

ŞANLIURFA

THE CITY OF CIVILIZATIONS WHERE PROPHETS MET

EDITED BY
ALPARSLAN AÇIKGENÇ
ABDULLAH EKİNCİ

ALBUKHARY FOUNDATION





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Istanbul

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TRANSLITERATIONS

For Arabic words we shall follow the transliteration table below:

ا	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ش	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	ه	و	ي
â-ā	b	t	th	j	h	kh	d	dh	r	z	s	sh	ṣ	ḍ	ṭ	ẓ	ʿ	gh	f	q	k	l	m	n	h	w-û	î

Turkish words are spelled as they are written in modern Turkish. The following notation should make it easier to read these words:

- C c pronounced as “j”
Ç ç pronounced as “ch”
Ğ ğ soft “g” usually not pronounced but lengthens the previous vowel
I ı (undotted i) pronounced as in the last syllabus of “phantom”
Ö ö pronounced as the “ö” in German
Ş ş sh
Ü ü pronounced as French “eu” in “peur”

ABBREVIATIONS

AÜİFD	<i>Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi</i>
BOA UŞS	The Sharia Court Archives of Urfa
DIA	<i>Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi</i> (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı)
DGBİT:	<i>Doğuştan Günümüze Büyük İslam Tarihi</i> , ed. Hakkı Dursun Yıldız, Konya: Kombassan Yayınları, 1994, 8 vols.
MEB	<i>İslam Ansiklopedisi</i> (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı)
OTAM	<i>Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi</i>
Pbuh	peace be upon him (after the names of prophets)

PREFACE

Urfa, more recently known as “Şanlıurfa”, is no doubt one of the most significant cities, if not the most significant city, in the history of world civilizations. Its location in the region of the birthplace of human civilization lends credence to this claim. As recorded history begins with the invention of writing around 3200 BC, the period before this date is referred to by historians as “prehistory”. Recent excavations near Şanlıurfa show that there were settlements in this region even during prehistoric times. The early writing called “cuneiform” consisted of specific marks made in wet clay using a reed implement (Mark, 2011). However, historians consider that human civilization emerged before this date, with the first city-like settlement found at Çatalhöyük (in central modern Turkey) being dated at around 6700 BC. This was followed by the development of the city-cultures in southern Mesopotamia by around 4000 BC, as in the city of Uruk. Closer to Şanlıurfa was Nineveh, also one of the oldest and greatest cities in antiquity. Nineveh was located in upper Mesopotamia on the banks of the Tigris, near Mosul in Northern Iraq. The area around Nineveh was settled as early as 6000 BC and by around 3000 BC had become an important religious center for the worship of the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar.

When we consider these dates in relation to the ancient temple built in Göbeklitepe, located about 22 km northeast of Şanlıurfa near the village of Örencik, we find that there had already been a city-like settlement in this area. The Göbeklitepe temple structures were built 7500 years before Stonehenge in Southern England and 6000 years before the Pyramids in Egypt. This site will change our perception of the history of civilization because the first settlement which led to city culture, and in turn to the emergence of human civilization, must have begun in northern Mesopotamia, not in the lower regions of this most fruitful and cultivated area called the Fertile Crescent. Just 40 km southeast of Şanlıurfa, the ancient city of Harran hosts another ancient site of city culture. Especially in light of these facts, we may safely conclude that Şanlıurfa is perhaps at the center of the rise of civilization. That is the reason that today, if one visits this city, one may notice the rich Urfa culture of the present reflecting all aspects of the civilizations to which she gave birth.

Şanlıurfa has not only made a mark in the history of civilizations, but also in the history of the revealed religions. In this sense, it is important for all three of the great religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Many of the Biblical prophets also mentioned in the Qur’an lived in this city for some time or passed through it during their spiritual wanderings. One reason for this is the fact that the city is strategically located at the crossroads of the celebrated Silk Road. It is also right at the heart of the Fertile Crescent. Thus, the city has witnessed many cultural and historical developments right from the beginning, from the Neolithic Period (10,000–4000 BC) through the Bronze Age (4000–700 BC), when the early historical period also began with the invention of writing, and then from the Iron Age (approximately 1100/800 BC) until the present.

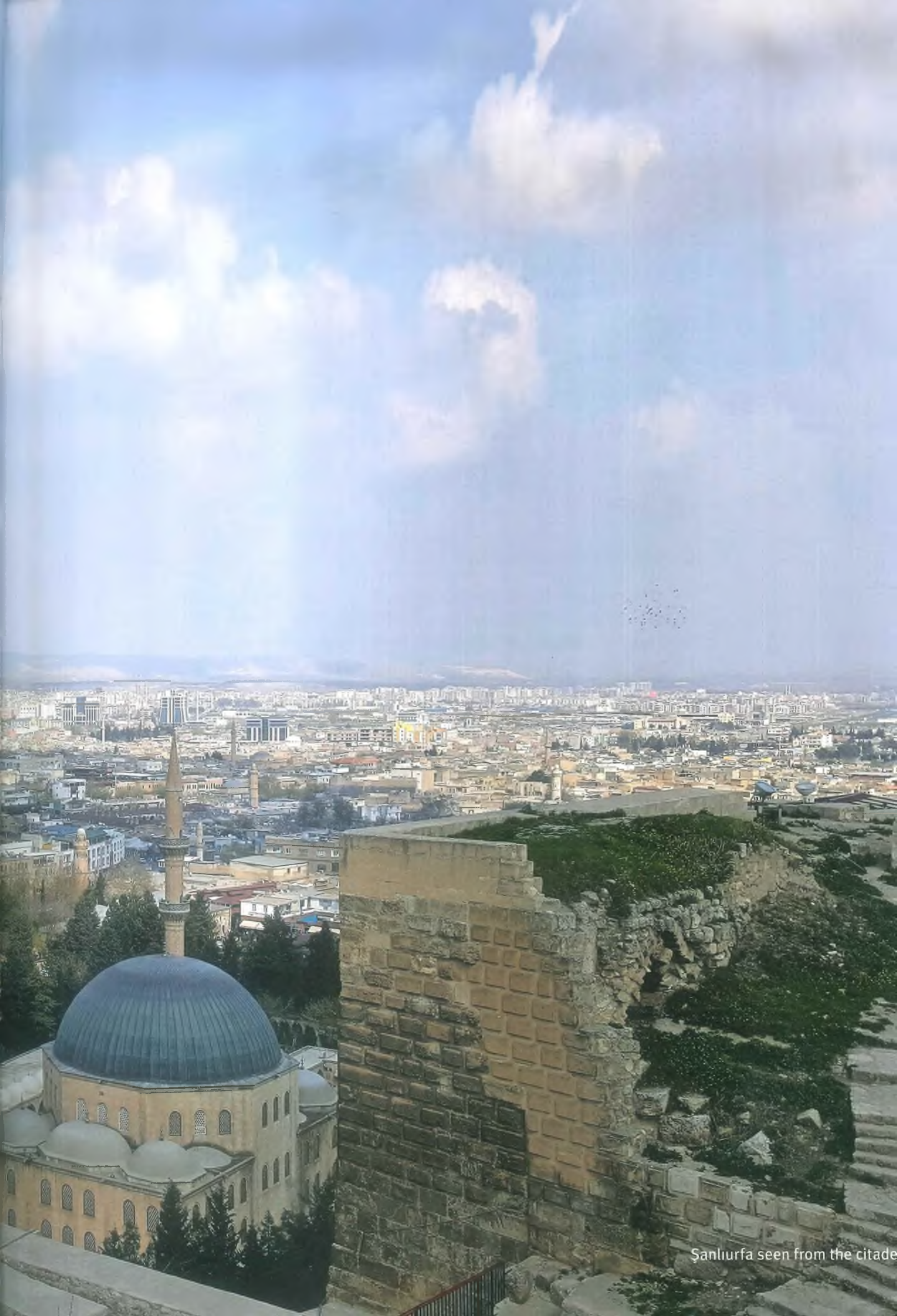
In the Holy Book of Islam, the Qur’an, the names of 25 of the earlier prophets are mentioned. These are, with their Biblical equivalents: 1. ’Ādam (Adam), 2. ’İdrīs (Enoch),

3. Nūh (Noah), 4. Hūd (Eber), 5. Sālih (Salah), 6. 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham), 7. Lūt (Lot), 8. 'Ismā'īl (Ishmael), 9. 'Ishāq (Isaac), 10. Ya'qūb (Jacob), 11. Yūsuf (Joseph), 12. Ayūb (Job), 13. Dhul-Kifl (Ezekiel), 14. Shu'ayb (Jethro), 15. Mūsā (Moses), 16. Hārūn (Aaron), 17. Dāūd (David), 18. Sulaymān (Solomon), 19. Yūnus (Jonah), 20. 'Ilyās (Elijah), 21. Alyasa' (Elisha), 22. Zakarīya (Zechariah), 23. Yahyā (John), 24. 'Īsā (Jesus) and 25. Muhammad (Peace be upon them all). Among these, the names of 11 prophets occur in the legends of Urfa. These traditional stories, despite not having been verified historically, nevertheless tell us something historical. They demonstrate the fact that these prophets in one way or another had some contact with the Urfa region, if not directly with the city, during their lifetime. It is for this reason that Şanlıurfa is known as the "City of Prophets".

We are introducing this historical city in this book with a perceptive and visual history of its civilizations and cultures in order to highlight human achievements as seen through the window of Şanlıurfa. We will thus explain its known history, based on documents and historical or archeological records, with as many pictures, maps and drawings as possible. In the introduction, we try to present the historical framework for the emergence of human civilizations, and in the rest of the book, all aspects of Şanlıurfa are described. Although the city was known by its original name of Urfa for many centuries, this book will discuss a brief history of its ancient names. As a result of the heroism shown by the city in resisting the French occupation during the First World War, Urfa won its independence without the help of the Turkish army. In recognition of this, the Turkish Parliament bestowed the title "Şanlı", meaning "Glorious", upon the city, and since then its name has been "Şanlıurfa" (Glorious Urfa).

This book was originally suggested by Tan Sri Syed Mukhtar Albukhari and it was funded by the Albukhary Foundation, for which we are grateful. We hereby express our indebtedness to Tan Sri for his support and unceasing enthusiasm and interest in the city of Şanlıurfa, where civilizations originated. He was so very impressed by this aspect of Şanlıurfa that he wanted this historical city to be recognized throughout the world, and for this reason he wanted this book with its historical facts to be published. We are grateful also to the people of Şanlıurfa for their constant support throughout the realization of this project. We especially thank the former Governor of Şanlıurfa, İzzettin Küçük, who opened up the archives for our use. We are grateful to the Office of the Şanlıurfa Governorate for the continued support of our project. The former Deputy Governor, Mehmet Keklik, showed great interest in this book and brought many documents and photographs to our attention. He also provided technical support for our regional site visits. We are grateful to all these officials for their unceasing assistance. The Honorary Consul of Malaysia, Mr. Cevdet Sefer, must also be mentioned for his continual support and coordination of the project. We would like to express our appreciation for his constant help and encouragement.





Sanliurfa seen from the citade

INTRODUCTION

ALPARSLAN AÇIKGENÇ

Human history presents a progression from the lower levels of culture, lifestyle and civilization to the higher. Whether we call this process evolution, perfection, or development, it is a historical fact that we can read about and explain. We know that this process began with city life: settled human communities with political organizations. In this regard, human history goes as far back as the history of Urfa, which, based on archeological findings, is about 11,500 years ago. This corresponds to the period designated by historians as “prehistory,” which is in turn subdivided into four main periods:

1. The Old Stone Age, or Paleolithic Period, which is further divided into three phases:
 - a) The Upper or Early Paleolithic Period (2.5 million–250,000 BC);
 - b) The Middle Paleolithic Period (250,000–30,000 BC);
 - c) The Lower or Late Paleolithic Period (30,000–10,000 BC);
 2. The New Stone Age, or Neolithic Period (10,000–4000 BC);
 3. The Bronze Age (4000–700 BC), when the early historical period also begins; and
 4. The Iron Age (approximately 1100–800 BC).
- (See Map 1 showing prehistoric Mesopotamia.)

After the Neolithic Period, dates differ according to the progress shown by the societies dwelling therein. For instance, the Bronze Age began for the societies



Map 1. Map of prehistoric Mesopotamia where the location of Urfa is also shown.



An ancient bridge
(Hızmalı Bridge)

living in Mesopotamia (modern Middle East) around 4000 BC, whereas for the societies in Europe, this age started about 2000 years later (and even later for others in the rest of the world). This periodization offers clues potentially marking sites at or near Şanlıurfa as the first ever human settlements in history. However, beginning in 1994, evidence discovered at the Göbeklitepe excavations have revealed that the history of human civilization began in Upper, not Lower, Mesopotamia during the Late Paleolithic Period. There was also a Neolithic settlement known as Balıklıgöl-Yenimahalle right in the center of the modern city of Urfa. Obviously, humans did not suddenly emerge in history with well-developed cultures and civilizations. It took many centuries to develop tools, writing, and above all, science and learning; we recognize this as human progress. This introduction will briefly discuss these concepts in the context of the history of Şanlıurfa and from the perspective of the history of the Abrahamic religions. We may begin this history with the nature of mankind at the center of human civilization.

The definition of Man as a “rational animal” has persisted throughout the history of philosophy, bringing to the fore two main human aspects: animality and rationality. However, this neglects another significant aspect, represented by human emotions. This means that a human being is “an animal endowed with emotions and rationality.” By this definition, we claim that human animality is different from that of animals, just as human emotionality and rationality are different from those of animals. It is because of this difference that humans can transcend physical being and rise to a level of spirituality not possible for other species. As a result, we need to modify our definition by including a fourth aspect in the classical definitions of Man: spirituality. The first three aspects, namely animality, emotionality and

The Peutinger map or *Tabula Peutingeriana* is the earliest map which shows ancient Mesopotamia

Medieval copy of an ancient Roman map, which is in turn the copy of the world map that was prepared by Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa (64-12 BCE), a personal friend of the emperor Augustus. After his death, his map was carved into marble and set up in the Porticus Vipsania in Rome. This world map, which is also known from the *Natural history* of Pliny the Elder (23-79), was updated several times to document the Roman conquest of Britain, Dacia and Mesopotamia, and as such it is an invaluable important source for the study of ancient topography. Konrad Peutinger (1465-1547) was a patrician born in the German city of Augsburg. He took degrees in classics and law at the famous universities of Bologna and Padua, served as Stadtschreiber (town clerk) in his home town and advisor to the emperor of Austria, was something of an archaeologist, collected coins, ancient manuscripts and old books, owned the largest private library north of the Alps and published the first printed collection of Roman inscriptions. He was married to Margareta Welser, a member of one of the wealthiest families of Germany and a scholar in her own right. In 1508, his friend Konrad Bickel or Celtes (1549-1508) a well-known collector, the librarian of the emperor Maximilian of Austria, died. Peutinger inherited an old map, which Bickel claimed to have found "somewhere in a library" in 1494. The map now belonged to Peutinger, and has ever since been called *Tabula Peutingeriana* or the *Peutinger map*. He recognized the map as a medieval copy of a Roman map, but was unable to prepare its publication. This was left to Marcus Welser, a relative of Peutinger's wife and mayor of Augsburg. In 1591, the *Fragmenta Tabulae Antiquae* were published in Antwerp. The first modern edition is that of Konrad Miller of 1887, which was reprinted in 1976 and still is the best version available.

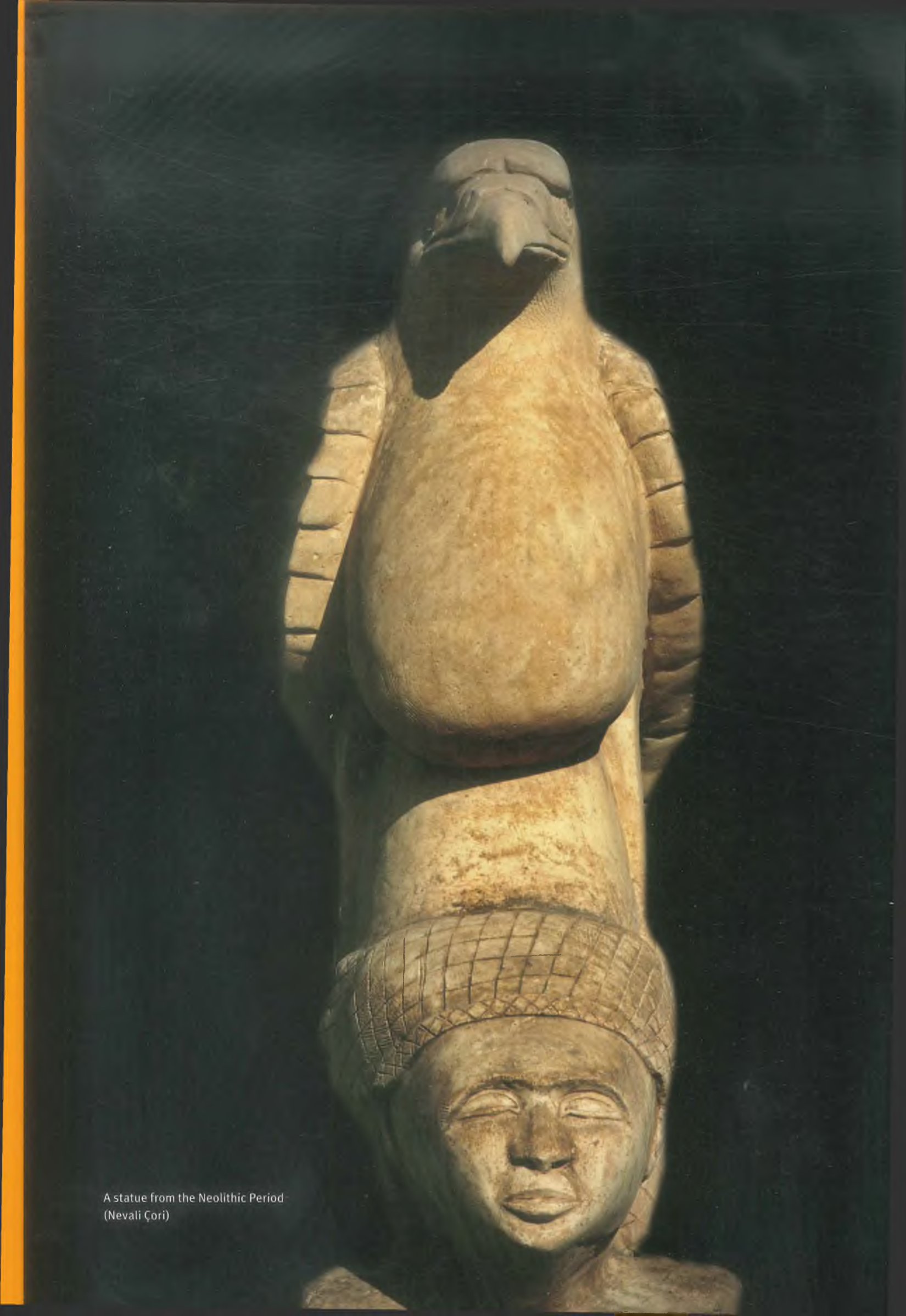
[This explanation of the map is taken with modification from: <http://www.livius.org/pen-pg/peutinger/map.html>]











A statue from the Neolithic Period
(Nevalı Çori)

rationality, belong to Man as his own nature, whereas the fourth one, spirituality, is a potential given to him which he may or may not develop. Each of these aspects is endowed with abilities given to humans for specific purposes. Problems arise when they are used outside the limits of these purposes. In this case, a meticulous analysis of these human aspects must be carried out in order to avoid these problems, some of which are manifested in the phenomenon of globalization.

The human animal aspect has two basic functions, one being the preservation of life, which includes nutrition, reproduction and defense, while the other is maintenance of these activities within the human sphere. The latter is the link between animality and emotionality. This link is found in the fact that humans are weak animals; they do not have the physical power or other defensive mechanisms found in other animals. Therefore, at the level of animality, they need "togetherness" in order to survive. Even if this characteristic is found in other animals, it is the main characteristic of human animality because it leads to emotionality. The basic characteristic of the emotional aspect is to bring to life all human activities, whether animal, rational, or spiritual. If the animal aspect is able to perceive our biological and physical needs, then the emotional aspect is able to perceive our non-physical needs. Since the spiritual aspect is expressive of the non-physical, it is the closest to our spirituality. The rational aspect, on the other hand, includes the human characteristic which, according to Aristotle, defines Man's real nature because this is the aspect which no other animal has—that of conceptual thinking. The rational aspect analyzes and evaluates all the data it receives from the lower aspects, namely the animal and emotional, and as such, is the seat of scientific knowledge.

All of these aspects have faculties enabling them to perform their functions. The faculties of animality are the five senses at the lower level and concupiscence in general at the higher level (which means appetites of the flesh, not taken merely in the sexual connotation); this represents the passage from animality to emotionality. The heart is the seat of emotions in the lower emotional faculty, whereas at the higher level, the conscience is the moral faculty that provides the first step into intellectual thinking. However, since this thinking is supposed to be conceptual, we need a faculty of the rational aspect that converts all these data into raw material that is easy for the mind to digest. The faculty which provides this conceptual conversion is the imagination, which is the lower faculty of our rational aspect. On the other hand, intuition is the higher faculty of our rational aspect and provides the first step into spirituality. These are not the only faculties belonging to human nature. The ones mentioned here are important for our purpose of evaluating the foundations of human differences. Although the three biological aspects and the spiritual aspect, with varying degrees of intensity, are one and the same in all human nature, the consequences of these aspects are many.

What I have outlined here provides a rich inner world for a human being. At the animal level, for example, a piece of land is perceived as mere "territory" which provides livelihood. The land is defended only for this purpose and is seen as precious as long as it serves this function. But at the emotional level, a human being is passionately attached to the land. As such, he may write poems and sing love

songs about the land where he lives. At the rational level, a human being will try to conceptualize the land and call it his "country" or "homeland." Moreover, he may intellectually idealize the land where he is living. The same approach can be applied to everything Man encounters in this world – his belongings, his friends, his family, his relationships, his actions and so on. According to human perception, all things human will have the same aspects, namely an animal, an emotional and a rational. As a result, human beings will have a rich inner world. It is this inner world that is reflected outwardly. That reflection may have a variety of modalities. As a mode of action, it is their behavior, what they do to others and in fact to themselves. As a mode of new existence, it is their achievements, which could be works of art or inventions. When it is in the conceptual mode, it is knowledge, which is perhaps the highest achievement for a human being.

All these achievements are reflections of the inner world of a human being; when these occur in a social context, they are called "culture." With such a diversified nature, Man, in a sense, turns inside out within a social context, and thus becomes part of what we call "culture." Although the system in human nature that turns an inner world into a culture is a single one, that which is turned inside out is not one but many. This resembles a system of production that is one in its structure but diversified in its outputs. Let us consider only two systems that belong to our nature: the digestive system and the knowledge system, or human epistemology. Our digestive system is the same for all, consisting of a mouth, tongue, teeth, stomach and the rest of the organs. We know from anatomy the way they work is the same for all humans, so that when there is a problem, a Turk does not have to go to a Turkish doctor, but can go to any human doctor. On the other hand, contrary to the universality of our digestive system, our culinary culture is immensely diversified. In the same way, our knowledge system is also one, having one logic and epistemology, all with similar faculties. Yet the knowledge generated from that system is not one, but many. This illustrates the great cultural diversity amongst human societies.

Let us pass from here to another human dimension which may enable us to evaluate the spiritual aspect. As we have seen, the need to be together with other fellow human beings is grounded in our animality. It is therefore part of our inner nature to form groups and live together. Then again, this togetherness is a primitive collection of human beings. When the emotional aspect is added, the togetherness gradually turns into a community. In a community, bonds are established with strong feelings because they are evaluated emotionally and hence, relationships are created. As a result of this, the community may be organized on the basis of a "feeling relationship". There may be an elderly group that is respected and obeyed. There will also be other groups that are defined on the basis of feelings, which in turn contribute to the organization of the community.

With the addition of the rational aspect, the organization is maintained with reason. Therefore, a political system is developed according to which the community is governed. Now, the community is a society in the true sense, and the rational organization of the community is a state or government. In such an organization, Man is able to exhibit and develop all his potentialities. He can find everything in





The ancient site of
Deyr Yaqub Monastery

the society. By using his reason he is also able to find the reason for existence and the source of the universe. But he is utterly unable to arrive at an all-comprehensive concept which can provide meaning to all the aspects of which he is a reflection. Moreover, he finds some potentialities in himself which he is not able to develop. At this juncture, he finds “revelation,” defined here as religion. Upon an investigation of religion, he finds that he is now able to develop some of his hitherto unimaginable potentialities. This aspect, based upon the development of these potentialities through religion, is what we refer to as the “spirituality” of human beings.

Religion is in fact the Divine Guidance for humanity. Therefore, religion is God-given. There is nothing in human nature to provide a foundation for the rise of religion. There are only “receptive points” which we call “potentialities” that are able to receive religion, but cannot make or unmake it. Human beings may invent religion by imitating the True Religion that has been revealed. This is a different case, however. I believe that Man has not been given the authority to invent religion because those fabrications will not find receptive points in human nature and, as a

result, will be dangerous to humanity, as can be seen in such instances in human history. Therefore, by definition, human beings do not have any authority to establish religion.

Although religion is a Divine Guidance for humanity, it is not the kind of guidance that presents us with an exhaustive list of behaviors for any given situation. If this were the case, we would have to act as robots, and there would be no room for human intellectual creativity in any field, including the sciences. Conversely, religion as a Divine Guidance bestows upon us two fundamental states of mind: consciousness of the Divine Presence in all and moral sensitivity in our behavior. Both states of mind are expressed in general principles by religion. We therefore feel the need to interpret these principles in order to apply them to certain situations in our lives. This need for interpretation gradually gives rise to a systematic exposition of religion as a system of guidance. We thus need to distinguish between these two phenomena: religion as Divine Guidance and religion as the interpretation of this Divine Guidance. The former is Pure Religion and the latter is religion within a certain cultural context. I believe that there is no harm in interpreting the Pure Religion in a certain cultural context. On the contrary, it is inevitable, and indeed required by God. This requirement is made clear by the fact that He does not send His Guidance as a complete set of rules readily available for application to human life, thus resulting in the development of our spiritual potentialities. Moreover, as we shall see below, Muslim jurists have developed the concept of '*urf*' in Islamic legal philosophy in order to be able to interpret religion within a certain cultural context and thus preserve cultural diversity.

In Islamic thought, Mankind is depicted as a microcosm because human beings are representations of all the worlds in the universe. In this sense, a human being can be called a "mini universe." It is therefore natural for all these diverse universes to be reflected in the mirror of human society. This is the aspect of human beings which aspires to reach others and yet longs for diversity. Here we find the roots and thus the foundation of globalization. What we claim is that globalization finds its origin within human nature and it is therefore unavoidable. It is, therefore, *we* who try to reach out to others and other communities and places. On the basis of this fact, we cannot explain the inexorable campaign of Alexander the Great as being merely an idle quest to conquer the East. This applies equally to the campaign of Genghis Khan in the West. Moreover, it is this aspect of Man that is taken as the locus of revelation by religion, meaning that it is also a God-given right for humans to have diverse cultures, societies and communities. This diversified nature of Man makes him a valuable creature, as the Qur'an also points out:

We have honored the children of Adam, provided them transport on land and sea and given them for sustenance good and pure food and conferred upon them special favor above many of Our creation. (17/Al-Isra', 70)





Dome houses of Harran

Therefore, the abundance of different cultures makes life enjoyable and breaks the monotonous flow of events in history. Yet there is another aspect to the beauty of diverse cultures, and that is that this places on Man the burden of tolerating differences. This is because each aspect of human nature is permitted to be free and without limits. It follows that if these aspects are not regulated, injustice and similar violations will emerge. For this reason, each aspect of human nature must be kept under control. I think this can be done by taming the lower aspect by using its next higher aspect in a good manner. In this case, the animal aspect is controlled by good use of the emotional aspect and the emotional aspect is controlled by good use of the rational aspect. It then follows that the rational aspect is controlled by the spiritual aspect, which is nourished by Divine Revelation. If the final phase is the greatest good, then religion as the Divine Revelation and as the greatest good provides tolerance for differences. Therefore, if different cultures arise within a civilization of a religion, we can then recognize that the religion is fulfilling its function as desired by the Divine Will.

However, human beings must also perform accordingly in order to tolerate different cultures or diversities in general. We may then briefly express our point that human nature is diversified, giving Man a rich inner world to be realized within a social context. When this is achieved, it leads to rich cultures which may eventually turn into a significant civilization. However, since the realization of the inner world is manifested at different planes in different communities, there would necessarily be differences which open a challenge for humanity to face. Today, the world is moving towards globalization, which poses yet a greater challenge for the diversity of cultures. In the past, people only knew about or were aware of different cultures, while today, we live with them. That presents a challenge, putting a greater moral responsibility on us to tolerate other cultures and differences, even those differences that exist within the same culture. In order to solve problems concerning this moral responsibility, we need to channel the direction of globalization towards goodness and try to utilize it as such, rather than trying to stop the great flood of the global burden which threatens to destroy everything in its way.

Islam has tried to solve the issue of preserving cultural and religious diversity by introducing certain mechanisms to humanity in two ways: the moral and the legal. In other words, every human being may not have the same moral sensitivity for social issues and thus may violate principles developed as measures to protect human rights. For this reason there is also a need to develop legal measures to protect the rights of humans and societies. In order to illustrate this development, we may present a brief history of the emergence and progress of the Islamic legal philosophy which has generated principles for the protection of individual rights as well as social and cultural diversity, as opposed to the global movement.

Against the backdrop of this theoretical framework of the civilizations in human history, we observe that archaeologists have discovered evidence of an early occupation at Ur around 6500-3800 BC. This is quite late compared with the discoveries near Şanlıurfa. The developments in this region exhibit similar

trends, as explained in our theoretical framework. The city of Ur was located about 500 km south of Şanlıurfa. The third millennium BC, the Early Bronze Age of Mesopotamia, witnessed further occupation of Ur during its re-emergence. Historians have gathered this information primarily from two sources. The first is a large body of cuneiform documents, mostly from the empire of the so-called Third Dynasty of Ur, at the very end of the third millennium, also known as the Neo-Sumerian Empire. The second source is the archaeological work in modern Iraq. Although the early centuries (first half of the third millennium and earlier) are still poorly understood, archaeological discoveries have shown unequivocally that Ur was a major urban center on the Mesopotamian plain and its splendor has been confirmed, particularly by the discovery of the Royal Tombs of Ur. These tombs, which date from the Early Dynastic IIIa Period (approximately the 25th or 24th century BC), contained an immense collection of luxurious items made of precious metals and semi-precious stones, all of which would have been brought from long distances (e.g., Iran, Afghanistan, India, Asia Minor, the Persian Gulf). This wealth, previously unparalleled, is a testimony of Ur's economic importance during the Early Bronze Age.¹

It is possible to identify Ur as the sister city of Şanlıurfa. Faroqi gives the following brief information:

Al-Ruhâ or al-Ruhâ' is, the Arabic name of a city which was in early Islamic times in the province of Diyar Mudar but known in Western sources as Edessa, Syriac Orhay or Armenian Urhay. It is now in the province of Diyarbakir in the southeast of modern Turkey and is known as Urfa, a name for the city which is not clearly attested before the coming of the Turks to eastern Anatolia. Urfa is an ancient city, though efforts to identify it with the Babylonian Erech/Uruk or with Ur of the Chaldees cannot be taken seriously. Its site, at the junction of ancient highways from Armenia southwards and east-west from the fords across the Euphrates to Mesopotamia and Persia, must have made it strategically valuable when it was founded or re-founded by the Seleucids. Orhay now received new names, such as "Antioch by the Callirrhoe", i.e. "by the beautiful, flowing [water]", a reference to its famed fish-ponds or to the river of Orhay, and Edessa, originally the name of the Seleucids' own capital in Macedonia.²

What we have drawn up here is a brief framework which represents the rise of civilizations in human history as manifested in Urfa throughout its historical periods. The reader will witness visually the history of Şanlıurfa as displaying the concept of human nature outlined in this brief Introduction. We indeed experience this gradual progress in our lives as well, passing through the animalism, emotionality and humanist stages in order to achieve the real potentiality imbedded in us to reflect spiritualism. To achieve this level is to reach the actual human nature, which reflects moral sensitivity as inner satisfaction. This is indicated in the Qur'an, as seen in the following passages:

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ur>

² Suraiya Faroqi, "Al-Ruhâ," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (8): 593.





Şanlıurfa, Halfeți

By the soul and the One Who gave it its nature and wrought it with good and evil.
Truly he who purifies it achieves salvation; and he who corrupts it becomes a loser.
[91/al-Shams, 7-10]

Those who remember God standing, sitting and lying down and reflect upon the
creation of the heaven and the earth, and say: "Our Lord! You have not created all
this in vain..." (38/ Sad, 17).

O satisfied soul! Come back to your Lord well pleased and well-pleasing unto Him.
Enter you, then, among My devotees. Enter you My Heaven. (89/al-Fajr, 27-30)

We may convert this Qur'anic framework into a vision of human nature in and around Urfa throughout history. We can see this in the writings of the first scientific world historian in human history, Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabarî (838-923 AD). In his celebrated work, *History of the Prophets and Kings* (*Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk*), popularly known as *Tarīkh Tabarī* (*Tabari's History*), he divided human history into periods according to major events. Obviously, the first major event in human history was the creation of the universe. Hence, his first period covered "from the Creation to the Flood."³ This periodization is somewhat consistent with modern world histories, with the exception that because of new theories of creation concerning the origins of the universe, the natural history of the world is more detailed in modern world histories.

The Flood refers to Prophet Noah. We may interpret this period as consisting of two main segments: 1. Creation of the universe, and 2. Human existence on earth with the prophets. Since the Flood was a major event, then human history began with the first prophet, Adam, who represents the first settlement on earth. The second major event was the Flood which took place at the time of the prophet Noah. Hence, the third period in this sequence would be the coming of the major prophets, called the Period of Prophets and Patriarchs. In this period, the major event was the emergence of rationally explained monotheism as a universal Divine Tradition at the behest of the prophet Abraham.

It is the Period of Prophets and Patriarchs which is relevant for this book. We know this because the story of Abraham seems to coincide with the presence in Urfa of his arch enemy, Nimrod. According to the Bible, Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldees. However, according to traditional stories told in Urfa, he was born in a cave near Urfa. In any case, the Qur'an tells us that Abraham was thrown into a fire [by Nimrod] (21/Surat Anbiya, 69). Since the Bible also mentions the fact that Abraham went to Harran before he went to Canaan, it may be the case that he was captured in Urfa by Nimrod. From this period onward, the history of the prophets and that of Urfa coincide. The next period in the history of al-Tabari is the rise of the Children of Israel with other major prophets, such as Jacob, Joseph and Moses, until the coming of Jesus. In the meantime, he mentions the ancient kingdoms of the Sassanids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and of Yemen. Afterwards comes the Prophet Muhammad, and the rest is the history of Islam.

3 This great monumental work has been translated into English by the State University of New York Press, ed. Ihsan Yar-Shater, complete set in 40 vols. (2007).



Streets of Urfa

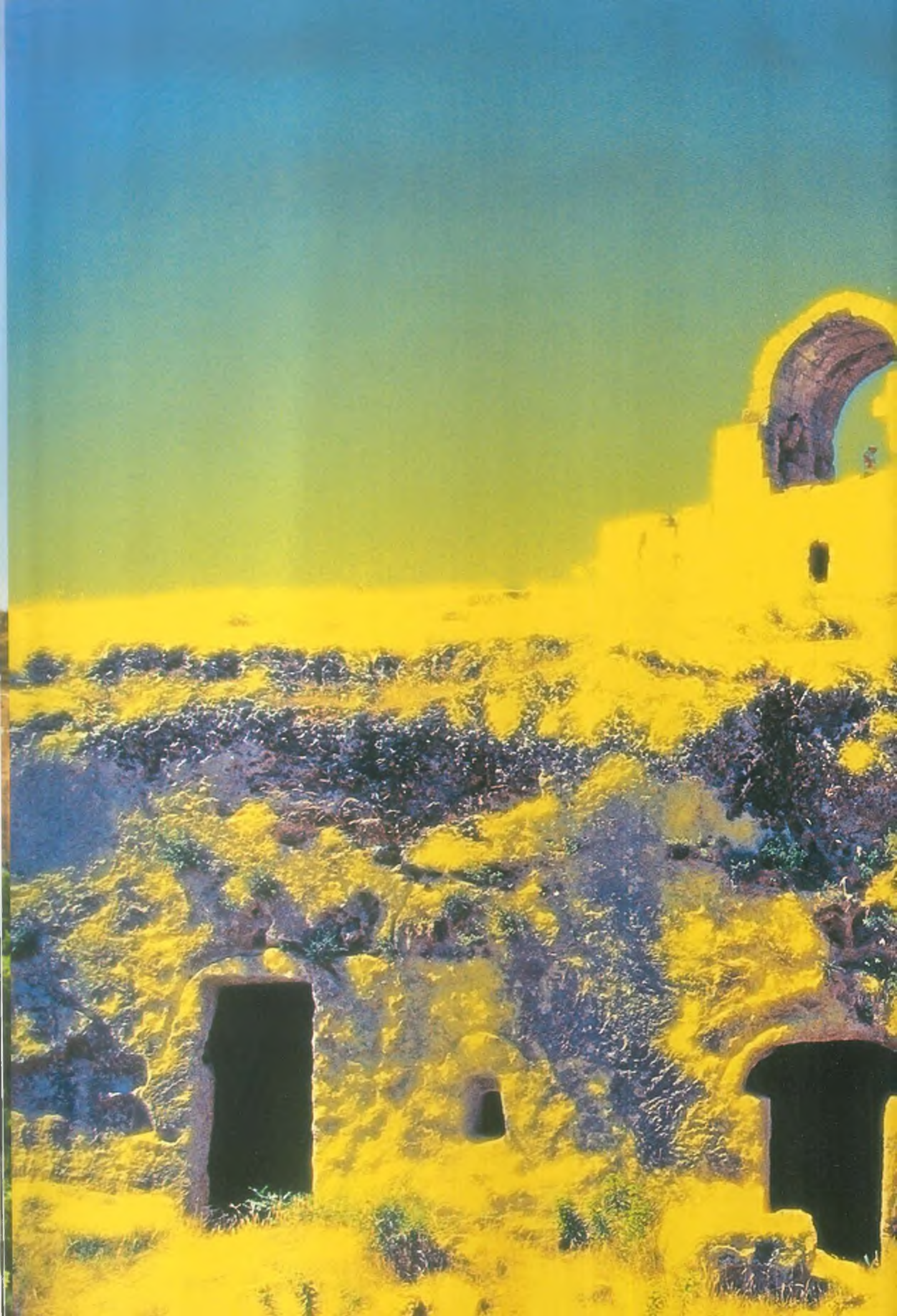
From these sources it is clear that the city of Urfa is very important in human history and for the rise of civilizations because it falls right at the center of the major events in the history of these early civilizations. This fact can be seen in Urfa's history, religious milieu, intellectual tradition, arts and architecture. We hope that this humble work can demonstrate this aspect of Urfa – as the city of civilizations and prophets.



Inside view of an ancient Harran house

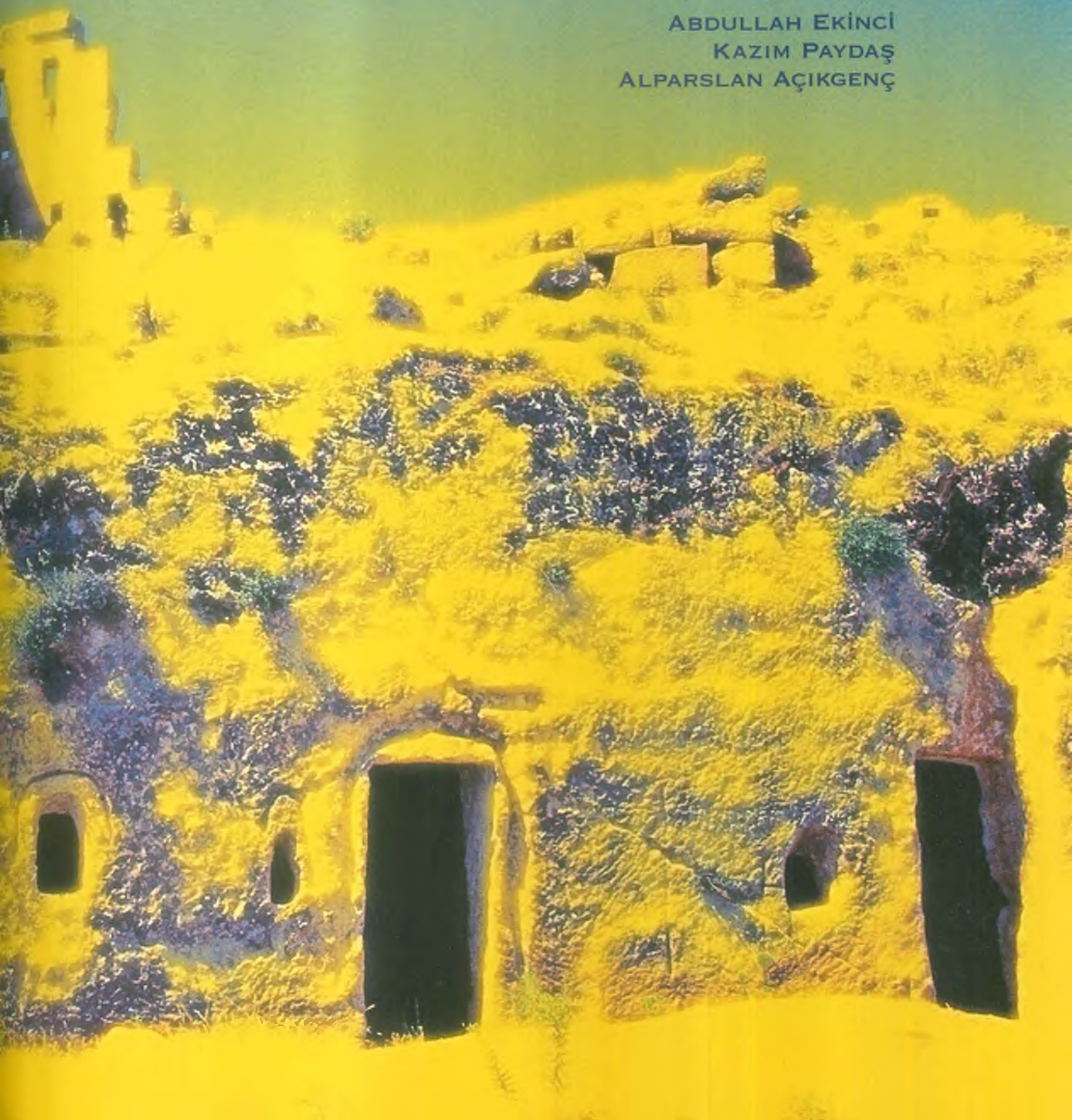






THE HISTORY

ABDULLAH EKİNCİ
KAZIM PAYDAŞ
ALPARSLAN AÇIKGENÇ



General map of Şanlıurfa Province with historical sites

1. TOMB OF HAYAT IBN QAYS AL-ANSARI AL-HARRANI

Hayat ibn Qays al-Ansari al-Harrani was a well-known scholar and Sufi sheikh who died in 1185. He was born in Harran and thus is known as al-Harrani, but according to Nisba al-Ansari, his family must have migrated from Medina. His tomb is near Şanlıurfa, where it is a place of veneration by visitors.

2. HARRAN DOME HOUSES

It is possible to run across houses similar to the ones of Harran in the villages of rural Suruç and Birecik Provinces, which share borders with Şanlıurfa. However, those of Harran are different, with bricks being used to form the top of the houses. There are two reasons for this, one being the lack of wood sources in the area, and the other the ready availability of brick-making materials in Harran. The height of the houses is at most five meters. The interior and exterior walls are plastered with clay. The houses of Harran are cool in summer and warm in winter. There are 580 dome houses within the city walls.

2. ULU (GRAND) MOSQUE OF HARRAN

Harran fell under the control of Islam in 639 during the reign of the Caliph Omar. Harran had been the capital during the Umayyad period under the rule of the last caliph, Marwan II. The Ulu Mosque of Harran, which is the oldest mosque in the Islamic architectural style in Turkey, was constructed between 744 and 750 AD during the Umayyad period by Caliph Marwan II. The wooden stairs of the minaret have been reconstructed with 105 steps, the same number as were in the original. Scholars trained in the nearby Harran School made a huge contribution to the formation of European civilization.

2. HARRAN CASTLE

Harran Castle was constructed adjacent to the city ramparts on the south-eastern side of the city. Islamic sources report that there was a Sabeen sanctuary within the area of the castle. It is estimated that the castle, on which the Umayyad Caliph Marwan II spent 10 million gold drachmas, had the dimensions of 90 × 130 meters with three floors. There was a dodecagon-shaped tower on each of the four corners of the irregular rectangular form of the castle.

3. TOMB OF IMAM MUHAMMAD AL-BAQIR

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir was the fifth of the Twelve Imams in Shi'a Islam. He is revered by Shiite Muslims for his religious leadership, and respected by Sunni Muslims for his knowledge and Islamic scholarship as a jurist in Medina. He died near Urfa in 733.

4. BAZDA CAVES

These are two historical underground stone quarries, located on each side of the Han el-Ba'rur road 16 km from Harran. It is understood from the Arabic inscriptions in the stone that these quarries were in active use in the 13th century. As thousands of stones were needed for the buildings of the nearby cities of Harran and Shuayb and the Han el-Ba'rur, many square openings, tunnels and galleries have been hollowed out in these two pits. Furthermore, exits to different sides of the mountain are provided by long galleries and tunnels.

5. HAN EL-BA'RUR (CARAVANSARY)

This caravansary (*han*) is located in Gökteş village, which is 26 km from Harran. It is dated to the period of the Ayyubids (1219 AD). "Ba'rur" means "goat manure" in Arabic. According to the story, Hacı Hüsameddin Ali Bey, son of İmad, son of İsa had this *han* constructed, filled it with dried grapes and offered them to his guests and to passers-by. He told everyone that after him, people would fill this place with goat manure. This structure was destroyed after the Mongolian invasion and for a long time was used as a stable by the local inhabitants.

6. THE ANCIENT CITY OF SHUAYB

This site is 39 km from Harran and 13 km after Han el-Ba'rur. It was a residential community dated to the late Roman period (4th or 5th century AD). In this duplex city, the buildings of the upper side were constructed with blocks of stone, while the lower side consisted of caves. It is rumored that Prophet Shuayb used one of the caves there as his house and temple and that Moses got his famous staff from Prophet Shuayb while he was shepherding in this region. Moses climbed Tur Mountain and from there received his first epiphany and was assigned to be a prophet.

7. THE ANCIENT CITY OF SOĞMATAR

After 18 km from the ancient city of Shuayb, you will reach the ancient city of Soğmatar. It is 57 km from Harran. This region dates back to the Roman Period (2nd century AD) and was a cult center where the people of Harran worshiped the moon and planet gods during the reign of King Abgar. In Soğmatar can be seen a cave (Pogon Cave) belonging to Sin, god of the moon, a hill (Holy Hill) with reliefs of gods on its slopes and tablets engraved on the ground, five square- and circular-shaped mausoleums (Anıt Mezar), and tombs carved into the main rock. It is rumored that the historical well in the ancient city of Soğmatar could have been the well of Moses.

8. SENEM CAVES

The Senem Caves are located in the village of Senem Miğar near Şanlıurfa. These caves were actually carved into the huge rocks during Roman times by Christians who were trying to escape persecution. In the village there is a hill with ruins of a three-storey structure believed to have been a church built by these Christians. There are small chapels carved into the rocks on the northern side of the village.

9. ÇİMDİN CASTLE (OLD CASTLE)

This is a historical fortress which can be reached by going 61 km on the Şanlıurfa-Viraneşir highway and then taking the south exit and continuing for 9 km on that road. It is estimated that this castle, which is surrounded by a deep defense moat, was constructed during the Ayyubid period. According to the epigraph, the tomb in the castle is that of Mesut Ali, son of İbrahim, who was a descendant of the Prophet (pbuh). There are huge caves below



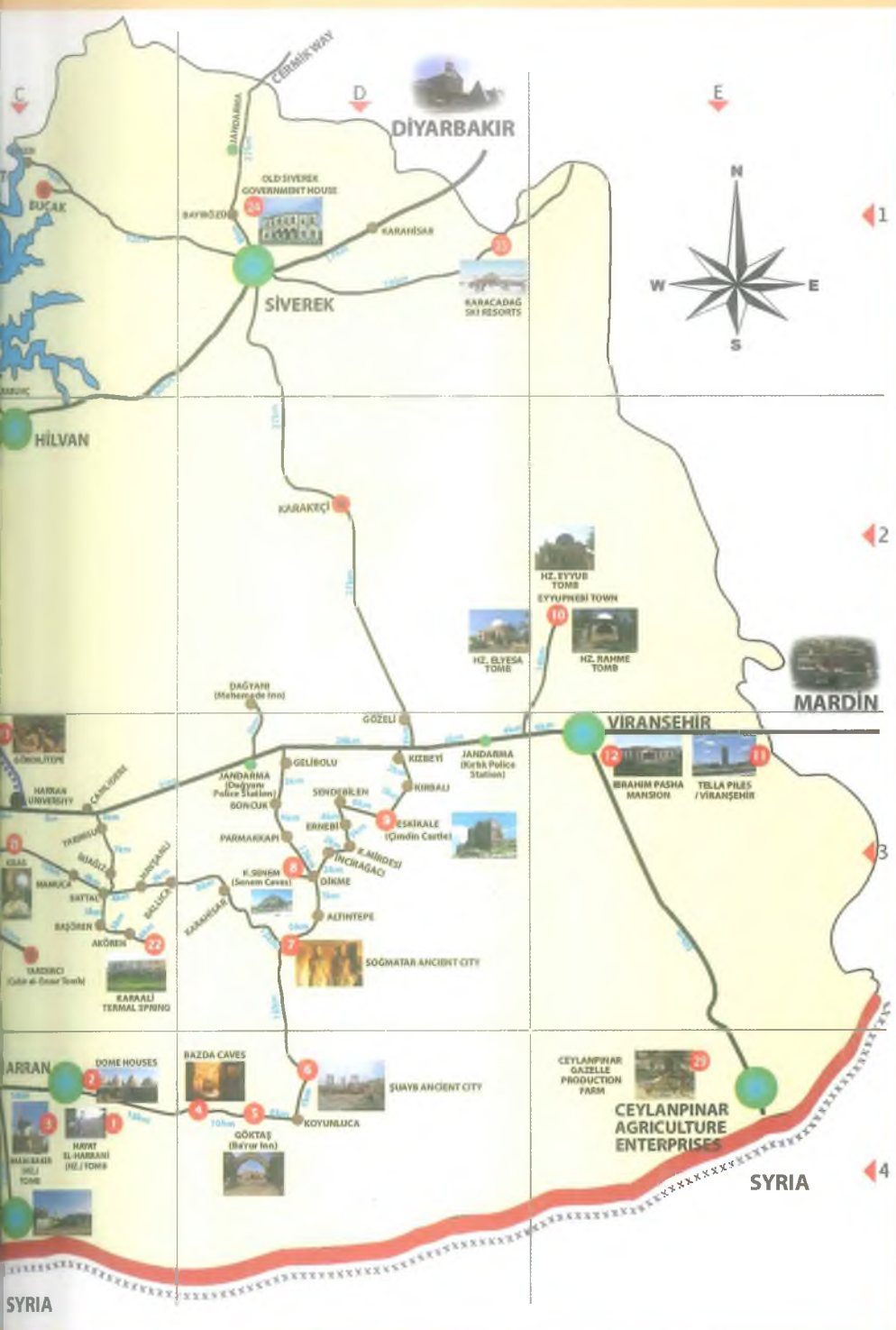
the western entrance of Çimdin Castle. The well of the castle was restored during the Mameluke period.

10. THE TOWN OF EYYUBNEBI (PROPHET JOB)

This site is 101 km from the city of Şanlıurfa. The town of Eyyubnebi is at the end of the 15-km asphalt road that exits the Urfa-Mardin highway after 85 km. The tombs are here of Prophet Job (Eyyub) and his wife Rahme, and of Prophet Elijah ('İlyās), who came there to find Prophet Job. This town has been called Eyyubnebi for 400 years based on this legacy. These tombs are visited by thousands of people, especially on religious holidays and on the eve of religious holidays. A large basalt stone believed, according to legend, to be the stone against which Prophet Job used to lean is known as the "Stone of Patience" and is a pilgrimage site. After being cured in Urfa, Prophet Job returned to Eyyubnebi, where he lived for a long time, acquired property and had a child. He regained the wealth that he had had before he was tested. When he passed away, he was buried in Eyyubnebi, and 50 meters from his tomb is that of his wife Rahme. Prophet Elijah passed away upon reaching Eyyubnebi when he was about to visit Prophet Job, and his tomb is located 500 meters from that of Prophet Job.

11. TELL A PILLARS / TELL A MARTYRION

These structures, called "Tella" during the Byzantine period, are on the west side of Eski Paşalar School in Viraneşir. Several significant historical sites are to be found in this district of Şanlıurfa Province. These octagonal structures were built in the 4th or 5th century to honor a Christian saint known as Martyrion. Originally there were eight, but only one has survived until the present day. These structures were decorated with beautiful mosaics, some of which are still intact.



12. İBRAHİM PAŞA MANSION

This is a historical building from the Ottoman period used by General Ibrahim who was the commander-in-chief of the South Eastern Army. Between 1923 and 1941 it was used as a school, but since then it has been abandoned. Recently however, the district governor took over the building in order to restore it as a public library.

13. GÖBEKLİTEPE, THE OLDEST ARCHEOLOGICAL SANCTUARY IN THE WORLD

Göbeklitepe is 17 km east of the Şanlıurfa city center and 3 km northeast of Örencik (Karaharabe) Village. It is the oldest archeological sanctuary in the world, dating back 12,000 years. Excavation work has continued since 1995 and has been carried out by archeologist Klaus Schmidt from the German Archeology Institute since 2007, under the decree of the Turkish Council of Ministers.

Among the interesting findings that have been revealed at Göbeklitepe are included embossed depictions of creatures like the desert monitor (Varanus griseus), wild boar, common crane, white stork, fox, gazelle, wild donkey, snake, scorpion, wild sheep, lion, spider and humans without heads, as well as male sculptures with exaggerated organs. All these provide important clues as to the belief system of the humans who adopted the sedentary life 12,000 years ago.

The 12,000-year-old structures of Göbeklitepe are accepted as the beginning of the history of architecture. The first sanctuary belonging to the polytheistic period that came before the monotheistic religions was understood to be the sanctuary on the island of Malta, which dates back to 5000 BC. With the discovery of the Göbeklitepe settlement, this information is no longer valid. Now it can be verified by scientific data that the first sanctuary built by humankind was at Göbeklitepe, dating back 12,000 years. According to

accepted worldwide archeological understanding, the most important factor for the transformation of a people from the hunter-gatherer to a settled lifestyle are the fear of hunger and the protection instinct. Göbeklitepe shattered this theory in that it proves that religious beliefs may have affected the transition to the settled life.

14. ATATÜRK DAM, PRIDE OF TURKEY

The Atatürk Dam project began in 1960 and was completed on January 10th 1991. In June 1992, electricity was generated and it began to irrigate the Harran lowlands. As a result of this, annual harvests from these fertile soils have been doubled or tripled. Atatürk Dam is the biggest dam in Turkey, the 6th biggest dam in the world in terms of backfill, the 9th tallest dam in the world, and the 8th largest dam in the world in terms of its reservoir volume.

15. KANTARMA CARAVANSARAI

This is the site of an old caravanserai built by the Seljuks in the 13th century right on the Silk Road.

16. SECRET PARADISE - HALFETİ

The name of this district was Şitamarat when it was conquered in 855 BC by Salmanassar III, King of Assur. Afterwards, it fell under the control of the Greeks, Assyrians, Arabs, Byzantines, Mamelukes and Ottomans respectively. A large part of the district was flooded by the waters of the Birecik Dam. The "black rose", which is the symbol of the city, attracts huge attention. Transportation is available by boat to Rumkale, where the Saint Nerse Church, Barşavma Monastery and many historical edifices are located, and to the historical Savaşan village, where there is a rock church.

17. RUM CASTLE / RUMKALE

Rumkale is located on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River, north of the Birecik lowland and Halfeti, on top of a hill in the direction of the Şanlıurfa road. It became the center of the Armenian Bishopric in the 12th century. Visitors are provided with a magnificent view of Rumkale via the boat tour beginning from the Halfeti coastal area and traveling to Savaşan Village, which is noted for its historical features.

18. BİRECİK AND THE BALD IBIS SANCTUARY

In 1956, with the construction of the Birecik Bridge, one of the longest in Turkey, over the Euphrates River, the district began to redevelop. Birecik is an important migration center for the bald ibis, which travel to Birecik and northern Africa to nest. These birds arrive in Birecik by mid-February and leave by mid-July together with their offspring. In 1977, due to various reasons their numbers decreased and they were put under protection at the Bald Ibis Sanctuary and Breeding Station established by the Directorate General of Forestry.

19. BİRECİK CASTLE

The exact date when it was built is not known. However, the earliest information available is that it was in the rule of the great Assyrian King Salmaneser II (859-824 BC) who renovated the castle and strengthened it giving it its appearance that we have today, although later some more repairs were done. There are four main gates to the Castle. In 1894 French archeologist J. E. Gautier did excavations there and discovered some objects through which he could estimate the settlements there to belong to the Paleolithic ages. The city of Birecik was occupied at different times in history by the Hittites, Assyrians, Parthians, Macedonians and Romans.

20. DEYR YAKUB (JACOB MONASTERY)

This is 10 km from the city center. Legend has it that King Nimrod, whose Prophet Abraham defied, had used this place as his capital, so colloquially the building was called "Nimrod's Throne" or the "Devil's Mill". Indeed, it is a monastery. The name of Şardu Bar Ma'nū's wife Amaşşeme is written on the epigraph of the mausoleum on the north-western side of the monastery. The tablet and building have been dated to the 2nd or 3rd century.

21. KISAS

Kıyas, is an historical village about 12 km southeast of Urfa near the Tektar Mountains. It overlooks the Harran Valley. The inhabitants are Turcoman tribes who settled here in the 11th century and they have preserved their old traditions and customs.

22. KARA ALİ THERMAL SPRINGS

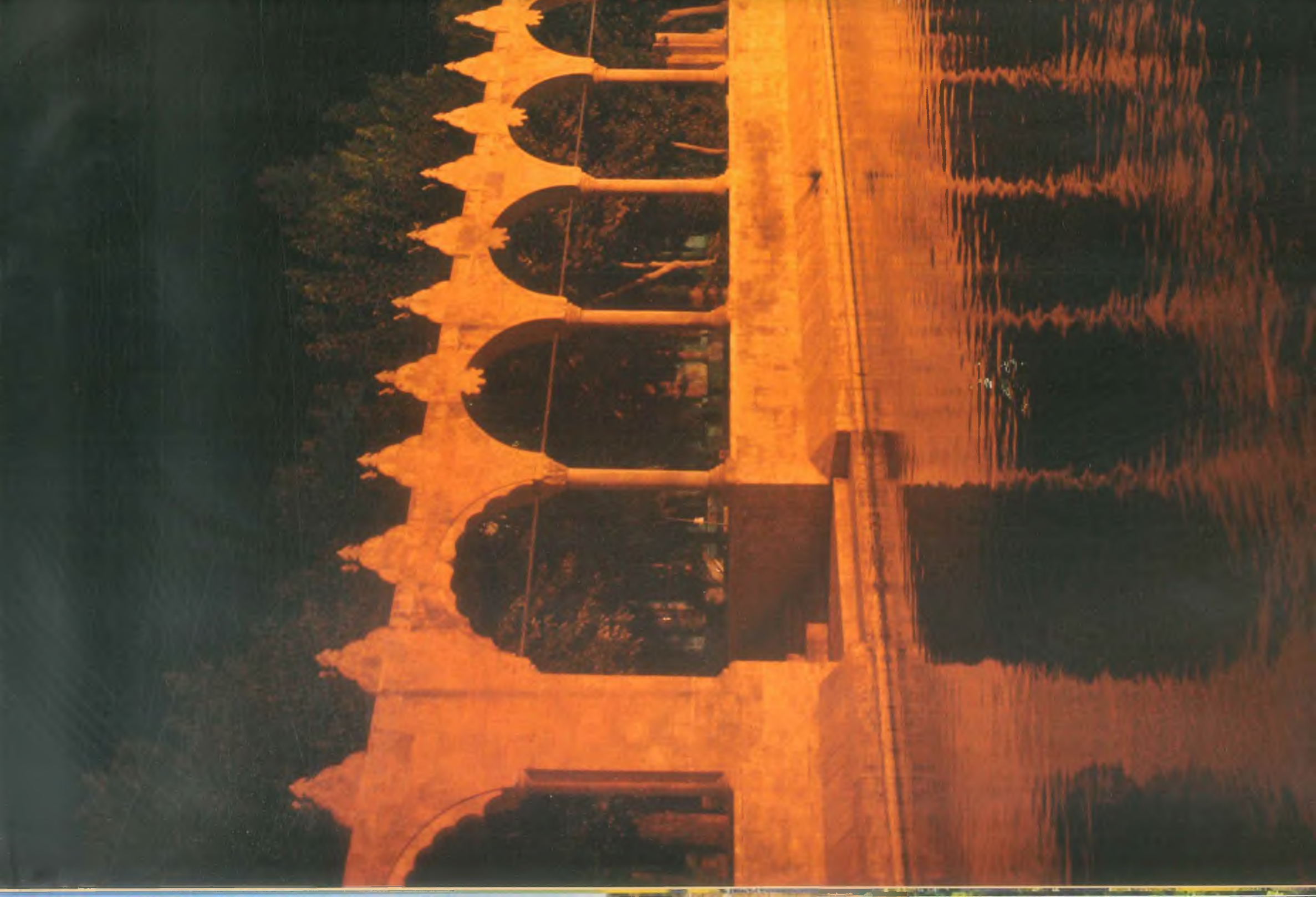
In the Karaali Hot Springs 40 km east of Şanlıurfa, the Hot Spring Hotel and indoor pool facilities were built by the Şanlıurfa Special Provincial Administration. There are 34 rooms and 68 beds. It has a 150,000 m³/hour hot water capacity. A residential hotel consisting of 54 flats has been in service since February 2000. It has been determined that the hot spring water (49-55 °C) can be successfully used to treat diseases related to the nervous system, diarthrosis, skin conditions, circulation problems and more. Apart from health tourism, the Karaali hot springs are utilized for greenhouses.

23. GERMUŞ CHURCH

Germuş Church is located in Germuş Village (Dağteği) 10 km northeast of the Şanlıurfa city center. It is estimated that this church was constructed in the 19th century. On the church grounds can be found a stream, the church (Saint Jacob/Yakub Church) and a place for church gatherings (maiden). The church was built of stone and has two storeys.

25. KARACADAĞ SKI RESORT

The ski-runs are prepared according to the snow conditions by the governorship of Karacadağ which is in the Siverek district. A 250-m chairlift was built for the 600-700 m-long ski runs. One 60 m² cafe and one 30 m bungalow-type service area can be found at the ski center, which is 60 km from Siverek. There is a four-month skiing season beginning in November.





The ancient city center with the Mosque of Abraham, God's Friend (Halilürrahman) and the fish lake



Ancient carvings in
Harran Soğmatar

Throughout history, the city of Urfa and the region in which it is situated have been known by a variety of names. Among these, the most commonly recognized are Ostroene, as it was called by the Romans and Al-Jazeera (The Island), so named by the Arabs. The Arabic name is derived from the fact that the plains were surrounded by the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. The region was divided into three parts under the Persian Sassanians: the Land of Rabia, the Land of Mudar, and the Land of Bakr, named after the three tribes that had been settled there during the Pre-Islamic period.¹ Moreover, Makdisi, in his work *Ahsan al-Taqasim*, called Al-Jazeera the Akur Region.² In this brief history of Urfa, we will try to trace the historical roots of the city in ancient times.

PREHISTORIC AND ANCIENT PERIODS

According to one point of view, the origin of the name Urfa is the Arabic *orhai*.³ Based on this claim, some historians assumed that *orhai* was derived from *vrhai*, meaning “watery” in Arabic. Subsequent versions of *orhai*, such as *orha* and *orbe*, eventually emerged as *Urfa*. The Greeks called the city Kaliura, which means “maid servant of miyah (water)”.⁴ According to another theory, the word *orhai* originated



Stone reliefs with animal motifs from the Göbeklitepe Temple site



Map 2. Seleucid Empire
after Alexander the
Great (312-63 BC)

from *osrhoene* in Greek –*orrpei* in Latin– meaning “castle” or “spring.” Some historians have called Urfa by the name of Ur, or Ur of the Chaldees. However, the ancient origin of the name Urfa as being Urha or Ur of the Chaldees is unlikely because the Ur occupied by the Chaldeans was located a short distance from the shore of the Euphrates in the southern part of Babylonia (in today’s Iraq, see Map 3).

Between the years 605 and 550 BC, Urfa was ruled by the Babylonians.⁵ After its conquest by Alexander the Great, Urfa was known by the name of Edessa under the Seleucids (312–63 BC) (see Map 2). From 132 BC to 214 AD, a kingdom of Nabataean origin was established in Urfa/Edessa. During the period lasting from 215 AD until the collapse of the Roman Empire, Edessa was known by several names. Based on a study of coins from Edessa, Segal demonstrates that the city was named after a succession of Roman rulers. In 215 the city was named Aurelia, Antonina. In the period of the emperor Macrinus, the name was replaced by Opellia, Macrinina. Afterwards, Edessa was referred to as Marcia, Aurelia, Antoniana and Alexandria, or Alexandriana.⁶ In the following period, between the 3rd and 7th centuries, the region continued to be an area of conflict between the Roman/Byzantine and Sassanid Neo-Persian empires.

There are a number of opinions as to when the city was founded. For example, Abu al-Faraj and the Assyrian, Mihail, date the foundation of the city back to the prophet Noah, but those views are exaggerated.⁷ On the other hand, there are also those who have based the city’s foundation upon mythological heroes. Moreover, Abu al-Faraj pointed out that the prophet Enoch founded 180 cities, and that Edessa was the greatest among these. During archaeological surface excavations around Urfa, some tools found in the terrace sets of the Euphrates located between Birecik and Nizip and between Sürtepe and Tilvez Village show characteristics of

the Paleolithic Age. Among these, the most interesting is a 20 × 9 cm hand axe made of flint. In addition, other tools made of flint have been found 1–1.5 meters below the surface during excavations carried out in Soğut Tarlası.⁸ It is uncertain whether these tools belong to the Paleolithic Age, but they are considered to be part of an industry that produced simple stone hand tools.⁹ Many such blade-type tools were made at the beginning of the Upper Paleolithic period.



Stone reliefs in Şanlıurfa
Archeological Museum



Mosaics left from the Osrhoene
Kingdom, 120 BC

GÖBEKLİTEPE

An archaeological site that changes our present time framework of human civilization

Approximately 12,000 years ago, the area of land between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, near present-day Şanlıurfa, was the site of the most important change in the history of mankind. The hunter-gatherer lifestyle of early humans was beginning to evolve into a more settled, herder-farmer way of life. The remains found at Göbeklitepe reveal that life during this period of change, thousands of years ago, was not the simple, unsophisticated life that we have thus far assumed it to be. On the contrary, Göbeklitepe reveals that the hunter-gatherers were living through a magnificent age.

Göbeklitepe is composed of 20 round and oval structures reaching 30 m in diameter. Of these, six have been exposed through excavations and the rest have been mapped using geomagnetic and georadar survey methods. These monumental structures were built for ceremonial purposes. In the center of these circular structures are two T-shaped, free-standing limestone pillars which are about 5 m in height. Smaller versions of these pillars, each of which weighs 4 tons, are placed around the inside walls facing the central pillar. The animal motifs and various abstract symbols carved on the pillars seem to point to some kind of a communication system.

The findings at Göbeklitepe reflect a competent level of stonework and the rich content of the carved motifs show that a level of complex thought had developed in this early period. The monumental structures of Göbeklitepe were deliberately buried by the Neolithic people who built them. It almost seems that the burial was a planned part of the construction right from the beginning.

The earliest reference to the name Göbeklitepe appears in a 1980 publication of archeological research indicating that the site was discovered in 1963 during a surface survey carried out jointly by Istanbul University and the University of Chicago. The first large statues and T-shaped pillars dating from the same period were discovered in the Nevalı Çori excavation near Urfa in the 1990s. In 1994, Klaus Schmidt, a German archeologist and professor at Erlangen University who had worked on the Nevalı Çori excavation, visited Göbeklitepe and was able to get a grant to begin excavations there in 1995. He and his team uncovered what had remained buried under ground for centuries.



An artist's depiction of the Göbeklitepe Temple (*National Geographic*, June 2011)



Göbeklitepe temple



Göbeklitepe excavation sites



Carving details on the temple stone

Findings uncovered during the environmental planning of Balıklıgöl have revealed that the city of Urfa was built upon a mound belonging to the Neolithic Age. This section discusses the history of the city and its settlement, which dates back to 9000–8000 BC. Moreover, findings in Urfa and its outskirts related to the Bronze Age are not limited to the Titris, Kurban, Hassek, Zeytin Bahçeli, Hadji Nebi, Lidar and Kazene mounds around Urfa and Harran.¹⁰ It was during this period that Hattusili I, king of the Hittites, fought against the Yamhad kingdom of northern Syria. After the destruction of the capital, Aleppo, he probably conquered Hassuva, near Birecik,¹¹ where a significant finding, the name of Kuzi Tesup, king of Karkamis, was discovered written on a seal.¹²



Göbeklitepe
Temple steles

Southern Mesopotamia witnessed the dynamism of several rival city-states after 2500 BC. As a result of excavations made since 1979, it is recognized that Urfa was once under the dominion of the Ebla kingdom. In cuneiform archives found during the archaeological excavations in Ebla, the center of the kingdom was recorded as Harran, and it was ruled by a queen named Zugalum¹³

It is actually the ancient history of Urfa that makes it significant because many Biblical and Qur'anic prophets lived in this area. In one way or another, their paths crossed through the ancient city, according to the legends told among the local Urfa inhabitants, and some cases are confirmed by historical documentation. For historical insight into the circumstances, we need to examine a brief history of the Mesopotamian cities in the proximity of Urfa at that time (see Map 3).

GREAT CITIES OF ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

Uruk was one of the first major cities in the history of the world. It reached its peak around 2900 BC when it had an estimated population of nearly 80,000 inhabitants, making it the largest city in the world in ancient times. This means that there was a settlement in this place at the time of ancient Sumer until the late Babylonian period, spanning from about 4000 BC to the late Seleucid and Parthian periods. Uruk was located in southern Mesopotamia along the banks of the Euphrates River. It was the center of the Sumerian civilization and was able to grow so large because of advanced farming and irrigation techniques. The abundance of



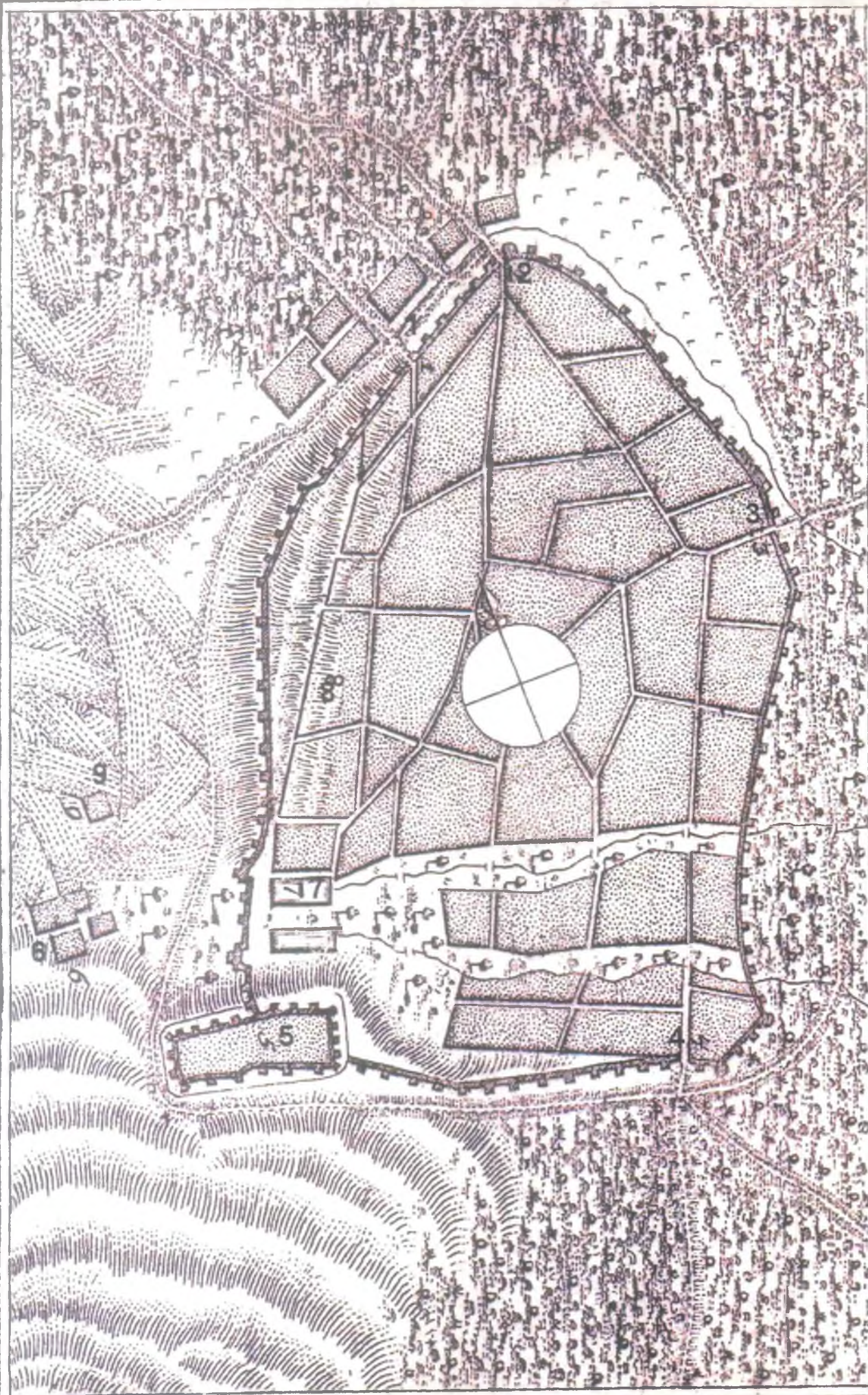
An example of a Cuneiform Tablet. From Annals of Tukulti-Ninurta II, king of Assyria (890–884 BC), <http://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-asia/rise-and-fall-sumer-and-akkad-003192>

Map 3. Great cities of ancient Mesopotamia

food made the city rich. The most famous king of Uruk was Gilgamesh, who was later turned into a mythical hero through the tales of his exploits and superhuman strength in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. The city is also connected to the name of Nimrod, who established Uruk as part of his empire.

Uruk had monumental mud-brick buildings decorated with painted clay cone mosaics embedded in the walls and amazing works of art. "Large-scale sculpture in-the-round and relief carving appeared for the first time, together with metal casting using the lost-wax process. Simple pictographs were drawn on clay tablets to record the management of goods and the allocation of workers' rations" (*Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*). Stone temples built in Uruk formed a complex with a great ziggurat at the center. Ziggurats were built as temple complexes by the Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian inhabitants of Mesopotamia as part of their religion. These were massive structures built from sun-baked bricks which were glazed from the outside so that the

Grundriss der Stadt Orfa



100 200 300 400 500

1000 doppelte Schritte



اورفا في القرن التاسع عشر



Urfa in the 19th century

walls would look aesthetically beautiful, but at the same time they depicted some astrological references. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus claimed that ziggurats were built to support the important buildings in a temple complex.



Artist's depiction of daily life in
ancient Uruk
<https://antiquitynow.org/2014/05/28/>

Ur was the great city-state of the Sumerian empire in ancient Mesopotamia. Ur was originally a coastal city on the Persian Gulf, but the coastline has shifted and the remains of the city are now inland, south of the east bank of the Euphrates, about 16 km from the city of Nasiriyah in present-day southern Iraq. According to written historical documents, the city of Ur dates back to about 3800 BC, which means it must have been well established even before this date. Archeological findings show that this site must have been inhabited during the Ubaid period (6500-3800 BC). Excavations of the ancient city have revealed evidence of a great flood, as mentioned in the sacred texts and also in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

The Akkadian Empire, founded by Sargon the Great, took control of Ur between the 24th and 22nd centuries BC. The Akkadians were a Semitic-speaking people who gained ascendancy over the Sumerians of Mesopotamia and indeed, much of the ancient Near East. According to one estimate, Ur was the largest city in the world from c. 2030-1980 BC. Its population was approximately 65,000.



Artist's impression of
the city of Ur
<http://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-asia/rise-and-fall-sumer-and-akkad-003192>

This city is traditionally held as the birthplace of the prophet Abraham (Abram, or in the Qur'an Ibrâhîm) sometime between 2200-2000 BC. There are also traditional reports that the city mentioned in the Book of Genesis, "Ur-Kasdim" meaning "Sanctified Ur," is Şanlıurfa (Genesis 11:28, Genesis 11:31 and Genesis 15:7; also in Nehemiah 9:7). Others claim that it may be Urkesh, Urartu or Kutha. Ur-Kasdim is rendered into English as "Ur of the Chaldees." However, although the Chaldeans were settled in the vicinity by around 850 BC, they were not the rulers of Ur until the late 7th century BC. On the other hand, Ur was under the dominion of the Elamites during the time of Abraham, around 2000 BC. Elam was an ancient civilization whose capital was Susa, in present-day Khuzistan in Iran. Elam ruled the large area primarily east of the Persian Gulf extending to some parts of southern Mesopotamia, including Ur, between 2700 and 539 BC.

The city of Akkad was the center of the world's first empire, the Akkadian Empire. The people of Akkad, under the leadership of Sargon the Great, conquered many of the Sumerian city-states and took control of Mesopotamia. The Akkadian language took the place of Sumerian and continued to be the primary language of the region into the time of the Babylonian and Assyrian Empires. Archeologists, unsure of its location, still have not found the city of Akkad. It was likely located in southern Mesopotamia just east of the Tigris River.

Assur, located in northern Mesopotamia on the western bank of the river Tigris, became the first capital city of the Assyrian Empire. Although other cities would later take over as the Assyrian Empire's capital, Assur continued to be recognized as the religious center of the empire. Assur was named after the primary god of the Assyrians, and the city and the god are sometimes called "Ashur".

Babylon was the capital city and center of the Babylonian Empire. It is mentioned in the Qur'an by its Arabic name "Babil":

They followed what the evil ones gave out (falsely) against the power of Solomon: the blasphemers were not Solomon, but the evil ones, teaching men magic, and such things as came down at Babylon to the angels Harut and Marut. But neither of these taught anyone (such things) without saying: "We are only for a trial; so do not blaspheme." They learned from them the means to sow discord between man and wife. But they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah's permission. And they learned what harmed them, not what profited them. And they knew that the buyers (of magic) would have no share in the happiness of the Hereafter. (2: 102; *Surat al-Baqarah*-The Cow)

This verse indicates the use of astrology, which was highly developed at that time in Babylon, for magical practices. During its peak, Babylon was the largest city in the world, with a population exceeding 200,000. It was home to kings such as Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar as well as the site of the fabled Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It was also the location of the famous Tower of Babel. Babylon was located in central Mesopotamia along the banks of the Euphrates River. Today the ruins of the city can be found around 50 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq.



Hammurabi (standing), depicted as receiving his royal insignia from Shamash. Hammurabi holds his hand over his mouth as a sign of prayer. (Relief on the upper part of the stele of Hammurabi's code of laws)

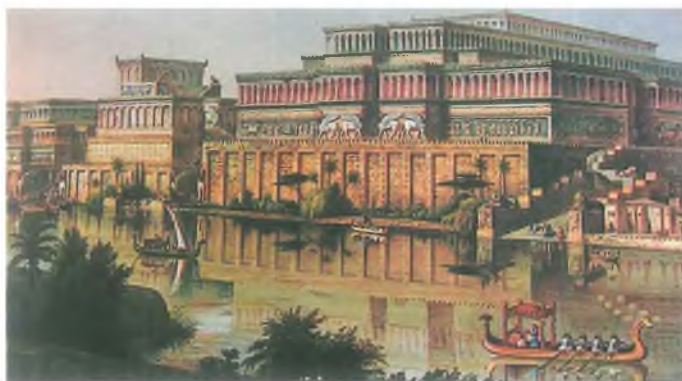
Hammurabi reigned between 1792 and 1750 BC as the sixth king of the First Amorite dynasty of Babylon. He was very successful in expanding the kingdom to conquer all of ancient Mesopotamia. The kingdom of Babylon comprised only the cities of Babylon, Kish, Sippar, and Borsippa when Hammurabi came to the throne but, through a succession of military campaigns, careful alliances made and broken when necessary, and political maneuvers, he held the entire region under Babylonian control by 1750 BC. He is best known in the modern day for his law code which, although not the earliest code of laws, came to serve as a model for other cultures and is thought to have influenced the laws set down by Hebrew scribes, including those from the biblical Book of Exodus. This picture and information is taken from: <https://www.ancient.eu/hammurabi/>



Tower of Babel depicted by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

Babylon is mentioned several times in the Bible. It became the capital city of the Assyrian Empire in the 13th century BC. Although the city later fell into ruins, the great King Ashurnasirpal II rebuilt the city and made it the Assyrian capital in 880 BC. Babylon boasted some of the most magnificent palaces built in ancient history. The palace of Shalmaneser III covered over 12 acres and had more than 200 rooms. Under Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC), the city of Babylon was rebuilt with great splendor and would eventually become one of the most magnificent cities in the Middle East and Mediterranean region. But all was not perfect beneath the shining surface of the Babylonian city-state, as there still existed a number of cities that were loyal to the Assyrians and resented Babylonian hegemony.

Nineveh was the greatest city of the Assyrian Empire and at its height became the largest city in the world. The city was largely built under the rule of King Sennacherib, around 700 BC. The great walls of Nineveh enclosed an area of seven square kilometers and had 15 gates. There were 18 canals that brought water to different areas of the city. Nineveh was home to King Ashurbanipal, the last great king of the Assyrian Empire. Under his rule a



Nineva: an artist's impression
<https://www.shtreber.com/Mesopotamija>



Nineva ruins
https://www.delcampe.net/en_GB/collectables/postcards/iraq/ak-irak-hatra-nineva-nr-56-alte-postkarten-275471657.html

great library was built that housed over 20,000 clay tablets. Much of what we know about Mesopotamia is from these tablets. Nineveh is also famous from the Biblical story of Jonah and the Whale. In the story, God tells Jonah to travel to Nineveh, but Jonah refuses. Jonah then tries to run away from God, but is swallowed by a great fish and is spat out on the shore. Finally, in obedience to God, Jonah then travels to Nineveh.

Harran was founded around 2000 BC as a mercantile outpost of Ur situated on the major trade route across northern Mesopotamia. The name comes from the Sumerian and Akkadian “Harran-U”, meaning “journey”, or “crossroad”. For centuries it was a prominent Assyrian city, known for its temple of the moon god Sin. The Harranians also claimed that they were descendants of Abraham and that Adam was among their ancestors. This is perhaps a result of the later influence of Islam.¹⁴ According to the Harran inscriptions of Nabonidus (see Nabonid stele



Dome houses of Harran

on p. 94), the children of Sin, Ishtar (goddess of love and war) and Shamash (god of the sun) were worshipped as well. However, these were not the only deities worshipped at Harran. Ningal and Nusku as well as Nabu and other lesser gods were all worshipped to some degree.¹⁵ It is important to keep this in mind so that we understand why Abraham vehemently opposed this kind of idolatry (see Part III: Gods and Goddesses for detailed information on the Harran and Urfa pantheon).

In 363 AD, Emperor Julian paid his respects to the Temple of Sin. Jacob of Searug also wrote of Sin, the moon god of Harran.¹⁶ The Harranians were also heavily influenced during this period by the Christians and other religious groups, including those of the baptizing sects like the Mandaeans. After the conquest of Alexander, Harran came to be a center of intellectual and religious activity, which evolved into a philosophical tradition centered on Hermes Trismegistus. At one time, Hermes Trismegistus was thought to be an Egyptian priest who lived in very ancient times and wrote a series of books on magic which became known as Hermetic literature. In reality, Hermetic literature is a series of books written by

various authors containing a mixture of popular Greek philosophy, Platonism, and Stoicism influenced by Jewish and Persian religious theology.¹⁷

After the conquest of Harran by the Muslims in 639 AD, the city shifted to an Islamic affiliation. Muslim authors described the Harranians as Nabataean pagans and Greek immigrants. The Harranians made calculated moves to make peace with the Muslims. The Umayyad Caliph Marwan (744–750 AD) made Harran his home and moved the center of the Umayyad Empire from Damascus to Harran. Then in 830 AD the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun demanded that the pagans of Harran either change religions or accept death. They chose to be identified with the "Sabeans".¹⁸ They also succeeded in having the School of Philosophy and Medicine moved from Alexandria to Harran. Moreover, a number of famous scholars in philosophy and medicine are said to have come from Harran (see Part IV: History of Thought and Science).

Harran in Biblical sources is the city where Abraham was cast into Nimrod's



Inside view of the dome
of a Harran house

furnace to face trial by fire. But this name also resembles the name of the first son of Terah, the eldest brother of Abraham (Genesis 11:27), who migrated with his family from Ur of the Chaldees to Harran, where the descendants of his brother Nahor had established themselves. The Romans called the city Charrae, but today it is called Harran in Turkish. Some of the incidents mentioned in the Qur'an concerning the call of Abraham and the opposition to Nimrod also took place in Harran, a major district of Şanlıurfa Province today. Moreover, Abraham is said to have set out from Harran on his pilgrimage of faith to Canaan (Gen 12:1). According to the *Bible Encyclopedia – ISBE*, "The name appears in Assyro-Babalonian as Kharran, which means 'road', possibly because here the trade route from Damascus joined that from Nineveh to Carchemish. It is mentioned in the prism inscription of Tiglath-pileser I. It was a seat of the worship of Sin, the moon-god, from very ancient times. A temple was built by Shalmaneser II... [the] destroyed [temple] was rebuilt by Ashurbanipal, who was here crowned with the crown of Sin." In 53 BC, the Parthians defeated the Roman army near Harran and slew its general, Crassus.



The remains of the
ancient Harran School

Each one of these cities, as well as others not mentioned in this context, housed a temple that was the seat of a major god in the Mesopotamian pantheon. Some of these temples evolved into massive ziggurats. These gods controlled the powerful forces which were believed to dictate the fate of all humans. In the beginning, the priesthood had the duty to please the town's patron deity, but this role soon passed to the secular kings. Yet the priesthood did manage to hold great authority owing to their interpretation of omens and dreams.

Harran citadel





The tower of the ancient Harran School



Harran, Ulu Cami
(The Grand Mosque)

THE ISLAMIC PERIOD

Muslims began to populate the city of Urfa during the time of the Four Great Caliphs (632–661 AD). In the year 639, at the death of Abu Ubayda, the caliph ‘Umar appointed Iyâd ibn Ghanem as governor and charged him with the order to conquer Mesopotamia. ‘Umar especially wanted to control the cities of Homs and Kinnesrin in order to extend his zone of influence. In order to conquer this area, the Muslims first invaded Urfa in the second half of that year.¹⁹ In response to the advances of the Muslims, the emperor Heraclius increased his efforts to retain the area beginning in 627. In order to save Homs, he tried to make use of the military resources of Ruha, another name for Urfa which was becoming popular among the Arabs. Ultimately, he had to turn back to Constantinople, effectively relinquishing his control over the Al-Jazeera region.²⁰ After Iyad’s death, the caliph ‘Umar appointed Sa’d ibn Amir ibn Hizyam al-Jumahi as governor of Homs and the territory which included all of the Al-Jazeera region.

Following ‘Umar, the caliph ‘Uthman was also interested in conquering this area. After the illness of ‘Umayr Sa’d, ‘Uthman discharged him from duty and put Homs and Kinnesrin under the direction of Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan.²¹ ‘Uthman also ordered Muawiya to go to Simsat, so Muawiya sent both Habib ibn Maslama and Shatwan ibn al-Mu’attal to the region. With the state of affairs being at peace in Ruha (the name frequently used for Urfa during the Islamic period)²², these men later conquered Armenia.



Urfa Citadel

Prior to the Muslims, the area was opened to settlement by the invasions of Arabian nomadic tribes. Subsequently, Urfa and its surroundings were named after the tribes that settled there. The Land of Mudar²³ was invaded under the leadership of Muawiya during the Islamic Period. At 'Uthman's request, Muawiya relocated the Mudar tribe far away from the city. After the Mudar were resettled, the Kays, Numeyr, Ukayl and Süleiman tribes were also relocated.²⁴ In this way, Muawiya dominated over an area which became the keystone of the Umayyad dynasty.²⁵ Urfa and its surroundings were used as a military base to protect against Byzantine attacks.²⁶ Upon the martyrdom of 'Uthman on 17 June 656, the most important stage of the battle between the caliph Ali and Muawiya took place in Siffin, near the Land of Mudar.²⁷

There were no serious disturbances in the Land of Mudar during Muawiya's time; however, his successors, Yazid and Muawiya II, witnessed the struggle of the Arabian tribes.²⁸ Similarly, the internal conflict amongst the members of the Umayyads was of particular concern. As a result of the struggle over the throne, the Kalb tribe escaped to Tedmur. The conflict was resolved with the submission of Ibrahim ibn Walid to Marwan ibn Muhammad, who then marched to Damascus in 744.

Mosaics from the period





In this period, Harran became an important location for the Umayyad Dynasty. The holy wars fought by Maslama ibn Abdulmalik, who blockaded Constantinople, began in Harran.²⁹ He chose Harran rather than Kinnesrin as his capital and built a palace there.³⁰ When Maslama seized power,³¹ he gave the charge of the city to his brother 'Umar ibn Abdulaziz.³² During the Umayyad dynasty, a period lasting more than 90 years, the caliph Abdulaziz's rule is of special importance. During this time, the reforms of Abdulaziz were beneficial for the area, as justice was applied and honest governors took the place of despotic ones. In addition, he appointed new *qâdis* (judges) to several provinces and employed teachers for the schools in Antakya and Alexandria.³³

After the Umayyad dynasty collapsed in 750, the area came under the rule of the Abbasids.³⁴ The Arabs of Syria and Al-Jazeera rebelled in 751, but the uprising was quashed by the Abbasid military.³⁵ The second revolt against Abbasid power was carried out by Abu al-Ward, but it was defeated when Ishaq ibn Muslim al-Uqayli took over as the leader. The city of Harran with its Abbasid governor had been surrounded by Ishaq and his forces for two months when he charged his brother, Abu Jafar, with bringing the revolt to an end. He sent his other brother, Bekkar, to Mardin to the aid of the Land of Rabia, whose leader was Bureyka. Aware of the advent of Abu Jafar, Ishaq lifted the siege of Urfa and withdrew. Abu Jafar, who became stronger with the participation of Musa b. Kaab's troops, went to the Land of Rabia via Raqqa and killed Bureyka, so that the rebellion there was suppressed. Bekkar, who had not seen action in Rabia, returned to Urfa, where Ishaq left him in charge of defending the city and keeping them from changing allegiance. After besieging Samsat for seven months, Ishaq eventually negotiated a surrender.³⁶ Some Islamic states which settled in Abbasid lands—like the Tulunids, Ikhshidids, and Fatimids—also dominated the Syrian and Palestinian region prior to the conquest of the Selçuks. (The Turkish spelling *Selçuk* is pronounced "salchuk").³⁷ Egypt tried to dominate the area by sending governors.³⁸ For instance, Ahmad ibn Tolun and Sajoglu Muhammad ibn al-Afshin governed in the Land of Mudar, but by this time the city was under the control of the Selçuks.³⁹

THE SELÇUK ERA

The first entrance of the Turks to the areas surrounding Urfa occurred in the Selçuk era during the sultanate of Tuğrul Bey. In 1059, Turkish warriors entered Anatolia, and in 1060 they attacked Byzantium under their leader, Altunkök. In this period, his general, Salar-ı Horasan, conquered most of the fortresses near the Tigris, but he could not manage to conquer Urfa.⁴⁰ When Tuğrul Bey died in 1063, Alparslan ascended to the throne.⁴¹ Salar-ı Horasan, who was responsible for the conquest of most of this region, finally entered Urfa in 1065–66. Turks under his rule attacked Siverek and Nasibin.⁴² The Franks had difficulty resisting the Turks, who again attacked and captured two fortresses. In the same year, Salar-ı Horasan tried to attack Culap and captured the fortress of Diphisar. After conquering it, he

set up a base in Ksos. Four thousand Byzantine soldiers advanced against the Turks, but lost the battle and were therefore forced to retreat.⁴³

Sultan Alparslan arrived at the Urfa fortress on 13 November 1070, and set up camp there for a night. The people of Urfa, under the rule of Duke Vasil, the son of the Bulgarian Alusianus,⁴⁴ resisted Alparslan and denied him entry.⁴⁵ They put catapults, ballistae and all manner of weaponry around the fortress in preparation for war.⁴⁶ When the sultan saw this, he became angry and initiated an offensive, but without success.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the Byzantine emperor sent a letter and an envoy to Alparslan. This envoy came to Urfa and negotiated an agreement between the people of Urfa and Alparslan.⁴⁸ The battle had already lasted nearly two months, and the wearied sultan agreed to the arrangement.⁴⁹ After the agreement, however, the people of the fortress deceived Alparslan and backed out of the treaty.⁵⁰

In the meantime, if we look at Şanlıurfa as it is seen today, we will see in the southwest of the city the lakes of Aynzeliha and Halilürrahman. There is an inner fortress on the hill, its east, west and south sides surrounded by ditches and the north side filled with stones. It is possible that the inner side of the castle was built during the Arab invasion of the city in the years 812–14 AD. There are stone tombs underneath the ditch on the south side. This bit of evidence tells us how difficult it was to conquer Urfa at that time.

Exhausted, Alparslan moved to Malazgirt (Manzikert) to engage the Byzantine army led by the Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes. Alparslan's decisive defeat of the Byzantine army played an important role in undermining Byzantine authority in Anatolia and opened the doors of Anatolia for the Turks. The Selçuks nevertheless insisted on conquering Urfa. At this time, Sultan Alparslan was also planning a campaign against Egypt, but this never took place and he straightaway returned to confront Urfa. Upon the way, Alparslan lost some of his horses and mules, so when the duke of the city presented him with fresh horses, mules and food, the sultan was satisfied and continued eastward without harming Urfa.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the Selçuks' interest in Urfa was not limited to Sultan Alparslan. After him, this interest grew and the sons of the Selçuk Chief (*Bey* in Turkish) Kutalmış, Suleyman Shah (the ancestor of Osman Bey, founder of the Ottoman Empire), Mansur, Alp İliğ and Devlet settled in the areas around Urfa and Birecik in either 1072 or the following year.⁵² As a matter of fact, upon settling there, they came in contact with the Turkomans of Yavekiyye⁵³ and Navekiyye,⁵⁴ who were also travelling about in the region of Urfa, and gained their support⁵⁵ in surrounding Urfa in preparation for invading the city.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, Alparslan was assassinated by an Isma'ili⁵⁷ in 1072 and his son Melik Shah ascended the throne. Melik Shah's commander, Gümüştekin, routed the remaining Byzantine armies around Urfa and Nizip,⁵⁸ but in 1086 Melik Shah came to Harran from Tikrit. Barsama, who was then the ruler of Urfa, sent envoys who told him that they would surrender Urfa to him. Melik Shah sent one of his representatives to Urfa, but this man deceived the people and confiscated their properties. Because of this, Barsama withdrew the offer of handing over Urfa to Melik Shah.⁵⁹ Consequently, Melik Shah gave the task of conquering the city to Emir Bozan,⁶⁰ who proceeded to block all food and drink



coming into the city. The people rebelled against Barsama, who died a few days later after unsuccessfully trying to escape from Emir Bozan. The leaders of Urfa then surrendered the city to Emir Bozan on 28 February 1087.⁶¹

Ancient palace in
Harran castle

Emir Bozan was good to the people of Urfa.⁶² However, the city shortly thereafter fell from the hands of the Selçuks. The Crusaders occupied Urfa and set up a colony there on 10 March 1098. The Selçuk Beys along with the Turkomans attacked the Urfa fortress in order to recapture it from the Crusaders, but they finally had to give up due to the strength of the resistance as well as resilience of the fortification.⁶³ Meanwhile, the Crusaders took advantage of this loss and seized Antakya under their occupation.⁶⁴ The Crusaders conquered Antakya with the help of a traitorous Armenian who pretended to work with the Turks.⁶⁵ This help that led to the fall of Antakya and rescued the Crusaders also increased the reputation of Baudouin de Boulogne, the king of Jerusalem.⁶⁶ Subsequently, the Turkish sultans struggled to take Urfa back from the Crusaders. Finally, the Atabeg of Musul, Nur al-Din (*Nurettin* in Turkish) Zengi, conquered Urfa in 1144.⁶⁷ After the conquest of Urfa, the local Christians were not harmed, but all the Franks were slaughtered.⁶⁸ The defeat of the Crusaders caused anguish in Europe and the conquest of Urfa by Muslims was seen as a threat for Syria and Iraq.⁶⁹ On hearing of the crushing of the Franks in Urfa, the Europeans were provoked into organizing a new Crusade, which was directed by Saint Louis VII and Conrad III.⁷⁰

After the death of Atabeg Nurettin Mahmud, ruler of Zengi, in 1174,⁷¹ his chief commander, Salahuddin (known in Latin as Saladin), founded the Ayyubids in Egypt.⁷² He made efforts to syndicate the Islamic states and annex the Euphrates and Tigris valleys.⁷³ After some time, Salahuddin achieved dominion over Syria and Al-Jazeera.⁷⁴ He then went on a military circuit tour of the east,⁷⁵ to Anatolia. Salahuddin set up a base on the Euphrates near eastern Birecik. The ruler of Mardin, Ilgâzi, had already captured some places in Birecik, but upon hearing of the Ayyubid's arrival, he cleared out of the region. After the sultan's conquest of these places, he gave them to Sihâb al-Din Ilyas.⁷⁶ The Ayyubids consolidated all the areas of Urfa under their rule. When they captured Diyarbakir prior to the battle of Yassiçemen, their interests came in conflict with those of the Selçuks.⁷⁷ With the aim of founding the first true Turkish state in Anatolia, in 1235, Alaeddin Keykubad, the sultan of the Anatolian Selçuks, sent an army of fifty-thousand soldiers under the command of Kemaleddin Kemyar to invade Urfa and Harran.⁷⁸ The Selçuk army set up catapults around Harran and then began to destroy the walls of the fortress with stones. Although the people of Harran were frightened by the attacks of the Selçuk forces, they resisted this siege because the town was entrusted to them. However, when they were no longer able to maintain their resistance, they sent a few trustworthy envoys to Amir Kemaleddin Kamyar. They agreed to surrender Harran and evacuated the town. After the Selçuks seized Harran, they marched on to Urfa and called for its surrender. The people of Urfa resisted, however, insulting the sultan of the Selçuks. Angered by their words, the sultan invaded Urfa. They dug holes in the ramparts of the city, and by setting up ladders, scaled the towers and captured Urfa.⁷⁹ The Selçuk army then looted the city. The Ayyubid commanders along with some two thousand of the soldiers in Urfa were then sent away to the inner parts of Anatolia and the Selçuk sultan later began new negotiations in Urfa.⁸⁰

THE MONGOL INTERIM

Kharzem Shah's forces came to Diyarbakır and Al-Jazeera in 1239 and brought a major threat with them in the form of the Mongols. Having captured Urfa and Harran earlier in the time of Artuqid Najm al-Din (1242), they were under threat because of their refusal to submit to Mongol rule.⁸¹ In 1251, the Mongols had invaded Diyarbakır and the regions surrounding Meyyafakirin, where they continued to loot, take captives, and massacre the people until they reached Suruç, Harran, and Urfa.⁸² The Mongol leader, Hulagu, then set out in September 1259 with his army to invade the northwestern part of Syria.⁸³ He came to Ba Nahrin with four-hundred thousand soldiers and established a military camp near Harran. Meanwhile al-Malik, the ruler of Aleppo, Nasrullah ibn Sayyar, the governor of Yusufin, and Nasiruddin Muhammad ibn Husamuddin, the commander of the citadel, were all in Harran. When it was clear that the city would fall, they asked for mercy from Hulagu, who took the treasures of the city but did not harm the people. Hulagu appointed Ali Savrani as the ruler of Harran, but the citadel's commander continued

to resist. When the bastions had fallen, al-Shaykh Hayat al-Harrani asked for mercy from Hulagu, who forgave them.⁸⁴ In 1271, when the Mongols realized that they could not take the treasures of Harran, they demolished the mosques, bazaars, city walls, and the citadel, bringing its people and assets to Mosul and Mardin. The traveler Ibn Jubayr described Harran's state before it was destroyed by the Mongols in this way: "Harran was full of trees. There was a great variety of vegetables and fruits, and an abundance of water. The water of the city was brought from outside the walls and every house had its own well. The people were very hospitable. Their roads were great and broad and they had covered bazaars. People from other cities came and traded there. A drought then broke out which lasted seven to eight years and Harran fell into ruin." After the Mongols' destruction of the city, Harran lost its significance and Urfa took its place as a major city of the region.⁸⁵

After Hulagu conquered Harran, the residents of Urfa were not harmed. The people of Suruç did not send a delegation, but rather asked for assurance that their lives would be spared. They were massacred nevertheless.⁸⁶ Hulagu spent the winter of 1259 in Urfa making plans for further invasions in the spring. He ordered his soldiers to build bridges in three different spots: Halfeti and Samsat on the western side of the Euphrates, and Karkisya. The Mongols took action in the spring and captured the cities of Manbij, Raqqa and Jaber, all alongside the Euphrates. Of these, Manbij was subjected to mass killing and plundering. The Mongol leaders then positioned warriors against the citadels of Birecik, Necm, Jaber, Kalanikos and Balas,⁸⁷ and in the end, all the inhabitants there were slaughtered.⁸⁸

After the destruction the Mongols had wrought in Anatolia, a new power began to rise in 1395 in the form of Timur, who viewed himself as the heir of Genghis Khan. Timur, known as Tamerlane (Timur the Lame), was a Turco-Mongol conqueror and the founder of the Timurid Empire in Persia and Central Asia which extended well into Anatolia (Asia Minor). He wanted to take back the lands the Mongols had previously captured.⁸⁹ After gaining control over Ra's al-Ayn, he approached Urfa.⁹⁰ The governor of the citadel of Urfa, Guzal, fled with fear upon hearing Timur's arrival was imminent. In this case, the people of Urfa also fled, taking refuge on a nearby mountain. Due to this conduct,



Girls in traditional dress at an ancient site in Harran



A holiday celebration, early
20th century

Timur ordered a group of soldiers to confiscate their assets.⁹¹ The Turkmen Junayd declared his loyalty to Timur and asked for mercy for his friends, province and people. The Sultan of Hisn-i Keyfa also declared his loyalty. After over nineteen days in Urfa, Timur and his army destroyed the Urfa citadel and advanced to Mardin on 29 January 1394.⁹²

Following Timur, the Akkoyunlu dominated the region. In fact, the domination by the Akkoyunlu was realized only after Timur's Syrian battle. Timur's absence in Urfa in the year 1400 allowed Dimask Hoca, the ruler of Doğers, to rule between 1403 and 1404. When Dimask Hoca was killed by Nuayr ibn Hayyar in 1404, the Memluks once again prevailed in this area.⁹³ Meanwhile, Karayuluk Osman had the leadership of the Akkoyunlu. He reigned over the area between Amid and Bayburt, later incorporating the cities of Urfa, Erzincan, Çemişgezek, Harput, and Erzurum into his territory.⁹⁴ He gave Sarki Karahisar and Kemah to his son, Yakup Bey, Tercan to his brother's son, Mose Bey, Urfa to his nephew, Ali Bey, and Bayburt to his other brother's son, Kutlu Bey, as fiefdoms.⁹⁵ The Memluks and Akkoyunlu battled repeatedly in Urfa until it was dominated by the Safavids in 1514.⁹⁶

THE OTTOMAN PERIOD AND MODERN TIMES

When the Safavids appeared on the stage of world history, the Ottomans took action to prevent the cities of southeastern Anatolia from being held by Shah Ismail. To this end, Sultan Selim I sent the Akkoyunlu sultan, Murad ibn Yakup, to occupy



Diyarbakır before the Ottomans and Safavids did battle in Çaldıran. Murad, with an army comprising about eight thousand Ottoman soldiers, encountered the smaller forces of the Safavids under the leadership of Sultan Eco Kacar, who would later be called the “Kuturmuş” Sultan. Murad was killed in 1514 and his head was presented to Shah Ismail by Sultan Eco. Meanwhile, Sultan Selim sent Bıyıklı Mehmed Pasha to the area to seek advice from Idris-i Bitlisi.⁹⁷ The sensitivity of Selim and the efforts made by Idris-i Bitlisi paved the way for the capture of the Mardin citadel. The castle of Hisn-i Keyfa and the fortress of Savur were also surrendered peacefully thanks to Bitlisi and efforts made by Mehmed Bey, the ruler of Sason, Davut Bey, the ruler of Hizan, and Malik Halil Ayyubi. When Urfa and Cermik's fortresses were captured, Urfa was given to Piri Bey.⁹⁸ Under the rule of the Ottomans, a census was carried out in 1518. According to the results, there were 782 Muslim households with 75 adult male taxpayers, and 300 non-Muslim households with 42 adult male taxpayers.⁹⁹

In 1525, in the early years of Ottoman governance in Urfa, there were 163 villages, 294 arable fields, and eight migrant-settler communities. Its population was 8000 (6300 Muslims and 1700 non-Muslims) in 1525. The famous 17th century Ottoman traveler, Evliya Celebi, stated that Urfa had nearly 2600 households in 1646. The number of total households was 2380 in 1871 (1377 Muslims and 1003 non-Muslims).¹⁰⁰ Urfa maintained its position as a *sanjak* (district) affiliated with the state of Diyarbakır until 1587. It was connected to Raqqa when it became an autonomous state. Since Raqqa was not given much importance, the ruler of the state resided in Urfa, a situation which continued until 1822. In the 16th century,

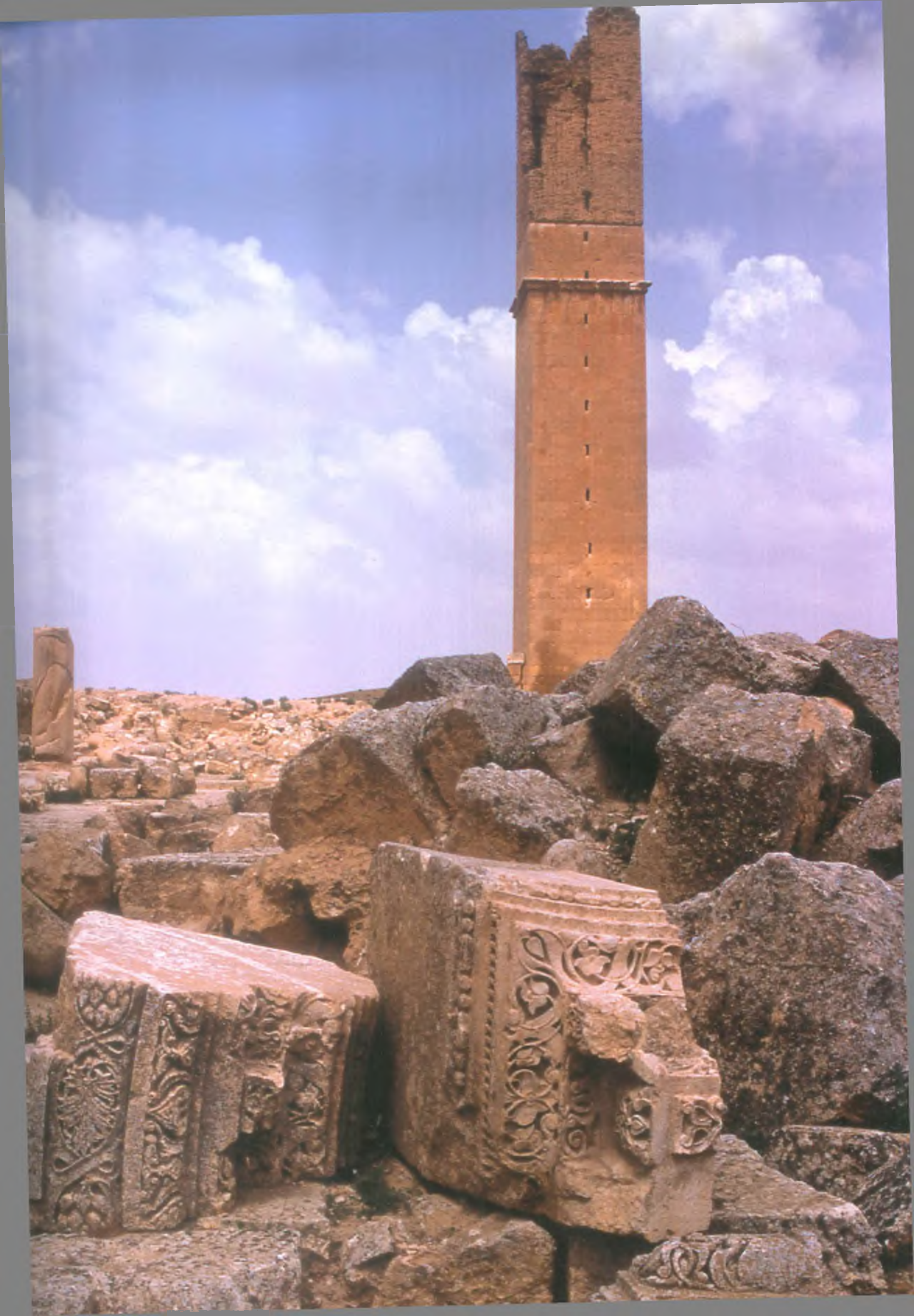
Abdulhalim Karayazic, the Jalali leader, captured the city and destroyed it.¹⁰¹ The Jalali revolts together with the wars against Iran in the 17th century resulted in the growth of the city being centered around the citadel. Upon visiting the city in 1646, Evliya Celebi narrated that there were 200 soldiers in the citadel, whereas the records in 1525 showed that only 57 soldiers were present.¹⁰²

During his Baghdad campaign, Sultan Murad IV stopped in Urfa. When rebellion broke out there, Murad ordered Hafiz Mehmet Pasha, then governor of Egypt, to quell the uprising. The Ottoman army was defeated, however, in the battle of Birecik. In 1842, Urfa was joined to the state of Aleppo by special decree, becoming a *sanjak* (administrative district) once again. But later, in 1910, it became a separate *sanjak*.¹⁰³

Though being among the most loyal subjects in the Ottoman government until 1876, the Armenians were provoked by Western nations, who had the intention of fragmenting the political, social, and economic infrastructure of the empire. As part of this conspiracy, a number of incitements were organized in Urfa. Events beginning in April 1915 spread to the village of Germus in August of that year. At that time, in an attempt to attack the city, the Armenians fired the first shot in Urfa, on 7 August 1915. The uprising in the city continued at intervals until 16 September. The army, under the leadership of Fahri Pasha and a German military officer named Graf Wolfskehl von Reichenberg, came to Urfa with cannons. After having lasted seven months, the Armenian revolt was finally suppressed on 16 October.

Urfa could not rid itself of its troubles completely during that period. People oppressed by the Armenians and Russians in Van, Muş, Erzurum, Bingöl and Bitlis took refuge in Urfa. At first it was thought that civilians coming to Urfa were going to be delivered to cities such as Konya, Teke, Sivas, Leal and Kastamonu. Because they could not be sent immediately, they struggled to survive in poverty and lived miserably in temporary settlements. By December 1916, 40,000 people had been taken in temporarily as refugees.¹⁰⁴ By the end of 1917, 200,000 people in total had amassed in Muradulaziz, Diyarbakır, and Urfa. Over 50,000 people were sent to Konya by train. Even by the 1920s, there were still 48,778 homeless Muslim refugees in Urfa.¹⁰⁵

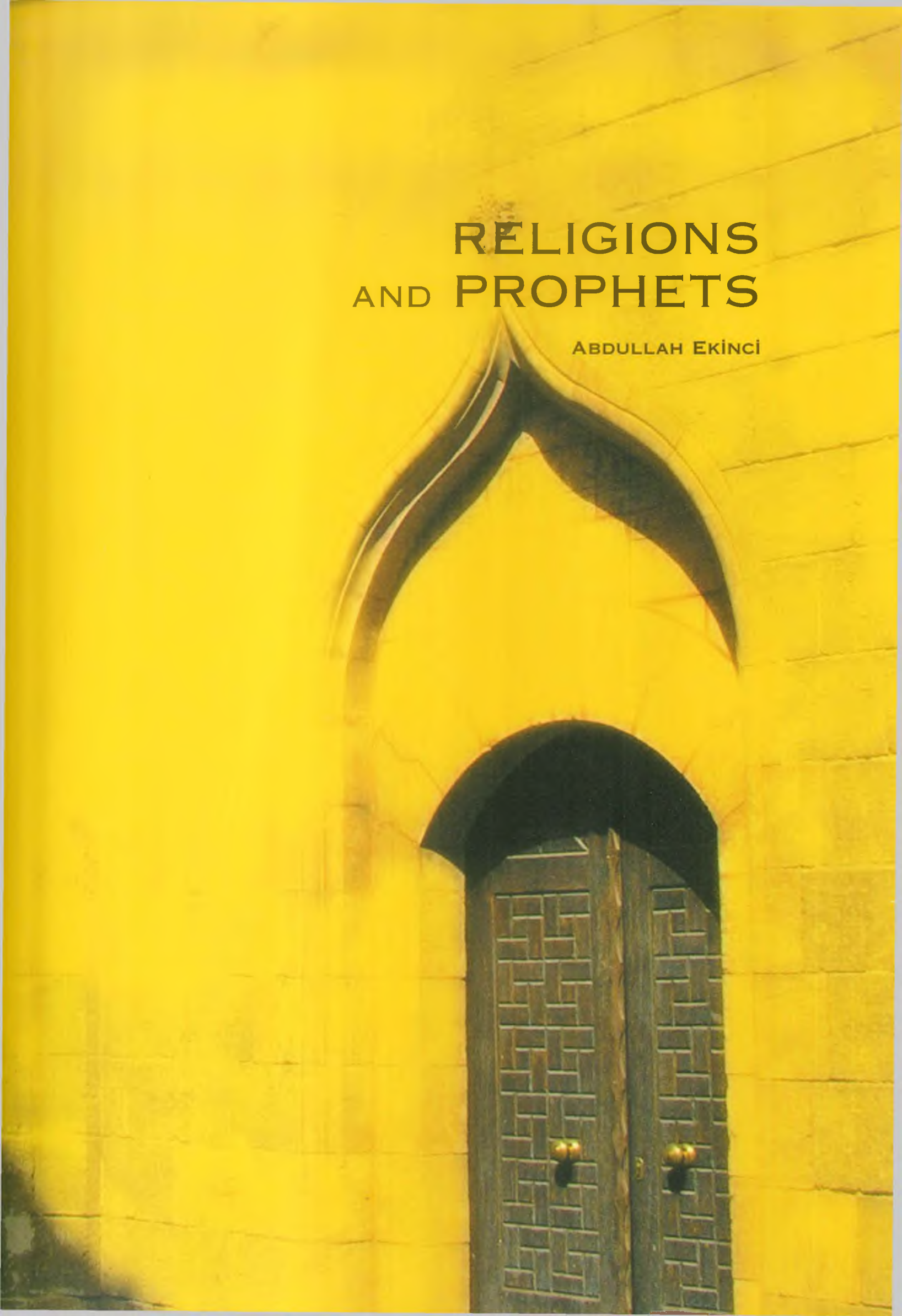
Urfa was affected by the political and socioeconomic incidents which took place in the 19th and 20th centuries. Following the Mondros armistice, invasions began to occur and Urfa was occupied by the British and later by the French. An organized resistance took action on 9 February 1920, forcing the French to leave. In the first years of the Republican regime, Urfa became a province according to the administrative divisions set forth in the constitution of 1924.





RELIGIONS AND PROPHETS

ABDULLAH EKINCI







The two remaining pillars of the catapult from which Abraham is said to have been thrown into the fire (see Urfa Legends)

SABEANS

Harran is a place that has hosted a variety of beliefs and maintained its importance as a center for science and culture. One of the most ancient beliefs found in Harran was that of the Sabean religion. There is no consensus among historians about the origin of the Sabeans. Some claim that the religion first appeared in the city of Ur in Sumeria, and some sources seek to demonstrate that it emerged in Harran.¹ Aside from the various opinions on the origin of the Sabeans, there are also different approaches to the word *Sabean*. In Arabic it comes from the root *Sabee*, meaning “conversion to another religion”, or “a return from the ‘truth’ to the superstitious”, while the same word in Hebrew comes from the root of “š-b,” meaning “to immerse, or submerge”. From this, it has been interpreted as “those who are baptized,”² or “performing the ritual of baptism by immersion.”³ The Sabean faith had a rather complex structure, and its traditions have many cultural elements. Some claim that it was based on the belief of Noah, while others argue that it initially relied on Noah, but then began to include worship of the sun, the moon, and the planets as intermediaries. As a result, there are those who say that by worshiping idols and practicing polytheism, the Sabeans were trapped in idolatry.



Soğmatar Sin (Moon) and Shamash (Sun) symbols

The statue of a deity discovered in excavations at Balıklıgöl

The Jewish philosopher, Maimonides, known in Islamic philosophy as Ibn Meymun, argued that it was the first belief to have deviated from monotheism. He also said that there was a link between Sabea and other superstitious beliefs and that the prophet Abraham struggled against them.⁴

Some scholars claim that this belief first appeared in the environs of Urfa and Harran.⁵ Some even link the Sabeans to the prophet Seth, arguing that the word Sabea comes from the name of his son, whose name was Sabi. Sources from the Abbasid period indicate that the Sabeans were accepted as *dhimmis* (a special status granted non-Muslims living within an Islamic state).⁶ Western researchers link this belief to the Mandaean living in Iraq and consider them to be the remnants of the Arameans and the Nabataeans.⁷ Since the Mandaeans were called by the names “Nauray”, “Muğtasıla”, and “Subba (Baptists),” they were confused with the “Nasara,” the name for Christians in the Arabic language, and so they were considered a sect of Christianity.⁸ In contrast to the researchers who linked them to the Mandaeans, a group of modern scholars say that they

took this name later, and these researchers are particularly opposed to the rumors included in *el-Fihrist*. Recent excavations carried out in the region have found inscriptions containing evidence of the presence of Sabeans over four periods.⁹

This evidence shows that this belief had a significant place both in Harran and in the surrounding areas. We can categorize the Sabeans as:

1. Mandeans or Subbas of Mesopotamia: Combining Zoroastrianism and Christianity.
2. Sabeans of Harran: Influenced by the old Babylonian religions and close to idolatry in their worship of the moon and stars.¹⁰

Furthermore, the “Harranian Father,” or “the Godfather of Harran,” is mentioned as the father of the prophets of the Harranians. It is estimated that he lived prior to the Hegira in the year 367 AD.¹¹ Bar Salibi, on the other hand, has suggested that the Sabeans might even have predated Christianity.



Orpheus mosaic found in Urfa estimated to be made at a date around 190 AD which still shows the remnants of the pagan Greek religion. Orpheus was a legendary musician, poet, and prophet in ancient Greek religion and myth. The major stories about him are centered on his ability to charm all living things and even stones with his music. He is supposed to be the composer of the Orphic Hymns, a collection of which only two have survived.



The statue of the Victory Goddess



Pognon Cave is in the antique city of Soğmatar. It was discovered by the French diplomat H. Pognon who visited the area in early 1900's. It is believed that this area was used as a fortress in the second century AD. The symbol of the Moon God Sin as a crescent is on the head of two reliefs. There are more caves like this one and they contain seven tombs of the dignitaries who served here as governors. Many objects discovered here in excavations are now on display at Şanlıurfa Museum, including human statues and stones with inscriptions.

PROPHET ABRAHAM (PEACE BE UPON HIM) IN THE QUR'AN

Summarized by Alparslan Açıkgenç

The most comprehensive chapter on Prophet Abraham, whose Qur'anic name is Ibrâhîm, is called *sûrat al-Anbiyâ* (Ch. 21-The Prophets), verses 51-70.

We gave Abraham his integrity formerly, and We knew him well. When he said to his father and his people, "What are these statues to which you are devoted?" They said, "We found our parents worshiping them." He said, "You and your parents are in evident error." They said, "Are you telling us the truth, or are you just playing?" He said, "Your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the One Who created them, and I bear witness to that. By God, I will have a plan for your statues after you have gone away." So he smashed them to pieces, except for their biggest, that they might return to it. They said, "Who did this to our gods? He is certainly one of the wrongdoers." They said, "We heard a youth mentioning them. He is called Abraham." They said, "Bring him before the eyes of the people, so that they may witness." They said, "Are you the one who did this to our gods, O Abraham?" He said, "But it was this biggest of them that did it. Ask them, if they can speak." Then they turned to one another, and he said, "You yourselves are the wrongdoers." But they reverted to their old ideas. "You certainly know that these do not speak." He said, "Do you worship, instead of God, what can neither benefit you in anything, nor harm you? Fie upon you, and upon what you worship instead of God. Do you not understand?" They said, "Burn him and support your gods, if you are going to act." We said, "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham." They planned to harm him, but We made them the worst losers.



The Ka'ba as built first by Abraham is pictured on an Ottoman Hajj certificate

We do not know exactly where this incident took place. But considering the fact that according to the Bible, Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldees, a semi-nomadic tribe that lived in the southern part of Babylonia, this must have taken place in the vicinity of Ur, if not in Ur itself. During archeological excavations in Ur, in southern Iraq, two tablets were discovered which contain clear evidence concerning Abraham. On one tablet is written "Abram the son of Terah", but nothing else. On the other tablet are written measures taken by Achor, the son of Elnathan, to capture the Prophet of Ur. These tablets are proof that Abraham was actually a real person who lived in Mesopotamia and specifically in Ur at one point in his lifetime.

However, the Book of Genesis gives the name of the city of Ur in Hebrew as "Ur-Kasdim" which is, according to some historians, Şanlıurfa (Genesis 11:28, 11:31, and 15:7; also in Nehemiah 9:7). For this reason, people in Urfa today claim that Urfa was the city of Abraham. However, others claim that it may be Urkesh, Urartu or Kutha. This Ur-Kasdim is rendered into English as "Ur of the Chaldees", which is a wrong rendition because the Chaldeans took over this city long after the time of Abraham, during which the Elamites were in power in Ur. Moreover, although the Qur'an relates the two distinct events in the above verse as if they took place one after the other, it may not be the case historically. It is clear that Abraham opposed his people for idol worshipping and he thus revolted against their ancestral religion in his youth. In verses 74-90 of *sûrat al-An'âm* of the Qur'an (Ch. 6 - The Cattle/Livestock) this is related as follows:

Remember when Abraham said to his father Azar: "Do you take idols for gods? For I see you and your people in manifest error." So also did We show Abraham the power and the laws of the heavens and the earth, that he might (with understanding) have certitude. When the night covered him over, He saw a star: he said: "This is my Lord." But when it set, he said: "I do not love those that dissipate." When he saw the moon rising in splendour, he said: "This is my Lord." But when the moon set, he said: "unless my Lord guide me, I shall surely be among those who go astray." When he saw the sun rising in splendour, he said: "This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all)." But when the sun set, he said: "O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah. For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah." His people disputed with him. He said: "Do you dispute with me, about Allah, when He has guided me? I do not fear what you associate with Allah. Unless my Lord wills, (nothing can happen). My Lord comprehends in His knowledge all things. Will you not be admonished? How should I fear (the beings) you associate with Allah, when you fear not to give partners to Allah without any warrant having been given to you? Which of (us) two parties has more right to security? (Tell me) if you know. It is those who believe and confuse not their beliefs with wrong - that are (truly) in security, for they are on (true) guidance." That was the reasoning about Us, which We gave to Abraham (to use) against his people: We raise whom We will, degree after degree: for thy Lord is full of wisdom and knowledge. We gave him Isaac and Jacob, all (three) guided, and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron; thus do We reward those who do good. And Zakariya and John, and Jesus and Elias, all in the ranks of the righteous. And Isma'il and Elisha, and Jonas, and Lot; and to all We gave favour above the

nations. (To them) and to their fathers, and progeny and brethren. We chose them, and We guided them to a straight path. This is the guidance of Allah. He gives that guidance to whom He pleases, of His worshippers. If they were to join other gods with Him, all that they did would be vain for them. These were the men to whom We gave the Book, and authority, and prophethood; if these (their descendants) reject them, behold! We shall entrust their charge to a new people who reject them not. Those were the (prophets) who received Allah's guidance. Copy the guidance they received. Say: "No reward for this do I ask of you. This is no less than a message for all the world."

This quote is given in full so that the mention of other prophets in the Qur'an can be seen. In traditional accounts, almost all of these prophets were in one way or another mentioned in stories as having lived in or travelled through the Urfa region. Abraham also warned his people, and he became a rebel in their eyes. It is possible that because the king at the time, named as Nimrûd in the traditional exegesis of the Qur'an, wanted him killed, he thus wandered around Babylonia for some time and eventually came to Urfa. It is possible that he was thrown into the fire by Nimrod here in Urfa. But as the Qur'an says in the above verse, God commanded the fire to be cool and safe for Abraham, in which case he was not burned. After this miracle, Abraham turned to Palestine and traveled to Canaan where he settled for some time. His nephew, Prophet Lot (Lût in the Qur'an), was sent on a mission to preach in the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah.

Today in Urfa there are two pillars at the gate of the citadel which are supposed to be the poles of a huge catapult. The traditional legend told in Urfa claims that Abraham was thrown into the fire from this catapult and that he landed somewhere in the Balıklı Göl (Lake of Fish). The fire had not burned him, and later the furnace became a small pond and the embers turned into fish. This is only a tale told by people. Even though it is not found in the sacred texts, it tells us something about the creative imagination of the people of Urfa in describing previous events that signify the historical greatness of their city.

Say you: "Nay, but we follow the faith of Abraham the Truthful because he was not a polytheist. We believe in God, and in that which has been sent down on us and sent down on Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which was given to Moses and Jesus and the prophets of their Lord; we make no division between any of them, and to Him we surrender." (2/al-Baqarah, 135-6).

Then We revealed to you: "Follow you the faith of Abraham (*millat Ibrahim*), a man of pure faith and no idolater." (16/al-Nahl, 123).

And struggle for God as is His due, for He has chosen you, and has laid on you no difficulty in your religion, being the faith of your father Abraham. (22/al-Hajj, 78)

The Qur'an also declares that Abraham along with Ishmael constructed the Ka'ba at Mecca which is also called the House of God:

Behold! We gave the site of the House to Abraham saying: "Associate not anything with Me; and sanctify My House (the Ka'ba) for those who compass it round or stand up, or bow, or prostrate themselves there in prayer. (22/al-Hajj, 26)



The ruins of the ancient
Harran School (university)



And when Abraham, and Ishmael with him, raised up the foundations of the House (praying thus): "Our Lord, accept (this service) from us; You art the All-hearing, the All-knowing; and, our Lord, make us submissive (Muslims) to You, and of our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to You; and show us our holy rites, and turn towards us; surely You are Oft-Returning, Most Compassionate." (2/al-Baqarah, 127-8).

Abraham's prayer, which is mentioned in the Qur'an, beautifully summarizes his lifetime sojourn leaving us a good example to follow in the chapter that also carries his name:

And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham said: "My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols. My Lord, indeed they have led astray many among the people. So whoever follows me, then he is of me; and whoever disobeys me, indeed, You are [yet] Forgiving and Merciful. Our Lord, indeed You know what we conceal and what we declare, and nothing is hidden from Allah on the earth or in the heaven. Praise be to Allah, Who has granted to me in old age Ishmael and Isaac. Indeed, my Lord is the Hearer of supplication. My Lord, make me an establisher of prayer, and [many] from my descendants. Our Lord, and accept my supplication. Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the reckoning will be established." (14/Ibrahim, 35-41)

JUDAISM

The establishment of Jewish communities in the region is related to immigration and trade. A Jewish minority resided both in Urfa and in its surroundings. During the reign of the Medes and Persians, Harran was under the rule of the Iranians, and some Jews settled in the region. In the year 722 BC, Sargon II exiled the Jews to Harran, the coast of Habur, and Medina by invading the territories of the Israelites.¹² One Jewish community in a residential area outside of Harran was considered to be foreign and disreputable.¹³ The biggest Jewish community in the region was located in an area to the east of Nisib.

Josephus stated that the Adiabene Kingdom, which was linked to Edessa, was ruled by a dynasty that converted to Judaism in the 1st century AD.¹⁴ The kingdoms of Edessa, Nusaybin and Adiabene were important trade hubs located on the Silk Road. The region of Adiabene was linked to the empire of Parthia in the first century of AD which was ruled by the Jewish Kingdom. This area witnessed fighting for the throne of Parthia and conflicts between Rome and Parthia. The ruler of the area was King Izates. There were several synagogues in Edessa, and the Jewish communities located in Adiabene and Edessa played an important role in the growth of Christianity in northern Mesopotamia.¹⁵ Segal used the presence of a Jewish cemetery southwest of the Urfa citadel, inscriptions in the cave of Kırk, and two synagogues as evidence of the remnants of the Jewish community in the city.¹⁶ When the Roman emperor Trajan was struggling against Persian forces,



Nusaybin and Adiabene were under Persian rule. As a result, the Jews of Adiabene and Nusaybin took refuge in Edessa.¹⁷

King Abgar V claimed that there was a Jewish community in Urfa and its surroundings. The Jewish community in Urfa was not an essential element of the city, having migrated to the region primarily for trade. Indeed, in 1446, when Ruha/Urfa was under the domination of the Turkish Atabeg Zengi, he expelled a number of Armenians from the city, gave rights to the Jacobites and Assyrians, and settled 300 Jewish families there.¹⁸

Amidst the ruins of the Harran School women collect local plants for traditional use



Map of Mesopotamia, showing the environs of Urfa and the Empire of Parthia as well as the territories of the Roman Empire

From the earliest centuries, trade and proximity to both Syria and Palestine might be counted as the reasons that Jews settled in Urfa and its surroundings. Segal stated that there were some temples belonging to the Jews in the region. There was once a synagogue at the site of the present-day Hasan Paşa mosque in the center of Urfa.¹⁹ Indeed, Jews who immigrated to the Ottoman Empire between 1862 and 1914 were permitted to settle there as well as in Syria and Palestine.²⁰ Therefore, while the Jewish population in Urfa had numbered 300 before this migration, afterwards it reached 614.²¹

As mentioned above, as a result of the trade route, a small Jewish colony had been established in the city since the first centuries. The first Christians in the city also grew out of this Jewish community. Hayes considered Christianity, in a sense, as a kind of reformed Judaism. Owing to the commercial instinct of the Jews and their exile in the 7th century BC, Jewish colonies were established throughout the cities of the civilized world. Urfa had a strong Jewish colony that traded with the East, particularly China and India, selling mainly silk.²² Present-day Suruç, which borders the Urfa Province, had an annual Great Trade Fair which featured goods brought from India, China and elsewhere.²³ This shows that trade there at that time was international and that Jews played an active role. This commercial culture, acknowledged since the 1st century, continued up to the last days of the Ottoman Empire with the market of the Barutcu Han (Jewish trading center) in Urfa.

Carved rock tombs from the
Abgar Period



CHRISTIANITY

In the early periods, Urfa and its surroundings were impacted by Christian culture. The Edessa (Urfa) fortress was one of the major citadels of Eastern Christianity. Paul and other Christian missionaries were active in Edessa, Iran, the Arab region, Asia's central regions, China and India. There was even a Christian missionary itinerary that started from Edessa and ended in Afghanistan.²⁴ From this point of view, Edessa played a prominent role in terms of the expansion of Christianity in the region; however, the exact date of the advent of Christianity in the city is disputed.²⁵ Before Christianity, the city had a completely pagan outlook, although the existence of a small Jewish community was recorded in historical documents.²⁶ Information about Christianity in Edessa has been gathered from legends rather than from historical data. Analyzing this folklore and uncovering the differences between the narrations will help to establish more definitely the arrival of Christianity in the city (see part VII: The Legends of Urfa).

Since the 4th century, the city of Edessa was seen as an important base for the spread of Christianity in the area, particularly to Syria, the rest of the Middle East and India.²⁷ Studies concerned with Eastern Christianity have an important place in highlighting sectarian differences in the Christian history of Edessa.²⁸ Information resulting from these efforts to describe the establishment of Christianity in Edessa is inconsistent with the historical data. In this period, it might be concluded that there was a Christian community. Indeed, the first copy of the gospel of Thomas, as compiled by Jacob, came to Urfa and was further developed in the 60s and 70s AD.²⁹ Nevertheless, it is impossible to talk about an institutionalized Christian community in the region during this period. Indeed, there was no church in Edessa prior to the Nicaean Council in 325 AD.

According to one of the local traditions, Abgar sent an envoy to request help from Jesus. Addai (St. Thaddeus), one of the Twelve Apostles, was sent to heal and convert the king. He settled in the house of the Palestinian Jew Tabias, and continued his mission there. It is believed that in this way, the first Christian community in Urfa emerged.³⁰ Addai was presented to the king, cured him and then compelled him to become a Christian. Once the king had accepted Christianity, the religion spread rapidly among his people. The idols in the temples were smashed and they were converted into churches. With the support of Abgar, Addai completed his evangelizing and went on to Mesopotamia with two of his students, Agay and Mara.³¹ In this period, among the students of Agay were Palout, Ab Slomo, and Bar Samyo.³² Edessa displayed a full commitment to Christianity and the new religion spread from there to the cities of Greece and Syria. Christianity failed, however, to evoke a profound effect on the spirit of the Persians and the religion did not take hold there. According to some accounts, it did not take hold in Edessa either, and the people reverted to paganism after the death of Abgar V.

From the beginning of the 4th century, tales of the Christianity in Edessa were abundant. This legendary tradition was expressed in relation to Harran, a neighboring city of Edessa and the center of a pagan cult. Duval stated that Christianity entered







Jesus's picture on a mosaic, Şanlıurfa Archeological Museum

Edessa during the time of Abgar IX (the Great), rather than Abgar V, supporting the account that Edessa had returned to paganism. Reportedly, the king adopted Christianity during his visit to Rome in the year 203 AD.³³ When he returned to Edessa, he banned the eunuch tradition carried out in honor of the goddess Atargatis (Tar'atha) and ordered that a hand of the eunuchs be cut off as evidence that Edessa had accepted Christianity in the era of Abgar the Great.³⁴

The best evidence concerning the establishment of Christian culture in the region is the banning of ancient cultures and traditions. Ephram refers to the many dedications to the gods of the pagans, astrology, magic, and advice about monotheism as proof that the pagan culture had continued in many Christian cities after the Byzantine period.³⁵ In 382 AD the emperor Theodosius prohibited sacrificing to the gods, and so the people of Edessa were no longer allowed to worship their pantheon. In a tougher statement, in 391 AD, he banned prophesizing and offering libations in honor of the dead, and then he closed pagan temples and punished those who did not obey his orders.³⁶

Through the efforts of Christian missionaries, Christianity began to dominate many places around Urfa, such as Suruç (Batnae) and Samsat (Samosota). They did not have much representation in Harran because, like the Persians, the Harranians had a strongly established religious tradition. Harran was the center of pagan culture and was not under the influence of Christianity, so it lost this initiative to its neighboring city, Urfa. Assyrian sources show that, in addition to Urfa, Addai went to places such as Samsat, Suruç, Amid (Diyarbakır),³⁷ Bet Zabday (İdil), Hadyab (Erbil), Begermay, Kashmir and Ahvaz and its surrounding areas to spread Christianity. Moreover, he appointed a bishop to the city of Erbil before eventually returning to Urfa. Shortly after his return, he died in Urfa and was buried in the church that he had built there.³⁸

Agay, a student of Addai, then took his place. In the time of Agay, missionary activities continued in Urfa and Mesopotamia.³⁹ Through Agay's efforts, Christianity spread to Lice and Silvan. These missionary activities included the endeavors of Mari Sagirt, another disciple of Addai, who worked with Filippus to spread Christianity by going around Mesopotamia in the year 82 AD. The seeds of the new religion were planted in Nusaybin, Bazebe, Baarbayı, Kordu-Island (Cizre), Salık and Ktesifon (Medain). Şerpil, the head of the pagan archbishops, and his sister Babay entered the religion of Jesus in 105 AD by informing the bishop of the Urfa church, Barsamyo (Barşamyo), the monk Tirtad, and the deacon Şilolo. However, they were killed in September of the year 115.⁴⁰ When Bar-Serafiyon became the Antioch bishop in 191, the jurisdiction of the Syriac church extended beyond Syria, east to Mesopotamia and to Anatolia in the west. After the murder of Agay by the new King of Antioch, Bar-Serafiyon appointed Fakut as bishop. Thus, Urfa was under the jurisdiction of the Antioch bishops from the late 2nd through the 6th centuries.⁴¹

Christianity began to enter Mesopotamian and Iranian lands (Babylonia) by 150 AD. The use of various dialects of the Aramaic language in these regions led to the rapid spread of Christianity. In 150 AD, Christianity started to spread in Urfa by way of missionaries. For this purpose, a church was built in Mardin.

To this day, its gate, courtyard and marble column headings are standing and the building is used as a mosque.⁴² By the first quarter of the 3rd century, the number of archbishops had increased to twenty. The most famous of them were those of Bet Zabday, Hilvan, Sincap and Beyt Katar.⁴³ Through caravans coming and going to Urfa and Nusaybin, Christianity began to appear in Armenia. However, it is impossible to document Christian missionary activities in these regions for the first three centuries. Christianity entered such regions at the beginning of the 4th century through St. Gregory, the son of an aristocratic family, who received education at the church in Cappadocia. Another area that Christianity reached was the East. According to Syriac sources, Christianity was brought there by the apostle Thomas, who went there in 52 AD in order to spread the Bible and build churches. Then, in the 4th century, a group that included 72 soldiers with a bishop and missionaries was sent to Urfa. According to such information, it is clear that Urfa provided a significant arena for missionaries in spreading Christianity.

THE CITY OF PROPHETS: URFA

In Urfa, there is a lively oral tradition concerning the prophets associated with the city: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Elijah, Jethro, Moses and Jesus.⁴⁴ In Urfa folklore, Jirjis (George) is also named as a prophet.

Adam (ʿĀdam)

According to Abrahamic tradition, the father of mankind was the prophet Adam, and he was one of the first prophets associated with Urfa.⁴⁵ In the oral history of Urfa, it is stated that the prophet Adam established a farm in the plain of Harran, a legend supported by sacred books, archeological findings and written documents.⁴⁶ The oldest sites belonging to human history are found in the vicinity of Urfa. Nevalı Çori, Göbeklitepe, Sefer Tepe and Karahan have been dated between 9500–8200 BC.

Noah (Nūh)

In the Qurʾan, it is said that the ark of Prophet Noah settled on Mount Judi after the flood (11/Hūd, 44). Some people believe that the ark is somewhere within the boundaries of Şanlıurfa because there is a mountain with this name.⁴⁷

Abraham (ʾIbrāhīm) The Father of Monotheistic Religions arose from Urfa

It is believed that the prophet Abraham was born in Urfa and his memory is vividly kept alive there. He is respected by the people of the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the Old Testament of the Bible and in the Qurʾan, there is much information given about Abraham. Abraham's name is written in some parts of the Torah as Avram (Abram), and in other sections as Avraham (Abraham). The name Avram means "lofty father," whereas the name Avraham means "the father of nations." In the Bible it is written, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I

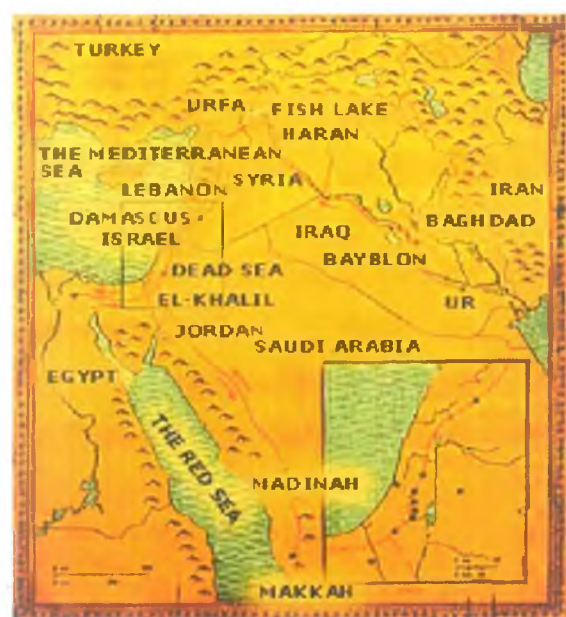
am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, 'As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.'" (Genesis, 17/4-5)⁴⁸ In spite of this, however, the origin of the name has not been fully determined. In the Torah, the name of Abraham's father is Terah (Genesis, 11/26), while in the Qur'an, it is mentioned as Azer (6/En'am, 74.).

The period in which Abraham lived is not known exactly, but it is possible that he lived around 22nd-20th century BC. In addition, the Torah gives the hometown of Abraham as "Ur Kasdim" (Genesis, 11/28, 31) which is translated into Greek as "Ur of the Chaldees," referring to Tellu'l-Mukayyer in southern Iraq. Nevertheless, the expression of Ur as "Ur of the Chaldees" has been criticized as it fails to comply with historical facts. The Torah was revealed to Prophet Moses in the 13th century BC when the Chaldeans had not yet emerged on the stage of history. In Islamic sources, Abraham's birthplace and hometown are mentioned as Kusa (today's Tel Abraham), Babylon, Harran, Hurmuzjard, Sus, Kesker, Verkâ, and between Basra and Kufa. Apart from these, according to a common legend in Urfa, Abraham was born in Urfa and was thrown into the fire there. In the Torah, it is written that Abraham's son, Isaac, married Rebecca, and Abraham's grandson, Jacob, stayed for a while in his uncle's house in Harran. This gives us the opportunity to say with some degree of certainty that Abraham's family was from the upper region of Mesopotamia.

There is not much information about the childhood of Abraham in the Bible. In the Qur'an, there is a verse saying that he reached a belief in the oneness of God before he became a prophet (6/An'am, 76-79). The Qur'an says that he was chosen as a prophet and scriptures were given to him (2/Baqara, 130-131). Also see 53/Najm, 36-37; 87/A'la, 19). He invited his people to the religion after becoming a prophet, but he did not receive a positive response from them. According to the belief among the people living in Urfa, when Abraham was thrown into the fire, the fire turned to water, and the burning embers became fish. According to the Torah, Terah, Abraham and his wife Sara, and Abraham's brother Haran and his son Lot all settled in Harran, and Abraham's father, Terah, died there (Genesis, 11/31-32). However, there is no information as to whether Abraham's father had emigrated there with him or not.



The cave in which Prophet Abraham was born, according to Urfa legends. It is still venerated by many people visiting this place.



A map depicting the travels of Abraham as in the Bible



The Ka'ba and the Zamzam Well as imagined to be at the time of Prophet Abraham



The Ka'ba was built by Abraham and his son Ismâ'il

On the orders of God, Abraham resided in Harran for a while with his wife Sara and his nephew, and then went to the land of Canaan (Genesis, 12/1-5). Due to famine there, he traveled to Egypt temporarily. After staying for a while in Egypt, he returned to the land of Canaan (Genesis, 12/10-20). Sara could not bear a child for Abraham, so she gave him her slave Hagar as a concubine. When Abraham was 86 years old, Hagar bore his son Ismail (his name in the Bible is "Ishmael"; Genesis, 16). When Abraham was 100 years old, Sara bore him Isaac (Genesis, 21/5). According to the Torah, when he was 99 years old, Abraham was circumcised as a symbol of the covenant between God and him (Genesis, 17/27). After the birth of Ismail, Abraham went to Mecca with Hagar and Ismail because of Sara's jealousy (Genesis, 14/37). According to the Torah, when Sara was 127 years old, she died in Hebron (the modern-day city of al-Khalil) and was buried by Abraham in the cave of Makpela (Genesis, 23). After Sara's death, Abraham was married to a woman named Ketura, with whom he had more children. Leaving his belongings to Isaac, he died when he was 175 years old and his sons Isaac and Ismail buried him in the cave of Makpela (Genesis, 25).⁴⁹

Lot (Lût)

The prophet Lot was one of the believers of Abraham and also emigrated with him. In the legends of Urfa, it is said that they left Urfa and went to Harran, where they stayed for a while. Lot, the son of Abraham's brother Haran, went to the land of Canaan with him (Genesis, 12/4-5). Afterwards, due to the famine there, they went to Egypt together and returned to Canaan after a while (Genesis, 12/4-5). According to the Torah, when they became prosperous, Lot left the area where Abraham was staying and moved to nearby Sodom (Semud). The population of this region practiced deviant behaviors and Lot urged them to straighten up, but they did not listen. Finally, God sent angels who extracted Lot and the believers, and then annihilated the whole city (Genesis, 12/4-5). The people of Sodom did not obey God and thus were destroyed (Genesis, 19).

Isaac ('Ishâq)

It is believed that Abraham's son Isaac also had a connection with Urfa and its surroundings. He is mentioned in 17 verses in the Qur'an. According to the Torah, he was born to Sara and was also considered as the second ancestor of Israel. According to this information, he was born 25 years after the emigration of his family.⁵⁰ Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born (Genesis, 21/5). When Abraham left Harran, he was 75 years old (Genesis, 12/4). The events of the sacrifice of Abraham's son are narrated in both the Qur'an and the Torah, but

these holy texts differ as to which child was the potential sacrifice. In the Torah, Abraham wants to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis, 22/2), and, though Ismail's name is not mentioned as the sacrifice in the Qur'an, it is understood that the sacrifice was to be Ismail (37/Saffât, 100-112). In the Torah, it is said that Abraham did not want his son to marry a woman from Canaan, so he sent his old maidservant Eliezer to the Aram-Naharayim region where Abraham's brother Nahor lived (Genesis, 24/2-4). This was in upper Mesopotamia in the area between the two rivers which included Harran. The servant asked Bethuel for his daughter Rebecca as a wife for Isaac. Her father agreed and the servant returned with her to Abraham (Genesis, 24/10-67).

Jacob (Ya'qūb)

According to the Torah, Jacob was another prophet associated with Harran. Isaac and Rebecca had twin sons, Esau, and Jacob. As Jacob was heir to his father, a conflict arose between him and his brother, Esau, who wanted to kill Jacob. Thereupon, Rebecca sent Jacob to Harran where her brother, Laban, was living. Jacob worked there as a shepherd for a long time. He married his uncle's daughters, Lea and Rachel. He later went to the land of Canaan, taking his children and herds with him (Genesis, 27-31).

Joseph (Yūsuf)

Joseph, the son of the prophet Jacob and Rachel, is also one of the prophets associated with Urfa. According to the Torah, Joseph was born in Harran (Genesis, 30/23-24). After returning to Canaan, Joseph's mother died upon giving birth to another son, Benjamin (Genesis, 35/16-19).

Job (Ayūb)

It is believed that Job was one of the prophets who lived in Urfa, though it is not known exactly where and when he lived there. In the Torah, it is stated that he lived in the country of Uz. His sufferings are expressed in the Book of Job (Job, 1/1). According to the Torah, he was a sincere and good man of God. Satan claimed that Job's obedience to God originated from his wealth, and so God allowed Satan to test him. Although he lost all his property and children, he continued to obey God. He was exposed to terrible diseases and his body was covered in boils.⁵¹ When Job washed his body and said, "I did not do anything to deserve these sufferings," God criticized him and called to him from inside a hurricane. Job regretted his words and repented. God accepted his repentance and gave him more children and goods than what he had had before. Job's name is mentioned in four places in the Qur'an. In two of them, it is written that he was one of the prophets and that he was tested. He showed patience and



Inside the tomb of the Prophet Job



The tomb of Prophet Job
(p.b.u.h) in the town of
Eyyubnebi

God blessed him as a result of this (21/Enbiyâ, 83-84). The water that Job used to wash his body is mentioned in another verse (38/Sâd, 41-43). Yet another verse refers to the relationship between Job and his wife (38/Sâd, 44).

Some Isra'iliyyat (Judeo-Christian material) sources containing stories of the prophets include extensive information about Job. For example, one source says his body was covered with sores from head to toe and he cleared them up with a piece of tile, referring to an Isra'iliyyat context. Moreover, according to this information, his body was full of worms, he smelled bad and the people expelled him from the city. He continued to suffer in this condition for seven years while no one other than his wife supported him.⁵² In terms of the Qur'an and the Torah, the difference is that in the Qur'an, Job is consistently obedient to God. However, in the Torah, he loses faith in God when he is exposed to disease. It is said that he endured his suffering while in Urfa. There is a tomb believed to be that of Job in Urfa Province 100 km from the city of Urfa.

The city of Shu'ayb (Jethro), where Shu'ayb/Jethro was believed to have lived. The ruins are dated to the Roman period. There are many ancient tombs carved into the rocks. Prophet Shu'ayb (p.b.u.h) is said to have spent time in meditation and prayer in the solitude of the cave seen in this picture.





The tomb of Prophet Elijah

Elijah ('Ilyās)

One of the prophets associated with Urfa is Elijah. His name is mentioned in two verses of the Qur'an along with the names of other prophets (6/En'âm, 86; 38/Sâd, 48). It is possible that he is the Elisa mentioned in the Old Testament. Elisa was the son of Safat, the king of Israel.⁵³ According to legends



Inside of the tomb of Prophet Elijah

in Şanlıurfa, Elijah departed to visit Job and wandered for years in search of him. When he came to the village of Ayyub Nabi, Satan came upon him and said, "You have not yet reached this village. You are still only half-way there." Thus, old Elijah thought that he would never be able to reach Job, so he died there. His tomb is 500 meters from the village of Ayyub Nabi, which is to the southwest of Job's tomb in Urfa Province.⁵⁴

Jethro (Shu'ayb)

Approximately 80 km from Urfa are the remains of a city called Shuaib. It is likely that these are ruins from the Roman-Byzantine period. The association of Jethro with this city is not included in the sources. The name of both the place located on the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, and the tribe from which he originated is Midian.⁵⁵ In one verse of the Qur'an it is written that he warned his people (7/A'râf, 85). Though he invited them to obey God, they rejected him (7/A'râf, 88). Other verses say that his people did not obey God and were destroyed (7/A'râf, 85-92; 11/Hûd, 84-95).

Moses (Mūsā)

It is known that Moses came to the prophet Jethro and married his daughter. In Soğmatar, close to the city of Shuaib, there are two places believed to be the



One of the gates of Harran castle, called the Halep (Aleppo) Gate

original site of the well of Moses and the staff he used.⁵⁶ Moses plays a significant role in Jewish tradition. When he was born in Egypt, the Jews were enslaved there. According to the Torah, he witnessed an Egyptian beating a Jew. Moses, seeing that no one was around, killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. The next day, he saw two Jewish men fighting with each other. When he admonished them, one of them asked, “Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian?” Pharaoh heard this and subsequently wanted to have Moses executed, so Moses fled to the land of Median. While he was sitting by a well, the seven daughters of the soothsayer Reuel came to draw water. Some shepherds harassed them and Moses intervened to help the women. They returned to their father and told him what had happened. He asked them to invite Moses to dinner and offered Moses a place with him. He gave his daughter Sippora to Moses as a wife (Exodus, 2/11-23). Afterwards, the Torah refers to Moses’ father-in-law as a priest of Midian named Yitro (Jethro), and narrates more of the events in the life of Moses (Exodus, 3/1). In the Qur’an one can read about the incident of the killing of the Egyptian by Moses (28/Kasas, 15-28; also see 20/Taha, 40).

Jesus (’Īsā)

Though Jesus did not come to Urfa, he is associated with the city. According to the folk tradition, after Jesus began to preach, king Abgar V of Edessa (Urfa) became a Christian, resulting in Urfa being considered the first kingdom to accept Christianity.⁵⁷ According to the story, Abgar sent a letter to Jesus asking him to come and heal him.⁵⁸ In one version, Jesus had instructed that after his crucifixion

a cloth with an impression of his face be sent to Abgar.⁵⁹ (For more details of this story, see Part VII: The Legends of Urfa.) The matter of this cloth caused some problems between Muslims and Christians. In the year 942, the Byzantines wanted to take the cloth from the Urfa church and in return, they promised to release a number of slaves. Subsequently, the Abbasid caliph, Muttaqi Lillah, negotiated an agreement and gave the cloth to the Byzantines in exchange for the slaves.

George (Jirjis)

In Urfa, George is also mentioned as a prophet. However, some historians think that this person was most probably only a Christian holy man. A church was built in his name, but it was later converted into a mosque.

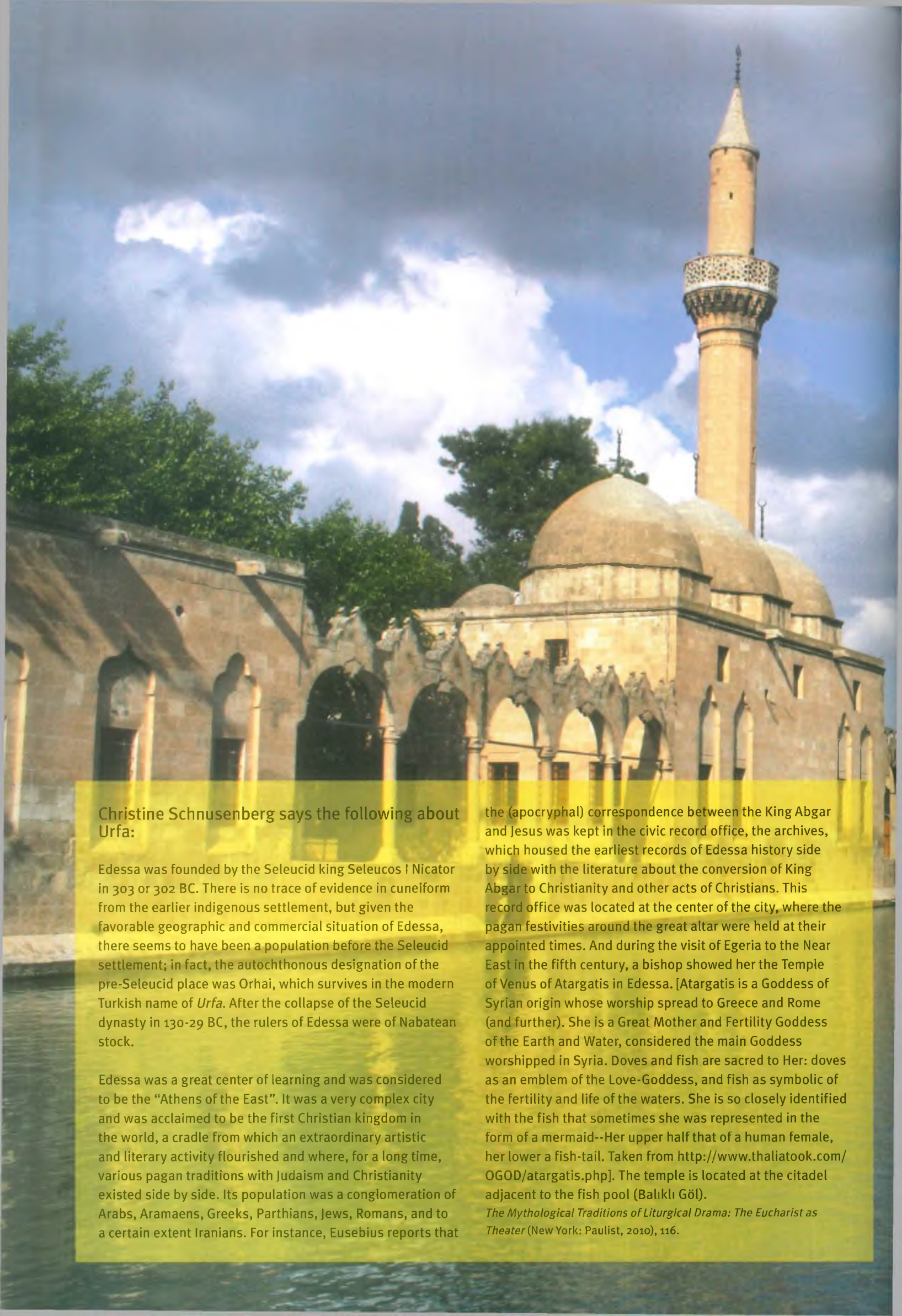




The background of the cover is an abstract, textured surface. It features a mix of bright yellow and muted blue-green colors, creating a marbled or stone-like effect. The textures are irregular and organic, with some areas appearing more saturated than others.

GODS AND GODDESSES

ABDULLAH EKİNCİ



Christine Schnusenberg says the following about Urfa:

Edessa was founded by the Seleucid king Seleucos I Nicator in 303 or 302 BC. There is no trace of evidence in cuneiform from the earlier indigenous settlement, but given the favorable geographic and commercial situation of Edessa, there seems to have been a population before the Seleucid settlement; in fact, the autochthonous designation of the pre-Seleucid place was Orhai, which survives in the modern Turkish name of *Urfa*. After the collapse of the Seleucid dynasty in 130-29 BC, the rulers of Edessa were of Nabatean stock.

Edessa was a great center of learning and was considered to be the “Athens of the East”. It was a very complex city and was acclaimed to be the first Christian kingdom in the world, a cradle from which an extraordinary artistic and literary activity flourished and where, for a long time, various pagan traditions with Judaism and Christianity existed side by side. Its population was a conglomeration of Arabs, Aramaeans, Greeks, Parthians, Jews, Romans, and to a certain extent Iranians. For instance, Eusebius reports that

the (apocryphal) correspondence between the King Abgar and Jesus was kept in the civic record office, the archives, which housed the earliest records of Edessa history side by side with the literature about the conversion of King Abgar to Christianity and other acts of Christians. This record office was located at the center of the city, where the pagan festivities around the great altar were held at their appointed times. And during the visit of Egeria to the Near East in the fifth century, a bishop showed her the Temple of Venus of Atargatis in Edessa. [Atargatis is a Goddess of Syrian origin whose worship spread to Greece and Rome (and further). She is a Great Mother and Fertility Goddess of the Earth and Water, considered the main Goddess worshipped in Syria. Doves and fish are sacred to Her: doves as an emblem of the Love-Goddess, and fish as symbolic of the fertility and life of the waters. She is so closely identified with the fish that sometimes she was represented in the form of a mermaid--Her upper half that of a human female, her lower a fish-tail. Taken from <http://www.thaliatook.com/OGOD/atargatis.php>]. The temple is located at the citadel adjacent to the fish pool (Balıklı Göl).

The Mythological Traditions of Liturgical Drama: The Eucharist as Theater (New York: Paulist, 2010), 116.



Balıklı Göl, Fishpond, where the fish are still considered sacred



Temple of Venus of
Atargatis in Urfa,
Soğmatar

HARRAN

Throughout history, Harran has been ruled by the Assyrians, the Kingdom of Alexander, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Umayyads, the Abbasids, local dynasties, various Turkic dynasties, the Mongols and the Ottomans. In recent years, findings in the mounds of Göbekli, Karahan, Sefer, Çöplük, Soğmatar, Nevalı Çori, Tell Idris and Balıklıgöl have revealed the importance of the region as a center for religious cults. The history of Harran dates back to 7000 BC, while its reputation as a religious center began around 3500 BC. The religious traditions of its people undoubtedly helped Harran become a commercial center in the region. From the oldest known date until the Mongol occupation in the 13th century AD, Harran had a reputation as a center for pagan culture. This culture was based on the principle of deified planetary existence and was the center of the faith of the Sabeans.

In Urfa, Shamash was the divine presence of the sun. As an indication of this, the name of one of the city's gates was Beth Shamash.¹ There is no concrete literary

tradition of the ancient beliefs in Harran during this period. As in the case of Nabu, even though the name of the goddess Atargatis appears over an extended area, it cannot be generalized that the implementation of the sect was the same in every region because in the traditional popular beliefs of antiquity the power and expression of a god depended on both the group and the place.

Gods worshiped in the region have been described as male and female. In the system of gods worshiped in Harran, the male gods were the Moon and the Sun, the Lord with his Dogs (Nergal), Baalshamin and Bar-Nemre. The goddesses were



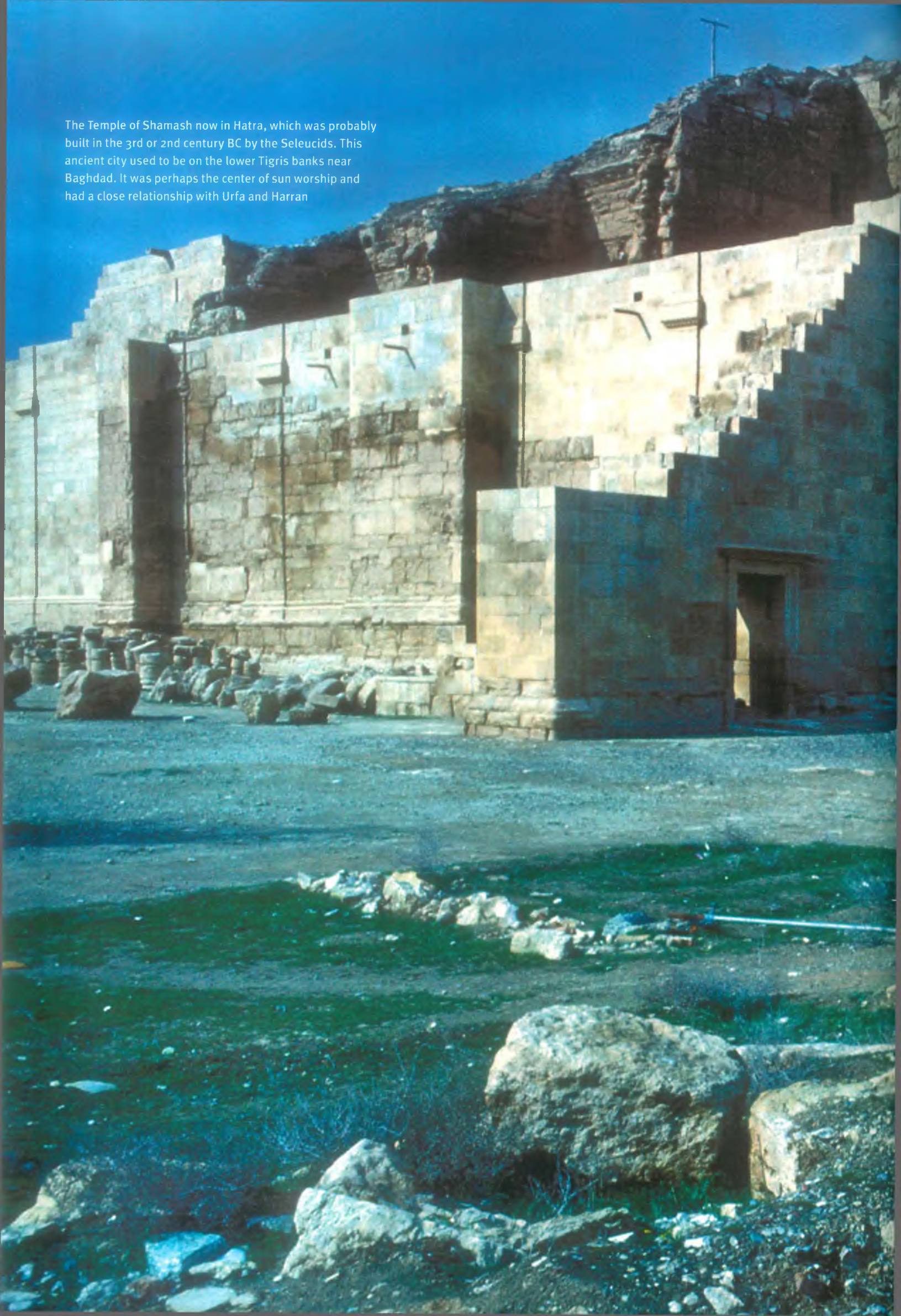
Shamash

Bath Nikkal (Ningal), Atargatis (Ishtar), Gadlat and perhaps Uzza. In addition, the *Doctrine of Addai* confirms the existence of planetary and stellar gods. The mother goddess had various forms, cults and festivals, each appealing to a certain local section of followers, as did Ba'al. Except for Apollo, there are no names of Greek gods. This indicates that despite the nickname of Hellenopolis, traditional Harran belief was little affected by the faith of the Greek Seleucids.²

In some periods during which there was religious persecution, the people of Harran had to maintain their faith in secret, causing them to use different names throughout history. One faith group identified with Harran was the Harranis. Historians such as Abdulqâhir al-Baghdadî and Shahrîstani saw these people as practicing a branch of *Sabia*, the religion of the Sabeans. Due to their idolatrous religious traditions, they have also been referred to as Chaldeans, Nabataeans and even pagans.³ The faith groups in the region were concentrated in three centers: Edessa (Urfa), Harran, and Soğmatar.

In sources from Harran dating from the 2nd century BC, the gods of the

The Temple of Shamash now in Hatra, which was probably built in the 3rd or 2nd century BC by the Seleucids. This ancient city used to be on the lower Tigris banks near Baghdad. It was perhaps the center of sun worship and had a close relationship with Urfa and Harran





sun and moon are seen as masters of the city. Among the gods and goddesses of Harran, there were some Mesopotamian and Syrian gods and goddesses: Ba'al, Belit, Tammuz, the Moon (Sin), the Sun (Shamash), Bath Nikkal, Baalshamin, Bar Nemre, Tar'atha, Gadlat and others. Mentioned in the same sources are the

gods Nebo, Bel (in Edessa/Urfa) and Uzza (in Beth Hur), who were also worshiped in the region. These deities had a significant impact upon the religious culture of the area, before Islam, as a new religion, dominated these regions after the 7th century AD. Let us look at some of these gods and goddesses worshiped in the area of Urfa and its vicinity.

Enlil

Enlil was one of the most important gods in the pantheon of Mesopotamia. Among the children of Enlil were Inana, Iskur, Sin, Nergal, Ninurta, Pabilsag, Nusku, Shamash, Uras, Zababa and Ennugi. Enlil was often called "the Imposing Mountain" and "the King of the Other Earth," and so there is a link between impressive high mountains and Enlil. Other iconic names representing Enlil are "the King", "the Lord, Father and Creator", "the Angry Storm", "the Wild Bull" and, interestingly, "the Merchant". In astrology, Enlil is associated with the constellation of Boötes.⁴

The Seven Gods

The most important number in ancient Mesopotamia was seven, and a group referred to as the Seven Gods corresponded to the Pleiades. Prayers had to be repeated seven times while magic rituals were being performed. Seven demons were removed from the body. Rites were repeated seven or seventy times. Seven cylinders were

hung around the neck of a sick person. It was believed that there were seven gates which opened to the underworld.⁵ The theistic beliefs associated with the number seven manifested themselves in Harran both in the Feast of Gods and in the Cult of the Seven Planets.



At the left corner, sun, moon and star symbols can be seen in the details of a Nabonid stele.

In one account, the Harranians were going to a village named Sabta on April 28th in order to sacrifice a bull to Hermes along with nine lambs, seven for the seven gods, one for the devil and one for the “Master of the Hours.”⁶ Since the number seven was used with special reference to the planetary gods, more evidence is needed to arrive at the conclusion that the seven gods were manifested in heavenly bodies. For example, bulls were sacrificed in April for “the god Saturn (Kronos), the god Mars (Ares), and the god of the moon (Sin). In this ceremony, of the nine sacrifices, seven were for the seven gods, one for the god of the jinn and one for the “Lord of Time.”⁷ The idea of seven gods has an important place in the Star/Planet Cult. The number of structures located on the sacred hill in Soğmatar is seven, a feature that could be a reference to seven gods. The sites of the seven temple buildings in the area are all extant today. These are the temples of Saturn, Shamash (the sun), Jupiter, Sin (the moon), Venus, Mercury and Mars. These structures were representative of the diversity of early Hermetic tradition. Moreover, Soğmatar, a small town 46 km from Harran, was the center of pagan belief. Its main god was Mar Alahe, the “Lord of Gods”. In Soğmatar there were seven hills in the west representing the gods Shamash, Sin, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury, and one to the northwest, “The Sacred Hill,” representing Mar Alahe.

EDESSA (ANCIENT URFA) AND BABYLON



The great gate of Babylon:
Ishtar Gate

The Star/Planet Cult

Astronomy began with examination of the movements of celestial bodies in relation to the rising and setting of the sun and the moon and the seasonal changes in nature. Though the sun dominated the daytime sky, the master of the evening sky, the moon, ruled to a wider heaven. From the known period of history, the communities of Mesopotamia surveyed the changes of the evening sky instead of that of the daytime. The Sumerians, and later the Assyrians and Babylonians, built structures in the form of ziggurats in order to reflect their belief in the unity of the universe. Neugebauer and others claim that the foundations of the Chaldean faith,



Various small idols
discovered in Urfa

wisdom and knowledge were the results of Hellenic ideology having spread in the Near East. The Seleucids developed astronomy as a science using mathematics to form the basis of Hellenistic astrology, but the Zodiac was determined during a relatively late period.⁸ The importance of the moon deity developed at an early age in Mesopotamia, and meteorological events were calculated according to the phases of the moon.

Augury was also popular during Babylonian and Assyrian times. Nabonidus (556–539 BC), the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, was tasked with the restoration of the temple in Harran. In the 7th century BC, the use of heavenly prophecy focused on the planets and stars was connected with the Babylonian beliefs in astrology recorded in the *Enuma Anu Enlil* tablets. A quarter of the prophecies were related to drought.⁹ Astronomical calendars of the sun and moon on cuneiform plates dating prior to 523 BC demonstrated that the merger of the moon with other planets and solar eclipses could be calculated. The solar-lunar calendar necessary for the development of astronomy was not developed until the 5th century BC. The conquest of the Near East by the Persians was the main reason for an increasing interest in gods related to the heavens and prophecy. On the eve of the Islamic conquests there were groups of pagans in Harran, around the north of Syria, and possibly in Heliopolis (Baalbek in Lebanon). Folkloric pagan culture lived on for a long time in Harran.¹⁰ The Harranians had temples named according to the basic shapes and the heavenly bodies, which included the temples of Saturn (hexagon), Jupiter (triangle), Mercury (rectangle) and the Moon (octagon). The Sabaeans kept their mysteries and symbols in these temples.¹¹ The fact that Muslim ritual prayers are performed according to the rising and setting and celestial positions of the sun and moon should be accepted as a reflection of this cult.



The god over the countryside resides
in this statue on a deer



NINLIL (MUSLISSU)

The goddess Ninlil was in the pantheon of Harranian gods. She was the wife of Enlil and was referred to as the compassionate mother. In Assyria, she was worshiped as Muslissu, and accepted as the wife of Assur, a god in Assyrian beliefs who was the same as the Babylonian Enlil. The lion was her animal symbol. In the picture above, we see Enlil with a plow, Haia (barley god) and spouse Nisaba (grain goddess), Ninlil and an unidentified figure. When the gods did their work, Nisaba and spouse Haia brought down seeds to develop grain on the earth, and Enlil brought farming to Eden.

Nabu and the Cult of Bel

Nabu (Nabium, and according to the Bible, Nebo) was the scribe-god of Mesopotamia considered to be the writer of divine destiny. Because information at that time was transmitted via text, Nabu joined Ea (Enki) and Marduk as the gods of wisdom. In some traditions, he took on the properties of Ninurta, the god of farming, floods and wind, and thus became associated with irrigation and agriculture. He was also linked to the planet Mercury. His wife was the goddess Tasmetu. At the beginning of the 2nd century BC, the Nabuan belief spread, probably with the nomadic Amorites from Babylonia, to what is today Anatolia.¹² Borsippa, near Babylon, was one of the cultural centers of this god.

Nabu was adopted during the Neo-Assyrian period and was a god of the Assyrians during the reigns of both Esarhaddon (680-669 BC) and Ashurbanipal (668-627 BC). During the 4th century BC, Nabuan belief spread among communities speaking the language of Aram in Anatolia and Egypt. Nabu was included in the Mesopotamian pantheon of gods and was worshiped in central and northern Syria in Palmyra, Dura-Europis and Edessa

in the 4th century BC during the period of the Roman ruler Augustus (27 BC–14 AD). The Nabuan cult was associated with Apollo by the Greeks.¹³

Edessa (Urfa) was a religious and political center of the Star/Planet Cult until the 3rd century AD.¹⁴ Sufficient information is lacking on the beliefs of the Harranians during this period. However, knowledge of these beliefs is strengthened by texts and icons representing the literary tradition of the ancient beliefs in Harran, along with its history, which was parallel to that of Edessa. As for Nabu, though the name of the god appears over an extended area, the implementation of religious practices was not the same in every location. In the popular beliefs, the power and expression of a god varied by group and place. Bel was the god of the city of Urfa, while Ba'al was a god worshipped further south. There are similar origins of the regional variants with similar roots. Bel and Nebo appear as gods in the writings of Jacob of Suruç and in the anonymous 4th century *Doctrine of Addai* (Addai, the Apostle Thaddeus). In the latter, Addai asked the people of Edessa: "Who is Nebo? Is it a god worshiped by you? And honored Bel? Among you, some worship Bath Nikkal. Like your neighbors the Harranians and Tar'atha, the people of Mabbuğ (Hierapolis) and the Arabian Eagle, there are some who worship the sun and the moon. You cannot escape the enslavement of the light and the shining stars—everyone who worships lifeless objects is already cursed by God."¹⁵

Jacob of Suruç claimed that demons were the cause of Nebo and Bel being introduced in Edessa. His explanation gives clues about the pagan culture in Edessa. Though the main culture was the same, it differed from Harran in that Jupiter symbolized Bel and Mercury symbolized Nabu, the son of Bel, in the pantheon of Urfa. With this information, it is understood that Nabu and Bel represent the

pantheon of Edessa as being dualistic. Furthermore, Nabu was linked to the singer Orpheus in Hellenic culture. This identification is represented in the mosaic of Orpheus which depicts animals with winged angels. In the early period of Ur, there was a belief amongst the Sumerians that the bad conditions of death could be eased by music. As a result, this cult had an important effect on Urfa as well. When the kingdom of Urfa chose Christianity, it banned the sacrificing to Nabu and Bel, and both the king and his people tore down the sacrificial altars, whose existence was further evidence of the importance of this cult.¹⁶ In the graveyard of the kingdom, there are depictions of Orpheus playing a lyre and animals dancing with their musicians. Vestiges of the Nabu cult are represented in the names of historical characters like Nabonassar, Nabonid, Nabopolassar, Naburimanni and Nebuchadnezzar.

Atargatis (Tar'atha/Ishtar/Astarte)

Another important cult in the region was that of Atargatis, who was a fertility goddess that had a significant role among the deities of Edessa. A pool in the city filled with sacred fish symbolized this cult. In this period, there was no serious threat to the survival of the pagan culture of Harran in Edessa. Although there were gods other than Sin at the summit of the pantheon, the cult of Urfa/Edessa was no different from the paganism that worshiped the stars and planets, of which Harran was a chief representative.¹⁷ The people of ancient Urfa believed in a form of worship requiring men to castrate themselves, and eunuchs served as priests of the Atargatis cult. This information can be inferred from the orders of Abgar, who, after his conversion to Christianity, noted that this practice had been abolished.¹⁸

Ningal and Atargatis were the oldest goddesses in Mesopotamia.¹⁹ Ningal was the spouse of the moon god, Sin. Their daughter was Ishtar/Atargatis, who is known as Venus in Roman-Greek mythology. The origin of Atargatis is hidden in the mass of ancient local traditions. This goddess was worshiped in a wide variety of forms in many different places and it is impossible to ascertain details of her worship in Harran in this period. Among the Arabian goddesses, it was Uzza who became known as Astarte/Venus. We learn from Bardasian through the *Doctrine of Addai* that the people of Edessa also worshipped Atargatis. Addai associated this belief with the Tar'atha cult in the neighboring city of Hierapolis.²⁰ Drijvers reported that the goddess in Hierapolis was described as a "sister of Harran" in the writings of Jacob of Suruç, who stated that both "Harran and Hierapolis like spring [as a season]." This refers to the ceremonies in Harran held in honor of the gods, when water, as a life-giving force, was sprinkled everywhere, although there is no information as to whether Harran had a sacred lake like Edessa and Hierapolis. Sacred fountains were under the divine protection of the gods.²¹

The representation of the goddess is found in different forms in different places. She may be depicted as the symbol of a city (Edessa), as the wife of the Syrian storm god Haddad (Edessa, Hierapolis and Dura-Europis), as the wife of Nergal (Hatra), or as Cybele enthroned between two lions (Hierapolis). Coins found in Harran indicate that, as in Edessa, the goddess was worshiped in Harran



Bust of a priest of Atargatis, 3rd century AD, Capitoline Museums

as a symbol of the city. The beliefs and traditions of Edessa were compatible with the influence of the Atargatis cult in Hierapolis. Within this period it is difficult to determine the difference between the Arab goddess Uzza and Atargatis in terms of their functions.

Cybele (Kybele)

Cybele was the Phrygian/Hittite mother goddess. Excavations revealed a Kybele goddess figure in Anatolia dating back to 7000-6500 BC. This goddess symbolized maternity, reproduction, femininity, fertility and continuity of life. The goddess was depicted as standing, seated or lying and is also seen in sculptures as a figure in childbirth. Two lion figures are included in some statues depicting a seated goddess or one giving birth. The sacred animal of the mother goddess was the lion, which is seen as being the queen of all animals and having unlimited sovereignty over nature. Sometimes Cybele is shown holding the figure of Attis in her arms. Attis was at the same time both the child and lover of the goddess. The way in which Cybele was worshiped in the cult of Hierapolis was compatible with the faith and tradition of Atargatis in Edessa,²² one notable similarity being the eunuch tradition of her priests.

Haddad (Ba'al)

Haddad was another god worshiped in this region. His title is generally given as "El Toro" (El the Bull) and he was supposed to be present at the beginning of river heads, sitting in the farmland, as the father of gods. He was known as "El", "Rider of the Clouds," and the god of lightning and thunder, as well as representing Ba'al the god of fertility.²³ This god was later named the god of the seas and rivers with the name of Yam-Nahar. As seen in the Atargatis icons found in Syrian cities, Haddad as the weather god had been merged with several other gods, among them Zeus and Ba'al. However, it is not known if a male god was assigned as a weather god in Harran.²⁴

Nusku

During the reign of the Neo-Assyrians, Nusku, the god of light and fire, was also included among the gods worshiped in Harran. He was accepted as the son of Sin (Nanna-Suen), the main god of the region. A large Aramaic-Semitic community worshiped these gods, although Nusku might not be the same god as the Neo-Assyrian "Nasuh" or in the Aramaic inscription "Nsk". These cults continued to exist until the 1st century AD and beyond. Kudurrus found in the region depict light/fire figures representing Nusku.²⁵ A kudurru is an old Mesopotamian stone document recording royal land grants and decorated with sculptured reliefs. They may chronicle sales, grants of fields or writings about the ruler. These stones are often made of black basalt, although some rarer ones are smaller and made from baked clay.

Ningal (Nikkal/ Bath Nikkal)

The goddess Ningal was the wife of Sin and the mother of Shamash. Ningal was worshiped both in Ur and in the temple of Sin in Harran. This cult evolved separately in other places during the 2nd century BC. In Syria she was converted to Nikkal, which was the spelling used in Babylon. It seems that the Nikkal cult continued until the middle of the 1st millennium AD.²⁶

Nergal (Erra)

Nergal and Erra were later identified with each other despite the fact that they began as different gods. Nergal was worshiped at the temple of Meslam in the city of Kutha in Babylonia, and he was associated with the underworld. The queen of the underworld, Ereshkigal, was considered to be his wife. Nergal was the son of Enlil and Ninlil and was associated with forest fires and plague. Nergal in particular was responsible for the plague and was a fierce god of war. One of the most important symbols of Nergal was the warrior. As Erra, he was worshiped with his consort, Mami (perhaps one of the mother goddesses/ goddess of childbirth), in the city of Kutha. In Babylonian art, Nergal is usually pictured draped in a long cloth open in front with one leg forward, his foot either standing on a pedestal or trampling on the figure of a man.

Nergal was accepted as the ruler of death, but also as the son of Enlil, and thus the sibling of Sin or perhaps even his twin.²⁷ One description of Nergal²⁸ represents him as “the Lord with Three Dogs,” and another as the brother of Sin and ruler of the underworld. There are different examples of both versions in local forms. He is depicted in the iconography of Hatra with three dogs.²⁹ The guard duty of the dogs, as with Cerberus, likely represents the guard duty of the god. Evidence of this interpretation was also found in Harran. The dog reliefs located on the castle walls of the southeast gate next to the buttresses had the function of protection against evil spirits.³⁰ In this period, the godhood of Nergal had a place in the traditions of the Mesopotamian pantheon. References to the gods Nergal and Sin show that this duality in old Mesopotamia had an effect on the mystery religion of Mithra/ Ahriman, Zoroastrianism, and even Gnosticism.³¹

Generally, as the symbol of an independent god, Nergal was depicted carrying a sword or a one- or two-headed lion scepter. From the Old Babylonian time until the Achaemenid period, according to Kassite-Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions, ram-headed sculptures were considered as a symbol of the god of wisdom Ea (Enki). In a Neo-Assyrian seal, Ea carries a baton which might be a ram-headed scepter, while the goat-fish and turtle were considered as two other symbols of Ea.³² An eagle-headed scepter is only seen in the kudurrus of the Kassites and was adopted as the symbol of the god Zababa. From the Akkadian to the Neo-Babylonian period the lion-headed scepter or sword were seen as symbols of Nergal, god of the underworld. Furthermore, the Anzu bird, killed by Ninurta as the god of hunting (as well as farming) and the light/fire of Nusku were also associated with Nergal.



Clay tablet depicting Nergal



Ereshkigal



Dogs as the symbol of Gula,
the goddess of healing

Gula

The dog was the sacred animal of Gula, the goddess of healing. The seated dog as a divine symbol first appeared in the Old Babylonian period and continued until the Neo-Babylonian period. Writings on a kudurru with a goddess and a seated dog are the sign of the advancement of this symbol. A small dog figure found in Girsu (Telloh) in southern Iraq, southeast of Sumer, was dedicated to Gula. In addition, the many small dog figures in the temple of Gula in Isin, also in southern Iraq, prove the history of this relationship. It is stated in the records of King Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562 BC) that small dog sculptures were left at the door of the Gula temple in Babylon. In the seal designs of this period, a dog sits next to a goddess, perhaps Gula, seated on a throne and sometimes carrying a hook. During the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods a sitting or standing dog was used as a magical protective figure unconnected to any god. Putting small dog figures on both sides of a door represented magical protection and prevented entry of evil spirits.³³

Traces of the goddess Gula, including the dog reliefs located on the walls at the southeast gate of the Harran Citadel, still exist today. Though these reliefs date from the 11th century, they are rooted in ancient times. These figures were considered to function as guardians.³⁴ In the previous period, according to this belief, Assyrians placed dog figures at doorways. Today if one visits the Urfa Museum, one can find statues of dog idols. The dog spirits were placed on each side of the threshold of the door to ward off evil spirits attempting to enter the house.³⁵ The linking of the cult of a deity with dogs showed that the god or goddess functioned as a protector. This can be inferred in the depiction of "the Lord with Three Dogs" in Harran, perceived as the local form of Nergal, the ruler of the underworld and sibling of Sin. Moreover, in Hatra, Nergal was pictured with a scorpion, a snake, and three dogs.³⁶

For Mesopotamian societies, the dog family not only included wolves, hyenas,

jackals and dogs, but also lions.³⁷ This is why there are many lion figures in the Urfa region. The places having such motifs used them for protection from evil spirits and for guarding the home. In addition to the Urfa Citadel and the inns, lion motifs can be found on many buildings in and around Harran, and there are even some figures carved in stone and black basalt rock in the fields in the area.

Rabies was an important issue in connection with the dog cults of Mesopotamian communities. Rabies is thought to have originated in Mesopotamia before the beginning of the second millennium BC. Moreover, it is believed that the transmission of rabies from animals to humans first occurred in this region and consequently, by the 1st century BC the disease had begun to spread further.

Sin/Nanna/Suen (the moon)

The Sabeans mentioned in the Qur'an as followers of one of the divine religions and the pagan Sabeans cited in medieval sources are often confused with each other. By the 11th century AD, the Sabeans who entertained the monotheistic belief (*tawhid*) had disappeared in this region and in their place appeared Harranians of the same name who embraced the Moon culture. Indeed, historians such as Ibn Jubayr, Ibn Shaddad, al-Biruni, Dimashqî, Yaqut, Ibn Mas'ud, Shahrîstani, Ibn al-Nadim and Bar Hebraeus mention the moon temples of Harran.³⁸ The cult of Sin had brought advantages to Harran from the early periods. The famous E-khulkhula and in particular, the majestic temple of Sin in Harran later became the pilgrimage sites of the Assyrian, Babylonian and Roman emperors, in addition to becoming the sites of peace treaties.³⁹

In addition to the Sin temple in Harran, the moon god had various influences in the region. One of Harran's key features was holding the authority of both Sin and Ningal. Sin, one of the oldest gods, was later adopted by the Assyrians and occupied a prominent place in the religious life of Mesopotamia throughout ancient times. In ancient Mesopotamia, both the sun and the moon were among the male gods. In the Sumerian culture, the moon was a male god called Suen or Nanna. In the Akkadian language, Suen was later pronounced Sin. Asimbabbar, Namrashit (outward shining person) and Inbu were among his other names. His name was also written as the number 30 corresponding to the moon calendar.

Sin/Nanna was the son of Enlil and Ninlil. The most important temple of Nanna in the region was E-kisnugal in the city of Ur. During the Neo-Babylonian era, another temple in Harran gained importance as a different cult center. In this temple, Sin was worshiped together with Nusku, who was recognized as his son. The temple in Harran gained great popularity during the time of the Babylonian King Nabonid, whose mother was a priestess at this temple. Nabonid appointed his daughter as a high priestess of Sin in the city of Ur. The symbol of Sin was a crescent moon and his animal symbol was a bull or a lion-dragon.⁴⁰ Due to this, bulls were sacrificed in the temple. Tamara Green states that the different names used for Sin indicated the phases of the moon.

The Sumerian-Babylonian creation epic of *Enuma Elish* was found among the ruins of the Nineveh library in that ancient city, now located in Mosul in Iraq. It is

also known as *The Seven Tablets of Creation* and consists of approximately 1000 lines recorded on seven clay tablets in the Akkadian language. This saga emphasized the superiority of the god of wisdom Marduk over other gods. These tablets were the primary sources dealing with the worldview and lifestyle of the people of Babylonia, and they also revealed that, although it had an important place in Mesopotamian cosmology, the sun came second to the moon. The moon, according to the *Enuma Elish* was created before the sun, and in the belief of the Sumerians, the evening star (Ishtar/Atargatis) and the sun (Shamash) were the children of the moon.⁴¹

Shamash (the sun)

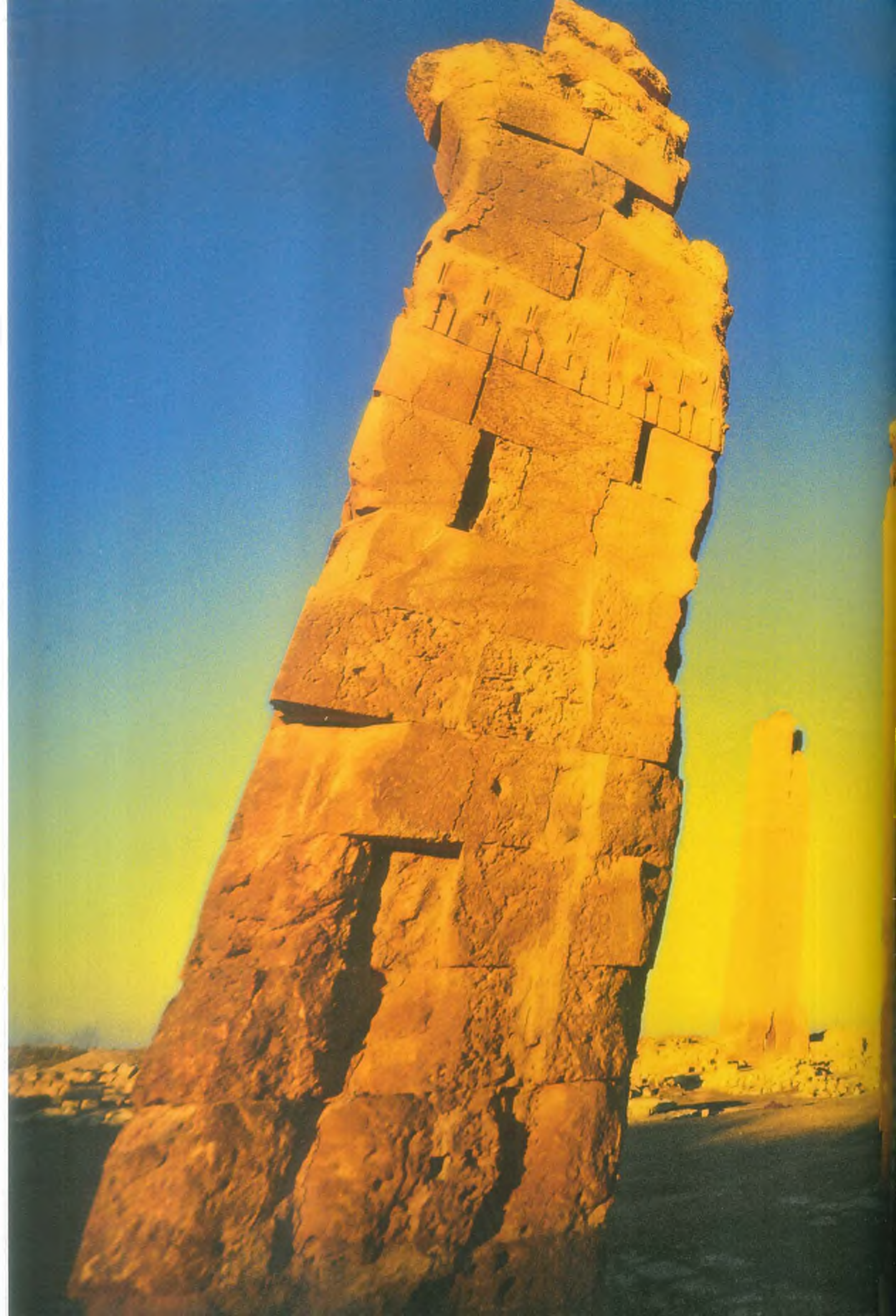
In the early Babylonian-Assyrian tradition, Shamash (the sun) played a relatively minor role in the political pantheon. He was one of three children of the moon god and had the power of light. Therefore, he was the enemy of darkness. In the social sphere, he represented the power of justice and honor. At night, in the underworld, he solved conflicts among the dead and also meted out justice. Although Shamash oversaw everything as the keeper of justice, his power was limited. Extant texts show that the sun played a secondary role when compared to that of the moon. Only in the Hellenistic period did the sun gain primary importance in Mesopotamia. Shamash figures in the sacred hill of Soğmatar have shed some light on this period. It remains an unresolved question as to whether any form of sun worship was implemented in the traditions of Syria and Mesopotamia before contact with the Arabs.



The tablet of Shamash, the sun god. Dating from the 800s B.C., this relief from Sippar depicts the Babylonian sun god Shamash viewing a display of respect from the three smaller figures on the left

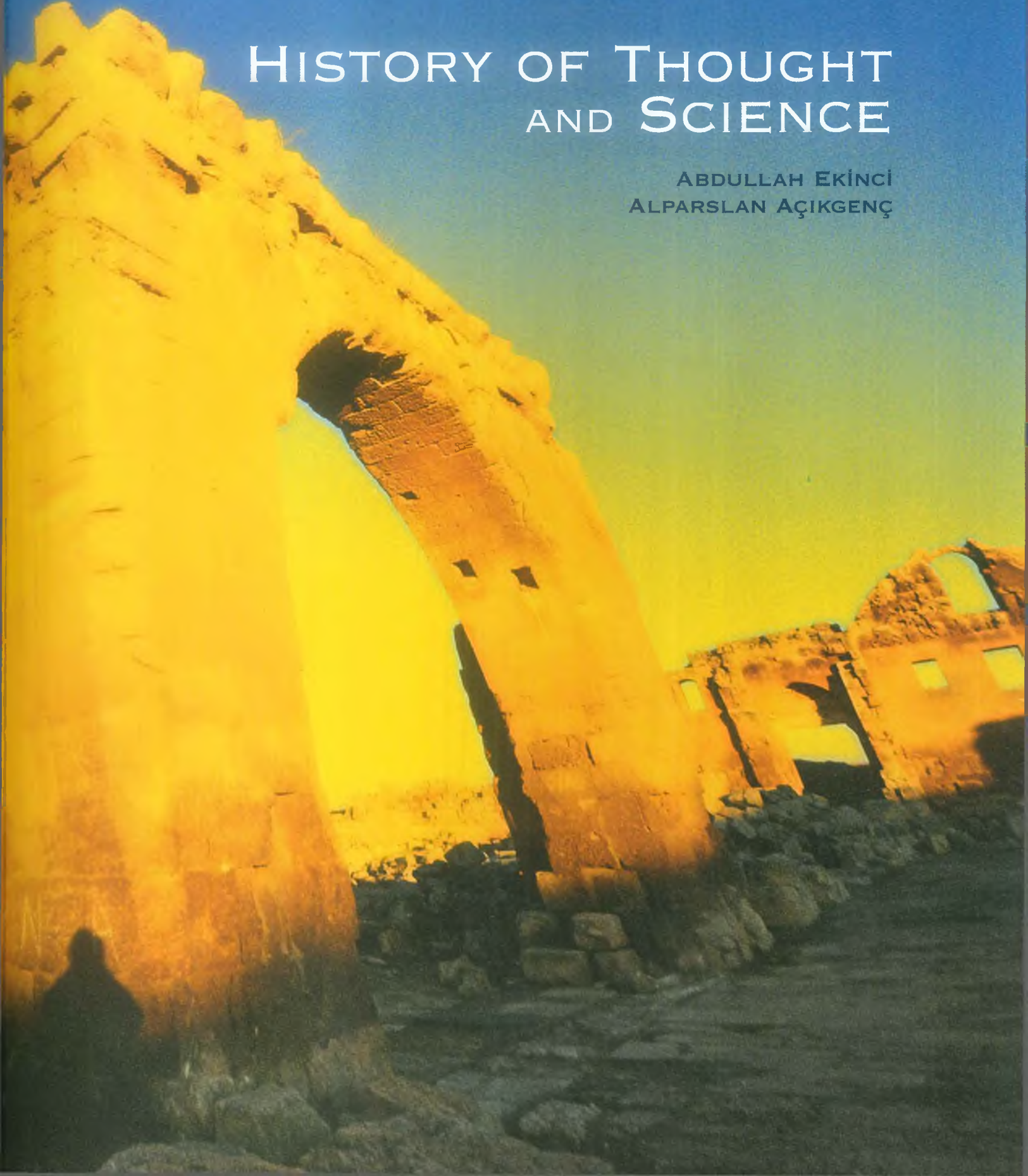
The growing interests in the philosophers, especially the new Platonists, also impacted the beliefs in the gods and the sun in Harran.⁴² In the *Doctrine of Addai*, Bath Nikkal/Ningal, Ishtar/Atargatis, and the sun and moon gods were mentioned as being the gods of Harran. Finally, the sun motifs seen at the sacred hill in Soğmatar and in the city of Urfa and its cemeteries demonstrate the development of the importance of the sun cult in the area.





HISTORY OF THOUGHT AND SCIENCE

ABDULLAH EKİNCİ
ALPARSLAN AÇIKGENÇ







Ruins of the ancient School of Harran



One of the most impressive libraries of the ancient Near East was located in the palace of the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal at Nineveh. We can see that the Mesopotamian cultures were not alien to learning and scholarly activities. This may be the reason why writing and writing instruments were perfected in this area.

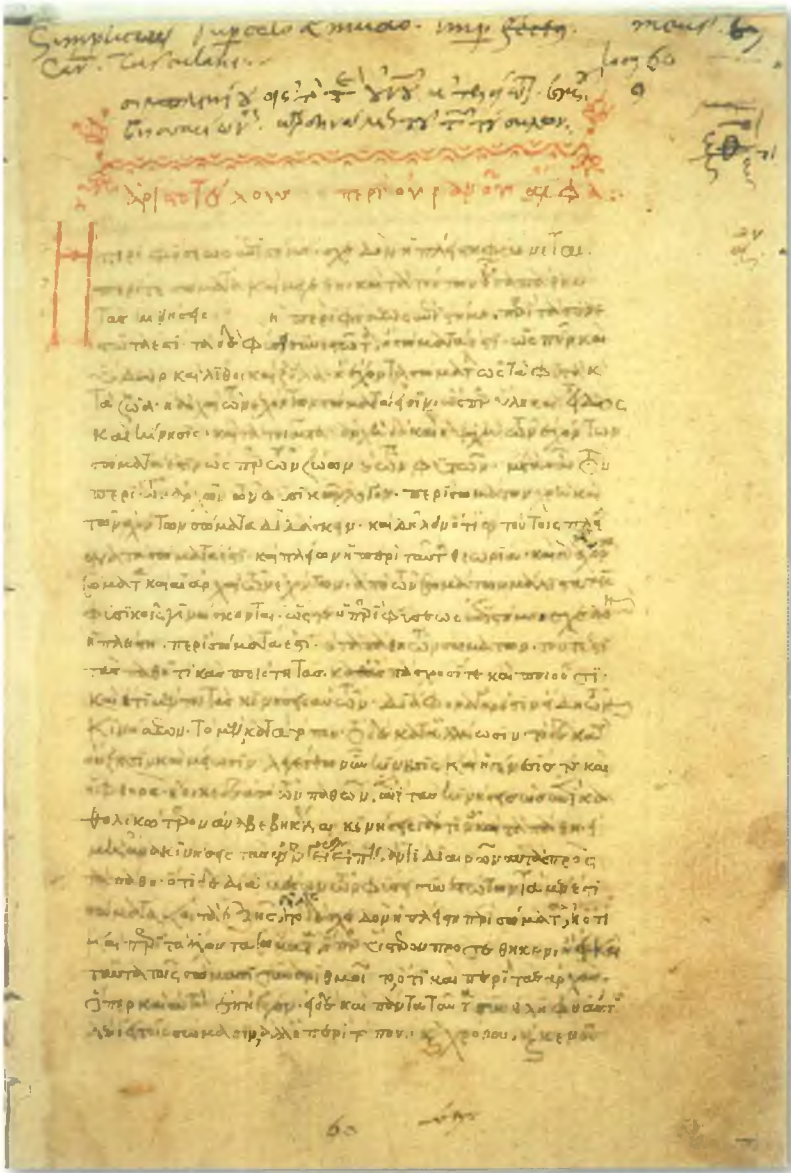
The Urfa vicinity was a significant center for scholarly learning and scientific activities right from ancient times until the time of Islamic civilization in the 19th century. In ancient times we see more pagan scholars active in scientific learning. At this time Greek scientific tradition dominated the region. After the advent of Christianity, the region came under the influence of Christian learning which had in turn come under the influence of later Hellenic learning. Besides the school established in Urfa itself, known as the School of Edessa, we see two other schools in the vicinity during this time. One was the School of Harran and the other, established in a town quite near Urfa called Nusaybin today, was the School of Nisibis. When Urfa fell under the rule of Islamic kingdoms, we see many Muslim schools (*madrasas*) actively engaged in scientific learning throughout this period. Since the School of Nisibis (Nusaybin) was traditionally not connected with Urfa, we shall concentrate on the other two schools and their later continuation within Islamic civilization.

THE SCHOOL OF HARRAN

In the History chapter, we saw that after the Macedonian king, Alexander the Great, had conquered Greece and the Persian Empire, the city of Harran came under Greek dominion. Although its people spoke Syriac (a form of Aramaic), they were influenced by Greek culture. After Alexander the Great, Seleucid emperors took control of Persia, Syria, and Babylon.¹ After his conquest, many Greek people came and settled in this city,² spreading their own culture as well.³ In this way, most of the people of this region accepted the Greek Orthodox faith and began to mix with other peoples of many diverse religions. However, there was one common characteristic among these diversified people – any education and learning they might have received would have been primarily in Greek. Later on, Syriac also was used, and after the rise of Islam, mainly Arabic took the place of Greek.

During this era, Pythagoreanism and Neo-Platonism were the most common philosophies and these gave rise to a kind of Sabeian-Hellenistic thought. Many philosophers devoted to Neo-Platonism came to Harran. They had found asylum in Persia

This 14th-century manuscript is a copy of the Commentary on Aristotle's De Caelo by Simplicius





The ruins of the ancient
Harran School

after their school in Athens was closed down by the Christian Emperor Justinian in 529 AD. Some of them returned to their hometowns, while others stayed in Sassanian cities as a consequence of a deal between the Sassanian and Byzantine Empires. One of these philosophers, Simplicius, stayed in Harran and tried to propagate Neo-Platonic thought there. However, we have no evidence whether Simplicius spent the rest of his life there or eventually returned to Athens and died there. As a result, he and his friends are now thought to have been the founders of the Harran School. After the scholars of the Alexandrian and Antiochian Schools came to Harran, it became an important center of philosophical learning in the 9th century after coming under the control of the Muslim Caliphate. The Caliph al-Mutawakkil (822– 861) supported their arrival. Teachers from Harran and Mervez helped Harran become an attraction. Their knowledge and expertise was conveyed to Baghdad via their students.⁴ Neo-Platonism and Pythagoreanism played an important role in the adoption of Islam.⁵ By virtue of their contribution to education, the Alexandrian School in Harran may have existed for nearly half a century.⁶

This structure is believed to be the
observatory of the ancient Harran
University (School of Harran)



Harran, where the world's oldest university was founded, had been the sister city of Urfa from ancient times. The School of Harran came into prominence before the adoption of Islam, with studies in medicine, astrology, physics, mathematics and Greek and Assyrian translation. After the conquest of Iyad Ghanem (Abu Sa'd 'Iyad ibn Ghanem ibn Zuhayr al-Fihri, d. 641, a companion of the Prophet Muhammed), such disciplines as Islamic law, hadith, commentary, philosophy, history and literature began to be taught.⁷ The third caliph, 'Umar I, sent Islamic scholars to some cities to spread Islam. He gave governors orders to administer the law in the



Ruins of the earliest Harran Madrasa (university established by Muslims). The courtyard with its central fountain

fairest way.⁸ In the Umayyad period, caliph 'Umar II was interested in organizing educational institutions in Harran. He also had medical techniques and knowledge transferred from Alexandria to both Antakya and Harran.⁹ Under Khalid ibn Yazid (d. 704), the first scientific activities began, starting with translations from Greek to Arabic. This was followed by translations from Syriac to Arabic during the rule of Marwan ibn al-Hakam (684-5). During the time of 'Umar ibn Abdulaziz, a large library was also founded which included books from Egypt and Byzantium. Harran's brightest era was the period of Marwan II (744-750 AD) when Harran

was the capital of the Umayyads. Some scholars of the Alexandrian School came there during that time.¹⁰

It is of considerable importance that the people living in Harran during this period played an active role in the translation movement. The translators of scientific and philosophic books from Greek and Syriac into Arabic were primarily from Harran.¹¹ They were especially interested in astronomy and mathematics. It was their respect for the stars that fueled their interest in astronomy.¹² In the 9th and 10th centuries, the Sabeans, under the influence of Hellenism, attributed their wisdom to Hermes Trismegistus, Uranus and others. Some of them were preoccupied with translation and copying, while most worked together with Persian and Arab scholars.¹³ After the rebellion of Ali ibn Abdullah ibn al-‘Abbas (d. 736), the region was in disarray for some time, but eventually peace was restored to the region and scientific activities once again picked up speed.¹⁴

The main translation activities developed in the Abbasid period, especially at the time of Caliph al-Mansur (754 –775). Under his leadership, Baghdad became a bastion of poets and scholars. Information pertaining to the period of the caliph Harun al-Rashid (786-809) is quite abundant. He is identified in English sources as Aaron the Just.¹⁵ In the same period, after the rebellion of Walid ibn Tarif al-Taghlibi, Assyrian sources tell us that Harun visited Urfa. He repaired the canal which supplied water to the city¹⁶ and built an educational institution.¹⁷ When he was leaving Urfa, some conspirators came to him and accused the Christians, saying, “The Roman Emperor comes to their church to pray every year.” This was because they wanted the church destroyed.

Upon inquiry, he discovered that this was not true, and thereupon punished the miscreants. The admiration held by Al-Ma’mun (813-833) for ancient wisdom led to the start of a significant but brief translation movement.¹⁸ He gave special importance to philosophical works and books imported from Cyprus and other Byzantine centers.¹⁹ As a consequence of the Athenian School’s destruction, a new school was opened in Alexandria. Its effects reverberated throughout Antakya, Urfa, and Harran, and thus Hellenistic philosophy spread throughout the region. The dialectic developing in Urfa’s school became independent in time; however, it was closed after the teachers had adopted Nestorian thought.²⁰

Harran, as stated in the previous section, had a special position in representing paganism.²¹ Especially after the Arab conquest, ancient paganism made contact with Neo-Platonism and Neo-Pythagoreanism in the city. In the following years, many representatives of Hellenism were recognized by the Sabeans although they had already been forgotten in their own towns. The members of this school founded



An Arabic manuscript which is a translation of a book by Hermes Trismegistus; Kyranides, The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

HERMES TRISMEGISTUS

Hermes and stories related to him appear in the major traditions of the Near East and Mesopotamia. This is known as the Hermetic tradition (Hermeticism). In ancient Greek tradition, Hermes was the Greek god of magic. In ancient Egyptian tradition, he was the equivalent of Thoth, the god of writing and magic. The title Trismegistus, meaning “three times” or “thrice great” (*tris-megistus*), was given by the Greeks. A collection of writings attributed to Hermes was considered to be sacred. These texts enjoyed great prestige and were popular among alchemists. In Christian tradition, Hermes was seen as a holy man, a prophet, and indeed, many Christian writers such as Lactantius, Augustine and Giordano Bruno considered Hermes Trismegistus to be a wise pagan prophet who foresaw the coming of Christianity. Therefore, the Hermetic teachings were then appropriated into Christian ideas. Some of these thinkers assumed that Hermes was either a contemporary of Moses or the third in the line of prophets: Enoch, Noah and then Hermes, as perhaps the Egyptian priest-king who was a great sage and philosopher.

In Islamic tradition also there are various views concerning Hermes Trismegistus. It has been pointed out that the Sabean religion had a sect of star worshipers who held their doctrine to come from Hermes Trismegistus through the prophet Adimun. [See H. E. Stapleton, R. F. Azo and M. H. Husein, “Chemistry in Iraq and Persia in the Tenth Century AD: Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal”, Calcutta: *Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 8 (1927), pp. 398–403.]. Some scholars claim that the Prophet Idris mentioned in the Qur’an is actually Hermes Trismegistus. This is because Bible scholars think that Idris is the Biblical prophet Enoch, who was already mentioned as the first of the three in the line. However, there is another view which refers to Qur’anic verses (18/al-Kahf - The Cave, 60-82) where a mysterious person is mentioned as “one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Ourselves and whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence.” This person with wisdom and spiritual powers is identified by Muslim scholars as Khidr, which means “green” in Arabic. According to Abdullah Yusuf Ali, green refers to the freshness of his knowledge, which is pure truth and reality. Some scholars also claim that it is this Khidr who is identified in earlier traditions as Hermes Trismegistus. As there is no clear evidence for the identity of Hermes, we need



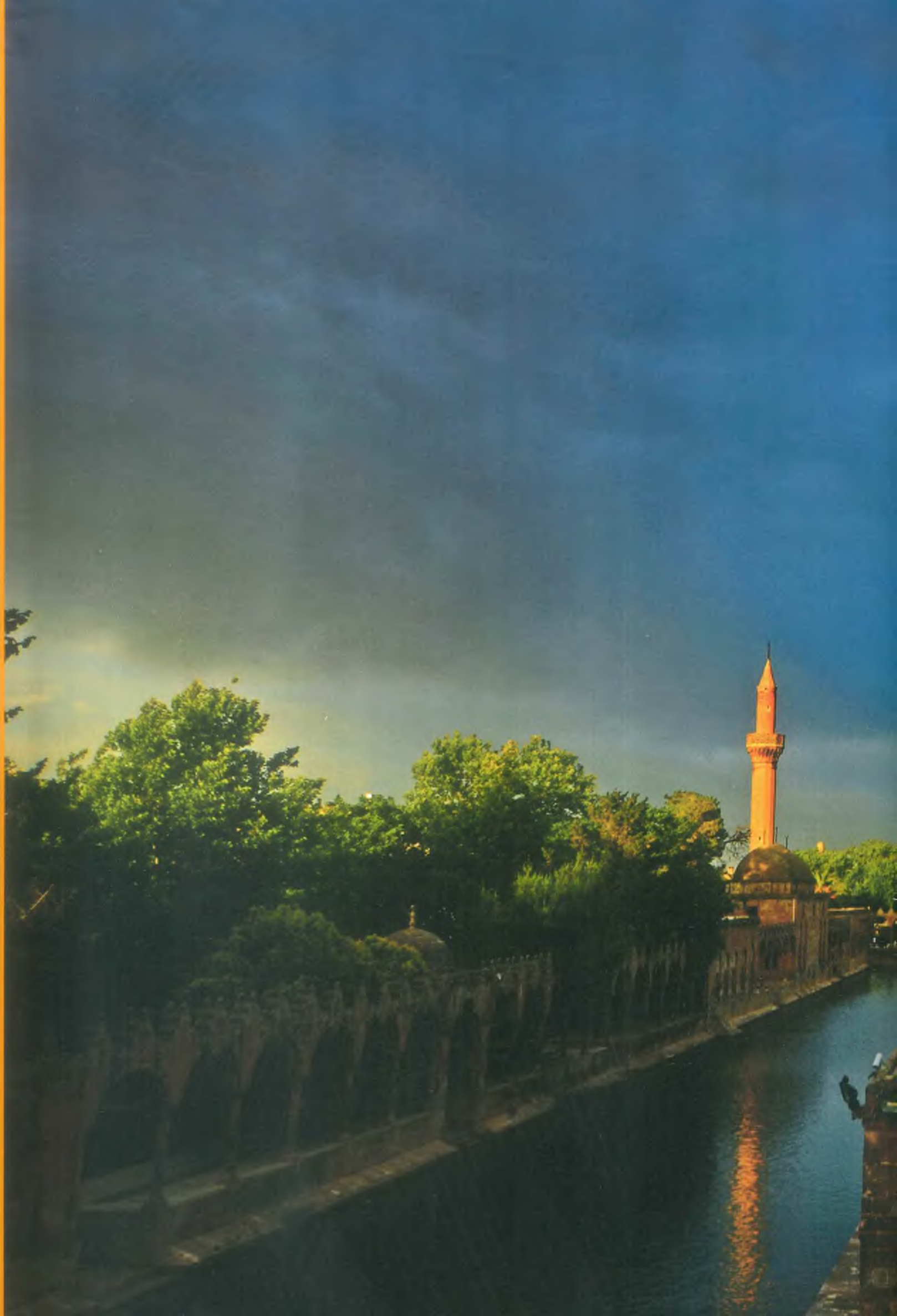
Artist's impression of Jabir ibn Hayyan working in his laboratory

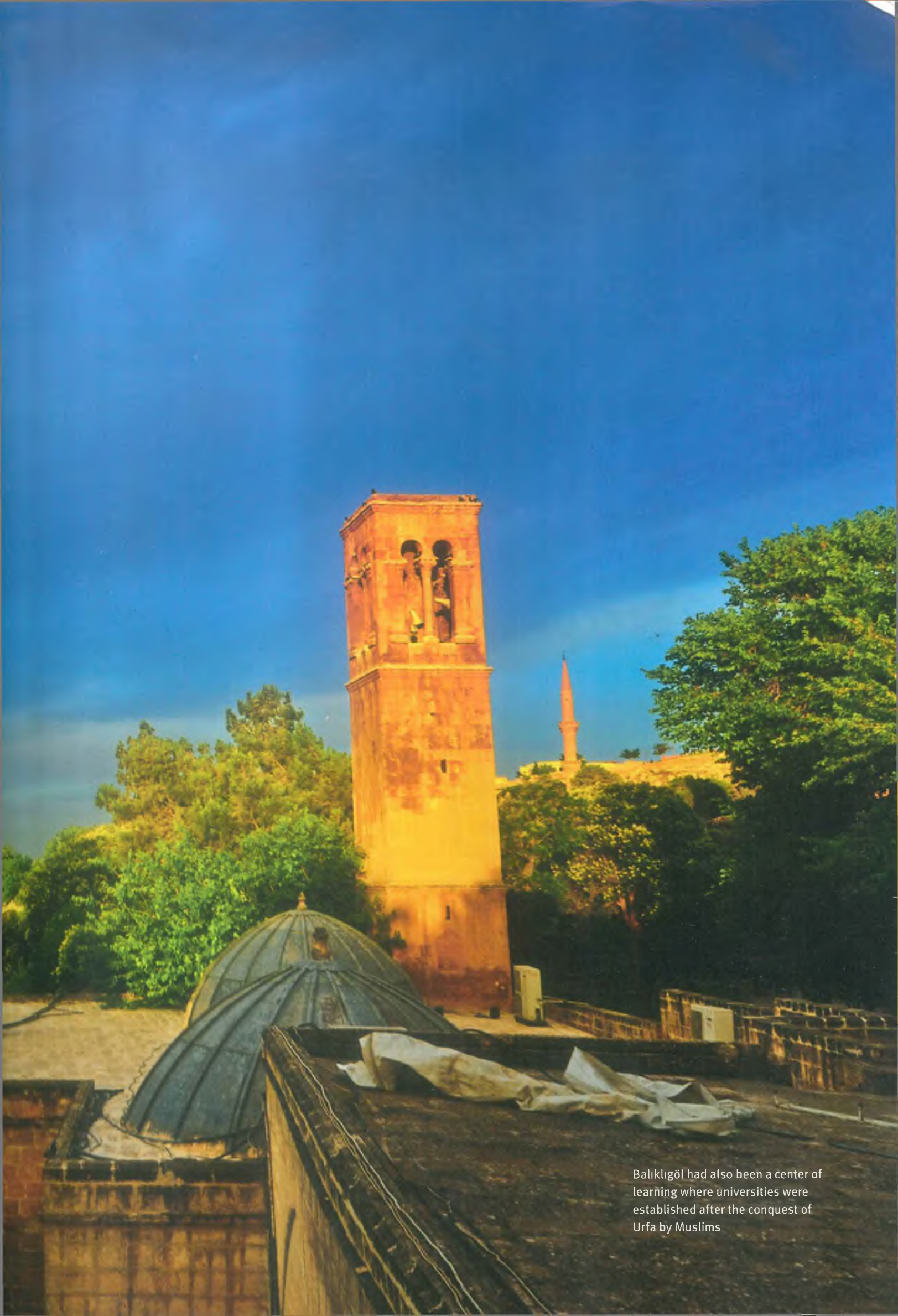
to mention Jabir ibn Hayyan (d. 815), known in the West as Geber, who also lived not far from Urfa and who must have at least visited Harran. He is said to have studied secret sciences under Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 765), great-grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh). Jabir established chemistry as a science, but he was also concerned with alchemy and astrology. The following verses of the Qur'an (18/al-Kahf – The Cave, 60-82) explain why Khidr was identified as Hermes Trismegistus:

Behold, Moses said to his attendant, "I will not give up until I reach the junction of the two seas or (until) I spend years and years in travel." But when they reached the junction, they forgot (about) their fish, which took its course through the sea (straight) as in a tunnel. When they had passed on (some distance), Moses said to his attendant: "Bring us our early meal; truly we have suffered much fatigue at this (stage of) our journey." He replied: "Did you see (what happened) when we betook ourselves to the rock? I did indeed forget (about) the fish: none but Satan made me forget to tell (you) about it: it took its course through the sea in a marvelous way!" Moses said: "That was what we were seeking after." So they went back on their footsteps, following (the path they had come). So they found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Ourselves and whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence. Moses said to him: "May I follow you, on the footing that you teach me something of the (Higher) Truth which you have been taught?" (The other) said: "Verily you will not be able to have patience with me!" "And how can you have patience about things about which your understanding is not complete?" Moses said: "You will find me, if Allah so wills, (truly) patient: nor shall I disobey you in anything." The other said: "If then you would follow me, ask me no questions about anything until I myself speak to you concerning it." So they both proceeded: until, when they were in the boat, he scuttled it. Said Moses: "Have you scuttled it in order to drown those in it? Truly a strange thing have you done!" He answered: "Did I not tell you that you can have no patience with me?" Moses said: "Rebuke me not for forgetting, nor grieve me by raising difficulties in my case." Then they proceeded: until, when they met a young man, he slew him. Moses said: "Have you slain an innocent person who had slain none? Truly a foul (unheard of) thing have you done!" He answered: "Did I not tell you that you can have no patience with me?" (Moses) said: "If ever I ask you about anything after this, keep me not in your company: then would you have received (full) excuse from my side." Then they proceeded: until, when they came to the inhabitants of a town, they asked them for food, but they refused them hospitality. They found there a wall on the point of falling down, but he set it up straight. (Moses) said: "If you had wished, surely you could have exacted some recompense for it!" He answered: "This is the parting between me and you: now will I tell you the interpretation of (those things) over which you were unable to hold patience. As for the boat, it belonged to certain men in dire want: they plied on the water: I but wished to render it unserviceable, for there was after them a certain king who seized on every boat by force. As for the youth, his parents were people of Faith, and we feared that he would grieve them by obstinate rebellion and ingratitude (to Allah and man). So we desired that their Lord would give them in exchange (a son) better in purity (of conduct) and closer in affection. As for the wall, it belonged to two youths, orphans, in the town; there was, beneath it, a buried treasure, to which they were entitled: their father had been a righteous man: So your Lord desired that they should attain their age of full strength and get out their treasure as a mercy (and favor) from your Lord. I did it not of my own accord. Such is the interpretation of (those things) over which you were unable to hold patience."



Floor inlay in the Russian Cathedral of Siena depicting Hermes Trismegistus as a contemporary of Moses





Balıklıgöl had also been a center of learning where universities were established after the conquest of Urfa by Muslims

an academy named Dar al-Hikmah or sometimes referred to as Bayt al-Hikmah (The House of Wisdom). They translated books at this center, which was established mainly as a library, with writings brought from the libraries of Alexandria, Jundishapur, India and Byzantium, as well as from Assyrian and Harranian libraries. Ma'mun sent a committee under the supervision of Salim al-Harrani to Byzantium to collect books in the Greek scientific tradition.²²

In addition to scholars, those interested in antiquity and the culture of the ancients visited these centers. According to Ibn al-Nadim, up to the time of Ma'mun, Sabeans had paid *jizya* (a tax paid by non-Muslims) in order to preserve their religious beliefs. When Ma'mun was about to make his journey, he wanted the



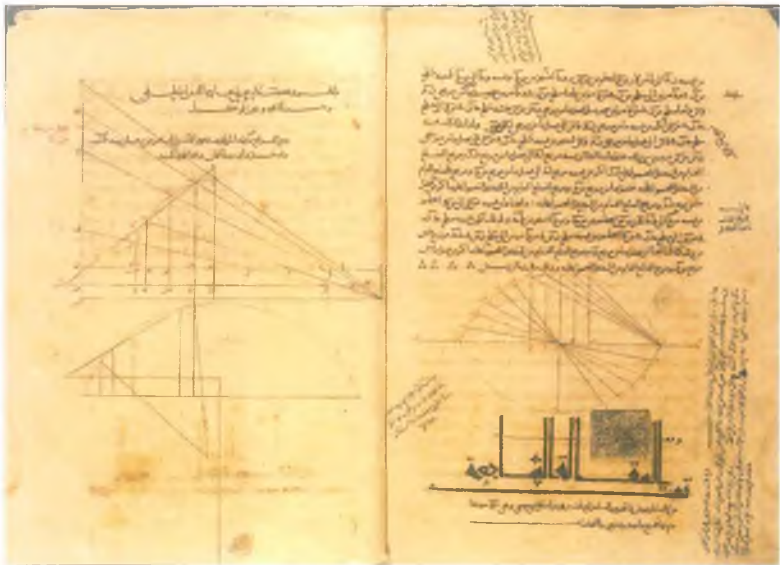
Halilürrahman Madrasa next to the balıklıgöl (Fishpond)

pagans to adopt one of the religions with a divinely revealed holy book. Some of them chose Islam, while others preferred to be Christian. However, Ma'mun died during the journey, so the Christians returned to their previous religion, whereas the Muslims stayed Muslim because of the death penalty for apostasy. Pagans in the region described themselves as Sabeans. Thabit ibn Qurra, who translated many important books into Arabic, was identified as one of Harran's pagans.²³

A Harranian scholar named Stefan al-Harrani was a famous doctor who participated in scientific organizations. We have no information about his life other than al-Qifti's remark that he was a doctor active in the early Abbasid period (c. 780-800).²⁴ One of the famous translators in the period of Ma'mun was Hajjaj ibn

Matar al-Harrani. He translated Euclidian Geometry into Arabic with the title *Usûl al-Handasah*. He also translated Ptolemy's *al-Majisti*, known in Latin translations as *Almagest*.²⁵ Ma'mun sent Salim al-Harrani and Hajjaj ibn Matar to Byzantium to collect old Greek books. It is highly possible that Salim also wrote or translated many books. However, other than several small chemistry pamphlets, none of his works are extant. Abu Qurra (826-910) was yet another scholar in Harran. He translated Aristotle's moral philosophy as *Fada'il al-Nafs* for Tahir ibn al-Husayn.²⁶

The Alexandrian school gradually lost its significance and could not maintain itself, and consequently, over approximately half of a century, the scholars who were active there moved to Harran.²⁷ The members of the Harran school later moved



yet again to Baghdad. Muslim scientists and philosophers benefited a great deal from the works they produced on theology, philosophy, astronomy, medicine and mathematics.²⁸ Another geographical name for the area was Al-Jazeera, the common name for the northern part of the region which lies between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.²⁹ In the first three centuries of Islamic civilization, the most important cities of the area in terms of science were Mosul, Raqqa, Ruha (Urfa), and Harran. Because many *hadith* reporters were brought up in this area, it was one of the favorite destinations for people seeking education, and importance was also given to medicine and astronomy.³⁰ Among these cities, Urfa and Harran were regarded as two of the most attractive because of the highly developed sciences. However, after the 9th century, other centers such as Baghdad, Kufa, Basra and other cities in Iran and central Asia such as Bukhara and Samarkand gained prominence. As a result, many scholars gradually moved to these centers, and eventually the School of Harran lost its previous significance.

(Above)
An artist's depiction of
Thabit ibn Qurra al-Harrani

(Above left)
Apollonius of Perga (d. 190
BC) Greek geometer: Pages
from Thabit ibn Qurra's
Arabic translation of his
Conics
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wikimedia.org/w/index.
php?curid=4071303](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4071303)

THE SCHOOL OF EDESSA

The School of Edessa was a theological school of great importance to the Syriac-speaking Assyrian world established in Urfa, which was called Edessa when the Seleucid Dynasty (312 BC–63 BC) was established by Seleucus I Nicator (c. 358–281 BC), a general of Alexander the Great. The School of Edessa was founded as early as the 2nd century by the kings of the Abgar dynasty.³¹ Let us briefly examine the history of this academy.

Edessa (Urfa), which lies near the Euphrates, has been a remarkable settlement throughout history on account of its geopolitical position. The city's hinterland is regarded as indispensable in terms of cultural history because of its scholars from the Pagan, Islamic and Christian cultures. The city is regarded by historians as having been the heart of Syria and Near Eastern civilization.³² Archeological findings in the area of Balıklıgöl and in Neolithic centers like Göbeklitepe and Karahan Tepe give us important clues about the city's cultural fabric. On this basis, we can understand that the city must have had cultural repute since prehistoric times. Archeological excavations in this region show that Edessa had been a center of religion since the Neolithic Age. Particularly after the invasion of Alexander the Great, diverse cultural influences and philosophical schools became prominent in the area. The Edessa region opened its doors to external influences after Alexander's invasion when the region fell under the hegemony of the Seleucid Empire. Subsequently, the city brought forth its first Assyrian literary and philosophical works. It has been recognized that Jews founded academies in all the colonies they had conquered. The efforts of Addai (St. Thaddeus) in propagating Christianity in Edessa started from within the Jewish colony in the city and to this purpose, a Christian church was constructed there. Addai also founded an academy for the same purpose, and this academy maintained itself in Edessa.³³

In the 2nd century AD, Assyrian literary and philosophical works came to the fore in Edessa.³⁴ The city had also accumulated scientific knowledge even before this. Before the establishment of the Christian academy in Edessa, there already existed an academy which taught Pagan and Jewish culture and theology. The academy of Edessa started with the purpose of disseminating Christianity and philosophy to the world. This academy can be thought of as embodying the history of the struggle between Hellenic and Semitic thought, and as the site of the victory of Hellenistic thought. After this spiritual war, the defeated Semitic side continued to influence the region's culture. The religion of the Hellenes in the area was based on the Semitic tradition. The expressions of this religion influenced kings who came from the West.³⁵ For example, in the 2nd century AD, there were many speakers of ancient Greek, even in the birthplace of the Assyrian alphabet. From the 2nd century AD onward, the city was under Christian, Jacobite, and Nestorian influence. In this period, the academy of Edessa was the stronghold of Assyrian theology, which was called "Antioch Theology" and banned by the Roman Empire. After the Antioch academy was closed, scholars there returned to Assyria and began working to clarify the Assyrian church's theology by casting it in the Nestorian mold. In the

later period, Edessa was influenced by the turbidity of the mysticism that had been transferred to the Eastern churches.³⁶

Between the 8th and 10th centuries, the scholars in Edessa embarked upon translating their antique philosophy into Arabic, thereby attracting the attention of Muslim philosophers.³⁷ The academic atmosphere which had existed since the 2nd century took on a new habilitment with the adoption of Christianity. Thus, "church literature" was composed mostly by the theologians and priests.³⁸ Because Edessa was the cradle of the Assyrian civilization and alphabet, the city was in competition with other surrounding cultural centers.³⁹ Edessa was especially a rival of Harran, which was flooded by students from the Middle East, Near East, and even from Europe.

In this period, we can see that the greatest emphasis was placed on the sciences, especially medicine. Schools were founded in this region in cities like Jundishapur, Nusaybin (Nisibis), and Ctesiphon. Furthermore, the Sassanian King Ardashir I (180–242 AD) sent private envoys to collect important books from Mesopotamia, India and Byzantium. In the Edessa School, history, geography, medicine, theology and astronomy were taught.⁴⁰ One of the important philosophers of this period was the Assyrian writer Bar Daysan (155–222 AD). Bar Daysan, who was from Edessa, was known for his pagan identity. He was born as an idolater, accepted Christianity and then reverted to his pagan culture. His ideas influenced the Manichaeism which arose in Iran in the 3rd century. The Academy of Edessa gained a new image, first with pagan culture and then with the subsequent Christian theology.

Christian preachers who opposed Gnosticism and paganism must have benefited from philosophical evidence.⁴¹ The Edessa Christian School, founded in 363–64 AD, carried this effort one step further. Sacred hymns and the Songs of Solomon were signs of Christian Gnosticism, and these were the products of the Bar Daysan School.⁴² During the first period of the Edessa and Nusaybin schools, the church fathers compiled a significant amount of literature and Edessa became the center of the local Syriac church.⁴³ After the invasion of Alexander the Great, the philosophical atmosphere was prepared for the entrance of Christianity. Many philosophy schools were established in Anatolia. After the pagan culture, it is believed that the school established in Urfa was compelled towards Jewish doctrine and then to Christian theology.

After the 2nd century AD, the Syriacs of the Nestorian-Jewish sect criticized the philosophy taken from Alexandria, and they used science to spread their own ideas. The Assyrians who adopted Nestorianism had fifty schools in the Al-Jazeera region alone, with Edessa taking the lead among them. Edessa remained the center of Pagan, Syriac/Aramaen, and Islamic cultures for a long time, preparing the ground for the flourishing of great philosophers and scientists. Barthold stated that there had been Mani and Jewish academies in existence before the establishment of the Christian academies.⁴⁴ These schools raised the importance of the region encompassing the Euphrates.

CTESIPHON

Ctesiphon, known in Arabic as *al-Mada'in*, was an ancient city located on the eastern bank of the Tigris about 35 kilometers south-east of present-day Baghdad.



Ctesiphon palace ruins with the central arch in 1864, and right, its present-day view

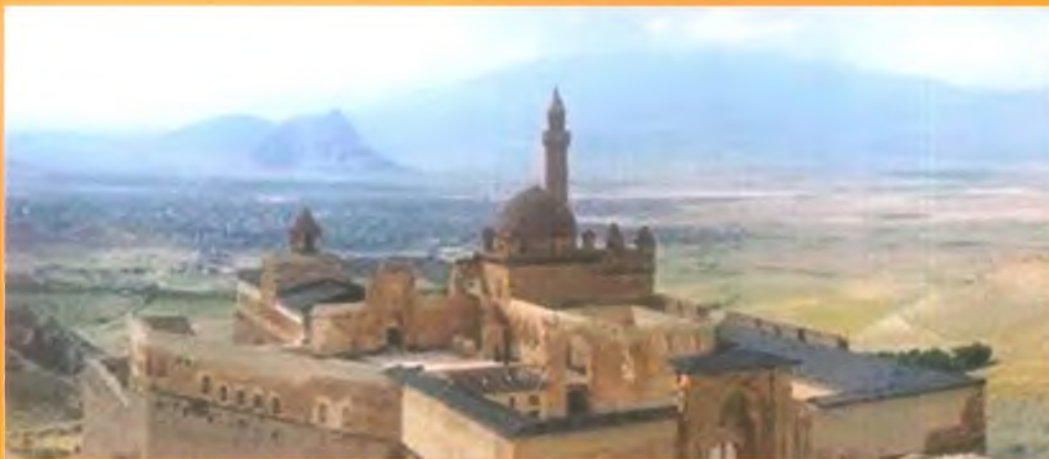
Wonders of the Past vol. 2, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4186752>

Ctesiphon was founded by Mithridates I of Parthia (195 BC – 132 BC) in the late second century BC as the site of a military camp established across from Seleucia. Later on, Ctesiphon developed as a political and commercial center. The city became the Empire's capital by about 58 BC, but eventually the city merged with the old Hellenistic capital of Seleucia and other nearby settlements to form a cosmopolitan metropolis with rich commercial activities. Ctesiphon and its environs were therefore sometimes referred to as "the cities". Ctesiphon fell four times to the Romans and once to Sassanian Empire. By 226, Ctesiphon was in the hands of the Sassanians, who also made it their capital and had laid an end to the Parthian dynasty of Iran. Ctesiphon was greatly enlarged and it flourished during their rule, and came to be known in Arabic as *al-Mada'in*, i.e., The Cities. It is reported that by the late 6th and early 7th centuries, Ctesiphon had become one of the largest cities in the world. Finally, in 638, the city was conquered by the Muslims. By the end of the 8th century it had fallen into decay and was depopulated. The most conspicuous structure remaining today is the great archway of Ctesiphon shown in the pictures here. As Ctesiphon developed throughout history, it also became a center of learning and scholarly activity and had mutual scientific exchanges with nearby Urfa.

NISIBIS (NUSAYBIN)

Nisibis was founded as the center of an Aramaean kingdom in 901 BC and was known by the name Našibīna. The Assyrian king Adad-Nirari II captured the city in 896. Then it was fully annexed to the Assyrian Empire and remained part of the Assyrian Empire until its collapse in 608 BC. This ancient Mesopotamian city was then re-established by successors of Alexander the Great as Antiochia Mygdonia.

Like many other cities in the region where Roman and Parthian powers confronted one another, Nisibis changed hands many times until it was finally captured by Muslims in 639, and remains today close to Syria within the borders of Turkey in the province of Mardin, near Urfa, with its Arabized name Nusaybin. The first theological, philosophical, and medical School of Nisibis was founded upon the introduction of Christianity to the city by the Assyrians of the Assyrian Church of the East. This theological school did not continue and when the city was captured by the Persians it was closed down. However, Ephrem the Syrian, a poet, commentator and preacher, joined the flight of Christians from Nisibis and reestablished the school at Edessa. However, later in the 5th century AD, the School of Nisibis was reopened. Its rich library possessed a good collection of Nestorian works and from its remains Ebed-Jesus, Bishop of Nisibis in the 14th century, composed his celebrated catalogue of ecclesiastical writers. This school later on also paid attention to Hellenic learning. Some of its masters afterwards played an important role in translating original Greek books into Syriac and Arabic. The importance of this school gradually diminished, and especially after the founding of the School of Baghdad in 832, it began to decline. Among its literary celebrities, mention should be made of its founder, Narses, in addition to Abraham- his nephew and successor, Abraham of Kashkar (c. 492-586 AD)- the restorer of monastic life, John, and Babai the Elder. (Based on the *Catholic Encyclopedia*; see also the Bibliography)



Nusaybin (Nisibis) today

The remains of the School of Nisibis next to the Church of Saint Jacob, as unearthed by excavations



The School of Edessa, which formally taught philosophy,⁴⁵ had come to be known as the “Academy of Iran.”⁴⁶ This academy was re-opened by the Sassanians in 363 in order to teach Greek to Iranian Christians. Because the city of Nusaybin had been abandoned by Iran, many inhabitants of Nusaybin migrated to Edessa. One of these was Saint Ephraim, who was the most important figure in the Edessa church. With Ephraim, Christian religious men started to struggle against the intellectual tradition in Urfa. Long before the campaign of Iran, Bar Daysan and his works had

deeply influenced Edessa. Christian theology gave an advantage to the Christian religious men who wanted to eradicate the traces of these works, including the logic of Aristotle and Neo-Platonism, and especially of Porphyry’s *Isagogue*.⁴⁷



Main centers of learning; Edessa, Nisibis, Jundishapur and other cities

In the School of Edessa, theology and medicine were important topics. There is evidence of the existence of a large hospital and medical training center. The

School of Edessa acted not only as an academy, but also as a center for the study of theology and philosophy. It also served as a hospital in which leprosy and scabies were treated.⁴⁸ The studies of the Edessa medical academy were based on those of Greek philosophers and theologians as well as Babylonian, Pagan, and Heretic (*Rafidhi*) traditions. This school accepted the style of Hippocrates and Galen, and the hospital was founded by Saint Ephraim.⁴⁹ Theology studies were established at the beginning of the 4th century, and proceeded to push medical education to the

background. The studies of both Hippocrates and Galen triggered an interest in medicine, and the number of medical students increased. This new development also helped increase theological studies.

In the meantime, there were two hospitals in Edessa. One of them, Saint Ephraim's Hospital, founded in 350 or 375, had a 300-bed capacity.⁵⁰ Scientific education was carried out in this academy after the 4th century. Many sources, such as the ecclesiastical history studies of Eusebius, were translated. Moreover, Bostra's *Titus* and his discourse against Manichaeism, and Eusebius' *Martyrs* and *Theophania* were translated into the Assyrian language.⁵¹ Mopseustia's *Theodore* and Porphyry's *Isagogue* were also translated. The most important scientific translation was done by a doctor from Antioch named Probus, who translated and interpreted Aristotle's *Analytica Priora*. The appointment of a priest who was a supporter of the thoughts of Anastasius caused them to break away from the Byzantine Catholic Church. This resulted in the Edessa Academy's becoming the center of the new sect and its theologians became heretic heroes.⁵²

The interest given to this philosophy increased because of newly arising sectarians. For example, the Nestorians played a great role in the spread of the Peripatetic (Arabized as *Mashshai*) philosophy of Aristotle. In Asia, the Nestorians were the strongest followers of Greek philosophy.⁵³ In the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the Assyrians had learned Greek so they did not need to translate sources into their mother tongue. Greek was accepted as an obligatory language for education and science for Assyrians in the 4th century as they were close to the Greek Orthodox Church. Aristotle's well-known book of logic, *Organon*, as well as other Aristotelian corpora such as *De Anima* and *Theology*, were widely read. Towards the end of the 4th century, Ephram the Syrian (d. 373), and later his follower Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa (d. 453), struggled against the heretics. However, following Rabbula, logic studies were begun by Ibas,⁵⁴ Bishop of Edessa (d. 435), who was a supporter of the Nestorian sect. At the end of the 5th century, Probus was assigned as a priest in Urfa and worked as a supporter of Nestorianism. However, Bishop Cyrus II of Edessa sought assistance from Emperor Zeno against the Nestorians, and in 489, Zeno had the Academy of Edessa closed down.⁵⁵

In fact, closure of the Academy of Edessa did not deflate aspirations toward science and philosophy. The starting point of this problem began with conflicts among Christians who were debating with each other on religious topics in the 4th century. Many who identified themselves as orthodox broke away from the orthodox sect. They were divided between the Jacobites, who acknowledged only the divine nature of Jesus, and the Nestorians, who accepted both his humanity and divinity together and saw Mary as a daughter of God, not the mother of God. The closure of the Edessa School due to the disputes among Christians did not extinguish enthusiasm for science.⁵⁶ As a matter of fact, philosophical studies in Urfa secretly progressed in the monasteries. Sergius of Reshaina (d.536), a physician and priest, was famous for his studies in the area of logic and he continued the tradition of this discipline in Urfa.⁵⁷ Teachers like Sergius continued teaching informally after the closing of the Urfa (Edessa) School.



Front view of the ancient
School of Harran

Closure of the Academy of Edessa triggered the opening of two new schools, the academies of Nusaybin and Kinnasrin. Narses was invited to be the head of the Academy of Nusaybin by the Nestorian bishop Bensuna,⁵⁸ who had been trained at Edessa. Compared to other Assyrian schools, the academy at Nusaybin was considered to be of great importance. The best-known scholar at the academy was Paulos Pensa, who wrote *Introduction to Logic*, dedicated to the Iranian emperor Anushirvan I (531-569). In the preface of his book, Pensa argued in favor of the superiority of philosophy to Christianity, claiming “philosophy is the genuine knowledge of everything.” The Academy of Nisibis, which was a continuation of the Academy of Edessa, enjoyed a brilliant period until the 7th century. In the 9th century, a new academy was opened in Baghdad and the Academy of Nusaybin lost its popularity.⁵⁹ At the madrasa of Nusaybin, in addition to religious knowledge, the medical books of Hippocrates and Galen and the logic of Aristotle were taught.⁶⁰

The Academy of Kinnasrin, founded in the year 530, gave great importance to Greek philosophy.⁶¹ This academy was the most important school of theology for Assyrian society, and later it took the place of the Academy of Edessa as far as the study of philosophy was concerned. Some of the best-known scholars of this school were Severe Sebaht (d. 667), Baladen Athanasios (d. 696) and Jacob of Edessa (d. 708).⁶² With the conquests of Islam reaching north Mesopotamia, the captured cities became centers of knowledge and the efforts in translation by the scholars

trained there paved the way for a new era.⁶³ Jacob of Edessa was a distinguished 7th century Assyrian scholar known as Yakup el-Ruhavî (633-708) by the Muslims.⁶⁴ He had studied at the Academy of Kinnesrin. In the 8th century AD, invasions made times difficult for Jacob and the Nestorians.

THE ISLAMIC SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT AND SCIENCE

It is known that there was peace in Syrian cities under the dominion of the Umayyad dynasty (661-751). In the meantime, Christian Assyrians gave up struggling amongst themselves. Moreover, they were under protection of the *dhimmi* law. A Christian Assyrian named Abu Nuh al-Anbar (d. 803) wrote an essay against the Islamic religion called "Denial of the Quran" during his formal duty in Egypt.⁶⁵ Although there were a few skirmishes with the Muslims, later on they were able to establish peace. In this period, Assyrians were recruited to translate Greek philosophical and scientific books into Arabic. Philosophical translations reached a peak during the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun (815-833).⁶⁶ The academicians who had been brought up in this cultural environment were engaged to translate many works at the academy of Dar al-Hikmah.

The following were the main translators:

- Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d. 873)
- Ishaq ibn Hunayn (d. 911)
- Theodore Abū Qurrah (c. 750's-823) born in Urfa (Edessa), Bishop of Harran
- Abdullah ibn Nazima al-Himsi (d. 830)
- 'Abdishū' Ibn Bahriz (750-830)
- Thabit ibn Qurra al-Harrani (826-901)
- Abu Yahya al-Marwazi (850-930)
- Abu Ishaq Ibrahim al-Quqayri (d. circa 940)

Philosophical undertakings began with the Academy of Edessa and went on till the opening of Dar al-Hikmah (more commonly known as Bayt al-Hikmah) in Baghdad. Members of the Edessa and Harran academies were active in this translation process and the translation efforts at Bayt al-Hikmah can be assumed to be a continuation of these earlier philosophical activities. For example, al-Farabi (870-950) took lessons from Yuhanna ibn Haylan and read Aristotle's *Organon*, translated as "al-Burhan". The philosophical tradition in Islam was mostly shaped by the Academy of Edessa and continued with Arabic translations in the period of the Abbasids. Edessa was the center of church studies and literature in the Euphrates valley for 900 years. Thus, Urfa had a major role in the success of religious and literary activities there.⁶⁷ Thanks to the Academy of Edessa, Hellenic science and philosophy were transferred to the Arabs and later, from the Arabs to medieval Europe.⁶⁸

Scholars Active in the Edessa and Harran Schools up to the Early Centuries of Islam

- Bar Daysan (115–222)
- Theodore Abu Qurra (750–820)
- Zayd ibn abi Unayseer Ruhawi (709–743)
- Job al-Abrash of Edessa (b. 760)
- Tell Mahreli Dionysius (d. 845)
- Theodosius (d. 832)
- Matthew of Edessa (?)
- Monk Grigor (1136–1162)
- Vahram of Edessa (?)
- Ibas (d. 457)
- Theophilus of Edessa (695–785)
- Sergius of Resulayn (?)
- Gabriel of Edessa (?)
- Doctor Isa of Edessa (?)
- Ya'qub al-Ruhawi (Jacob of Edessa) (633–708)
- Maymun ibn Mihran (660–736)
- Abdulkarim ibn Malikabu Sa'id al-Harrani (d. 745)
- Husayf ibn Abdurrahman al-Hidrami al-Harrani (d. 745)
- Thabit ibn Qurra (Abul Hasan al Harrani) (821–901)
- Hunayn ibn Ishaq (834–901)
- Ali ibn Isa (?)
- Sinan ibn Thabit ibn Qurra (?)
- Thabit ibn Sinan ibn Thabit ibn Qurra (d. 973)
- Ibrahim ibn Hilal al-Sabi'i al-Harrani (925–996)
- Hilal ibn Mubassir ibn Ibrahim al-Sabii (b. 970)
- Abu Ishaq Ibrahim ibn Zahrum al-Harrani (d. 920)
- Hilal ibn Ibrahim ibn Zahrum al-Sabii al-Harrani (?)
- Yuhanna ibn Haylan, the Nestorian (d. 941)



Al-Battani



Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Jabir ibn Sinan al-Harrani al-Battani (858-929), known in the Latin world as Albatenius, was a notable astronomer. He introduced the effective use of mathematics in astronomy and a number of trigonometric relations. His *Kitāb al-Zij* was frequently quoted by many medieval astronomers, including Copernicus. Al-Battani calculated the solar year as being 365 days, 5 hours, 46 minutes and 24 seconds which is only 2 minutes and 22 seconds off. Al-Battani was very instrumental in the development of science and astronomy. In fact, Copernicus quoted him 23 times in the book that initiated the Copernican Revolution, the *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*.

The well-known Muslim philosopher **Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Tarkan al-Farabi** (872-950), known in the medieval West as Alfarabius, was reputed to have studied with the scholars of Harran. It is well known that he studied under Abu Bishr Matta ibn Yunus (d. 942) in Baghdad, and then under Yuhanna ibn Haylan, the Nestorian (d. 941), in Harran.

Philosophical thought in Islamic civilization developed gradually on the basis of the Islamic world view inspired by the Qur'an and inculcated into the mind of

early Muslims by the Prophet Mohammed (Pbuh). This worldview was suitable for cultivating knowledge and led to a tremendous outpouring of knowledge and learning as a result of these individual sciences that emerged from Islamic civilization. At this time Muslims were introduced to Greek philosophical thought, which began a translation movement from Greek into Arabic. Al-Farabi was the first Aristotelian philosopher after al-Kindi (d. 873) to build a philosophical system based on the Islamic world view. He greatly influenced medieval Europe.

- Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Salama al-Harrani (d. 807)
- Muhammad ibn 'Ubaydullah al-Musabbihi (977-1029)
- Ghars al-Ni'mah Muhammad ibn Hilal al-Sabii (1025-1087)
- Hayat ibn Qays al-Harrani (1107-1185)
- 'Ali ibn 'Umar al-Harrani (1116-1164)
- Abu'l-Sana Hammad ibn Hibatullah al-Harrani (1117-1202)
- Abdullah ibn Nasr al-Harrani (1154-1227)
- Abdulqadir al-Harrani (1169-1236)
- Abdusselam ibn Taymiyyah al-Harrani (1194-1254)
- Muhammad ibn Abdulwahhab al-Harrani (1213-1276)
- 'Abdulqadir ibn Abdullah al-Ruhawi al-Harrani (1141-1215)

Other Scientists Contributing to the Intellectual Tradition in the Area

- Fatima bint 'Abdirrahman al-Harraniyya (845-924)
- Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Salam ibn Abdullah al-Bakhili al-Harrani (d. 808)
- Abu Ja'fari Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Kuda'i al-Nufayli al-Harrani (d. 849)
- Abdullah ibn al-Hasan ibn Abi Shu'ayb al-Harrani (821-907)
- Ahmed ibn Omer ibn Yunus al-Harrani (d. 975)
- 'Ali ibn Allan al-Harrani (d. 966)
- 'Ali ibn Muhammad Abu'l Kasim al-Harrani (945-1041)
- Amiduddin ibn Sallama ibn al-Ruha al-Harrani (d. 970)
- Abu 'Ali al-Qusayri al-Harrani (867-945)
- Abu Aruba Abi Ma'sar al-Sulami al-Harrani (835-930)
- Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Nufayl al-Kudai al-Harrani (d. 848)
- Yunus al-Tabib al-Harrani (?-Most probably 10th century)
- Abu'l-Hasan (or al-Husayin) Hilal al-Harrani (969-1056)
- Abu 'Uruba al-Harrani (897-974)
- Husayn ibn Abi Masan al-Harrani (835-930)
- Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Manjahini al-Harrani (825-916)
- Abu Shu'ayb Abdullah ibn Husayn ibn Ahmed ibn Abi Shu'ayb al-'Umawi al-Harrani (d. 1029)
- Muhammad ibn Abi'l-Qasim al-Harrani (d. 1029)
- Muhammad Abi'l-Muzaffar al-Harrani (899-989)
- Muhammad ibn Mukhtar al-Harrani (d. 1034)
- Muhammad al-Musabbihi al-Harrani (d. 1035)
- Musa ibn A'yan Abu Sa'id al-Harrani (d. 793)
- Al-Nusayli al-Saghir al-Harrani (d. 885)
- Sulayman ibn Sayf ibn Dirham al-Harrani (d. 888)



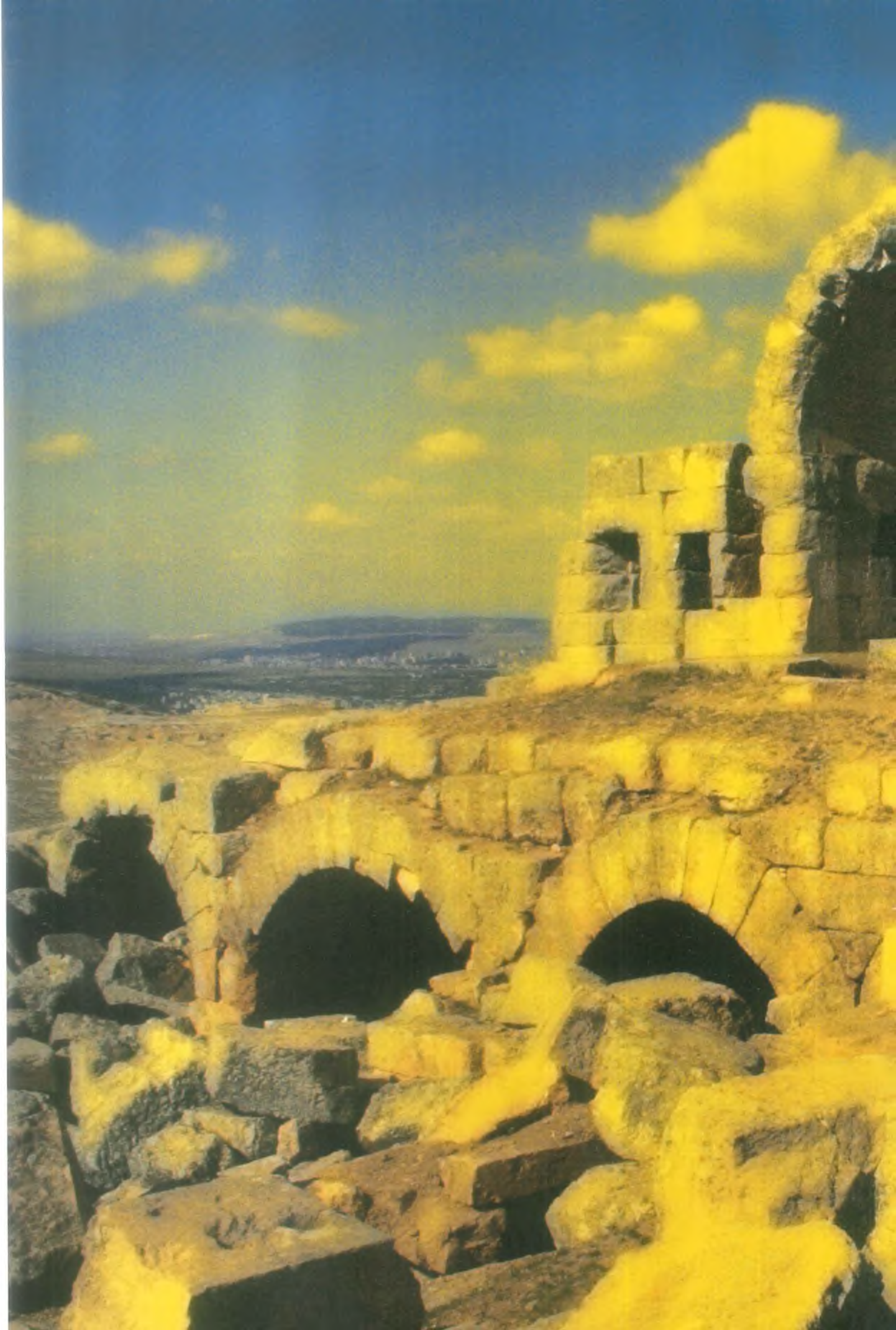
Ruins of the School of Jundishapur

JUNDISHAPUR

Another center of learning in the ancient Near East was Jundishapur, known by its Persian name as Gondēshāpūr, which was the intellectual center of the Sassanid Empire. The city was founded in 260 AD by the Sassanid King Shahpur I in Khuzistan (in modern-day Iran, about 60 km. north of the Persian Gulf). Although the local language was Syriac, many scholars were educated in Greek because it was used for discussions and for some new publications. The Sassanid monarch Khusraw I (531-579AD), called Anushiravan, gave refuge to various Greek philosophers and Nestorian Assyrians fleeing religious persecution by the Byzantine Empire. As a result, an academy was established there which then became known for its medical school and higher learning. The significance of this school continued until the city was conquered by the Muslims. The school also lost significance because its best professors moved to Harran or to Baghdad where they continued their studies.

- 'Ali ibn Himmisa al-Sawwad-Harrani (945-1049)
- Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn 'Umar ibn 'Ali al-Darir al-Zahid, al-Hanbali (d. 1095)
- Abu'l-Qasim Nasr ibn al-Husayn ibn Hamid al Harrani (?)
- Abu'l-Hassan 'Ali ibn Omer ibn Abbas al-Harrani (1117-1164)
- Zahiruddin Mansur ibn Nasr ibn al-Attar al-Harrani (d. 1179)
- Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Sadaqat al-Harrani (d. 1188)
- Abu'l-Sana Hammad ibn Hibatullah al-Harrani (1117-1196)
- Taqiyyuddin Abu'l-Fazi al-Tamam Abi'l-Fazi Ilyas ibn Hamid al-Harrani (d. 1197)
- Abu'l-Faraj 'Abdulmun'im ibn Abdulwahhab ibn Kulayb al-Harrani (1106-1200)
- Shamsuddin Abu'l-Fath Asrullan ibn Abdulaziz al-Harrani (d. 1203)
- Abu Abdullah Espah-Mir ibn Muhammad ibn Nu'man al-Harrani (d. 1204)
- Najm al-Din Abu Muhammad Abdulmun'im ibn 'Ali ibn Hibetullah al-Harrani (d. 1204)
- Hamza ibn 'Ali ibn Hamza ibn Kubayti (1129-1206)
- Abu Muhammad Abdulmalik ibn Ya'is al-Harrani (d. 1213)
- Shams al-Din Abu'l-Fath 'Umar ibn As'ad ibn al-Muhajja al-Harrani (1162-1221)
- Abu'l-Rabi Kamaluddin Sulayman ibn 'Umar ibn al-Musabbak al-Harrani (d. 1273)
- Abu'l-Fazi Yusuf ibn Fadlullah al-Sakakini al-Harrani (1204-1244)
- Ya'qub ibn Sabr ibn Barakat al-Majun al-Harrani (1159-1229)
- Nasihuddin Abdulwahhab ibn Zak ibn Jumayyi al-Harrani (d. 1231)
- Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Imad al-Harrani (d. 1234)
- Muwaffaquddin Hamd ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Barakat al-Harrani (1158-1236)
- Nasuhiddin Abdulqadir ibn Abdulmun'im ibn Salamat al-Harrani (1169-1236)
- Sayfuddin Abdulghani ibn Fakhruddin Muhammad ibn Taymiyyah al-Harrani (1159-1243)
- Abdullatif ibn Abi'l-Faraj ibn Muhammad ibn al-Kubbayti (1159-1243)
- Abdurrahman ibn 'Umar ibn Barakat al-Harrani (d. 1246)
- Abu'l-Abbas Ahmad ibn Salamat al-Najjar al-Harrani (d. 1248)
- Najd al-Din Abu'l-Barakat Abdussalam ibn Abdullah al-Taymiyyah (1194-1254)
- 'Isa ibn Salamat ibn Sa'im al-Harrani (1156-1254)
- Nasihuddin ibn al-Zarrad Abu Bakr ibn Yusuf ibn Abi Bakr al-Harrani (1247-1275)
- Abdulqadir ibn Abdulghani ibn Fakhruddin ibn Taymiyyat al-Harrani (1215-1273)
- Abu Tahir Ibrahim ibn Yahya ibn Ghannam al-Hanbali al-Harrani (d. 1275)
- Abu'l-Faraj Abdullatif ibn Abulmun'im al-Harrani al-Hanbali (1182-1273)
- Jamaluddin Abu Zakariyya Yahya ibn Abi Mansur Fath ibn Rafi al-Harrani (1187-1279)
- Abu'l-Mahasin Abdul'alim ibn Abdussalam ibn Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Taymiyyah al-Harrani (1230-1284)
- Izzuddin Abu'l-'izz Abdul'aziz ibn Abdulmun'im ibn al-Sakr al-Harrani (1198-1287)
- Najm al-Din Ahmad ibn Hamdan ibn Sabib ibn Hamdan al-Harrani (1207-1295)
- Sayfuddin Abdulghani ibn Yahya ibn Muhammad ibn Kadir al-Harrani (1247-1309)
- Badruddin Abu'l-Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid ibn Ibrahim al-Harrani (1252-1317)
- Sharafuddin Abdullah ibn Abdul'alim ibn Abdussalam al-Harrani (1267-1317)
- Najduddin Abu'l-Fida Ismail ibn Muhammad ibn al-Farra al-Harrani (1248-1329)

- Zaynuddin Abu Muhammad 'Ubadah ibn Abdulghani ibn Mansur al-Harrani (1273–1305)
- Abdulqadir ibn Muhammad ibn Abdulwahid al-Tabrizi al-Harrani (b. 1250)
- Badruddin Abu Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Senaya ibn Walid al-Harrani (1272–1348)
- Zaynuddin Abu Hafs 'Umar ibn Sa'dullah ibn Najih al-Harrani (b. 1286)
- Abdullah Abu Bakr al-Harrani (1154–1226)
- Abdulwahhab ibn Abi Habba al-Harrani (1122–1192)
- Ahmad ibn Sabib al-Harrani (1234–1296)
- Mansur ibn Nasr ibn al-Attar al-Harrani (1138–1179)
- Mawhub al-Jazari al-Harrani (b. 1276)
- Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Jazari al-Harrani (b. 1290)
- Muhammad ibn Hibatullah ibn Najjar al-Harrani (b. 1182)
- Muhammad ibn Taymiyyah al-Harrani (1147–1225)
- 'Umar ibn Ikrima Abu'l-Qasim al-Harrani (1078–1164)
- Salman ibn 'Umar al-Harrani (d. 1263)
- Sirajuddin al-Hanbali al-Harrani (d. 1245)
- Ya'qub al-Menjemikli al-Harrani (1159–1229)
- Yusuf ibn Waslullah al-Harrani (d. 1225)
- Khadijah bint Muhammad ibn Abdillah ibn al-Harrani (?)
- Sittudar bint Muhammad ibn Abdillah ibn Taymiyyah al-Harrani (d. 1287)
- Zaynab bint Makki ibn 'Ali ibn Kamil al-Harrani (1226–1289)
- Abdulghani ibn Taymiyyah al-Harrani (1185–1241)
- Abdul'alim ibn al-Harrani (1230–1284)
- Abduqadir al-Ruhawi al-Harrani (d. 1230)
- Abdulmun'im ibn Abdilwahhan Abu'l-Faraj al-Ajuni al-Harrani (1106–1199)
- Abdulmun'im ibn Hibatullah al-Harrani (d. 1204)
- Najm al-Din Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Sabir ibn Barakat ibn Hawsara al-Harrani (d. 1228)
- Abu'l-Fatir Sadaqa al-Harrani (1120–1199)
- Abu'l-Qasim Mahmud al-Harrani (1148–1236)
- Abu Mansur al-Harimi al-Harrani (d. 1245)
- Fityat ibn Mansur al-Harrani (d. 1168)
- Hammad ibn Abi'l-Fadil al-Harrani (1117–1202)
- Hibatullah ibn Nasr al-Harrani (d. 1184)
- Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn 'Imad ibn Muhammad al-Harrani (d. 1234)
- Abu al-Sasa Hammad ibn Hibatullah ibn Fudayl al-Harrani (1117–1201)
- Ishaq ibn 'Ali Ruhawi (?)
- Husam al-Ruhawi (d. 1451)
- Haji 'Ali Efendi al-Kurdi (d. 1911)
- Mevlana Khalil Efendi (d. 1658)
- Hasan Efendi (d. 1641)
- Haji Hasan Efendi (d. 1780)
- Ahmet Hikmet Efendi (1832–1878)
- Abbas Vasik Efendi (1859–1922)
- Abdulhamid Efendi (Mullah Hamid) (1892–1973)
- Abdulwahid Efendi (1864–1932)
- Haji Abdurrahman Efendi (1865–1968)⁶⁹





ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

A. CİHAT KÜRKÇÜOĞLU





Halfeti exhibiting the traditional architecture of Urfa



Halilürrahman Mosque next to the Balıklıgöl (fishpond) and with a view of the Citadel in the background

PREHISTORY AND ANTIQUITY

The world's oldest temple ruins and examples of plastic art, in the form of carved and sculpted works, have been discovered in Göbeklitepe, located within the precincts of the village of Örencik in Şanlıurfa Province. This site has already been mentioned in the first part of this book covering the history of Urfa. Archeological excavations taking place in the area since 1995 have been concentrated on the remains of a series of temples connected to each other belonging to the late Paleolithic Age, approximately 11,000 BC. Architectural remains from antiquity have also been uncovered in the following locations:

- Nevalı Çori site near Angaç (Kantara),
- Kumar Tepe, a hill between the Big and Small Mounds near Bozova,
- The Mezraa Telaylat mound near Birecik (Neolithic Era, 8500-7500 BC).

These findings reveal Urfa to be one of the world's oldest centers of religion, architecture, the plastic arts and agriculture.

The excavations at these sites have uncovered archeological evidence belonging to the Chalcolithic, Bronze, Iron and Hellenistic ages, a number of Islamic states and the Byzantine Empire, thus demonstrating the richness of Şanlıurfa in terms of its cultural and architectural history. The first and most magnificent churches were built in Urfa (Edessa), which accepted Christianity during the religion's earliest years. A tribute written for the church of Sophia, which



Bronze statue of a bull



was built during the Byzantine period near the cave where Prophet Abraham was born, reads, “This building is a world example in terms of size and balance. The waters surround the building like the oceans surround the world. Its dome rises like a sky without a pillar and the golden mosaics shine like stars.”

Ruins of the ancient city of Shu'ayb which is associated with the prophet Jethro



Göbeklitepe temples

Inside the cave where
people of Urfa think that
Abraham was born



The 7th century Islamic historian al-Muqaddasi (also called al-Maqdisi) stated that the mosaic dome of the Sophia church was one of the three wonders of the world, a distinction it held until the construction of the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Though waste, extravagance and luxury are forbidden in Islam, al-Muqaddasi reports that the reason for the construction of the splendid Umayyad mosque in Damascus was that “Islamic mosques should not fall behind the glory of the churches of Edessa.” This statement alone is evidence of the magnificence and historical importance of the Edessa churches. The al-Firdaws Mosque (Mosque of Heaven / Harran Grand Mosque) was built in Harran during the Umayyad dynasty, between the years 744 and 750, and is considered a masterpiece of Islamic architecture with its splendid monumental beauty and opulent stone decoration. In the rest of this chapter, we will concentrate on Islamic architectural monuments.



Şanlıurfa Archeological Museum



Old Urfa streets

In Urfa during the Islamic period dimensions in architecture were perceptible through a leisurely walk within the city. Narrow streets, mosques, houses, and madrasas were all constructed to maximize the human social experience rather than on a massive scale in honor of the Divine or a great ruler. These human-scale structures were designed to make it easy to meet others on the narrow streets of Urfa, where a salutation with an oncoming person almost certainly would have taken place. Mosques and prayer halls had a similar design. Almost everyone would be within sight, and no one would get lost within the structure. One would not have felt alone in the famous single-storey courtyard houses of Edessa either. The courtyard was the place in the home where people gathered to socialize, cultivating personal relationships and stimulating conversation. As a result, all the houses had a courtyard and each room of the house had direct access to it.

THE ISLAMIC PERIOD

The region went through different phases informed by the architectural tradition that accumulated in the city over the course of history. Different types of design arose as the result of interactions of multiple aesthetic periods lasting twelve thousand years until the end of the Ottoman period. Architects in Urfa brought out new variations on old traditions, seeking innovation rather than an imitation of their predecessors; it is possible to observe this richness in each branch of architecture in Urfa.



The different architectural designs of the famous Urfa houses also attract attention. Although they seem like they all contain a stereotyped design, the *iwan*, the fact that one can see thousands of homes in Urfa without encountering two exactly alike is a testament to how much importance architects there gave to variety in their designs.



Urfa house with iwan

CLASSIFICATION OF THE ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE OF ŞANLIURFA

After the year 639 AD, different architectural works in Şanlıurfa were commissioned under the sovereignty of the Islamic Umayyad, Abbasid, Seljuk, Zengid, Ayyubid, Karakoyunlu, Akkoyunlu, Mamluk and Ottoman empires. These included:

1. Religious Architecture (Mosques and masjids, minarets, tombs and cemeteries)
2. Dervish Lodges and Madrasas
3. Public Institutions (Schools, hospitals, orphanages, libraries)
4. Water-Related Architecture (Baths, fountains and water taps, bridges, aqueducts, a *maqsam* system, reservoirs, cisterns)
5. The Citadel (City walls, gates, interior tower)
6. Commercial Structures (Markets and bazaars, covered markets, trading centers, caravanserais),
7. Domestic Architecture (Palaces and mansions, traditional Urfa houses)

Among what we would regard as religious architecture in Urfa, there are 50 mosques (three of them converted churches) and masjids (small houses or halls for prayer, “lesser mosques” in Turkish, four of them being cave mosques), seven dervish lodges, and 20 tombs. In terms of social structures, there are seven madrasas, two schools, one library, two hospitals, and one orphanage. Of water-related structures,

there are six bridges, 13 street taps, two public fountains, one *maqşam*, eight baths, and three ablution cubicles (*çimecek/gusûlhâne*) for the poor. There are only remnants of the citadel and the city walls. The structures of commerce include 11 trading centers, eight bazaars, and one printing house. For domestic architecture, there are many houses and mansions, and two monuments. We shall briefly introduce some of these with their descriptions and pictures.

RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

Mosques and Masjids

According to writings dating back to the 16th century, 34 mosques and masjids were registered in Urfa. Evliya Çelebi visited there in the middle of the 17th century and indicated that there were 22 mosques and about 67 neighborhoods at the time of his stay.

The mosques and masjids (prayer halls) believed to have once existed in Şanlıurfa are the Siverekli Ali Mosque, Korkmaz Haji Mosque, Çine Mosque, Tarihi (historical) Masjid, Shah Hussein Mosque, Mahkeme (Court) Masjidi-Şerif, Haji Mihman Mosque, Meşarki Mosque, Haji Sadıka Masjid, Kubbe (Dome) Masjid, Musa Efendi Mosque, Kutbiye Mosque, Sakibiye Mosque, Abdalbaki Masjid (near the mosque of Hızanoğlu), Acemler (Persian) Masjid (near Hamidiye Madrasa, in the Harran Gate neighborhood), Beg (Bey) Kapı Mosque (different from the Kara (Black) Musa Mosque), Gelenli Masjid (in the Dabbâkhane neighborhood), Haji Hamza Mosque, Khalili Mosque, Kal 'a Mosque, Kanberiye Mosque, Kubbe Mosque, Kuşçu Ali Masjid, Sıdıkiyya (Charity) Masjid (in the Mızrakçı Market), Sakib Masjid (in the Sakib Tekke at Akarbaşı) Haji Ghazi Masjid, Halilürrahman Lodge Masjid, and the Hükümet Konağı (Government House) Masjid.

These mosques and masjids were listed in *qadi* records dating to the second half of the 19th century, but they no longer exist today. Neighborhoods such as Gelenli Masjid, Yırtık Sheikh Masjid, and Helvacı Masjid took their names from these religious structures. However, the location of these masjids and neighborhoods have not been identified to date. In the Aleppo Province yearbook, it is stated that in Şanlıurfa there were 24 mosques and two masjids in 1876, 31 mosques and masjids in 1887, 77 mosques and masjids in 1893, and 58 mosques in 1894.

Within the last twenty years, historical mosques such as Sultan Bey, Ihlasiye, Kamberiye, Damat Sulayman Pasha, Abdülvahid Hodja and Kutbeddin mosques have been demolished and reinforced concrete mosques have been constructed in their place. In spite of this, in Şanlıurfa, there are still 50 historical mosques and masjids. The oldest is the Grand Mosque, constructed during the Zengi dynasty and estimated to date from 1170-75 AD. The Zengids (1144-82) and the Ayyubids (1182-93) were prominent in Urfa during the period when the Sheikh Mas'ud Lodge and the masjid inside it were constructed (1183), making it possible that the structure dates from the Ayyubid period. The Halilürrahman Mosque is dated 1211 and was built during the Ayyubid period, replacing an old church. The Hasan Padishah and Nur Ali mosques belong to the Akkoyunlu period in the 15th century.

Aside from those mentioned above, almost all of the remaining mosques in Urfa belong to the Ottoman dynasty. It is understood from the inscription dated 1523 that the first Ottoman mosque in Urfa was Mevlid Halil. The Saladin, Jirgis (George) and Fırfırlı (frilly) mosques were converted from Ottoman-period churches. Four of the *maşjids* in Urfa are caves carved into the rock, their dates not known precisely.

Minarets

The minarets of the Urfa mosques also display rich variety. The piazza balcony of the Arabi Mosque, which is covered during rainy weather and open during clear weather, is the sole example of this feature among the mosques of Urfa. The minarets of the Kadioğlu and Narıncı mosques attract attention in that they are situated over an arched gateway. Another name used by locals for the Kadioğlu Mosque is Dipsiz Minareli Camii (bottomless minaret mosque). Minarets with both cylindrical and polygonal bodies were used on the Hasan Padişah and Narıncı mosques. The Dabbâkhane and Pazar mosques are notable in that their minarets are a combination of octagonal, dodecagonal, and cylindrical shapes. In addition, the shape of the *minber* (pulpit) was occasionally used for the minarets of mosques in Urfa, particularly in the former Ömeriyye, Şehbenderiyye, Miskınler, and Mevlid-i Halil mosques.

Tombs and Cemeteries

There are twenty tombs belonging to the Islamic period in Şanlıurfa. These include Abdulkadir Kemalettin Arbil, Arab Baba, Müslüm Baba, Bediüzzaman Ahmed al-Hamadani, Çift Kubbe, Hacı Kilib, Hafız Muhammed Selim Efendi, Hekim Dede, Nebih Efendi, Ruz Bey and Ali Bey, Şahabeddin Ahmed, Sheikh Ali Dede, Sheikh Abu Bakr, Sheikh Saleh Tayyar Mehmed Pasha and his son Hussein Bey, Yakup Kalfa, and Sheikh Mas'ud. Among them, the *divanhane* of Sheikh Mas'ud and Ahmet el-Hamadani belong to the Ayyubid period, while the others belong to the Ottoman period.

The Muslim cemeteries located in Urfa up until forty years ago were the Bediüzzaman, Harran Kapı (in the Tepe district), İtyiyen (meaning “dog eaten”,



Pazar Mosque with its minaret

where the poor and homeless would be buried and which stretched from the northern outskirts of the Urfa Tower to the back of Ayn-ı Zeliha Lake), Millet Han (located south of the present-day State Hospital), Gazhân (at the old Şıra Bazaar south of today's Revenue building) and Bey Gate (covering the area of the Agricultural Products Office, the old Wheat Market, and the Remziye Erseven Healthcare Center). Of these, only the Harran Kapı and Bediüzzaman cemeteries survive, in addition to the Çift Kubbe family tomb, whereas the others have been destroyed for residential development.

DERVISH LODGES AND MADRASAS

Dervish Lodges (*Tekkeler / Zaviyeler*)

Evliya Çelebi explains the religious and mystical life of the people of Urfa with the following sentences: "...some neighborhoods have two or three [dervish] lodges because the townspeople are pious people who keep to their five times daily prayers, owning spirituality and avoiding sin." He specifically mentions the Halilürrahman and Seyyid Münci lodges. Based on 16th century charity writings, it is understood that there were four small dervish lodges (*zaviyeler*) in Urfa: Ayn-ı Halilürrahman, Mevlud-ı Halilürrahman, Sheikh Mas'ud Dede-i Horasani and Mencik. Of these, only the Sheikh Mas'ud Zaviye has survived. It dates to 1183, placing it in the Ayyubid period, while the others belong to the Ottoman period. Other than Sheikh Mas'ud Zaviye, there are four lodge buildings (*tekkeler*) currently in



Some old sufi lodges in Urfa

Şanlıurfa, belonging to the Afghani, Indian, Sadık Kalfa, and Sheikh Saffet sects.

The names of the following dervish lodges are listed in the *kadı* records belonging to the second half of the 19th century: Mevlid-i Halil Aleyhisselam Tekke (Makam-ı Ceddü'l Anbiya) belonging to the Kadiri order; the Halilür-rahman Tekke belonging to the Naqshbandi order; the Mevlevi Tekke belonging to the Mevlevi order; the Siddikiye Tekke belonging to the Rufai order; the Sheikh Ramazan Zaviye belonging to the Halveti sect; the Sakıbiye Tekke which was built by El-Haj Mehmed Emin Sakıb Efendi ibn Mustafa Efendi in the middle of 18th century in the Narıncı Akarbaşı neighborhood; the Hindi (Indian) Tekke, understood from the inscription to be built in 1546 for dervishes and sheikhs having come from India; the Afghani Tekke, built for dervishes belonging to the Kadiri sect; the Şafii Tekke; and the Sheikh Abdurrahman Mas'ud Tekke.

Madrasas (Religious Schools)

In the endowment of Emir Mencik dated 1374, it is registered that a *masjid* (prayer hall), an *imaret* (soup kitchen), and a *madrasa* (school) were housed in the Mencik Lodge; the same endowment also had another madrasa called Temurboğa. In the travel logs of Evliya Celebi, it is believed that he was referring to the Firuz Bey Madrasa in the Şanlıurfa Red Mosque of Sultan Hassan (Hassan Sultan), which was later destroyed. We were unable to determine the existence of any other madrasa having the name of Firuz Bey.

In the yearbook of Aleppo Province dated 1867, one madrasa was recorded in Şanlıurfa; in 1883 there were 14. In 1887 there were 18 madrasas in which 500 students were reported to have received an education. In the Maârif yearbook dated 1903, the madrasas of Rızvaniye, Rahimiye, Sakib, and İbrahimiye were listed as being in Şanlıurfa. Among these, we know from the records of the El-Haj Ali Ibn Mehmet Endowment that the



The main door of the Ridvaniye Mosque



madrasa of Rahimiye was built near Tahtamor (Toktemur) in 1718, and the madrasa of Rızvaniye was constructed by Ümmü Gülsüm Hatun in 1779. We understand from the endowment of Es-Sheikh El-Hajj Ibrahim Ibn Kasım that the Sultan Burhan Madrasa was built in 1726. From Bedri Alpay's 19th century work, *Poets of Şanlıurfa*, it is also understood that the Şabaniye, Ihlasiye, and Kutbeddin madrasas were all located in Urfa.

Today, there are seven madrasas in Şanlıurfa. Belonging to the Ottoman period are the madrasas of Halilürrahman (mid-17th century), Abbas Agha (1695-96), İbrahimiye (1723), Rızvaniye (1736-37), Suleiman Ağa (early 18th century), Nakibza (1781-82), and Şehben Deriyye (1910). Only a wall of the Ayyubid Madrasa (1101) still survives in the city.

The Rızvaniye Madrasa displays the classical Ottoman design consisting of an open-domed mosque with its front porches and vaulted rooms surrounding a courtyard. The Abbas Ağa Madrasa extends towards the northern section of the Nimetullah Mosque with a yard consisting of two rows of dome-covered rooms.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Schools, Hospitals, Orphanages, Libraries

Of the social institutions dating from the Ottoman period, the Village Yacht School, the İrfaniye School, the National Hospital, the Swiss Hospital, the Armenian orphanage and the Madrasa Library in Nakibza have survived until the present time in Şanlıurfa.



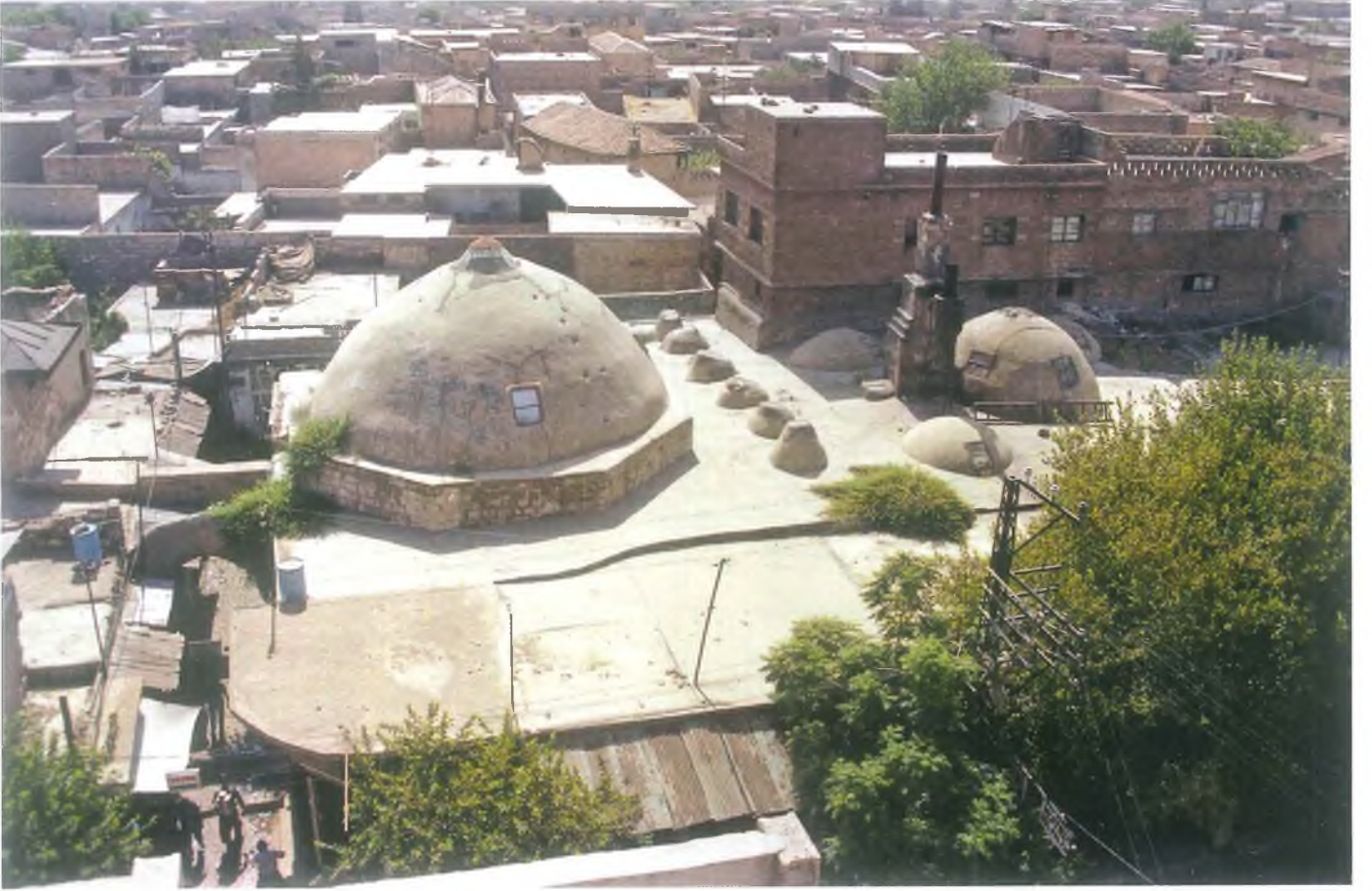
The National (Millet) Hospital

WATER-RELATED ARCHITECTURE

Baths

Evliya Celebi gave the names of eight baths in his itinerary: Paşa, Samsat Kapısı, Hacı Bey, Cıncıklı, Arasta, Muharrem, Keçeci and Meydan Baths. The various endowment-sponsored baths in Şanlıurfa included the Ibn Maktülü, Mencek, Karaburç, Danakov, Halilürrahman, and Kuloğlu Baths.

There are seven active baths in Şanlıurfa remaining from the Ottoman Empire. These are Veli Bey, Sultan, Vezir, Cıncıklı, Eski Arasta, Serçe, and Şaban. They were constructed in the Ottoman style and only the designs of the Sultan and Vezir baths are similar to one another. The Serçe, Şaban, and Arasta Baths have their own general plans.



The Grand Vezir
Turkish Bath

Fountains and Water Taps

From the Ottoman period, we can find thirteen water taps located on the streets and two public fountains in Şanlıurfa. The street taps are Emencekzâ, Firuz Bey, Hekim Dede, Sheikh Safvet, Yıldız Meydanı, Haider Ağa, Hussein Ferideddin, Hafız Suleyman Bozan Efendi, Şebbenderiyye, Sütçüler Abdurrahman Efendi, Hüseyiniye Bazaar, Firuz Bey and Sheikh Abubakr.



Hızmalı Bridge

Mustafa Kemal Pasha Fountain

Bridges, Aqueducts, and a Water Distribution System (*Maqşam*)

The bridges in Şanlıurfa are located on the Karakoyun River, which passes through the area in which a dam and aqueduct were built. Along the river moving upwards towards Demirkapı are the bridges of Beykapı, Hacı Kamil, Samsat, also known as the Eski (Old) Bridge, Ali Saip Bey and the Hızmalı (Speed Up) Bridge, in addition to the Justinian Aqueduct. The construction date of the Hızmalı Bridge is unknown although it is believed to have been built during the Karakoyunlu period. An inscription on the bridge dated 1843 states that it was repaired by a person named Muhammad Said.

In Urfa, a water distribution system called a *maqşam* was used. The *maqşam* in the Kadioğlu Mosque is the only such example in Urfa. The water coming from the Justinian Aqueduct would be divided up and distributed throughout the city using this system.

Reservoirs and Cisterns

Structures built by pious patrons for the benefit of society, such as schools, fountains, bridges, and inns, are typically called *hayrats* (charitable works). In Urfa, however, the word *hayrat* is used to describe a kind of water reservoir carved into the rock floor to collect rain water where water springs do not exist. These *hayrats*, would be carved 1-2 meters deep and 5-6 meters in length. They were covered in stones and would be used for prayer because they were oriented in the direction of Mecca. Of these *hayrats*, only the one called Akabe remains. *Hayrats* were once scattered throughout Urfa, although important groups of them were located on the Urfa-Birecik and Urfa-Viranşehir routes.

It is thought that the *hayrats* of the Kapaklı Village, Mehemed Han, and the countryside villages of Kırılık Büyük and Kırılık Küçük are from the Roman period.

The *hayrats* of İkizce Village, Sarı Mağara, Edene Village Road, Bozova District, Akabe, and Firuz Pasha belong to the Ottoman period. Of these, only the Firuz Pasha *hayrat* has an inscription dating it as 1771.

Another method for collecting water is the cistern. Cisterns in the shape of a funnel were dug in the ground in locations that were far away from natural water springs. Water would be pulled from the rounded mouths of these cisterns with buckets to which ropes were attached. The biggest cisterns existing in the mountainous areas of Urfa are at the Deyr Yakup and Çardal Monasteries. These cisterns and fountains no longer function because of lack of maintenance and the reduced amount of rainfall in recent years



Firuz Pasha underground well and fountain

THE CITADEL

Walls and Gates

The date of construction of the city walls of Urfa is uncertain. It is recorded that a church was built near the Harran Wall in the honor of the martyr Barlaha by Bishop Diogenus in the year 408 AD, and since then the wall of Harran has been known as the “Wall of Barlaha.”

Procopius, who lived in the 6th century BC, wrote about the “Barlaha Gate” (Harran Kapısı), the “Great Gate” (Bey Kapısı) and the “Gate of Time” (Saray Kapısı). In addition to these, various sources indicate that the main city gates of Şanlıurfa were:

1. Sakıbın Kapısı (Gate of Sakıb): On the western wall, between Aynzeliha Lake and İçkale.
2. Su Kapısı (Water Gate): North of Sakıp Gate and on the northwest corner of Halilürrahman Madrasa. This gate would be called the Gate of Murat IV, and before that was called “the wall of water” due to its being situated where the Daysan River flowed into Halilürrahman Lake. It was demolished by the current government during a road-construction operation.

3. Kemerler Kapısı (Gate of Arches / West Gate): North of the Water Gate, in Aleppo Garden.
4. Samsat Kapısı (Samsat Gate): One of the northern gates of the city which opened towards Samsat Bridge from the entrance of 12 Eylül Street.
5. Saray Kapısı (Palace Gate / Sun Gate): In Köprübaşı near the Old Palace.
6. Bey Kapısı (Bey (Prince/Lord) Gate): On the eastern walls of the city. The Mahmutoğlu Tower of this gate still stands.
7. Tiyatro Kapısı (Theater Gate): located at the site of the present-day Çâkeri Camii, this gate opened onto the road to the Byzantine amphitheater.
8. Harran Gate (South Gate / Barlahâ Gate): One of the southern gates of the city which has survived until today. The name of Gazi Ebubekir bin Ayoub is written on the inscription.



The Harran Gate (ancient Barlahâ Gate)

Interior Tower

The southern, western, and eastern sections of the interior tower are formed by a steep rock and a deep, carved ditch. The tower was erected on a hill overlooking the lakes of Ayn-ı Zeliha and Halilürrahman. It is presumed that the tower was built during the construction of the city walls in the year of 814 AD (during the Abbasid period). Although the officer Procopius mentioned the walls in his 6th century AD documents, he did not mention the existence of a tower. The name of the tower was first encountered in historical sources in the 9th century. Based on this information, the date of the construction of the tower falls sometime between the 6th and 9th centuries. In addition, we can also say that the tower was constructed during the fortification of the city gates against the Islamic armies. Seljuk, Ayyubid, Mamluk, Akkoyunlu and Ottoman inscriptions can be seen on the fronts of these fortifications.



The caravansaray of
Han al-Ba'rur

COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES

Markets and Bazaars

Markets from the period of the Ottoman Empire were concentrated in the vicinity of the Gümrük (Customs) Han, the old trade center, which consisted of open and closed markets. Markets that have preserved their historical features are the Kazaz Bazaar (Bedesten), Sipahi Bazaar, Koltukçu (Upholsterer) Bazaar, Pamukçu (Cotton) Bazaar, Oturakçı (Seat Maker) Bazaar, Kınacı (Henna) Bazaar, Bıçakçı

(Knife) Bazaar, Kazancı (Coppersmith) Bazaar, Neccâr (Carpenter) Bazaar, Isotçu (Pepper) Bazaar, Demerci (Blacksmith) Bazaar, Çulcu (Sackcloth) Bazaar, Çadırcı (Tentmaker) Bazaar, Saraç (Saddle) Bazaar, Attar (Perfume) Bazaar, Tenekeci (Tinker) Bazaar, Kürkçü (Fur) Bazaar, Eskici (Second-hand) Bazaar, Keçeci (Goat) Bazaar, Kokacı/Kovacı (Water-carrier) Bazaar, Kasap (Butcher) Bazaar, Boyahâne (Dye) Market, Kavafhâne Market, Hanönü Market, Hüseyiniye Markets, and the Eski Kuyumcu (Old Jewelry) Market.



The covered bazaar of
Kazaz



Covered Markets

The covered markets in the Urfa marketplace were the Kazaz, Sipahi, Pamukçu, Kınacı, Kasap, Boyahân and Hüseyiniye Markets. The Kazaz and Sipahi markets were constructed south of the Gümrük Han (1562). The Hüseyiniye Markets were built by Muhammad Hafiz Pasha Selim's son, Hussein Hartavizâ Efendi, in 1887.

Trading Centers and Caravansarais (*Hanlar*)

Caravansaray architecture was given significance in Urfa, which was among the leading centers of trade in Anatolia. The caravansarais which were located outside the city walls provided secure accommodation for the merchants as well as their animals and goods, and the trading centers in the city were constructed as places for goods to be stored and sold, rather like the commercial centers and malls of today. Both are called *han* in Turkish.

If the small establishments are excluded, eleven huge trading centers (sometimes translated as "inns" in English) were found in Urfa during the Ottoman period. These include the Barutcu Han, Bican Ağa Han, the Fesadı Han, Gümrük (Customs) Han, Hacı Kamil Han, Kumluhayat Han, Mencek Han, Millet (Nation) Han, Sipahi Han, Samsat Kapısı Han, and Şaban Han. Of these, the Barutcu Han, Bican Ağa Han, Fesadı Han, Gümrük Han, Hacı Kamil Han, Mencek Han, Millet Han, and Şaban Han had three floors. The second floors of Bican Ağa Han (formerly used as a guest house) and the Millet Han have since been demolished. The Kumluhayat, Samsat, and Topçu Hans are one-storied structures. The Gümrük

An old han used as a
traditional café



Han, which was constructed by Behram Pasha in 1566, was listed in the itinerary of Evliya Çelebi by the name of “The Seventy Hans” and in some other sources as “Alaca Han.”

There are four caravansarais within the provincial borders of Şanlıurfa: Han el-Babur, Çarmelik, Mırbi (Ilgar) and Titris. Of these, Han el-Babur was built on a monumental scale by the Ayyubids (1228-29), and the Çarmelik Caravansaray belonged to the Anatolian principalities. The other two small caravansarais were built in the Ottoman period.

Streets of Urfa



DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE

Palaces and Mansions

Small palaces or pavilions (*köşk* in Turkish) and mansions were constructed in Urfa by wealthy families in scenic locations, such as the small palace from the endowment of Ömer Pasha, dated 1780. The last Ottoman examples of luxury residences are those of the Kürkçüzade Mahmut Nedim Efendi mansion, built from carved stone, the Osman Efendi and Omar Edip Efendi mansions, the poet Sakıp Efendi's mansion, the Hacıkamilzâ Yusuf Ziya Efendi mansion, the Hacıkâmilzade Küçük Hacı Mustafa Efendi mansion, and the Halil Bey Mirror Pavilion. The governor's mansion was destroyed in 1983 and replaced by the Cebeci İşhanı, which is an important representative of stone implementation in modern architecture. Of the other structures mentioned, only the following have survived: the mansions of Kürkçüzade Mahmut Nedim Efendi, Hacıkâmilzade Yusuf Ziya Efendi, Hacıkâmilzade Küçük Hacı Mustafa Efendi, and Sakıp Efendi.

Traditional Şanlıurfa Houses

In Urfa, houses with windows concealed from the view of the street emerged from the Islamic requirement of privacy. These houses were large and equipped like a palace because familial ties were strong and homes tended to be crowded with multiple generations of the family. Male children would not establish a separate home after marriage, but rather remained living with their families, which was the reason for building large, well-equipped houses.

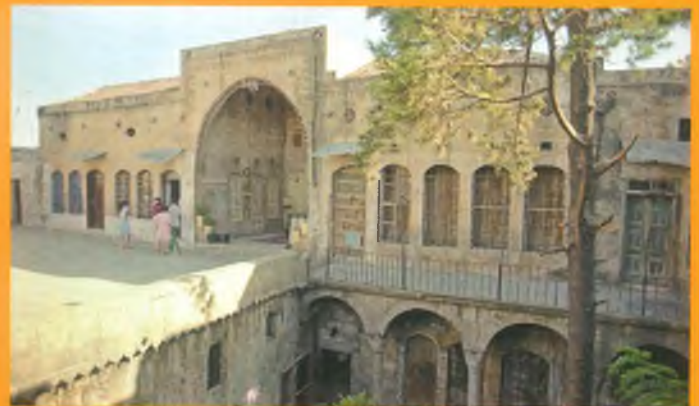
Another reason why the houses were constructed to be large is because, in keeping with the tradition of the prophet Abraham, the people of Urfa loved to



Haji Kamil Han (old inn)



Houses exhibiting traditional architecture



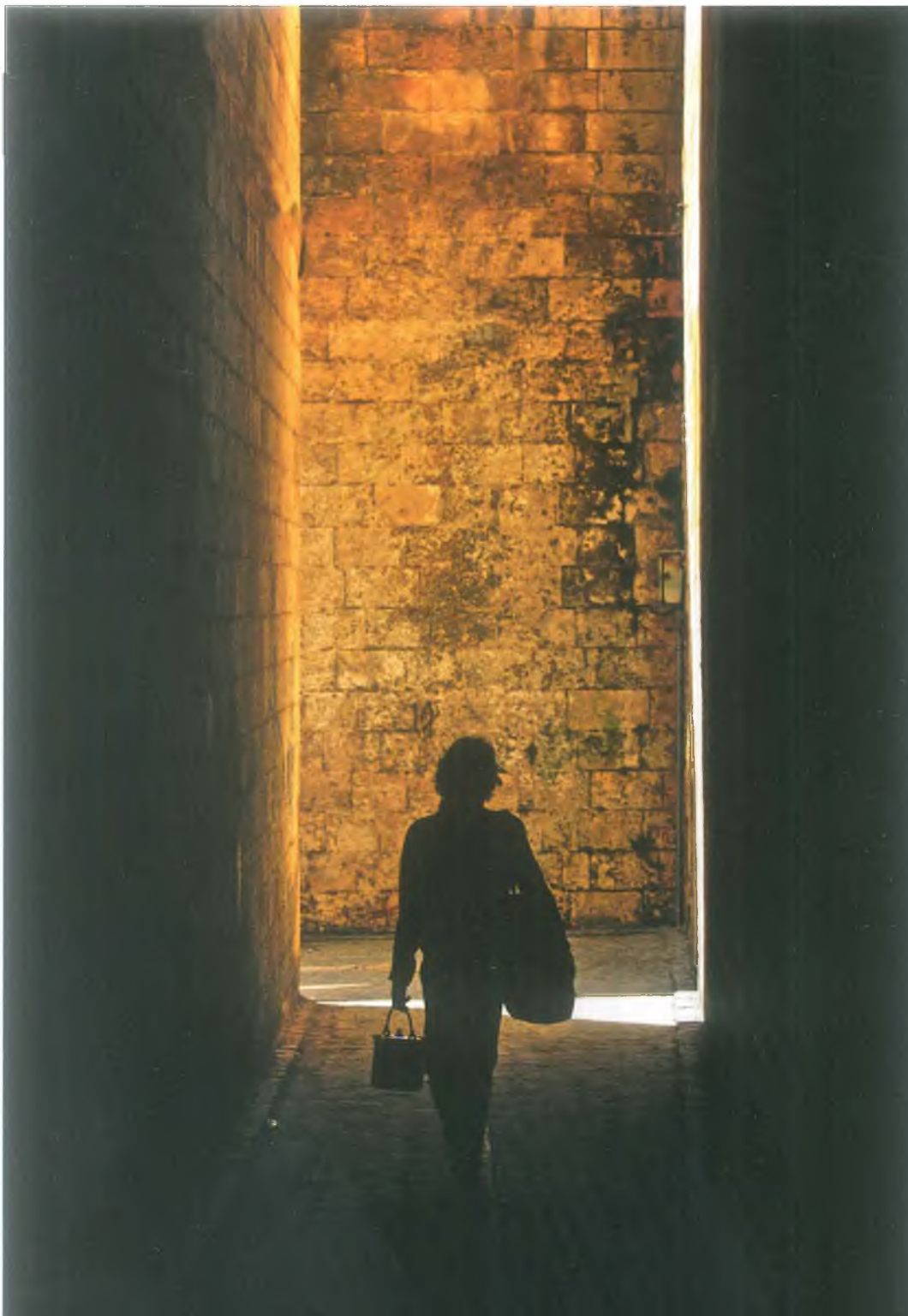
Abdulkadir Hakkari's house



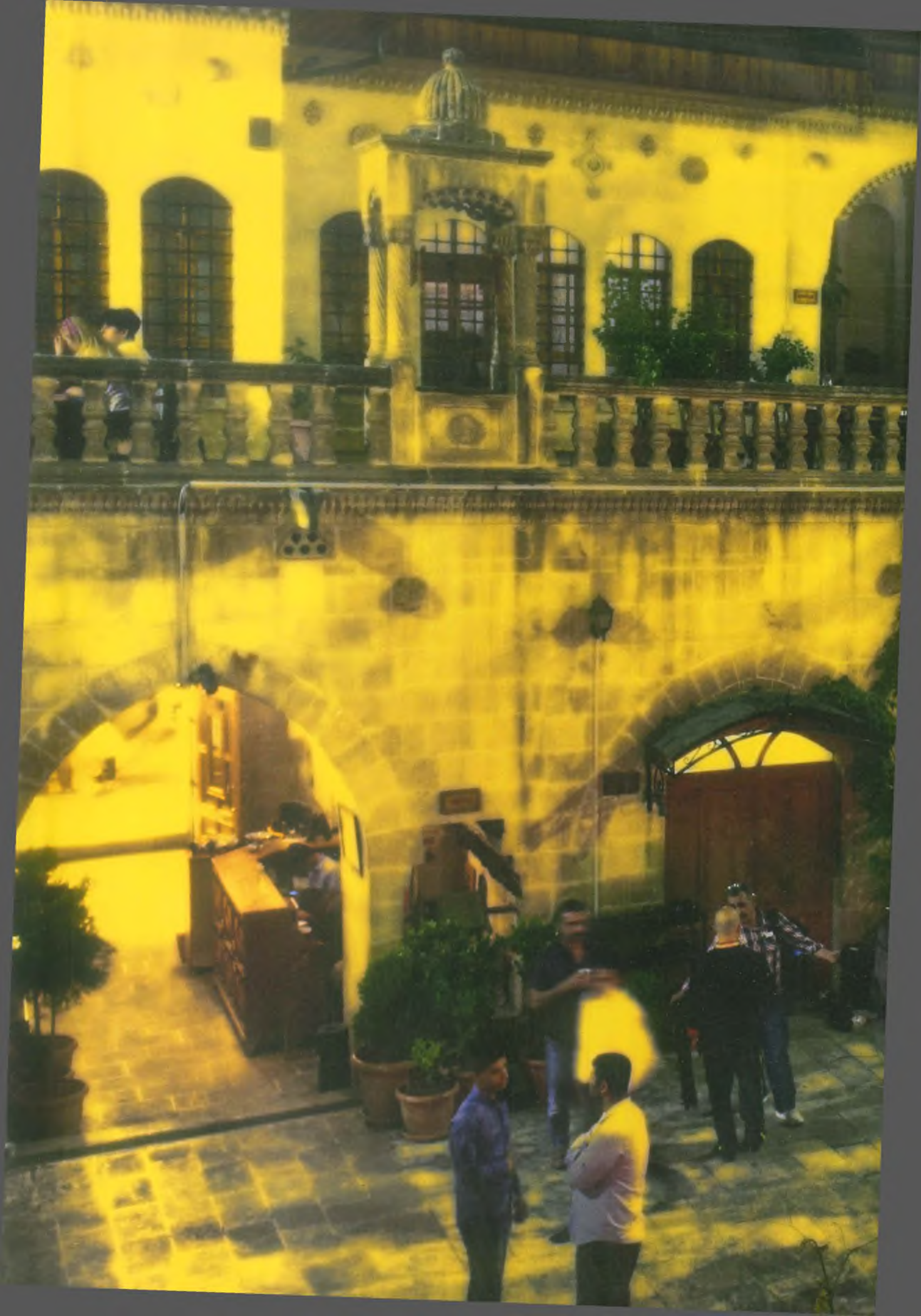
Şahap Bakır house (Majlis House)

host visitors. This tradition was also the reason for the huge gates like the doors of an inn, and for the construction of kitchens with six or seven ovens. In order that housewives not feel bored in the windowless homes, houses in Urfa tended to be quite rich in architectural features, comparable to mosques, inns, baths, madrasas and such works of monumental form.

The spacious homes and open lifestyle developed because of the warm climate. Social traditions such as circumcisions, weddings, and *supha* (wedding dinners) were a part of the lifestyle. The *iwan* was a spacious sitting area with one open wall used as a cool place to relax and considered the seat of honor in Şanlıurfa, where seven months of the year it is very hot. Therefore, in Urfa, the importance given to *iwans* was given to no other part of the home in terms of spaciousness and stone decoration.



A narrow street

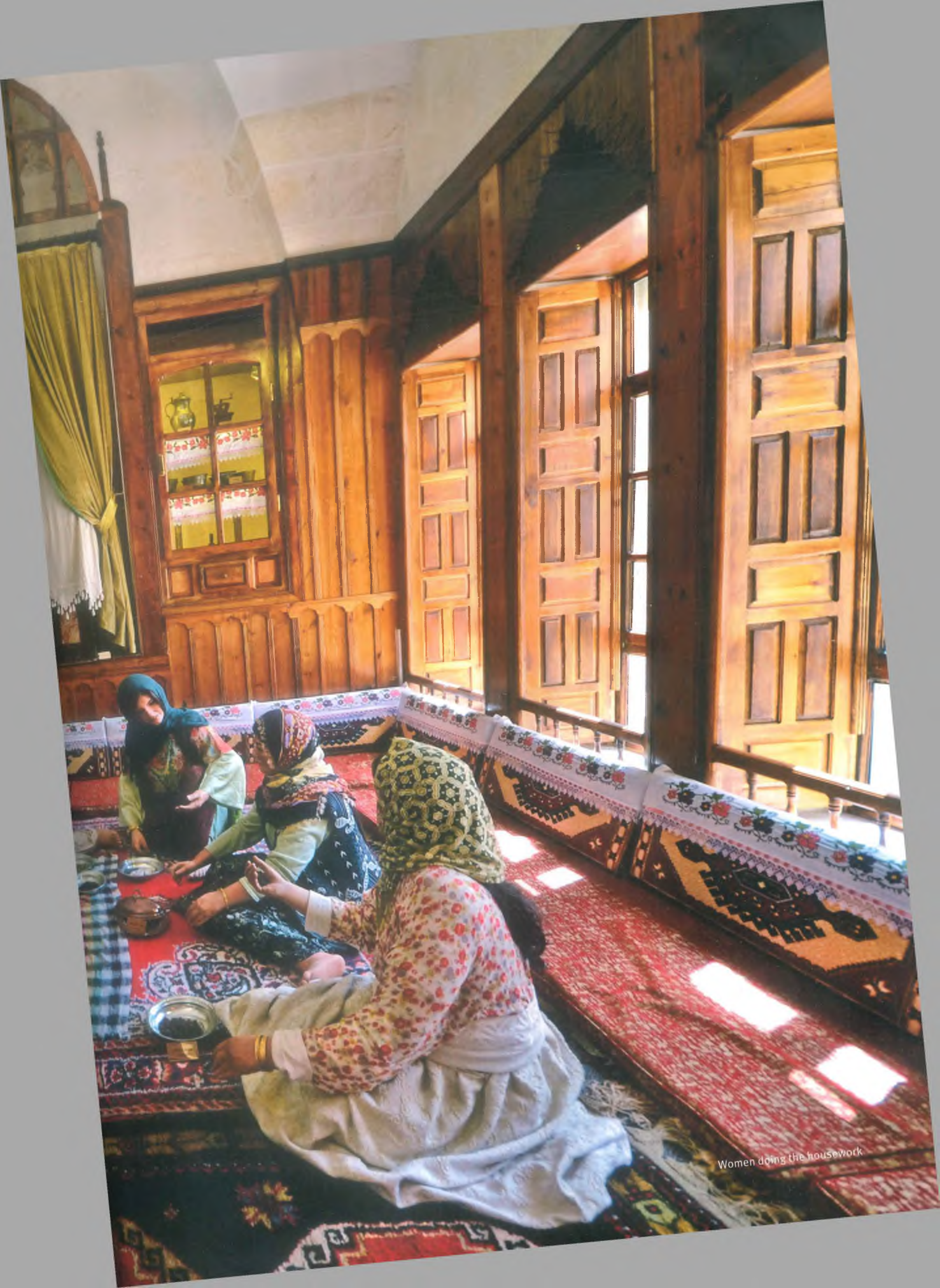


A photograph of a traditional courtyard, likely in a historical setting. The courtyard is paved with stone tiles and features a central, ornate, multi-tiered fountain. Several potted plants and small trees are arranged around the fountain. A yellow building with arched windows and a balcony with a decorative railing surrounds the courtyard. A staircase leads up to the balcony. People are visible in the courtyard, including a woman in a yellow shirt and red skirt on the left, and a man in a blue shirt on the right. The overall atmosphere is warm and historical.

DAILY LIFE AND CULTURE

ABDULLAH EKINCI
ISMAIL ASOĞLU

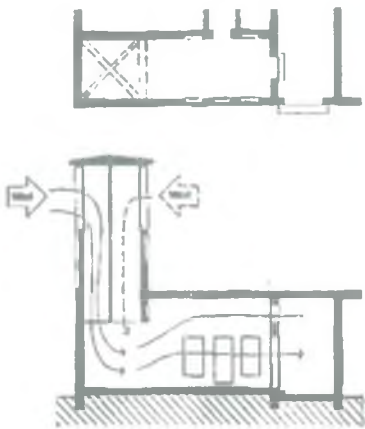




Women doing the housework

DESIGN FEATURES OF THE URFA HOMES

The structure of the home meets the physiological, sociological, aesthetic and economic needs of humanity, and the socio-cultural values of every society are reflected in the cultural relics of the past.¹ The houses in Urfa have the characteristics of geography, history, culture and the traces of the lifestyles and traditions of the people who have inhabited them over time. Despite the rapid transformation of modern life, the traces of these houses have resisted the change of times; however, most of the elements of the traditional Urfa houses have begun to be outdated. The traditional Urfa houses used to consist of typically a courtyard, an *iwan*, rooms, a tandoor room (oven made of baked clay buried in the ground used mostly to make bread but also to prepare other dishes), a cellar, stables, pools, windows, toilets, traditional bathrooms, chimneys, archways, staircases with balustrades and revolving cupboards used to serve food to guests. To minimize the effects of climate, *badgirs* and fireplaces were part of the architectural design of Urfa houses. *Badgirs* are wind towers or wind catchers built in hot climates as a ventilation system to keep the homes cool on hot summer days. These were common in Urfa houses. These *badgirs* and fireplaces also represented a unique home decor style and have emerged as architectural masterpieces. In this chapter, we will uncover the everyday life in Urfa throughout various periods in history and see how this life was reflected in the arrangements of the homes.



The construction in a *badgir* which is also used as an architectural element



Homes and cities are shaped by the characteristics of their cultures and environments. In this line of thinking, the economic and aesthetic situations of the individual are important. Medieval people exhibited a taste for such pleasures as the indoor fireplaces, gardens, and winter and summer *iwans*. Like in many medieval cities of the Middle East, Urfa houses had two floors.² The homes featured ornate iron door knockers and doors connecting onto the street. As is the case in today's world, in the past people entered their houses using doors. There

was a doorway which had a square or rectangular plan covered by a vaulted cross overhead. Moreover, a paved courtyard opened into a vestibule from the hall. Through this hall, one could pass to the garden, which would contain a grapevine, pomegranate trees and flowers. In the houses of Urfa, the courtyard floor was made of cut stone (*nahit*). In the center of the courtyard, there was a pool, also constructed from stone. These pools could be in various shapes, such as square, rectangular, hexagonal, octagonal or elliptical.

In the courtyard, there were core elements like a water well, a pool and a garden. *Iwans*, rooms, kitchens, fireplaces, stables (*develik*), a cellar (*zerzembe*) and stairs also could be found in the courtyard. Typically, there was a garden beside the pool protected by a scarecrow. In the garden, trees and plants were not grown



Urfa house entrance

only for decoration or consumption. In fact, for the man of medieval age, every tree and plant had a meaning. The palm was planted in Mesopotamia, poplar, oak and mulberry in Iran, and in the gardens of Eastern regions, there were a lot of cypress trees that always had green leaves and provided shade. Cypress were mourning trees in the Byzantine Empire, so they were planted at gravesites. The mourning tree of the Eastern world was mostly pine. The favorite plants of the Urfa houses were pomegranate trees and grapevines because such trees symbolized fertility and abundance for the people of Urfa. The pomegranate tree was a symbol of the goddess Cybele in mythology. It was also the symbol of fertility and productivity, so every house had at least one pomegranate tree.

The same architectural style continues in Urfa houses today. In the houses of Urfa, in addition to a pool and a garden, there was a well located in the corner of the courtyard. Usually, the first space on the opposite side of the entrance was a large hall. Rooms with arched windows overlook the courtyard directly. Ground floors were a few steps above the ground. An internal staircase led down to the basement. This basement faced the courtyard and was illuminated by ground-level half windows. It was also ventilated by an underground gallery. There was a cistern for drinking water. In some homes where there were water wells, on every floor of the buildings,

Urfa house with *iwān*





Abdulkadir Hakkari's house

a system of ropes and pulleys was placed in the corner of the gallery, where water could be easily drawn up in buckets to each floor.

The toilet was not forgotten either in townhouses or homes. There was more than one toilet in some mansions. They were square or rectangular in shape and located close to the door. In some mansions, toilets were also located in the basement and at one end of rooms. Two or three copper vessels or jugs always sat beside the door. Another important space in the house was the cellar known as *zerzembe*, which was generally planned below the courtyard level. It is possible to regard the *zerzembe* as natural cold storage. One of the largest spaces of the houses of Urfa was the *develik*, which was a stable with stalls for feeding the animals.

In the houses of Urfa which had no baths, some rooms had a vestibule called a *gedemec*³ which was used for washing. The rooms facing the courtyard had ironwork gratings. On the inside of the windows, there were wooden shutters as big as doors which are now considered beautiful examples of the art of carving.

During the Ottoman period, the design and ambiance of Urfa houses were influenced by the large family structures, a social life that emphasized privacy, and the local stone materials.⁴ In court and estate records, information about Urfa can be found dealing with such subjects as trade, spatial design, prices, household items and clothes. One can learn from records about the architectural arrangements within the houses and the existence of sections, as in one entrance gate for the house and separate gates for the women's apartment (*haremlik*), the toilet (*kademhane*), the courtyard (*havş*), the kitchen (*mutbah*), and the cellar (*zerzembe*). During the division of sale or inheritance, one can also witness that houses were divided into



A street between houses





A common courtyard (avlu) in front of Urfa houses

Modern houses which have
taken over the classical houses
in Bozova



the *selamlık* (the portion of a house reserved for men) and the *haremlık* (reserved for women), and heirs would sell either the *haremlık* or *selamlık*.

HOUSEHOLD DECOR

These houses also contained a display case (*camhâne*), which was used for the exhibition of precious objects. Niches enclosed chests, mirrors, and beds. Stone ornamentation decorating the inside and outside of the houses were a treasure of

Inside of an Urfa house, ladies
are preparing food



house architecture. Ornaments and aesthetics reflected the socio-economic status of the family. Such décor used in the home had special meanings. For example, acanthus (*kenger*) leaves were used symbolically for the protection of the buildings from evil and bad luck. In fact, this motif was used in ancient Greek and Egyptian civilizations, as well. It can be seen as a relief in Corinthian column headings. The columns of the Urfa citadel and structures like tombstones and column headings in Harran and its surroundings were also decorated with acanthus leaves. Indeed, many exhibits in the Urfa museum display these leaves.

Another aspect of décor in medieval houses was the use of lively color, especially blue, and gilt to embellish the inside of the house. Other decorative elements were to be seen in curtains, coverlets, couches, pillows and carpets, which were bright and made of luxurious fabrics like velvet. Even in humble homes and the houses of poor people, there were multi-colored carpets. In almost every room of the house were arched niches containing shelves which held belongings. In the small recessed niches of bedrooms would be candles or vases. In large rooms, display cabinets took the place of niches. In them were usually kept silver, gold or ivory trinkets, valuable crystals or decorated porcelain and some attractive books. There were always copper- or silver-embellished lamps placed in front of the mirrors. Wide, low wooden seating benches lined the walls. Large pillows were made from satin or velvet fabric. Other decorative items included curtains, lamps, censers, vases, mirrors, and low copper tables, known as "Damascene work". For use in the toilet, there were ewers and basins made of copper, silver or earthenware.

In the bedrooms the niches held inlaid wooden mirrors and beeswax candles in decorative candlesticks. Mattresses were spread out on top of the carpet. On the beds, there were materials such as linen, thick, heavy wool or cotton quilts, bolsters, and cushions stuffed with goose and swan feathers. In the mornings the mattresses were removed, quilts and blankets folded, carefully covered with a large silk cloth and thus made into a comfortable couch when placed against the wall.



A girl with her traditional dress



Covered bazaar (Bedesten)

CULINARY CULTURE AND SOCIAL LIFE IN URFA

One of the important places in the house of the medieval ages was the kitchen. There was no doubt that the medieval woman spent most of her time there. The kitchen was not far from the cistern and included several cooking areas. These were connected to a chimney on the roof, called a *pigirik* in Urfa. The most beautiful

Urfa spice market





Musicians from the Ottoman period

example of a *pigirik* is the one in Mahmutoğlu Tower, still extant today. There was also a large tray kept next to the oven for ashes. Every day, the tray of ashes from the previous day was emptied and the ashes were given to gardeners who wandered the streets. In some houses, water from the cistern was easily transferred to a brick basin having a tap. Dirty water from this basin was drained and removed to a pit outside the house via a pipe. Every morning, water was brought to the home in water skins, which kept the water quite fresh.

Generally, the smoke from the kitchen was not adequately vented. On the one hand, soot resulted due to the oil lamps located in two or three corners, and on the other hand, the boiling of pots and the smoke of cooking fires filled the



Main entertainment on long winter nights: Sıra nights (sıra geceleri)

kitchen. Thus, the blackened kitchen was in contrast with the brightness of the rest of house. The kitchen equipment consisted of copper plates, pots, *camhânes*, and wooden stools. Cooking pots with handles and lids were lined up in every corner. Some of them were earthenware and others made from copper. There were at least two mortars in every kitchen. The small bronze mortar was used to crush saffron, almonds, and walnuts, while the large granite one (*dibek*) was used for meat, dried herbs, and peas. This larger mortar could measure half a meter in height and width and was indispensable in the kitchen. In the dining areas, there was no furniture other than the low seating lining the four walls, pillows, carpets and wide low tables of veined agate.

The kitchen was a key requirement for the entertainment and pleasure of the *sıra* nights (when each household in turn would host the others) and banquets of the era. *Sıra* entertainment is still common today, but mostly for touristic purposes. However, it used to be an occasion when people came together to share their experiences and to have pleasant discussions during the long winter nights while eating special dishes and listening to live music. It was important for the people of this period to provide the greatest, most luxurious table for their relatives and friends to gather around. Friday was the acknowledged holiday and on that day meals were prepared with special care. Only the men of the houses were invited; the



Stuffed vegetables



Lahmacun is the pizza of Urfa



Miftahi tas kabab



Kazan Kabab with rice



Chilli is used in all dishes



Preparing chilli pepper flakes for winter





Urfa salad



Traditional Urfa kabab



Urfa eggplant kabab



Urfa kadayıf dessert



A special dessert made from sesame seeds and grape molasses, called Küncili akıt



Urfa çiğ köfte are meatballs made with bulgur (cracked wheat) ground together with raw meat

women of the family never appeared. In the 10th century, maidservants to the lady of the house were paid two dinars if they worked in the daytime, three for the nighttime. Before the feast day, the big kitchen located in the basement resonated with the noise of the pounding of mortars. Urfa oil (ghee) and vegetable oil could be heard sizzling in the pots. One moment, servants were weighing the meat separated for the broth, and the next they were preparing skewers of chicken. The lady of

the house was shelling almonds. The drink for the feast was made from rose syrup and snow prepared in a copper container. The commonly prepared meals for these banquets were roasted kid, roasted chicken, chicken kebab and *faludec* (*paluze* in the local Urfa dialect), a desert made from honey and starch.

Ali Mazaheri mentions two books written at the beginning of the 13th century: Muhammad al-Baghdadi's *Kitab al-Tabh* and *Wuslah ila'l-habib*, written by Salahaddin Ayyubi's nephew. Many passages in these books contain recipes. According to *Wuslah*, sheep fat was used a lot in the kitchen. This oil was first melted and then the following herbs were used for flavor: cilantro, dill, cinnamon, mastic gum, a kind of grape, quince, and pieces of apple. Spices were used a lot in the Urfa kitchen. Pepper and cinnamon brought from India, and then cloves from China and the Indonesian islands of Sunda, mint, parsley, rue, wild thyme, lavender, dill, hibiscus, purslane, tarragon, bay leaves, lettuce, caraway, poppy seed, rose petals and rosehips, pistachios, garlic, onion, and mustard were irreplaceable kitchen ingredients.

When it comes to vegetables, one can see that eggplant (aubergine) was the one most used in the kitchen. Ali Mazaheri states this by referring to Ibn Wahshi, who wrote a book about agriculture in the 10th century. Mazaheri reported that eggplant was grown in Iran and spread to the West in the Middle Ages. Modern researchers claim that the origin of the eggplant is India. The vegetable made its way from India to Africa, and on to Europe in the 16th century, where it was brought to the Spanish. People would make kebabs and pickles from eggplants. Eggplant kebab was the food of low-income families of the Middle Ages.

In the sources of the period, it is possible to find recipes and names of both low and high-income families. For instance, for a wealthy family, the best meat was lamb. The lamb should be fed with the best sheep's milk and grazed for two months, then cooked in the oven. There was also fried goat cooked in its own juices, or a fat veal breast sautéed with vinegar, marrow and egg yolk. One can also see recipes for rock partridge, and pigeon fattened up on hemp seed and olive skins. At the table of low-income families, there were sour soups, variety meats in sauce, vegetable soup, milk soup, chickpeas, eggplant kebab and a dish of flour cooked with milk.

Steamed rice colored with saffron was—and still is—the indispensable food of the Eastern world. Historians think that rice came to the area during the period of Timur (1335-1404). However, the origin of rice with saffron is China. It is also considered that before the spread of rice to all eastern countries, the recipe was perfected in Turkistan. Today, saffron pilaf and saffron rice pudding (*zerde*) are among the hallmarks of Urfa cuisine. In order to obtain information about the Ottoman family, their daily life and kitchen culture, court records are undoubtedly rich archival sources. In the court records of Urfa, there are references to kitchen and other implements such as meatball basins, trays, combs, kindling stands, writing sets, tobacco dishes, coffee urns, samovars, coffee mills, copper bowls, lanterns, storage chests, soup bowls, coffee sets, tea kettles, large basins, rugs (kilims), cauldrons, cutting boards, plates, and large deep copper dishes. All these items provide clues about domestic life and kitchen culture of the period.⁵

MUSIC IN THE DAILY LIFE OF URFA

During the pre-Islamic period, music was a significant part of religious rites. In the period of polytheistic beliefs, it was used in the temples; in the Christian period, it was performed in churches with prayers. With the conquest of Urfa by the Muslims, music was performed in mosques, lodges, at weddings and in places of entertainment. From the Titris excavations (2600–2400 BC), stylized human figures with violin-type instruments were found. In addition, in the Eyyubiye neighborhood of Şanlıurfa, there is a mosaic dating around 194 AD of the Greek musician Orpheus sitting with a lyre in his hand. Around him are depictions of birds, deer, and angels. Two of the oldest figures in the musical history of Urfa are Bardaysan (d. 222), the founder of a form of music to express the Syriac Orthodox faith, and Mor Ephraim (d. 375), called “the lyre of the Holy Spirit.” It is possible to see the traces of Bardaysan’s fondness for music from his everyday life; indeed, the name of his son was Harmony.⁶ In Edessa (Urfa) and its surroundings, the most famous musicians were Tityan of Hedyap, Mor Rabula of Urfa, Mor Jacob of Suruç and Mor Ishok of Urfa. Moreover, Jacob of Urfa was one of the major figures of the 5th century, famous for his poetry and music.

The relationship between the city and music continued during the Ottoman period. When Yusuf Nâbî, the celebrated poet from Urfa, went to Istanbul in 1655–66, he was twenty-four years old and had accumulated considerable knowledge about music. The 18th and 19th centuries were the most important period in the history of music in Urfa. Between 1725 and 1925, the Mevlevihane of Urfa maintained its activities in performing the Mevlevi ceremony.⁷ In addition to these religious rites, folk music, and *sıra* evenings have continued to be part of the musical culture of Urfa to this day.



Çiğköfte ready to serve



The main part of entertainment
Çiğköfte (raw meatballs)

NEIGHBORHOODS AND IMAMS

The dictionary definition of neighborhood is “a district or community within a town or city.” The word neighborhood also signifies permanent or temporary small settlements.⁸ Throughout Islamic history, Muslims have constructed many villages, neighborhoods, towns and cities. They even considered these activities a sacred duty and accepted this situation as a mark of their religious identity.⁹ In an Ottoman city, the neighborhood was perceived as a place where everyone knew each other, where there was social solidarity, and the people were responsible for each other’s behaviors.¹⁰ Neighborhoods have been called by different names: in Algeria and Tunisia, it was called *havme*; in Cairo, Damascus, and Sana it was the *hare*; and in Mosul, Aleppo, Baghdad, and Urfa, it was called *mahalla*.¹¹ The formation of *mahallas* in the city of Urfa was worship-centered, and at the same time, there were also fountains, religious schools (madrasas) and dervish lodges. Though the influence of such places was not great compared to that of the *mahalla*, they also affected the *mahalla* to a degree.¹²

Court records are significant sources that reflect the socio-economic life of Urfa in the second half of the 19th century. Such sources also shed light on the daily life of the neighborhood. At that time, registers belonging to Urfa included the names of fifty-six *mahallas* (neighborhoods/wards). Among them the following were the most prominent:¹³ Alihân Bey, Esb Bâzârı, Beykapı, Bıçakçı, Câmî-i Kebir (Ulu-Camî), Çâkeri, Dabbâkhane, Dergezenli, Gerz Mescidi, Hâcî Gazi, Hâcî Hamza, Hâcî Yadigâr, Halife Mescidi, Halilürrahman, Harrankapı (Bâbü’l-Harran), Haseki, Hekimdede, Korkmaz, Kubbe Mescidi, Mahkeme, Meşârikiye and Müderris.¹⁴

In these court records, it is also possible to find information about the identities of both plaintiffs and defendants in cases. Even dwelling places of individuals are listed. Each record begins with the phrase of “medine-i Urfa Mahallatı ...,” (The city of Urfa neighborhood/ward of ...) then telling the name of the neighborhood and the person’s name in relation to the case. In the court records, defining individuals in relation to neighborhood determined the position of the individual in the city.¹⁵ The management of the neighborhood was the responsibility of imams until the reforms of the Tanzimat era (second half of the 19th century). Other than these duties, the most important task of the imams was overseeing religious issues. With the establishment of the office of *mukhtar* (district/neighborhood headman) in 1829, imams, no longer involved in daily issues and neighborhood management, were able to devote their time to religious issues.¹⁶ Thus, the administrative role of the *mukhtar* reset the authoritative structure of the neighborhood.¹⁷ Imams of mosques were interested in the *mahalla* residents not only in terms of religion but also in terms of social relations. The *mahalla* constitutes a step in the transition to the sense of community in Urfa.¹⁸ The *mahalla* took its name from the neighborhood mosque and included the families clustered around the central point of the mosque. It is possible to learn the level of relationship, interaction, and problems among households from the legal cases of the period. In particular, as well as cultivating religious ties with the

people of the neighborhood, imams were witnesses, guarantors, and representatives. This situation shows that there was a multifaceted relationship between a *mahalla's* imam and its residents. The following records are examples of these cases:

Relying on the testimony of Yusuf Pasha Mosque Imam Hadji Ahmed Efendi bin Eyyub and Süleyman bin Muhammed, the court where the lawsuit for the 233 piasters (kurush) that Yusuf Pasha Ward resident Molla Sinan bin Mustafa was owed by Dede bin Sheikh Yusuf and of which the said Dede had admitted a debt of 176 piasters and contested the remainder, decided that Dede pay the debt. (H. 25 Rajab 1393/16 August 1876).

'Ali, the son of Sarach Hamza bin Murtaza who had died while in the Kazghan (Kazgancı) Ward, applied to the court to prove his becoming of age/reaching his legal majority. It was ascertained that he was seeking his inheritance from his guardian 'Osman Ağa bin Derviş of the Kazgancı Ward. Upon the contestation of 'Osman Ağa, application was made on the aforementioned dates, to the testimonies of the imams of the ward Halil bin Muhammed and Muhanned bin Ishak properly together with the testimonies of Müslim bin Ahmed and Mustafa bin Ahmed, residents of the aforementioned ward. (H. 25 Receb 1296 /15 July 1879).

This document was held by the judge of Urfa.¹⁹ The following case tells us the relationship of the imams:

The appointment of Kerküklü 'Abdülhak Efendi ibn 'Abdullah Efendi, Imam of the Bican Efendi Mosque in the center of Suruç as legal agent for the sale procedures of the watered fields valued at forty Ottoman Gold Liras by Kürkçüzâde Mahmud Nedim Efendi ibni Şeyh Müslüm Efendi ibni Hâcî 'Osman to 'Armoş b. Bozo b. 'Abdullah, a resident of Kara Village of the township of Suruç in the district of Urfa, was confirmed on H. 11 Rajab 1309 (10 February 1892).²⁰

CLOTHING

Tereke (estate/inheritance) records give us information about the clothing worn in Urfa. It is understood that in the second half of the 19th century, the clothes and textiles used in Urfa included shirts, loose robes, women's outer coverings (*çarşaf*), broadcloth waistcoats, fezzes, silk headscarves, English shawls, bolts of Istanbul cloth, silk-cotton robes, bath towels, broadcloth, striped robes, silk-cotton baggy trousers, and felt.²¹

TRUSTEES AND ORPHANS

In the Ottoman Empire, if a child became orphaned and had goods belonging to his/her father, the control of these goods was managed by a trustee (*vâsî*) who was officially appointed for this duty.²² This guardian might be close to an orphan, as in a relative, or could be someone not related by kin.²³ The main reason for this implementation was to protect the rights of orphans until they reached the age of

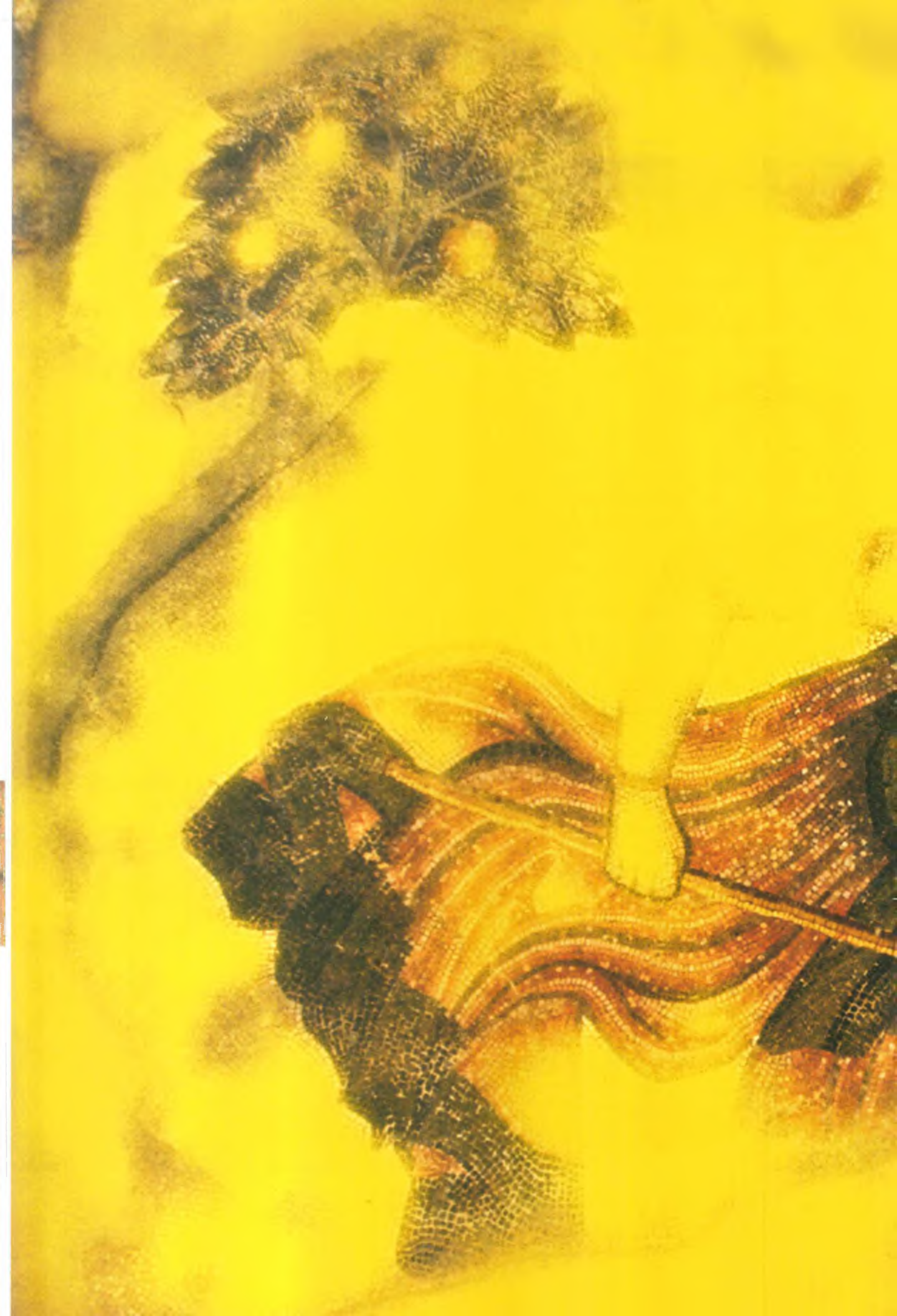
puberty. Their protection in this way was upheld in courts and, if necessary, the judge could change the *vasi*. In the district of Urfa, during the second half of the 19th century, while the situation of orphans was managed by the *vasi*, their economic guarantee was provided through an orphan fund (*eytam sandığı*).²⁴ The guardians appointed for the orphans were chosen from among reliable and responsible men.

After dividing the estate of the deceased, to protect the goods of orphans the *vasi* was instituted with the power of orphan funds.²⁵ The *vasi* was responsible for selling both movable and immovable (real estate) goods of orphans on their behalf.²⁶ If someone wanted to benefit from the orphan fund, he/she had to make a contract with the *vasi* in court.

If the *vasi* so willed, he could take permission from a judge (*kadı*) to spend the properties of an orphan.²⁷ For example, Mehmed Efendi was appointed as *vasi* for his siblings and he wanted to sell the goods from his father's estate to provide maintenance for them. The *kadı* then gave permission to him in front of witnesses.²⁸

The socio-cultural capital of individuals in the daily life of Urfa, from prehistory to the Middle Ages, and from the Republican period to the present, has presented different features. At the center of daily life, there have always been the home, street, neighborhood, the marketplace, places of worship and coffee houses. Interactions between individuals in Urfa during the Ottoman period were limited to their neighborhoods. Imams of neighborhoods were at the forefront in ensuring solidarity. In each case, they took responsibility as witnesses, guarantors, and deputies for the protection of women and children. Contrary to popular belief, women had equal status with men. As evidenced by the records of inheritance of Urfa families, the many similarities in the architectural features of the houses where they lived, the household goods that they used and their clothing types, the existence of a social structure of equal prosperity is revealed.







THE LEGENDS OF URFA

MEHMET KURTOĞLU





Lion trainer, the Ayyubid Period
(Sanliurfa Archeological Museum)



Edessa Mosaic

Mythology or fable, better yet legend... For centuries legends have been the leading cultural dynamics of civilizations. Moreover, legends have been the source of inspiration for history, the arts, and literature. As such, they exhibit the characteristics of the region in which they appear. The great Turkish writer Behçet Necatigil defines mythology, namely legend, in relation to people as “stories which emerged from the need to ascribe a simple explanation for various cosmological and life phenomena which appeared to them as mysterious, and also to interpret the natural phenomena they faced in the world around them.” Therefore, we may say that legends reveal the beliefs, thought and lifestyle of the societies to which they belong.

When looking at the legends of Urfa, traces of influence from the ancient past such as those of Zoroastrianism, Shamanism, Buddhism, the Sabeans, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and monotheistic religions besides those of the Old Testament can be found. In fact, it is not wrong to say that these legends continue to exist today in the culture of Urfa. The four known elements of the source of life—fire, water, wind and earth—are expressed in the Urfa legends based upon fear and hope, and their deep traces in social life can be seen today.

The general characteristic of Urfa’s legends is their religious tone. Especially considering that the Judeo-Christian and Islamic faiths existed side by side in Urfa, the colors, sounds, and rituals of these religions can be felt immediately in many of the legends. In fact, the elements of fire and water hold an especially major role in



The fish revered
in the Balıklıgöl

the legends of Urfa. Judah Benzion Segal emphasizes the existence of the cult of healing water in this region. Even today, the continuation of the legends of sacred water, healing water, sacred fish, the sacred cave, the sacred cloth and sacred script are based on the belief of holy baptism in Christianity and Islam's edict that water is the source of life. By bathing in the river Jordan, the prophet Job recreates the baptism of Jesus. In the cave, the prophet Job, known for his patience against the calamitous disease he suffered, is tested and eventually finds healing through the water in the Well of Patience (*Sabır Kuyusu*). In the district of Harran, Jacob nears the well and finds love, and Abraham falls into the fire in the lake of Zeliha. Love and water stand side by side in the legends of Urfa. We shall in this context relate just a few of these historic and fabulous legends handed down in Urfa generation after generation.

THE LEGEND OF ADAM AND EVE

According to legend, after Adam and Eve were banished from Paradise, the first place they set foot on earth was in the plain of Harran. At that time the plain was like a corner of Paradise, with knee-high grass, beautiful, fragrant flowers and the sweet chirping of birds. Adam and Eve were overwhelmed when contemplating this beauty. Among this bounteous beauty they were struck by one single tree. Adam, on his way from Heaven, brought a pomegranate and a white rose branch,

which he planted in the middle of the plain. By evening the plants had grown to be the size of a man, and the following day one was adorned with white and the other with red. The earth's abundant growth of the white rose and red pomegranate led him to the decision to plough the earth.

While thinking about what to plant, Eve opened the palm of her hand to find a grain of wheat she had brought from Heaven. With delight, they got to work.

Adam made a plow from a branch of the white rose tree and started to plough the earth. But after a time, the physical work became so overwhelming that he could hardly move from exhaustion. Eve struggled to help, but she too found it hard to keep up. That year the harvest was small. One year after another their energy became exhausted. One day, working the land in the heat of the noontime sun, all of a sudden a yellow ox directed its horns toward the plow. Adam was delighted thinking that he was freed from this strenuous labor and kissed the ox's eyes. From then on, every start at plowing was preceded by a grateful kiss. According to popular belief, the Plain of



Symbolic carvings, Şanlıurfa
Archeological Museum

Harran is the site where the first person stepped onto the earth, and the place where the earth was plowed and oxen worked the land for the first time. The sacredness of wheat, the white rose, and pomegranate stems from their being brought from Paradise. Even today, the ongoing tradition of the farmers' kissing of the oxen dates back to the time of Adam.



Geometrical
designs used in
carpets and kilims:
the Sipahi Market

THE NAMES OF URFA AND THE LEGEND OF NIMROD

According to one narrative, Urfa was founded during the time of the prophet Enoch and is said to take its place among the first established cities of the world. In some Islamic sources, it is said to have been founded after Noah's flood. Urfa came onto the stage of history with Edessa as its first name. Since the ruler Ruha from the tribe of Thamud founded the city, it started to be known as Ruha. Turks called this area Urruha and after a time it came to be called Urfa. Here, in a cave, the Prophet Jesus and his Apostles set up a church, chanting sorrowful hymns from morning till night such that the city took on the name "Rehawi" in that area.

King Nimrod, the ruler of Urfa who presented himself as a god, opposed the prophet Abraham's teaching of monotheism and punished him by placing him into the fire. Despite Abraham's warnings, Nimrod would not give up his claim of being a deity, increasingly becoming enraged. An overwhelming sense of arrogance and pride overcame him.

One day, God Almighty appointed a mosquito to fly to Nimrod's palace in order to curb this overbearing situation. Although protected from all sides by guards, a mosquito entered Nimrod's palace, and from there it entered Nimrod's nose and reached his brain, causing an unbearable irritation. The more the mosquito buzzed around, the greater pain Nimrod would endure. After a time it became unbearable. He lost all hope of being able to kill the insect. Later on, doctors recommended that he be hit with a felted club whenever the mosquito moved. Nimrod became resigned to his hopeless predicament. A club of felt was manufactured and two men were assigned to the duty of hitting Nimrod's head and nose. When Nimrod told them to hit him, they would strike, relieving his pain. However, at every blow, the mosquito would become even more active and Nimrod would order them to hit harder. Blow by blow, Nimrod died in the end. The word "hit" thus turned into "Ruha," "Reha," and, lastly, into "Urfa."



Objects as symbols
of worship found in
Göbeklitepe

THE LEGEND OF BALIKLIGÖL (THE LAKE OF FISH)

There was a despotic ruler in Urfa called Nimrod who claimed to be divine. At the same time, the prophet Abraham spread teachings about the One God among the people. Nimrod, seeing that this would jeopardize the idea of his claim to divinity, ordered Abraham to be brought to him. While everyone bowed down in Nimrod's presence, Abraham unwaveringly remained standing up straight. Nimrod, becoming angry, asked, "Why did you not prostrate before me?" Abraham replied,





A view from Halfeti



Balıklıgöl (the fish pond
where Abraham fell into
the fire)

“I will not prostrate before anyone except the One and Only God.” Nimrod then asked, “Who is this One God?” and Prophet Abraham replied, “My Lord makes being from nothing and turns nothing into being.” In response, Nimrod said, “That describes me, I can both kill and raise up to life,” and he ordered his men to bring two captives from prison. The men went and brought back two prisoners. Nimrod in an instant killed one of them and forgave the other one. Turning to Abraham, he said, “You can see I killed one and the other I raised up.” Abraham replied, “You did not raise up the dead, you just did not kill the living one.” This time, Nimrod asked, “What does your God do?” Abraham replied, “My Lord creates day and night and causes the sun to rise and light up the world. At dusk the sun sets and the whole world basks in darkness. He allows the sun to rise in the East and set in the West. If you truly are divine then make the sun rise from the West!” Nimrod became speechless because the examples Abraham enumerated made sense.

Fearing that Abraham would cause a revolt against him by spreading the teachings about the One God, Nimrod thereafter gathered his men, and thus ordered that Abraham be thrown into the fire. According to the narrative, for six months beasts of burden carried wood, heaping it up at the foot of the fortress. The wood was then set on fire. Later a catapult was constructed across the fortress in order to throw Abraham into the fire. At God’s command, however, the fire did not burn Abraham. The burning wood turned into fish and the fire into water. Thus a miracle transpired. A rose garden surrounded the lake. The command “Oh fire! Be cool and calm for Abraham!” was made in accordance with revelation, and thus the prophet Abraham walked around in the rose garden. Seeing this, Nimrod called Abraham to his presence and said, “Your God is greater than me. Because of this, I will sacrifice a hundred camels.” Yet Abraham did not believe him and continued to spread his teachings of the monotheistic religion. Nimrod’s daughter could not bear the sight of Abraham being thrown into the fire and threw herself in, too. The place



The cave right above the Balıklıgöl where Abraham (pbuh) was born

where she fell was also transformed into a lake. The name “Aynzilha,” derived from the Arabic meaning “the tears of Zuleyha”, was given to the lake.

PROPHET JESUS (PBUH) AND THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY CLOTH

During the time when the prophethood of Jesus Christ was proclaimed, there was a king, known as Kara (Black) Abgar, the son of Ma’nu, who ruled in Urfa. This king was struck by leprosy, and no one could find a cure for his disease. At this time it became known that there was a prophet who healed the sick and even resurrected the dead. Through the means of envoys, a letter was sent to him, stating: “From the head of the country, Kara Abgar sends greetings to the Saviour Yesu (Jesus) in the city of Jerusalem. The successful healing of the sick without medicine by your hands is the work of your purity and miraculous nature. For years I have been suffering and wish to have a cure for my illness. I have also learned that the Jews are eagerly preparing for your assassination. For this reason, I extend the invitation to come to my beautiful small city which is secure enough for us both.” Before their departure, he commanded the head of the delegation saying, “If it happens that Jesus cannot come back with you, I want you to bring a likeness of him painted on wood.” On arrival at Jerusalem, they met with Jesus and delivered his letter.

Jesus read the letter and, having sensed everything beforehand, had already washed his face and wiped it on a cloth. The image of his face appeared on the cloth and he gave it along with a letter to one of the emissaries to bring to King Abgar. In the letter, the following was written:

“Happy is the one who believes in me without seeing. I received your letter requesting my visit. However in order to complete everything here by those who sent me [I must



Abgar's portrait



A mosaic of Abgar

remain.] Please accept my apologies. After ascending, I will send one of my apostles to provide you with a cure. May God bless your city. May it not be bothered by the Assyrians.”

Every Holy Book writes of the ability of Prophet Jesus to heal the sick and raise up the dead. When the letter reached King Abgar, he wiped his face with the cloth and was cured.

It is said that Christianity began in Urfa from this date onwards. Later it is reported that a thief stole the cloth and threw it into the well of the Ulu Mosque (which had once been a church). According to an Assyrian priest, the cloth spread a glowing light. In history books, it is recorded that Muslims took possession of the cloth and during a war with the Byzantines it was given in exchange for Muslim captives (see Part II: Religion and Prophets).

(Left) Abgar holding the mandylion with the image of Jesus



(Right) The Shroud of Turin with the image of Jesus (pbuh)



Here it should be mentioned that there is a controversy as to whether the king in the legend who brought the people of Edessa into Christianity was Abgar V (the Black, d. 50 AD) or Abgar IX (the Great, 177–212 AD). Obviously if there was a letter written to Jesus, this would imply that the King was Abgar V, as they lived at the same period in time. On the other hand, if the letter to Jesus was an invention, then the later king, Abgar IX, would most likely be the one referred to as converting his people to Christianity. Some accounts state that after Abgar V died, the people reverted to paganism and the holy cloth was hidden away by one of the Bishops of Edessa, presumably reappearing with the conversion of Abgar IX to Christianity after his visit to Rome in 203 AD.

Three historical references to this legend are given below, and it can be seen

that details differ. The subject of the Mandylion, or the Image of Edessa, holds a place in Christian tradition as the first holy “icon.” In some versions of the story, Jesus instructed the cloth to be delivered to the king after his crucifixion. Indeed, some scholars have advanced the theory, based on writings preserved in the Vatican library that the cloth was in reality the Shroud of Turin, but folded in layers so that only the face was visible.

The Doctrine of Addai (St. Thaddeus)

In this version of the story, the king’s envoy, Hannan, was the keeper of the archives and court painter. He painted a likeness of Jesus and brought it back to the king, who was very pleased and gave it a place of honor in one of his palaces (*Doctrine of Addai*/ 13, c. 400).



Ayn Zeliha Lake

Eusebius of Kayseri

The introduction of Christianity into Urfa and the oldest anecdotes related to the church depend on the history of Eusebius of Kayseri. According to the legend, during the period of Jesus, Abgar V reigned in Edessa (Urfa). This king, also known as Ukomo (the Black), suffered from a kind of skin disease. The story relates that the king sent his envoy, led by the delegate Hannan, to Emperor Tiberius. Hannan went to Jerusalem and heard from the people of the region that a new prophet had emerged. The delegation stayed ten days and upon returning to Urfa, told the king what they had heard about Jesus. When Abgar heard that Jesus healed the sick and conducted miracles, he sent Hannan to invite Jesus to Urfa. Jesus answered that he ministered to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” With this sentence, he thanked

the king for the invitation and said he would send one of his disciples in his place. The man Jesus sent was Addai (St. Thaddeus), one of the Twelve Apostles and sibling of St. Thomas. Addai was appointed as a missionary to Urfa, was presented to the king, cured him and then compelled him to become a Christian.

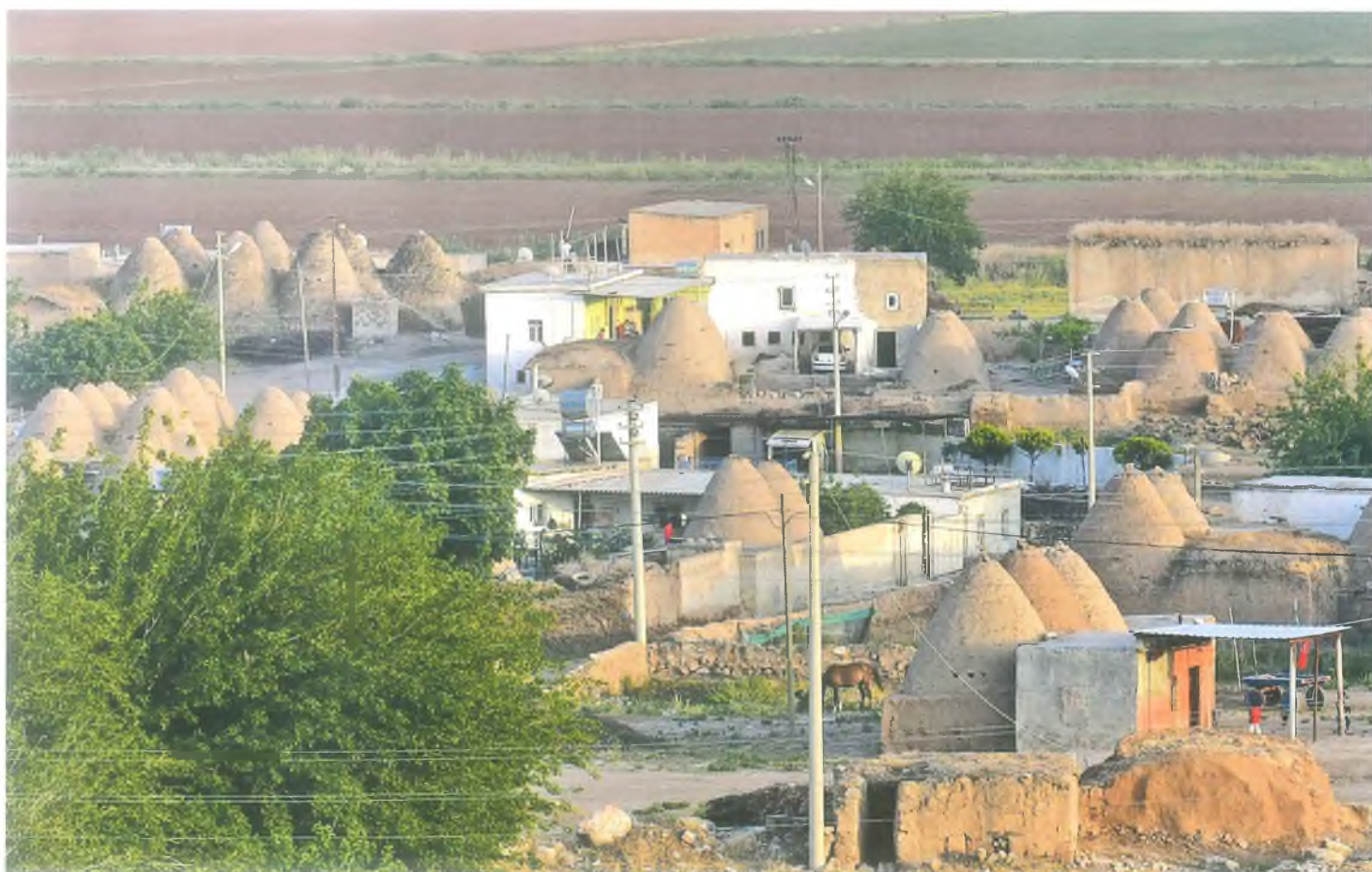
Abu al-Faraj

Abu al-Faraj informed us of the content of the letter of Abgar. According to his account, in the nineteenth year of Tiberius, the king of Ur-hai (Edessa) sent a letter with Hannan (Ananias) to Jesus. In his letter, he wrote, "I received news that you can heal people without drugs, that you are God, or the son of God, so I am writing this letter to ask you to come to us. Furthermore, I received news that the Jews want to destroy you. I have a small and beautiful city and this place is enough for us. Before departing, the king told Hannan, "If Jesus does not want to come back with you, I want his picture painted on a piece of wood." When the delegation met with Jesus in Jerusalem, Abgar's letter was given to Jesus. After reading the letter, Jesus washed his face and dried it with a piece of cloth. As a miracle, the image of Jesus' face appeared on the cloth.² After giving this cloth to the envoy, Jesus prepared his answer and sent a letter.³ In it, Jesus said,⁴ "Happy are those who believe without seeing me! As for what you wrote about my coming to your side, I have established a way of life and a movement, so I am responsible for carrying out a mission here. However, I will send one of my disciples to treat your disease. This disciple will give life to you and those who are with you."⁵ The ambassadors brought Jesus' cloth and letter to Urfa and praised his name to the king.⁶

THE LEGEND OF THE BLOODY CAVE

In the past, taking on bets was one of the lively themes of the Urfa *sira geceleri* (nights of "taking turns"). Usually, the young men would make bets on which among them was the strongest and bravest. Of course, a prize was put forth as a reward. Even late at night, these youths would make bets among themselves. On a certain *sira* night, they decided to test each other's bravery by seeing who would dare to go into the dark caves in the mountains outside the city limits. One of them, being bold, said that he would enter any cave of their choosing. According to the claim, he would have to drive a stake in a cave that, up until this time, no one had dared to enter, even in daylight.

The young man took the bet, got up and left. He bravely entered the cave. In the past in Urfa, boys would wear a garment (*zubun*) made out of white cloth. This brave young boy who made the bet entered the cave and started to pound the wooden stake into the ground. Unable to see anywhere in the darkness he pounded a part of his own garment in with the stake! When he attempted to stand up after finishing, he was unable to because his long shirt was driven in together with the stake. He thought that spirits were holding him and so he started struggling left and right. Panicking, he yelled and screamed, "Let me go! Let me go!" Panicking, he kept beating the cave wall with his hands and head. He died there in fright.



Present-day Harran

Towards morning, after seeing that their friend hadn't come back, out of curiosity the others set out and finally reached the cave. They found their friend lying lifeless in a pool of blood. The end of his long shirt was tacked in with the stake. While struggling, the blood from his hands had been wiped onto the cave walls and made an imprint. For this reason, that cave is now known as the Bloody Cave.

Upon looking at the surroundings of the citadel, one cannot avoid this sacred site and its legends. According to another legend, the prophet Abraham lived in this cave. The cave protected him from the despotic king Nimrod and Abraham, who was still a baby, grew up being nursed by a doe. Later on, he clashed with Nimrod while spreading monotheism. This story of Abraham is from the same period as the legend of the foundation of the city of Urfa. Abraham was convinced that, besides himself, nine other prophets lived in this city. The legends that shaped the spirit of the city include the founding of Harran by Prophet Idris (Enoch), the blessing of the city by Prophet Jesus and the dispensing of patience and healing by Prophet Job. The city's metaphysical and mystical dimensions are based on the truth upon which these legends are nurtured. Urfa is a city with "legendary" beauty.





NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ÖMER FARUK KAYA
ABDULLAH EKİNCİ





A view from Saniurfa, Takoran Valley



The Euphrates passing through the Urfa plains

The province of Şanlıurfa, situated in Turkey's Southeastern Anatolia Region, is located between 37 49' 12"- 40 10' 00" eastern meridian and 36 41' 28"- 37 57' 50" northern parallel. Şanlıurfa has been a strategic location throughout history due to its proximity to rivers and its position on trade routes. It is surrounded by the provinces of Gaziantep to the west, Adıyaman to the northwest, Diyarbakir to the northeast, Mardin to the east and Syria to the south.

GEOLOGICAL FEATURES

Şanlıurfa's geological makeup has the characteristics of the Paleocene epoch, which was the last layer of the third geological period in terms of structure. It was formed together with a part of the Old World. Prior to the formation of folds due to geologic activity, the Tethys Ocean was located in the region where Anatolia is currently located. Volcanic eruptions that took place between the end of the third and fourth geological eras affected Şanlıurfa, which rose slightly on the hard mass and has undergone sporadic curling in places. The northeast of the Şanlıurfa Province is composed primarily of basalt rock from the Siverek, Hilvan, Viranşehir and Karacadağ volcanoes. Part of the province is also covered by limestone formations.



Şanlıurfa Takoran Valley

The province of Şanlıurfa is located on the northern Arabian Plateau and on the southern foothills of the southeastern Taurus range. The highest point is Karacadağ (1919 meters), which is the peak of an extinct volcanic mountain. The Tektek Mountains, reaching a height of 801 meters, stretch from north to south between the valleys of Harran and Viranşehir. The province is on structurally flat land and its many plains include the Harran Plain, Suruç Plain, Viranşehir Plain and Halfeti Plain. The Euphrates River is located within the provincial borders, and the Atatürk Dam, situated on the river between the provinces of Şanlıurfa and Adıyaman, is used for energy and irrigation.

Göbeklitepe Temple is the earliest settlement in human history (12,000 BC.)
Source: *National Geographic*
(Turkish version), June 2011
(slightly modified)

EARLY SETTLEMENTS

Şanlıurfa has been a center of attraction throughout history in terms of the richness of its nature and environment. It is home to the rich lands known as the Fertile Crescent. The names of the hills surrounding the Harran Plain are Göbeklitepe, Karahantepe, Sefertepe, and Hamzatepe. They form a crescent of about 30–40 km and are considered the most





The Nisibis Bridge,
Takoran/Siverek

important settlements of the Neolithic era, and nearly all date back 11,000–12,000 years. There are findings from the excavations on Göbeklitepe which could overturn previous knowledge and understanding of the human transition to sedentary life. These findings also show that these are the oldest settlements in human history (see Part I: History).



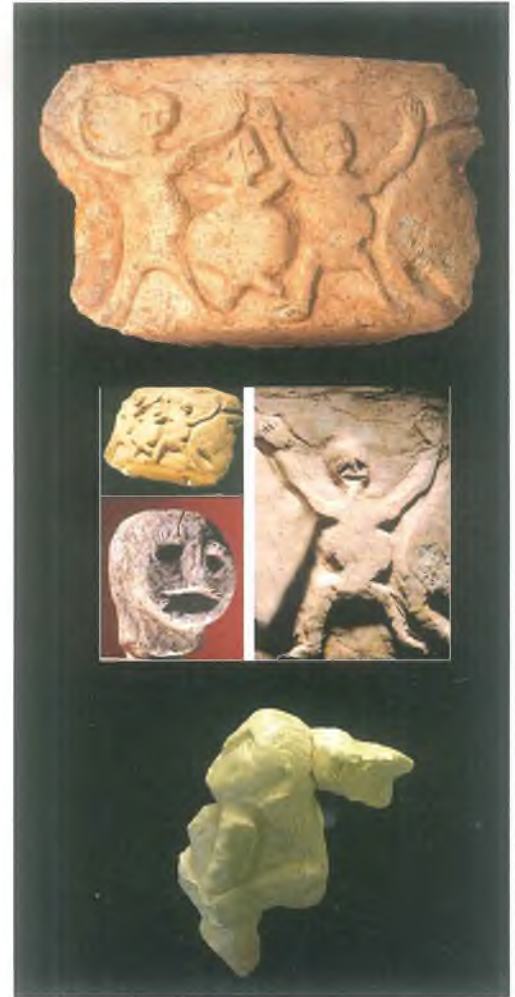
Nevali Çori excavations:
Nevali Çori is a settlement
of the early Neolithic Period
(10th-8th millennium BC),
and it is on the banks of
the Euphrates about 30 km
northwest of Göbeklitepe

During the Neolithic period, mankind was adapting to agriculture, which was of vital importance along with hunting and gathering. People through trial and error began cultivating such products as wheat, barley and lentils, which were developed into their best varieties due to acculturation over the course of time. The domestication of animals took place, and the first religious and civil architecture began to emerge during this period. Findings including engravings of reptiles, such as the desert monitor (*Varanus griseus*), wild boars, cranes, storks, foxes, snakes, scorpions, sheep, gazelles, lions, spiders, and statues of humans and engravings of men without heads have all been unearthed in Göbeklitepe and are of importance in that they reflect an 11,500-year-old sedentary society.

The settlement called Nevalı Çori is located next to the Kantara Tributary coming from the right bank of the Euphrates River. Flint arrowheads and digging tools have been found in this area, which was occupied continuously during the years 8400–8100 and 3000–2800 BC. It is understood that people earned their livelihood by farming and hunting and domesticating animals as well as by manufacturing small statues and constructing huge monumental stone sculptures and temples for worship. In addition, limestone figures, male and female, and animal figures and sculptured heads of individuals have been discovered. The settlement of Nevalı Çori reflects the period when human beings started domesticating animals and plants in addition to practicing intensive hunting. The fact that many stone structures have been found shows that this settlement was the center of this transitional period. The structures found here could have been used as warehouses. In them are the oldest known terrazzo floors with stone sculptures and many other works of art. There are approximately 250 mounds situated in Nevalı Çori, located between the village of Kantara and Biris Cemetery in the district of Bozova, and in the field of Söğüt, in Akarçay Tepe, and in the Harran Plains.

FLORA

Şanlıurfa is geographically located in Southeastern Anatolia. While little information is available about the plant life of the southern parts, the northern parts of the province include moderate vegetation. Karacadağ, in the north of Şanlıurfa Province, is an important area for plants. It is where the wild ancestors of legumes and cereal grasses (*Gramineae*), as well as endemic and rare plants, were grown. One of the biggest reasons why Şanlıurfa has not attracted the attention of botanists is because it generally displays steppe topography, except for the mountainous northern regions. However, there has been an increase in our knowledge of the plant life of Şanlıurfa thanks to the floristic studies carried out in recent years. According to the quadrature system created by Davis (1965–85) that considers the latitudes and longitudes passing through Turkey, the districts of Birecik and Halfeti are situated



Figurines discovered in Nevalı Çori



Onobrychis galegifolia



within the C6 square. Viranşehir and Ceylanpınar, located in the south, are situated within the C8 square, and a large proportion of the rest of the province is within the C7 square. According to Zohary, Şanlıurfa is located in the Iran-Turan floristic zone.

It is unfortunate that the region of Southeastern Anatolia has been only marginally included in the botanical excursions conducted by foreign travelers since the beginning of the 18th century. One can find general information about the plants that extend naturally within Şanlıurfa and about plants collected by both foreign and local botanists within the basic work called *Flora of Turkey*. The first information about the plants of Şanlıurfa can be found in the travelogue which a German physician named Leonhard Rauwolff (1535–96) wrote in the middle of the 16th century. Austrian botanist Karl Georg Theodor Kotschy (1813–66) also collected many sample plants from Karacadağ and the Siverek region. Most of the plants he collected were classified as new species after being renamed by Edmond Boissier (1810–85) in *Flora Orientalis* in the years 1841–43. Another salient plant collector was the German chemist Carl Haussknecht (1838–1903), who collected plants in Şanlıurfa between the years 1865 and 1867. Another researcher who collected plants in 1888 in the vicinity of Birecik, and Rum Kale in particular, was the German chemist Paul Sintenis (1847–1907). Moreover, Davis and Huber-Morath were two noteworthy researchers who collected sample plants in the 1950s.

The steppes of Urfa are covered by a certain type of Anatolian milk vetch (*Astragalus gummifer* or gum tragacanth) a small woody evergreen shrub

The southeastern Anatolian steppe area is included in the northern end of the Fertile Crescent, reaching Israel through Lebanon and Amanos. The Taurus arc starts from the gulf of Basra (Iran) and stretches towards the Taurus foothills. There are wide plains and low, flat steppes along the Mardin-Viranşehir-Urfa line located in the south of the plateau area.

Steppe vegetation dominates Şanlıurfa. The species variety is not as rich as in the other steppes in eastern Anatolia. The steppe plains of Şanlıurfa are influenced by the arid conditions of Syria to the west. After a short spring, the plant life starts drying up due to excessive temperatures. The first plants in the mountainous steppe areas at the beginning of spring are the striking bulbous plants like weeping bride



Hyacinth



Cerasus microcarpa
subsp. *tortusa*

flower/inverted tulip (*Fritillaria*), star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum*), windflower (*Anemone*), tulips (*Tulipa*), hyacinth (*Hyacinthella*), the mountain/grape hyacinth (*Muscari*), orchids (*Orchis* and *Ophrys*), iris (*Iris*) and wild onion (*Allium*). Plants that survive with little liquid water (xerophytes) have adapted to the harsh climatic conditions and they dominate the physiognomy of the steppe. Perennial drought-resistant plants found in the mountainous steppe fields of Şanlıurfa include milk vetch (*Astragalus pelliger*), cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), tumble thistle (*Gundelia tournefortii*), globe thistle (*Echinops pungens*), sea holly (*Eryngium maritimum*), sainfoin (*Onobrychis visiiifolia*), Turkish thistle (*Onopordum turcicum*), golden drop (*Onosma nanum*), phlomis (*Phlomis tuberosa*, *Phlomis rigida*), figwort (*Scrophularia lucida*) and mullein (*Verbascum speciosum*).

It is unfortunate that it is no longer possible to talk about the steppe of Şanlıurfa in today's conditions. A large portion has been converted into agricultural land because of the increasing demands of the human population. Speedwell (*Veronica persica*), the most widespread plant species on the steppe in previous years, is not seen as often as before. We find traces of the indigenous vegetation of the steppe on rocky areas that are not suitable for agriculture.

In these rocky areas, perennial herbaceous plants such as golden alyssum (*Aurinia saxatilis*) are common, and of the mustard or cabbage (*Brassicaceae*) family, wild/white mustard (*Sinapis arvensis*), elongated mustard (*Brassica elongata*), wild radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*), and the wallflower (*Matthiola longipetala*). Of the *Apiaceae* family, we can find malabaila (*Malabaila secacul*), anise (*Pimpinella anisum*), Mediterranean/small-fruited hartwort (*Tordylium apulum*) and hedge parsley (*Torilis*

Pistacia terebinthus
subsp. *palaestina*
(wild pistachio)



arvensis). The *Aegilops* genus in the grass (*Poaceae*) family which includes the cereal grains barley (*Hordeum*), oats (*Avena*) and wheat (*Triticum*) are also present. Of the Legume (*Fabaceae*) family, clover (*Trifolium*) fenugreek (*Trigonella*), Alfalfa (*Medicago*), sweet pea (*Lathyrus*) and vetches (*Vicia*) can be observed in the region.

No kind of forest can be observed on the plains and plateaus in the southern part of Şanlıurfa in general; only shrubs and trees can be observed sporadically. Among the factors that cause this condition are the effects of human activity as well as climate. Sporadic small groups of trees seen in the steppe are evidence that these places were once covered with forest. Among the species of tree and bush that attract attention are the Brant's oaks (*Quercus Brant*), which have a wide distribution in the vicinity of Karacadağ. The Turkish gall oak (*Quercus infectoria* subsp. *Boissieri*) and Lebanon oak (*Quercus libani*) are other types of oak that are noted. In addition, other woody plants that are found in the region are small-fruited cherry (*Cerasus microcarpa* subsp. *tortusa*), oriental hackberry (*Celtis tournefortii*), Eurasian smoketree (*Cotinus coggygria*), hawthorns (*Crataegus aronia* and *Crataegus monogyna*), Syrian pear (*Pyrus syriaca*) and almonds (*Amygdalus arabica*).

Remnants of Mediterranean flora in southeastern Anatolia took refuge in the inland valleys where the microclimate is more favorable. One can observe pistachio (*Pistacia terebinthus* subsp. *palaestina*), which exist within the Tektek Mountains to the east. The wild fig (*Ficus carica* subsp. *rupestris*) is another type of plant that attracts our notice.

There are many woody plants which spread on the slopes of the Euphrates and creeks in the province of Şanlıurfa. Among those which spread within the Euphrates basin, prime examples are Lydian gorse (*Genista lydia*), Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*) and Euphrates poplar (*Populus euphratica*), which took its name from the Latin name of the river. White willow (*Salix alba*) and Persian willow



Tulipa aleppensis

(*Salix acmophylla*) are woody species commonly encountered on the water's edge. On the hillsides surrounding the dry river beds are almond (*Amygdalus arabica*), tamarisk (*Tamarix smyrnensis*) and chaste trees (*Vitex Agnus-castus*). Salinity inside the soil occurred as the result of Harran Plain's transformation to irrigated agriculture. As a result, species called saline plants (halophytes) such as *Salsola incanescens*, *Halothamnus hierochunticus*, *Atriplex leucophylla*, *Frankenia pulverulenta*, the salt wheatgrass (*Aeluropus lagopoides*), *Oligochaeta divaricata*, and lamb's quarters (*Chenopodium album* subsp. *album*) are now seen in these habitats.

New aquatic (hydrophyte) plant species were recorded within the irrigation channels in recent years which had not been previously included in Şanlıurfa's vegetation. These are the long-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton nodosus*), the submerged aquatic plant *Myriophyllum spicatum*, the free floating aquatic plant *Lemna*, and the algae *Chara globularis* and *Cladophora fracta*. Some of the natural plant species in the vegetation of Şanlıurfa have been used for different purposes for centuries. While some of the species are used as medicine, others are used as ornaments or within the framework of belief.



Verbascum sp.
(Mullein)





A historical section of Halpeli



Black-tailed gazelle

FAUNA

Our knowledge about large mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and butterflies living in Şanlıurfa has become clearer thanks to the studies carried out in recent years under the influence of the Southeastern Anatolian Project. The most conspicuous mammal, on behalf of which poems and songs have been written, is the black-tailed gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*). Gazelles that live in the mountains of the region have been taken under the protection of the government, where they are listed as endangered. The species is protected inside the Ceylanpinar State Farm and is maintained naturally under the Wildlife Development Program at Kızılkuyu. Another notable mammal which was thought to have become extinct, but which has been seen more often recently, is the striped hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*). This species is thought to have increased in the vicinities of Ceylanpinar and Birecik in particular. In addition, the presence of the wild goat (*Capra aegagrus*) in the western part of Karacadağ is acknowledged.

Şanlıurfa is also interesting in terms of birds. One of the three known populations of the northern bald ibis (*Geronticus eremita*) is in Birecik. This endangered bird species is protected under the authority of the Bald Ibis Sanctuary and Breeding



Station in Birecik. While the great bustard (*Otis tarda*) used to be plentiful, especially on the plain steppe, this bird species is no longer seen as frequently as it was before. The spectacled warbler (*Sylvia conspicillata*) is another bird species identified in the Astragalus steppe of Karacadağ in recent years. The lesser kestrel (*Falco naumanni*), cinereous bunting (*Emberiza cineracea*), Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*),

Urfa pigeons are famous for their beauty and the way they fly



Pigeon house







Mulberries

see-see partridge (*Ammoperdix griseogularis*), blue-cheeked bee-eater (*Merops persicus*), cream-colored courser (*Cursorius cursor*), and pallid scops owl (*Otus brucei*) can be counted as other prominent bird species. Moreover, the little cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*) is generally to be found in the region of the Euphrates River and Atatürk Dam.

Newly discovered reptiles and amphibians are being observed in Şanlıurfa as the result of recent studies. The desert monitor (*Varanus griseus*) is the most conspicuous species detected in the Tektek Mountains and Birecik. The Iranian fat-tailed gecko (*Eublepharis angramainyu*) and Blanford's short-nosed desert lizard (*Mesalina brevirostris*) are among the other species that attract attention. The recently discovered Harran lizard (*Acanthodactylus harranensis*) has been accepted as a new species and is thought to be found only in Şanlıurfa. The Urfa or diadem snake (*Spalerosophis diadema*), the Iranian snake or dark-headed dwarf racer (*Pseudocyclophis persicus*), and the long-nosed worm snake (*Leptotyphlops macrorhynchus*) are among the conspicuous snake species to be seen in Şanlıurfa. The endangered Euphrates soft shell turtle (*Rafetus euphraticus*), which takes its name from the river it inhabits, is interesting because of its unique nose structure.

The *Melanargia grumi* is an endemic butterfly species peculiar to the Southeastern Anatolia Region of Turkey. Other butterflies found here include the festoon butterfly (*Zerynthia deyrollei*), and the Apollo and false Apollo butterflies (*Archon apollinaris* and *Archon apollinus*).

The Euphrates River hosts many types of fish species that are of economic importance. The most notable among these, both biologically and economically, are the shirbot/shabut (*Barbus Grypus*), Mesopotamian catfish (*Silurus triostegus*) and Mesopotamian spiny eel (*Mastacembelus mastacembelus*). Five species belonging to the carp (*Cyprinidae*) family live in Balıklıgöl, a water habitat which bears an importance of its own from both a historical and a touristic point of view.







Takoran Valley reservoir

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- 24 Ibn al-Athir. *al Kâmil fi al-Tarikh*, op. cit, pp. 108, 113; Segal, p. 193; Işıltan, p. 105; T. H. "Diyar-ı Mudar," p. 601; H. Kindermann, "Ukayl", *MEB*, XIII, pp. 15-18.
- 25 Işıltan, p. 102.
- 26 Segal, p. 253.
- 27 Neşet Çağatay. *Makaleler ve İncelemeler* (Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1983), pp. 23-24; for more information on the Ali-Muawiya controversy, see Adnan Demircan, *Ali-Muaviye Kavgası* (İstanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 2002).
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- 29 Süryani Mihail. *Süryani Mihail Vakayinamesi (1042-1195)*, trans. Hrant D. Andreasyan (Ankara: TTK Nüshası, 1944), p. 89; Abu al-Faraj, p. 187; Işıltan, p. 107.
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- 33 Ahmet Ağırakça, op. cit., p. 100.
- 34 Ibn al-Athir, op. cit., pp. 340-52; Işıltan, p. 113.
- 35 Tabari, *Tarikh*, op. cit., VII, pp. 443-44; Ibn al-Athir, pp. 351-53.
- 36 Balazuri, p. 276; Tabari, VII, p. 446; Yakubi, *Tarih*, II, p. 289; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Ta'rikh*, p. 353; Işıltan, op. cit., p. 114; Ağırakça, op. cit., p. 99.
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- 38 A. Ekinci. "İhşidilerin Suriye-Filistin Bölgesinde Hakimiyet Kurma Mücadelesi," *Fırat Üniversitesi, Ortadoğu Dergisi*, 1/1 (Elazığ, 2003), pp. 35-53.
- 39 Ibn Shaddad. *Umari al-Sham, III/I*, pp. 212-19; H. Hakkı Dursun Yıldız, "Sacoğulları," *DGBİT* (İstanbul: 1987), p. 90; Kazım Yaşar Koprıman, "İhşidiler," *DGBİT*, 6, p. 96.
- 40 Ali Sevim. *Anadolu Fatih Kutalmışoğlu Süleymanşah* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1990), p. 9; Ali Sevim and Yaşar Yücel, *Türkiye Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1990), p. 37; Ekinci, "İhşidilerin Suriye-Filistin Bölgesinde Hakimiyet Kurma Mücadelesi," pp. 14-15.
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- 42 Waqidi. *Futuh al-Sham*, pp. 128, 130; Yaquti, *Mu'jam al-Buldan, V*, p. 289; Ibn al-Athir, op. cit., p. 463; Büncher, "Şapur," *İA, XI* (Eskişehir: 1997), pp. 341-42; Honigmann, "Nasibin," *İA, IX*, p. 101; Vekayiname, p. 135, fn. 71; Şemsettin Sami, *Kamusu'l-Âlam, IV*, p. 4581; Ernst Honigmann, *Bizans Devletinin Doğu Sınırı*, trans. Fikret Işıltan (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1970), p. 140; M. Altay Köymen, *Büyük Selçuklu, III*, p. 22.
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- 45 M. Zeki Pakalın. *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü, III* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1993), p. 82.
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- 47 Mateos, pp. 139-40.

- 48 Mahmud, *Selçuk-Nâme*, op. cit., p. 82.
- 49 Osman Turan. *Selçuklular Tarihi ve Türk-İslam Medeniyeti* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1993), p. 170.
- 50 Abu al-Faraj, p. 320.
- 51 Mateos, p. 141-142; Segal, p. 221; although this event can be viewed a sign of Urfa obeying the sultan, there is no evidence of this at this point in Islamic sources.
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- 63 Steven Runciman. *Haçlı Seferleri Tarihi, I*, trans. Fikret Işıltan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), p. 177.
- 64 AlpTekin, pp. 13-14.
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- 74 Merçil, p. 417.
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- 103 Hilmi Bayraktar. *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Urfa Sancağı*, pp. 7-11; E. Honigmann claims that Rakka was pointed out as a state. Bayraktar, p. 7; Honigmann, "Urfa", *MEB*, vol. XIII, pp. 50-56; the same mistake is made by mixing of both Hijra and Gregorian years when Urfa is a separated *sanjak*. The *sanjak* of Urfa is one of three *sanjaks* of the Aleppo State. The correct date is not 1908, but 1910. See. Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi, VII*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983), p. 340; for further assessment, see Bayraktar, p.11.
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II. RELIGIONS AND PROPHETS

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- 10 Şinasi Gündüz, *Sabiiler Son Gnostikler*, p. 10; Bahriye Üçok, *İslam'dan Dönerler ve Yalancı Peygamberler* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi, 1967), p. 27; B. Cara De Vaux, "Sabiiler," op. cit., pp. 9-10.
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- 22 Ammien Marcellin, XIV, from C. 3, E. R. Hayes, *Urfa Akademisi*, translated into Turkish by Yaşar Günenç (İstanbul: Yaba Yayınları, 2002), pp. 41, 43.
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- 24 T. V. Philip, "The Missionary Impulse in the Early Asian Christian Traditions", *International Review of Mission* (October 1996), pp. 505, 508.
- 25 H. J. Drijvers, *Cults, and Beliefs* (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1980), p. 175.
- 26 Hayes, p. 29.
- 27 A. J. Arberry. *Religion in the Middle East* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 382-84.
- 28 Aziz Suryal Atiya. *Doğu Hristiyanlığı Tarihi*, trans. Nurettin Hiçyılmaz (İstanbul: Doz Yayınları, 2005).
- 29 Şinasi Gündüz. *Pavlus Hristiyanlığın Mimarı* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2001), p. 153. The vast majority of Christian people of Urfa in the nineteenth century consisted of Jacobites (Yakubiye). Other Christian groups were the Nestorians, Merkits and Maronites. This shows that the sect of Jacobites was in Urfa since the earliest periods. See Hans-Lukas Kieser, "Bir Misyoner Hastahanesinin Çevresindeki Küçük Dünya: Urfa, 1897-1922", *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Yaşamak*, ed. François Georgeon and Paul Dumont (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), p. 261, footnote 6.
- 30 Mehmet Çelik. *Süryani Kilise Tarihi* (İstanbul: Ayraç Yayınları, 1987), pp. 39-40; Aziz Günel, *Türk Süryaniler Tarihi* (Diyarbakır: the Author, 1970), pp. 91-92.
- 31 Aziz Günel, p. 103.
- 32 Hayes, *Urfa Akademisi*, pp. 43-45, 68, 69.
- 33 Rubens Duval. *Histoire Politique, Religieuse Et Littéraire D'edesse Jusqu'à La Première Croisade* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1892, reprint by Ulan Press, 2012), pp. 81-91.
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- 40 Baysanoğlu, p. 129.
- 41 Mehmet Çelik, pp. 40-43.
- 42 Aziz Günel, p. 13; such structures are used for worship, and this situation is suitable in terms of preventing architectural deterioration and moral perspective.
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- 46 Yıldız, p. 21.
- 47 Yıldız, p. 26; Demircan, pp.81-82.
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- 49 Demircan, pp. 82-87.
- 50 Ömer Faruk Harman, "Lût", *DİA*, vol. 27 (Ankara: 2003), p. 229; Demircan, pp. 87-88.
- 51 Ömer Faruk Harman, "Eyyüb", *DİA*, vol. 12, p. 16.
- 52 Abdullah Aydemir, *İslâmî Kaynaklara Göre Peygamberler* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1992), p. 97; Demircan, pp. 89-91.
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- 55 Ömer Faruk Harman, "Medyen", *DİA*, vol. 28, p. 347; Demircan, pp. 92-93.
- 56 Yıldız, p. 117; Demircan, pp. 93-94.
- 57 Segal, op. cit., p. 101.
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III. GODS AND GODDESSES

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- 5 Black and Green, op. cit. p. 186.
- 6 Tamara Green. *The City of The Moon God* (Leiden, New York, Köln: E. J. Brill, 1992), pp. 40, 175; Abdullah Ekinci, *Harran Mitolojisi ve Tarihi* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2008); Ekinci, "Edessa ve Harran Tanrı ve Tanrıcaları", *Geçmişten Günümüze Şanlıurfa'da Dini Hayat*, ed. Yusuf Ziya Keskin (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2011).
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- 11 Tamara Green, pp. 35-43.
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- 14 Amir Harrak, "Pagan Traces in Syriac Christian Onomastica", <http://www.aina.org/articles/ptisco.pdf>, accessed on 24.12.2016, pp. 1-2; Şinasi Gündüz, "Arkeolojik Bulgular Işığında 2. Yüzyıl Soğmatar Mar Alahe Kültürü", *19 Mayıs Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 6. (Samsun: 1992), p. 149; Şinasi Gündüz, "Ay Tanrısı Sin Şehri Harrani", *Yeni Harran Çevresi* (1995), p. 88.
- 15 Addai. *The Teaching of Addai*, trans. G. Howard (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 23, 69, 86-89.
- 16 See Green, p. 21; Compared to Sumerian examples, winged angels in the Orpheus mosaic are identified with Nabu. See E. R. Hayes, *Doğu - Batı Asur - Süryanilerin Kurduğu Urfa Akademisi*, trans. Yaşar Günenç (İstanbul: Yaba Yayınları, 2002), p. 33; and Amir Harrak, pp. 2-3.
- 17 H. J. Drijvers. *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa* (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1980), pp. 43, 74-75.

- 18 Bardaisan of Edessa. *The Book of the Laws of Countries*, trans. H. J. W. Drijvers (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1964), p. 59; Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa*, op. cit., pp. 80-82.
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- 24 Drijvers, p. 90.
- 25 Black and Green, *Gods, Demons, and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia*, op. cit., p. 166.
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- 32 See Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, op. cit., pp. 207-08.
- 33 Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, pp. 130, 204.
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- 37 Jeremy Black and Anthony Green, p. 131.
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IV. HISTORY OF THOUGHT AND SCIENCE

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- 3 Y. Kumeyr. *İslam Felsefesinin Kaynakları*, trans. F. Olguner (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1976), pp. 166-68.
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- 9 Philip Hitti. *Siyasi ve Kültürel İslam Tarihi*, 2 vols. trans. Salih Tuğ (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı, 2011), p. 349.
- 10 Aynur Özfirat. *Eskiçağ'da Harran* (İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, 1994), p. 14.
- 11 Ramazan Şeşen. *Harran Tarihi* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1993), p. 59.
- 12 Kumeyr, p. 8.

- 13 T. J. De Boer. *İslam'da Felsefe Tarihi*, trans. Yaşar Kutluay (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1960), p. 13.
- 14 Ağırakça, p. 99.
- 15 Şeşen, p. 12.
- 16 Ibid, also Ağırakça, p. 99.
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- 19 Gutas, op. cit., pp. 95ff.
- 20 Süryani Mihail, *Süryani Mihail Vekainamesi, (1042-1195)*, op. cit., p. 166; De Boer, p. 12.
- 21 Mihail, p. 166; De Boer, p. 12.
- 22 H. Dursun Yıldız. "Tercüme Faaliyetleri", *DGBİT*, vol. 3, p. 462.
- 23 Yıldız, pp. 454-55; Şeşen, pp. 52-53.
- 24 Ali Bakkal. *Harran Okulu (The School of Harran)* (İstanbul: Şanlıurfa Valiliği, İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü Yayınları, n.d.), p. 70.
- 25 For more information on this see Olaf Pedersen, *A Survey of the Almagest* (New York, Dordrecht, Heidelberg and London: Springer, 2011).
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- 32 W. Barthold. *İslam Medeniyeti Tarihi*, trans. into Turkish by Fuad Köprülü (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 1977), pp. 11-12.
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- 40 M. Dağ and R. Öymen. *İslam'da Eğitim Tarihi* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1974), p. 104; Cahit Baltacı, *XV-XVI Asırlarda Osmanlı Medreseleri* (İstanbul: İrfan Yayınevi, 1976), p. 2.
- 41 Barthold, p. 10-11.
- 42 Hayes, p. 12.
- 43 Samir Johna. M.D.F.A.C.S. "From Warriors to Guardians: The Assyrians and Their Role in the History of Medicine", *The American Surgeon*, 68 (Oct. 2002), p. 927; De Lacy O'Leary, *Arabic Thought and its Place in History* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1959), p. 32.
- 44 Barthold, p. 14.
- 45 Keklik, p. 20.
- 46 Kumeyr, p. 157; Bayraktar, pp. 38-39.
- 47 Bayraktar, p. 38-39.
- 48 F. H. Garrison. *History of Medicine* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1929), p. 127; Samir Johna, "The Mesopotamian Schools of Edessa and Jundi-Shapur: The Roots of Modern Medical Schools", *The American Surgeon*, 69/7 (Jul. 2003), pp. 627-30. Some water sources around Urfa were used to treat leprosy and scabies. The names of these places are reflections of the purposes for which they were used, such as the Prophet Ayyub draw well in the center of the city and Kanegurri/Scabies water source.
- 49 William P. Cheshire. "Twins of Terebinth: The Ethical Origins of the Hospital in the Judeo-Christian Tradition", *Ethnic-Medicine*, 19/3 (2003), p. 150.
- 50 Ibid.

- 51 Johna, p. 628; see also F. Garrison, *History of Medicine*, 1929.
- 52 Johna, p. 628.
- 53 In the history of Eastern Christianity, the name Nasturi was given to Assyrian Christians by Nestorius (Nastur), who was the founder of Eastern Assyria. In 382, he was born in the Kommagene province of the Roman Empire in the city of Germanica (Maras). He completed his study in the theology department of the Antioch School. Nastur was against the idea of the Alexandrian School, which claimed that Mary was the mother of God. Nastur argued that Mary was the mother of a human, and supported the idea Jesus reached the nature of being God sometime after birth. In the history of Christianity, Nastur advocated the opinion of diophysicism (having dual nature) and thus they were called "diophysicists". See Kadir Albayrak, *Keldânîler ve Nasturîler* (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 1997), pp. 72-74.
- 54 Keklik, pp. 21-22.
- 55 Keklik, pp. 23-23.
- 56 Barthold, p. 10-11.
- 57 Bayraktar, pp. 38-39.
- 58 J. B. Chabot. *Asur Edebiyatı* (Littérature syriaque.), trans. Vedi İlmen (İstanbul: Yaba Yayınları, 2008), pp. 67-70; Keklik, p. 24.
- 59 Keklik, p. 26.
- 60 Mşiha Zha, *Erbil Vekayinamesi*, pp. 138-39, 146-48; Hayes, pp. 11, 133, 152, 252-26.
- 61 Bayraktar, p. 39.
- 62 See Chase F. Robinson, *Empire, and Elites after the Muslim Conquest: The Transformations of Northern Mesopotamia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- 63 Keklik, p. 27.
- 64 Keklik, pp. 27-30.
- 65 Ibid, p. 31.
- 66 Majid Fakhri. *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: University of Columbia Press, 1992).
- 67 E. R. Hayes. *Urfa Akademisi* (L'école d'Edesse), trans. into Turkish by Yaşar Günenç (İstanbul: Yaba Yayınları, 2002, p. 11.
- 68 Ibid, p. 13.
- 69 Abdullah Ekinci, *Ortaçağ'da Urfa, Efsane, Tarih, İnanç, İlim ve Felsefe Kenti*, (Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi, 2006), pp. 199-248; Ekinci, *Harran Mitolojisi ve Tarihi* (Şanlıurfa: Şanlıurfa Valiliği, İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2008), pp. 140-70.

VI. DAILY LIFE AND CULTURE

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- 5 *BOA UŞS* 204 Dn: 5, 179, 205 Dn: 20, 210; Dn: 117, 183, 227 Dn: 339.
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- 13 Yasin Taş. "Kadı Sicillerine Göre XIX. Asrın İkinci Yarısında Urfa'da Sosyal Hayat", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İstanbul, 2013, p. 57.
 - 14 Ekinci, p. 8; Taş, pp. 58-59; İsmail Asoğlu, "223 Numaralı Şanlıurfa Şerhiye Sicili'nin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirmesi (The assessment of the 223 numbered court record) (H.1304-1334/ M.1887-1916)," unpublished Master's thesis, Harran Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Şanlıurfa, 2014, p. 24.
 - 15 Turan Açık. "Mahalle ve Cami: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Mahalle Tipleri Hakkında Trabzon Üzerinden Bir Değerlendirme", *OTAM*, 35 (2014), p. 10.
 - 16 İsmail Kıvrım. "Osmanlı Mahallesinde Gündelik Hayat (17. Yüzyılda Gaziantep Örneği)", *Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 8/1 (2009), p. 233.
 - 17 Ekinci, p. 11.
 - 18 Osman Nuri Ergin. "Türkiye'de Şehirciliğin Tarihi İnkişafı", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi İktisat ve İktimaiyat Enstitüsü Neşriyatı*, 3 (1936), p. 103.
 - 19 *BOA, UŞS 210*, Dn: 6/119.
 - 20 *BOA, UŞS 210*, Dn: 356/402.
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 - 25 İrfan Ünal. "167 Nolu Çanakkale Eytâm Sandığına Mahsus Teminatlı İdâne Defterinin Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirmesi (1920-1926)", unpublished Master's thesis, Çanakkale 18 Mart Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Çanakkale, 2010, pp. 41-42.
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VII. THE LEGENDS OF URFA

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- 2 Aziz Günel. *Türk Süryaniler Tarihi* (Diyarbakır: The Author, 1970), p. 90. More information on this legend is given by Mark Guscini, *The Image of Edessa* (Leiden, Boston: E. J. Brill, 2009).
- 3 This cloth is thought to have belonged to the Urfa region. For its importance in the Christian art and in the relationships between Byzantine and İslam, see. Mahmud b. Muhammed *Aksarayi, Musameret-el-Abyar*, trans., M. Nuri Gençosman (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1943), pp. 90-91; Fikret Işıltan, *Urfa Bölgesi Tarihi* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1960), p. 18.
- 4 Aziz Günel, op. cit., pp. 90-91.
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Hidden Garden (Saklı Cennet), Halfeti







Some captions from the
Albukhary International
University



SYED MOKHTAR ALBUKHARY



Syed Mokhtar Albukhary, born in 1952, is of Hadhrami Arab ancestry. He is one of the most successful businessmen in the Muslim world. His father was a merchant who travelled to Central Asia and Thailand in his youth before settling down in Kedah, Malaysia, during the 1940s. When Syed Mokhtar was nine years old, he was sent to Johor Bahru to live with his uncle, Syed Omar, where he completed his education. Syed Mokhtar started his business in Kedah in the 1990s dealing in rice with his partner Zainal Hatim Hj Ambia Bukhary. More success followed and after progressing to the rice trading business, as a result of their continuing efforts, they were awarded a rice trading license from Lembaga Padi Negara. Later, Syed Mokhtar and Zainal were granted a succession of supplier contracts with government-linked corporations. Syed Mokhtar continued his business career at the port of Tanjung Pelepas, where he sought business partners and worked with the Danish shipping firm Maersk

Sealand International. Over time, Syed's wealth grew as he diversified his business interests to include other areas such as engineering, the media and banking. Today, his business enterprise has expanded into areas such as plantations, property development, construction, engineering, power generation, infrastructures and ports.

In appreciation of his services and contributions, a number of awards have been bestowed upon Syed Mokhtar Albukhary, including the "Panglima Setia Mahkota" (P.S.M.), which carries the title *Tan Sri*, by His Majesty Seri Paduka Baginda Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the King of Malaysia, and the "Dato' Setia Mahkota Kedah" (D.S.D.K.), which carries the title *Dato'*, by HRH the Sultan of Kedah. In addition, on 10 January 2008/1 Muharram 1429 Hijra, he was awarded the "Tokoh Ma'al Hijrah" by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia in recognition of his contribution to the building of the nation.

Albukhary International University was founded by Syed Mokhtar Albukhary and is located within the Sharifah Rokiah Centre of Excellence. The Centre is named in honor of his mother and encompasses a site covering over 30.35 hectares (75 acres) in Alor Setar, the birthplace of the founder. Albukhary International is not only renowned for its rich and beautiful architecture, but, more importantly, for the high value the university places on diversity, which can be seen in the countries of origin of its students and academic staff.

AIU aims to provide innovative, sustainable solutions for the promotion of dignity, well-being and success in the lives of individuals and societies through its commitment to education, high-quality research and engagement with communities and the productive sectors, and was founded on the values of charity, excellence, integrity, respect for diversity and compassion.

History as we know it may sometimes prove to be different than what we had believed it to be. The history of our cities tells us many things about our own history as well as that of our surroundings. However, the history of Urfa, known by its modern Turkish name of Şanlıurfa, is the history of one of the most significant cities, if not the most significant city in the history of human civilization. Recorded history began around 3200 BC, and recent excavations near Şanlıurfa show that there were settlements in this region even during prehistoric times. Historians had considered human civilization to have emerged with the first city-like settlement found at Çatalhöyük in central Turkey, dated at around 6700 BC, while the ancient temples of Göbeklitepe, about 22 km northeast of Şanlıurfa, are now believed to have been constructed about 12,000 years ago. Thus, there had already been city-like settlements in this area 7500 years before Stonehenge in England and 6000 years before the Pyramids in Egypt. The history of Şanlıurfa changes our perception of the history of civilization because the first settlement which led to city culture and in turn to the emergence of human civilization must have begun in northern Mesopotamia, not in the lower regions of the so-called Fertile Crescent. In light of these facts, we may safely conclude that Şanlıurfa was perhaps at the center of this rise of civilization.

Şanlıurfa has also played a major role in the history of the revealed religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Many of the Biblical prophets also mentioned in the Qur'an, the Holy Book of Islam, either lived in this city or passed through it during their spiritual wanderings, perhaps because of its strategic location at the crossroads of the celebrated Silk Road. Many of these prophets also occur in the legends preserved in the city of Urfa, including 'Ādam (Adam), Nūḥ (Noah), 'Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Lūṭ (Lot), 'Ishāq (Isaac), Ya'qūb (Jacob), Yūsuf (Joseph), Ayūb (Job), Shu'ayb (Jethro), Mūsā (Moses), 'Ilyās (Elijah) and 'Isā (Jesus). These traditional stories, despite being historically unverifiable, nevertheless tell us something historical - the reason Şanlıurfa is known as the "City of Prophets". In this book, we are introducing the city, with its many and varied civilizations and cultures, through a historical and visual perceptive in order to highlight human achievement as seen through the window of Şanlıurfa.



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