

AN
**ARAB-SYRIAN GENTLEMAN
AND WARRIOR**

IN
**THE PERIOD OF THE CRUSADES
MEMOIRS OF USĀMAH IBN-MUNQIDH**

TRANSLATED BY
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8. AN APPRECIATION OF THE FRANKISH CHARACTER

Their lack of sense. — Mysterious are the works of the Creator, the author of all things! When one comes to recount cases regarding the Franks, he cannot but glorify Allah (exalted is he!) and sanctify him, for he sees them as animals possessing the virtues of courage and fighting; but nothing else; just as animals have only the virtues of strength and carrying loads. I shall now give some instances of their doings and their curious mentality.

In the army of King Fulk, son of Fulk, was a Frankish reverend knight who had just arrived from their land in order to make the holy pilgrimage and then return home. He was of my intimate fellowship and kept such constant company with me that he began to call me "my brother." Between us were mutual bonds of amity and friendship. When he resolved to return by sea to his homeland, he said to me:

My brother, I am leaving for my country and I want thee to send with me thy son (my son,¹ who was then fourteen years old, was at that time in my company) to our country, where he can see the knights and learn wisdom and chivalry. When he returns, he will be like a wise man.

Thus there fell upon my ears words which would never come out of the head of a sensible man; for even if my son were to be taken captive, his captivity could not bring him a worse misfortune than carrying him into the lands of the Franks. However, I said to the man:

By thy life, this has exactly been my idea. But the only thing that prevented me from carrying it out was the fact that his grandmother, my mother, is so fond of him and did not this time let him come out with me until she exacted an oath from me to the effect that I would return him to her.

Thereupon he asked, "Is thy mother still alive?" "Yes." I replied. "Well," said he, "disobey her not."

¹ Abu-al-Fawaris Murhad.

Their curious medication. — A case illustrating their curious medicine is the following:

The lord of al-Munayyirah² wrote to my uncle asking him to dispatch a physician to treat certain sick persons among his people. My uncle sent him a Christian physician named Thābit. Thābit was absent but ten days when he returned. So we said to him, "How quickly hast thou healed thy patients!" He said:

They brought before me a knight in whose leg [81] an abscess had grown; and a woman afflicted with imbecility.³ To the knight I applied a small poultice until the abscess opened and became well; and the woman I put on diet and made her humor wet. Then a Frankish physician came to them and said, "This man knows nothing about treating them." He then said to the knight, "Which wouldst thou prefer, living with one leg or dying with two?" The latter replied, "Living with one leg." The physician said, "Bring me a strong knight and a sharp ax." A knight came with the ax. And I was standing by. Then the physician laid the leg of the patient on a block of wood and bade the knight strike his leg with the ax and chop it off at one blow. Accordingly he struck it — while I was looking on — one blow, but the leg was not severed. He dealt another blow, upon which the marrow of the leg flowed out and the patient died on the spot. He then examined the woman and said, "This is a woman in whose head there is a devil which has possessed her. Shave off her hair." Accordingly they shaved it off and the woman began once more to eat their ordinary diet — garlic and mustard. Her imbecility took a turn for the worse. The physician then said, "The devil has penetrated through her head." He therefore took a razor, made a deep cruciform incision on it, peeled off the skin at the middle of the incision until the bone of the skull was exposed and rubbed it with salt. The woman also expired instantly. Thereupon I asked them whether my services were needed any longer, and when they replied in the negative I returned home, having learned of their medicine what I knew not before.

I have, however, witnessed a case of their medicine which was quite different from that.

The king of the Franks⁴ had for treasurer a knight named Bernard [*bernād*], who (may Allah's curse be upon him!) was one of the most accursed and wicked among the Franks. A horse kicked him in the leg, which was subsequently infected and which opened

² In Lebanon near Aḡlah, the source of Nahr-Ibrāhīm, i.e., ancient Adonis.

³ Ar. *nashif*, "dryness," is not used as a name of a disease. I take the word therefore to be Persian *nishaf* = "imbecility."

⁴ I ulk of Anjou, king of Jerusalem.

in fourteen different places. Every time one of these cuts would close in one place, another would open in another place. All this happened while I was praying for his perfition. Then came to him a Frankish physician and removed from the leg all the ointments which were on it and began to wash it with very strong vinegar. By this treatment all the cuts were healed and the man became well again. He was up again like a devil.

Another case illustrating their curious medicine is the following: In Shayzar we had an artisan named abu-al-Fath, who had a boy whose neck was afflicted with scrofula. Every time a part of it would close, another part would open. This man happened to go to Antioch on business of his, accompanied by his son. A Frank noticed the boy and asked his father about him. Abu-al-Fath replied, "This is my son." The Frank said to him, "Wilt thou swear by thy religion that if I prescribe to thee a medicine which will cure thy boy, thou wilt charge nobody fees for prescribing it thyself? In that case, I shall prescribe to thee a medicine which will cure the boy." The man took the oath and the Frank said:

Take uncrushed leaves of glasswort, burn them, then soak the ashes in olive oil and sharp vinegar. Treat the scrofula with them until the spot on which it is growing is eaten up. Then take burnt lead, soak it in ghee butter [*sammā*] and treat him with it. That will cure him.

The father treated the boy accordingly, and the boy was cured. The sores closed and the boy returned to his normal condition of health.

I have myself treated with this medicine many who were afflicted with such disease, and the treatment was successful in removing the cause of [82] the complaint.

some wax." We fetched him a little wax, which he softened and shaped like the knuckles of fingers, and he stuck one in each nostril. The knight died on the spot. [84] We said to him, "He is dead." "Yes," he replied, "he was suffering great pain, so I closed up his nose that he might die and get relief."

Their judicial trials: A duel. — I attended one day a duel in Nāblus between two Franks. The reason for this was that certain Moslem thieves took by surprise one of the villages of Nāblus. One of the peasants of that village was charged with having acted as guide for the thieves when they fell upon the village. So he fled away. The king¹³ sent and arrested his children. The peasant thereupon came back to the king and said, "Let justice be done in my case. I challenge to a duel the man who claimed that I guided the thieves to the village." The king then said to the tenant who held the village in fief, "Bring forth someone to fight the duel with him." The tenant went to his village, where a blacksmith lived, took hold of him and ordered him to fight the duel. The tenant became thus sure of the safety of his own peasants, none of whom would be killed and his estate ruined.

I saw this blacksmith. He was a physically strong young man, but his heart failed him. He would walk a few steps and then sit down and ask for a drink. The one who had made the challenge was an old man, but he was strong in spirit and he would rub the

¹³ A hemistich quoted from the pre-Islamic poet Zuhayr ibn-abi Sulaym al-Muzani.
¹⁴ Folk of Anjou, king of Jerusalem (1137-42).

Another curious case of medication. — A curious case relating to their medicine is the following, which was related to me by William of Bures [*Itiyām dabūr*], the lord of Tabarayyah [Tiberias], who was one of the principal chiefs among the Franks. It happened that William had accompanied al-Amir Mu'in-al-Dīn¹⁵ (may Allah's mercy rest upon his soul!) from 'Akka to Tabarayyah when I was in his company too. On the way William related to us the following story in these words:

We had in our country a highly esteemed knight who was taken ill and was on the point of death. We thereupon came to one of our great priests and said to him, "Come with us and examine so and so, the knight." "I will," he replied, and walked along with us while we were assured in ourselves that if he would only lay his hand on him the patient would recover. When the priest saw the patient, he said, "Bring me

¹⁵ Mu'in-al-Dīn Anar.

nailed of his thumb against that of the forefinger in defiance, as if he was not worrying over the duel. Then came the viscount [*al-biskund*], i. e., the seignior of the town, and gave each one of the two contestants a cudgel and a shield and arranged the people in a circle around them.

The two met. The old man would press the blacksmith backward until he would get him as far as the circle, then he would come back to the middle of the arena. They went on exchanging blows until they looked like pillars smeared with blood. The contest was prolonged and the viscount began to urge them to hurry, saying, "Hurry on." The fact that the smith was given to the use of the hammer proved now of great advantage to him. The old man was worn out and the smith gave him a blow which made him fall. His cudgel fell under his back. The smith knelt down over him and tried to stick his fingers into the eyes of his adversary, but could not do it because of the great quantity of blood flowing out. Then he rose up and hit his head with the cudgel until he killed him. They then fastened a rope around the neck of the dead person, dragged him away and hanged him. The lord who brought the smith now came, gave the smith his own mantle, made him mount the horse behind him and rode off with him. This case illustrates the kind of jurisprudence [85] and legal decisions the Franks have — may Allah's curse be upon them!

Ordeal by water. — I once went in the company of al-Amir Mu'in-al-Din (may Allah's mercy rest upon his soul!) to Jerusalem. We stopped at Nāblus. There a blind man, a Moslem, who was still young and was well dressed, presented himself before al-amir carrying fruits for him and asked permission to be admitted into his service in Damascus. The amir consented. I inquired about this man and was informed that his mother had been married to a Frank whom she had killed. Her son used to practice ruses against the Frankish pilgrims and cooperate with his mother in assassinating them. They finally brought charges against him and tried his case according to the Frankish way of procedure.

They installed a huge cask and filled it with water. Across it they set a board of wood. They then bound the arms of the man charged with the act, tied a rope around his shoulders and dropped him into the cask, their idea being that in case he was innocent,

he would sink in the water and they would then lift him up with the rope so that he might not die in the water; and in case he was guilty, he would not sink in the water. This man did his best to sink when they dropped him into the water, but he could not do it. So he had to submit to their sentence against him — may Allah's curse be upon them! They pierced his eyeballs with red-hot awls.

Later this same man arrived in Damascus. Al-Amir Mu'in-al-Din (may Allah's mercy rest upon his soul!) assigned him a stipend large enough to meet all his needs and said to a slave of his, "Conduct him to Burhān-al-Din al-Balkhi (may Allah's mercy rest upon his soul!) and ask him on my behalf to order somebody to teach this man the Koran and something of Moslem jurisprudence." Hearing that, the blind man remarked, "May triumph and victory be thine! But this was never my thought." "What didst thou think I was going to do for thee?" asked Mu'in-al-Din. The blind man replied, "I thought thou wouldst give me a horse, a mule and a suit of armor and make me a knight." Mu'in-al-Din then said, "I never thought that a blind man could become a knight."

A Frank domesticated in Syria abstains from eating pork. — Among the Franks are those who have become acclimatized and have associated long with the Moslems. These are much better than the recent comers from the Frankish lands. But they constitute the exception and cannot be treated as a rule.

Here is an illustration. I dispatched one of my men to Antioch on business. There was in Antioch at that time al-Ra'is Theodoros Sophianos [*al-drus ibn-al-saff*], to whom I was bound by mutual ties of amity. His influence in Antioch was supreme. One day he said to my man, "I am invited by a friend of mine who is a Frank. Thou shouldst come with me so that thou mayest see their fashions." My man related the story in the following words:

I went along with him and we came to the home of a knight who belonged to the old category of knights who came with the early expeditions of the Franks. He had been by that time stricken off the register and exempted from service, and possessed in Antioch an estate on the income of which he lived. The knight presented an excellent table, with food extraordinarily clean and delicious. Seeing me abstaining from food, he said, "Eat, be of good cheer! I never eat Frankish dishes, but I have Egyptian women cooks and never eat except their cooking.

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Besides, pork never enters my home." I ate, but guardedly, and after that we departed.

As I was passing in the market place, a Frankish woman all of a sudden hung to my clothes and began to mutter words in their language, and I could not understand what she was saying. This made me immediately the center of a big crowd of Franks. I was convinced that death was at hand. But all of a sudden that same knight approached. On seeing me, he came and said to that woman, "What is the matter between thee and this Moslem?" She replied, "This is he who has killed [86] my brother Hurso [ʿwr]."
This Hurso was a knight in Afamiyah who was killed by someone of the army of Hamah. The Christian knight shouted at her, saying, "This is a bourgeois [bourgeois] (i.e., a merchant) who neither fights nor attends a fight." He also yelled at the people who had assembled, and they all dispersed. Then he took me by the hand and went away. Thus the effect of that meal was my deliverance from certain death.

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EAST ENCOUNTERS WEST

France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century

FATMA MÜGE GÖÇEK

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EVLIYA CHELEBI (17th Cent.)

COMPARISONS BETWEEN AUSTRIANS AND HUNGARIANS

Though they have lost their power, they still have fine tables, are hospitable to guests, and are capable cultivators of their fertile land. Like the Tatars, they ride wherever they go with a span of horses, with from five to ten pistols, and with swords at their waists. Indeed, they look just like our frontier soldiers, wearing the same dress as they, and riding the same thoroughbred horses. They are clean in their ways and in their eating, and honor their guests. They do not torture their prisoners as the Austrians do. They practice sword play like the Ottomans. In short, though both of them are unbelievers without faith, the Hungarians are more honorable and cleaner infidels. They do not wash their faces every morning with their urine as the Austrians do, but wash their faces every morning with water as the Ottomans do.³⁹

PUBLIC DEFERENCE SHOWN TO WOMEN

I saw a most extraordinary thing in this country. If the emperor encounters a woman in the street, then if he is on horseback he halts his horse and lets the woman pass. If the emperor is on foot and meets a woman, then he remains standing in a polite posture. Then the woman greets the emperor, and he takes his hat off his head and shows deference to the woman, and only when she has passed does he continue on his way. This is a most extraordinary spectacle. In this country, and elsewhere in the lands of the infidels, women have the chief say, and they are honored and respected for the sake of mother Mary.¹⁴

WOMEN OF VIENNA

Like the men, the women wear as outer garments sleeveless quilted coats made of black cloth of various kinds. Under these, however, they wear gowns of brocade and silk and cloth-of-gold and diverse other precious and gold stuffs; these are not short and scanty as are women's gowns in the other lands of the infidels, but rich and copious, so that they drag yards of cloth on the ground behind them like the trailing skirts of the Mevlevi [whirling] dervishes. They never wear drawers. They wear shoes of all colours, and their belts are usually studded with gems. Unlike the young maidens, married ladies there go about with their bosoms uncovered, gleaming as white as snow. They do not catch their dresses around the waist with belts, like the women of Hungary, Wallachia, and Moldavia, but put sashes round their midribs, as broad as the rim of a sieve. This is an ugly garb, which makes them look like hunchbacks. On their heads they wear white muslim caps adorned with fine lace and embroidery, and over them hoods with gems and pearls and bands. By God's providence, the breasts of the women of this country are not, like those of the women of Turkey, as big as waterskins, but are as small as oranges. Nevertheless, they mostly suckle their children with their own milk.³

Because the water and air in that country are so good, all the women are beautiful, of good height and fine figure and fairylike features. And everywhere there are girls without number as sweet, graceful, and beautiful as the gleaming golden sun, who enchant a man with every gesture and every movement, every word and every act. . . .

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by Bernard Lewis

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MEHMET EFENDI (EARLY 18TH CENT.)

PARIS VS. ISTANBUL

Paris is not as big as Istanbul, but the buildings are of three, four, or as many as seven storeys, and a whole family lives on each storey. Great numbers of people are seen in the streets because the women are always in the streets going from one house to another, and never stay at home. Because of this mixture of men and women, the inner city looks more populous than it really is. The women sit in the shops and conduct business.¹⁴

MEETING THE FRENCH KING

He [Villeroi] asked, "What do you say about the beauty and grace of our King?" We replied, "Wonderful, may Allah protect him from evil eyes." He then held the King and turned him around. "He [the King] is only eleven years and four months old. Is he not well-proportioned with this stature? Particularly his hair is not a wig, kink." We stroked and caressed those curly locks. . . . Then he [Villeroi] said, "His gait is also graceful. Walk some so they can see." The King walked to the center of the hall like a dog and came back. "Let them see you run fast as well." The King juggled to the center of the hall and came back. The Marshal (Villeroi) asked if we liked it [the performance]. "May the Almighty Allah be praised for creating such a beautiful creature." We responded.

ON FRANCE'S GOVERNMENT

They have several viziers who are called "ministres," and who rank below marshals and dukes. Each of them is entrusted with a specific matter. No one of them interferes with any other, and each is independent in the service which is entrusted to him. The above-mentioned [the archbishop of Cambrai] was in charge of foreign affairs and had the power to deal with such matters as arranging war and peace, looking after all commercial affairs, dealing with the ambassadors who came from other parts, and appointing and dismissing the French ambassadors to the Threshold of Felicity [Istanbul].¹⁵

FRENCH CURIOSITY ABOUT OTTOMANS

They wanted, in particular, to watch us eat. We received messages that the daughter of so-and-so or the wife of so-and-so requested permission to watch us eat. We could not always refuse. Since [our eating times] coincided with their fast, they would not eat but surround the dining table and watch us. Since we were not accustomed to such behavior, this distressed us very much. We endured with patience out of our consideration for them. Yet the French were accustomed to watching people eat; for example, it was their custom to permit some to watch their King eat. What was more strange was the fact that these people would go to watch the King rise and get dressed in the morning. The fact that they made similar requests of us made us very uneasy.¹⁶

ROLE OF WOMEN IN FRANCE

In France women are of higher station than men, so that they do what they wish and go where they please; and the greatest lord shows respect and courtesy beyond all limits to the humblest of women. In that country their commands prevail. It is said that France is the paradise of women, where they have no cares or troubles, and where whatever they desire is theirs without effort.¹⁷

ON OPERA AS ENTERTAINMENT

There is in Paris a special kind of entertainment called opera, where wonders are shown. There was always a great crowd of people, for all the great lords go there. The regent goes often, and the king from time to time, so I decided to go too. . . . Each is seated according to his rank, and I was seated next to the king's seat, which was covered with red velvet. The regent came that day. I cannot say how many men and women there were. . . .

The place was superb; the staircases, the columns, the ceilings, and the walls were all gilded. This gilding, and the brilliance of the cloth of gold that the ladies were wearing, as well as of the jewels with which they were covered, all in the light of hundreds of candles, created the most beautiful effect.

Opposite the spectators, in the place of the musicians, hung a brocade curtain. When everyone was seated, the curtain was raised, and a palace appeared, with actors in theatrical costumes and about twenty angel-faced girls, with gold-laced dresses and skirts, that cast new radiance on the assembly. Then there was music, then a moment of dancing, and then the opera began. . . .¹⁸

ON THE ARTS IN FRANCE

The custom among these people is that the king gives ambassadors his own portrait adorned with diamonds, but since pictures are not permitted among Muslims, I was given instead a diamond-studded belt, two rugs made in Paris, a large mirror, a gun and pistols, a casket bound in gilded brass, a gilded brass table-clock, two thick porcelain vases with gilded brass handles for ice, and a sugar bowl.⁶

ON PAINTING

We then began to look at the wonderful pictures which were hanging in the council chamber. We went round with the King, who himself explained who they were.⁷

ON TAPESTRY

There is a special factory for making tapestries which belongs to the King. . . . Knowing that an ambassador was coming, they had hung all the tapestries which were ready on the walls. Since the factory is very vast, there must have been more than a hundred pieces hung on the walls. When we saw them, we put the finger of admiration in the mouth. For example, the flowers are worked in such a way that they look like a vase of real flowers. The appearance of the persons depicted, their eyelids, their eyebrows and especially the hair and the beards on their heads are so well portrayed that neither Mani nor Behzad working on the finest Chinese paper could achieve such art. One appears laughing, to show his joy; another sad, to show his sadness. One is shown trembling with fear, another weeping, another stricken by some disease. Thus, at first glance the condition of each person is known. The beauty of these works is beyond description and beyond imagination.⁸

AL-JABARTI'S CHRONICLE
OF THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS
OF THE
FRENCH OCCUPATION OF EGYPT

MUḤARRAM - RAJAB 1213
15 JUNE - DECEMBER 1798

TĀRĪKH MUDDAT AL-FARANSĪS BI-MIṢR

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S. MOREH

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They follow this rule: great and small, high and low, male and female are all equal. Sometimes they break this rule according to their whims and inclinations or reasoning. Their women do not veil themselves and have no modesty; they do not care whether they uncover their private parts. Whenever a Frenchman has to perform an act of nature he does so wherever he happens to be, even in full view of people, and he goes away as he is, without washing his private parts after defecation. If he is a man of taste and refinement, he wipes himself with whatever he finds, even with a paper with writing on it, otherwise he remains as he is. They have intercourse with any woman who pleases them and vice versa. Sometimes one of their women goes into a barber's shop, and invites him to shave her pubic hair.³⁹ If he wishes he can take his fee in kind. It is their custom to shave both their moustaches and beard. Some of them leave the hair of their cheeks only.

When Saturday morning dawned, and the French reached Umm Dinār, the crowds thickened and the alarm increased, and an innumerable throng surpassing all description gathered at Būlāq and on its outskirts and in the southern and northern districts. A crowd also formed on the bank of Inbāba, but smaller in number. The Ghuzz, the soldiers, and the Mamlūks gathered on the two banks, but they were irresolute, and were at odds with one another, being divided in opinion, envious of each other, frightened / for their lives, their well-being, and their comforts; immersed in their ignorance and self-delusion; arrogant and haughty in their attire and presumptuousness; afraid of decreasing in number, and pompous in their finery, heedless of the results of their action; contemptuous of their enemy, unbalanced in their reasoning and judgement. They were unlike the other group, that is the French, who were a complete contrast in everything mentioned above. They acted as if they were

following the tradition of the Community (of Muhammad) in early Islam and saw themselves as fighters in a holy war. They never considered the number of their enemy too high, nor did they care who among them was killed. Indeed they considered anyone who fled a traitor to his community, and an apostate to his faith and creed. They follow the orders of their commander and faithfully obey their leader. Their only shade is the hat on their head and their only mount their own two feet. Their food and drink is but a morsel and a sip, hanging under their arms. Their baggage and change of clothing hang on their backs like a pillow and when they sleep they lie on it as is usual. They have signs and signals among themselves which they all obey to the letter.

When he had completed plastering and furnishing it, the French came and he fled with the others and left all that it contained, not having enjoyed it for even a whole month. The administrators, astronomers, and some of the physicians lived in this house in which they placed a great number of their books and with a keeper taking care of them and arranging them. And the students among them would gather two hours before noon every day in an open space opposite the shelves of books, sitting on chairs arranged in parallel rows before a wide long board. Whoever wishes to look up something in a book asks for whatever volumes he wants and the librarian brings them to him. Then he thumbs through the pages, looking through the book, and writes. All the while they are quiet and no one disturbs his neighbour. When some Muslims would come to look around they would not prevent them from entering. Indeed they would bring them all kinds of printed books in which there were all sorts of illustrations and *cartes (kariât)* of the countries and regions, animals, birds, plants, histories of the ancients, campaigns of the nations, tales of the prophets including pictures of them, of their miracles and wondrous deeds, the events of their respective peoples and such things which baffle the mind. I have gone to them many times and they have shown me all these various things and among the things I saw there was a large book containing the Biography of the Prophet, upon whom be mercy and peace. In this volume they draw his noble picture according to the extent of their knowledge and judgment about him. He is depicted standing upon his feet looking toward Heaven as if menacing all creation. In his right hand is the sword and in his left the Book and around him are his Companions, may God be pleased with them, also with swords in their hands. In another page there are pictures of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. On another page a picture of the Midnight Journey of Muhammad and al-Burâq and he, upon whom be mercy and peace, is riding upon al-Burâq from the Rock of Jerusalem. Also there is a picture of Jerusalem and the Holy Places of Mekka and Medina and of the four Imâms, Founders of the Schools and the other Caliphs and Sultans and an image of Islâmbül including her Great Mosques like Aya Sofya and the Mosque of Sultan Muhammad. In another picture the manner in which the Prophet's Birthday is celebrated and all the types of people who participate in it (are shown); also (there are) pictures of the Mosque of Sultan Sulaymân and the manner in which the Friday prayers are conducted in it, and the Mosque of Abû Ayyûb al-Anşârî and the manner in which prayers for the dead are performed in it, and pictures of the countries, the

coasts, the seas, the Pyramids, the ancient temples of Upper Egypt including the pictures, figures, and inscriptions which are drawn upon them. Also there are pictures of the species of animals, birds, plants and herbage which are peculiar to each land. The glorious Qur'ân is translated into their language! Also many other Islamic books. I saw in their possession the *Kitâb al-Shifâ'* of Qâdî 'Iyâd, which they call *al-Shifâ' al-Sharîf* and *al-Burûd* by Abû Şîrî, many verses of which they know by heart and which they translated into French. I saw some of them who know chapters of the Qur'ân by heart. They have a great interest in the sciences, mainly in mathematics and the knowledge of languages, and make great efforts to learn the Arabic language and the colloquial. In this they strive day and night. And they have books especially devoted to all types of languages, their declensions and conjugations as well as their etymologies. They possess extraordinary astronomical instruments of perfect construction and instruments for measuring altitudes / of wondrous, amazing, and precious construction. And they have telescopes for looking at the stars and measuring their scopes, sizes, heights, conjunctions, and oppositions, and the clepsydras and clocks with gradings and minutes and seconds, all of wondrous form and very precious, and the like.

In a similar manner they assigned the house of Ibrâhîm Katkhudâ al-Sinnârî and the house of the former Katkhudâ Zayn al-Fiqâr and neighbouring houses to the studios and knowledgeable ones. They called this *al-Madâris* (the Schools) and provided it with funds and copious allowances and generous provisions of food and drink. They provided them with a place in the house of the above-mentioned Hasan Kâshif and built in it neat and well-designed stoves and ovens, and instruments for distilling, vaporizing, and extracting liquids and ointments belonging to medicine and sublimated simple salts, the salts extracted from burnt herbs, and so forth. In this place there are wondrous retorts of copper for distillation, and vessels and long-necked bottles made of glass of various forms and shapes, by means of which acidic liquids and solvents are extracted. All this is carried out with perfect skill and wondrous invention and the like.