

studies he took classes at l'École des Hautes Études, Collège de France. Upon his return to Egypt in 1877, the Khedive Isma'il appointed him to the Auditory general. He left after two years to enter the Ministry of Justice, where he remained until his death after a long illness on 25 July 1897. *Bulletin de l'Institut égyptien*, 3e série, 8 (1897), pp. 177-182

Abbott, Freeland Knight, born 31 May 1919 at Hartford, Conn., he graduated from Tufts College and received a Ph. D. from Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He taught at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, and Tufts University. In 1953-1955, he was a Ford Foundation Fellow in Pakistan and went there again in 1959-1960 as a Fulbright Research Fellow. His chief interest was Middle Eastern and South Asian history on which he wrote a number of articles and the monograph *Islam and Pakistan* (1968). He was a member of several learned societies, and was interested in curriculum reform. He died suddenly at Pusan, Korea, while on sabbatic leave, 24 February 1971. *WhAm* 5

Abbott, George Frederick, born 19th cent., he wrote *The tale of a tour in Macedonia* (1903), *Through India with the Prince* (1906), *Israel in Europe* (1907), *Turkey in transition* (1909), *The holy war in Tripoli* (1912), *Turkey, Greece, and the great powers* (1917), *Under the Turk in Constantinople* (1920), and *Greece and the Allies, 1914-1922* (1922). LC; LitYbk, 1922; *Master* (4)

Abbott, Sir James, born 12 March 1807; he passed through the military college of the East India Company, Blackheath, and received a commission as second lieutenant in the Bengal Artillery on 6 June 1823. In 1839 he was sent to Khiva to negotiate the release of Russian prisoners, and concluded the terms in 1840 in St. Petersburg. From 1845 to 1853 he was commissioner of Hazara. He was also a poet and antiquarian. His writings include *The Thakoorine, a tale of Maandoo* (1841), *A Narrative of a journey from Herat to Khiva, Moscow and St. Petersburg* (1843), *Legends, ballades, &c.* (1854). He died 6 October 1896 in Ellerslie, Isle of Wight. *Boase*; *Buckland*; *DNB*; *Henze*; *IndianBilnd* (4); *Riddick*

Abbott, Keith Edward, born about 1800; he had a Turkish background and was associated in business with James Brant, a Smyrna merchant. He was served as a British consul at Erzerum, Tehran, Tabriz and Odessa. From October 1849 to June 1850, he travelled from Tehran to Qum, Isfahan, Yazd, Kirman, Shiraz, Bushire, and from there by boat to Baghdad, returning by way of Kirmanshah and Hamadan. From Tehran he made periodic visits to the Caspian province of Gilan in order to report on and encourage the cultivation of silk which was exported to England. He made valuable reconnaissance of parts of Persia which had not been trodden before by Westerners. He died in Odessa, 28 April 1873. *DNB*; *Gabriel*; *Henze*; *Wright*

Abbott, Nabia, born 31 January 1897 at Mardin, Turkey; she was educated at the University of Allahabad, Boston University, and the University of Chicago. For some years she taught English at girls' schools in India; subsequently she was head of a girls' school in Iraq until 1923 when she went to the United States. After some ten years at Asbury College, Wilmore, Ky., she went to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, where she remained until her retirement in 1963. Her writings include *The Monasteries of Fayyum* (1937), *The Kurrah papyri from Aphrodito in the Oriental Institute*, a revision of her Ph.D. thesis, Chicago, 1933 (1938), *The Rise of the North Arabic script and the Kur'anic development* (1939), *Aisha, the beloved of Mohammad* (1942), *Two Queens of Baghdad* (1946), *Studies in Arabic literary papyri* (1957-1972). *DrAS*, 1969 H, 1974 H, 1978 H; *WhoAmI*, 1961/62

Abboud, Peter Fouad, born 30 June 1931 at Jaffa, he studied at the University of London, AUC, and Univ. of Texas at Austin, where he obtained a Ph.D. in 1964 for *The Syntax of Nadji Arabic*. From 1968 until his retirement he was professor of Arabic at the University of Texas. He was joint author of *Elementary modern standard Arabic* (1975-76). *DrAS*, 1974 F, 1978 F, 1982 F

'Abd al-Jalil, Jean Mohammed, 1904-1979 see Abd-el-Jalil, Jean Mohammed

'Abd al-Jawad, Dorothea née Schumacher, born in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, her writings include *Eine türkische Ehe in Briefen* (1913), and *Frauenkleid und Entartung eines Jahrtausends* (1929). She died after 1932.

'Abd al-Nasir, Jamal, 1918-1970 see Nasser, Gamal Abdel

'Abd al-Rahim, Muhammad Kamil, born in 1897 in Egypt, he was educated at Fuad I University, Cairo, and Cambridge University. He was an Egyptian diplomat and sometime ambassador to the United States. His writings include *Shifa' lil-qulub* (1967). *Who's who in the Arab world*, 1978/79

Abd-el-Jalil, le père Jean Mohammed, born in 1904 in Morocco, he studied at Paris, and entered the Franciscan Order in 1928. He was ordained in 1935 and shortly thereafter appointed professor of Arabic and Islamic studies at l'Institut catholique de Paris. His writings include *Histoire de la littérature arabe* (1943). *MIDEO* 15 (1982), pp. 311-312; *NUC*, 1968-1972

of Arabic literature and science. Nevertheless, Rosenthal's contribution provided a fuller treatment of the origins of Arabic historiography than had Gibb's brief survey of the subject in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, and began the process of synthesizing the rather large number of isolated studies of detailed aspects of Arabic historiography that had accumulated over the preceding decades. A further step, and one of greater importance for practicing historians, was taken with the appearance of the second book, Nabia Abbott's splendid *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri, I. Historical Texts* (Chicago, 1957). This work provided an even more detailed survey of the crucial earliest phases of Arabic historiography, and did so in a manner that emphasized, on the basis of papyrological evidence, the generally reliable character of the process by which historical accounts were transmitted. The book thus provided strong, if still somewhat general, support for the view that the Arabic accounts were as a whole reliable as historical sources, even if some distortions and spurious material may have crept in.

The third work, however, really represented the culmination of the long series of diverse efforts to trace the evolution of early Arabic historiography in such a way as to be useful to the historian. It was 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dūrī's *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs (Baḥṭh fī nash'at 'ilm al-ta'rikh 'inda l-'Arab)*, which appeared in Beirut in 1960. Dūrī's book was, and remains, noteworthy for several reasons. First, it provided the most comprehensive overview of the growth of early Arabic historiography that had yet appeared. Drawing in part on the results of many scattered critical studies and monographs devoted to individual traditionists and historiographical issues, the author was able to sketch out a much clearer and more highly nuanced picture than had previously existed of the rise of various schools of Arabic historical writing and of their methods. But Dūrī did not merely synthesize

the work of others; he also relied heavily on his own independent researches into early Arabic historiography, efforts that became manifest not only in this book, but also in a number of studies of more restricted aspects of the subject that appeared over the years. Among them were his articles on "The Iraq School of History to the Ninth Century—A Sketch" (1962), and "Al-Zuhri: A Study of the Beginnings of History Writing in Islam" (1957), as well as his monograph *Dirāsa fī sirat al-nabī wa-mu'allifihā Ibn Ishāq* (Baghdad, 1965) on Ibn Ishāq and his biography of the prophet.

The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs is especially noteworthy because Dūrī is himself a practicing historian, with many fine publications on early Islamic history to his credit (see Bibliography). It was therefore natural that in approaching the problem of historiography he should do so with the question that historians always want most to have answered uppermost in his mind—namely, how reliable are the sources under scrutiny as evidence for reconstructing "what actually happened"? This concern Dūrī wove together with his analysis of the earliest historical accounts according to the genre to which they belonged (popular story, genealogical tradition, tribal "battle-day" narrative, etc.) and according to the methods used by the various local schools of historical writing that emerged in Medina, Iraq, and elsewhere. The result was not only a more detailed and sophisticated analysis of the rise of early Arabic historiography in general, but also the elaboration for the first time of a set of general guidelines for assessing the reliability of a given account on the basis of its origin and its formal characteristics. This made the book particularly useful to historians, and also provided more support for those who viewed the Arabic sources as essentially reliable for reconstructing history, since the lack of consistent criteria for weeding spurious and tendentious material out of the Arabic historiographical tradition had all along been one of the main

A.A. Duri, Edited and Translated by Lawrence I. Conrad, Princeton - New Jersey, 1983, VIII-XVII pp. 2098

Tamam "Goldziher I. Posetindedir

18 TEMMUZ 1996

REACTION AGAINST SCEPTICISM

Unlike Stetter's work, the theories and methodologies advanced by Goldziher and Schacht have inspired much comment, commendation, and criticism, and in so doing have determined both the nature and direction of the debate concerning *hadīths*. Their work has been attacked on two fronts.⁵⁵ The first attempts to correct the aforementioned "misunderstandings" by insisting that *hadīths* were committed to written form very shortly after the death of Muḥammad, or even during his lifetime. And as a further guarantee of their reliable transmission, *hadīths* were then maintained in written form until they were finally compiled in the classical collections.⁵⁶ The second consists of asserting the early and reliable use of the *isnād* to counter Schacht, for whom its presence, particularly in complete form, is already an indication that a *hadīth* has been fabricated or at least manipulated.

D. Ed.

N. Abbott and the Early Continuous Written Tradition

Nabia Abbott tries to argue that there was an early and continuous practice of writing *hadīths* in Islam. By "early" she means that the Companions of the Prophet themselves kept written records of *hadīths* and by "continuous" that most *hadīths* were transmitted in written form (alongside the oral transmission) until the time they were compiled in the canonical collections. For her, then, it is this written transmission of *hadīths* that serves as the guarantee of their authenticity.

Abbott suggests that literacy was not uncommon among Arabs even in pre-Islamic times and that reports about Muḥammad were already being written during his lifetime.⁵⁷ The problem for Abbott, given this suggestion, is the obvious lack of any early attempt to standardize all these reports about Muḥammad and, more tacitly, the lack of extant manuscripts from this period. Her solution to this conundrum is to lay the blame squarely on the shoulders of the second caliph, ʿUmar I (d. 23/644). Because of the lack of familiarity with the Qurʾān in the newly conquered lands outside Arabia, the caliph feared "a development in Islam, parallel to that in Judaism and Christianity, but particularly in the latter, of a body of sacred literature that could compete with, if not distort or challenge the Qurʾān."⁵⁸ So he destroyed the manuscripts of *hadīths* he discovered and punished those who had possessed them. Many Companions avoided (at least publicly) the use of written and even oral *hadīths* lest they incur the caliph's wrath (even though they did not necessarily concur with him on this issue). However, the real basis for the later collections of *hadīths* was the relatively few Companions, such as ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ (d. 65/684), Abū Hurayra (d. 58/678), Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 67-8/686-8), and Anas ibn Mālik (d. 94/712), who continued to collect, record, and transmit them.⁵⁹

With the death of ʿUmar and the successful promulgation of the ʿUthmanic recension of the Qurʾān, the two major fears regarding the use of *hadīths* were significantly diminished. According to Abbott, the use of *hadīths* then flourished in the second half of the first century and even those early Muslims, who like ʿUmar, eschewed the use of *hadīths* in written form, succumbed to preserving their knowledge thus. *Hadīths* were taught in the major centres of Islam, particularly Medina and Mecca, for legal, paraenetic, and entertainment purposes, not only by jurists and judges, but also by teachers, preachers, and storytellers.

Abbott recognizes that Western scholars, such as Goldziher and Schacht, question the veracity of the later reports of literary activities during this early period. She states that she herself shared these same doubts but now believes them to be largely unjustified, for the description of this period is relatively consistent and well-attested. Abbott adds:

For not only was there a remarkable degree of unanimity among the admiring students and followers of these men and like-minded traditionists concerning the overall literary activity, but reluctant and at times censorious testimony by the opposition bears witness to this literary activity. Furthermore ... there are literally dozens of their contemporaries scattered across the vast empire who were engaged in similar activities but who for one reason or another never received marked public attention.⁶⁰

In an attempt to counter Goldziher's suggestion of the secular nature of Umayyad rule, Abbott argues that the Umayyad caliphs Muʿāwīya (d. 60/680), Marwān (d. 65/684) and ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 86/705), for example, all took an active interest in transmitting and/or recording *hadīths*.⁶¹ ʿUmar II is particularly associated with *hadīth* literature. Abbott accepts the report (found in the recension of Shaybānī (d. 189/805) of Mālik ibn Anas's *Muwattaʿa*)⁶² that this Umayyad caliph commissioned Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAmr ibn Ḥazm (d. 120/738) to record *hadīths* and sunna.⁶³ Abbott argues that he was only one of many the caliph contacted in order to secure authentic *hadīths*, and that Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī was ordered to collate these numerous *hadīths* from the various regions of the empire. Abbott further assumes that al-Zuhrī finished this enormous task and that these *daftar*s (manuscripts) were distributed, but that because of resistance in the provinces and the untimely death of ʿUmar II, they never received much attention⁶⁴ (though the work of al-Zuhrī lived on through his many noteworthy students). Thus, Abbott has attempted to remedy this "oversight" by Goldziher and to give the Umayyads their due by stressing their role in encouraging the written transmission of the *hadīth* material.

With this form of transmission of *hadīths*, Abbott is also able to provide the following explanation for the appearance of a rapid expansion in the number of *hadīths* – perhaps to counter Schacht's spread-of-*isnāds* theory.

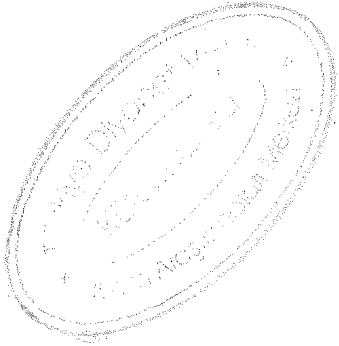
KİTABİYÂT

**N. Abbott'un Aishah Adlı
Kitabı ve Hz.
Muhammed'in Sevgili
Eşi Ayşe İsimli Çevirisi
Üzerine**

Giriş

Yaşadığımız son bir asır içerisinde en çok tartışılan konulardan birisi, –belki de Batı'daki tartışmaların etkisiyle– İslam'da kadın ve müslüman hanımın konumudur. Bu hususta gerek İslam aleminde,¹ gerekse Batı'da çeşitli çalışmalar yapılmıştır.² Bunlardan bir kısmı, müslüman hanımların haklarını,³ bazıları onların problemlerini ele alırken,⁴ bir kısmı ise İslam tarihindeki meşhur bazı hanımların biyografilerini veya ilmî yaklaşımlarını anlatarak İslam kadınına tavsif etmeyi amaçlamıştır.⁵ Özellikle son zamanlarda

- 1- Bekir Topaloğlu, *İslam'da Kadın*, İstanbul 1985; Rıza Savaş, *Hız. Muhammed (s.a.v.) Devrinde Kadın*, Ravza Yayınları, Bursa, t.y.; Abdur Rahman Doi, *Women in Shariah*, Nigeria 1983; Mehmed Said Hatiboğlu, "İslam'ın Kadına Bakışı", *İslâmî Araştırmalar V* (1991), sayı: 4; Neda Armaner, "Hadislerle Göre Kadının Sosyal Durumuna Umûmî Bir Bakış", *AÜİFD IX* (1961).
- 2- Bo Utas, ed. *Women in Islamic Societies-Social Attitudes and Historical Perspectives*, London 1983; Charis Waddi, *Women in Muslim History*, London 1980; Nabia Abbott, "Women and the State in Early Islam", *Journal of Neareastern Studies I*(1942), s. 106-126, 341-368; "Women in Ruth Nanda Anshen, Mid-East: World Center: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow", *Science of Culture Series VII* (1965), s. 196-212; Batılı alimlerce Hz. Âişe, müstakil eserlere konu edilmiştir. Mesela, Avusturyalı araştırmacı-yazar Kurt Frischler'in *Aischa, Mohammeds Heblingsfrau* ismiyle Viyana 1957'de basılan Almanca eseri, Fransızca'ya *Aicha, Epouse Favorite de Mahomet* ismiyle çevirilmiş ve Paris 1964'te Gallimard yayını olarak neşredilmiştir.
- 3- Abdulhalîm Ebû Şakka, *Tahrîru'l-Mer'e fi 'Asri'r-Risâle* (4. cilt), Kuveyt 1990, I-V.
- 4- Musa Carullah, *Hatun*, yayına haz. Mehmet Görmez, *Kitâbiyât*, Ankara 1999; Muhammed Gazâlî, *Kadâyâ el-Mer'e Beyne't-Takâlid er-Rakîde ve'l-Vâfide, Dâru's-Şurûk*, y.y., 1992 (4. baskı); Nasr Hâmid Ebû Zeyd, *Devâiru'l-Havf, Kirâ'a fi Hitâbi'l-Ezme*, Beyrut 1999; M. Tayyib Okıç, *İslamiyette Kadın Öğretimi*, DİB Yayınları, Ankara 1979; Mehmed Said Hatiboğlu, "İslam'da Kadın Eğitiminin Doğuşu", *Türkiye I. Din Eğitimi Semineri, İlahiyat Vakfı Yayınları*, Ankara 1981; Ali Osman Koçkuzu, "Ukûdu'l-Cumân fi Cevâzi Ta'lîmi'l-Kitâbe li'n-Nisvân Adlı Eser Üzerine Birkaç Söz", *Diyanet Dergisi*, XIX. sayı: 3; Kamil Çakın, "Kadınlarla İlgili Bir Hadis ve Değerlendirmesi", *Dinî Araştırmalar I* (1998), sayı: 1; M. Emin Özafşar, "Hadis Tarihinde Kadın Gerçeği Üzerine", yayınlanmamış makale.
- 5- Özellikle Hz. Âişe hakkında yapılan kayda değer şu çalışmaları burada zikredebiliriz: Zerkeşî, *el-İcâbe li İrâdi Mâ'stedrakethu 'Âişe 'alâ's-Sahâbe*, tah. Sa'îd el-Efgânî, Beyrut 1985 (4. baskı), (Eser, tarafımızdan Hz. Âişe'nin Sahabeye Yöneltiliği Eleştiriler adıyla *Kitâbiyât Yayınları* arasında neşr edilecektir.); Sa'îd el-Efgânî, *'Âişe ve's-Siyâse*, Kâhire 1947,



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SONRUK KÜTÜPHANESİ

JNES, 40, 1981 Chicago

MAKULU TAYINLANDIRYAN
KONRA GELEN DOKUMAN

25 KASIM 1993

PREFACE

It seems singularly fitting that Nabia Abbott, now in her 85th year, should be honored with special studies in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, to which she herself has contributed numerous articles and reviews over a period of many years.

The realization of the wish, often repeated by her colleagues in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago, to give public recognition to Nabia Abbott for her extraordinary scholarly accomplishments owes a great deal to one of her colleagues from another University, Gladys Frantz-Murphy of Loyola University, Chicago. It was she who did much of the initial correspondence and organizational work, including getting in touch with potential contributors. On behalf of my colleagues at the University of Chicago, I wish to express great appreciation for her efforts, which led to the fulfillment of a long-held wish. At the same time, I wish to thank Muhsin Mahdi, Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, for his foreword, and Miroslav Krek of Brandeis University for compiling the bibliography of Miss Abbott's published work.

ROBERT D. BIGGS
EDITOR

آبوت، نبی

Abbott, Nabi [nabi ābot]

(۱۸۹۷ -)، مطالعات اسلامی.

۳۱ ژانویه در ماردین^۳ (ترکیه) به دنیا آمد. در ۱۹۱۹ از دانشگاه الله‌آباد هند در رشته مطالعات اسلامی لیسانس گرفت. در ۱۹۲۵ از دانشگاه بَستَن فوق لیسانس و در ۱۹۳۳ از دانشگاه شیکاگو درجه دکتری دریافت داشت. از ۱۹۱۹ تا ۱۹۲۱ معلم مدارس انگلیسی هند و در ۱۹۲۲ و ۱۹۲۳ سرپرست بخش مدارس دولتی دخترانه در وزارت آموزش و پرورش عراق بود. از ۱۹۲۵ تا ۱۹۳۳ استاد و رئیس گروه تاریخ دانشکده ازبیری^۴ بود. از ۱۹۳۳ تا ۱۹۳۶ استاد میهمان و عضو پژوهشی انستیتوی شرق شناسی دانشگاه شیکاگو، از ۱۹۳۷ تا ۱۹۴۳ استادیار مطالعات اسلامی، از ۱۹۴۳ تا ۱۹۴۹ دانشیار و از ۱۹۴۹ تا ۱۹۶۳ استاد بوده است. در ۱۹۶۳ استاد افتخاری جمعیت تاریخ آمریکا و در ۱۹۶۳ و ۱۹۶۴ معاون انجمن شرق شناسی آمریکا بود. وی در زمینه تاریخ اسلام، موقعیت زن در اسلام و نسخه‌های خطی عربی کار کرده است.

آثار

Torrey, Charles Culter: "An Arabic Papyrus Dated 205 A.H.", *JAOS*, Vol. 56, 1936-193 (?), 286-292; Vol. 57, 312-315.

«پاپيروس عربی متعلق به سال ۲۰۵ هـ.ق.» (ترجمه و تصحیح)

"The Monasteries of the Fayyum", *AJSLL*, Vol. 52, 1936/37, 18-33; 73-96; 158-179.

«معابد قیوم» (در مصر)

"Arabic Papyri of the Reign of Gafar al-Mutawakkil-ala-llah", *ZDMG*, Vol. 92, 1938, 88-185.

«پاپيروس عربی دوران حکومت جعفرالمتوکل علی الله»

"An Arabic-persian Wooden Kuranic Manuscript from the Royal Library of Shah-Hussain Safawi I", *AI*, Vol. 5, 1938, 89-94.

«قرآن دستنویس عربی - فارسی متعلق به کتابخانه سلطنتی شاه حسین اول صفوی»

"Maghribi Koran Manuscripts of the Seventeenth to the Eighteenth Centuries", *AJSLL*, Vol. 55,

آبل، لودویکوس فون

Abel, Ludovicus Von [ludovikus fon ābel]

(۱۸۶۳ - ۱۹۰۰)، زبانهای شرقی.

در آلمان به دنیا آمد. زبانهای شرقی را نزد استادانی چون فریتس هومل^۱ و ادوارد زاخاوا^۲ فراگرفت و به دریافت درجه دکتری نایل آمد. او زبان عربی را نیک می‌دانست و ترجمه‌هایی در زمینه ادبیات عرب از وی مانده است.

آثار

Aegyptische urkunden aus den Königlichen mussen zu Berlin. Hrsg. von der Generalverwaltung. Arabische urkunden. Berlin, Weidmann: 1886-1900.

استاد مصری در موزه سلطنتی برلین

Abu Mih'jan poete arabico. e jusque carminibus, Lugduni Batavorum, 1887.

ابومحجن ثقفی، شاعر عرب

Sargon, King of Assyria. *Die Keilschrifttexte sargons. nach den papierabklatschen und originalen neu hrsg. von Hugo Winkler...* Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1889.

متون خط میخی سارگن (ویرایش جدید، باهمکاری)

Tell-el-'Amarna Tablets. *Der Thontafelfund von el-'Amarna...* Hrsg. Von Hugo Winckler nach den originalen autographieirt von L. Abel, Berlin: W. Spemann, 1889-90.

لوحه گلی مکشوفه از تل العمارنه (بازنویسی از روی نسخه اصل)

Keilschrifttexte zum gebrauch bei vorlesungen. hrsg. von L. Abel und H. Winckler, 1890; [For criticism see: R. Gottheil. *Heberaica*; a Quarterly Journal, Vol. 7, 1890/91, 233-235].

متون میخی برای تدریس در دانشگاهها

Mu'allakat. Die sieben muallakat. Text, vollständiges wörterverzeichnis, deutscher und arabischer commentar, bearb. von L. Abel, Berlin: W. Spemann, 1891.

معلقات سبع (فهرست و اژه‌های آلمانی و عربی همراه با تفسیر)

منابع ۲۲ ج ۱ ص ۳۹؛ ۴۲ ص ۴۰؛ ۵۳ ج ۲ ص ۶۲۲ - ۶۳۳؛ ۶۲۵ ج ۱ ص ۷۶؛ ۱۵۱ ج ۱ ص ۹۵.

own right, she sponsored and financed the building of the water system of Mecca and of stations on the Pilgrim Road from Iraq. The water works, as Dutch scholar Snouck Hurgronje put it, 'made the name of Zubaidah immortal in Mecca'.

Abbott sets the role of these women in the public and private life of the palace against 'the familiar phrase "harem intrigue"'. She argues that 'the many recorded actions of these royal women speak louder and clearer than these overworked words ever did.' Yet in her attempt to demythologize women's role in the court and the harem she encounters some problems with the historical sources she uses. As she observes in the book, contemporary Arab historians eager to remain in favour with the court engaged in self-censorship. Later Arab and Persian writers tend to glamorize and fantasize the admittedly spectacular life of the Baghdad court of Harun al-Rashid's time, which, for all its intrigues, violence, and rivalries, was also the centre of a rich intellectual and creative life. Western writers, she found, had added to the melodramatic distortions and oversimplifications of history.

But where Khaizuran and Zubaidah are concerned, there are also gaps in the record, because both contemporary and later Arab historians wrote under a further constraint: 'To begin with, it was not the proper thing to dwell too much on the affairs of the harem—any harem. Next, from Mansur onward, the caliphs demanded that the royal harem in particular be handled with exceptional care and caution.'

Although the weight of scholarship is evident in almost every part of this book, it is aimed, like *Aishah*, at a wider audience, particularly at 'progressive Muslims', whom Abbott hoped 'both to amuse and instruct'. It was intended to be part of a wider discussion in her work of early Islam and its implications for the role of women in the contemporary world.

But Nabia Abbott was, in the eyes of her contemporaries, first and foremost a scholar. This alone makes her an unusual figure. In 1933 she became the first woman member of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, and in 1963 she was made Emeritus Professor. In a tribute published in the Institute's 1974/5 annual report, Dr Muhsin Mahdi, formerly professor of Arabic and chairman of the university's Department of Near Eastern Languages, commented on 'the discrimination I knew she had faced as a professional woman in

those pre-liberation days', and lists her major achievements as 'her pioneering work on the position of women in the Islamic Middle East; her classic study of the rise of the North Arabic script; her massive, painstaking, and path-breaking investigations of Arabic literary papyri, which have already revolutionized the study of the culture of early Islam; . . .'

Abbott's early life seems to have been one of constant movement. She was born in Mardin, in south-western Turkey, on 31 January 1897. Her father was a trader and, while she was still a child, she travelled with her family in a covered wagon in a caravan to Mosul and sailed down the Tigris to Baghdad. The family subsequently moved on to settle in Bombay. It was in India that Abbott received most of her education, attending English schools; during World War I she took a BA degree at Lucknow's Isabella Thorbom College for Girls, graduating in 1919. After the war she spent a brief period in Iraq, where she was involved in the establishment of a women's education programme, a subject that continued to interest her in later years.

Her family then moved to the United States, where she accompanied them and took her masters degree at Boston University, graduating in 1925. She subsequently became first a faculty member and then head of the history department at Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky, where she remained until 1933.

When her family moved to Chicago in that year she went to work under Martin Sprengling, professor of Arabic at the Oriental Institute, and began her career there with a study of the Institute's collection of rare early Islamic documents. In order to do this, she immersed herself in the history of early Islamic society, out of which grew her interest in the position of women in that society.

In both the historical biographies, one weakness from a contemporary point of view is the language she uses to describe her female characters, and particularly relationships between men and women. She sometimes seems to have deliberately sought to achieve a tone appropriate to the romantic novels of the day, probably in an effort to reach a wider audience than in her strictly scholarly works. Nonetheless, by introducing women as actors in the life and power struggles of early Islam, and not as mere appendages of men, she contributes to a broadening of historical perspective which even now is refreshing and stimulating.



FIG. 1.—Nabia Abbott in her office at the Oriental Institute

NABIA ABBOTT, the first woman faculty member of the Department of Oriental Languages and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, came to Chicago in 1933 and became Professor Emeritus in 1963. When I visited her in the spring of 1974 in her apartment on the Midway, I expected her to recall such aspects of her career as the discrimination that I knew she had faced as a professional woman in those pre-liberation days; her pioneering work on the position of women in the Islamic Middle East; her classic study of the rise of the North Arabic script; her massive, painstaking, and pathbreaking investigations of Arabic literary papyri, which have already revolutionized the study of the culture of early Islam; or the many projects (including an extensive study on the introduction of the use of paper into the Middle East) which she was forced to abandon due to failing health. Instead, I found her hard at work on a major review of a recent book in German on an important Arabic historical papyrus document. "There are very few young scholars willing to undertake the hard labor involved in the study of Arabic papyri," she said, "and I want to write a critical review that will encourage this able young author to continue in this field and enhance it."

Nabia Abbot traveled far to reach the Oriental Institute. Born in Mardin (in southwest Turkey) on 31 January 1897, she, when still a child, traveled with her family in a covered wagon with a caravan of nomad horsemen down to Mosul, sailed down the Tigris to Baghdad, and later through the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea to Bombay (1907). She went to English schools; took and passed the Overseas Senior Matriculation Examination of the University of Cambridge (1915) but stayed in India during World War I; and traveled north to Lucknow's Isabella Thorburn College for Girls (an affiliate of the degree-granting University of Allahabad, whose largely British faculty set, administered, and graded the final examinations), which granted her an A.B. degree with honors (1919). Among her college colleagues were a number of India's future women leaders. Then she was called on to start up a program of women's education in the nascent kingdom of Iraq, where she enjoyed the company and support of the famous Gertrude Bell. From there she followed her family to Boston (1923). She obtained her A.M. at Boston University (1925). She then joined the faculty of Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky, where she taught first in the department of education and later became head of the Department of History (1925-33). When her family moved to Chicago, she was attracted by the courses offered by Martin Sprengling, then Professor of Arabic in the Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures and the Oriental Institute. She became Traveling Fellow and Research Associate (1933-37), Assistant Professor (1938-43), Associate Professor (1943-49), and Professor of Islamic Studies (1949-63).

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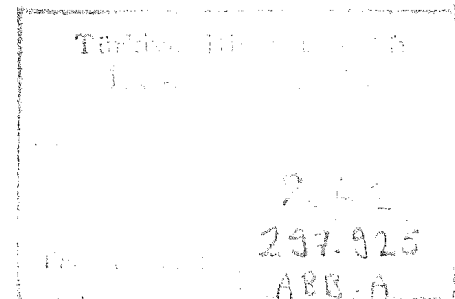
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Nabia Abbott

Aishah—
The Beloved of
Mohammed



Al Saqi Books

With a preface by Sarah Graham-Brown

**Nabia Abbott
(1897–1981)**

Sarah Graham-Brown

For those today who are concerned with the position of women in the Muslim world, this account of the life of Aishah, the best-known of Mohammed's wives, may at first sight seem little more than a curiosity. Certainly from a feminist point of view its language seems archaic, presenting women in terms usually used by men. Yet the book—and its author—must be seen in the context of their time.

Aishah was written in 1942, in the middle of World War II and the latter years of the era of colonial rule in the Middle East. The early women's movement, particularly in Egypt, had already begun to make its mark on society.

Those who support the women's movement in the Islamic world today often express the view that Islam, in its basic tenets, is favourable to the notion that women should have equal, or at least comparable, rights with men. According to this argument, it was the later development of restrictive traditions and social practice that 'distorted' Islam and led to systematic forms of oppression of women.

It is possible to cite portions of the Koran to support this view, as it is possible to justify a more restrictive interpretation. In recent years this issue has surfaced in a number of countries—in Egypt and Algeria in debates over the Personal Status Law and the Family Code respectively, and in Kuwait over the issue of women's political rights.

In this context, *Aishah* makes a useful contribution to the historical debate and its contemporary interpretation. Though the author's portrayal of women sometimes sounds inappropriate to present-day readers, in her own time Nabia Abbott's writings were breaking new ground. As she comments in her preface,

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