"MUSAYLIMAH: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPRAISAL."

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by

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Pour valider notre entreprise, il n'est pas besoin à nos yeux qu'elle soit assurée de jouir, pendant des années et jusque dans ses moindres détails, d'une présomption de vérité. Il suffit qu'on lui reconnaisse le modeste mérite d'avoir laissé un problème difficile en moins mauvais état qu'elle ne l'avait trouvé.

- - Claude Lévi-Strauss,
Le Cru et le Cuit, p. 15.

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Transliteration, Dates, and Abbreviations.

With only a few exceptions, I have adhered strictly to the transliteration scheme of the Institute of Islamic Studies. These exceptions are primarily of Arabic place names which have become fairly common in English, for which a strict transliteration would be unnecessary for the Arabist, and confusing or pedantic for the non-specialist. Thus Mecca, not Makkah; Medina, not al-Madīnah; and the Yemen, not al-Yaman. Islām is rendered as Islam. Likewise al-Ḥijāz is a fairly common geographical term; in consideration of the ears of non-Arabic speakers I have preferred to use the half-Anglicized form "the Ḥijāz." For similar reasons the definite article has been dropped from the names of most Arab authors, although it is restored in the bibliography.

The use of Arabic words in an English text always presents a problem. I have tried to restrict their use to terms with no adequate English equivalent. All are defined upon their first appearance in the text. Frequently recurring words, such as Riddah, ḥaram, etc., are usually underlined only upon their first appearance, to preserve the attractiveness of the manuscript page. Unfamiliar Arabic plurals are avoided in favor of the Arabic singular pluralized by regular English usage. Thus kāhins, not kuhhān.

Dates, unless otherwise indicated, are in the Christian era.

The names of a few frequently cited journals and reference works have been abbreviated. They are:

BSOAS - Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.

EI - Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition.

JESHO - Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.

JRAS - Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

SEI - Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam.

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Chapter One: Introduction

One of the most significant and least analyzed aspects of the Riddah, or "apostasy" which occurred in the last years of Muḥammad's life and in the caliphate of Abū Bakr (632-634) is the fact that the most adamant opposition to the incipient religious-economic-political system of Islam in all regions of Arabia except al-Baḥrayn and ʿUmān was directed by the so-called "false prophets," four of whom are known by name: al-Aswad (Yemen), Ṭulayḥah b. Khuwaylid (B. Asad), Sajāḥ (B. Tamīm), and Musaylimah b. Ḥabīb (al-Yamāmah).[1]

The most significant of these "false prophets," and the one on which the most information is available, is Musaylimah. With an army of allegedly 40,000 men he crushed two Muslim armies before being overwhelmed by a third, under the Muslim general Khālid b. al-Walīd.[2] Some accounts report that even in the victorious third battle, enough Qur'ān reciters were lost to cause concern over the perpetuation of the Qur'ān.[3] Both V.V. Barthold and W. Montgomery Watt have assessed Musaylimah's movement to have been the most serious threat faced by the nascent Islamic state.[4]

With the exception of V.V. Barthold, scholars dealing with the first half of the seventh century in Arabia have neglected to examine in detail the source materials on Musaylimah's movement - its formation, its membership, its organization, and the question of why it offered such bitter resistance to incorporation in the Islamic movement even when military defeat was imminent.

This study is intended to fill that gap in our knowledge as far as possible, by gathering and critically analyzing materials in the primary (and secondary) sources relevant to the study of Musaylimah. From these I hope to present an account of his movement as comprehensive and coherent as the sources will permit.

The contribution of a study of Musaylimah to our knowledge of Islamic history and of seventh century Arabia is manifold. Not surprisingly (since Musaylimah's movement was the most important one of the Riddah), an understanding of Musaylimah's movement is a key to understanding the nature of the resistance to Islamic expansion during the Riddah. The assertion of the traditional Muslim historians that the Riddah was a period of religious apostasy has been regarded as untenable by most European scholars; it is unlikely that more than a few tribes surrounding Mecca and Medina were converts to Islam by the time of the Prophet's death.[5] However no alternative detailed analysis of the opposition to Islam has been brought forward.

The cultural anthropologist will be interested in Musaylimah's movement as a case study of a "religious revitalization movement"[6] in the seventh century Arabia which failed. Furthermore a study of the historical materials provided in this thesis can serve as an important building block by which the factors and policies which led to the rapid expansion of the Islamic movement after Muḥammad's death can be delineated with more precision.

<u>The Primary Sources</u>. Historical material directly relating to

Musaylimah's movement is to be found in the following works:[7]

1. Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), Ta'rikh ur-Rusul wa l-Mulūk [History of Prophets and Kings].[8]
2. Ibn Isḥāq (d. 768), Sīrat Rasūl Allāh [The Life of Muḥammad], in the recension of Ibn Hishām (d. 833).[9]
3. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī (d. 892), Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān [The Origins of the Islamic State].[10]
4. Yāqūt b. 'Abdallāh (d. 1229), Mu'jam ul-Buldān.[11]
5. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 870), As-Ṣaḥīḥ [Sayings of the Prophet].[12]
6. Ad-Diyārbakrī (d. 1574), Ta'rikh al-Khāmis fī Aḥwāl Anfus an-Nafīs.[13]

A study of Musaylimah and analysis of the significance of his movement is not an easy undertaking. Barring the appearance of additional primary source material,[14] certain aspects of the nature of his movement must remain unknown. Especially on questions such as when Musaylimah first claimed prophecy, the primary sources are difficult to manage. On such sensitive issues they indulge in what Caetani has called a "forced acrobatics,"[15] in which traditions contradictory to each other and mutually exclusive are found juxtaposed. For instance in the Sīrah of Ibn Isḥāq one tradition reports that the Meccans accused Muḥammad of having been instructed in religious matters by Musaylimah.[16] Another tradition in the same collection relates that the "arch liar" Musaylimah claimed prophetic talent only after 631, when he allegedly visited Muḥammad with a delegation

of the B. Ḥanīfah.[17] Similarly an account in Ṭabarī asserts that Musaylimah decreed that a man was not to have intercourse with any woman so long as he had a son alive;[18] another alleges that Musaylimah encouraged fornication and the drinking of wine.[19]

It would be incorrect to reject as fabrications or as unusable all of the material on Musaylimah because of such inconsistencies or obvious distortions in the accounts of certain of his beliefs and activities. Similar textual problems are common for events in the life of Muḥammad and the first four ḫaliphs, and do not in themselves preclude the writing of history as we understand it. In the first place, the primary sources (the ones relevant to this thesis are listed above) were for the most part never intended to be connected, critically evaluated narratives. Instead they are generally supposed to be eyewitness or contemporary accounts in which various narrators diverge, often significantly, in their descriptions of an event.[20] Not infrequently all accounts of an event contain fabricated data, but still include material salvagable to the historians. One such case is the varying reports of tribal delegations from all parts of Arabia submitting to the Prophet before his death. Internal contradictions and inconsistencies with other more reliable accounts leave none of these stories completely authenticated, although many valuable details of tribal diplomacy have been salvaged from them.[21] Once these stories are checked against each other, and corrected as far as possible for what Watt has called "tendential shaping," it is possible to reconstruct many events

with a fair degree of probability.[22]

With the above considerations in mind, we must still ask whether there are historiographic problems peculiar to the material on Musaylimah which would render fruitless any attempt to give an account of him.

One critical objections which has been raised is that all narrators and reporters of events concerning Musaylimah were Muslim, had an anti-Musaylimah bias, and therefore must be regarded as unreliable. In many ways this bias is an advantage, for unlike events completely within the Islamic movement reported by various factions of Muslims to their own advantage, all reporters of Musaylimah's actions have the same bias against him; one need not speculate as to which faction a particular reporter belonged. The final test of validity must come after the accounts of Musaylimah are divided into sub-categories: geographical data, al-Yamāmah before Musaylimah, military campaigns, B. Ḥanīfah relations with other non-Muslim groups in Musaylimah's time, Musaylimah's revelations and religious teachings, and when, vis-à-vis Muḥammad, Musaylimah first claimed prophecy. The last category, and to some extent the next to last, are the ones in which obviously fabricated or distorted data are found. This is not surprising since any admission that Musaylimah preceded Muḥammad in his claim to prophecy would have created serious difficulties for Muslim theologians of later generations, and would lend support to the charge of Muḥammad's Meccan opponents that Muḥammad "imitated" Musaylimah. "Miracle" stories and other inventions

abound on this subject to prove the "uniqueness" of Muḥammad, and great caution must be exercised by the historian.

In the remaining subject categories the sources show few, if any, signs of conscious distortion. Nothing would be gained (or lost) by manipulating them, unlike the sensitive questions of when Musaylimah claimed prophecy. The preservation of many details unfavorable to Muslims, such as the taunts of the Meccans that Muḥammad was an "imitator" are signs of a successful attempt at an impartial reporting of tradition. In the accounts of the campaigns against Musaylimah, serious Muslim blunders are recorded. To the discredit of Khālid's perspicacity, all traditions report that the nobles of (shurafā') B. Ḥanīfah won a lenient truce for B. Ḥanīfah after their defeat at the battle of 'Aqrabā', by dressing B. Ḥanīfah women in men's clothing and lining them along the walls of al-Ḥajr, Musaylimah's capital city. Khālid, unwilling to risk another fierce battle, acceded to an armistice rather than obey Abū Bakr's orders to kill all adult male members of the tribe.[23] Likewise accounts of the alliances of B. Ḥanīfah with adjoining tribes and of relations among the various subdivisions of B. Ḥanīfah appear accurate. To falsify the complicated interrelations between these groups, Muslim and non-Muslim, would have distorted the entire picture of tribal relations as portrayed by recent authors,[24] and could be detected with relative ease.

Some efforts were made by later generations of B.Ḥanīfah to cover up the "apostate" activities of their ancestors, but these

fabrications were recognized as such by the Muslim chroniclers themselves. Yāqūt, for instance, cites some verses of 'Alī, son of Hawdhah (d. 629).[25] 'Alī lived through the defeat of Musaylimah by Khālid. In one of his poems he defends his tribe from abjuring the faith of Islam during the Riddah as had other tribes! Yāqūt was aware of the falseness of the verses, but in fairness to 'Alī, also quotes him as saying: "We had been deceived. O! If only our deceivers had no children!"[26]

While not minimizing the problems involved, it can be concluded that the textual problems relating to the accounts of Musaylimah are roughly the same which plague all documents pertaining to seventh century Arabia, excluding the Qur'ān. Carefully examined, it is possible to shed light on many aspects of Musaylimah's movement. Lacunae remain, but these may be due more to a lack of interest by the Muslim chroniclers in a religious movement which failed, than to a conscious attempt to suppress information on it.

Secondary Sources. With only a few exceptions, the European sources which have dealt with Musaylimah have done so only tangentially or with insufficient analysis of the evidence available. To consider the major writers of this century, Margoliouth (1903)[27] and Lyall (1903)[28] referred to Musaylimah in the course of their controversy over the etymological "origin" of the terms "Muslim" and "Ḥanīf" (pre-Islamic monotheist), both rather unconvincingly basing their arguments upon a number of assumptions not justified by the limited

quantity and quality of the data available.[29] Their arguments are considered in Chapter Three. Caetani (1907) in his monumental Annali dell' Islām reproduced the traditions known at that time regarding Musaylimah, but failed to integrate his overall concept, that "the almost successful movement of Musaylimah should be considered as an event synchronous and parallel to Islām, created by analogous causes,"[30] with his evidence. In fact Caetani's treatment of Musaylimah has been regarded by Barthold perhaps as the "least successful" part of the Annali.[31] Barthold's account (1925) is by far the most successful, reconstructing the historical events as far as the evidence allows, and thoroughly reviewing and criticizing all previous European and Muslim scholarship on the question. His gathering of citations in Yāqūt relating to al-Yamāmah which are not found in Wüstenfeld's index of Mu'jam al-Buldān is particularly useful. Bühl's summary for the first Encyclopaedia of Islam[32] was intended only as a brief summary of common historical fact; Montgomery Watt, although he demurs that he treats the problem "only so far as concerns the life of Muḥammad,"[33] nevertheless makes several incisive observations on Musaylimah's movement, some of which I will develop in the course of this thesis. Werner Caskel's work, now in progress, on the tribal groupings of eastern Arabia in the sixth and seventh centuries, is valuable for making sense of the tribal groupings in al-Yamāmah.[34]

Chapter Two: Prelude to the Seventh Century

Historians dealing with sixth and seventh century Arabia tend to dichotomize their materials into "pre-Islamic" and "Islamic." In discussing the Islamic Weltanschauung this conceptualization is most useful, since the ideological system of Islam, as analyzed by European and Muslim scholars alike, represented a substantial break with "pre-Islamic" beliefs.[1]

However this dichotomy has also been mistakenly applied to assumptions on the fundamental structure of Arab social, economic, and political life.[2] Several authors, not trained in the analysis of cultural systems, have erroneously asserted that a sharp "break" in these fundamental structures corresponded with Muḥammad's acquisition of temporal authority. An extreme example among Orientalists is Montgomery Watt, who in an otherwise excellent and pioneering work on the origins of Islam, asserts that Arabia was undergoing a transition from a matrilineal to a patrilineal kinship system during Muḥammad's lifetime.[3] This view is based on an outmoded evolutionary hypothesis, justified by neither anthropological theory nor Orientalist evidence, not taken seriously since its refutation shortly after Robertson Smith first proposed it in Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia (1885).[4]

It is beyond the scope of this paper systematically to analyze in their entirety the cultural transformations which occurred in seventh century Arabia, but it is useful to indicate certain key

concepts, as well as historical data, which have been introduced or modified by recent studies and investigations.[5] This chapter is also meant to serve as a survey of current scholarly work relevant to this thesis.

Among the most significant studies are Serjeant's analysis of the Sīrah[6] and the "Constitution of Medina" documents,[7] Watt's analysis of tribal relations during the Riddah, which he uses to clarify Muḥammad's tribal policies previous to the Riddah,[8] Joseph Chelhod on political organization and religious institutions,[9] and Saleh A. El-Ali on land ownership.[10] The conclusion of each of these works (in their respective subject-areas) is that the fundamental political and social structure of Arabia shows no sudden "break" with the pre-Hijrah past, at least through the period of the Riddah (to 634). Thus Watt was able to explain Muḥammad's tribal policies by formulating certain patterns of tribal custom as practiced during the Riddah; El-Ali could show the continuity of ideas of land tenure; Serjeant how the "Constitution of Medina" conformed to pre-existing standards of tribal diplomacy. Therefore what is known of tribal custom outside of the period of the Riddah can be used to weigh the significance of the data on Musaylimah, most of which covers the years 630 to 634.

* * *

There is a misconception in some of the sparse anthropological literature on seventh century Arabia which, if corrected, will render the material on al-Yamāmah in the following chapter more

intelligible: it is that the sedentarization of nomads and the spread of trade in the Ḥijāz from the fifth century onwards was an unusual event in an overwhelmingly nomadic land and had as its immediate, unique consequence the foundation of Mecca (ca. 400), and eventually, to complete the "evolutionary" sequence - the formation of a "rudimentary state organization."[11]

However, an examination of the history of pre-Islamic Arabia, based on inscriptions, early accounts by non-Arab travellers, and the traditional Muslim sources, indicated that the process of sedentarization was not confined to the period immediately preceding the rise of Islam,[12] nor was the process of state-formation from both nomadic and sedentary tribal groups.[13] Urban centers of predominantly Arab settlers were numerous and well-established. The tone of the following quotation from Sidney Smith in BSOAS (1954) suggests that he felt his Orientalist colleauges, as well as members of other disciplines, occasionally neglected these facts:

> Social conditions in Arabia demand a new treatment. The land was not, before the appearance of the Prophet, a closed box, in which there were a few Jews and Christians, isolated from the great states. Lopsided views have been induced from quaint stories of the jahiliyah ["ignorance," i.e. pre-Islamic Arabia], and the abiding predilection [of scholars on the period] for nomad ways. Only the accidental literary emphasis seems to justify

> conclusions that would not apply to Syria or 'Irāq . . . There were thriving cities in Arabia, old foundations, as civilized as any in Syria or 'Irāq . . . The Christian and Jewish communities were large, and not mainly foreigners. Arabs had faced the formidable Abyssinians. Military leaders had fought men trained in Persian armies on equal terms.[14]

Thus, while the events leading to the hegemony of Mecca are clouded with uncertainty, the sudden rise of Quraysh there to wealth and importance in a settled environment was not a singular event in "pre-Islamic" history. Rather it was part of a continuing pattern of the rise and fall of urban centers, fluctuating with the vicissitudes of international trade and politics.[15]

Mecca, in this perspective, was one of a number of settlements which at various times managed to transcend the narrow confines of a kin-based society and form a city-state.[16] Thus the premise that the rise of Islam was "causally connected with the spread of trade," as suggested by one anthropologist,[17] becomes untenable when the sources for pre-Islamic history are fully utilized. The trade factor alone accounts for nothing except an economic base for urban life not unique to Mecca, even in the Ḥijāz.[18] In other centers trade as an economic base was frequently substituted or supplemented by the cultivation of date palms or cereals, such as at Medina and aṭ-Ṭā'if.[19]

What then, were some of the other factors by which a city acquired hegemony over its hinterland, or over other cities? Recent studies by R.B. Serjeant (still in progress) suggest that the most typical pattern in central Arabia by which a city would acquire ascendancy over neighboring tribes and regions was to form (or be selected for) a ḥaram, which could constitute "a nucleus about which may be gathered an indefinite number of tribes."[20] Several tribes (or sections of one tribe) would agree to recognize a given town or region as a sanctuary in which no blood could be shed, to meet there to discuss blood disputes and other serious inter-tribal matters, to allow each other to conduct trade there in peace, and to arrange for the safe transit of caravans through their respective territories. To violate the rules of a ḥaram was to risk supernatural sanctions and reprisals by the other contracting tribes.

In seventh century central Arabia several ḥarams are known by name: aṭ-Ṭā'if,[21] al-Yamāmah,[22] and Mecca.[23] Mecca and Medina were recognized as ḥarams by Muḥammad after 622, and aṭ-Ṭā'if and al-Yamāmah continued until suppressed by the Islamic conquests. Pre-Islamic inscriptions indicate numerous such sanctuaries of a similar pattern in South Arabia.[24] Bin Hūd has been regarded as a ḥaram since at least the sixth century, although in contemporary South Arabian usage it is referred to as a ḥawṭah.[25]

The ḥaram is a clear example of a fundamental social institution with its origins in pre-Islamic times which carried

over, virtually unchanged, into Arab society in some regions until at least 633.[26] There is evidence, analyzed later, that Musaylimah set up such a ḥaram. R.B. Serjeant, in the passage below, related the "Constitution of Medina" documents to the institution of the ḥaram. While his interpretation of specific clauses and technical terms is not of direct relation to the present inquiry, his general conclusions support our position that no sudden break in fundamental social conventions occurred in the 620's and 630's.

> The progress revealed by this remarkable series of agreements preserved by Ibn Hishām, is from a confederation presided over by a member of a holy house [such as Quraysh] to regulate procedure - and this is what I understand when the agreements stipulate that any point upon which the Medinan tribes disagree to is to be referred to Muḥammad who knows what the law is - to the founding of a ḥaram within which God, for practical purposes Muḥammad, is virtually absolute, surrounded by tribes self-governing but linked to the ḥaram.[27]

After analyzing the "Constitution" clause by clause,[28] Serjeant concludes:

> Muslim sources present a picture of Islāmic law as sanctioned by Muḥammad's practice at Medina, but one has only to read the Sīrah and the series of 8 documents

> of the so-called "Constitution of Medina" to perceive that the already established system of law and custom was Muḥammad's practice. Any new sunnahs he introduced are so limited that they can be described in the brief letters he wrote to the tribes. It might be said that Muḥammad fitted into the custom into which he was born.[29]

* * *

Political and social conditions in the regions surrounding central Arabia played an important part in the internal developments of central Arabia. Until the end of the sixth century the Arabian peninsula was surrounded by three formidable powers, the Byzantine, Persian, and Abyssinian, none of which was willing to permit the formation of any major rival commercial or political power in Arabia. To these three should be added the various states of Southern Arabia, at least during the periods when free of Persian and Abyssinian control.[30] Were an Arab movement to have arisen before the seventh century, unifying nomads and settlers in common economic, political, and religious interests antithetical to those of the established powers, it could not have sustained itself or expanded without meeting stiff opposition, as is witnessed by the Abyssinian force sent against Mecca in 569/70, soon after Mecca had assumed major commercial importance.[31] "Client" states on the Arabian peninsula of the predominantly sedentary and semi-sedentary Arabs[32] were maintained by the major powers to keep the Arabs of the interior

in check[33] and to prevent the Arabs on the fringes of their empire from forming or joining an Arab state independent of their respective spheres of influence. The best-known of these buffer states were, in the north, the Byzantine Ghassānid state[34] and the Persian Lakhmid dynasty at al-Ḥīrah;[35] and in the south the short-lived Ḥimyarite Kindah kingdom of central Arabia.[36]

However, by the third quarter of the sixth century the economic and political system of the major empires had begun to collapse.[37] "In Persia this took the form of a disputed succession, as often before and since."[38] After the last Arab king died at al-Ḥīrah in 604, direct government by the Persians produced the rebellions which culminated in 634-635. In particular, the chain of events in Persia after the death of the Sasānid ruler Khusraw II (29 February 628) rendered ineffective Persian attempts to control the tribes on their fringes, including al-Yamāmah.[39] By the abdication of Justinian II in 578 the Byzantine empire was politically and economically exhausted; Abyssinian power had likewise waned. In South Arabia the breaking of the dam at Ma'rib (540) was a dramatic sign of decay in a state comparatively prosperous for over a thousand years.[40] As is well-known, the Islamic movement was eventually to benefit from the ensuing power vacuum, but not before facing rivalry (or resistance) from other Arab movements such as that led by Musaylimah.[41]

Chapter Three: Al-Yamāmah before Musaylimah

Musaylimah b. Ḥabīb al-Kadhdhāb, "the Liar," as he is known by the traditional accounts,[1] was a member of the B. Ḥanīfah, a tribe which, like the Quraysh, had some experience with settled life and non-kin society before the emergence of their prophet. The B. Ḥanīfah, in turn, were part of the larger tribal group of B. Bakr b. Wā'il (later known as Rabī'ah, after their eponymal ancestor), which had originally migrated from South Arabia and by 503 had become the leading tribe of the central Arabian Kindah empire, indicating an early transformation from relatively unorganized nomadic life to participation in an extra-tribal form of social organization. B. Bakr lived in al-Yamāmah, adopting al-Ḥajr (near present-day ar-Riyāḍ) as their "capital." Al-Ḥajr was originally in the hands of the B. Ḥanīfah, although other tribal groups of the B. Bakr joined them later.[2]

A major impediment to the study of Musaylimah prior to V.V. Barthold's work (1925) was the lack of accurate geographical knowledge of al-Yamāmah. As Barthold has pointed out, the map published with Philby's Heart of Arabia (1922), based on his travels of 1918, revealed that the previous maps relied upon by European Orientalists were inaccurate. Without such a map it was difficult to use the materials of the medieval Arab geographers and judge their accuracy, notably al-Hamdānī's (d. 945) Jazīrah and Yāqūt's Mu'jam al-Buldān. The latter was published in an 1884 edition by

Wüstenfeld without a thorough index. Barthold mentions that while the index to the materials on al-Yamāmah covers 2 1/2 columns, with the second largest entry covering only two, he ran across many more valuable references by a careful perusal of the text. Verifying Yāqūt by Philby was possible, Barthold writes, because most of the place names in al-Yamāmah have remained the same over the ten century interval (Yāqūt relied upon a tenth century source for materials on al-Yamāmah).[3]

Similarly the nature of the land and its utilization remained constant.[4] Information of this nature is especially important in determining whether Musaylimah's followers were primarily nomads or settlers.[5]

The region surrounding al-Ḥajr was an agricultural one where wheat was grown, as Yāqūt, al-Hamdānī, and Philby concur.[6] Yāqūt even mentions a ninth century Arab who constructed an irrigation canal in the region.[7] Al-Ḥajr itself was at the confluence of the fertile sections of Arabia with the inland desert, so situated that there must have been frequent intercourse between the nomadic and agricultural elements of the B. Ḥanīfah and other tribes.[8]

The evidence available for the seventh century, detailed below, also indicated the strength of sedentary elements in al-Yamāmah.[9]

Date palms were cultivated on all oases of al-Yamāmah, and grain was grown in the ʿIrd valley and in al-Kharj as well. In

good years, according to Caskell, grain was sent to Mecca, but in bad years was not sufficient even for local consumption.[10] Further evidence is provided by Muḥammad's relations with Thumāmah b. Uthāl, leader of a sub-section of the B. Ḥanīfah, who was captured by a Muslim raiding party and later won to Islam by kind treatment from the Prophet. To support Muḥammad's campaigns against the Meccans (before 628), he told the Meccans, whom he had been providing with grain, that "Never, no, never, by God, will you ever again receive a grain of wheat from al-Yamāmah without the Prophet authorizing it!"[11] Barthold states that Muḥammad, upon hearing that the Meccans were starving, allowed the grain shipments to be resumed.[12] Thumāmah remained faithful to Islam until his death, and played a significant part in several later campaigns, including the one against Musaylimah and another in al-Baḥrayn, where he died in combat.[13]

It is most likely that the division of leadership between Thumāmah and Musaylimah corresponded with the nomadic-sedentary division of the tribe.[14] On the basis of the story of Thumāmah's prohibiting the exportation of wheat to Mecca, Barthold infers that Thumāmah was ruler of the western region of al-Yamāmah, much less hospitable to agriculture than the region surrounding al-Ḥajr. Unlike the al-Ḥajr region, western al-Yamāmah was suitable to desert nomadism, and would be the most likely place to cut off trade between Mecca and al-Ḥajr.[15]

The evidence that Thumāmah controlled the nomadic element of

B. Ḥanīfah is only inferential, as can be seen. However, it is certain that Thumāmah did not control more than a small faction of the B. Ḥanīfah, whether they were nomadic or settled. Thumāmah had to wait for the main body of Muslims under Khālid before entering into conflict with Musaylimah in the decisive battle of 634.[16]

Although there were a few nomads among them, B. Ḥanīfah were regarded primarily as a settled group. Barthold mentions that when Ziyād b. Abīh, Muslim governor of 'Irāq, named as his deputy in Khurāsān a member of the B. Ḥanīfah, the poet Ibn Anās (of the nomadic B. Tamīm, rivals of B. Ḥanīfah?) wrote derogatory verses calling the B. Ḥanīfah slaves and tillers of land, employing all the scorn for sedentary life that a nomadic poet was capable of mustering.[17]

Many of Musaylimah's extant revelations are directed exclusively to a settled audience, and none are directed specifically to nomads. The following revelation, recorded in Ṭabarī, would obviously have no appeal to nomads, as Musaylimah swears by various agricultural occupations, exhorts his listeners to defend themselves against nomads, and establishes the merit of non-nomadic life:

> I swear by the sowers and reapers of the harvest, and the winnowers and millers of wheat, and the bakers of bread . . . You are better than the nomads (<u>ahl al-wabar</u>) and no worse than town-dwellers (<u>ahl</u>

al-madar), Defend your fields, shelter the poor, and drive off the attackers.[18]

To rid himself of the "false prophetess" Sajāḥ and her B. Tamīm followers, who were driven to al-Yamāmah by their B. Tamīm opposition, Musaylimah offered her half the harvest of al-Yamāmah, with a promise of half the coming year as well, according to a tradition from Sayf b. ʿUmār.[19] The ability to make such an offer depended, of course, upon Musaylimah's having the settled elements of B. Ḥanīfah under his control.

Also relevant are a number of miracles recorded by Ṭabarī which, when performed by Muḥammad, meet with success; while in imitating them, Musaylimah invariably meets with disaster: wells dry up, date palms wither at his touch, and vegetation dies in the fields.[20] The miracles, as well as the diametrically opposed results, are evidently fabulous, but what sustains our interest is that most of the miracles recorded for Musaylimah (and the parallel ones for Muḥammad) deal with situations relevant to settled, or possibly semi-nomadic, peoples. Of course the "miracle" stories must be regarded as highly questionable evidence; however, with the reservations elaborated in our footnote,[21] they support our position, established by the more substantial evidence cited above, that it was among a settled population and in a settled region that Musaylimah found his followers.

Al-Ḥajr was prominent as a regional trading center, although

no information is available as to how it compared in importance with Mecca. Three caravan routes converged there: one from Mecca and Medina, another from Persia in the north (which served as one of the major routes of Muslim expansion in the caliphate of Abū Bakr), and one from 'Umān and the Yemen in the south.[22]

Given its geographical position and economic importance, al-Yamāmah was well-connected with the state organizations on the fringes of Arabia, and influenced by their cultures. The Christian Lakhmid empire (ruled directly by the Persians from 604 on) was to the immediate north and even incorporated al-Yamāmah into its domains for much of the sixth century;[23] Christian monks and perhaps monasteries were known in al-Yamāmah.[24] Hawdhah b. 'Alī (d. 630), Musaylimah's immediate predecessor and leader of the B. Ḥanīfah, was a Christian, as well as al-'Ashā (d. 625), a poet from al-Yamāmah. Al-'Ashā relates that Hawdhah, after capturing a large number of prisoners in a long-standing conflict with the B. Tamīm, hoped to get God's grace by releasing them on Easter.[25] The northern sections of B. Bakr living near al-Ḥīrah were definitely Christians, and there is evidence that at least some sections of the B. Ḥanīfah were practising some form of Christianity as well.[26] Lyall strains his evidence by asserting that the entire B. Ḥanīfah were Christians,[27] but for our purposes it is sufficient to recognize (as did Watt for Mecca) that Christian influence were "in the air" and familiar to the settled population of al-Yamāmah.[28]

There is some direct evidence of political contacts between al-Yamāmah and non-Arab powers in the period immediately preceding Musaylimah's ascendancy to power. Hawdhah, who was "possibly the strongest man in central Arabia at this time,"[29] was allied to the Persians and "responsible for the safety of their caravans on a certain section of the route from Yemen to Persia."[30] For his cooperation with (or submission to) the Persians, Hawdhah received an honorary uniform and wreath, and was known from the time he received the gifts as "the wreath-bearer." In addition to the above evidence of Persian political influence in al-Yamāmah, several Ḥanīfī occupied major posts in the Persian bureaucracy.[31]

Al-Yamāmah was also influenced by developments in the Ḥijāz. Recognizing Hawdhah's importance, Muḥammad sent him a letter shortly before his armistice with the Quraysh at Ḥudabiyah in June 628, inviting him to accept Islam. Hawdhah replied that he would, on condition that Muḥammad would name him co-ruler and heir, a proposal which Muḥammad rejected, not willing in any way to compromise his claim to supreme religious and political authority.[32]

* * *

The discussions of most Orientalists regarding Musaylimah's movement have centered around the question of its origin in relation to Islam.

Essentially three positions have been taken: (1) Some historians

have argued that Musaylimah was preaching before Muḥammad and was relatively well-known. The only buttress for this position is Sūrah XXV:60 and the responding taunt of the Meccans that Muḥammad received his revelations from a man in al-Yamāmah called "ar-Raḥmān":

> But when they are told, "Bow yourselves to ar-Raḥmān," they say, "And what is ar-Raḥmān? Shall we bow ourselves to what thou biddst us?" And it increases them in aversion (Sūrah XXV:60).
>
> [The Meccans retorted to Muḥammad that] the only Raḥmān of whom we know is the Raḥmān of al-Yamāmah; i.e. Musaylimah the Liar (al-Baghāwī).[33]

The only Orientalist completely to adopt this position was D.S. Margoliouth. Perhaps not paying enough attention to historical method, he took an extreme (and arbitrary) interpretation of Sūrah XXV:60 and al-Baghāwī's commentary on it, and maintained that Muḥammad modelled his early Sūrahs upon Musaylimah's. Margoliouth based his argument on the non-sequitur that "in any question of literary ownership there must be a presumption against Mohammed, for in cases where we know his sources he indignantly denies the use of them," and hence "there is a suspicion that he is the imitator rather than the imitated." After Muḥammad borrowed from Musaylimah for his early verses, Margoliouth argues that "he found it expedient to desert Musaylimah for the Old and New

Testaments and the sayings of the Jewish fathers."[34]

(2) The second alternative is to accept uncritically the reverse assumption, favored by the Islamic source material, that Musaylimah was merely an imitator of Muḥammad.[35] A highly improbable explanation of how Musaylimah learned of Muḥammad is found in Ibn Isḥāq:

> A shaykh of B. Ḥanīfa from the people of al-Yamāma told me that the incident happened otherwise [immediately above this account is a story that Musaylimah, hiding in "garments," came within earshot of the Prophet, who sensed his presence]. He alleged [note the use of this term] that the deputation came to the apostle having left Musaylimah behind with the camels and the baggage. When they had accepted Islām they remembered where he was, and told the apostle that they had left a companion of theirs to guard their stuff. The apostle ordered that the should be given the same as the rest, saying, "His position is no worse than yours," i.e. in minding the property of his companions. That is what the apostle meant.
>
> They had left the apostle and brought him what he had given him. When they reached al-Yamāma the enemy of God apostasized, gave himself out as a prophet, and played the liar. He said, "I am a partner with him

> in the affair," and then he said to the deputation that had been with him, "Did he not say unto you when you mentioned me to him 'His position is no worse than yours'? What can that mean but that he knows that I am a partner with him in the affair?" Then he began to utter rhymes in saj' and to speak in imitation of the style of the Quran: "God has been gracious to the pregnant woman; He has brought forth from her a living being that can move from her very midst." He permitted them to wine and fornicate, and let them dispense with prayer, yet he was acknowledging the apostle as a prophet, and Ḥanīfa agreed with him on that. But God knows what the truth was.[36]

The first count against the story is the several internal contradictions within it. The clumsy and naive invention of having Musaylimah hide with the baggage is hardly orthodox etiquette for the leader of a large Arab tribe, or one about to be drafted for leadership.[37] The account that Musaylimah permitted wine and fornication to his people is contradicted by all other accounts (mentioned in the next chapter). Secondly, as A. Guillaume notes in the introduction to his translation of the Sīrah, Ibn Isḥāq prefaced this episode with "he alleged," which leads us to assume that Ibn Isḥāq placed less credence in this account than those accounts

which are not qualified by those words. Finally, the B. Ḥanīfah delegation story is one of a number of delegation accounts, as Watt notes, which were invented to increase the prestige of Muḥammad at the expense of Abū Bakr.[38] If a delegation did occur, it probably involved a discussion of primarily political matters, almost certainly not the submission of the entire tribe to Islam.[39]

A much more likely account supporting this alternative is that Musaylimah learned of Muḥammad's verses and techniques through the medium of a certain Nahār al-Raḥḥāl ("the traveller," alternatively given as ar-Rajjāl) b. ʿUnfuwah, who was either a member of the alleged B. Ḥanīfah delegation to Muḥammad who later apostasized,[40] or a Qur'ānic teacher (mu'allim) sent by Muḥammad to the B. Ḥanīfah who did the same. In the latter case he pressed Musaylimah's claim by saying that Musaylimah was an "associate" in prophecy with Muḥammad (innahu qad ushrik ma'ahu).[41] In either case he is said to have joined forces with Musaylimah, instructed him in the imitation of Muḥammad, and acted as his close adviser.[42]

(3) Our own position is to deny that there is sufficient information to fix the origin of Musaylimah's movement. We can conclude, however, that Musaylimah was some sort of religious figure in al-Yamāmah who did not attract substantial public attention or support until Hawdhah's death.[43] The contention that Musaylimah was merely an imitator of Muḥammad leaves many questions unanswered.

Musaylimah may well have borrowed or copied from Muḥammad, very possibly through the medium of an-Nahār. But the reasons for Musaylimah's success in converting the majority of his tribe and fighting with an army of 40,000 are still unexplained. Why would the B. Ḥanīfah have been so willing to accept an imitator of Muḥammad, the prophet of Quraysh? More pertinently, what needs did a prophet such as Musaylimah fill among the B. Ḥanīfah, so that they were willing to fight until death with him?

Traditional scholarship on Musaylimah, most of it on the "origin" questions, has concentrated on the historical "diffusion" of ideas and techniques, and who "imitated" whom. These questions are interesting in their own right, although they cannot be answered with the materials presently at our disposal. Our present analysis has a somewhat different focus. The following two chapters will try to indicate which cultural mechanisms Musaylimah had to utilize to gain supporters for his claims to religious and political authority, and how he could then maintain such support.

Chapter Four: Musaylimah - The Foundations of Authority

From what is known of the cultural acceptance of claims to religious authority and supernatural communication in general, their initial acceptance depends not upon innovations in the form and content of the claim, but rather upon those elements in it which are already familiar.[1] This is the case even if the overall intent of the claim is to endow old symbols and acts with new meaning,[2] and perhaps (as was the case with the movement begun by Muḥammad) to offer society material and ideological benefits from identification with some definable new cultural system, or Weltanschauung.[3]

The starting-point in an analysis of the basis of Musaylimah's authority is the style of his revelations. Unlike his ordinary speech, which is in prose, Musaylimah's revelations take the form of oaths using unusual words or images, or saj' verse, "short sentences in rhythmic prose, with single or more rarely alternating rhyme."[4] This style was used prior to the seventh century (and afterwards as well) by the kāhins, or soothsayers,[5] and, at least to some extent, by poets (sing. shā'ir). Another use of the cryptic "kāhinesque" form of speech occurs in some of the early Qur'ānic verses, as analyzed by Richard Bell.[6]

Below are several examples of Musaylimah's revelations, with the remainder quoted or paraphrased in other sections of this thesis. I have transliterated the Arabic of the first verse below to give the reader an idea of the sound in Arabic.

Croak, frog, as thou wilt: part of thee in the water and part in the mud; thou hinderst not the drinker, nor dost thou befoul the stream.[7]

Yā ḍifdi', ibnat ḍifdi',
Nuqqī mā tanuqqīn,
A'lāk fī l-mā',
Wa 'asfalk fī ṭ-ṭīn,
Lā sh-shārib tamna'īn,
Wa lā l-mā' tukaddirīn.[8]

The elephant, what is the elephant, and who shall tell you what is the elephant? It has a poor tail, and a long trunk; and is a trifling part of the creations of thy God.

Verily we have given thee the jewels: so take them to thyself and hasten; yet beware lest thou be too greedy or desire too much.

By the land covered with grass, by the mountains covered with whiteness, by the horses bearing saddles ...[9]

Happy are those who say their prayers, who give what is required of their surplus, who nourish the poor from their sack of provisions ...[10]

By various types of sheep ... by the black sheep

> and its white milk, indeed it is a pure surprise,
> and the wine was forbidden - Why don't you wonder
> about these things?"[11]

Unfortunately the context in which the above verses occurred is not known, although the verses cited in Chapter Five do occur in context. Here the form alone can be discussed. Anyone wishing to establish a claim to supernatural communication in seventh century Arabia was obligated, at least at the beginning of his career, to exhibit the traditionally recognized form of communication with the supernatural:

> All speech-act that had its origin in the unseen powers, all speech-act that was not a daily mundane use of words, but had something to do with the unseen powers, such as cursing, blessing, divination, incantation, inspiration, and revelation, had to be couched in this form [saj'].[12]

In some details, such as the use of saj' verse, Musaylimah used the same conventions as the kāhin. In the next chapter I will deal with Musaylimah's implementation of authority, but at this juncture it is significant to note that the kāhin, on the basis of his supernatural power, often had considerable political influence, as well as religious, which frequently extended beyond the limits of his own tribe. Thus the idea of a religious personage assuming control of one or several tribes was not unknown in the

two centuries prior to Islam:

> Their [kāhins] mantic knowledge is based on ecstatic inspiration . . . [which] is of demoniacal origin: a djinnī or shaiṭān "demon" . . . The kāhins often express themselves in very obscure and ambiguous language. They give greater emphasis to their utterance by striking oaths, swearing by the earth and sky, sun, moon and stars, light and darkness, evening and morning, plants and animals of all kinds . . .
>
> Kāhins play an extremely important part in public as well as private life. They are interrogated on all important tribal and state occasions . . . In private life the kāhins especially act as judges in disputes and points of law of all kinds . . . Their decision is considered as a kind of divine judgement against which there is no appeal. At the same time they interpret dreams, find lost camels, establish adulteries, clear up other crimes and misdemeanours, particularly thefts and murders, etc. . . . The influence of these men and women was naturally great and often stretched far beyond the bounds of their tribes.[13]

An example of a seventh century kāhin who was also chief of his tribe was Ṭulayḥah b. Khuwaylid of B. Asad. His dual role (before the Riddah) of chief and kāhin is emphasized by al-Jāhiz in Al-Bayān

wa t-Tabyīn.[14] Ṭulayḥah is an especially pertinent example since during the Riddah he further assumed the role of "prophet" of a tribal confederation under his aegis, at least until his conversion to Islam.[15]

Muḥammad's use of the traditional forms of communication with the supernatural at the beginning of his career has been studied in condiderable detail. He invested these forms with a new significance from the outset, but what we wish to establish is that only by use of the recognized signs of supernatural communication could Muḥammad initially establish his claim to inspiration:

> The prophet Muḥammad disclaimed being a kāhin . . . But his earliest appearance as a prophet reminds us strongly of the manner of these soothsayers. He was an ecstatic and had "true dreams" like them; his daimonion (ṣāḥib) was the (holy) spirit, whose place was later taken by the angel Gabriel. His revelations are, like the utterances of the kāhin, comprised in sadj' and sometimes begin with the usual abstruse oaths; even the forms which he was still using for administering justice and settling disputes in Madīna during the early years of his stay there correspond in their main features to those of the pagan kāhin and ḥakam.[16]

The source of Musaylimah's revelations is variously identified as "ar-Raḥmān,"[17] and simply "he who comes from heaven" (al-ladhī ya'tī min is-samā').[18] Elsewhere Musaylimah identifies himself as a "messenger of God" (rasūl illāh).[19] Like Muḥammad he did not claim to receive revelations from any of a number of undistinguished jinn or shayṭān, as did the ordinary kāhin or soothsayer; instead Musaylimah claimed to receive his inspiration from a superior supernatural being. Whether this concept was borrowed from Muḥammad or whether it was independently developed by Musaylimah (at least to some extent) is a question upon which there is no reliable evidence. The implications of the claim to a "superior" supernatural source are numerous. Most importantly, such a claim distinguished Muḥammad and Musaylimah from the kāhins who surrounded them, making their claim to authority superior, although in the case of Musaylimah (since he allegedly recognized Muḥammad's prophecy) not unique.

It is difficult to place Musaylimah's movement (as well as Muḥammad's) and innovations in a neat evolutionary sequence with preceding Arab political and religious movements and institutions. This is primarily because of the heavy "acculturative" influences in what is known of his teachings. As was the case in the Ḥijāz, al-Yamāmah's settled centers had long been influenced by the ideas, institutions, commerce, and people from outside central Arabia, as previous indicated.[20] Al-Jāḥiẓ presents a particularly interesting account of how Musaylimah was directly exposed to

Persian and Byzantine culture, paralleling the accounts of Muḥammad's journies to the Ghassānid state in his pre-prophetic days.[21] Before Musaylimah's "pretensions" to prophecy, al-Jāḥiẓ writes, he travelled to the market towns situated between the Arab lands (dār al-'arab) and Persia (al-'ajam), learning sorcery, astrology, and tricks of magic, and "then returned to his tribe, who are Arabs, and claimed prophecy."[22]

Specific data regarding the religious teachings of Musaylimah are highly limited in the primary sources. Among what is known of Musaylimah's teachings, he "insisted upon uprightness of life, and taught the doctrine of resurrection and Divine judgement based on what a man has done during his life," as well as prescribing three formal prayers daily, fasting, and the recognition of a sanctuary or sacred territory in al-Yamāmah upon his followers.[23] These influences, Watt believes, were predominantly Christian, as was Musaylimah's use of certain phrases such as "kingdom of heaven" (mulk as-samā').[24] Watt's inference is highly probable, since al-Yamāmah was a region highly influenced by Christianity. Furthermore, the nomadic B. Tamīm, who lived adjacant to the B. Ḥanīfah, were largely Christian, although converted to Islam in time to join the Muslims in battle against B. Ḥanīfah at the battle of 'Aqrabā'. One account in Ṭabarī describing the meeting between Sajāḥ of the B. Tamīm with Musaylimah describes her as having been "firmly rooted" in Christianity (rāsikkah fī n-naṣrāniyyah).[25]

There is one further, highly questionable, detail of Musaylimah's teachings. Watt refers to Musaylimah's "regulation" that "a man was not to have intercourse with any woman so long as he had a son alive," saying that it was "perhaps intended to deal with the economic basis" of al-Yamāmah; "the disappearance of the trade between the Yemen and Persia had perhaps affected the Yamāmah adversely."[26]

If the account in Ṭabarī were accepted as valid, the implications of such a "regulation" are much more disastrous than Watt realizes. Such a prohibition is diametrically opposed to the Arab ideal of having as many male offspring as possible, which is recognized by every writer on nomadic and sedentary Arabs.[27] Further, how could such a "regulation" be enforced? A claimant to authority could do nothing but weaken his claim by advocating measures inherently unenforceable. If the most creative response of Musaylimah to economic difficulties in his principality was to go against established values and restrict family size (which in any case could not solve an economic or population problem until later years), rather than conquer or subject to tribute rich regions beyond al-Yamāmah, then this regulation would support the contention that Musaylimah was unable to create an ideology capable of generating support in the cultural situation of central Arabia. However, this "regulation" is so obviously against Arab values of both today and of seventh century Arabia that it is most likely an invention on the part of the Muslim chroniclers or their informants.

Chapter Five: Musaylimah - The Implementation of Religious-Political Authority.

> It is . . . clear that Musaylimah's teaching was attempting to provide a religious and intellectual basis for a principality centred in the Yamāmah and independent of Persia, Byzantium, and Medina.
>
> - - Montgomery Watt,
> Muhammad at Medina, p. 136.

The practical effect of Musaylimah's movement was to establish, however briefly, an independent principality in al-Yamāmah. Although Hawdhah acted as protector of Persian caravans, there is no mention of Musaylimah's having done so. As was earlier suggested, the weakened condition of Persia after the death of Khusraw II (628) probably made possible the independence of outlying buffer zones such as al-Yamāmah; in any case there is no mention of Persian "presence" in al-Yamāmah after Hawdhah's death. The fierce resistance of al-Yamāmah to absorption into the Pax Islamica is another indication, in political terms, of its desire for independence.

While the effect of Musaylimah's movement is relatively clear, it is a difficult task to determine the nature of Musaylimah's principality and his authority over it. Watt's assertion that Musaylimah's teachings "clearly" attempted to provide an ideological basis for independence needs modification. While it was possible

in the last chapter to show the partial conformity of the form of Musaylimah's revelations with pre-existing Arab cultural norms,[1] and the possible sources for what is known of his moral dictums, no statement attributed to Musaylimah clearly justifies or supports al-Yamāmah as an independent principality. The revelation praising settled peoples as opposed to nomads may be interpreted as a call to liberty from nomad harassment, but this hardly provides the documentation necessary to buttress Watt's position that Musaylimah's teachings provided the ideological underpinning needed for an independent principality.

Musaylimah's actions, so far as they are known, indicate he went about forming an "independent principality," even if his "teachings" are of little use on this point. This chapter gathers the slim evidence of Musaylimah's negotiations with other tribal groups (and the Muslims), and his conduct of affairs within al-Yamāmah itself. The fragmentary nature of the evidence necessitates our dealing separately with each incident.

I. In the first episode to be analyzed, Ṭabarī records that in years of good harvest the nomadic B. Asad would raid the villages of al-Yamāmah and then withdraw into the sacred area (ḥaram) set up by Musaylimah, using it as a sanctuary. This happened repeatedly, even after warnings, until the people of al-Yamāmah prepared to pursue the B. Asad into the sacred area. Musaylimah stopped them, saying: "Wait for he who comes to me from heaven," and then

revealed: "By the dark night and the wily wolf, the B. Asad have not defiled the ḥaram." The people of al-Yamāmah replied. "Is the meaning of the ḥaram to make permissible the forbidden and destroy [our] property?" Later, according to the same account, the B. Asad again raided al-Yamāmah, and again Musaylimah prevented his followers from entering the sacred area, with "the one who comes to him" revealing through him that: "By the tenebrous night and the dark wolf! The Asad have not cut [down your] fresh or dried dates."[2]

The above account is significant for two reasons. First, it shows the sedentary people of B.Ḥanīfah in conflict with a nomadic group. As demonstrated by Musaylimah's revelation praising the virtues of living by agriculture, the existence of nomadic-sedentary conflict, an ever-present problem in pre-oil Arabia, is confirmed for the specific case of al-Yamāmah under Musaylimah. Unfortunately there is no explanation in Ṭabarī of why Musaylimah should have wanted to protect the B. Asad and allow his followers to be plundered. Possibly some sort of pact existed between Musaylimah's followers and the B. Asad which is not recorded in the Muslim chronicles. One of the first steps in securing al-Yamāmah as an independent principality would have been to reach a <u>modus vivendi</u> - by force or by promotion of mutually beneficial goals - with the nomads in and around the principality. Thus fortified, al-Yamāmah would be in a condition to maintain independence as a religious and

political entity in the face of mounting pressure from the Ḥijāz and other quarters.

The outcome of Musaylimah's encounter with B. Asad is not known. For our purposes the importance of the above story from Ṭabarī is that it shows the existence of nomadic-sedentary conflict in al-Yamāmah and Musaylimah's attempt to deal with it in some manner.

The other significance of the account is the mention that Musaylimah established a ḥaram. As mentioned in Chapter Two, establishment of a ḥaram was the means by which one or more tribes could unite under the aegis of a holy person or family, agree to submit their disputes to arbitration, and maintain peace in an area recognized as ḥaram.[3] There is no evidence in the Muslim accounts which contradicts such a view, although it is difficult to come to real conclusions on the basis of one unelaborated episode. If Musaylimah did establish a ḥaram, it would be useful to have examples of disputes submitted to him for arbitration or judgment. Such information could be used to determine the scope of his authority, the innovations (if any) he made to traditional concepts of authority, and his skill as a leader. In the beginning the "Constitution of Medina" documents were accepted as a standard item in the "cultural vocabulary" of both nomadic and settled Arabs, although it possessed within it the seeds of something quite revolutionary. Such may have been the case with Musaylimah's ḥaram.

Lacking more detailed evidence, our suggestion that Musaylimah founded a ḥaram in the customary Arab pattern must remain highly provisional.[4]

II. Another revelation, cited in Ṭabarī, indicates an attempt by Musaylimah to reconcile B. Ḥanīfah with the predominantly nomadic B. Tamīm,[5] traditional rivals of the B. Ḥanīfah: "The B. Tamīm are of noble blood; do nothing to discredit them. While we live we shall remain their good neighbors and we will defend them from enemies. When we die, let Raḥmān look after them."[6]

This verse suggests that an alliance of some sort may have existed with B. Tamīm. Unfortunately the history of B. Tamīm, especially for the period of the Riddah, is obscure, making it impossible to verify whether such an alliance existed with all, or merely part, of the tribe, and the specific times involved.[7]

The major difficulty facing an interpretation of II is that one of the chief authorities of the Riddah, Sayf b. ʿUmār, was of B. Tamīm. He probably tried to cover up the extent of his tribe's "apostasy" by suppressing information on the size of the non-Muslim factions of the tribe and their activities.[8] Another problem is that the B. Tamīm were divided into a number of factions, operating more or less independently of each other. The strength of these factions fluctuated frequently, and the sources refer collectively to B. Tamīm, with no specification of factions

involved.[9] Thus it is impossible accurately to estimate the strength of the anti-Muslim faction in B. Tamīm, with the exception of the members of B. Tamīm following Sajāḥ, discussed below.

As account II stands, it records an attempt of Musaylimah to reconcile his followers with their nomadic neighbors, although the outcome of the negotiations, as in the first story, is not specified.

III. In the latter part of Musaylimah's career an alliance was concluded with the "false" prophetess Sajāḥ of B. Tamīm. After she and her followers were severely beaten by other sections of B. Tamīm, they decided to join Musaylimah in al-Yamāmah.[10] Their encounter occurred there at either al-Ḥajr or al-Amwāh.[11]

There are three basic accounts of their meeting. The first, the most unreliable (for reasons which will be discussed), is that the two prophets unified their worldly and spiritual interests, married, and remained together until Musaylimah's death at 'Aqrabā'. The second is that they married, whereupon Musaylimah cast her off, and she returned to her people. The third is that Musaylimah was either raided by Sajāḥ, or feared her presence might provoke an attack by his more formidable enemies, so he offered her half the year's harvest plus half the harvest in the coming year if she consented to depart.[12]

The first account, depicting lewd relations between Musaylimah and Sajāḥ,[13] should be regarded as highly suspect; most European sources agree that this account was a later invention designed to blacken the reputation of the two. A "wedding" between the two culminating in a "lustful orgy"[14] would contradict the other evidence regarding Musaylimah's teachings and conduct. Secondly, contrary to the usual practice in Ṭabarī, no isnād is supplied for the account, other than that it came from someone "other than Sayf."[15] While a plausible isnād is no guarantee of veracity, the complete lack of one is an almost sure sign of fabrication. As for the claim that Sajāḥ remained with Musaylimah until his death, there is no hint of her presence at the battle of ʿAqrabā'. Finally, in this account Sajāḥ recognized Musaylimah as a prophet, whereupon he says: "Shall I marry you? Then I can conquer the Arabs (al-ʿArab) with your people and mine."[16] Considering the weakened condition of Sajāḥ's "army" after a series of defeats and Musaylimah's tenuous position, surrounded by the Muslims and other groups traditionally hostile to B. Ḥanīfah (such as B. Tamīm), it is doubtful whether plans for the conquest of all of Arabia were actually contemplated. Thus on four counts the "lewd marriage" version may be rejected as a later fabrication by Muslim chroniclers.

The remaining two versions of their meeting are from Sayf, and show more signs of authenticity. From them it can be assumed

that Sajāh was in al-Yamāmah only to raid its rich regions,[17] or that alternatively Sajāḥ had fled to Musaylimah for support, but was sent away or "bought off." In either case Musaylimah offered her half that year's harvest and half that of the following year. Sajāḥ, by either account, remained in al-Yamāmah for only a short time, and then rode off with the booty, leaving behind only a small detachment of men to collect the rest.[18]

Musaylimah would have every reason to want Sajāḥ's departure. He was being menaced by the Muslim forces; and the surrounding tribes, such as B. Asad and B. Tamīm, as the previous accounts suggest, were constant threats to his authority. Even if Sajāḥ had at one time the loyalty of many elements of B. Tamīm, she was a thorn in their side in the year or so preceding 'Aqrabā'. Much of B. Tamīm were wavering between "conversion" to Islam and resistance to it;[19] Musaylimah's harboring of an outcast member of Tamīm and her following would only serve to increase the strain on B. Ḥanīfah - B. Tamīm relations. This situation could be manipulated by the Muslim forces to their advantage, and probably was, since B. Tamīm elements joined forces with Khālid at the battle of 'Aqrabā'. For this reason, rather than because of Sajāḥ's military strength, Musaylimah probably feared her presence and desired her rapid departure from al-Yamāmah.[20]

In either of the last two accounts, in one of which a "marriage" between the two is mentioned without embellishments, it seems clear that some sort of political alliance or accomodation was concluded,

although onee again many details of the transaction remain obscure.[21] By all appearances Musaylimah was either outmaneuvered diplomatically, or had not acted as a skillful leader. If the best ally he could find was Sajāḥ, he was in desparate straits. His condition was even worse if he had to yield to her extortion of half al-Yamāmah's harvest, as the other account suggests.

* * *

As the above three accounts indicate, only a few details survive on the nature of Musaylimah's alliances with other tribes. However from the accounts that follow, a pattern finally begins to emerge, suggesting that Musaylimah's conception of authority was not far removed from that of the head of a traditional tribal confederation. Musaylimah, like Muḥammad, claimed prophecy, although nowhere is there an indication that Musaylimah, like Muḥammad,[22] emphasized obedience to himself on the basis of a non-kin rationale, transcending the existing system of tribal and kin organization. The thread of unity in the following accounts is Musaylimah's claim to authority on the basis of his tribal and kin affiliations with his followers.

IV. The tribal basis of his authority comes out most clearly in the differing accounts of his relations with Muḥammad, the most probable of which report a correspondence between the two, appearing with only minor variations in several of the traditional chronicles:

> Musaylima had written to the apostle: "From Musaylimah the apostle of God to Muḥammad the apostle of God. Peace be upon you. I have been made partner with you in authority. To us belongs half the land and to Quraysh half, but Quraysh are a hostile people." Two messengers brought this letter.
>
> A shaykh of Ashja' told me on the authority of Samala b. Nu'aym b. Mas'ūd al-Ashja'ī from his father Nu'aym: I heard the apostle saying to them when he read his letter "What do you say about it?" They said that they said the same as Musaylima. He replied, "By God, were it not that heralds are not to be killed I would behead the pair of you!" Then he wrote to Musaylimah: "From Muḥammad the apostle of God to Musaylima the liar. Peace be upon him who follows the guidance. The earth is God's. He lets whom he will of his creatures inherit it and the result is to the pious." This was at the end of the year 10 [the beginning of A.D. 632].[23]

The above account has several arguments in favor of its validity. First, it coincides with what is known in general of Musaylimah's movement - that it was an attempt to create an independent principality in al-Yamāmah and to reject external authority of any sort. Hawdhah, it is remembered, rejected a written invitation of

Muḥammad's to convert to Islam by suggesting that he should become Muḥammad's co-ruler and heir. The exchange of correspondence detailed above suggests that Musaylimah renewed Hawdhah's offer, albeit in a slightly modified form. Secondly, there are no details in the "letter" account which betray later fabrication, such as in the "delegation" account which has Musaylimah hiding with the delegation's baggage, or in "garments." Finally, Ibn Isḥāq does not preface the above passage with the words "he alleged," which occurs in the delegation story, the alternate explanation of relations between the two claimants of prophecy.

The previously-discussed accounts of Nahār ar-Rajjāl are not incompatible with those of the exchange of correspondence. Whether it is assumed that Nahār was an apostate member of the B. Ḥanīfah delegation to Muḥammad or a renegade Qur'ānic teacher, Musaylimah is not made to claim ascendancy over other claims to prophecy (and therefore to political leadership), as did Muḥammad; Musaylimah's claim to authority seems limited to the B. Ḥanīfah, except where explicit agreements with other prophets or leaders were made, as with Sajāḥ, or the one he tried to make with Muḥammad.

V. The following accounts underscore even more emphatically that Musaylimah's claim to authority was based upon the traditional ties of tribe and kin, as opposed to the innovatory, non-kin rationale (innovatory at least in emphasis) which buttressed the Muslim claim.

> Shu'īb related to us, from Sayf, from Khālid b. Dhafarah al-Namarī, from 'Amīr b. Ṭalḥah an-Namarī, from his father [who like Musaylimah belonged to B. Rabī'ah, which included B. Ḥanīfah] came to al-Yamāmah and asked: "Where is Musaylimah?" . . . and when he found him he said: "Are you Musaylimah?"
>
> He said: "Yes."
>
> "Who comes to you?"
>
> "Ar-Raḥmān."
>
> "In light or in shadows?"
>
> "In shadows."
>
> "I testify that you are a liar and that Muḥammad is telling the truth. But a liar of the Rabī'ah is better for us than a true prophet of the Muḍar [Muḥammad's tribal group]."[24]

Ṭabarī follows the above account by another in which the isnād, and the latter part of the story, are changed. It reads: "From Shu'īh, from Sayf, from al-Kalbī." The last line is changed, so that Ṭalḥah's father is made to be more sceptical of the prophetic claims of both Muḥammad and Musaylimah: "A liar of the Rabī'ah is better than a liar of the Muḍar."[25]

Both stories can be explained by reference to prevailing tribal

custom. Submission to the leader of another tribal group, whether or not it involved a payment of tribute, would result in a serious loss of status to the submitting tribe. By tribal custom the submission of one tribal group to another is a sign of the inability of a tribe to defend itself.[26] Submission to Islam would be prone to interpretation in this manner, particularly by tribes such as B. Ḥanīfah who were outside of the Ḥijāz and never connected with any pre-Islamic Ḥijāzī-based ḥaram or confederation.[27] The emphasis of both variants of V is upon the tribal affiliation of the prophet. The second version, in addition, suggests that the innovatory conception of the Arab prophet, with the corresponding alterations in leadership institutions, was not universally acknowledged as being "divinely inspired" by seventh-century Arabs.

The wording of several of the "miracle" stories also indicates that Musaylimah appealed to his followers (or was accepted by them) as a prophet intended only for his <u>specific</u> tribal group.

> A woman of the B. Ḥanīfah came to him [Musaylimah] and said: "Our palms are shrivelled and our wells are dry. Invoke God for our water and for our palms, <u>as did Muḥammad for the people of Ḥazmān</u>." And Musaylimah asked: "O Nahār, what does she say?" [in order to learn how to perform the blessing, or miracle]. And he [Nahār] said: "The people of Ḥazmān came to Muḥammad and complained of their lack

> of water and their dry wells and palms . . . so he prayed for them.[28]

Thus in contrast to Islamic ideology and practice, Musaylimah seems to have remained much closer to the traditional pattern of inter-tribal relations and kin-based society. Perhaps his strength was that he harnessed the tide of "tribalism" - or possibly that of regionalism - in his favor, in opposition to assimilation into the Islamic movement. Within this traditional framework Musaylimah had considerable support, as is illustrated by the reported 40,000 troops under his command at 'Aqrabā' in 634. However Musaylimah does not seem to have extended, or to have intended to extend, his authority much beyond the tribal, or regional, authority held by his predecessor, Hawdhah. The concept of prophet seems to be fused with that of the traditional chief of a tribe, although the religious element was more strongly emphasized.

This limited vision, or inability further to expand his authority, perhaps explains why there are no accounts of any agressive military actions on the part of Musaylimah and his partisans. In fact, the only recorded offensive action is the assassination of a Muslim emissary travelling from Baḥrayn to Mecca, which is far below the scale of a military venture or even an offensive raid.[29]

Accounts of Musaylimah at the Battle of 'Aqrabā' similarly

indicate that - despite his alleged numerical superiority - he passively waited for the Muslim attack.[30] Musaylimah's battle cries at 'Aqrabā' seem to be those suitable to a sedentary people interested only in defending their lands; they show neither signs of the promise of booty or heaven which Islam had to offer, nor exaltation of military virtues. Musaylimah's followers are exhorted to fight for their tribe and their relatives, again reinforcing the limited conception of leadership with which Musaylimah operated:

> O B. Ḥanīfah, today is the day of defending [your] honor; if the enemy puts you to flight the women will be taken prisoners and will be married shamefully [i.e. outside of your tribe]; so fight for your lands and protect your women![31]

Balādhurī's abbreviated version of the battle cry is: "O banu-Ḥanīfah, fight for your relatives!"[32]

* * *

The evidence presented in this chapter strongly indicates that the response of B. Ḥanīfah to increasing pressure from Islam, in the light of respect for tribal tradition and values, was to maintain or strengthen their independence by supporting a rival prophet of their own. One is tempted to relate the case of Musaylimah to the modern anthropological literature on the dynamics of religious movements. As Yonina Talmon has noted, it is common for rival

"religious revitalization" movements to crystallize in reaction to each other. The spread of independent movements is particularly contagious when the basis for claims to leadership is revelation, as any number of leaders and prophets can claim divine inspiration.[33] Arab prophetic movements rival to Islam would then be interpreted as having been given impetus by Islam's expansion, whether initially "spin-offs" from Islam or movements independent in conception.[34]

Unfortunately there is not enough data on Musaylimah to confirm such an interpretation, as appealing as it is in its clarity. It is only during the Riddah, the period of the consolidation of Muslim power over regions outside of the Ḥijāz, that we hear of Musaylimah. Did the Riddah serve as an inspiration and catalyst to Musaylimah's career, impelling B. Ḥanīfah to raise him to power as a focal point of resistance to Islam? Was the primary fear the threat of Islam to their tribalistic conception of society? Or did Musaylimah's career begin independent of Islam (whatever later borrowings from it may have occurred), only to clash eventually with Muslim armies and be vanquished by them? These questions cannot be answered at the present. All that can be concluded with certainty is that Musaylimah was a religious and political leader claiming prophetic powers. At the time of the Riddah he led resistance in al-Yamāmah to encroachment by Islam. Extant evidence suggests that much of his support came from his appeal as a tribal or regional prophet. How much of Musaylimah's rise to power was due to a skillful manipulation of B. Ḥanīfah on his part or by an

aide such as an-Nahār, or to his simple availability as a leader to a populace ready to seize upon any focus of resistance, cannot be determined.

Symbolically, Musaylimah's defeat in 634 was a test of strength of two antithetical world-views. The Islamic movement by 632 began realizing its goal of making the Arabs one people, offered a social, political, and ideological system superior to tribal loyalties, and exacted from the Arabs obedience to a centralized authority. In exchange for submission to this authority, Islam held out rewards, religious and otherwise. Islam extolled the virtue of fighting in its behalf. As success after success followed in the wake of the Muslim generals, enthusiasm for Islam spread among all tribes, nomad and settled. As Balādhurī and many writers since have observed, motives for submitting to Islam were mixed, but by the end of the Riddah all Arabia had united in the cause of Islam; by then, the Arabs were strong enough to carry their faith, and political hegemony, to other lands.[35] In contrast, Musaylimah had no super-tribal ideology to offer, or none which generated any enthusiasm beyond the confines of al-Yamāmah. Likewise there is no sign that Musaylimah ever emphasized warrior virtues, or intended conquest. His world-view offered little to Arabs outside B. Ḥanīfah, and his fumbling attempts to reconcile B. Ḥanīfah to their neighbors paled beside the infinitely grander scale of unity being developed by Islam.

In a pragmatic sense success is the final test of a prophetic movement (and its ideology) whose aim is to establish or maintain an independent principality. Musaylimah's movement failed this test. Islam did not. It is clear that we do not know all of the factors which lay behind the vicissitudes of Musaylimah's movement. Of what is known, the attitude of Musaylimah and his followers towards tribalism seems intimately linked with their rise and fall.

Notes to Chapter One.

[1]V.V. Barthold, "Musaylimah," Bulletin de l'Académie des Sciences de Russie, XIX (1925), 493; W. Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Medina (Oxford, 1962), p. 148; see also articles on each "false prophet" in SEI.

[2]Ṭabarī, Ta'rikh ur-Rusul wa l-Mulūk (Cairo, 1960), I, p. 1730; Leone Caetani, Annali dell' Islām (Milan, 1907), Vol. II (1), p. 452.

[3]P.K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, 8th ed. (London, 1964), p. 141. For a discussion of the claim that a significant number of Qur'ān reciters were killed at the Battle of 'Aqrabā', see SEI, p. 278.

[4]Barthold, 493; Watt, Medina, p. 136.

[5]Caetani, pp. 850ff.; Hitti, p. 141; Watt, Medina, pp. 79-80; Barthold, 484-485.

[6]This term is defined as "a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture," in A.F.C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," American Anthropologist, LVIII (1956), 265. I use it here because there is no adequate non-technical equivalent, and because of its wide acceptance in anthropological circles.

[7]Material is also to be found in the copious medieval dalā'il

an-nubuwwah, or "signs of prophethood" literature, in which Musaylimah is pictured as the Antichrist whose miracles always fail. These accounts are much later in date than the historical works I have utilized, and are of negligible value in a reconstruction of Musaylimah's movement. Examples of this literature can be found quoted in D.S. Margoliouth, The Early Development of Mohammedanism (New York, 1914) pp. 241-258.

[8]The Cairo edition which I have utilized is a revision of the earlier De Goeje one. My pagination, however, follows De Goeje, which is to be found in the margin of the Cairo text.

[9]tr. A. Guillaume (London, 1955).

[10]tr. P.K. Hitti (New York, 1916).

[11]The relevant passages in Yāqūt are cited in Barthold.

[12]Les Traditions Islamiques, tr. O. Houdas (Paris, 1908), Vol. III.

[13](Cairo, [A.H.] 1302), Vol. II. Technically this is not a "primary" source, because of its late date. However, it accurately reproduces material in the earlier sources to which I have access. In addition it contains valuable information not recorded in the extant "primary" sources, from the lost Rabī' ul-Ibrār of al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 869). On the strength of the internal plausibility of the material from al-Jāḥiẓ (introduced later) and the exact reporting

in ad-Diyārbakrī of the other earlier sources on Musaylimah, it is probable that the material in ad-Diyārbakrī's account attributed to al-Jāḥiẓ actually is from him.

[14]Such a hope is not vain. Prof. Martin Hinds (personal communication) of Cambridge University has informed me that ʿAbdul Ḥayy Shaʿbān is presently editing a previously unknown ninth century historian, al-ʿAtham al-Kūfī, which will constitute one of the earliest sources available on the life of the Prophet and the events of the "Orthodox Caliphate."

[15]p. 450.

[16]Barthold, 485.

[17]Ibn Isḥāq, pp. 636-637.

[18]Ṭabarī, p. 1917.

[19]Ibn Isḥāq, p. 637. Details of the "delegation story" of Ibn Isḥāq in which this allegation is made will be discussed later.

[20]Reynold A. Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs (Cambridge, 1962), p. 351; H.A.R. Gibb, Studies on the Civilization of Islam (Boston, 1962), pp. 114ff.

[21]See W. ʿArafat, "An Interpretation of the Different Accounts of the Visit of the Tamīm Delegation to the Prophet in A.H. 9," BSOAS, XVII (1955), 416-425; M.J. Kister, "Mecca and

Tamīm (Aspects of their Relations)," JESHO, VIII (1965), 113-163.

[22]Watt's notes on sources are in Muhammad at Mecca (Oxford, 1960), pp. xi-xvi, and Medina, pp. 336-338. In analyzing the various incidents in Muḥammad's life and milieu, it is interesting to note how often Watt describes what is probable, likely, or what may have been, given the cultural situation of seventh century Arabia, or what was the apparent purpose of specific verses in the Qur'ān. In some cases, such as in his account of the "Satanic verses" (Mecca, pp. 101-109), he passes no absolute judgment on the various accounts and clearly indicates that a definitive answer can never be given (p. 109). Despite many problems with detail in the accounts he makes certain conclusions as to what was probable (p. 105).

What Watt has done is to assume that the essential validity of the accounts with which he has to work depends not upon authenticating isolated facts, but upon considering these accounts in their entirety, fitting them into a credible pattern. It is upon the resulting pattern of events that Watt rests the value of his work. As Watt writes: "Perhaps the coherence of the resulting account of Muḥammad's career will be accepted as an additional argument for the soundness of this procedure." (p. 336).

An attitude similar to Watt's has been recently expressed by Régis Blachère, although Blachère does not defend the quality or reliability of the source materials: "Il semble de plus en plus

difficile d'admettre qu'on soit en état d'écrire une 'Vie de Mahomet' . . . Les sources dont nous disposons . . . ne permettant point de le faire avec la rigueur qu'impose la méthode historique." Histoire de la Littérature Arabe (Paris, 1964), Vol. II, p. 198.

This sort of history may appear somewhat disooncerting to the conventional historian dealing with documents of unquestioned authenticity, but the historian of seventh century Arabia must stop far short of perfection if he is to write history at all. The methodological assumptions involved are fully discussed by Philip Bagby, Culture and History (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), esp. pp. 85-92.

[23]A complete account of the battle of 'Aqrabā', with full references, is found in Barthold, 502-511.

[24]The most complete account of tribal relations in the early seventh century, based on the accounts of the riddah, is found in Watt, Medina, pp. 78-150. His accounts of specific tribes should be checked wherever possible against the articles by Werner Caskel in EI[2] on specific tribal groups, particularly those in eastern Arabia.

[25]Hawdhah was ruler of most of B. Ḥanīfah prior to Musaylimah.

[26]Cited in Barthold, 495.

[27]"On the Origin and Import of the Names Muslim and Ḥanīf,"

JRAS, XXXV (1903), 467-493.

[28]"The Words 'Ḥanīf' and 'Muslim'," JRAS, XXXV (1903), 771-784.

[29]One such erroneous assumption is that the term ḥanīf in the Qur'ān is related to the tribal name, B. Ḥanīfah. Although Buhl shows familiarity with the articles by Margoliouth and Lyall in his SEI article (pp. 132-133), he refrains from even mentioning the theory of a possible relation of "ḥanīf" with "B. Ḥanīfah" although he presents all the other interpretations brought forward by scholars (including Margoliouth) to that time.

[30]p. 643.

[31] 485.

[32]Reproduced in SEI, p. 416.

[33]Medina, pp. 136-137.

[34]In EI^2, esp. pp. 962-964.

Notes to Chapter Two

[1]E.g., Toshihiko Izutsu, God and Man in the Koran (Tokyo, 1964), pp. 198-229; Ignaz Goldziher, Muhammedanische Studien (Halle, 1888), pp. 219-228.

[2]Joseph Chelhod, Les Structures du Sacré chez les Arabes (Paris, 1964), p. 14.

[3]Watt, Medina, p. 388.

[4](Cambridge). For detailed discussions of this point see Robert F. Spencer, "The Arabian Matriarchate: an Old Controversy," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, VIII (1952), 478-502, and Joseph Henninger, "La Société Bédouine Ancienne," in F. Gabrieli (ed.), L'Antica Società Beduina (Rome, 1959), pp. 90-92.

R.B. Serjeant gives additional examples of errors of the same sort in his highly critical review of Watt's Medina in BSOAS, XXI (1958), 187-188. Pertinent to our present study is Serjeant's rejection of Watt's assertion that the ummah developed by Muḥammad was a form of social organization based on religion for which there was no pre-Islamic precedent. Serjeant points out that there were extra-tribal religious organizations surrounding the pre-Islamic gods and goddesses. Serjeant develops and documents this point in his "Ḥaram and Ḥawṭah, the Sacred Enclave in Arabia," Mélanges Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, ed. A. Badawi (Cairo, 1962), pp. 41-57, esp. p. 49. He also suggests the epigraphic evidence

in Khalīl Yaḥyā Nāmī, "Nuqūsh Khirbat Barāqīsh," Majallat Kullīyat al-Ādab (Cairo), XVII (1955), offprint p. 7. The general conclusion of Serjeant's review of Watt is that "Muḥammad acts according to well-known Arabian patterns" (p. 187), implying the continuity of many of his actions and policies with pre-Islamic practice. See also Serjeant's "Professor A. Guillaume's Translation of the Sīrah," BSOAS, XXI (1958), esp. p. 13.

[5]To many readers some of the material of this chapter, especially the historical data, may be so well-known as not to require statement. But as the above example from Watt on lineage systems indicated, the "communications lag" between disciplines working on similar problems - even in fundamental concepts - can exceed half a century. Since the approach of this thesis is interdisciplinary, the risk of fighting windmills in this chapter is justified. What is a "windmill" for the anthropologist may not be for the Orientalist, and vice-versa. In any case this chapter provides a general framework into which fits the more specialized material on Musaylimah and al-Yamāmah.

[6]In Mélanges and "Sīrah".

[7]In Mélanges and "The Constitution of Medina," Islamic Quarterly, VIII (1964), 3-16. The "Constitution" article is the more technical of the two.

[8]Medina, pp. 78-150; also H. Lammens, La Cité Arabe de Tā'if à

la Veille de l'Hegire (Beirut, 1922), pp. 119-121.

[9]Esp. Introduction à la Sociologie de l'Islam (Paris, 1964).

[10]Saleh A. El-Ali, "Muslim Estates in Hidjaz in the First Century A.H.," JESHO, II (1959), 247-261, esp. 248.

[11]E.g. Eric R. Wolf, "The Social Organization of Mecca and the Origins of Islam," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, VII (1951), 329-330.

[12]E.g. Daniel Schlumberger, La Palmyrène du Nord-Ouest (Paris, 1951), pp. 131 ff.

[13]E.g. Giorgio Levi Della Vida, "Pre-Islamic Arabia," in The Arab Heritage, ed. N.A. Faris (Princeton, 1946), pp. 35-37, 39; Gunnar Olinder, The Kings of Kinda (Lund, 1927).

[14]"Events in Arabia in the 6th Century A.D.," XVI, 466-467; see also G.E. von Grunebaum, Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition (London, 1964), p. 14.

[15]Smith, 467.

[16]Chelhod, Introduction, pp. 65-93.

[17]Wolf, 329.

[18]Several centers in the Ḥijāz itself competed with Mecca. Aṭ-Ṭā'if was a serious competitor (Chelhod, Introduction, pp. 95-96); possibly Jiddah as well (Smith, 467).

[19]Watt, Mecca, pp. 138, 142.

[20]Mélanges, p. 50.

[21]Chelhod, Introduction, p. 79; Serjeant, Mélanges, p. 48.

[22]The exact site in al-Yamāmah is unspecified, but it was probably in the region surrounding al-Ḥajr, and possibly included al-Ḥajr. See Ṭabarī, pp. 1932-1933.

[23]See the numerous references to Arabic materials in Serjeant, Mélanges; also Chelhod, Sacré, pp. 232-236.

[24]Serjeant, Mélanges, esp. p. 52; G. Ryckmans, Les Religions Arabes Préislamiques (Louvain, 1951), pp. 36-37.

[25]Serjeant, Mélanges; also his "Hūd and Other Pre-Islamic Prophets of Ḥaḍramawt," Le Muséon, LXVII (1954), 121-178.

[26]Chelhod, Sacré, pp. 232-233.

[27]Mělanges, p. 50.

[28]Mélanges, esp. pp. 49-51; a more detailed analysis is in the "Constitution" article.

[29]Mélanges, p. 51. This is not to argue against the fundamental social and political changes eventually wrought by Islam. I am merely presenting evidence to suggest that the bulk of these changes had not been implementd by 634.

[30]H. St. J.B. Philby, The Background of Islam (Alexandria, 1947), pp. 108ff. Also relevant is N. Pigulevskaja, "Les Rapports Sociaux à Nedjrān au début du VIe siècle de l'ère Chrétienne," JESHO, III, 113-130; IV, 1-14.

[31]Philby, pp. 122-123.

[32]Levi Della Vida, p. 42; H. Charles, Le Christianisme des Arabes Nomades (Paris, 1936), p. 4.

[33]Wolf, 342.

[34]Ismā'īl Khālidī, "The Arab Kingdom of Ghassān," Muslim World, XLVI (1956), 193-206.

[35]Smith, 465, 467.

[36]Olinder, p. 37; J. Ryckmans, La Persécution des Chrétiens Himyarites au Sixième Siècle (Istanbul, 1956).

[37]Ignacio Guidi, L'Arabie Anteislamique (Paris, 1921), p. 24; Smith, 467.

[38]Smith, 467.

[39]Barthold, 498.

[40]Smith, 467-468; see also Werner Caskel, "The Bedouinization of Arabia," in Studies in Islamic Cultural History, ed. G. von Grunebaum (Menasha, 1954), p. 40.

[41] We are here considering only the case of Musaylimah. Regrettably, little is known of the other "false prophets." Al-Aswad ruled for a month or two in Ṣan'ā, but it is unlikely that he was more than an Arab chief at the head of an uneasy alliance. His "prophetic" claims were minimal, and there is no evidence that he tried to transform society, as Muḥammad and Musaylimah attempted (Watt, Medina, pp. 128-130). Sajāḥ and Ṭulayḥah (both later became Muslims) seem to have applied their prophetic powers primarily to secure their positions as heads of predominantly nomadic confederations (Watt, Medina, pp. 88, 139).

South Arabia in the sixth century may have seen similar prophetic figures. D.S. Margoliouth, The Relations between Arabs and Israelites prior to the Rise of Islam (London, 1924), p. 81, concluded that in the two centuries which preceded Muḥammad it "underwent some violent religious transformation." More specifically, evidence has recently been collected which indicates that at least part of these transformations were brought about by a sixth century South Arab prophet, Hūd, but information is still scant. See Serjeant, "Hūd."

Notes to Chapter Three

[1]Musaylimah's genealogy is variously given, but always contains the name Ḥabīb, which will assume some importance in Chapter Five. See SEI, p. 416.

[2]EI[2], 962-964; Abū al-Fidā, At-Tawārīkh al-Qudmah min al-Mukhtaṣir fī Akhbār al-Basharī, ed. H.O. Fleischer (Leipzig, 1831), p. 194. Watt, Medina, pp. 132, 141, treats B. Bakr and B. Ḥanīfah as independent tribes. He corrects this error in his article "B. Ḥanīfah" for EI[2] (pp. 166-167), where B. Ḥanīfah is included as part of the B. Bakr group.

[3]Barthold, 485-488.

[4]Ibid., 487.

[5]Such a division is quite significant in a discussion of cultural institutions, social organization, or values. Régis Blachère, Histoire de la Littérature Arabe, Vol. II, pp. 243-247, recognized this when he divided Arab poets by region, and in each region by whether they were nomad or sedentary.

The dichotomy of values between nomads and settlers is very sharp. The settled Arab's interest in peace, security, and economic gain are diametrically opposed to the predatory instincts of the Bedouin. If one tribe is divided into nomadic and settled elements, it will usually have separate leadership as well. General accounts

of the inherency of nomad-sedentary conflict can be found in Chelhod, Sacré, pp. 3-33; Introduction, pp. 22-64; Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah, tr. Franz Rosenthal (London, 1958), Vol. I, pp. 302-305; al-Muqaddimah (Beirut, 1961), pp. 263-265; John Bagot Glubb, "Arab Chivalry," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, XXIV (1937), 7; Henry Rosenfeld, "The Social Composition of the Military in the Process of State Formation in the Arabian Desert," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, XCV (1965), 183; A. Musil, Northern Nejd (New York, 1928), p. 257.

[6]Barthold, 486. For twentieth century evidence drawn from roughly the same region, see F. S. Vidal, The Oasis of al-Hasa (New York, 1955).

[7]Barthold, 486.

[8]Ibid., 488. Ṭabarī, p. 1939 specifies that Musaylimah went out from the cultivated lands (ar-rīf) to meet Khālid's troops.

[9]Watt, Medina, p. 133; Barthold, 489.

[10]EI^2, p. 963.

[11]Bukhārī, Les Traditions Islamiques, tr. O. Houdas (Paris, 1908), Vol. III, p. 214.

[12]492.

[13]Barthold, 492-493.

[14]Watt, Medina, p. 133.

[15]492.

[16]Barthold, 503; Ṭabarī, p. 1962.

Note that there is no attempt in any of the primary sources to magnify the role of Thumāmah or of his followers among the B. Ḥanīfah. If the compilers of these sources had allowed their bias against Musaylimah to interfere with their goal of honest reporting, a dimunition of Musaylimah and glorification of Thumāmah would have been one of the most direct ways of doing so. That there is no sign of such an attempt is another confirmation of our position that the traditions on Musaylimah, a "false prophet," are not inherently less veracious than accounts of other less theologically sensitive events in the sources. See Watt, Mecca, p. xiv.

[17]489.

[18]p. 1934; cf. Ṭabarī, Chronique, tr. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1958), Vol. III, p. 295. A stylistically similar passage may be Qur'ān, LI:1ff.

[19]Ṭabarī, pp. 1919-1920.

[20]Ibid., pp. 1934-1935.

These stories are also found in the French translation from the Persian edition of Ṭabarī (Chronique, pp. 296, 297); but the

reader should be cautioned that the text of the Persian edition does not always correspond to the Arabic, especially in the account of Musaylimah, which is on pp. 276-298, with additional material in the account of Sajāḥ, pp. 257-269. In general the Persian edition reorganizes the material into a more narrative fashion than exists in the Arabic edition, and adds considerable hagiographic material.

In the Arabic edition (alone) there is a naive explanation of why Musaylimah still had supporters after such disasterous "miracles": "[Their ill effects] became clear only after his [Musaylimah's] death." The B. Ḥanīfah must have been extremely unperceptive cultivators not to have noticed the disappearance of their water and withering of their crops, which, by the same account, happened simultaneously! (Ṭabarī, p. 1935).

[21]These "miracle" stories, like all the "miracle" accounts, have probably been added by later commentators.

However, like other miracle stories, those concerning Musaylimah should not be rejected outright. Some stories, of this genre contain nothing of value. One such is where Khadījah, to test whether Muḥammad's visitant was from God or from Satan, undresses and makes Muḥammad sit in her lap, whereupon Gabriel disappears (Ibn Ishāq, p. 107). The story is (a) from an early period in Muḥammad's life on which we possess little information, and (b) cannot be corroborated by independent traditions or

similar events. Others often have a factual base, which of course can only be determined with the utilization of more reliable data. Thus one "miracle" story alleges that Rukānah al-Muṭṭalibī of B. 'Abdu Manāf (Quraysh) converts to Islam only after Muḥammad moves a tree and performs other miracles in his presence. Afterwards Rukānah returned to his tribe to boast of Muḥammad's skill (Ibn Isḥāq, pp. 178-179). It is known by more reliable data (see Watt, Mecca, p. 181) that B. 'Abdu Manāf were for a long time opposed to Muḥammad's assertion of prophecy and leadership; structurally the "miracle" story here may be a reflection of this situation. As Muir says, the presence of miraculous elements in a tradition does not necessarily discredit it. See his The Life of Mohammed, revised by T.H. Weir (Edinburgh, 1912), pp. lix-lx.

It is possible that the "structural" element in the Musaylimah miracle stories - their occurrance in a settled milieu - was also fabricated. Since the "settled" milieu corresponds with more reliable information from other sources, I suggest that there may be a fundament of truth to them. No interpretation in this paper, however, relies exclusively upon the "miracle" stories.

The last name on the isnād, or chain of authorities, in the majority of the Musaylimah miracle stories is one "Athāl al-Ḥanifī, who was with Thumāmah b. Uthāl" (Ṭabarī, p. 1931). Thumāmah, as we have surmised, was probably leader of the nomadic B. Ḥanīfah. If this was the case, it is interesting that there was no anti-nomadic bias (in this case) against the use of a nomad in isnāds.

Some commentators (with minimal factual foundation) assert that the primary sources often show an anti-nomad bias, since they were compiled by authors of settled origin. However the penchant of the "transmitters" of tradition for nomadic ways, and for nomadic verse, is clearly recognized in Orientalist literature, rendering invalid the blanket assertion of anti-nomadic bias (e.g. Blachère, Histoire, Vol. I, esp. pp. 99-101). Nomad "values" and nomad "impiety" may be despised, but this is quite different from saying that their testimony would be ignored in the pious duty of collecting information on the foundations of Islam. Bedouins were also highly regarded for their "pure" knowledge of Arabic.

[22]Barthold, 488.

[23]Smith, 442.

[24]Lyall, 777.

[25]In Yāqūt, cited by Barthold, 490; EI^2, p. 964.

[26]EI^2, p. 964.

[27] 784.

[28]Watt, Medina, pp. 158-161.

[29]Ibid., p. 133.

[30]Ibid., p. 133; also Barthold, 491; EI^2, p. 964.

Watt (Medina, p. 133) unconvincingly infers that since Hawdhah was responsible for the safety of Persian caravans, he was a member of the nomadic section of B. Ḥanīfah. If this were the case, then the small section of B. Ḥanīfah which was nomadic would have had hegemony over the settlers. This is highly unlikely in light of the overwhelming number of B. Ḥanīfah settlers. See Sergeant, "Hūd," 135, and "Two Tribal Cases (Documents) (Wāhidī Sultanate, South-West Arabia)," JRAS, 1951, 168.

As is the case with Quraysh, a settled tribe who could arrange for and guarantee the safe passage of caravans, there is no necessity for Hawdhah to be nomadic simply because he could facilitate commerce.

[31]Barthold, 491.

[32]Caetani, p. 640; al-Balādhurī, p. 133.

[33]Watt, Medina, pp. 134-135; Margoliouth, "Origin," 485.

The whole question of the term "ar-Raḥmān" is quite complicated when attempts are made to trace its origin in Orientalist literature. Y. Moubarac, "Les Études d'Epigraphie Sud-Sémitique et la Naissance de l'Islam," Revue des Études Islamiques, XXV (1957), 13-68, presents new evidence from South Arabian inscriptions to support his view that "ar-Raḥmān" may have been a South Arabian term, which further complicates the theories of many "diffusionists" over this question, who have often underemphasized the influence of South Arabian culture upon the language of the Qur'ān. Blachère in Vol. I of Histoire

(1952) indicates that "ar-Raḥmān" is found inscribed on the dam at Ma'rib, although he is careful to note that it also occurs in the inscriptions of several other regions (p. 53).

[34]"Origin," 492. Lyall, in his rejoinder, gave an accurate point-by-point refutation of Margoliouth's position, questioning the validity of his evidence. But then to "prove" that Musaylimah could not have been the inspiration of Muḥammad, Lyall asserts that Musaylimah's utterances (which he assumes we know in their entirety) "aesthetically" fall short of those of the Qur'ān. He concludes his argument with an injection of 19th century Victorian values: "Self-surrender, Islām, is an idea of the highest religious value ...," and since Musaylimah's movement lacked (?) this value, it obviously would not have the appeal of Muḥammad's (Lyall, p. 784). The primary fallacy here, of course, is that a movement such as Muḥammad's or Musaylimah's stand or fall exclusively on the question of ideas alone. A secondary fallacy is based on the transference of nineteenth century European values to sixth century Arabia. The logical process is the same as Margoliouth's: basing an argument on unprovable postulates.

[35]e.g. Ṭabarī, pp. 1749-1750.

G.H. Bousquet, "Observations sociologiques sur les origines de l'Islam," Studia Islamica, II (1954), 71, took this position, and managed to dismiss the problem discussed by this thesis in a single

sentence: "L'apparition ultérieure de faux prophètes est un cas d'imitation (cf. les fausses Jeanne d'Arc)."!

[36]636-637. Also in Ṭabarī, pp. 1737-1738.

[37]Caetani, p. 452, concurs with this position.

[38]See Watt, Medina, pp. 79-80.

[39]Caetani, p. 643.

[40]Balādhurī, p. 132; Watt, Medina, p. 134; Ṭabarī, p. 1932.

[41]Ṭabarī, pp. 1932, 1941; ad-Diyārbakrī, p. 175; Balādhurī, p. 133. Cf. Ṭabarī, Chronique, pp. 294-297.

[42]Watt, Medina, p. 136; Ṭabarī, p;1932; Barthold, 499.

[43]This position is substantially that of Watt in Medina, p. 136.

Notes to Chapter Four

[1]E.g. Theodore Schwartz, The Paliau Movement in the Admiralty Islamds, 1946-1954 (New York, 1962), pp. 392-393; see also Watt, Mecca, p. 81.

[2]Vittorio Lanternari, The Religions of the Oppressed (Toronto, 1965), p. 185.

[3]Wallace, 273.

[4]SEI, p. 207.

[5]"Kāhinship" is often erroneously considered a "pre-Islamic" institution. The use of saj' verse by kāhins as a sign of supernatural communication in Arabia has been fairly constant over the centuries. Al-Mas'ūdī, Murūj adh-Dhahab wa Ma'ādin al-Jūhur, ed. De Meynard and De Courteille (Paris, 1865), Vol. III, pp. 379ff., mentions the South Arabian kāhinah (female soothsayer) Ẓarīfah; Ṭabarī, III, 21, gives an example of a kāhin using saj' as late as the year 749, well after the "Islamization" of Arabia; Alois Musil, The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins (New York, 1928), p. 403, indicates that the kāhins of contemporary nomadic tribes still use saj' verse, although they profess themselves to be Muslim. See also Robert Montagne, La Civilisation du Desert (Paris, 1947), p. 85.

[6]Richard Bell, Introduction to the Qur'ān (Edinburgh, 1963), p. 76.

[7]This and the following two verses are translated by Margoliouth, "Origin," 488.

[8]Ṭabarī, p. 1934.

[9]This verse compares stylistically to Qur'ān LXXXV:1.

[10]Ṭabarī, Chronique, pp. 295-296. Cf. Qur'ān LXXXVII:14ff.

[11]Ṭabarī, p. 1933.

Palgrave is not considered to be one of the more reliable 19th century travellers, but he writes the following on Musaylimah in Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia (London, 1866), Vol. I, p. 382:

> Whenever a new chapter of Soorah of the Coran appeared, Gabriel-brought from heaven, a burlesque imitation awaited it, the work of Moseylemah. I have, while in Nejed, been favoured with the recitation of many of these ludicrous pieces, yet retained by tradition; but, like most parodies, they were little worthy of memory, and often very course.

If the account has any validity, it is regrettable that Palgrave neither recorded the alleged sayings nor the tribal affiliations of their reciters.

[12]Izutsu, p. 173.

[13]Italics mine, D.E.; SEI, p. 207; see also G. Ryckmans, pp. 11-12; Blachère, Histoire, pp. 188-195.

[14](Cairo, 1932), Vol. I, p. 280; also Blachère, Histoire, p. 191; H. Lammens, L'Arabie Occidentale avant l'Hégire (Beirut, 1928), p. 257, also notes the frequent identity of the roles of chief and kāhin.

[15]SEI, pp. 595-596.

[16]SEI, p. 207; cf. Bell, pp. 75-76.

[17]Ṭabarī, p. 1937.

[18]Ibid., p. 1933.

[19]Ibid., p. 1749.

[20]On specifically religious influences see Bell, pp. 80-81; and Izutsu, pp. 109ff.

[21]Tor Andre, Mohammed: The Man and His Faith (New York, 1960), pp. 37-38, 40-41; Blachère, Le Problème de Mahomet (Paris, 1952), p. 35.

[22]Cited in ad-Diyārbakrī, p. 176.

[23]Watt, Medina, p. 135. Based upon Ṭabarī, pp. 1916-1917. Watt calls these details "genuine." It would be interesting for him to articulate the criteria by which he is able to separate

the "genuine" from what is not in the early sources.

[24] Medina, p. 136; Ṭabarī, p. 1917.

[25] Ṭabarī, p. 1916.

[26] Medina, p. 135; see Ṭabarī, p. 1917.

[27] E.g. A. Jaussen, Coutumes des Arabes (Paris, 1948), pp. 14-15; Bishr Farès, L'Honneur chez les Arabes avant l'Islam, (Paris, 1932), p. 53.

Notes to Chapter Five

[1]The remaining few which are presented in context occur in this chapter, although these, in each case, seem related only to specific situations.

[2]Ṭabarī, pp. 1932; cf. Ṭabarī, Chronique, p. 294.

This account provides a clear example of the direct relation of the incidence of revelation to specific political or social situations, of which clear examples are rare in anthropological literature. See A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, Structure and Function in Primitive Society (London, 1963), pp. 177. It strikes a parallel with such parts of the Qur'ān as the repudiation of the "satanic" verses, said to have been intended to accommodate the Meccan nobles (Watt, Mecca, pp. 101-110), or the revelations rationalizing the Muslim defeat at the battle of Uḥud (March 625) (Watt, Medina, pp. 21-29).

[3]Chelhod, Sacré, pp. 229-237; Serjeant, Mélanges.

[4]Serjeant, Mélanges, p. 56.

It is interesting to note, in support of this suggestion, that one of Musaylimah's titles is "Ḥabīb," which is one of the titles of the sharīfs (members of holy families) in charge of the ḥawṭahs, present-day versions of the ḥarams, as previous mentioned. Serjeant, Mélanges, p. 56.

[5]Watt, Medina, p. 137; Charles, Christianisme, pp. 55, 60 ff.

[6]Ṭabarī, p. 1933.

[7]Watt, Medina, p. 139.

[8]Ibid., p. 139.

[9]Detailed contemporary descriptions of how rapid fluctuations in the strength of various tribal sections occur and some of the factors involved can be found in Albert de Boucheman, "Note sur la Rivalité de Deux Tribus Moutonnières de Syrie, les 'Mawali' et les 'Hadidiyn'," Revue des Études Islamiques, VIII (1934), 9-58, esp. the charts on 29, 34, 38; see also Emrys Peters, "The Proliferation of Segments in the Lineage of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Society, XC (1960), 29-53. Two writers on seventh century Arabia who recognize the problem of the fluctuation of the size of groups and the ensuing historical problems are Watt, Medina, pp. 78-79, and Blachère, Histoire, p. 9.

[10]Balādhurī, p. 151.

[11]SEI, p. 435.

[12]The variant accounts are summarized in SEI, pp. 485-486.

[13]Ṭabarī, pp. 1916-1918.

[14]V. Vacca in SEI, p. 485. The basis of this euphemism is the following verse (and several others), said to have come to Musaylimah

by revelation. After telling Sajāḥ that God revealed to him that a woman's place in life is on the bed, Musaylimah recited:

> God created women with a wide-open cleft,
> And made men as partners for her;
> Then we penetrate the clitoris (qu'ṣ)
> And she bears children for us (Ṭabarī, pp. 1917-1918).

The verse is in saj', and my translation does not capture the tone of the original. Unless I am mistakened, it is humorous, and says much for the skill and wit of its forger. Blachère (Histoire) frequently makes the point that a popular medieval sport was to forge "pre-Islamic" verse.

[15]Ṭabarī, p. 1917; Caetani, p. 645.

[16]Ṭabarī, p. 1918.

[17]This account is preferred by Barthold, 505.

[18]Ṭabarī, pp. 1919-1920; also SEI, pp. 485-486.

[19]SEI, p. 485.

[20]Ṭabarī, pp. 1915-1916.

[21]Marriage here would seem to be primarily a means of sealing an agreement or a political alliance, if one actually did occur.

[22]There is some dispute among Muḥammad's biographers as to whether his intention was to unify the Arabs or to go beyond Arab

lands, since the consolidation of the Muslim hold over Arabia and the foreign conquests were executed by Muḥammad's successors. For our purposes it is immaterial whether the goal of hegemony over the Arabs was clearly in Muḥammad's mind or that of its successors. By 634 the goal of the Islamic movement was to expand beyond Arabia.

[23]Ibn Isḥāq, p. 699; italics mine, D.E. Cf. Ṭabarī, pp. 1748-1749.

[24]Ṭabarī, p. 1937; cf. Ṭabarī, Chronique, pp. 297-298.

[25]Ṭabarī, p. 1937.

[26]See Glubb, "The Bedouins of Northern Arabia [misprinted as 'Irāq]," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, XXII (1935), 15; also Rosenfeld, 76-77.

[27]Watt, Medina, p. 116. Tribute remained a sign of submission after the Islamic conquests. My point here is that even if tribute were disguised as "tithe," or if only the recognition of Muḥammad or his successors as leader were involved, submission would still involve a loss of face in terms of traditional Arab values. Unless the absurd position is adopted that "Arab" values were instantly replaced by "Islamic" values in the 630's, it is safe to assume that much of the resistance to Islam outside of the Ḥijāz (as well as within it) came from tribes interpreting submission to Islam as submission to Quraysh, or to a Ḥijāzī tribal confederation.

[28]Ṭabarī, p. 1934; italics mine, D.C.

[29]Ibn Isḥāq, p. 212.

[30]John Bagot Glubb, The Great Arab Conquests (Englewood Cliffs, 1963), pp. 111-114.

[31]Ṭabarī, p. 1939.

[32]Balādhurī, p. 136.

[33]"Pursuit of the Millennium: The Relation between Religious and Social Change," in A Reader in Comparative Religion, eds. W. Lessa and E.Z. Vogt (New York, Evanston, and London, 1965), pp. 528-529.

[34]I base my remark on "false prophetic" movements other than Musaylimah's upon the relevant articles in SEI, not upon independent research.

[35]Balādhurī writes:

> When abu-Bakr was done with the case of those who apostasized, he saw fit to direct his troops against Syria. To this effect he wrote to the people of Makkah, aṭ-Ṭā'if, al-Yaman, and all the Arabs in Najd and al-Ḥijāz calling them for a "holy war" and arousing their desire in it and in the obtainable booty from the Greeks. Accordingly, people, including those actuated by greed as well as those actuated by

> the hope of divine remuneration, hastened to abu-Bakr from all quarters, and flocked to al-Madīnah (p. 165; italics mine, D.E.).

It is interesting to compare al-Balādhurī's description of the varying reasons men flocked to Medina to participate in the conquests with Holt's analysis of the varying motivations of the followers of the Mahdī in the nineteenth century Sudan. See P.M. Holt, The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881-1898 (Oxford, 1963), p. 117.

Holt also records that two of the most serious rebellions against the Mahdī's power came from men whom, under the banner of tribalism, themselves claimed prophecy and organized their respective tribal groups against the Mahdist state (pp 138-140; 152-153). This presents an interesting parallel to the case of Musaylimah, although the parallel can hardly be developed because of the lack of detailed information.

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