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978-1-108-06198-8 - The History of the Temple of Jerusalem: Translated from the Arabic Ms. of the Imám Jalal-Addín al Síúti

Jalal Al-Din Al-Suyuti Translated by James Reynolds

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The History of the Temple of Jerusalem

Ascribed to the Egyptian scholar Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (1445–1505), this medieval Arabic history was translated into English by the orientalist James Reynolds (1805–66). An outstanding Islamic polymath, al-Suyuti produced a large body of work in such fields as grammar, rhetoric, theology, medicine and history. The present work may have been compiled from his earlier *General History* and *Critical History of Traditions*. It contains rich descriptions of religious places and buildings in Jerusalem, including the Dome of the Rock and the Mosque of Omar, and offers a historical account of the city. First published in 1836 for the Oriental Translation Fund of the Royal Asiatic Society, the translation was based on the text of two Arabic manuscripts preserved in the British Museum. Including a translator's preface and detailed exegetical notes, this publication remains a rich source for the architectural and topographical history of Jerusalem.

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University Printing House, Cambridge, CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108061988

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2013

This edition first published 1836

This digitally printed version 2013

ISBN 978-1-108-06198-8 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

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كتاب اتحاف الاخصا بفضائل المسجد الانصي المسجد

تأليف الشيخ الامام (مولانا) العلامة (العامد)

العالم العالم الشيخ ابراهيم* السيوطي

اللّه

رحمه ابه (نعالي) ورضي عنه وارضه

!!

(امين)

The words within a parenthesis are peculiar to the (probably) more recent MS.

* One MS. gives ماكب for ابراهيم

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TRANSLATED FROM

THE ARABIC MS. OF THE IMÁM JALAL-ADDÍN AL SÍÚTÍ.

WITH NOTES AND DISSERTATIONS.

BY THE REV. JAMES REYNOLDS, B.A.

LATE SCHOLAR OF CATHARINE HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

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JUVAT IRE JUGIS, QUAE NULLA PRIORUM
CASTALIAM MOLLI DIVERTITUR ORBITA CLIVO.
VIRGIL.

//////////
PUBLISHED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
The Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland.



LONDON :

A. J. VALPY, M.A.

PUBLISHER TO THE ORIENTAL TRANSLATION FUND, &c.

RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

M.DCCC.XXXVI.

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TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
GEORGE
EARL OF MUNSTER,
VISCOUNT FITZCLARENCE,
BARON TEWKESBURY,
&c. &c.

THE FOLLOWING TRANSLATION
IS VERY GRATEFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY
INSCRIBED.

b

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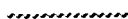
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THE following work, entitled 'Choice Gifts existing in the advantages of the Masjidu-l-Aksá,'* includes an account of the history and antiquities of that renowned Muhammadan basilica, as well as of the adjoining Al Sakhrá: it contains also historical and traditional notices of the Holy City of Jerusalem, wherein these places of worship are situated, and of Palestine and Syria, the scene of early Muhammadan success.

The two MSS. of this work, to which the Translator has had access, are deposited in the British Museum, and belong to Rich's Collection. They are of different ages: the more recent MS. is the most legibly written; but the

* The word *فَضْلٌ* seems to denote "*superabundant merit*," and hence "privileges," "meritoriousness," "works or gifts of supererogation."

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earlier possesses a more accurate text, and is that which the Translator has generally found it convenient to abide by. There are many various readings throughout; and the arrangement of the introductory matter is different in the two different copies. But the only important discrepancy between them appears to consist in a variation in the author's name: the older designates him as *Ibráhím*, the more recent as *Muhammad*; not that such a variation is so important in an Oriental MS. as it would be in a European one, the uniform practice of *surnames* adding a greater degree of precision than before existed; but still the substitution of so differently formed a word as *Muhammad*, for *Ibráhim*, can scarcely be attributed to oversight, especially in a title-page. It is therefore probable that one MS. was derived from some ultimate copy, varying from that whence the other was transcribed. The two MSS. coincide in designating the author as a *Moolla* and a *Shaikh*,—a divine, that is, and a teacher, or public professor, or a man of rank and respectability. They both give him the gentile appellation *Al-Síútí*, denoting, in a general sense, a native of *Síút*,

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in Upper Egypt. One adds the title of Amil, signifying either an intendant of the finances, a collector of the revenue, who is at the same time invested with some magisterial authority, (an officer somewhat resembling the ancient quæstor,) or simply 'the Author:' the other substitutes for this last, the word Imám, which is a word of widely various signification, but which, with the majority of orthodox Musalmáns in the early centuries, and universally, perhaps, in modern times, expresses *a priest*, one who leads the public prayers. Both MSS. coincide in determining the age in which the author lived (which, Ockley asserts with regret, can so seldom be done as regards Oriental writers):—"I said, to pass my time in the venerable house of God, is better than a return to Cairo, in the beginning of the year 848 from the prophetic Hijra," (*Introduction*,) which date corresponds with April, A. D. 1444.

The appellation Al-Síútí, or Al-Usíútí, coupled with the date, would seem to afford us some clue to the author. There would appear but little doubt, that the copyist who wrote the title-page of one MS. and perhaps of both MSS. designed thereby to attribute the work to the celebrated

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Jalál-Addín-Abdurrahmán-Al-Síútí, a very learned commentator upon the Korán, and a most voluminous writer. But there was another Jalál-Addín, also a commentator upon the Korán, one of whose names is Muhammad. The latter does not bear the gentile cognomen of Síútí, his name at length being جلال الدين محمد بن احمد الهكلي Jalál-Addín-Muhammad-Ibn-Ahmad-Al-Mahallí. (Pococke, Specimen, Notes, p. 368, &c.) This Jalál-Addín illustrated the Korán with certain short scholia and notes, but, dying before he had fully completed his labours, the remainder was accomplished by Jalál-Addín-Al-Síútí, who seems to have considerably enlarged upon the comments of his predecessor and namesake. There is but little doubt, that the greater part of the following work must be attributed to this last Jalál-Addín, being compiled with some variations and additions from his commentary. To him may also be assigned the ninth chapter, and the more historical passages interspersed in different parts. We know that Jalál-Addín-Al-Síútí was an eminent historian. His book entitled 'The Lyre, or Harp,' or 'The Flowery Meadow,' (Mizhar) is quoted with approbation by the very learned

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Pococke ; and we might readily conclude that an author who was at once an eminent historian and divine, and who had drawn from his stores of information upon the latter topic the greater portion of the subject-matter of those chapters which relate to Muhammadan theology, would not, in arranging the historical parts of his work, fail to recur to his own historical knowledge. But, in truth, Ockley (*Hist. Sar.*, vol. i.) expressly quotes a MS. history of Jerusalem by Jalál-Addín-Al-Síútí, and appeals to its authority in support of the fact of a difference of opinion between Alí and Othmán respecting the expediency of the Khalíf Omar-Ibn-Al-Khattáb's visit to Jerusalem, to receive its submission. This story is found in the ninth chapter of the following translation, the original of which is, in all probability, the work alluded to by Ockley.

Unless, however, the two MSS. consulted by the translator are extremely incorrect, the introductory portion of this work cannot be the production of Jalál-Addín-Al-Síútí : that author was born in the year of the Hijra 849, and completed his commentary upon the Korán A. H. 871 ; whereas the writer of the Introduction remained

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at Mecca (as stated above) after the departure of the other pilgrims in the year of the Hijra 848. This is the difficulty ; and it seems to have constituted the difficulty which perplexed the copyists. The Introduction purports to be written before Al-Síútí was born : the mass of the work is evidently to be ascribed to Al-Síútí. Possibly it was with a view of evading this difficulty, that one copy gives Muhammad as the author's name, thus ascribing the whole book to the elder Jalál-Addín, and that both omit the prænomén (Jalál-Addín), which would have fixed the authorship too decisively. The names Ibráhim and Muhammad are indeed neither of them inconsistent with that of Abdurrahmán ; the latter being the epithet superadded to the original name : but it is not probable that a Muhammadan would bear both names, as he generally assumes one simple name, preceded and followed by epithets or surnames ; thus, for example, in the name

ابو عبد الله محمد بن ابي الحسن اسمعيل البخاري

which signifies, the Father of God's servant (*Muhammad*), son of the Father of Hassan (*Ismaël*)—(of *Bokhara*), where Ismaël or Muhammad would appear to be the real first-imposed

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name. The distinguishing name may be sometimes omitted where the individual is well known; but a change in this argues a change in the personal identity, and entitles us to look for some motive which could lead a copyist to the alteration. The name Ibráhim might, or might not, be the name of Jalál-Addín-Al-Síútí, the later author; but Muhammad was the appellation of the older; and the inscription of that name upon the title-page might reasonably induce us to conclude, that the apparent anachronism (in making Al-Síútí write a book before his birth) led one confused copyist into an error of the same kind, and brought him to ascribe to the elder Jalál-Addín a book written long after his death, whilst, with a half-consciousness of some lurking error, he admits the name Al-Síútí, which did not belong to the elder Jalál-Addín. The other copyist, giving the name of the reputed author, makes no attempt to reconcile the discrepancy.

It will be profitless to enlarge upon a subject, in discussing which our data are so scanty. Jalál-Addín-Al-Síútí may be considered the responsible compiler and composer of the work; and with regard to the difficulty of reconciling

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the date of the Introduction with the date of Al-Síútí's birth, we may hazard a reasonable and probable conjecture. May not Al-Síútí, who inherited the unfinished work of his namesake Jalál-Addín upon the Korán,—who so considerably enlarged, and who completed it,—have undertaken in like manner to recompile and augment a work upon the Masjidu-l-Aksá at Jerusalem, originally composed by the elder Jalál-Addín in a less diffuse manner, and prefaced by a personal narrative which he did not think proper to disturb? There are difficulties which this conjecture will not entirely solve, because the author speaks of himself in the ninth chapter as well as in the Introduction; and since Al-Síútí is the author of the former, some confusion would seem to be caused if he were not the same individual as the person who introduces himself in the latter. These difficulties are of no great moment. Accuracy was not always regarded by ancient authors in matters not affecting the grand design, nor do they often attempt to obviate possible objections. Al-Síútí may have thought it unnecessary to intimate that the individual who began the work was not the same as the writer

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of the ninth chapter; for this chapter contains no marks of individual character, but merely mentions the authorities and books to which the writer recurred. Upon the whole, the above conjecture may, under the circumstances, fairly obtain. Some conjecture of the kind must be made, unless we are inclined to imagine either that the dates of the Introduction in both MSS. are erroneous,—which is highly improbable; or that Pococke was mistaken in the date of Al-Síútí's birth, which is equally so. We will then assume our hypothesis to be true; and, knowing from other sources of intelligence that Al-Síútí is accountable for the mass and bulk of the work, we will regard him as the author, and leave the difficulty of explaining the discrepancy between the Introduction and the remainder of the book, to be resolved by future research.

Jalál-Addín-Abdurrahmán-Al-Síútí was probably born, and certainly flourished in Egypt. That remarkable country had long been the prey of civil convulsions, subjected to the rule of strangers, and often deprived of the advantages of political independence: but it was favoured in other respects: Egypt was a sort of debateable

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land, wherein the contending zealots of Muhammadan sects met upon more common ground. The *soi-disant* Fátémite Khalífs, whilst they naturally professed considerable respect for Alí, endeavoured to connect this reverence with a degree of acquiescence in those opinions which the Muhammadans of the Sunna regarded as orthodox. Of the ever-varying and trifling shades of sentiment which divided the doctors, one occasionally prevailed over the others, if espoused and maintained by the reigning Khalíf; but, in general, both under the Khalífs, and the dynasties that succeeded them, many points were left open for discussion, which elsewhere it would not be suffered to question. This degree of liberty of conscience, and freedom of deliberation, may possibly have had the effect of enlarging the mind and expanding the thoughts of the Egyptians. Certain it is, that to them we owe some of the most interesting, eminent, and intelligent of the Arabic writers. Our author lived under the dynasty of the Circassian Mamlúk Sultáns of Egypt. He is said by Casiri, in his 'Escorial Catalogue,' to have written singly more works than others perhaps have read. It is probable,

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however, that many of these works are erroneously ascribed to him; and many others he merely compiled. If we could rely upon Casiri's authority, Jalál-Addín-Al-Síútí was indeed a most prolific author, who might be entitled a Muhammadan *Bede*.* Grammar, rhetoric, dogmatical and practical theology, history, criticism, and medicine, including anatomy, comprise some of the subjects upon which he wrote. His medical works are doubtless of no great value: they probably include the maxims of the school of Salernum (who in fact borrowed their theory and practice from the Arabians). But it would be interesting to examine, whether his knowledge of anatomy enabled him to avoid in any degree the errors of his age. His criticism and system of logic were probably modelled after the rules of the schoolmen, and consisted of mere quibbling evasions, substitutions of expressions for ideas, and subtle argumentations, in which men then persuaded

* He composed a comment upon the *Ajrúmía*. This fact would imply that he was not the first expounder of the principles of Arabic grammar; for the *Ajrúmía* is a kind of *corpus grammaticorum*, an elegant and concise digest of the many subtle rules and canons upon the subject. It would be strange for an author to expound himself.

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themselves that they solved a knotty point by a neat definition or an apt word. His theological writings are probably more valuable, as proceeding from a very skilful compiler of many of the ancient traditions and customs of the Terah-ite branch of the grand Semitic races, and as illustrating the history of the most important of all the heretical impostures that have ever prevailed in the world. But his historical compositions must possess high value. Upon the Mizhar, the accurate Edward Pococke passes what Casiri calls his "locuples commendatio," and from this professes to have derived great part of the matter of his Notes to the 'Specimen Historiæ Arabum.' Our author wrote also a history of Egypt, entitled 'The Beautiful History,' and a 'Critical History of Traditions.' Perhaps his 'History of Jerusalem' (which we have assumed to be that, of which the Translation is before us) may have been compiled from his General History, and the last-named 'History of Traditions.'

We may well imagine that these works possess much interest. Eastern history sometimes perplexes the mind, which experiences difficulty in following the rapid vicissitudes it presents:

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yet there is something extremely winning and delightful in those lively records of brilliant exploits and ever-varying changes,—dynasties planted and uprooted, vast conquests and fast-following ruin, battle, bravery, grandeur, pride, caprice, fanaticism, degradation, and misery. Much of the curious annals of the various Muhammadan dynasties founded in different regions of the world, remains yet to be presented to the public, and it is surprising that it should so remain. On Oriental poetry a variation of opinion will prevail. Scarcely understood, injudiciously translated, the poetical productions of the East have met with admirers, who have hastily challenged for them a reputation which was indignantly denied as undue: thus claiming more than they deserved, the Eastern poets were awarded a rank below their true merits. But Oriental history may justly claim the suffrages of all. The Eastern historians are not always chargeable with turgid and exaggerated diction: they will often be found to relate the remarkable facts they record with considerable simplicity and clearness: they are annalists, who, relating facts sincerely and correctly, reserve their rhetorical

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flourishes to adorn their own reflections and digressions. Saladin's secretary, Omad, indulges in some far-fetched redundancies, expressed in difficult idiom; yet in narrating events he is as plain as Makrizi. From these historians we could expect no philosophical disquisitions. In countries where no public discussion is permitted, where deliberations are carried on and resolutions taken in the midst of secrecy and intrigue, it is impossible to obtain much insight into the hidden springs which effectuated great results,—an insight often pretended by European writers without much foundation. It is in the wonderful and important exploits, and revolutions, and reigns, recorded by the Eastern historians, that their charm and their usefulness consists; and it is on this account that they well deserve our careful perusal and study.

In grammatical science Jalál-Addín was eminently versed, and is reported by Casiri to have been the first promulgator of that system of Arabic grammar now generally adopted. If it were possible to believe this, he must have possessed a most superior degree of ingenuity and acumen, as well as a consummate knowledge of all the

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subtleties and metaphysical niceties of general grammar. The assertion is, however, hardly credible to its full extent. Grammarians certainly flourished long before our author, and the Jewish writers had long before applied in explanation of the Hebrew principles of grammar borrowed from the kindred Arabic. Elias Levita was contemporary with Jalál-Addín; but Hebrew grammar had been treated of long before that author. Jalál-Addín may possibly have simplified and arranged a concise system of grammatical instruction.

Among Muhammadans, however, the fame of our author is chiefly founded upon his work on the Korán: it seems to be a sort of running comment and paraphrase, wherein the ceaseless incoherencies are connected, the difficulties explained away, and the contradictions reconciled by the convenient but strange postulatium of abrogation, whereby some verses are said to be abrogated, or annulled by others,—sometimes immediately following, sometimes preceding, it being not always sure, which is the abrogated, and which the obligatory passage; strange traditions are interspersed, and acute arguments

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upon the absurd scruples and questions of Muhammadan theology.

Some of the works attributed to Jalál-Addín must, judging from their titles alone, be curious and interesting:—‘A Confutation of the Millenarians,’ or those who asserted that the world was to be at an end in the 1000th year of the Hijra, shows that the Millenarian delusion was borrowed by the Musalmán divines from the Christians. ‘A Dissertation upon Muhammad’s Parents,’ in which they are said to have been raised up from the dead, converted to the Muhammadan faith, and received into heaven, being contradictory to several passages of the Korán, was perhaps a fable derived from the corrupt notions promulgated by the Latins respecting the parents of the Virgin Mary. A work entitled ‘The Tortures of the Tomb,’ and said by Casiri to be ‘De Purgatorii Pœnis,’ is probably not correctly so designated, for the Muhammadans do not seem to hold the Romish opinions on that subject. The work in question, in all probability, treats of the famous and long-disputed point—the eternity, or non-eternity, of the future punishment of true believers. ‘Ten Dissertations upon the duty of

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not avoiding the plague' would seem to imply that the author held the extreme opinions of the Jabarians, or Absolute Predestinarians. 'A small Collection of Traditions,' and a 'Critical History of Traditions,' as well as 'A Life of Muhammad,' would probably throw some interesting light upon Muhammadan superstitions and metaphysics. A Manual of Prayers for the morning and evening are inscribed *سَهَامُ الْأَصَابَةِ* 'unerring darts.'*

The above is all that the Translator can find upon the subject of the author. His public life indeed consists in his published works, and to deductions from these but little can be added. He lived at a period when the Ottoman power had attained the zenith of prosperity; and the latter part of his life was contemporary with the early part of that of Peter Bembo, one of the great revivers of European learning. The work upon the Masjidu-l-Aksá appears to be made up

* *سَهَامُ الْأَصَابَةِ* The above title is appropriate and becoming; but a work mentioned by Casiri, upon Muhammad's wives, is strangely entitled 'Columbæ;' a name which these ladies scarcely deserved. Aisha, at least, was a very wrathful dove.

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of selections from various authors and authorities, sometimes minutely and tediously enumerated. The Moslem writers are mostly faithful and sincere narrators; breach of faith in any way is generally avoided. But the exact mention of various authorities would scarcely appear to guaranty perfect correctness, (which Ockley thinks,) since the authorities themselves may often possess little or no value; and when the authority alleged, ascending step by step, terminates at last in "a Shaikh of the noble house of Shaddad," "a certain man of the province of Khorasán," it is plain that the chain of testimony, if not broken, is materially weakened. We know also that many of the Muhammadan traditions are, as the doctors themselves acknowledge, entirely forged; and although this fact does not discredit assertions unconnected with their religious belief, yet it shows that we must guard against the error of confounding particularity, in tracing up authorities to their source, with the purity of the source when found. Al-Síútí appears to have made his selection with much judgment. Even his legendary matter,

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although absurd, is amusing, and his historical and geographical notices display much information and erudition.

The book contains seventeen chapters. After an Introduction, in which the author describes the motives that induced him not only to visit Mecca, but also to remain there, and subsequently to proceed to Medína, and (after some interval) to Jerusalem,—concluding by a very intelligible appeal to the liberality of Musalmáns, to reward his zeal in accomplishing such excellent pilgrimages,—the first chapter relates the various names given to the Holy City at different eras, and a slight sketch of its history. Although the whole work is inscribed ‘A History of the Masjidu-l-Aksá,’ yet the contents of this first chapter would justify us in entitling it ‘A History of Jerusalem’ generally; nor do the subsequent chapters so exclusively relate to this mosque as to lead us to a different conclusion, although it be certainly a very prominent object of the author’s regard. In the following chapters he proceeds to describe the Glorious Rock, the Temple of Solomon, the Mosque of Omar founded upon its site, the various saints and martyrs who have consecrated

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Jerusalem by their presence, the different sacred spots now objects of veneration, the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, (which in another place seems to be confounded with the sacking of the city by the Persians in the beginning of the seventh century, as well as with its demolition by Titus,) the surrender of the Holy Abode by the Patriarch Sophronius to the victorious Abu-Ubaidah, lieutenant of the second Khalif Omar-Ibn-Al-Khattáb, its capture by the Crusaders under Godfrey, its recovery by Al Salah-Addín, its partial restoration to the Christians under the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, and its final subjection to Muhammadan sway: the different spots of peculiar sanctity to be found in Palestine and Syria are described; the traditionary sayings of Muhammad, miracles, legends, visions, are introduced; the sacred cities of Damascus, Acre, Tyre, Antioch, &c. are mentioned; many traditions relating to the Patriarchs are brought forward; the peculiar privileges of the Holy City, (especially the Masjidu-l-Aksá and Al Sakhra,) and of Syria and Palestine generally, are very earnestly urged; and in the concluding chapter