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Power and Knowledge in Jalili Mosul

Percy Kemp

Biographical dictionaries of learned men in the Islamic world bear witness to the immense poverty of cultural life in Mongol and Turcoman Mosul. Indeed, the historian Ibn al-Athir, himself a Jazari, was to be one of the last medieval 'Mosuli' intellectuals proudly displayed and paraded for centuries to come. From the second half of the thirteenth century onwards Mosul offers us a clear picture of what, in a different context, Berque has called an 'interrupted nation'. After the seizure and devastation of the town by the Mongols following the death of Badr ad-Din Lu'lu': nothing. The fragmentation of Iraq increased the isolation of Mosul and ended its role as a cultural centre sought by scholars from the towns and villages of Mesopotamia and the Kurdish mountains; the low level of economic exchanges discouraged investment in cultural activities; the mosques and prestigious schools built by the Atabegs were in ruins. Less than 200 miles to the west, in Mamluk Syria, there was keen cultural activity: the politico-religious struggle against the Infidel Mongols — as well as the less Infidel ones — was attracting lively interest, as was the controversy surrounding Ibn Taimiya, Hanbalism, and the cult of the saints. In Mosul, however, there was a frightening vacuum, and a vacuum which was to last well beyond the period of invasion and full-scale war. To the west and to the south, in Syria as in Egypt, the Mamluk State was fostering intellectual activities. To the east, this very east whence had come the lethal stampede, a cultural revival was noticeable: Samarqand, Bukhara, and the unifying and salutary role of a dominant language — Persian. Whereas Mosul, caught on an uneasy middle ground between Mamluk Islam and the Islam of the Ilkhanids, suffocated in a waste land roamed by petty princelings, mercenaries and brigands; and whatever cultural production there might have been soon floundered in a babel of languages and dialects. In the absence of one single dominant — and thus orientating — language, intellectual output dwindled into insignificance and sank into oblivion.

THE CULTURAL SCENE

By the beginning of the sixteenth century a totally different geopolitical configuration was emerging. The Safavids to the east, the Ottomans to the west, were rapidly effecting an acute bipolarisation of the region through their expansionist and unifying drives. Together with Upper Mesopotamia, Mosul was to be the prize of the Ottoman sultan, and its inclusion in a Sunni empire was to determine the pattern of its cultural life. The integration of the town into a vast territorial entity put it in economic and cultural contact with Asia Minor and the Arab provinces, and whereas the easterly and southerly outlooks of Mosul suffered from its vanguard position on the *thughur*, this was compensated for by a northerly and westerly perspective

that was to establish, once and for all, the Sunni character of Mosuli culture. Thus were the foundations of an intellectual revival laid, and its orientation shaped. Yet Mosul had to wait another hundred years for tangible evidence of this revival. Until the reconquest of Baghdad in 1638 the town remained the *chef-lieu* of a frontier *liwa'* integrated in the province of Diyar Bakr. Mosul was still a mere fortress, important for its strategic position as an offensive platform for Ottoman campaigns into Iraq, as well as a defensive stronghold and *plaque tournante* guarding the approaches to Anatolia and to the Syrian coast. Then, with the Ottoman reconquest of Baghdad, the *liwa'* of Mosul became an independent *wilaya*. In addition to upgrading the status of the town within the Ottoman administrative division of the empire and granting it a wali appointed directly by the Porte, this measure also allowed Mosul some breathing space by attenuating its *thaghr* position and connecting it with the Iraqi plains which spread outside its southern walls. But first and foremost, at a cultural level, the creation of the province of Mosul freed the town from the grip of a predominantly Turco-Kurdish Diyar Bakr¹ and allowed it smoother contacts with Aleppo to the west and especially with Baghdad to the south. Thus were the Arab foundations of Mosul's cultural revival laid.

On the eve of the Ottoman conquest of Mosul the dominant *madhhab* in the town seems to have been Shafiism. The arrival of the Ottomans then favoured the rise of Hanafism, and old Mosuli Hanafite families emerged on the politico-cultural scene while others came and settled in Mosul. From this period dates the rise to prominence of the Umari family, whose ancestor, Qasim, is first mentioned in the sources around 1560. At the same period the ancestor of Al Yasin, Abd al-Muhsin, arrived from Samarra and settled in Mosul. Both families were to become pillars of the Ottoman religious hierarchy and its worthy representatives in Mosul. At the time when the Umaris and Al Yasin were rising to prominence, cultural activities and prospects of scholarly advancement were practically non-existent and the newcomers did not, therefore, displace and frustrate an already established Shafiite intelligentsia. Rather, the emergence of the new Hanafite families was accompanied by a general and wide increase in cultural activities which benefited Hanafites and Shafiites alike. The new Hanafite 'masters' did not expropriate Shafiite mosques and turn them into Hanafite ones,² but since practically all mosques were in ruins new ones were built and the Shafiites participated in this movement. Whereas sources never mention clashes, or indeed tension, between Hanafites and Shafiites, relations between the new families and the Ashraf of Mosul do not seem to have been entirely harmonious, at least during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Chronicles mention two major incidents involving the Ashraf and the Umaris³ and on both occasions the Porte backed the Umaris. It is possible that at this early stage of Ottoman expansion in Iraq, when the border with Persia was still fluctuating and Baghdad was still in the balance, the 'Jaafarite' leanings of the Ashraf of Mosul might have cast doubt on their ultimate loyalty to the Ottoman sultan.

A hundred years after the Ottoman conquest, Mosul became a province, and the road to the south — to Baghdad, to Basra and to the Gulf — was

opened to its merchants as well as to its scholars. On the trade routes connecting the Mediterranean to the Gulf, Mosul had become an essential link. Between political stability, economic growth and urban space there was a 'natural' correlation, and from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards Mosul developed considerably as the population increased and notables and merchants erected mosques and schools. New mosques and new schools meant increased numbers of learned men and *udaba'*, teachers, preachers and *fuqaha'*: a clear pointer to a growth in cultural activities.

Two hundred years after the Ottoman conquest and less than a century after the setting up of the *wilaya* of Mosul, the Mamluk 'dynasty' of Baghdad was emerging as the main political force in Iraq, and the Jalili family was establishing itself as the undisputed master of Mosul. This process of 'localisation' of power created more opportunities for the growth of a class of intellectuals. In Mosul, the local ruling family, secure in its position and well established in the town, invested considerable capital in religious institutions, and in a society where politics, religion and culture often merged, the *mécénat* system benefited greatly from the formation of political clientèles. With local elements establishing themselves as the 'natural' rulers of the town, and with Mosul being physically and politically attracted by Baghdad, Mosuli culture developed less along Ottoman-Turkish lines than along Iraqi-Arab lines; and Turkish, the official language of the State, was certainly not the dominant language in the province. Jalili rule in Mosul and Mamluk rule in Baghdad were helping to connect Mosul with a pre-Ottoman, pre-Turcoman, pre-Mongol, Arab cultural heritage which was to put the town on its way to recapturing some of the prestige and prominence it had enjoyed under the golden reign of Badr ad-Din Lu'lu'. As new schools and mosques were being built, Mosul's cultural influence extended far beyond the narrow limits of the pashalik. Students and scholars — Kurds and Arabs, nomadic and sedentary — flocked from Tall A'far and from 'Ana, from Arbil and from Rabtak, from Duhuk, from 'Aqra and from 'Amadiya, attracted by the generosity of Mosul's rulers and notables.

CULTURAL NETWORKS AND MENTAL LANDSCAPE

An important centre of cultural activity was the *majlis* of the prince or the notable. There, friends and clients assembled to listen to poetry and music. The notables, of course, directly inspired *madh* poetry which flourished at that time in Mosul, and they encouraged other genres such as *mawawil*, *ikhwaniyat*, *ghazal* and *khamriyat* by organising poetic competitions and awarding prizes in species.⁴ Poetry in its various forms was an important means of communication — conversations, oratory duels, correspondence, etc. — and it served as an indicator for assessing the local political climate and the power and prestige of the various notables. This poetry gravitated around, and was fed by, the *majlis* of the *muluk* and the *a'yan*.

Another important centre of cultural activity was the school. All major mosques in Mosul had their own school, in addition to which certain notables erected schools independently of mosques, in or close to their own

houses. In all, Jalili Mosul must have had some 20 schools, the most important being the Aminiya (Pasha Mosque), the Aghawat, the Umariya, the Ziwaniya, Mulla Zakar, Abdaliya, Āl Yasin, Jirjisiya, Khatuniya, Yahya Pasha, Hasan Pasha, Rabi'iyā and Bakr Effendi. At the head of each school was a *mudarris* whose appointment was at the discretion of the *mutawalli*.⁵ The richest schools had a dozen or more rooms and employed between 10 and 20 people, from the *mudarris* to the sweeper. Competition for employment and positions was severe and a good teacher was usually appointed for life. To establish himself as an authority a scholar had to possess a vast culture, profess respect for the saints in accordance with the sufi climate of the time, secure the backing of a powerful notable, have an attractive and imposing personality, and be eloquent.⁶ The schools of Mosul offered a wide spectrum of courses ranging from Coranic exegesis to arithmetic and from grammar to astronomy. Young boys were taught separately by a special teacher (*mudarris as-sibyan*). Some schools also had a *dar hadith* as well as a *dar qur'an*, an indication of the importance of the study of Tradition and *qira'a* in Mosul.⁷

Little is known of the way in which these schools functioned and knowledge transmitted, but a quick glance at the works and *ijzas* contained in the libraries of Mosul shows that courses consisted of a public reading of works of authority (e.g., Bukhari on *hadith*, or 'Amili on algebra) followed by a discussion based on a recognised *sharh* of the work being read. Having satisfactorily read (i.e., understood) the work, the student received from his teacher an *ijaza* to this effect. It seems that the students were sometimes requested to copy the work under study to ensure greater familiarity. A solid traditional education usually opened the doors of local government and the religious hierarchy, as well as those of the imperial élite. In search of this essential 'social passport'⁸ some Mosulis — at least those who had the necessary *kifaya* — left their hometown, heading for other centres of learning. The village of Mawaran in the province of Shahrazur, Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus and Istanbul were the most popular destinations. Cultural contacts with Persia and North Africa were non-existent, and those with Egypt and Arabia negligible.⁹ The most prominent Mosuli intellectuals of the time (Umaris, Abdalis, Fakhris, Āl Yasin, Ghulamis) all spent some time in Baghdad, Syria or Istanbul, whence they returned with the added prestige of an *ijaza* from, or even a mere meeting with, some illustrious shaikh. To Mosul and its schools came Kurds from neighbouring towns and villages as well as Arabs from the tribes passing through the province. These Kurds and Arabs came to Mosul to stay and become part of the cultural élite. The prestige and reputation of some Mosuli teachers (Haddadi, Rabtaki, Wa'iz) also attracted students and scholars from Damascus, Aleppo, Baghdad and other important places of learning. They came to Mosul for a while and then returned home having studied with the shaikh they were originally seeking.

The geo-human network of cultural exchanges spun around the schools of Mosul was Syro-Iraqo-Ottoman, it was Sunni, and it was Arabic in language. Such an intricate network of cultural — and also political and social — relationships which developed around the schools gives but a

partial image of the cultural and mental profile of Jalili Mosul. The sufi *khanqa* was another constitutive element of this profile. Sufism was a fundamental part of the Mosuli religious, cultural and mental personality, and practically all the learned men mentioned in the biographical dictionaries were sufis. Furthermore the Kurdish mountains had a strong sufi tradition, and most of the Kurds who came and settled in Mosul brought with them a vivid sufi experience.

Very little is known of the internal organisation and the external hierarchical structure of the orders. The sources at our disposal mention three distinct *tariqas*: the Qadiriya, the Naqshbandiya, and the Rifa'iya. The first two were by far the most common and they attracted people from all sections of society while apparently being dominated and 'run' by the notables. Both *tariqas* were open, non-esoteric and non-exclusive — indeed most learned men belonged to both orders at the same time. It seems that the Qadiri and Naqshbandi orders provided a strong link of communication between the notables and the 'street'. The activities of the orders were limited to *dhikr tajwid* and singing, the emphasis being on social intercourse: theirs was a 'mild' form of sufism. The Rifa'i order, on the other hand, was very marginal and appears to have recruited from the lower classes of society. No prominent learned man, no notable, is mentioned as being a Rifa'i: theirs was a more violent, more exhibitionist form of sufism which entailed self-mutilation.¹⁰

According to Amin Umari there were 10 sufi *khanqas* in Mosul around 1760. To those should be added more than 100 shrines and tombs of *auliya*: as many centres of sufi activity. At the fringes of sufi society were the *majadhib* who, subject to melancholia (*malikhulya*), would sometimes contravene the *shari'a*; and the simpletons (*ablah*) who worshipped at the tomb of Shaikh Sharaf ad-Din, 'himself a simpleton'.¹¹ But be it in its esoteric form or in its more social and worldly one, Mosuli sufism was united in its defence of a deep-rooted religious experience threatened by a burgeoning fundamentalist movement. The mufti, the qadi, the teacher and the sufi shaikh, the *talib* and the *murid*, were one and the same, and thus did the *khanqa*, in its interaction with the *madrassa* and the *majlis* of the notable, contribute to a further homogenisation of Mosuli society; and thus does it give us a further clue as to the configuration of the Mosuli cultural and mental landscape.

From the sufi *khanqa* rose the sound of *dhikr* and religious poems; from the *madrassa* could be heard the *qira'a* and the *tajwid*; from the notable's *majlis* escaped the joyful melody of the *mawawil*; in front of the seraglio the military band played; and all this sound and all this music poured into the streets of Mosul: rhizomes of cultural connections. Until the seventeenth century 'Ashura' had been one instance of cultural expression running wild in the streets of Mosul. The 'innovation' was outlawed following a famous feud between the Ashraf and the Umaris, and then seems to have reappeared briefly in the eighteenth century before Sulaiman Pasha Jalili put a stop to it.¹² 'Ashura' was certainly a very marginal phenomenon in Sunni Mosul — at best involving some Ashraf and Shii peasants from neighbouring villages — but there were other religious occasions when the assembled

townspeople, notables and plebs, rejoiced in the streets. Such was 'id al-fitr, marking the end of Ramadan, when the guns of the Citadel gave the signal for the beginning of the festivities. On this occasion the military band played music throughout the 'id.¹³ The streets of Mosul also welcomed the various processions of *istisqa'* and *du'a'* when the people begged the Almighty to water the crops or to deliver them from a plague. And then there were numerous official festivities — the birth of a son to the sultan, the circumcision of a wali's son, a Muslim victory over the Infidels, etc. — when the suqs were decorated, the guns of the Citadel fired salvos of honour and the military band played. Non-official festivities included fêtes organised by each trade and called *huraifanat*,¹⁴ as well as various religious occasions which the Muslims shared with the Christians of the town, exchanging gifts and organising outings together, to the great despair of some of the *ulama* infuriated by those 'century-old innovations'.¹⁵

Processions and festivities only filled the streets of Mosul occasionally, whereas the coffee-houses were a permanent feature of these streets. The coffee-houses of Mosul — some 120 of them — were the domain of the Janissaries. The habit of coffee drinking was well established in town, and the coffee trade with Arabia had become an important component of the Mosuli economy. The habit of tobacco smoking, on the other hand, was less widespread and still encountered opposition in certain milieux.¹⁶ As for wine, it had no public existence whatsoever, although many Mosulis appear to have indulged in private. The British resident in Baghdad around 1820 tells us that 'the people of Mosul of all religions are much addicted to wine', and Mosuli sources sometimes mention a notable or even an *alim* as being a heavy drinker.¹⁷ Since wine was out of the question, coffee provided a nucleus for social intercourse. Sitting in a café, Janissary leaders established their claim to their territory, ordered their men about and liaised with the envoys of the prince and the notables. In these coffee-houses, political alliances were formed (and broken), trade contracts agreed upon, poetry recited and *mawawil* sung. Life went on, interrupted from time to time by a feud, the closing of the suqs or the assassination of an over-confident Janissary *agha*. The coffee-houses of Mosul formed yet another network of communication and exchanges. They symbolised and delineated distinct urban territories controlled by this or that leader. They provided the most regular form of contact between the rulers and the ruled.

In the *majlis* of the notable, the *madrasa*, the *khanqa*, the street and the coffee-house, segments of culture — written and oral, official and marginal, oppressive and subversive, religious and profane — connected, in harmony or in conflict, drawing a mental profile and a cultural configuration unique to Mosul. But how was this effervescence channelled and what concrete forms did it take?

CULTURAL PRODUCTION¹⁸

The most widely spread literary genre was undoubtedly poetry, and every *adib* worthy of the name indulged in writing verses. Poetry could be found in anthologies or scattered throughout prose works, didactic manuals (as

rhythm was used to help students to memorise), history books (*ta'rikh, madh, ritha'*) and private correspondence between *littérateurs*, as well as on the walls of all sorts of monuments (mosques, gates, etc.). In brief, poetry pervaded everything, as Mosuli *udaba'*, encouraged by the rulers and the notables, composed *madh, ghazal, muwashshahat, mawawil* and *khamriyat*. Exhuming their literary heritage, the Mosulis also made use of the techniques of *takhmis, tasmit, tasbi'* and *tashtir* to develop, expand and put a personal touch to the prestigious and immortal poems they were compiling. Along with this lively literary production (which included at least 11 works in prose) went the study of language, philology and literary criticism, presented in numerous short treatises as well as in encyclopaedic works dealing with allegory, metaphor, metonymy, rhetoric, grammar, syntax, etc.

Literature and literary criticism were closely connected with religion, sometimes in their very object of knowledge as Islam and the Prophet inspired great literary works. The connection between literature and religion went beyond the identity of objects through the intimate relationship existing between literature and philology on the one hand, and religious sciences (especially *hadith* and Coranic exegesis) on the other. In this transition between literature (*adab*) and religion (*'ilm*) one finds the religious art of *qira'a*. In Jalili Mosul the *shaikh al-qurra'* was a 'function' and a title which bore great prestige and became hereditary within a single family. Such prominence bears witness to the importance, in Mosul's religious experience and tradition, of Coranic recitation and of the 'genres' (such as *tajwid*) which gravitated around it. At many levels Coranic recitation converged with mystical practice and rituals (*tasawwuf, ad'iya, salawat, dhikr*), and at least 15 major sufi treatises were written in Mosul at that time: the richness of this production shows that mysticism played an important part in determining the Mosuli world view. On a more orthodox note, the Mosulis composed a flurry of works on dogma (*'aqa'id*), but did not venture into logic and speculative theology (*kalam*).¹⁹ On the other hand, the Mosulis showed a keen and lively interest in *fiqh*, understood as jurisprudence but also as the science of religion *qua* foundation of the social order. Their production in the field appears to have focused on three major issues, being: the problems of *tabdi'* (isolation of the heretic) and *takfir* (excommunication as Infidel or as renegade); the problems of land tenure and taxation; and the problems of inheritance and succession. In trying to come to terms with the legal problems of *tabdi'* and *takfir* the Mosulis were thus defining their attitude towards Shiism (and hence towards the Porte and towards Persia), towards the Yazidis of Jabal Sinjar (a constant threat to trade and stability),²⁰ as well as towards the rising and bewildering star of a local Christianity increasingly identified with infidel Europe. Then, at the turn of the eighteenth century, the Mosulis faced another challenge, that of Wahhabism and of the fundamentalist movement. Yet this challenge was not answered directly through *fiqh* (and one can well understand why), but indirectly through a defence of sufism and for the cult of the saints. The second main point of interest in *fiqh*, land tenure and taxation, illustrates the changing realities in the Eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire and

the gradual transformation of the *iqta'* and the *malikana* into virtual private property. As to the third major interest, inheritance, it depicts a growing mercantile society where the rapid flow of capital was an essential element in continued prosperity.²¹

On a more scientific level, medical knowledge and practice were, it seems, late to develop in Mosul, and the Christians appear to have dominated the discipline with their translations. Medical practice itself was limited in scope despite the many preventive and curative treatises contained in Mosuli libraries, and despite the many names of local doctors given by the biographical dictionaries. Indeed, popular medicine — of which an essential component was the cult of the saints — still swayed the beliefs of the common people. As for the rulers, they made use of another form of magic: European missionaries.²² Physics and astronomy were popular in eighteenth-century Mosul, and many learned men came from Baghdad to study under Salim al-Wa'iz who was the authority in the field. At one level, of course, physics and astronomy connected with astrology and horoscopes, while at another level they connected with geography through the secular need to provide for accurate orientation towards the *qibla*. In the Jalili era copies were made in Mosul of various geographical works (Mas'udi, Ibn al-Wardi, Abu al-Fida, Idrisi), but the only Mosuli geographical work of the Ottoman period was written by a Chaldean priest who travelled to Europe and thence to Latin America in the second half of the seventeenth century.²³ In arithmetic, we have two short treatises written by an *adib* named Amin Umari. Neither the sources of the time nor the libraries of Mosul today give any hint as to works on new technology being written in Mosul at that time. The only concession to technological changes being a rather literary *Risala fi 's-said bi 'l-baruda*, a treatise on shooting written in the nineteenth century by Ali Mahdarbashi.

Last but not least there was history: since history often brings together *adab* and *'ilm* and appears as an exhaustive 'genre'. More than 20 historical works were written in Mosul under the Jalilis, and they include dynastic histories, annalistic histories, biographical dictionaries, hagiographies, regional histories and contemporary chronicles.²⁴

In a society where the form of the communication was at least as important as the message being conveyed, it was natural that *adab* — in the narrow sense of literature — should have played a major role in culture. Be it in *fiqh*, in medicine, in history or in astronomy, a text offered itself to many different readings and language was multidimensional: a far cry from the 'transparence-language' nowadays advocated in science. Yet it is not enough merely to inform the reader as to the main topics of intellectual and cultural interest in Jalili Mosul. Nor would the reader be satisfied with a list and a classification of Mosuli output. Ideally, each work ought to be examined thoroughly and called upon to tell us — beyond the title, the chapter headings and the preface — what its project is, what line of research it pursues, and how (with what means and what insight) it does so. Such a study, however, is well beyond my capabilities and ambitions. Still, one is confronted with the problem of situating the Mosuli output with greater precision. One way might be to look at the lines of tradition and influence,

at the *aslaf* and the recognised and sacralised authorities by investigating the contents of the libraries of Jalili Mosul which will certainly inform us as to the intellectual genealogy of Mosul's *ulama* and *udaba'*. Seeking to comprehend better a work written by a Mosuli, to judge its intellectual level and its methods, to identify its influences and evaluate the realm of its possibilities, one might well examine the 'copying industry': identify and locate all reference works copied in Mosul, or by Mosulis, in the Jalili era; perceive the lines of tradition and borrowing which the Mosulis drew for themselves through the art of copying; measure the radius of the circle of possibilities formed by these lines and beyond which the Mosulis could not venture without effecting major — and obvious — epistemological breaks. Such works as were copied in this period were commissioned by rulers and notables from professional copyists, required from students as part of their education, or else they were the product of an autodidact's urge for greater learning.

The pattern of recurrence of works copied in Mosul at that time casts a light on the principal authorities in each field and gives an indication as to which handbooks were most popular in the *madrasas*: in rhetoric Muhammad al-Qazwini (d. 1338/739); in grammar Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 1078/471), Ibn Malik (d. 1273/672) and Ibn Hisham an-Nahwi (d. 1360/761); in *isti'ara* 'Isam ad-Din al-Isfara'ini (d. 1537/944) and Abu al-Qasim Ali as-Samarqandi (d. 1483/888).

Within the religious sciences, it appears that the main topics of interest were *fiqh*, Coranic exegesis, and sufism and its connected sciences (*tasawwuf*, *qira'a*, *tajwid*, *ad'iya*, *salawat*, *dhikr*). Coranic exegesis is the field where the Mosulis showed the most daring and originality. In the sufi-oriented religious fields, as in the science of *hadith* and in theology, they were uninspired, hiding behind recognised authorities. Again the pattern of recurrence of copied works informs as to these authorities: in *hadith* where Muslim (d. 875/261), Bukhari (d. 870/256), Suyuti (d. 1505/911) and Nawawi (d. 1277/676); in Coranic exegesis were Baidawi (d. 1286/685) and Baghawi (d. 1117/510); in sufism Ibn Arabi, Abu al-Wafa al-Hamawi (d. 1530/936), Juzuli (d. 1485/870), Abd al-Wahhab ash-Sha'rani (d. 1565/973) and Ahmad al-Iskandarani (d. 1309/709) who was Ibn Taimiya's arch-enemy; in dogma and theology were Nasafi (d. 1142/537) and 'Adud ad-Din al-Iji (d. 1355/756), and their recognised commentators Dawwani (d. 1501/907) and Taftazani (d. 1389/791); and while Mosuli production in logic was non-existent, the main authority was Abhari (d. 1264/663) and his commentators Kati and Talishi; in *fiqh* Khair ad-Din ar-Ramli (d. 1670/1081), Ibn Nujaim (d. 1563/970) and Mulla Khusru (d. 1480/885).

Medical knowledge was derived from three sources: the local and ancient Syriac tradition, Arab medicine and the European influence which reached Mosul through the Ottoman doctors. The authorities were Ibn Sina, Da'ud al-Antaki (d. 1599/1008) and Salih Hakim Effendi (d. 1670/1081). In astronomy, physics and arithmetic Baha' ad-Din al-'Amili (d. 1621/1030) dominated the scene.

Finally, the great numbers of works copied show that the 'copying industry' had started to move and to expand rapidly from the end of the

seventeenth century, a pattern which is similar to that of urban growth: as books were being written and copied, so the mosques and schools that would welcome them were being erected.

TOPICALITY AND THE INTELLECTUALS

The most topical challenges and issues facing Mosuli intellectuals of the Jalili era seem to have been the Persian Shii wars against the Sunni Ottomans; the uneasy awareness by these Mosuli Muslims of a totally new configuration of local Christianity; and the undermining threat posed by the fundamentalist movement and by Wahhabism. The first two issues were clear cut and entailed no problems of conscience²⁵ or drastic epistemological and mental breaks: the century-long mechanisms of *tabdi'* and *takfir* were duly resurrected and mustered in pamphlets, treatises, poems and sermons, and the Infidels promptly and vehemently vituperated — music in the ears of the people, and a reassuring spectacle for the prince. The third issue, however, was far more delicate. In the eighteenth century, there lived in Mosul a *faqih* and a Qadiri sufi by the name of Ahmad b. al-Kaula (d. 1759/1173) whose father had been a mamluk of the family Āl Yasin. This Ahmad had gained the respect of the notables and the plebs, and, showing great learning, piety and asceticism, had gathered a large following in the town. Then one day Ahmad dared to cast doubt on the prophet-hood of the most revered Nabi Jirjis. This caused a tremendous uproar in Mosul, with the sufis taking up the matter with the wali, Husain Pasha Jalili, who ordered Ahmad to retract and repent. The culprit appears to have done so *de mauvaise grâce*, hanging on to his convictions and going, so to speak, underground. Ahmad lost his following and died in disgrace.²⁶ Ahmad's son, Muhammad, was also an '*alim* of great learning and all Mosuli biographers of the time agree in praising his far-reaching intellectual abilities. Muhammad followed in his father's steps and went farther than him in his condemnation of what he saw as a 'vampirisation' of Sunnism.²⁷ He went so far as to attack Ibn Arabi and Abd al-Qadir al-Kilani, two figures which were essential to the Iraqi religious experience. Seeing that his prospects in Mosul were poor, Muhammad went to Istanbul where he seems to have entered the right channels, succeeding in being appointed qadi of Diyar Bakr. Later, he was given the *qada'* of Baghdad but was forced by its wali to leave the city soon after his arrival. His vast learning and intelligence, as well as the support he seemed to enjoy at the Porte, kept the Mosuli sufis in awe, and they were pleased to see him seek his fortunes outside the province. Sources do not mention other prominent fundamentalists in the Jalili era, but it is certain that the movement had attracted some support, and in 1793 Muhammad Pasha Jalili exiled three learned men who had attacked Ibn Arabi, Abd al-Qadir al-Kilani, Umar b. al-Farid, and Abd al-Karim al-Jili.²⁸

The rise of the fundamentalist movement had varying effects on the up till then predictable march of Mosuli thinking and production. First, it led some prominent learned men (Amin Umari, Uthman Bey b. Sulaiman Pasha Jalili) to restate their sufi identity in terms of a call for the purifica-

tion of the religious experience under attack from the many abuses and superstitions which tarnished its image. Amin Umari wrote *Al-kashf wa 'l-bayan 'an mashayikh az-zaman* in which he condemned certain abuses and practices in order to safeguard the love and respect for the true *auliya'* and the genuine *mashayikh*. Uthman Bey b. Sulaiman Pasha Jalili wrote many treatises in which he condemned practices which gave the cult of the saints and sufism a bad name. But, as always, the line between good and evil was very hard to draw. Secondly, the rise of the fundamentalist movement forced the more traditional sufi shaikhs to rally in defence of a religious experience they had until then taken for granted and believed to be unassailable. The intellectual — as also the military (Wahhabism) — onslaught of fundamentalism drew them somewhat closer to the Shiis of Iraq (and even to the Iraqi Christians), at least at a popular level. The threat also set in motion a great discursive machine: Sayyid Ahmad b. Hamid Fakhri translated *Jami' al-anwar* by Murtada Nazmi Zada, Amin Umari wrote *Manhal al-auliya'*, Yasin Umari consecrated an important section of his *Munyat al-udaba'* to the tombs of the saints, Ahmad b. al-Khayyat wrote *Tarjamat al-auliya'* and Yusuf b. Abd al-Jalil wrote *Al-intisar li 'l-auliya' al-akhyar*. To which should be added scores of shorter treatises either written or copied by Mosulis at that time. This intellectual climate illustrates the uneasy position of a Sunni Arab Mosul with a strong sufi tradition, caught as it then was between a religiously similar yet ethnically and linguistically different Ottoman overlord, a Persia which was as alienating in its Sunni as in its Shii variants, and an Arab, yet staggering, fundamentalist Sunni Arabia.

NOTES

1. At the end of the eighteenth century an English traveller wrote that south of Mardin 'Arabic is the prevailing language. To the northward the Turkish language is more common'. J. Jackson, *Journey from India* (London, 1799), pp. 158-9. And some 40 years later, '... the Arab population almost entirely ceases at Diarbekir. The Mussulmans are chiefly Turks and Kurds, and here the Turkish language begins to prevail'. H. Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour through Armenia, Koordistan, Persia and Mesopotamia* (London, 1840), Vol. II, p. 292.
2. As had happened in Tunis where the Hanafites had expropriated some Malikite mosques: see A. Abdesselem, *Les Historiens Tunisiens des XVIIe, XVIIIe et XIXe Siècles* (Tunis, 1973), p. 28.
3. Amin Umari, *Manhal al-auliya'*, S. Diwahji (ed.) (Mosul, 1968), Vol. II, p. 151; Yasin Umari, *Ad-durr al-maknun*, MS of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, number Arabe 4949, pp. 425 and 518.
4. Yasin Umari, *Qurrat al-'ainain*, MS of a private Jalili library in Mosul, p. 23; Yasin Umari, fragment of a MS without title, Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, number 9486, f. 23v.
5. Thus was the dependence of the learned man on the notable consecrated.
6. Hence, 'Ali as-Susani, a Kurd who had settled in Mosul and taught at the Aghawat School, had very few students because he stuttered: see Amin Umari, *Manhal al-auliya'*, I, 275.
7. Some *waqfiyat* stipulate that a school should have a *dar qur'an* and a *dar hadith*. A religious function in Mosul was that of *rawiya* (of *hadith*), while the dignity of *shaikh al-qurra'* became hereditary and confined within a single family known as *Āl Shaikh al-Qurra'*.

8. What André Miquel has called *adab*.
9. In the case of Arabia cultural contacts were poor despite the Pilgrimage and the coffee trade.
10. Until today sufism thrives in Mosul and the distinction between a 'mild' and social Naqshbandi-Qadiri experience and a violent and esoteric Rifa'i one is still valid.
11. See Amin Umari, *Manhal al-auliya*, II, 183.
12. See Amin Umari, *Manhal al-auliya*, II, 71.
13. 'Imad Ra'uf, *Al-Mausil fi 'l-'ahd al-'Uthmani* (Najaf, 1975), p. 354.
14. See the editor's note in *Manhal al-auliya*, II, 116.
15. Some of these innovations went as far back as the thirteenth century: see Amin Umari, *Manhal al-auliya*, II, 71-3.
16. At the end of the eighteenth century there were at least two treatises in the libraries of Mosul discussing the consumption of tobacco. Amin Umari tells us that at visits of condolence, the *masjid* where family and friends met was often filled with smoke as tobacco was passed and coffee drunk: see *Manhal al-auliya*, II, 73. And Yasin Umari made a very violent diatribe against the Kurds whom he accused of having introduced the nasty habit of tobacco smoking: see *Ghayat al-maram*, 'A. Basri (ed.) (Baghdad, 1968), p. 95.
17. C. J. Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan* (London, 1836), Vol. II, p. 59; Amin Umari, *Manhal al-auliya*, MS of the British Library, number 2429, f. 86v.
18. The following section is based on a week's work in Mosul's Maktabat al-Auqaf, as well as on *Fahras makhtutat maktabat al-auqaf al-'amma fi 'l-Mausil*, S. Abd ar-Razzaq Ahmad (ed.), 8 vols. (Baghdad, 1978); D. Jalabi, *Kitab makhtutat al-Mausil* (Baghdad, 1927); Y. Eche, *Les Bibliothèques Arabes au Moyen Age* (Damas, 1967); C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur*, 2 vols. and 3 supplements (Leyden, 1937-1949); F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, 6 vols. (Leyden, 1967-1978); Muhammad Agha Buzurk, *Adh-dhari'a fi tasanif ash-Shi'a*, 25 vols. (Najaf, 1936-1977); Khair ad-Din az-Zirikli, *Al-a'lam*, 10 vols. (Cairo, 1954-1959).
19. The only Mosuli works slightly approaching the subject are appendices to Islam ad-Din al-Isfara'ini's commentary on 'Adud ad-Din al-Iji's *Risala 'l-Adudiya fi 'l-wad'*. The Mosuli appendices are by Shams ad-Din ad-Damluji (d. 1835/1251) and Salih Mahdarbashi (d. circa 1850).
20. Cf. Ibn Taimiya's *fatwas* against the Druzes and the Nusairis: rebels against authority and rebels against religion.
21. On capital's 'decoding' function in society, see the interesting analyses put forward by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*, Vol. I (*L'Anti-Oedipe*) (Paris, 1972).
22. For an interesting account of the missionaries' medical function, see B.-M. Goormachtigh, *Histoire de la Mission Dominicaine en Mésopotamie et en Kurdistan* (Rome, 1896).
23. Father A. Rabbat s.j. has published the first part of this work. His edition is based on a MS he found in the library of the Syriac-Catholic metropolitan seat in Aleppo. See 'Rihlat awwal sa'ih sharqi ila Amrika', in *Al-Mashriq*, VIII (1905).
24. I shall examine Mosul's historical production and put forward my findings in a separate article.
25. Except maybe in connection with the Jaafarite proposals of Nadir Shah.
26. An Aleppine learned man, Ali ad-Dabbagh, wrote a treatise entitled *Ithaf al-anam bi akhbar sayyidina Jirjis* in which he answered the charges levelled by Ahmad b. al-Kaula against the saintly man, and he immediately sent the work to Mosul, together with an accompanying poem: see Muhammad Ghulami, *Shamamat al-'anbar*, S. Nu'aimi (ed.) (Baghdad, 1977), pp. 230-1.
27. The expression is Sartre's who uses it in connection with Catholicism.
28. Yasin Umari, fragment of a MS without title, MS of the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, number 9486, ff. 46v-47v. And it was also said (f. 48r) that none other than Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab had studied in Mosul. It is worth noting that contrary to Mosul's fundamentalist activists, Ibn Taimiya himself considered Abd al-Qadir al-Kilani to be a true sufi and saint: see A. Morabia, 'L'Antéchrist s'est-il manifesté du vivant de l'Envoyé d'Allah?', in *Journal Asiatique*, CCLXVII (1979), p. 81.