

been half a continent away, although we have no further knowledge of him, either.¹¹ – Also worth mentioning is a traditionist,

‘Uthmān b. ‘Abdallāh al-Umawī,

who certainly lived in Nisibis for a time, and may even have grown up there. He was a member of the Umayyad family; one of his two different genealogies made him a great-great-grandson of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥakam b. al-‘Āṣ, while the other traced him back through ten (!) generations to the caliph ‘Uthmān.¹² He had a weakness for pro-Shī‘ite hadith and consequently had the prophet speak of his family as a tree of which he himself was the root, ‘Alī a branch, and Ḥasan and Ḥusayn twigs; whoever should hold on to one of the twigs would go to paradise. However, he travelled too much to remain faithful to his principles. When he came to Khorasan he changed; he is said to have spread a pro-Murji‘ite tradition he had heard from Abū Muṭī‘ al-Balkhī.¹³ He settled in Nishapur, where he died towards the end of the second century. The hadith quoted sounds Zaydite, as the Ḥasanid twig was apparently just as strong as the Ḥusaynid one. This suited the Jazira quite well, as we shall see on the last stage of our itinerary.

2.4.3 Raqqa

Raqqa, called Nikephorion and later Kallinikos during pre-Islamic times, and a bishopric at that time,¹ was the main urban centre of the Diyār Muḍar in the west, and thus suffered much less under the Khārijites.² Hārūn al-Rashīd was able to move the seat of his government there in 180/796, although he did this partly in order to get the hostilities between the Yaman and the Muḍar under control.³ There were certainly great numbers of Ibādites in the city; Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd al-Qushayrī (d. 334/946), the author of *Ta‘rīkh Raqqa*,

11 *Fīṣal* IV 226, pu. f. (which states explicitly that the *nisba al-Naṣībī* belongs to Nisibis). Regarding Abū l-Ṣabbāḥ see p. 63ff. below.

12 TB XI 282f. no. 6053. Dhahabī already thought the second genealogy to be extremely improbable (*Mīzān* no. 5523).

13 *Mīzān*, loc. cit.; also Suyūṭī, *La‘ālī* I 38, –5ff., and 42, apu. ff. (cf. p. 605 below).

1 Regarding the history of the city in this time cf. Honigmann in *EI*¹ III 1196f., and D. Sturm in: *Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientwissenschaft* 1/1979/35ff. Another translator who understood Syriac came from here (Ibn al-Nadīm 305, 5f.).

2 Regarding Arab immigration cf. Ṣāliḥ al-‘Alī, *Imtidād al-‘Arab fī ṣadr al-Islām* 98f.

3 *EI*² III 233a.