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— ZEKİ VELİDİ TOGAN'IN HATIRASINA ARMAĞAN —

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Arab relations with Tibet in the 8th and early 9th centuries A.D.

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The notices about Tibet and the Tibetans in Islamic sources of the early period are not well known and are somewhat difficult of interpretation. But they are interesting in themselves[1], and it has seemed fitting to put together the more tractable of them[2] along with a few Chinese records to eke them out in this Volume of tribute to our late friend. Zeki Validi, as his friends liked to call him, was always interested in this kind of enquiry, on the outskirts, so to say, of Islam —as witness his admirable edition of the **Riḥlah** of Ibn Faḍlān—, and I recall at least one conversation with him on the subject.

The recently published English translation of a book by R. A. Stein[3], contains a brief reference to Tibetans and Arabs in the Caliphate of Hārūn ar-Rashīd (170/786-193/809), which serves to remind us that in the great days of their empire the Arabs were in contact not only with Central Asia and India but also with the peoples of the Far East[4]. The notice concerning ar-Rashīd is in the annals of the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618-907), to the effect that in 798 his embassy reached the T'ang court, presumably at Ch'ang-an, called by the Arabs Khumdān, and that its members performed the kow-tow[5], which an earlier Arab embassy had refused[6]. On this rather slender basis an alliance at this time of Arabs and Chinese against the Tibetans is often spoken of in the secondary authorities.

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1 The best account is W. Barthold, art. Tibet, *Enc. of Islam*, edn. I, which brings the history down to the Mongol period and beyond.

2 The notices of Tibet in *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam* and al-Idrīsī are not here dealt with at length but see some remarks *infra*.

3 *La Civilisation tibétaine*, Paris, 1962.

4 *Tibetan Civilization*, transl. J.E. Stapleton Driver, London, 1972, 65.

5 *T'ang-shu*, 221b, fol 20r (quoted Otto Franke, *Geschichte des chinesischen Reiches*, III (Berlin-Leipzig, 1937), 411. Cf. J. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, I (1954), 125, 215-6; H.E. Richardson, *A Short History of Tibet*, New York, 1962, 29; Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet, A Political History*, New Haven and London, 1967, 44.

6 *T'ang-shu*, 198, fol 29r for the year 713 A.D. (quoted O. Franke, *ibid.*, II, 440). Ṭabarī (*Annales*, ed. De Goeje and others, II, ii, 1277ff.) speaks of an embassy to the Chinese court sent by Qutaibah b. Muslim in A.H. 96 (Sept., 714 - Aug., 715) which is probably the same, cf.

The embassy of 798 appears to be unrecorded by the Arab historians, and the same applies to some twenty Arab missions to the court of China between 716 and 759, reported by Chavannes[7] and discussed by the late Sir Hamilton Gibb in an early article[8]. The possible reasons for this silence need not be gone into here, and it is practically certain, as Professor Gibb emphasized, that not all these missions came from the court of the Caliph. As regards their purpose, Professor Gibb had this to say: 'Conjecture has often been made as to the purpose and scope of these embassies, but only two reasons seem at all likely. They may have had political objectives, e.g. an alliance or understanding against their common enemy, the Western Turks. Or they may have been commercial missions, intended to foster trade relations, particularly in the matter of the overland silk trade. The frequent association of Arab embassies with those of Samarqand and other regions of Transoxania makes it almost certain that the second reason is the correct one in many cases, though other of the embassies may well have had political motives'[9]. It will be noticed that no mention is here made of Tibet, and that the common enemy of the Arabs and Chinese spoken of are the West Turks. But this cannot apply to the latter part of the period 716-759, for, as Professor Gibb says elsewhere, towards 740 after the defeat of the Türgesh the last remaining power of the West Turks disappears[10].

Whether or not the embassy of 798 directly concerned the Tibetans remains uncertain in defect of positive evidence, but that this or others of them did is quite likely. Relations both of war and peace between Arabs and Tibetans are occasionally mentioned by Arabic authors as well as in the Chinese annals. After the consolidation of the Lhasa kingdom and the adoption of Buddhism in the 7th century A.D. the Tibetans were specially aggressive, and made their presence felt on the upper waters of the Indus[11], in Chinese Turkestan and in China itself. Among their astonishing exploits outside of Tibet were the occupation of the 'Four Garrisons' (Kucha, Kashghar, Yarkand and Kokand in Turkestan) in the second half of the 7th century[12], the subjection of the Pala kings of Bengal

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E. Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources,* London, 1910 (reprinted New York, 1967), II, 46 and n.

7 E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les T'ou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux,* and especially *Notes additionnelles sur les T'ou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux,* originally published in *T'oung Pao,* V, 1904, later together with the *Documents,* Paris, n.d. (Adrien Maisonneuve).

8 *Chinese Records of the Arabs in Central Asia, Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies,* London, II (1921-23), 613-22.

9 *Op. cit.,* 621.

10 *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia,* 1923 (reprinted New York, 1970), 85.

11 Cf. W. Barthold, *Turkestan,* Gibb Memorial Series, London, 1958, 65-6. The present-day 'Little Tibet' probably recalls an earlier state of things.

12 Stein, *Tibetan Civilization,* 60, 64, cf. Shakabpa, *Tibet,* 30.

(circa 755)[13], and a little later (763) the capture of Ch'ang-an (Sian in Shensi province), then the capital of the T'ang dynasty[14]. The apparent paradox of Tibetan aggressiveness in all directions after their acceptance of Buddhism has been explained as due to encouragement given by the new central authority at Lhasa to outlying Tibetan tribes to direct their attention to external conquest rather than to the south of the country and Lhasa itself[15]. However this may be, it is no doubt significant that the Arabic historical sources mention Tibet especially in the 8th century, and that thereafter the name appears to be recessive.

We may leave out of consideration the fabulous tales connecting Tibet (usually at-Tubbat, with the article) with the Biblical history (at-Tubbat is a son or grandson of Japheth), with Dhū'l-Qarnain (Alexander the Great), with a Tubbaʿ of the Yemen, who is supposed to give his name to the country, or with Sāsānid rulers. Predating the rise of Tibet as a unified kingdom in the 7th century and giving the widest scope to fantasy, these are practically valueless, though in one tale, the date of which borders on the historical period (it purports to give an account of presents to Khusrau Anūshirwān) we have an indication, surely thought up after the event, of the warlike part which the Tibetans were presently to play in Asia. To Anūshirwān, on the occasion of his completing a wall, doubtless the famous Wall of Darband[16], come rich gifts from his fellow-rulers. These include from 'the king of at-Tubbatān and the eastern parts of the earth bordering on aṣ-Ṣīn and al-Hind... of the marvels exported from the land of Tubbat 100 coats-of-mail, 100 gilt bucklers **(turs)** and 4000 bags of musk'[17], i.e. typical products of Tibet a century or two later[18]. The shields of the Tibetans meet us again in more than one place, in Ibn al-Faqīh (shortly after 289/902), where he mentions musk and shields **(daraq)** as the special products of Tibet[19], and in a passage of Ibn Ḥauqal where he adds to al-Iṣṭakhrī's enthusiastic description of Bukhara as seen from the citadel, that the castles in the surrounding country are 'like Tibetan bucklers' **(talūḥu al-quṣūr fīmā bain dhālika ka't-tirās al-Tub-**

13 Stein, ibid., 60. For contact between a Pala king and the ʿAbbāsid court somewhat later see my article *A Diplomatic Exchange between al-Ma'mūn and an Indian King* in the forthcoming volume in honour of Professor A.S. Atiya.

14 Stein, *ibid.*, 65; Shakabpa, ibid., 39ff (quotes a Tibetan inscription in Lhasa).

15 Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, American Geographical Society, New York, 1951, 221ff.

16 Cf. Ibn Khaldūn, Beirut, 1956, II, 357-8.

17 Al-Ghuzūlī, *Maṭāliʿ al-Budūr fī Manāzil as-Surūr*, written before 815/ 1412, citing Ibn Badrūn (*circa* 558/1163), as given by Sāmī ad-Dahhān in Appendix 18 to his edn. of the *K. at-Tuḥaf wa'l-Hadāyā* of the Khālidīyān.

18 It is perhaps not surprising that silk is scarcely mentioned among the products reaching the West from Tibet.

19 Ed. De Goeje, 255.

batīyah), a clear indication that at the time they were well known[20].

A notice for 85/704 is given by aṭ-Ṭabarī[21] (less fully by al-Balādhurī)[22] according to which, at a time of dissension among the Arab invaders of Transoxiana, an attack was made upon them at Tirmidh, an important Oxus crossing (now Termez), by a combined force of Hayāṭilah (Hephthalites), Tibetans (at-Tubbat) and Turks. The defence of the town was made good with great loss to the attackers, for whom the figure of 70,000 is mentioned. This, the historian notes, was the number of those who wore helmets with a tapering top or crest **(baiḍah dhāt qūnas).** The remainder, without helmets, or who wore 'smooth helmets' **(baiḍah jammā'u)** were uncounted, or perhaps innumerable **(la yu'addūna).** Some of these troops were easily repulsed from a breach in the wall of Tirmidh by 300 mailed cavalry of the Muslims, whose horses were similarly protected (**mujaffaf,** i.e. wearing the **tijfāf** or cataphract of the time). Al-Balādhurī's short account, which omits mention of the Tibetans and gives no estimate of number, implies that the attack on the Muslims was made from within the town. This is contradicted by aṭ-Ṭabarī's description of the fighting, and especially by his mentioning 'Ṭarkhūn, king of Bukhara' as in command of the allies. The action in fact should represent a large-scale movement on the part of the natives of Transoxiana against the Arabs. In view of the lack of details, not much can be made of the reference to Tibetans, e.g. we cannot assume that either type of head-armour mentioned in the passage, or absence of head-armour, was characteristically Tibetan. Yet it seems that we have to think of a contingent from Tibet or the adjacent regions called upon, in circumstances unknown, to join in the general defence of Transoxiana.

In 715, less than a dozen years after the combined assault on Tirmidh, the Tibetans are reported by a Chinese source as again in Transoxiana, this time in alliance with the Arabs against Farghānah. The allies appointed a new king of Farghānah, called in the source A-leao-ta. The previous king, who had been under Chinese control, or enjoyed Chinese support, fled eastward to Kucha. A-leao-ta was defeated some time later, apparently in the Kashghar territory, by a Chinese army[23]. Nothing or this appears in the Arabic sources, and it is difficult to connect these events with Qutaibah b. Muslim, who then governed Transoxiana for the Arabs[24].

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20 Ibn Ḥauqal, edn. 2 (Kramers), 472 = transl. Kramers and Wiet, Collection Unesco d'Oeuvres Représentatives, Série arabe, Beirut and Paris, 1964, 454.

21 *Annales,* II, ii, 1153-54.

22 *K. Futūḥ al-Buldān,* ed. Ṣalāh ad-Dīn al-Munajjid, 515.

23 Chavannes, *Documents,* 148, n. 3.

24 Cf. H.A.R. Gibb, *The Arab Invasion of Kashghar in A.D. 715, Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies,* II (1921-23), 472-73.

As to the route between Transoxiana and Tibet, contact was evidently made for the most part by way of Badakhshān, the province lying east of Khuttal in the great bend of the Oxus (Amu Darya). It may have extended still further east across the Oxus. In the modern map the region lying immediately to the east of the Oxus bend, in medieval times called Shiqinān, is designated Badakhshan[25]. From Badakhshān the road ran through Wakhkhān, i.e. the modern Vakhan corridor, then through the Baroghil and Darkot passes by Gilgit to Baltistan and Ladakh, i.e. south of the Karakoram, or else north of the Karakoram following the Kashghar road so far, then turning southward through the Karakoram pass. From Wakhkhān to Tibet is 'near'[26] or 'a near distance'[27] Al-Idrīsī says it is a journey of 18 days[28]. 'From Badakhshān are brought garnets and lapis-lazuli, which come from mines in the mountains there. Musk reaches it by way of Wakhkhān from Tubbat'[29]. According to Ibn al-Faqīh, Badakhshān is the entrance to Tibet **(madkhal an-nās ilā 't-Tubbat)**[30]**.** Yāqūt says explicitly that it is from Badakhshān that the merchants enter Tibet **(arḍ al-Tubbat)**[31]. Al-Yaʿqūbī has also something to say on this subject. After explaining the sea-route to China[32], he continues, 'Whoever wishes to go China by land, travels by way of the river of Balkh (Oxus), crossing the lands of as-Sughd, Farghānah, ash-Shāsh and Tibet, till he reaches it.'[33] The routing appears vagues. Ash-Shāsh (Tashkent) comes before Farghānah as one travels east. The road to Kashghar seems indicated, but this is a long way from Tibet proper. Possibly Tibetan installations in Chinese Turkestan are intended. Al-Yaʿqūbī is more precise in the **Kitāb al-Buldān**, where at the end of a notice of Balkh and its region he mentions a town **(madīnah)** of Badakhshān and a 'town called Jirm, which is the last of the towns east of Balkh in the direction of Tibet **(balad at-Tubbat)**[34]**.**

The approach was by way of the Gate of Tibet (Dar-i Tubbat)[35], 'a valley where a gate stands on a mountain', guarded by Muslims. There was also a Gate

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25 I.e. Gorno Badakhshanskaya A.O.

26 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, ed. De Goeje, 297 = Ibn Ḥauqal, ed. De Goeje, 349; *wabaina Wakhkhān wa't-Tubbat qarīb*. Erroneously in Yāqūt (Muʿjam al-Buldān, IV, 909)*wabaina Wakhkhāb wa'l-Bust shai' qarīb*.

27 Ibn Ḥauqal, ed. Kramers, 476 *(masāfah qarībah)*.

28 Transl. Jaubert, Paris, 1836, I, 483.

29 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, 280.

30 Ed. De Goeje, 322.

31 *Muʿjam al-Buldān,* Ed. Wüstenfeld, I, 207.

32 *Historiae,* ed. Houtsma, I, 207.

33 *Op. cit.,* I, 208.

34 Ed. De Goeje, 288.

35 *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam,* transl. V. Minorsky, Gibb Memorial Series, London, 1933, 120.

of the Arabs (Dar-i Tāziyān), mentioned separately in **Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam**[36]. Minorsky suggested that the gate of Tibet may be 'another aspect' of the gate of the Arabs[37]. No figure seems to be given for the distance between Badakhshān and Wakhkhān but from Balkh to Badakhshān was 13 days,[38] according to al-Masʿūdī, who is less likely to be correct, about 20 days[39]. It was also 13 days 'by the course of the Oxus in a straight line' from Badakhshān to Tirmidh[40].

A little later than the episode at Farghānah already mentioned we hear of envoys of Tibet **(wufūd at-Tubbat)** visiting Jarrāḥ b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥakamī, then governor of Khurāsān, where is not stated, with a request that someone be sent to them to explain Islam. The proposal was accepted, with or without reference to the Caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, and a certain as-Salīṭ b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥanafī was sent to Tibet. We hear nothing of what happened to the mission but there is no doubt that, first introduced now, i. e. about the year 100/718,[40a] or at a later date, Islam made some progress in Tibet, Apart from notices of the **qiblah** of the people of Tibet and the mosque at Lhasa (see below), this is principally shown by the existence among the Tibetans of an era called **Mekha-gya-mtsho**, a period of 403 years beginning with the time when the Muḥammadans entered Meccah[41]. While there is some uncertainty here, since the Muḥammadan entry into Mecah would most naturally refer to the events of 630 A. D., when Prophet returned in triumph, shortly before his death, to his native city, it would seem that the Hijrah era dating from 622, the year of Muḥammed's flight to Medinah, is intended. For it is noticeable that 622+403 gives 1025 years. It is in or about 1026 A. D., that another Tibetan era called the Rab-byun era begins and the Indian cycle of 60 years, based on a cycle of 12 years named after certain animals, mouse, ox, etc. and then repeated five times over in association with the names of five 'elements', wood, fire, etc., is introduced into Tibet, to be used henceforward, side by side with a similar 60-year Chinese cycle, for dating all important events[42]. Whether or not this means that before 1026 the

36 *Op. cit.*, 112, 350.

37 *Ibid.*, 350-365.

38 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, 283 = Ibn Ḥauqal, ed. Kramers, 454.

39 *Tanbīh*, ed. Cairo, 1357/1938, 56 = transl. Carra de Vaux, 95.

40 Al-Iṣṭakhrī, 159; Ibn Ḥauqal, ed. Kramers, 455.

40a Al-Yaʿqūbī, Hist., II, 362. Jarrāḥ b. ʿAbd Allāh was governor of Khurāsān from 99/717 until 100/719. ʿUmar II's Caliphate began in 99/717 and ended with his death in 101/720.

41 Alexander Csoma de Körös, *A Grammar of the Tibetan Language in English*, 1834, 182-83; S.C. Das, *An Introduction to Grammar of the Tibetan Language*, Darjeeling, 1915 (reprinted 1941), XVI-XVII; B. Aoki, *Study on Early Tibetan Chronicles regarding Discrepancies of Dates and their Adjustments, a Report of Study for 1954-55 by the Subsidy from the Ministry of Education, Japan*, 104-05, 115.

42 Das, *op. cit.*, Xff.; Aoki, *loc. cit.*

Mekha-gya-mtsho era was in general use in Tibet[43], its existence clearly indicates, if not Islamic influence on leading circles in Tibet, at least some interest in and knowledge of the Islamic system.

In the battle of Ṭarāz (Talas) between the Arabs and the Chinese(Dhū'l-Ḥijjah, 133/July, 751) the Tibetans appear to have taken no part. The Arab victory under the generalship of Qutaibah b. Muslim, sometimes considered to have been one the decisive battles of history, was the last great achievement of the Umaiyads[44]. With the advent of the ʿAbbāsids a new policy towards China was adopted. Arab delegations were soon received again at the Chinese court. We know this from the report of an incident which took place there at an audience in 753. On this occasion a Japanese ambassador complained that he had been assigned a lower place than the representative of Corea. At the suggestion of a Chinese general the Japanese and the Corean exchanged places, the Tibetan and Arab envoys, who were also present, remaining as before, the Tibetan on the right of the Emperor, the place of honour, the Arab, surprisingly enough after Ṭarāz, in the lowest place[45]. In 757 Arab troops were sent by al-Manṣūr to assist the young Emperor Su-tsung to regain his capital of Ch'ang-an, which had fallen to rebels in the previous year[46].

Of al-Mahdī (Caliph 158/775-169/785) we read that he 'sent envoys to the kings summoning them to obedience. Most of them entered into obedience, among them the king of Kābul-shāh called..., the king of Ṭabaristān al-Iṣbahbad, the king of as-Sughd al-Ikhshīd..., the king of Sijistān Rutbīl, the king of the (Kharlukh) Turks Ṭarkhān, the king of at-Tubbat Ḥhwrn, etc.[47]. The last name is possibly for Khri-srong (Ide-btsan) (Trhisong Detsen), a famous Tibetan king contemporary with al-Mahdī (reigned 755-797).

We now come to the reign of Hārūn ar-Rashīd (170/786 - 193/809), by general consent one of the greatest of the Caliphs. Had he a 'Tibetan policy', and if so, can we say what it was? Certainly we shall not be able to do this with a great deal of precision, since the sources remain exiguous as before. Yet a pattern is distinctly traceable. Quite early in his Caliphate we hear of the virtual division of the Islamic world between the Barmecide brothers. According

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43 The Chinese circle of 60 years was known earlier than 1026, Das, *ibid.*, XI.

44 Ibn al-Athīr, *sub anno* 133; adh-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, ed. Cairo, 1367 / 1947, V, 210-11, cf. D.M. Dunlop, *A New Source of Information on the Battle of Talas or Aṭlakh, Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher*, XXXVI (1964), 326-30.

45 P. Deliéville, *Le Concile de Lhasa*, Paris, 1952, 180-81nn. citing *Shoku Nihongi*, XIX, 30th day of the lst month of the 6th year Tempyō-shōho.

46 J. Needham, *ibid.* I, 215, citing *Textes Historiques*, ed. Wieger, 1395, 1402, 1436, 1438; E. Chavannes, *ibid.*, 299.

47 Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Hist.* II, 479.

to al-Jahshiyārī, 'Ar-Rashīd appointed Ja'far over the whole of the West, from al-Anbār (on the Euphrates) to Ifrīqiyah, in the year 176/792, and he invested al-Faḍl with the whole of the East, from Naharwān (Iraq) to the farthest of the lands of the Turks. Ja'far remained at the court of ar-Rashīd. Al-Faḍl went out to his province in the year 178.[48]' Al-Ya'qūbī's account is that ar-Rashīd 'appointed al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā b. Khālid b. Barmak over Khurāsān. He went to Balkh, and conquered a number of districts of Ṭukhāristān, Kābul-shāh and Shiqinān.[49]' Elsewhere in his treatment of Balkh and its dependencies, al-Ya'qūbī gives some of the successes of the governorship of al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā[50], but nothing specifically about Tibet and the Tibetans. On the other hand, Shiqinān, beyond Badakhshān, was in their general direction. Indications of the activity of al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā on the eastern frontier of Islam are occasionally offered by other sources. Thus Ibn Khaldūn mentions that where the Wakhsh-āb (Oxus) river, after passing through the lands of at-Tubbat, flows between the Turks and the lands of al-Khuttal, there is a single route **(maslak wāḥid)** on which al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā placed a wall **(sudd)** and built in it a gate, like the Wall of Gog and Magog[51]. Ibn Khurradādhbih names ar-Rasht, 'the farthest of Khurāsān in this direction, lying between two mountains and the point of enrty of the Turks for raiding' as the place where al-Faḍl built his gate[52]. The situation 'lying between two mountains' is a feature of the Gate of the Arabs (Dar-i Tāziyān) already mentioned, which may then have been at ar-Rasht, i.e. a long way north of Badakhshān. Al-Idrīsī also says that al-Faḍl placed a garrison at ar-Rasht, which has been maintained by the local rulers[53].

Other defence works on the Arab side of the frontier were being created during ar-Rashīd's Caliphate. Ar-Rashīd himself restored the great wall of Samarqand[54]. More especially, with reference to Badakhshān, we have a notice of al-Muqaddasī. Badakhshān 'is conterminous **(mutākhimah)** with the lands of the Turks (al-Muqaddasī does not here speak of Tibetans) above Ṭukhāristān. In it is a mine of the jewel which resembles rubies (? garnets, cf. above), the only mine there is. It is the Ribāṭ Fāḍil **(sic)**, and a wonderful fortress of Zubaidah is there.'[55] Al-Mas'ūdī speaks of the post of Badakhshān in the **Tanbīh.** It is the last of the districts of Balkh in this direction. The post is a frontier in the face

48 *Kitāb al-Wuzarā' wa'l-Kuttāb,* ed. Cairo, 1357/1938, 190. cf. Ṭabarī, III i 631.
49 *Kitāb al-Buldān,* 304.
50 *Op. cit.,* 287-91.
51 Ibn Khaldūn, Beirut, 1961 (2 nd. edn.), I, 110 = transl. F. Rosenthal, I, 137.
52 Ed. De Goeje, 33-4.
53 Transl. Jaubert, I, 483.
54 Al-Ya'qūbī, *Buldān,* 293.
55 Ed. De Goeje, 303.

of Turkish nations **(ajnās min at-Turk)** called Aukhān (cf. Wakhkhān) Tubbat and Aighān, both settled and nomad. The river (sc. the Oxus) is here known as the river of the Aighān (? Afghans)[56]. This notice is repeated with slight variations in the **Murūj adh-Dhahab.** Here the **ribāt** of Badakhshān is said to have over against it various kinds **(anwāʿ)** of unbelievers called Aukhān and Tubbat, while on the right (south) of these is another nation called Īghān (Abghān)[57].

There is thus distinct evidence for increased military preparedness on the eastern frontier of the Caliphate under ar-Rashīd. The naming of a fortress after the reigning Empress (as-Sitt Zubaidah) in distant Badakhshān seems specially striking. To the north new dispositions may have been made against the Kharlukhs, who under their Yabghū are sometimes mentioned in the sources of these days. The concentration, as it appears, of defence works in the neighbourhood of Badakhshān can scarcely have been intended to hold back the Kharlukhs, approaching from the north-east, and must have been designed to protect Transoxiana from the mountaineers, i.e. principally the Tibetans. Clearly the situation is not inconsistent with a diplomatic move at the Chinese court in 798 directed against the Tibetans, and such appears to have been ar-Rashīd's policy. No firm alliance can have resulted. In 801 ʿAbbāsid troops fought unsuccessfully against the Chinese, apparently as part of an invading Tibetan army, in western China. A Chinese record speaks of the destruction of the enemy's camp on the Lu river, the defeat of the Tibetans in two engagements and the subsequent surrender of the ʿAbbāsid troops under their Tibetan commander, with the loss of 20,000 suits of armour[58].

In 190/806, still under ar-Rashīd, Rāfiʿ b. al-Laith rebelled in Samarqand, and Harthamah b. Aʿyan was sent to deal with him. We are informed by al-Yaʿqūbī[59] 'that the forces of Rāfiʿ increased greatly, and that he had conciliated the people of ash-Shāsh and Farghānah, the people of Ḥujandah, Ushrūsunah, aṣ-Ṣaghāniān, Bukhara, Khwārizm, Khuttal and other places in the districts of Balkh, Ṭukhāristān, as-Sughd, Mā-warā'n-nahr, the Turks, the Kharlukhī, the Tughuzghuz, the hosts **(junūd)** of Tibet (at-Tubbat), and others. He asked their help to fight the ruling power **(as-sulṭān)** and to kill the Muslims, and coming to the city of Samarqand, he fortified himself there.' Whatever exactly this may mean in terms of contingents to the rebel forces, we appear to have a general reaction of the whole region against the Arab central authority, as on a previous occasion. Discontent now centres round Rāfiʿ b. al-Laith — not a native prince,

56 Ed. Cairo, 1357/1938, 56 = transl. Carra de Vaux, 95.

57 *Murūj adh-Dhahab,* I, 213 = transl. Pellat, I, 87.

58 S.W. Bushell, M.D., *The Early History of Tibet from Chinese sources. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* N.S. XII (1880), 534, n. 64. citing the Nan-chao Record.

59 *Historiae,* II, 528, cf. 515; Ṭabarī, III, ii, 707.

but the grandson of a former Umaiyad governor of Khurāsān. The expression 'hosts **(junūd)** of Tibet' would seem to be significant for their military quality as well as mere number[60]. There is no evidence that Tibetans were actually engaged in the present struggle, which ended with the defeat of Rāfiʿ b. al-Laith. One notices that the Hayāṭilah are no longer upon the scene, unless they are to be identified with the people of Khuttal[61].

In Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī we read of a king of Tibet **(malik at-Tubbat)** sending to al-Ma'mūn what is described as an idol **(ṣanam),** afterwards despatched by al-Ma'mūn to Meccah, where it became for a time one of the principal ornaments of the Kaʿbah[62]. More information on this is given by al-Yaʿqūbī[63]. During al-Ma'mūn's residence in Khurāsān. i.e. before his accession to the Caliphate in 198/813, 'the whole region was in an orderly state, and its kings all rendered obedience. The king of at-Tubbat became a Muslim and came to al-Ma'mūn at...[64] with an idol of his, of gold, on a throne of gold encrusted with jewels. Al-Ma'mūn sent it to the Kaʿbah, in order to inform the people of God's guidance to the king of at-Tubbat'. Al-Yaʿqūbī adds: 'There remained no region of Khurāsān where opposition was feared. But when al-Ma'mūn left Khurāsān, Rajā' b. abi 'd-Daḥḥāk showed little discretion, was weak in his government and did not take hold of his affairs. Al-Ma'mūn was afraid that Khurāsān would be ruined and dismissed him, appointing Ghassān b. ʿAbbād. He did well and won over the kings of the different parts'. The 'idol of the king of Tibet', perhaps a statue of the Buddha, was not destined to remain long at Meccah. In 202/818, when the city was threatened by attack, with other treasures it was melted down for coin[65].

Before the end of al-Ma'mūn's residence in Khurāsān, in 195/810-11, al-Amīn, who was then Caliph, requested his brother to leave the East and return to Baghdad. Al-Ma'mūn, reluctant to comply, is represented by aṭ-Ṭabarī as enumerating the difficulties with which he was faced; 'I have learned of the disaffection in Khurāsān and the confusion of its cultivated and uncultivated parts. Jabghū[66] (king of Ṭukhāristān) has forsaken his allegiance, Khāqān lord of Tibet, is turning away[67]. The king of Kābul prepares to raid the parts of Khurāsān

60 Cf. Deliéville, *op. cit.,* 180.

61 Cf. G. le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate,* 438, n. 1.

62 Ed. De Goeje, 21.

63 *Historiae,* II, 550.

64 A place-name is missing in the text.

65 *Op. cit.,* II, 544.

66 Text has Jyghwyh for Jabghū (= Yabghū).

67 So understood by Ibn Khaldūn who has *altawā ʿalaihi* (III, 494). Otherwise *'twisting'*. shich is perhaps the more natural meaning of the word *(iltiwa')*.

adjoining him. The king of Ushrūsunah[68] has refused the tribute which he used to send. I can do nothing about any of these things'[69]. Al-Faḍl b. Sahl hereupon advised al-Ma'mūn to write to Jabghū and Khāqān, 'confirming them in the rule of their lands', and promising them support 'in the warring of the kings'. Al-Faḍl b. Sahl thought that he should collect all possible support and prepare to meet al-Amīn in battle, pointing out what had already occurred to al-Ma'mūn, that in the event of his defeat at the hands of his brother he could find a refuge with Khāqān[70].

The whole passage is very interesting, and is probably to be connected with the notice of the conversion to Islam of the king of Tibet[71]. Al-Ma'mūn can scarcely have contemplated entrusting his fortunes to the ruler of Tibet, unless he had some confidence that things would go well with him if he did so. It looks as if there were, if not a party, at least powerful individuals favourable to Islam in Tibet at this time. Again, the emphasis on Khāqān as the name of the ruler of Tibet, along with other indications, appears to indicate his standing among the Turkish tribes even outside of Tibet[72].

Al-Faḍl b. Sahl was subsequently appointed by al-Ma'mūn in Rajab, 196/ April, 812 practically as viceroy over the East, 'from the mountain of Hamadhān to the mountain of Siqīnān (Shiqinān) and at-Tubbat, and from the sea of Fārs and al-Hind (Indian Ocean) to the sea of ad-Dailam and Jurjān (Caspian)'[73] The Ribāṭ Fāḍil already mentioned may be his. We have hardly means of telling[74]. The responsibility of both al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā and al-Faḍl b. Sahl for the eastern frontier at different times within a period of not more than twenty years seems fully authenticated, though it may be that the fame of the Barmecide eclipsed that of the other al-Faḍl. It was at the time of his appointment that al-Faḍl b. Sahl received the title, hitherto unused in Islam, of Dhū'r-Riyāsatain, 'the man with the double command'. Of the governorship of al-Faḍl b. Sahl in the eastern part of the empire we know at least he was involved with Kāūs, the king of Ushrūsunah[75] (who appears to be the same as the king of 'Utrārbandah' in a text previously mentioned). He was, however, soon removed from the scene, by assassination in the bath at Sarakhs in Sha'ban, 202/ February-March, 818.

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68 Ṭabarī's text offers Utrārbandah not apparently elsewhere attested. Cf. *infra.*

69 Ṭabarī, III, ii, 815; Ibn al-Athīr, VI, 232 ('king of Tibet').

70 Ṭabarī, *ibid.*, 815-16; Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid;* Ibn Khaldūn, III, 494-5.

71 See above.

72 Once in Ṭabarī's narrative he is referred to as 'Khāqān, king of the Turks'.

73 Ṭabarī, III, ii, 841; Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī, ed. Gottwaldt, 226-27 slightly differently.

74 Cf. Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam,* 350.

75 Al-Balādhurī, *K. Futūḥ al-Buldān,* ed. Ṣ. al-Maunajjid, 528, Cf. D. Sourdel, *Le Vizirat ʿabbāside de 749 à 936* (Damascus, 1959), 204.

After this, references to Tibet are now and for a long time practically absent from our historical sources. They begin again centuries later in a changed world. But such remarkable events as the Mongol invasion of the country and the Mirza Haidar's retreat from Tibet to Badakhshān[76] are no part of the history of the Arabs.

To complete the enquiry something must be said about the Arabic geographical notices. These begin later and continue longer than the historical notices which we have been considering. The **Kitāb Ṣūrat al-Arḍ** of Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Khwārizmī, written before 232/ 846, a work based on Ptolemy and perhaps Marinus of Tyre[77], gives the co-ordinates of a city of at-Tubbat[78], which are certainly derived from no ancient author. The **Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik** of Ibn Khurradādhbih, written between 230/844 and 234/848, mentions at-Tubbat repeatedly. The kings are called Khāqān, like those of the Turks and Khazars[79]. The **qiblah** of at-Tubbat as of the lands of the Turks, China, and al-Manṣūrah (in Sind) is west with a difference, so that prayer is made in nearly the opposite direction by the inhabitants of these countries and the inhabitants of the Maghrib, Ifrīqiyah, etc[80]. This strictly implies Muslims in all these places. At-Tubbat is one of the boundaries of the land of the Tughuzghuz. The boundaries of China are given, on the other hand, as 'from the sea to at-Tubbat and the Turks and westward to India'[81]. 'He who enters at-Tubbat does not cease to laugh and be joyful without a cause, till he leaves the country'[82]. The outgoing of the Jaiḥūn, the river of Balkh (Oxus), is from the mountains of Tibet, and it passes by Balkh, Tirmidh, etc. till it flows into the Aral sea[83]. These references indicate that Tibet is a familiar name to Ibn Khurdādhbih. It was familiar also to Qudāmah (d. 310/922), who seems to promise a systematic notice, where he discusses the nations surrounding the lands of Islam and the nations opposed to them[84]. But after beginning: 'As for at-Tubbat among the latter, it is on the right hand of the lands of the Tughuzghuz in a southerly direction', he goes on to tell a legendary tale about Alexander and 'the king of Tibet with his ṭarkhāns', which serves to show, if it shows anything, the popular view of the Tibetans

76 See the Mirza's *Tarikh-i Rashidi (History of the Moghuls of Central Asia)*, transl, N. Elias and E. Denison Ross, London, 1895, new edn. by Denis Sinor, New York, 1970).

77 Cf. D.M. Dunlop, *Arab Civilization to A.D. 1500*, London and New York, 1971, 151ff.

78 Ed. H. von Mzik, 1926, 28.

79 Ed. De Goeje, 16.

80 *Op. cit.*, 5.

81 *Ibid.*, 69.

82 *Ibid.*, 170.

83 *Ibid.*, 173.

84 Ed. De Goeje, 363.

held in Qudāmah's time or earlier. Ibn Rustah (circa 290/903) has an uninformative little note: 'The lands of at-Tubbat and Kābul and other places in the same region consist of deserts **(bawādī),** level tracts **(ṣaḥārā)** and wastes **(kharābāt),** which are described as long and broad in comparison with the habitable part. They have no rain in summer, but all have snow in winter owing to the cold of their climate'[85].

A continuous account of Tibet is given by al-Yaʿqūbī in his **Histories,** (later than 259/872), not in the **Kitāb al-Buldān** where it might have been expected. 'At-Tubbat is a broad land, greater than China. Their kingdom is powerful **(jalīlah).** They are inaccessible **(aṣḥāb manaʿah)** and wise, and resemble the craftsmanship **(ṣanʿah)** of the Chinese. In their country are deer whose navels **(surar)** are musk. They are worshippers of idols and have fire-temples. Their valour is extreme **(shaukatuhum shadīdah),** and no one fights with them'[86].

There are several interesting references to Tibet in al-Iṣṭakhrī - Ibn Ḥauqal (see above), but nothing like a continuous account. The longest notice of Tibet in these writers is that given by Yāqūt in his **Muʿjam al-Buldān,** a late compilation (circa 621/1224), which, however, demonstrably contains material of much earlier date. Yāqūt's account is as follows[87].

'Tubbat, the first consonant with a **u** vowel. Az-Zamakhsharī pronounces its second consonant with an **i** vowel, and some pronounce its second consonant with an **a** vowel. Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Mūsā gives its first consonant with an **a** vowel and its second consonant, doubled, with a **u** vowel, in all citations. It is a country **(balad)** in the land **(arḍ)** of the Turks. It is said to be in the fourth Climate, bordering on the lands **(bilād)** of the Indians. Its longitude from the west is 130° and its latitude 37°. I have read in a certain book that Tubbat is a kingdom bordering on the kingdom of China, and bordering in one direction on the land of India, in the east on the lands **(bilād)** of the Hayāṭilah (Hephthalites) and in the west on the lands of the Turks. They have many cities and extensive and powerful populated regions. Its people are both settled and nomad. Their desert-dwellers are Turks, who cannot be comprehended for number, and none of the desert-dwelling Turks can withstand them. They are held in honour among the Turkish races **(ajnās at-Turk)** because the kingship was among them in ancient times, and among their traditions is that the kingship will return to them. In the country of Tibet **(balad at-Tubbat)** are special properties in respect of their air and water, their mountains and plains. A man there laughs and rejoices continually. Sadness, danger, anxieties and griefs do not affect him.

85 Ed. De Goeje, 88.

86 Ed. Houtsma, I, 204.

87 *Muʿjam al-Buldān,* I, 817.

Their old, middle-aged and young are alike in this. The wonders of their fruits and flowers, their meadows and rivers, cannot be counted. It is a land in which the humour of the blood prevails over the rational animal and others. Among its people are sensibility of nature, liveliness and cheerfulness, which prompt to the frequent use of musical instruments and different kinds of dancing. When any has died, his family do not enter on much mourning, like what affects others, but there is mutual commiseration. Smiling among them is general. It even appears on the faces of their animals.

'Tibet (Tubbat) is so called from the men of Ḥimyar who were established **(thubbita)** and reared there. Then the **th** was changed to **t,** because **th** is not found in the language of non-Arabs. The story is that Tubbaʿ al-Aqran marched from al-Yaman till he crossed the Jaiḥūn (Oxus), passed the city of Bukhara and came to Samarqand, which was waste. He built it and continued there. Then he marched towards China through the lands of the Turks for a month, till he came to broad lands, rich in water and pasturage. There he built a great city, and settled in it 30,000 of his companions who were unable to march with him to China. He named it Thubbat. Diʿbil b. ʿAlī al-Khuzāʿī boasts of that in a **qaṣīdah** in which he challenges al-Kumait:

'It is they who wrote on the gate of Marv,
and on the gate of China they were the writers.
It is they who gave Samarqand its name in ancient times,
and they who planted there the Tibetans.'

Its people, as some assert, are after the fashion **(zīy)** of the Arabs, to the present time. They are skilled in horsemanship and brave, and have subdued all the different kinds of Turks who are round about them. Formerly they called everyone who reigned over them Tubbaʿ, in imitation of the first of them. Then time wrought its changes. Their outward appearance and language changed to those of their Turkish neighbours, and they called their kings Khāqān.

'The country in which the Tibetan and Chinese musk-deer are is one and continuous. The superiority of the Tibetan over the Chinese is due to two things. One is that the Tibetan musk-deer pastures on spikenard **(sunbul aṭ-ṭīb)** and certain kinds of aromatics, whereas the Chinese musk-deer pastures on grass. The other thing is that the people of Tibet do not try to remove the musk from its vesicles. The people of China do so, and it is contaminated with blood. etc. The Chinese is brought for a long distance by sea, and is reached and spoiled by the moistures. The Tibetan musk is preserved from contamination by being placed in glass bottles, the stopper of which is firmly fastened. It reaches the lands of Islam from Fārs and ʿUmān. It is excellent, really good.

'Musk is such that its special property can alter' and therefore it varies, i.e. there is no difference between our deer and musk-deer in shape and form and colour and horns. The only difference between them is in their canine teeth, which are like an elephant's tusks. Every deer has two canine teeth which protrude from their jaws, sticking out about a span, more or less. In the lands of China and Tibet snares and traps and nets are set for them, and they hunt them. Sometimes they shoot them with arrows and bring them down. Then they cut out their musk vesicles. The blood in their navels being raw, not yet having reached maturity, has an unpleasant odour which remains for a time, then ceases, like fruit which has been plucked before ripening, for it is defective in taste and smell. The best and purest musk is that which the deer casts itself, i.e. the humour drives the black blood to the navel, and when the [colour of the] blood solidifies in it and is matured, it pains the animal, and there is irritation in the navel. It runs to a sharp rock and rubs itself against it and feels pleasure therein. The blood gushes out and flows over the stones, as wounds gush out, and pustules when they come to a head. The deer feels pleasure in losing it. When the animal has emptied what was in its musk-bag, i.e. its navel **(nāfijah),** a Persian word[88], it is healed. The musk-bag ejects in addition certain components of the blood, then comes together again as it was at first.

'The men of Tibet go out and follow its pasturings among the rocks and mountains, and find the dried blood on the stones, when the maturing has been effected. They take it and place it in musk-bags which they have with them. That is the best and finest musk, and that which their own kings make use of and present to each other. Merchants rarely bring it from their lands.

'Tibet has many cities, and to each city they attribute its own musk. It is said that the Valley of Ants through which Solomon passed is behind the land of Tibet. In it is the mine of red sulphur[89]. They say that in Tibet is a mountain called the Mount of Poison. When anyone passes by it, he faints, and some die. and some are struck dumb.'

Much of this (from 'Its people are both settled and nomad', p. 13, to 'they attribute its own musk', p. 15) is taken from the **Murūj adh-Dhahab** of al-Masʿūdī (completed in 336/947). Al-Masʿūdī seems to have taken part of what Yāqūt subsequently borrowed (from 'The country in which the Tibetan and Chinese musk-deer are', p. 14), without mentioning it from a contemporary. Abū Zaid as-Sīrāfī, whose **Akhbār aṣ-Ṣīn wa'l-Hind** is well known. The first part of the **Akhbār** is an anonymous account composed in 237/851, in which a certain Sulaimān the Merchant is named, sometimes considered to have been the author.

88 i.e. *nāfa.*

89 Sometimes taken as = the philosopher's stone.

At all events, this first part appears to be based on accounts of what Sulaimān and possibly others had actually seen. Interest, however, is centred on Khān-fū (Canton), and approaches to China by sea are envisaged. Khumdān, (Ch'ang-an) is not mentioned, and the point of view of this first part is indicated by the remark, towards the end, that beyond China are the land of the Tughuzghuz and the Khāqān of Tibet. On the other hand, the second part of the **Akhbār aṣ-Ṣīn wa'l-Hind** is the work of Abū Zaid as-Sīrāfī, writing circa 303/916, without himself having visited the Far East. It is from this second part that al-Masʿūdī apparently took some of his information, mentioning that he met Abū Zaid as-Sīrāfī at al-Baṣrah in 303/916, though he does not name him as his source[90].

Abū Zaid as-Sīrāfī knows of a certain Ibn Wahb, a rich tribesman of Quraish resident in al-Baṣrah, who after the destruction of the city during the Zanj rebellion, i.e. a long time previously[91], sailed for China, and later made his way from Khān-fū to Khumdān, where he met the Chinese Emperor and conversed with him through an interpreter, before returning to the coast. This part of Abū Zaid's narrative was also made use of by al-Masʿūdī, who calls the traveller Ibn Habbār.

From such sources as this Abū Zaid has a good deal on Tibet in his second part not mentioned in the narrative of Sulaimān the Merchant, if it be his. Thus he knows about the town of Madhū (cf. Amdo), on the frontiers of Tibet **(mutākhimah li-bilād at-Tubbat, ʿalā ḥudūd at-Tubbat),** which he mentions twice[92]. Another man of whom he had heard had travelled from Samarqand on foot and had passed from place to place in China, carrying a wine-skin **(ziqq)** of musk on his back, till he reached Khan-fu (Canton). The detailed account of musk and the musk-deer, which al-Masʿūdī took over, and which we have given above as it stands in Yāqūt, has left distinct traces also in al-Qazwīnī[93]. It is certainly somewhat remarkable that this subject, based on what was in his time an antiquated source, should, together with the legendary connection of Tibet with the South Arabian Tubbaʿ, form the bulk of Yāqūt's article. Yet if by the 13th century Tibet is vaguely known as a mysterious country from which musk is obtained, and concerning which information is for the most part centuries old, the reason is clear enough. When Yāqūt wrote, Transoxiana had long passed out of Arab hands, and perhaps already when he wrote was inundated by the Mongol storm. It is the 9th century writers Ibn Khurradādhbih and al-Yaʿqūbī who, in spite of the brevity of their notices, give the impression

90 *Murūj adh-Dhahab,* I, 321 = transl. Pellat, I, 130, cf. ibid., I, 353 ff. = transl. I, 143 ff. with *Akhbār aṣ-Ṣīn wa'l-Hind (Silsilah at-Tawārīkh),* ed. Reinaud, 110 ff.

91 The capture of al-Baṣrah by the Zanj was was in Shawwāl, 257/ Aug.-Sept., 871.

92 *Akhbār aṣ-Ṣīn wa'l-Hind (Silsilat at-Tawārīkh),* ed. Reinaud, 64, 109.

93 *Kosmographie,* ed. Wüstenfeld, I, 386.

of really knowing something about Tibet, not Yāqūt, and this is doubtless because of their nearness to times when there was real contact between the two peoples. By the 10th century even, to judge from Abū Zaid as-Sīrāfī and al-Masʿūdī, the earlier historical connection had to a large extent been forgotten.

In the 10th century and later, however, two accounts of Tibet were written, evidently based on more or less knowledge of the facts, how obtained we do not learn, which evidently remained unknown to Yāqūt. One of these is in the anonymous **Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam,** written perhaps by a Farīghūnid of literary tastes[94] and begun in 372/982, the other al-Idrīsī's account dating from circa 518/1154. Both present great difficulties of interpretation. We must here dispense with anything more than a bare reference to the short notice of Lhāsa in the **Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam,** where it is said to be a small town with numerous idol temples and one Muslim mosque, in which live a few Muslims **(Lhāsā shahrakī-st wa-andarway but-khānahā-st wa-yak masgit-i Musulmānān-ast wa-andarway Musulmānān-and andak).** The whole section has been translated into English by Minorsky, and his commentary follows[95]. Al-Idrīsī's account of Tibet, like that of the **Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam,** is factual. Discussion of it should perhaps wait till the new edition of al-Idrīsī's geographical work, at present being prepared jointly by the Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli and the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, has provided us with a more reliable text. An impression of al-Idrīsī's knowledge of Tibet can be gained from the old work of Jaubert[96].

None of these geographical notices claims to be a first-hand account. Exceptional in this respect is the first **Risāiah** of Abū Dulaf Misʿar b. al-Muhalhil, in which he reports a journey in 331/942 or 943 from Bukhara to some East Asian capital here called Sandābil. Wherever Sandābil was, it was evidently not in Tibet, for on the way[97] the travellers passed through the territory of 'a tribe known as Tubbat. We journeyed among them for 40 days in security and abundance. They have as food wheat, barley, beans, all flesh and fish, green vegetables, grapes, and (other) fruit. They wear all kinds of clothing[98]. They have a great town of reeds. In it is a temple made of the coloured[99] hides of oxen, in which are coats-

94 Cf. the late Professor Minorsky's article in *A Locust's Leg, Studies in honour of S.H. Taqizadeh,* ed. W.B. Henning and E. Yar-Shater, London, 1962, 189ff.

95 *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam,* § 11, pp. 92-94, 254-63.

96 Paris, 1836, I, 492-95 (Ninth Section of the Third Climate).

97 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān,* ed. Wüstenfeld, III, 447 (article *aṣ-Ṣīn).* Cf. Qazwīnī, *op. cit.,* II, 30.

98 *Yalbasūna jamīʿ al-libās.* The meaning of this, in itself rather ambiguous, is clear from Abū D.'s previous remarks: the Chigil wear wool and fur, the Baghrāj only felt.

99 Or 'red'. Arabic is *madhūnah,* cf. Lane, *Lexicon, s.v. dahīn.*

of-mail (?) [100] and the horns of musk-deer. In it are people of the Muslims, Jews, Christians, Magians and Indians. They pay tribute **(itāwah)** to the Baghrājī ʿAlid[101]. None rules over them except by lot. They have a prison for crimes and faults. Their prayer is to our **qiblah.'** This appears to refer to some outlying Tibetan town, since it is practically excluded that the embassy from Bukhara (? to Kan-chou) passed through Lhasa. As Marquart observed[102], at this time the presence of Jews, Christians and Magians speaks against Tibet proper, though there is evidence for Muslims, as we have seen. Unfortunately Abū Dulaf's first **Risālah,** as the account of an actual journey, is so confused as to be usually judged spurious, and not much weight can be given in any case to his description of the 'city of Tubbat'. What is perhaps most remarkable here is the observation that none rules over them except by lot **(lā yamlikuhum aḥad illā bi'l-qurʿah),** a state of things which seems remote from all or most Asiatic practice, and certainly cannot refer to the method of selection of the Dalai Lama, who appears in Tibetan history only much later (15th century A.D.).

We have canvassed most of the rather meagre sources. What conclusions can be drawn from such a survey as has been possible of Arab relations with Tibet especially in the 8th Century? There is no doubt that in Central Asia at this time, while the Arabs and the Tibetans were the new, aggressive powers, China and the Turks had diminished greatly in importance. It is probably no exaggeration to say that after the defeat at Talas (Ṭarāz) and the fall of their capital Chʿang-an twice within less than ten years, the Chinese permanently turned away from Central Asia and began to look to their eastern sea-board as offering the best hopes for the future. The paradox is that the powers which had, as it seems, forced the Chinese withdrawal, after confronting each other for a relatively short time themselves withdrew. The Turkish power, eclipsed for several centuries revived, and after the Mongol interlude, once more became dominant, at least in Transoxiana. This could have been foreseen by none during the period which we have been considering, though a resumption of an apparently age-old order, in which the appearance in strength in Central Asia of Arabs and Tibetans was no more than a brief episode.

I have to thank Professor E. Carrington Goodrich for his valued help in looking out information in the Chinese sources and for his willingness to answer a variety of questions. I am also much obliged to Mr. Andrew Topping of New York, who first drew my attention to Mr. Stapleton Driver's book, and kindly provided most of the Tibetan references.

100 Text *al-ḥuthūr,* which yields no plain meaning. Perhaps *jaushan* with a numeral letter omitted.

101 The Turkish tribe of Baghrāj was according to Abū Dulaf ruled by chiefs descended from the ʿAlid Yaḥyā b. Zaid, cf. Ṭabarī, II, iii, 1770ff.

102 *Streifzüge,* 78.