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Rābi'a, a female Sufi saint, was born in 717 CE and released from slavery to lead a life in pursuit of purity and perfect union with God. Her teachings and the numerous miracles attributed to her have made her an influential and revered figure in Sufi theology. This authoritative 1928 biography of the saint was written by Margaret Smith, who mastered numerous eastern languages, travelled extensively, and published a number of translations of important Arabic texts. Smith's linguistic skill and her immersion in the culture she studied has produced a book still considered an important account of Rābi'a's life, Smith also includes an incisive discussion of the role of women in early Islamic mysticism and an examination of Sufi doctrine, and examines the issues of celibacy and sainthood in Islam. A biography of one exceptional woman written by another.

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RĀBI'Ā THE MYSTIC



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RĀBI'Ā THE MYSTIC
HER FELLOW-SAINTS IN ISLĀM

Being the Life and Teachings of
Rābi'ā al-'Adawiyya Al-Qaysiyya of Baṣra
together with some account of
the place of the women saints in Islām

BY

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*Sometime Scholar of Girton College,
Cambridge*



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In Memoriam

A. A. S.

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PREFACE

Rābi'a of Baṣra, the subject of this memoir, has long been known to students of Ṣūfism, and to a lesser extent to those interested in Mysticism generally, as a unique personality among the early Ṣūfīs, one who, in spite of her early date—she died in A.D. 801—was a true mystic. The material for this account of her life and teachings is derived from one or two short biographical notices and from scattered references to be found in Arab and Persian writers on Sūfism and is the first biography of this early Muslim saint to appear, which aims at being complete, so far as the sources at present available make this possible.

In the compiling of this biography, originally undertaken for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of London, I have been indebted for valuable references to Professor L. Massignon, of the Collège de France, and to Prof. Ritter of Constantinople, and I take this opportunity of offering my thanks to both of these distinguished scholars.

My grateful thanks are due also to Sir Thomas Arnold, from whom I have had constant help and advice in the writing of this memoir, and to Professor Nicholson of Cambridge, whose writings first inspired me to study Ṣūfism, and whose unrivalled knowledge of the subject has been most generously placed at my disposal for the purposes of this book.

MARGARET SMITH

*London**June 1928*

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SURVEY OF SOURCES

The sources from which information is to be derived about the life and teachings of Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya al-Qaysiyya give us evidence which at the best is fragmentary and in many cases unreliable, chiefly because her biographers lived at a considerable distance of time after her death, and legend has played at least as great a part as history in the account given of the story of her life. This, however, is no uncommon thing where saints are concerned, be they Muslim or Christian, and the accounts given shew us at least the estimation in which Rābi'a was held by those who came after her, and are a clear indication that she had a great reputation during her life-time. Belonging to the sex to which Muslim theologians commonly attributed little capacity for thought, and less for religion,¹ only a woman of outstanding character and gifts could have won a place among the greatest of the Ṣūfī teachers, renowned as much for her teaching as for the blameless sanctity of her life.

A small point, but one of great significance, is that she is constantly referred to by later writers as "Rābi'a" pure and simple, proving that both to the writers and to those for whom they wrote, she was a personality too well known to need further description.

The earliest writer who mentions her is *al-Jāhiz* (the Goggle-eyed) of Baṣra (*ob.* A.D. 869), a well-known thinker, who gave his name to a sect of the Mu'tazilites. He wrote the *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (= The Book of Animals) and the *Kitāb al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, a popular book on rhetoric. In both of these he mentions Rābi'a al-Qaysiyya. His references to her are of the first importance, because of his early date, and the fact that he may have known Rābi'a in his early childhood and in any case is likely to have known those who were personally acquainted with her. As a native of Baṣra, her own city, he would be in close touch with all types of religious thought and religious thinkers in that place.

1 See pp. 133 ff.

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Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (ob. A.D. 988), who was born at Ṭūs, and was surnamed the “Peacock of the Poor”,¹ mentions Rābi'a once in his *Kitāb al-Luma'*, one of the earliest treatises on Ṣūfism, which it was the author's intention to justify as being in accordance with the Qur'ān and the Traditions, and as the knowledge directly revealed by God to His saints.² Al-Sarrāj is concerned to give the views of Ṣūfī thinkers, not his own theories. He quotes from both books and oral traditions and in most cases states his authorities. Because of his early date and also because of his method of dealing with his subject, al-Sarrāj's work is of great importance, though not so complete or so clear a statement of Ṣūfī doctrine as the *Qūt al-Qulūb* of his contemporary Abū Ṭālib, nor so concise and readable as the *Risāla* of al-Qushayrī.³

Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (ob. A.D. 996), an ascetic who lived and taught in Mecca, Baṣra and Baghdād, was the author of the *Qūt al-Qulūb* (= The Food of the Hearts), another very early treatise on Ṣūfism, and in it he mentions Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya several times, giving incidents from her life, referring to her associates and, most valuable of all, quoting her well-known verses on the “two loves”,⁴ and giving his own comments on these verses at considerable length. Abū Ṭālib is a Ṣūfī author of great authority, and he is also a careful writer, for we note that he admits that different authors have been suggested for the verses above mentioned, but he himself believes that Rābi'a was responsible for them.

Another Ṣūfī writer contemporary with these two was *M. b. I. al-Kalābādhī* (ob. c. A.D. 1000), the author of the “*Kitāb al-Ta'arruf li-Madhab ahl al-Taṣawwuf*” (= Book of Enquiry as to the Religion of the Ṣūfīs) and the “*Ma'ānī al-Akhhbār*” (= The Hidden Meanings of the Traditions), which are to be found only in MS. Both of these contain references to Rābi'a, and the former includes a version of her poem on Love, which gives a slightly different reading from that of Abū Ṭālib.

¹ Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-Uns*, p. 319. No reason is given for the title.

² *Kitāb al-Luma'*, p. 203.

³ See below, p. xv.

⁴ See p. 102.

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Al-Hamādhānī (ob. A.D. 1007), surnamed the “Wonder of the Age”, a native of Ecbatāna, in his “*Shakwa al-Gharīb*” (= Complaint of the Stranger), of which only MSS. are available, speaks of Rābi'a's engagement to 'Abd al-Wāhid b. Zayd, who was her contemporary and one of the same school of thought.

Abū Nu'aym al-Isfahānī (ob. A.D. 1038) was one of the earliest to write a biography of the saints and his “*Ḥilya al-Awliya*”, known also as the “*Ḥilya al-Abrār*”, is an authority of the greatest importance. There are several references to Rābi'a in Abū Nu'aym's accounts of other early Ṣūfīs and there is said to be a complete biography of her in one of the MSS. of this work in Constantinople, but I have not yet been able to obtain a copy of it. If it could be found, it would probably throw much light on Rābi'a's life and teachings, as being the earliest biography of her available.

A very important authority is *Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī* (ob. A.D. 1074), who was born at Naysābūr in A.H. 986. He made a study of Islamic mysticism and was also a teacher of the Traditions at Baghdād towards the end of his life. His *Risāla* (= Treatise) is one of the most valuable books of reference on Ṣūfism written in Arabic and that he is a conscientious and reliable writer is proved by the fact that he is careful to quote his authorities and in the case of a traditional statement to give the chain of witnesses back to the original speaker. In the *Risāla* he mentions Rābi'a frequently, quoting her teaching or some anecdote illustrating her practice, in connection with most of the stages of the mystic Way. As we have noted, she is accepted by these leading writers as a Ṣūfī teacher of recognised authority.

Among the minor authorities who mention Rābi'a is *al-Sarrāj al-Qārī* (ob. A.D. 1106) of Baghdād, the writer of the *Maṣāri' al-Ushshāq* (= Poems about Lovers), including an account of a dream of Rābi'a's not given by any earlier writer and an anecdote found also in Abū Nu'aym's “*Ḥilya*”.

Al-Ghaṣṣālī (ob. A.D. 1111), surnamed the “Proof of Islām”, was born at Ṭūs in A.D. 1059 and is such an outstanding figure in Islamic literature that his testimony to Rābi'a is of the greatest value. He was a lecturer at Naysābūr and later a professor at Baghdād. Having turned from orthodox Islām to the study of

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Şūfism, which he made it his business to reconcile, so far as he could, with the traditional faith, he went to live in Damascus, and after visiting Jerusalem and Alexandria, returned to his native town and died there. His greatest work is the *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (= The Revivification of the Religious Sciences), in which he sets forth the Şūfī doctrine as he conceived it, quoting in all cases the early Şūfī teachers as his authorities. His work is scholarly and critical in the highest degree and he is too careful a writer for his conclusions not to be accepted as representing all the sources and knowledge to be obtained in his time, while his wide learning and also his extensive travels put a great deal of material at his disposal. He refers to Rābi'a (without any further distinguishing title)¹ among the leading teachers of Şūfism and accepts her teaching and her views as of at least equal authority with those of the great mystic *shaykhs*. He quotes the verses already referred to,² and gives his own interpretation of them. It is on the stage of Love (on the mystic Way) that he considers her views as most important, and this is of great interest as an indication of her special contribution to this doctrine.³

The Persian writer *M. b. al-Munawwar* (ob. A.D. 1203) mentions Rābi'a in his *Asrār al-Tawhīd* (= The Secrets of Unification), which is an account of the life and sayings of his great-grandfather, the mystic Abū Sa'īd b. Abī al-Khayr, a very well-known Şūfī teacher who died in A.D. 1049, and whose quatrains represent some of the most exquisite Persian mystical poetry that is known. The *Asrār al-Tawhīd* sets forth very clearly the mystical doctrines of the Şūfis of this period, based upon the teaching of those earlier Şūfis of Rābi'a's time.

I. A. A. b. Ghānim al-Maqdīsī (ob. c. A.D. 1279) wrote a considerable number of works on Mysticism, amongst them the "Kashf al-Asrār wa manāqib al-Abrār" (= The Unveiling of Mysteries and the Merits of the Righteous) in which he devotes a page to Rābi'a, giving some verses of hers not found in any other writer, but found in a very corrupt form in a MS. without title or author, under the heading "Tawba Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya" (= The Conversion of Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya).⁴ The lines as given by Maqdīsī

1 See above, p. xiii.

2 See above, p. xiv.

3 See Part II, Chapter x.

4 Berlin, *Bibl. Wetzstein*, II, 230.

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are quite characteristic of Rābi'a and it seems probable that both these and the whole poem quoted in a corrupt form by this unnamed writer, are derived from some older source, now missing. The "Kashf al-Asrār" and the "Tawba" are found only in MS.

By far the most extensive and complete biography of Rābi'a extant is that of the Persian poet *Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār* (ob. A.D. 1230), who was born near Nīshāpūr about A.D. 1120. He followed the calling of a druggist when young, hence his surname of 'Aṭṭār, but later became a contemplative and gained a deep knowledge of Ṣūfism. His *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā* (= The Memoirs of the Saints) is the oldest book in Persian dealing exclusively with the lives of the saints. He gives no precise indication of the sources upon which he drew for his information, but no doubt he used earlier biographies or treatises on Ṣūfism available to him, such as the "Hilya al-Awliyā" of Abū Nu'aym and the *Risāla* of al-Qushayrī already referred to. He is at pains to make his biographies as complete as possible, giving a full account not only of the lives of his subjects, but of their reputed miracles and their sayings and teachings, so that we may assume that he searched all possible sources in pursuit of information and doubtless he had access to documents long since destroyed. Obviously, legends had grown up around the memory of the saints he portrayed and he has not hesitated to insert them, and probably to add considerably to them, along with what may well rest on historical facts and, for the modern student of his work, it is no easy task to disentangle the two. Yet by inference we may find corroboration for many of his statements, apart from any documentary confirmation, e.g. he speaks of Rābi'a as having been a slave in her youth and gives a circumstantial account of the events which led to her being sold into slavery and what brought about her manumission. Other writers describe her as a freed woman. Now, it is a curious fact that Rābi'a, though given a tribal surname, is never called by the name of her father, as every unmarried Muslim woman is, to the present day. Her namesake, Rābi'a of Syria,¹ who died fifty years before our Rābi'a, is always called Rābi'a bint Ismā'il (= daughter of

¹ See pp. 140 ff.

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Ishmael) and details are given of her parentage. The fact that Rābi'a has no patronymic and is called only by the name of her tribe, is strong evidence of her having been a slave and therefore of no known parentage. The same would be the case to-day, in countries where slavery is prevalent or has prevailed up to recent years.

Again, a Muslim freewoman in practice is always under the guardianship of a male relative, father, husband, brother or uncle, and this guardian has the right to marry his ward to whom he will, and though technically, according to Muslim law, her consent is necessary, actually she will not be allowed to remain unmarried. There is no suggestion in any of the biographies that Rābi'a was under any such guardianship, and on the contrary it is plain that she was free to refuse the offers of marriage made to her,¹ and that she could—and did—live the celibate life is again strong proof that she had no known relatives, in her youth at least, to oblige her to follow the invariable custom for Muslim womanhood. A freed slave would be able to choose for herself and none would have the right to coerce her. So in this respect 'Aṭṭār's account is supported by other circumstances.

A Ṣūfī writer of considerable importance was *Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar b. A. al-Subrawardī* (ob. A.D. 1234), who studied Ṣūfism in Baṣra, and was later known as a preacher and teacher in Baghdād. His best known work is the '*Awāriṣ al-Ma'āriṣ*' (= The Bounties of Knowledge) and in this he mentions Rābi'a and quotes her teaching several times.

J. Ṣibt Ibn al-Jawzī (ob. A.D. 1257) was the author of the "Mir'āt al-Zamān" (= The Mirror of the Age), containing a biography of Rābi'a of considerable length, which is of importance because it is most probably derived from the "Ṣafwa al-Ṣafwa" (= The Cream of the Cream) by his grandfather Ibn al-Jawzī, which is a résumé of the "Ḥilya" of Abū Nu'aym. No available MS. of the "Ṣafwa al-Ṣafwa" contains the biography of Rābi'a which is known to form part of the complete work, and therefore this account, though at second-hand, is of interest.

One of the most famous of Rābi'a's biographers is *Ibn Khallikān* (ob. A.D. 1282), who was born at Arbela in A.D. 1211. After

1 See Part I, Chapter II.

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living for a time at Aleppo and Damascus, he went to Cairo and there began his great biographical dictionary, the *Wafayāt al-A'yān* (= Obituaries of Eminent Men). In his preface he explains clearly his motive and his method. He says that he adopted the alphabetical order, because he judged it to be more convenient than the chronological (which is the order we usually find employed by Oriental biographers). He says further:

I have spoken of all these whose names are familiar to the public and about whom questions are frequently asked. . . . I have fixed, with all possible exactness, the dates of their birth and death; I have traced up their genealogy as high as I could. . . . and I have cited the traits which may best serve to characterize each individual, such as noble actions, singular anecdotes, verses and letters, so that the reader may derive amusement from my work.¹

Unfortunately, in his account of Rābi'a, he has confused her to some extent with Rābi'a, sometimes spelt Rā iy'a, bint Ismā'il of Syria. At the same time, his notice of her is very valuable, because he gives his sources and it is possible therefore to fall back on earlier authorities to supplement his statements. Ibn Khallikān has put posterity under a great obligation to him for his invaluable work.

A well-known chronicler who mentions Rābi'a is *al-Dhababī* (ob. A.D. 1348), who in his *Mizān al-Itidāl* (= The Balance of the Equilibrium) quotes the opinion of her held by the traditionist Abū Dāwūd (ob. A.D. 889).

The Sūfī writer *M. b. al-Ḥ. b. 'Alī al-Isnawī Imād al-Dīn* (ob. A.D. 1363), who studied in Cairo and Damascus and was also for some time a professor at Hamat, was the author of the *Ḥayāt al-Qulūb* (= The Life of the Hearts) in which Rābi'a's eschatological teaching is referred to.

Another of these later Sūfī writers was *Yāfi'ī al-Shāfi'ī* (ob. A.D. 1367), who was born in Yemen and travelled to Jerusalem, Damascus and Cairo, and died in Mecca. He wrote extensively and in his *Rawḍ al-Riyāḥīn fī hikāyāt al-Ṣāliḥīn* (= 'The Garden of the Perfumes in the Lives of the Virtuous') he gives several of Rābi'a's sayings.

Among the Persian biographers who mention Rābi'a is *Aflākī*, contemporary with these two last mentioned. He was a Mevlevi

1 Ibn Khallikān, ed. de Slane, 1, p. 3.

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dervish, who wrote a history of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī and his successors called “Manāqib al-‘Ārifīn” (= The Merits of the Gnostics) which is not very exact chronologically, but contains some interesting anecdotes, including one of Rābi'a not found elsewhere. Aflākī spent the years from A.D. 1310 to A.D. 1353 in compiling this history, but though he claims to have obtained his information from trustworthy witnesses, much of what he writes is plainly incredible.

A writer who has a good deal to say of Rābi'a and quotes as hers verses not given elsewhere is *al-Ḥurayfīsh* (ob. A.D. 1398), an Egyptian. He wrote *Al-Rawḍ al-Fā'iḳ* (= The Super-Excellent Garden), a collection of anecdotes about famous men and women, and apart from his specific account of Rābi'a, his personal opinion which prefaces it is interesting because in it he takes pains to prove that God had bestowed His favours and promises upon women, equally with men. He makes at least one mistake in regard to Rābi'a, but there is little evidence for or against his credibility as a whole.

A late writer *Taqī al-Dīn al-Ḥisnī* (ob. A.D. 1426), of Damascus, has written a whole book on the virtuous women of Islām called the “*Siyar al-Ṣāliḥāt*” (= Lives of Good Women), which contains an account of Rābi'a, but not very much that is original. He has evidently derived his information from both al-Jahīz and Ibn Khallikān, but his book is interesting because he has thought it worth while to devote a whole volume to the women saints and has found no lack of material.

The Persian ‘*Abd al-Raḥmān*, surnamed *Jāmī* from his birth-place in Khorasān (ob. A.D. 1492), was a man of great learning and a poet, and among his books wrote a history of famous saints entitled *Nafaḥāt al-Uns* (= The Breaths of Fellowship) which includes a section devoted to women, the first of whom is Rābi'a al-‘Adawīyya. This history is a recension of an earlier work, the “*Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*” (= The Classes of the Ṣūfīs) by ‘Abd Allah b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī (ob. A.D. 1088) which Jāmī originally intended to re-edit,¹ but actually he limits himself to only the most prominent personalities among the Ṣūfīs. These “*Ṭabaqāt*” exist in MS. in Calcutta, but there is no copy

1 *Nafaḥāt al-Uns*, p. 2.

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available in Europe. Another still earlier source, which he mentions in connection with the women saints, is the “Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya” of Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (*ob.* A.D. 1021), which is extant in MS. but not in a complete form. Jāmī also made use of Yāfi‘ī¹ and Hujwīrī² and a number of other Ṣūfī authors, including Ibn al-‘Arabī.³ Jāmī is undoubtedly a reputable authority and his wide learning and great ability would enable him to make the fullest use of all sources available in his time.

A writer, who has been described as the “last great Muḥammadan theosophist”, ‘*Abd al-Wabbāb al-Sha‘rānī*’ (*ob.* A.D. 1565), though a weaver by trade, living in Old Cairo, yet became a man of great learning.⁴ He has devoted some space in his *Lawāqih al-Anwār* (= The Manifestation of the Luminous Truths), otherwise called the *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (= The Great Classes), to women saints, including Rābi‘a, but he gives more details concerning women of Egypt, which is natural enough, since he was in a position to gain first-hand information about them, and their shrines, in many cases, were still in existence and were places of pilgrimage in his time. He derived some of his information from the “Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya” (= The Meccan Revelations) of Ibn al-‘Arabī (*ob.* A.D. 1240).

Dāwūd al-Antākī (*ob.* A.D. 1599), a late writer, who was born in Antioch and died at Mecca, wrote the *Taẓyīn al-Aswāq* (= The Adorning of the Markets) for which he made use of al-Sarrāj’s *Maṣāri‘* already mentioned,⁵ but obviously he had other sources as well. He does not mention Rābi‘a by name, but gives some verses by an unnamed woman which he links up with Rābi‘a’s well-known lines on the “two loves”, attributing all to one unnamed author. His testimony is therefore very uncertain and, in the absence of confirmation from more reliable sources, cannot be accepted without qualification.

An authority who is important, though so late as to be classed among modern writers, is ‘*Abd al-Rā‘ūf al-Munāwī*’ (*ob.* A.D. 1622) of Cairo, who was a prolific writer. Among his works is “Al-

1 See above, p. xix.

2 See below, p. xxii.

3 For a complete list of Jāmī’s sources see W. Iranon, *J.A.S. Bengal*, xviii, pp. 386 ff.; xix, pp. 298 ff.

4 Cf. R. A. Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 464.

5 See above, p. xv.

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Kawākib al-Durriya" (= The Glittering Stars), in which he gives an account at length of several women saints, including Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya. Munāwī is a careful writer, and takes pains to avoid the confusion between the two Rābi'as, into which several writers have fallen. He mentions Ibn al-Jawzī as a source for Rābi'a's biography and has evidently consulted al-Jāhīz and al-Qushayrī; his account is valuable, including much that is not found elsewhere, and it is probable that he had access to sources now lost and unavailable. Since his method is definitely critical, we may suppose that he took pains to consult sources which he believed to be authentic.

The above represent the chief sources for Rābi'a's life and teachings, and for the accounts of other women saints included in this book. With regard to Ṣūfī doctrine, in addition to the works of Abū Ṭālib, al-Kalābādī, Abū Nu'aym, al-Qushayrī and al-Ghazālī and others already mentioned, another early writer, who does not mention Rābi'a, is quoted, namely *al-Hujwiri* (ob. c. A.D. 1079). He was born at Ghazna and was contemporary with al-Qushayrī. He died at Lahore. In his great work, the *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (= The Unveiling of the Veiled), his aim is not, like that of al-Sarrāj in the *Kitāb al-Luma'*,¹ merely to report the opinions of previous Ṣūfī thinkers, but to set forth an exhaustive treatise on Ṣūfī doctrine, including his own personal views. He was already acquainted with the *Kitāb al-Luma'* and he also quotes from the "Ṭabaqāt" of al-Sulamī,² and the *Risāla* of al-Qushayrī. As the oldest treatise in Persian on Ṣūfism the *Kashf al-Mahjūb* is a work of the greatest value to all interested in the early development of mysticism in Islām.³

There are certain sources for the life and teachings of Rābi'a which at present are unavailable and which might be of the greatest value if they could be discovered.

The first of these is the "Manāqib Rābi'a" (= Biography (lit. Merits) of Rābi'a), which has been heard of and presumably is in existence, but so far has baffled all efforts for its discovery.

¹ See above, p. xiv.

² See below, p. xxiii.

³ For an account of al-Hujwiri and his writings see *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, Translator's Preface. This work is available in an English translation by a master-hand, that of Professor R. A. Nicholson of Cambridge.

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If this work is early or by a writer who has the critical faculty and states the sources of his information, it is probable that it would throw much light upon Rābi'a's personal history, for which so little really authentic material is available at present.

Another missing authority which would undoubtedly be of great value is the section on women devotees and gnostics at the end of the "Ṭabaqāt al-Şūfiyya" of Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, to which Jāmī refers¹ and to which there is also a reference in al-Munawwar's book, especially referring to Rābi'a.² Al-Sulamī was born in Naysābūr in A.D. 941 and died in A.D. 1021. The MSS. of the "Ṭabaqāt" which are extant do not appear to include this section on the women saints, and as al-Sulamī is one of the earliest biographers of the Şūfis, his account would be of great interest. Yet another missing authority is the complete MS. of the "Şafwa al-Şafwa", already mentioned,³ of Ibn al-Jawzī, who was born at Baghdād, and who died in A.D. 1200. His book is derived from Abū Nu'aym's "Ḥilya" and contains a biography of Rābi'a to which Ibn Khallikān refers in his *Wafayāt al-A'yān*⁴ and to which al-Munāwī also refers.⁵

For the third part of this book, the sources above mentioned have been used, and also some authorities dealing with History and Geography and subjects of general interest, rather than with Şūfis and Şūfism.

The "Chronicles of Mecca" are a collection of writings by authors of the ninth and tenth centuries, the first of whom was *Al-Aẓraqī* (ob. A.D. 858). From these Chronicles information has been derived concerning the convents of Muslim women.

Al-Balādhurī (ob. A.D. 892) was a Persian, but wrote in Arabic. His *Kitāb al-Futūḥ al-Buldān* gives an account of the early Muḥammadan conquests and mentions the earliest Muslim saints, including some women.

A source of much information concerning the women of pre-Islamic and early Islamic times is the celebrated *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (= The Book of Songs) of *Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī* (ob. A.D. 967), who was born at Isfahān. This work is a mine of

1 *Nafaḥāt al-Uns*, p. 716.

2 *Asrār al-Tawḥīd*, p. 410.

3 See above, p. xviii.

4 Vol. 1, p. 34, No. 230.

5 "Al-Kawākib al-Durriya", fol. 52 a.

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invaluable information on early Islamic times and the writer frequently mentions the celebrated women of Islām. Though his book is primarily a collection of songs, he introduces a great many traditions and stories, and was near enough to the events he describes to be able to obtain authentic information.

Al-Maqdīsī, born in A.D. 946 at Jerusalem, was a great traveller who set down an account of his travels in his "Aḥsan ul-Taqāsīm fī ma'rifat al-Aqālīm" (= The Best of the Divisions in Knowledge of the Climes), which is edited in the *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*.

Another famous geographer to whom reference is made is *Yāqūt* (ob. A.D. 1229), who was by birth a Greek but was enslaved and became a Muslim. He travelled a good deal and wrote the *Mu'jam al-Buldān* (= Account of the Lands), a great geographical dictionary, which is full of valuable information.

A theological writer to whom reference is made in this part of the book is *M. b. M. al-'Abdārī* (ob. A.D. 1336), who has some strong comments to make on women in his *Madkhal al-Sharī' al-Sharīf* (= Introduction to the Sacred Law), which he writes from the point of view of an orthodox theologian.

A very celebrated traveller to whom several references are made is *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa* (ob. A.D. 1377), a native of Tangier, who travelled in Europe, going as far as India and China, and also to East Africa and the Sudan, and making copious notes of all he observed, which he set down in his delightful and entertaining book of travels called *Tuhfa al-Nuẓẓār fī Gharā' ib al-amṣār wa 'ajā' ib al-asfār* (= Rarities seen among the curiosities of cities and the marvels of travel), in which he notes especially the position and customs of women in foreign countries.

Among the writers referred to is *Ibn Khaldūn* (ob. A.D. 1406), described as "the greatest historical thinker of Islām". He was born at Tunis. The most famous of his writings is the *Muqaddima* (= Prolegomena), which forms the first volume of a large general history.¹

A writer of considerable importance where places and shrines are concerned is *al-Maqrīzī* (ob. A.D. 1442), a native of Cairo, who wrote a great work known as the *Khiṭaṭ* (= Sites), on

1 Cf. R. A. Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, pp. 437 ff.

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the topography and history of Egypt. Although his work is incomplete and sometimes vague, he has preserved much valuable information for generations to come and is usually accurate and careful to use contemporary evidence when available.¹

A history arranged chronologically, which is of great use for reference, is the *Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-Ṣaḥāba* (= Setting forth of the Excellences of the Companions) of Ibn Ḥajar (*ob.* A.D. 1449), a native of Ascalon. He traces his history from the time of the Prophet, and includes the celebrated women of Islām in his account. The above include all the important native authorities used; some obscure and late writers have been omitted.

¹ Cf. A. R. Guest, "List of Writers, Books and other Authorities mentioned by al-Maqrīzī in his *Khiṭaṭ*", *J.R.A.S.* 1902, pp. 103 ff.