very approach towards the capital, and taught lessons of extreme depravity to the infant citizens while yet unconscious that what they learned was vice. The figures appear to have been executed in a style worthy of better subjects, and beyond the skill of modern Persian artists; but from the fading colours we may reasonably hope that these pictures will not much longer continue to excite disgust or taint the imagination.†

Pictures of this kind, however severely reprobated by the godly and the scrupulous, did not fail to find defenders among the physicians; a member of this profession about the end of the fourteenth century wrote a work on various sources of enjoyment—gardens, banquets, friends, singers, fish, flesh, and fowl, books, fine literary style, &c. When he comes to speak of the ideal bath, he says that

"it should contain pictures of high artistic merit and great beauty, representing pairs of lovers, gardens and beds of flowers, fine galloping horses and wild beasts; for pictures such as these are potent in strengthening the powers of the body, whether animal, natural or spiritual. Badr ad-Din ibn Nuzair, the Qadi of Ba' albak, says in his book Mafarir al-nafta ("The gladdener of the soul"): "All physicians, sages and wise men are agreed that the sight of beautiful pictures gladdens and refreshes the soul, and drives away from it melancholy thoughts and suggestions, and strengthens the heart more than anything else can do, because it rid it of all evil imaginings." Some say, if a sight of actual beautiful objects is not possible, then let the eyes be turned towards beautiful forms, of exquisite workmanship, pictured in books, in noble edifices or lofty castles. Such is also the thought that Muhammad ibn Zakarly a-r-Razi expresses and strongly urges on any one who finds within himself carking cares and evil imaginings that are not in harmony with the poise of nature; for he says, When in a beautiful picture harmonious colours such as yellow, red and green are combined with a due proportion in their respective forms, then the melancholy humours find healing, and the cares that cling to the soul of man are expelled, and the mind gets rid of its sorrows, for the soul becomes refined and ennobled by the sight of such pictures. Again, think of the wise men of old, who invented the bath, how with their keen insight and penetrating wisdom they recognised that a man loses some considerable part of his strength when he goes into a bath; they made every effort to devise means of finding a remedy as speedily as possible; so they decorated the bath with beautiful pictures in bright cheerful colours. These they divided into three kinds, since they knew that there are three vital principles in the body—the animal, the spiritual, and the natural. Accordingly they painted pictures of each kind, so as to strengthen each one of these potentialities; for the animal power, they painted pictures of fighting and war and galloping horses and the snaring of wild beasts; for the spiritual power, pictures of love and of reflection on the lover and his beloved, and pictures of their mutual recriminations and reproaches, and of their embracing one another, &c; and for the natural power, gardens and beautiful trees and bright flowers.‡

Such a defence could not win the approval of an orthodox theologian or

‡ "Abd Allâh al-Balâdî al-Ghazâlî, Matâbât al-balâdî fi maqâîîl al-`urîr, pp. 7-8 (Cairo, 1883).
legist, though there were some who were willing to make such a concession to common custom as to permit the frequenting of a painted bath, provided that the pictures were to be found only on the outside or in the vestibule; such a permission was not, however, to be taken to imply approval of so reprehensible a practice, for it only gave reluctant acquiescence to the wicked ways of the world on the ground that the place in which such pictures were found indicated that they were regarded with contempt.\footnote{C. Snouck Hurgronje, ‘Verspreide Geschriften’, Vol. II, p. 431.}

In agreement with such a judgement was the common belief that the bath was a favourite resort of evil jinn, and that neither should prayers be performed nor the Qur‘ān be recited in it.\footnote{E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, 5th ed. (1860), p. 337.} This reputation may explain the fact that pictures of the Devil were sometimes painted in a bath—if credence may be placed in a verse of Sa‘dī in which the poet tells how a man had a vision of Iblīs as tall and handsome; surprised, he asks, ‘Why have men believed you to be so horrible of aspect, and why have they painted you so hideous in the bath-room? Why have they depicted you in the king’s palace with dejected countenance, twisted hand, and ugly and ruined?\footnote{Bütten, ed. C. H. Graf, p. 52, II, 216–17 (Vienna, 1818).} The answer of Iblīs is that it is an enemy who had done this. Of any such picture in a bath-room no example or even any description appears to have survived.

Another common feature of the decoration of baths was the terrible bird known as the ‘Anqā,\footnote{Mas‘ūdī, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 29.} which is as old as Sasanian times and corresponds to the Simurgh of the later Persian poets and the dreaded Ruhk of the Alf Laylah.

Even to the present day the entrances of baths are decorated with pictures in Persia and in those parts of ‘Irāq in which Persian influence has made itself felt.\footnote{E. Herzfeld, *Die Malerei von Samarcand*, p. 2.} It is impossible to speak of Muslim erotic art without making reference to the love of boys, which was so characteristic a feature of Muhammadan culture from the ninth to the nineteenth century.\footnote{The translator of Ibn Khallikan’s *Biographical Dictionary* (Vol. IV, p. 83), Baron MacGuckin de Slane, writes: ‘Amongst the Muslim princes, ‘ulamā, scholars, and poets, there were probably but few who could say with Ovid: Amore puerorum tangerem minus.’ Cf. A. Men, *Die Renaissance des Islams*, p. 358 (‘Hoch und Nieder frhste dieser Sache’).} The poetry of the Muhammadan world from the time of Abū Nuwās (ob. circa A. D. 810) onwards has been full of love-songs addressed to boys, and the painters naturally fell in with a fashion so widespread among cultured persons. Pictures of elegant, lackadaisical youths, such as Thomas Herbert\footnote{Travels into divers Parts of Asia and Africa, p. 169 (London, 1658).} saw at the court of Shāh ‘Abbās...
in 1628, whom he describes as 'the Ganined Boyes in vests of gold, rich bespangled Turbants, and choice sandalls, their curl’d haires dangling about their shoulders, rolling eyes, and vermilion checks, with Flagons of most glorious mettall, [who] went up and downe, and proffered the delight of Bacchus to such would relish it', were common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and were frequently painted by Riẓā 'Abbāsī and his school.

VI

RELIGIOUS ART IN ISLAM

FROM the evidence set forth in a previous chapter it might appear that no form of religious art whatsoever would be possible in a Muhammadan society; and those who have denied the existence of Muslim religious pictures2 could adduce an abundance of literary evidence in support of such a conclusion. It is certain that the severe condemnation of the sculptor and the painter embodied in the Traditions of the Prophet had made it impossible for either plastic or pictorial art to receive the sanction of the Muslim theologian. Consequently, as explained above, Islam has never welcomed painting as a handmaid of religion as both Buddhism and Christianity have done. Mosques have never been decorated with religious pictures, nor has pictorial art been employed for the instruction of the heathen or for the edification of the faithful.

Nevertheless, despite the hostility of the theologian and the unsympathetic attitude of the main body of orthodox believers, there have been certain aspects of Islamic religious thought which have found expression for themselves in pictorial form, and the painter has been called up to depict the various scenes of Muslim religious history. He has even laid profane hands on the person of the Prophet himself, though pictures of Muhammad are so rare that some writers have even doubted the existence of any.3

But these religious pictures occur sporadically only, as they were exposed to more than a double measure of the wrath which figured art excited in the minds of the orthodox; for if it was unlawful to usurp the function of the Creator by representing the forms of any living beings, how much more outrageous was it to attempt to depict such holy personages as the Prophets of the Lord! Accordingly, there has never been any historical tradition in the religious painting of Islam—no artistic development in the representation

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1 Religious art in a Muslim country, of course, finds its fullest expression in architecture—in the mosque and the tomb of the saint.
4 'Ce serait pour un Musulman le plus grand sacrilège que de tracer la figure de son Prophète' (M. d'Ohsson, *Tableau de l'empire ottoman*, Vol. IV, p. 444 (Paris, 1791)).
of accepted types—no schools of painters of religious subjects; least of all has there been any guidance on the part of leaders of religious thought corresponding to that of the ecclesiastical authorities in the Christian Church. In Muslim literature there has never been such a manual as that compiled in the eleventh century by Panselinos of Mount Athos for the guidance of the Byzantine painters, or the regulations laid down in the middle of the sixteenth century by the clergy of the Russian Church assembled in the Council of the Hundred Chapters. On the contrary, the Muslim painter must always have been hampered by a haunting sense of the disapproval of the more devout minds among his co-religionists; he could never feel, like his Christian contemporary, that early prayers would be offered before his handiwork or that it would serve to stimulate and encourage devotion. It was impossible for the Muslim religious painters to take such an exalted and encouraging view of their own function as did the Sienese painters in the fourteenth century, who, in the opening words of their statute, proclaimed themselves 'per la gratia di Dio manifestatori agli uomini grossi che non sanno lettera, de le cose miracolose operate per virtù et in virtù de la sancta fede'. Nor were they ever called upon to illustrate the sacred scriptures of their faith; the Bible has provided subject-matter for Christian painters from the earliest period of Christian art, but no such thing as an illustrated version of the Qur’an has ever been known to exist, and indeed to most Muslim minds such an outrage would be inconceivable; the Umayyad Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (685–705) might close the sacred volume on hearing of his accession with the words, 'Now you and I part', and Yazid III (744) might make the Qur’an a target for his arrows, but no Muslim monarch, however godless, was guilty of putting the Word of God into the hands of his court painters for them to work their wicked will upon it.

During the earlier centuries of the Muslim era it is unlikely that any attempt was made towards the pictorial presentation of incidents of sacred history; at any rate none of the examples that have come down to us are of an earlier date than the beginning of the fourteenth century. Consequently, the painters of this and successive periods had no tradition of religious art on which to model their own productions, and it is not clear what were the springs of their artistic inspiration. The earliest record we have of any pictorial representation of Muhammad is in a story told by an Arab merchant,

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1 Das Handbuch der Malerei von Berge Athos, übersetzt von G. Schäfer, p. ix (Trier, 1851).
4 SuSif, op. cit., c. 84 (I. 24–5).
5 Id., p. 98 (I. 10).
named Ibn Habbār, who travelled in China in the ninth century. He describes an audience that he had with the Emperor of China, who asked him whether he would like to see a picture of the Prophet; whereupon an officer of the court brought in a box containing portraits of the Prophets of Islam, e.g. Noah in the ark, Moses with the Children of Israel, Jesus seated on an ass accompanied by the twelve Apostles, and Muhammad on a camel surrounded by his Companions.1

It is not impossible that such pictures may have been produced in China by adherents of the Nestorian Church, which had established itself in that country as early as the seventh century.2 As will be shown later, there are clear indications that the Muslim or other painters working for Muslim patrons copied or adapted Christian religious pictures for their own purposes. These painters may possibly themselves have been Christians, or, if not, they may have had Christian works of art before them while they were working.

The earliest examples of portraits of Muhammad that have survived to us are found in a copy of the Ḫāṣṣīyat al-Sithrī by Rashīd ad-Dīn, part of which belongs to the Royal Asiatic Society in London3 and part to the Edinburgh University Library.4 Rashīd ad-Dīn (as already explained) made elaborate arrangements for the distribution of copies of his work, and when engaged in the compilation of his Universal History sent for two learned Chinamen, who brought with them from China a number of books dealing with medicine, astronomy, and history.5 The subject-matter of his enormous work embraced the whole history of the world, so far as it was known to the author, who was a man of vast learning, said to have been acquainted with the Hebrew, Mongol, and Turkish languages as well as those commonly familiar to a Muhammadan scholar of his time—Arabic and Persian. His history begins with Adam and comprises the annals of the Jewish people and as much of the history of the Christian Franks as was of interest to a Muslim scholar; especial attention is given to the early history of the kings of Persia, and (what is more unusual) there are accounts also of the Chinese and of the Hindus; and the whole of Muhammadan history is traversed up to the author’s own time.

2 Mithgāhtā (Rasqīt as-Safī, translated by E. Rehmat, Vol. I, pp. 82–4) transferred this story to the Emperor Heracleius and Hishām ibn al-‘Āṣ, who is said to have been sent by the Prophet on an embassy to Constantinople; and Khwāndānār copied his grandfather’s narrative into his own Ḫabb as-Sa‘īr (Vol. I, Part IV, pp. 9–10, Bombay, 1817).
3 A. Mingana, The Earliest Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East, p. 31 (Manchester, 1922).
4 Arabic No. 26.
For the illustration of this book he probably attracted to Tabriz from various quarters the most competent painters he could, and provided them with pictures and illustrated historical works to serve as models for their own compositions, and took as great pains in this respect as he had shown in the collection of historical materials for his text. Unfortunately, none of the illustrations in the MS. above mentioned bear the signature of any artists, so we have no indications as to their nationality or religion, but in their work it is possible to trace distinct Chinese influences, especially in the drawing of trees and the character of the landscape. The costumes of the warriors are of a Mongol type, the sovereigns wear the Mongol dress, and there are many other indications that the prevailing influence in these pictures came from the East. But the painters must also have had Christian and Hindu pictures to work from.

From what source they derived their striking type of the person of Muhammed has not yet been determined. There are altogether as many as eight pictures in which the Prophet appears; in all of them, except the picture of his birth, he is represented with a tall, somewhat emaciated body and a melancholy expression on his countenance. This look of dejection is, however, not peculiar to this distinguished personage, but is characteristic of most of the faces that appear in the illustrations of this manuscript, for a sense of melancholy seems to brood over all of them, as though the painters were oppressed by feelings of horror at the subjects they were called upon to depict, consisting as they do for the most part of battle scenes, executions, mutilations, and various forms of torture.

Muhammed himself is presented to us as a slim youth before whom the camels kneel down in worship and the spectators reverently bow when the monk Bahtir a recognizes him as a Prophet (fol. 15). Again, as a young man, he stands before the Ka‘bah and lifts up the Black Stone, which four prominent citizens of Mecca present to him on a long strip of carpet (fol. 46 b) (Plate XIX). As an older man, seated on Mount Hira in an attitude of profound depression, he receives from the Angel Gabriel the announcement of his prophetic mission (fol. 16), and later, after his fellow townsmen have rejected his warning utterances and he has to flee in peril of his life from his enemies in Mecca, he rests in the desert on his way to Medina with one of his earliest converts, Abu Bakr, while an old woman milks a goat for the refreshment of the weary fugitives (fol. 10); there is a pathos in this picture such as the Muhammadan painters seldom succeed in putting into their compositions, and the faithful Abu Bakr gazes into the face of his venerated friend with touching devotion (Plate XX).
It is, of course, not possible for the illustrators of the life of the Prophet to depict a picture of his heavenward journey on Burāq, to which reference will be made in the next chapter, but the representation of this subject in this MS. (fol. 18) can hardly be described as successful, for the Prophet clings awkwardly to his strange steed, as if in some apprehension of falling off.

In none of these pictures is Muḥammad represented with a halo, nor is there any indication of his exalted status as the Apostle of Allah, except the prominent position he occupies in each separate picture. But in a MS. of al-Āthār al-Bāqiyyah (‘The abiding memorials from the generations that have passed away’) by al-Biruni, of almost the same date—707 H. (≈ A.D. 1307–8)—Muḥammad appears with the round halo so familiar in Christian art (foll. 11 b and 193). In the first of these he is shown riding on a camel, with Jesus by his side on an ass, while the Prophet Isa;ah, looking out of the window of his house, watches them approach; to this vision of Isaiah the Muslim theologian appealed when his Christian opponent twitted him with the fact that whereas the coming of Jesus was foretold in many verses of the Old Testament, no prophecy could be found predicting the mission of Muḥammad. So the Muslim controversialists quoted the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (xxi. 6, 8, 9), according to a version of their own, as follows: ‘For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman; let him declare what he seeth. And he cried, O Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time, and am set in my ward whole nights; and behold I see a man riding on an ass, and a man riding on a camel, and one of them came forward crying, and said: Babylon is fallen, and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.’ To the Muslim theologian he that rode on the ass was Jesus, and the rider on the camel was Muḥammad; and to whom but to Muḥammad could the destruction of Babylon be ascribed? For in consequence of the coming of the Prophet of Islam, Babylon (or its successor) had indeed fallen, its idols had been broken, and its empire had perished.

In each of the pictures in this Edinburgh MS. the Prophet’s head is surrounded by a halo. But too much importance must not be attached to this mark of distinction, for not only does he share it with the other Prophets of God—as, of course, is in harmony with Muslim teaching—but also with...
Ahriman, the spirit of evil, when he tempts the first man and woman (fol. 49 b); the false Prophet Bihãfrûd (fol. 117 b); King Nebuchadnezzar burning the temple of Jerusalem (fol. 158); the Persian tyrant Dâhik (fol. 122); the executioners of Hajjât (fol. 113); and the woman bringing wine to the revellers at the fair of ‘Ukâţ (fol. 188).

Used in this indiscriminate manner, the halo ceases to carry with it any association of holiness and becomes merely a meaningless decoration. But the flame-halo, which superseded it in Persian art, appears to have been reserved for Muhammad and the other Prophets, and, in Shah pictures, for ‘Ali also. In Indian paintings, on the other hand, in which the round halo again makes its appearance, it is used to indicate sovereignty and adorns the heads of the emperor and of members of the imperial family, and also occasionally of some of the saints.

In Persian and Indian art the representations of Muhammad that most commonly occur show him as riding on Burûq, the consideration of which demands a separate chapter. Such pictures and the majority of the other scenes in which he occurs are generally found as isolated paintings or as illustrations in poetical works where the text happens to provide suitable occasion for them. It is rare to find incidents of his life represented in works of history, and none of the standard biographies of the Prophet accepted by orthodox opinion appear to have been at any time provided with pictures. In such historical works of more general contents as happen to be illustrated—which in itself is rare—the painters seem to have felt some hesitation in inserting pictures of the founder of their faith among those of meaner folk, and it is hard to find a parallel to the frequent occurrence of the Prophet in the illustrations of Rashíd ad-Dîn’s Jâmi‘ al-Tawârikh. Messrs. Luzac & Co. possess a MS. of Mîrâkhâmîd’s universal history, entitled Rawdat as-Safa (dated 1093 A.H. = A.D. 1595), which contains several pictures of incidents in the Prophet’s career, such as the mysterious event known as the splitting of the chest (fol. 15 b), the death of Abû Jahl in the Battle of Badr (fol. 44), the casting down of the idols from the roof of the Ka’âb (fol. 83 b), and Muhammad proclaiming ‘Ali as his successor at Ghadrî al-Khumma (fol. 97 b) (Plate XXI). But this MS. was obviously illustrated for some Shah and was intended to subserve the glorification of ‘Ali, who is provided with as magnificent a flame-halo as the Prophet himself. Though a few other illustrated copies of this work are in existence, none appears to have pictures of this character.

There is another historical work in which portraits of the Prophet might well be expected, namely, Qisas al-Ashârî (The Legends of the Prophets)—the title adopted by several authors for their account of the sacred annals of Islam—but though of course a biography of Muhammad is always included, the only incident illustrated in the MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Persan 54, fol. 187) is the first meeting of Muhammad with Khadijah, and the same is the case with the MS. belonging to Mr. Chester Beatty (fol. 273).

It is more common to find isolated pictures of what may be termed a Santa Conversazione, in which the Prophet is seated among his Companions, several of whom it is possible to identify, even when their names are not given. Such groups are undoubtedly in many instances tendentious and are intended to subserve the interests of the Shah cause, as may be judged from the prominent or isolated position assigned to ‘Ali and his sons, Hasan and Hûsain. One of the finest of these groups is in a MS. of Nagzûn al-Jawâbir by Nawâl dâd A.H. 890 (= A.D. 1485). The Prophet is seated in the prayer-niche of a mosque, which forms the background of the picture; it is a superb example of a building such as the painter himself may have known in the city of Ḥarât or Samaqand in the days of their greatness, with a green dome, and a front covered with intermingled blue and green tiles; with a similar disregard for the local conditions of Medina, the artist has set in front of the Prophet a great brazer from which rise up bright yellow flames of fire. Muhammad is engaged in dictating either a passage of the Qur’ân or some official letter to a secretary, possibly Zayd ibn Ṭhabît, who, seated on the ground before his master, is busily engaged in writing; by his side is another seated figure, and opposite these two other Companions of the Prophet, at whose identity it is only possible to guess, but they are possibly intended for the three devoted friends of Muhammad, who succeeded him as leaders of the Muslim community. Standing in the left-hand corner is Bilîl, the first of the Muslims appointed to give the call to prayer; he is easily recognized by his black face, he being always thus represented on account of his Abyssinian birth. On the right stands ‘Ali, holding under his arm his famous two-pointed sword; in the foreground, just inside a slender railing, are seated four more of the Companions. The picture is a fine piece of composition, remarkable for the brilliancy and the harmony of its colouring (Plate XXII).

A picture of a much later date, probably the earlier part of the seventeenth century, has been reproduced in the Burlington Magazine, from an Indian original. The scene is laid in the mosque at Medina; in the centre is the prayer-niche, on its right is a pulpit, and on its left a raised throne, on which

1 Reproduced in Survivals of Sassanian and Manichean Art in Persian Painting (Plate 15).
2 Bodleian Library (Elliott 287, fol. 7).
is seated Muhammad, between his two grandsons, Hasan and Husayn. In an archway, in the extreme left-hand corner, stands Bilāl, and below him are seated the first three Caliphs, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthman, and opposite them (in front of the prayer-niche) the fourth Caliph, 'Ali. The prominent place thus given to 'Ali clearly marks the Shi'ah proclivities of this picture, and supports the hypothesis that it was painted in one of the Shi'ah kingdoms of the Deccan. In a recess in the right hand of the background is 'Abbās, an uncle of the Prophet and the ancestor of the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad, with his son 'Abdallāh. In the centre of the picture are the three 'pillars' of the Shi'ah sect: 'Ammār, one of the earliest converts to Islam, holding in his hands a copy of the Qur'ān; Qanbar, a freedman of 'Ali, with his master's famous two-pointed sword under his arm; Abū Dharr kneeling on a prayer-mat, on which lies his rosary; he is held in special reverence by the Shi'ah for his ascetic virtues; on his right hand stands Salmān, with his hands extended in prayer; he is said to have been a Persian Christian slave in Medina and one of the early converts in that city. Inside a marble balustrade, in the foreground, are six of the most famous Companions of the Prophet, while outside it are seated four others, each of whom is known for having come in conflict with 'Ali in more or less degree. The only figures to whom no name is attached are two men with their arms crossed, seated in a humble attitude on the right, and probably intended to represent two of the early mystics of Islam.

Such Shi'ah pictures designed for the glorification of 'Ali became more frequent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, though at no time have they been very numerous, and attention has not been drawn to any other containing such a large number of figures; as a rule only the Prophet himself, his son-in-law 'Ali, and his two grandsons are represented.

In pictures from the sixteenth century onwards, and possibly earlier, the Prophet is distinguished, not by the round halo, which was probably of Christian origin (as in the two MSS. described above), but by the flame halo, which may certainly be traced back to the haloes of a similar form, occurring in paintings and statues of the Buddha.

Pictures of Muhammad in which his features are visible are comparatively rare and most frequently occur in the earlier period. From the sixteenth century onwards a convention became established of hanging a short veil, from the forehead to the chin, over the face of the Prophet, so that his features were hidden. Such a concession to orthodox sentiment also occurs in representations of other Prophets, such as Abraham, &c., and the early saints of Islam, such as 'Ali and his grandson, Zayn al-Abidīn.
Later, reverence for the Prophet leads the painter to depict him merely as a flame, e.g. in a MS. of Hamdab-i-Haydari, a metrical history of Muhammad and the first four Caliphs (Bibliothèque Nationale, Supplément persan 1078), dated 1632, the Prophet is represented in every case as a flame, without any indication of human form at all.

In an eighteenth-century copy of Sa’di’s Bāstān, in the India Office Library (Ethé 1142, fol. 2 b), Muhammad rides upon Burāq, enveloped in a white garment like a woman’s burqa, such as Indian ladies wear when they go abroad in the streets; though the Prophet is riding, not even his hands or his feet are visible (Plate LVI).

In the series of the inspired Prophets of Allāh, Islam assigns to Jesus the highest place after Muhammad. Accordingly, in religious art, pictures of Jesus frequently occur, especially as poets, such as Nizāmī, Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī, Sa’dī, and others, constantly introduce anecdotes about him into their poems. The Muslim painters must in some cases have had before them Christian pictures of the life of Jesus and possibly illustrated MSS. of the Gospels. In the present shrunken condition of the Christian Churches in the Muhammadan East, it is sometimes forgotten how numerous was the Christian population under Muslim rule before the Mongol conquest and even later, as has been already shown in Chapter III, and social relations, closer and more intimate, between the adherents of the rival creeds, before the growing bitterness of later centuries estranged them, made it easier for the religious art of Islam to copy that of Christianity.

The picture of the birth of Muhammad in Rashid ad-Dīn’s Jāmī’ at-Tawārikh (fol. 43 b) is obviously reminiscent of a Christian picture of the Birth of Jesus. The angels hovering over the mother of the new-born child conform to a Christian type; in the place usually assigned to Joseph in Christian art, and in a similar attitude of bewilderment, sits ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the grandfather and guardian of Muhammad, for the Prophet was a posthumous child; and the three women who are coming to visit the mother correspond to the three Wise Men (Plate XXIII). Another illustration (fol. 23 b), which still more closely resembles the Christian type of representation for the same incident, is the picture of the Annunciation; according to the tradition of the Eastern Church,4 the Angel Gabriel met the Virgin Mary as she was on her way to fetch water from a well, and a comparison with the mosaic in the Church of San Marco in Venice clearly shows that the Muslim painter must have attempted to copy a similar original; even the dress of the Virgin in

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4 Edinburgh University Library, No. 20.
the two instances corresponds, and the artist working for Rashid ad-Din apparently did not understand the exact arrangement of her robe and in his endeavour to copy it produces a garment of a clumsy character, calculated to fall off as soon as the Virgin moved forward (Plate XXIV).

In the Annunciation in the MS. of al-Āthār al-Bāqiyyah (fol. 166 b), though the scene is not set in the vicinity of a well, yet both the figure of the Virgin and that of the Angel suggest a Christian original, and the Virgin has a spindle and distaff in her hands and is engaged in spinning wool, in accordance with the traditional representation of her in Byzantine art.¹

A Christian original also probably suggested the picture in this same MS. (fol. 49b), in which, in accordance with the Zoroastrian tradition, the principle of evil, Ahirman, is represented as conversing with Mēshā and Mēshyānā, the first man and woman in the Zoroastrian legend. It would appear that the artist, finding no model to follow in such survivals of early Persian art as had come down to the fourteenth century, has adapted to his present purpose a Christian picture of God walking with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.²

In the delineation of other incidents in the life of Jesus, the Muslim artist has had no Christian exemplar to follow—necessarily so, in cases where the Islamic account differs from that given in the Gospels; e.g. the Qur'ān does not describe the birth of Jesus as taking place in a stable, but in a remote and desolate place (Qur. xix. 22). In his presentation of the Nativity, therefore, the Muslim artist had to create his own types, and (so far as the writer is aware) the picture here reproduced is unique in Muslim art.³ The Virgin in an attitude of exhaustion and dejection leans against the withered date-palm, which, at her touch, bursts into leafage and fruit, and from its roots a stream gushes forth; unfortunately, the silver used by the painter to depict water has, as in almost every other case in these Persian pictures, become tarnished and has turned quite black. The new-born babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lies on the ground, with a great flame halo of gold, which seems almost to serve as a pillow. Among the countless pictures of the Nativity to be found in the world, this one has characteristics that exist in no other, and though not remarkable as a work of art or in itself particularly beautiful, it is unique in its conception and execution (Plate XXV).

Similarly, no other Muhammadan representation of the Baptism of Jesus is known except that in al-Āthār al-Bāqiyyah⁴ (fol. 169 b), and though other

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² Reproduced in the author's Survivals of Sasanian and Manichean Art in Persian Painting (Plate 15).
³ From a MS. of the Qur'ān al-Āthiyya, undated, but probably belonging to the end of the sixteenth century (fol. 235), in the collection of Mr. A. Chester Beatty.⁴ See p. 95.
Christian subjects in this volume suggest that the painter had some knowledge of earlier Christian art, he has treated the Baptism in a manner peculiar to himself. The types he has selected for Jesus and St. John the Baptist are Central Asian, and peculiarly unattractive; the dress also is Central Asian, and the huge shoes which Jesus has put down in a prominent place before stepping into the water are such as are worn in Chinese Turkestan to the present day. The dove swoops down from the sky almost like a bird of prey and looks as if it were made of brass. A more unsympathetic representation of this important event in the life of Jesus it would be difficult to imagine.

Other incidents in the Gospel narrative, which receive no mention in the Qur'an, are illustrated in a MS. of Mirzâwând's Universal History in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Supplément persan 1567), such as Jesus casting a stone at the devil (fol. 155 b) and the Last Supper (fol. 163).

A variant of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican was woven by Sa'di into the text of his Bustân (ed. Graf, p. 237). Jesus is said to have been one day in the company of a devout person, when a reprobat overhearing their conversation repents him of his evil ways and resolves to amend his life. So, humbly he draws near the two holy personages; but the devout ascetic, annoyed at the interruption, wishes harshly to drive him away; whereupon Jesus rebukes him in the same spirit as in the Gospel narrative he expresses his commendation of the Publican (Plate XXVI).

One of the most beautiful stories that Muhammadan writers tell of Jesus is that one day, while walking in the bazaar with his Disciples, they passed the body of a dead dog lying in the gutter; one after another began to express his disgust at the sight; one exclaimed, 'How it stinks!'; said another, 'Its skin is so torn, there is not enough left wherewith to make a purse'. But Jesus, selecting the one characteristic of the poor beast that was worthy of commendation, said: 'Pearls cannot equal the whiteness of its teeth.' This story first occurs in the literature of Islam, in the Hadith, and was afterwards popularized by the poets, notably by Nizâmi in his Makânan al-Asrâr. Unlike so many of the sayings attributed to Jesus in Muslim literature, this story does not appear to be of Christian origin, as it occurs neither in the Gospels nor in Apocryphal literature. But it is told by Haribhadra, a Jain monk of the second half of the ninth century, and might well have been made known in the Muslim world by the Indian thinkers of the Sumanîyyah

1 Survivals of Sassanian and Manichæan Art in Persian Painting (Plate 17).
sect, who were holding disputations with the Muslim theologians of Baghdad and Basrah just at the same period. The Jaina writer connects the incident with Vāsudeva, one of the names of Krishna, and the fact that his biography had more points of similarity with that of Jesus than with any other of the Prophets of Islam may partly explain why the Ḥadīth in which the story first makes its appearance in Muslim literature connects the story with Jesus. It was made part of the literature of Europe by Goethe in the notes to his Westöstlicher Divan.

In a late MS. of the Khamsah of Nizâmî, dated a.h. 1060 (A.D. 1650), the painter has represented this incident as though it had occurred in a bazaar of his own native city and has given to the chief personages in the story the dress and appearance of his contemporaries; in the background are the shops of the baker, the butcher, the pastry-cook, and the grocer. But the composition is stiff and lacking in dignity. A higher degree of pathos is reached by an earlier painter who in A.D. 1500 illustrated a copy of Nizâmî’s Khamsah, but having a special interest in the delineation of various kinds of foliage, he has departed from the original lines of the story and has set the scene in a wood. The figure of Jesus, leaning on his staff and looking down with compassion on the dead body of the poor beast, attains a dignity such as is rare in Persian painting of this period.

In a later MS. in the British Museum (Add. 6613, fol. 19 b) all the pathos of the story is destroyed by the foolish expedient of dressing up the Apostles in the garb of Portuguese, apparently because such foreign visitors to Persia were the only representatives of the Christian world known to the artist.

It is somewhat strange that no picture of the Crucifixion appears to have been painted by any Muhammadan painter, for though the Qur’ân (iv. 136) declares that a phantom was crucified by the Jews in the place of Jesus, while He Himself was carried straight up to heaven, it was still regarded as an historical event, and might therefore have well been selected as a fitting subject for pictorial representation. The Crucifixion reproduced by Professor Massignon in his learned work Al-Hallâj, martyr mystique de l’Islam (p. 770), is a late nineteenth-century woodcut, obviously copied from some Christian book of devotion, and is used to represent the martyrdom of Hallâj rather than the death of Jesus.

The varying types of countenance which Christian art has employed in portraying the features of Jesus—which in the Catacombs, in Roman and

\[1\] M. Hörten, Die Philosophie des Islam, p. 181 (München, 1905).

\[2\] Bibliothèque Nationale (Supplément persan 1111, fol. 209). (Plate XXVII a.)

\[3\] Bodleian Library (Elliott 192, fol. 22 b). (Plate XXVII b.)

\[4\] (Plate XXVII b.)
Byzantine mosaics, in the Quattrocento and Cinquecento, or in Protestant pictures—have been made the subject of special studies; but none of these seems to have impressed itself on the imagination of the Muslim painters, and there is no notable similarity in their manner of depicting the personage whose name the Muhammadans never mention without invoking a blessing upon Him. As characteristic of the Muslim attitude towards Jesus, mention may be made of a portrait of Him occurring in a genealogical tree of the Ottoman Sultans, painted in the seventeenth century. Jesus is specially distinguished among the Prophets of Islam as the only one among them who never married, and thus it was natural that the Muslim artist should seek for a type among the dervishes of his own time, who likewise were wont to forgo the consolations of married life. In the picture referred to, which occurs in a long series of portraits arranged like the Tree of Jesse in a medieval cathedral, and depicts all the great personages with whom the Sultan of Turkey claimed relationship, from Seth the son of Adam onwards, Jesus is depicted as seated on the ground in the humble attitude of a dervish, who has renounced all the pleasures and attractions of the world—bareheaded, as one who would not claim even the distinguishing mark of the meanest of the faithful, the turban, the crown of Islam.

Jesus and Muḥammad are the last in the long series of the Prophets of Islam, who from time to time delivered to their own generation, under divine inspiration, the same revelation of God’s nature and of man’s duties towards Him, as had been given to Adam in the beginning of the world and had to be taught anew as wickedness and idolatry obscured the knowledge of the true faith and men fell away into sin. Accordingly, in Muslim religious art a place had to be found at least for the better known of the Prophets from Adam onwards. For the majority of them, the Muslim painter could derive no guidance from the work of his predecessors and had to depend upon his own fantasy. But in the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, the long white shirts in which our first parents are clad seem to be reminiscent of the traditional representation of this incident in the art of the Oriental Churches, as may be judged from the mosaic of the history of the Creation and of the Fall in the vestibule of San Marco in Venice, in which Adam is seen standing clad in such a long shirt, while God is putting another over the head of Eve. Christian painters, probably under the influence of the

1 Karl Pearson, Die Franchise: zur Geschichte des Christentums in Mittelalter (Strassburg, 1887); G. F. Hill, The Madonna Portraits of Christ (Oxford, 1902).

2 Subah al-Aḥlāb, fol. 8 (A.F. 30 (145), Nationalbibliothek, Wien). (Plate XXIX.)

3 E. W. Lane, Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, 5th ed., p. 31 (1860).

4 Qīṣaʾ al-ʾAnbāʾ, belonging to Mr. A. Chester Beatty.
classical predilection for depicting the nude, have for centuries been accustomed to representing Adam and Eve naked, having scriptural warrant for thus disregarding ecclesiastical condemnation of such a breach of the conventional demands of modesty in the majority of cases, but respect for a Prophet of Allah would stand in the way of a Muslim painter in a similar manner outraging orthodox sentiment, and the picture of Adam and Eve merely semi-nude (in the MS. formerly in the Yates Thompson collection and now in the possession of Mr. Gulbekian) is an isolated example, which may partly be explained by its occurrence in an anthology compiled for a prince, and not in a religious work such as a history of the Prophets.

Muslim theologians have given various estimates of the number of the Prophets, attaining so high a figure as 224,000, and as geographical knowledge grew, even that number was not held to satisfy the verses in the Qur'an (x. 48; xii. 8; xxxv. 22) in which God declares that He has sent a Prophet to every nation. But the Qur'an mentions by name only twenty-eight, and in regard to some of these no details whatsoever are given, and even of so great a figure in Jewish and Christian literature as David it is merely recorded that he was a maker of armour, that the birds joined with him in singing the praises of God, and that he decided a dispute between two shepherds (Qur'an, xxi. 78-80; xxxiv. 10; xxxviii. 16-25). The compilers of the popular Biographies of the Prophets, and the poets who introduced stories of the Prophets into their narrative and didactic poems, naturally followed the lead of the Word of God, and consequently the Prophets of the Old Testament whose history the Muslim painter was most commonly called upon to illustrate were Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon, and among the Prophets sent to Arabia, Shâlih, who caused a she-camel to come out of the mountain side, when his unbelieving fellow tribesmen called upon him to perform a miracle in confirmation of his claim to be the bearer of a divine message. Alexander the Great, whom the commentators identified with Dhu'l-Qarnayn mentioned in the Qur'an (xviii. 82-96) and regarded as a pious Muslim, engaged in spreading the faith among unbelievers, and warring against giants, monsters, and obstinate infidels, became the hero of marvellous adventures, the recital of which, as elaborated by writers both in prose and poetry, furnished abundant material for the painters to work upon. Another favourite subject was the story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, who, as witnesses to the true faith in an unbelieving generation, received special mention in the Qur'an (chapter xviii).

\footnote{\textit{Illustrations from One Hundred Manuscripts in the Library of Henry Yates Thompson, Vol. III, Plate XLII} (London, 1912).}
XXIX. Jesus, as represented by a Turkish painter

XXX. Abraham and the fire-worshipper