution to Plato’s Paradox of ‘The One and the Many,’” to the final issue of Spring/Summer 2006, a “Symposium on Edgar Allan Poe and the Spirit of the American Revolution,” *Fidelio* magazine gave voice to the Schiller Institute’s intention to create a new Golden Renaissance.

The title of the magazine, is taken from Beethoven’s great opera, which celebrates the struggle for political freedom over tyranny. *Fidelio* was founded at the time that LaRouche and several of his close associates were unjustly imprisoned, as was the opera’s Florestan, whose character was based on the American Revolutionary hero, the French General, Marquis de Lafayette.

Each issue of *Fidelio*, throughout its 14-year lifespan, remained faithful to its initial commitment, and offered original writings by LaRouche and his associates, on matters of, what the poet Percy Byssche Shelley identified as, “profound and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature.”

Back issues are now available for purchase through the Schiller Institute website:
http://www.schillerinstitute.org/about/order_form.html

