

Education was created to deal with ever expanding higher education. The new Ministry authorised the establishment of private colleges of higher education, but the experiment was not a successful one, and all the private colleges were nationalised in 1974. Also in 1974, education at all levels was declared free by the *Shāh*.

The abnormal growth of secondary education had created a large number of applicants for university places. Notwithstanding the fast expansion of higher educational facilities, only a fraction of the applicants could find places. The accumulating number of young people whose levels of aspiration had been thereby raised, but could not be satisfied, was another factor responsible for the discontent that led to the 1979 Revolution in Iran, but the consequent closure in effect of the universities as potential centres of resistance, and the relegation once again of woman to an inferior status under the *Khumaynī* régime have diminished rather than enhanced educational opportunities.

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(MAḡMŪD SANĀ'Ī)

MA'ARRAT MAŞRİN or **MİŞRİN**, a small town in North Syria (lat. 36° 01' N., long. 36° 40' E.). It is 40 km. to the north of Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān [q.v.], 50 km. south-west of Aleppo or Ḥalab [q.v.] and 12 km. north-west of Sarmīn. It owes its importance to its position between the districts of the Rūḏī, the *Djāzr* and the *Djabal al-Summāk* and formerly served as the market for this region which the road from Ḥalab to Armanāz traverses, a route used in the Middle Ages by the Turkomans. Its role has devolved today on Idlib. The land, although poorly watered, has never lacked agricultural resources; in the Middle Ages there were already fig, olive and pistachio trees as well as *summāk*, which was exported to the tanneries; lentils were also cultivated there. In former times, the town was protected by a wall which today has disappeared, and there were five mosques.

As the chef-lieu of a *nāḡhiya* of the *muhāfaẓa* of Ḥalab, situated in the district of the *Djāzr*, Ma'arrat Maşrīn had 3,000 inhabitants in 1930 and 5,000 in 1945, and came under the *kadā'* of Idlib.

The name of the town is often given in the form Ma'arrat Mişrīn, but it is also called Ma'arrat Naşrīn, which some authorities, such as al-Muḡaddasī and Abu 'l-Fidā', connect with the name of *Qinnaşrīn* [q.v.], the *djund* of which the town formed part, just as Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān [q.v.] was sometimes designated Ma'arrat Ḥimş by an allusion to the *djund* to which it belonged. In the Syriac manuscripts of the 8th century, this town, situated in the *kūra* of Antākiya [q.v.], is called Ma'arrat Meşrēn; the monastery of Bēth Mari *Qānūn* was there. In the chronicles of the Crusades, one encounters the form Megaret Basrin or Meguret Mesrin. In Isambert's *Guide* (714), one reads Maarrat Mocerin.

History. In the year 16/637, after having defeated a large Byzantine army drawn up between Ḥalab

and Ma'arrat Maşrīn, Abū 'Ubayda [q.v.] conquered this town, which surrendered on the same conditions as Ḥalab [q.v.]. In the 'Abbāsīd period, under the caliphate of al-Mutawakkil (d. 247/861), 'Amr b. Ḥawbar, originally from Ma'arrat al-Buraydiyya, a locality near Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, held the office of governor of Ma'arrat Maşrīn. A century later, in 357/968, profiting from the unstable situation in Ḥalab after the death of Sayf al-Dawla, Nicephorus Phocas conquered the town and had more than 1,000 inhabitants deported to the *bilād al-Rūm*. After the Arabo-Byzantine truce of Saḡar 359/end of 969-beginning of 970, the town was part of the territory governed by *Qarḡuwayh*. At the time of his expedition against Ḥalab, in 415/1024, Ṣāliḡ b. Mirdās, chief of the Banū Kilāb, sent one of his *amirs*, Abū Maşūr Sulaymān b. Ṭawḡ, to attack Ma'arrat Maşrīn; the place was captured and its commander taken prisoner. In 454/1062, a short time before the death of Mu'izz al-Dawla *Thimāl*, the Byzantines succeeded in making themselves masters of the town by trickery. Asad al-Dawla 'Aṭiyya succeeded his brother in Ḥalab but, in 457/1065, his nephew Maḡmūd b. Naşr, with the help of the Kilābīs, was successful in turning out his uncle and setting himself up in his place. However, some discontented Kilābīs helped 'Aṭiyya to attack Ma'arrat Maşrīn in 458/1066 and recapture it from his nephew. In 490/end of 1097 the Franks besieged Antākiya, where the Saldjūkid governor Yaḡhī-Siyān resisted them. During the siege, the Franks went in Saḡar 491/January 1098 to pillage some of the towns of the *Djāzr* and notably Ma'arrat Maşrīn. In *Djumādā II* 491/June 1098, Antākiya was taken; Yaḡhī-Siyān escaped, but he fell from his horse at Armanāz, not far from Ma'arrat Maşrīn and, mortally wounded, he is said to have been killed by some Armenian woodcutters who carried his head to Bohemond.

After having taken Ḥarīm [q.v.] in *Shā'bān* 492/July 1098, Raimond Pilet, with a detachment of the army of the Comte de Saint-Gilles, crossed the Rūḏī and captured the town, which was integrated into the Frankish defences to the east of the Orontes. When Baldwin of Edessa had been taken prisoner, the Frankish garrisons were attacked in 497/1104 in the district of al-*Djāzr* by the inhabitants of al-Fu'a, Sarmīn and Ma'arrat Maşrīn, who inflicted heavy losses on them and drove them out of the region. Riḡwān of Ḥalab received a good reception and occupied the town, which came to play the role of frontier-post (*thaḡhr*) for the Muslims. In 505/1111-12 the population of Ma'arrat Maşrīn came into conflict with the *Shī'ī* Ismā'īlīs, who were numerous in the district; two years later, in *Dhu 'l-Ḥaḡda* 507/April 1114, a group of Ismā'īlīs recruited in Ma'arrat Maşrīn, Afāmiya [q.v.] and Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, tried to attack *Shayzar* during Easter, but were repulsed by the Banū Munkidh.

In 514/1120 *Ṭuḡhtakīn* and *Iḡhāzī*, lords of Ḥalab, arrived to besiege the Franks who had withdrawn to Ma'arrat Maşrīn; when Baldwin proceeded to the rescue of the Crusaders, the antagonists reached a peace agreement granting the Westerners a certain number of places, including Kafartāb, al-Bāra [q.v.] and Ma'arrat Maşrīn, whence the Franks could keep a watch on the Turkomans. The Frankish fief of al-Aḡhārib extended as far as Ma'arrat Maşrīn at that time. In *Raḡjāb* 520/August 1126, when Aḡ Sunkur al-Bursukī [q.v.], governor of Mawşil, invaded the territory of Sarmīn, he found the Franks camping in front of him near the cisterns (*hawāḡ*) of Ma'arrat