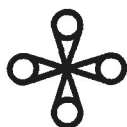


**BOLLINGEN SERIES**





IBN KHALDÛN

THE MUQADDIMAH

*An Introduction to History*

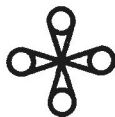
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With a new introduction by Bruce B. Lawrence



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## Chapter 4

### *Countries and cities, and all other forms of sedentary civilization. The conditions occurring there. Primary and secondary considerations in this connection*

1 *Dynasties are prior to towns and cities. Towns and cities are secondary products of royal authority*

The explanation for this is that building and city planning are features of sedentary culture brought about by luxury and tranquillity, as we have mentioned before. They come after Bedouin life and the features that go with it.

Furthermore, towns and cities with their monuments, vast constructions, and large buildings, are set up for the masses and not for the few. Therefore, united effort and much co-operation are needed for them. They are not among the things that are necessary matters of general concern to human beings, in the sense that all human beings desire them or feel compelled to have them. As a matter of fact, they must be forced and driven to build cities. The stick of royal authority is what compels them, or they may be stimulated by promise of reward and compensation amounting to so large a sum that only royal authority and a dynasty can pay for it. Thus, dynasties and royal authority are absolutely necessary for the building of cities and the planning of towns.

Then, when the town has been built and is all finished, as the builder saw fit and as the climatic and geographical conditions required, the life of the dynasty is the life of the town. If the dynasty is of short duration, life in the town will stop at the end of the dynasty. Its civilization will recede, and the town will fall into ruins. On the other hand, if the dynasty is of long duration and lasts a long time, new constructions will always go up in the town, the number of large mansions will increase, and the walls of the town will extend farther and farther. Eventually, the layout of the town will cover a wide area, and the town will extend so far and so wide as to be (almost) beyond measurement. This happened in Baghdad and similar (cities).

The Khaṭīb mentioned in his *History* that in the time of al-Ma'mūn

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the number of public baths in Baghdad reached 65,000. It included over forty of the adjacent neighbouring towns and cities. It was not just one town surrounded by one wall. Its population was much too large for that. The same was the case with al-Qayrawân, Córdoba, and al-Mahdiyah in Islamic times. It is the case with Egypt and Cairo at this time, so we are told.

The dynasty that has built a certain town may be destroyed. Now, the mountainous and flat areas surrounding the city are a desert that constantly provides for (an influx of population). This will preserve the existence of (the town), and it will continue to live after the dynasty is dead. (This situation) can be observed in Fez and Bougie in the West, and in the non-Arab 'Irâq in the East, which get their population from the mountains. When the conditions of the inhabitants of the desert reach the utmost ease and become most profitable, they look for tranquillity and quiet. Therefore, they settle in towns and cities.

Or, it may happen that a town founded (by a dynasty now destroyed) has no opportunity to replenish its population by a constant influx of settlers from a desert near the town. In this case, the destruction of the dynasty will leave it unprotected. It cannot be maintained. Its civilization will gradually decay, until its population is dispersed and gone. This happened in Baghdad and in al-Qayrawân, as well as in other cities.

Frequently it happens that after the destruction of its original builders, a town is used by another realm and dynasty as its capital and residence. This then makes it unnecessary for (the new dynasty) to build a town for itself as a settlement. In this case, the (new) dynasty will protect the town. Its buildings and constructions will increase in proportion to the improved circumstances and the luxury of the new dynasty. The life (of the new dynasty) gives (the town) another life. This has happened in contemporary Fez and Cairo.

### *2 Royal authority calls for urban settlement*

This is because, when royal authority is acquired by tribes and groups, they are forced to take possession of cities for two reasons. One of them is that royal authority causes (the people) to seek tranquillity, restfulness, and relaxation, and to try to provide the aspects of civilization that were lacking in the desert. The second (reason) is that rivals and enemies can be expected to attack the realm, and one must defend oneself against them.

A city situated in a district where (rivals of the dynasty) are found, may often become a place of refuge for a person who wants to attack (the tribes and groups in authority) and revolt against them and



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deprive them of the royal authority to which they have aspired. He fortifies himself in the city and fights them. Now, it is very difficult and troublesome to overpower a city. A city is worth a great number of soldiers, in that it offers protection from behind the walls and makes attacks difficult, and no great numbers or much power are needed. Power and group support are needed in war only for the sake of the steadfastness provided by the mutual affection (tribesmen) show each other in battle. The steadfastness of (people in a city) is assured by the walls of the city. Therefore, they do not need much group support or great numbers (for defence). The existence of a city and of rivals who fortify themselves in it thus eats into the strength of a nation desiring to gain control and breaks the impetus of its efforts in this respect. Therefore, if there are cities in the tribal territory of (a dynasty, it) will bring them under its control, in order to be safe. If there are no cities, the dynasty will have to build a new city, firstly, in order to complete the civilization of its realm and to be able to lessen its efforts, and, secondly, in order to use the city as a threat against those parties and groups within the dynasty that might desire power and might wish to resist.

It is thus clear that royal authority calls for urban settlement and control of the cities.

### *3 Only strong royal authority is able to construct large cities and high monuments*

We have mentioned this before in connection with buildings and other dynastic (monuments). (The size of monuments) is proportionate to the importance of (the various dynasties). The construction of cities can be achieved only by united effort, great numbers, and the co-operation of workers. When the dynasty is large and far-flung, workers are brought together from all regions, and their labour is employed in a common effort. Often, the work involves the help of machines, which multiply the power and strength needed to carry the loads required in building. (Unaided) human strength would be insufficient. Among such machines are pulleys and others.

Many people who view the great monuments and constructions of the ancients, such as the Reception Hall of Khosraw, the pyramids of Egypt, the arches of the Malga (at Carthage) and those of Cherchel in the Maghrib, think that the ancients erected them by their own (unaided) powers, whether (they worked) as individuals or in groups. They imagine that the ancients had bodies proportionate to (those monuments) and that their bodies, consequently, were much taller, wider, and heavier than (our bodies), so that there was the right proportion between (their bodies) and the physical strength

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from which such buildings resulted. They forget the importance of machines and pulleys and engineering skill implied in this connection. Many a travelled person can confirm what we have stated from his own observation of construction and of the use of mechanics to transport building materials among the non-Arab dynasties concerned with such things. . . .

### *4 Very large monuments are not built by one dynasty alone*

The reason for this is the aforementioned need for co-operation and multiplication of human strength in any building activity. Sometimes buildings are so large that they are too much for (human) strength, whether it is on its own or multiplied by machines, as we have stated. Therefore, the repeated application of similar strength is required over successive periods, until (the building) materializes. One (ruler) starts the construction. He is followed by another and (the second by) a third. Each of them does all he can to bring workers together in a common effort. Finally, (the building) materializes, as it was planned, and then stands before our eyes. Those who live at a later period and see the building think that it was built by a single dynasty.

Something similar has been reported with regard to the construction of Carthage, its aqueduct, and the giant arches supporting it. And the same is the case with most great buildings. This is confirmed by the great buildings of our own time. We find one ruler starting by laying out their foundations. Then, if the rulers who succeed him do not follow in his steps and complete (the building), it remains as it is, and is not completed as planned.

Another confirmation of our theory is the fact that we find that (later) dynasties are unable to tear down and destroy many great architectural monuments, even though destruction is much easier than construction, because destruction is return to the origin, which is non-existence, while construction is the opposite of that. Thus, when we find a building that our human strength is too weak to tear down, even though it is easy to tear something down, we realize that the strength used in starting such a monument must have been immense and that the building could not be the monument of a single dynasty.

This is what happened to the Arabs with regard to the Reception Hall of Khosraw. Ar-Rashid had the intention of tearing it down but was unable. The same happened to al-Ma'mun in (his attempt) to pull down the pyramids in Egypt. He assembled workers to tear them down, but he did not have much success. The workers began by boring a hole into the pyramids, and they came to an interior

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chamber between the outer wall and walls farther inside. That was as far as they got in their attempt to pull (the pyramid) down. Their efforts are said to show to this day in the form of a visible hole. Some think that al-Ma'mûn found a buried treasure between the walls.

The same applies to the arches of the Malga (at Carthage, which are still standing) at this time. The people of Tunis need stones for their buildings, and the craftsmen like the quality of the stones of the arches (of the aqueduct). For a long time, they have attempted to tear them down. However, even the smallest (part) of the walls comes down only after the greatest efforts. Parties assemble for the purpose. I have seen many of them in the days of my youth.

### *5 Requirements for the planning of towns and the consequences of neglecting those requirements*

Towns are dwelling places that nations use when they have reached the desired goal of luxury and of the things that go with it. Then, they prefer tranquillity and quiet and turn to using houses to dwell in.

The purpose of (building towns) is to have places for dwelling and shelter. Therefore, it is necessary in this connection to see to it that harmful things are kept away from the towns by protecting them against inroads by them, and that useful features are introduced and all the conveniences are made available in them.

For the protection of towns, all the houses should be situated inside a surrounding wall. Furthermore, the town should be situated in an inaccessible place, either upon a rugged hill or surrounded by the sea or by a river, so that it can be reached only by crossing some sort of bridge. Thus, it will be difficult for an enemy to take the town, and its inaccessibility will be increased many times.

To protect towns against harmful atmospheric phenomena, one should see to it that the air is wholesome, in order to be safe from illness. When the air is stagnant and bad, or close to corrupt waters or putrid pools or swamps, it is speedily affected by putrescence and it is unavoidable that all living beings who are there will speedily be affected by illness. This fact is confirmed by direct observation. Towns where no attention is paid to good air have, as a rule, much illness. In the Maghrib, Gabès is famous for that. Very few of its inhabitants or those who come there are spared the putrid fever. It has been said that this (condition) is recent there, that it did not use to be that way. Al-Bakrî gives an account of how this happened. A copper vessel was found during an excavation there. The vessel was sealed with lead. The seal was broken, and (a puff of) smoke came out of the vessel and disappeared in the air. Feverous diseases began to occur in that place from that time on.

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(Al-Bakrî) meant to imply that the vessel contained some magic spell against pestilence, and that when it was gone its magic efficacy also disappeared. Therefore, putrescence and pestilence reappeared. The story is an example of the feeble beliefs and ideas of the common people. Al-Bakrî was neither learned nor enlightened enough to reject such (a story) and see through its nonsensical character. The truth lies in the fact that it mostly is the stagnancy of putrid air that causes the putrefaction of bodies and the occurrence of feverous diseases. When Ifriqiyah enjoyed a flourishing civilization and a large population, Gabès had many inhabitants whose constant activity helped to keep the air circulating, so that there was not much putrescence or illness there at that time. But when its inhabitants became fewer, the air there became stagnant, and putrescence and the incidence of disease increased. This is the only correct explanation (of the prevalence of feverous diseases in Gabès).

In connection with the importation of useful things and conveniences into towns, one must see to a number of matters. There is the water (problem). The place should be on a river, or near springs with plenty of fresh water. The existence of water will be a general convenience to the inhabitants.

Another utility in towns, for which one must provide, is good pastures for the livestock. Each householder needs domestic animals for breeding, for milk, and for riding. If the pastures are near and good, that will be more convenient for them.

Furthermore, one has to see to it that there are fields suitable for cultivation. Grain is the (basic) food. When the fields are near, the grain can be obtained more easily and quickly.

Then, there also is the need for woods to supply firewood and building material.

One should also see to it that the town is situated close to the sea, to facilitate the importation of foreign goods from remote countries. However, this is not on the same level with the aforementioned (requirements).

The founder (of a town) sometimes fails to make a good natural selection, or he sees only to what seems most important to him or his people, and does not think of the needs of others. The Arabs did that at the beginning of Islam when they founded towns in the 'Irâq, the Hijâz, and Ifriqiyah. They saw only to what seemed important to them, namely, pastures, trees and brackish water for their camels. They did not see to it that there was water for human consumption, fields for cultivation, firewood, or pastures for domestic animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, and so on. Among the cities (founded by the Arabs) were al-Qayrawân, al-Kûfah, al-Basrah, and the like. They

were, therefore, very ready to fall into ruins, inasmuch as they did not fulfil all the natural requirements of towns.

As regards coastal towns, one must see to it that they are situated on a height or amidst a people sufficiently numerous to come to the support of the town when an enemy attacks it. The reason for this is that a town which is near the sea but does not have within its area tribes who share its group feeling, or is not situated in rugged mountain territory, is in danger of being attacked at night by surprise. Its enemies can easily attack it with a fleet. They can be sure that the city has no one to call to its support and that the urban population, accustomed to tranquillity, does not know how to fight. Among cities of this type, for instance, are Alexandria in the East, and Tripoli, Bône, and Salé in the West.

This should be understood. It may be illustrated by the fact that Alexandria was designated a 'border city' by the 'Abbâsids although the 'Abbâsid propaganda extended beyond Alexandria to Barca and Ifrîqiyah. (The term 'border city' for Alexandria) expressed 'Abbâsid fears that attacks could be made against it from the sea, in view of its exposed situation. This probably was the reason Alexandria and Tripoli were attacked by the enemy in Islamic times on numerous occasions.

#### 6 *The mosques and venerated buildings of the world*

God has singled out some places of the earth for special honour. He made them the homes of His worship. People who worship in them receive a much greater reward and recompense. God informed us about this situation through His messengers and prophets, as an act of kindness to His servants and for the purpose of facilitating their ways to happiness.

We know that the most excellent places on earth are the three mosques of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. Mecca is the house of Abraham. God commanded Abraham to build it and to exhort the people to make the pilgrimage thither.

Jerusalem is the house of David and Solomon. God commanded them to build the mosque there and to erect its monuments. Many of the prophets, descendants of Isaac, were buried around it.

Medina is the place to which our Prophet immigrated when God commanded him to immigrate and to establish the religion of Islam there. He built his sacred mosque in Medina, and his noble burial place is on its soil.

These three mosques are the consolation of the Muslims, the desire of their hearts, and the sacred asylum of their religion. There are many well-known traditions about their excellence and the very

great reward awaiting those who live near them and pray in them. . . .

We have no information about any mosque on earth other than these three, save for stories about the Mosque of Adam on the Indian island of Ceylon. But there exists no well-established information about that mosque upon which one may rely.

The ancient nations had mosques which they venerated in what they thought to be a spirit of religious devotion. There were the fire temples of the Persians and the temples of the Greeks and the houses of the Arabs in the Hijâz, which the Prophet ordered to be destroyed on his raids.

### 7 *There are few cities and towns in Ifrîqiyah and the Maghrib*

The reason for this is that these regions belonged to the Berbers for thousands of years before Islam. All their civilization was Bedouin. No sedentary culture existed among (the Berbers) long enough to reach any degree of perfection. The dynasties of European Christians and Arabs who ruled them did not rule long enough for their sedentary culture to take firm root. The customs and ways of Bedouin life to which they were always closer, continued among them. Therefore, they did not have many buildings. Furthermore, crafts were unfamiliar to the Berbers, because they were firmly rooted in desert life, and the crafts result from sedentary culture. Now, buildings can materialize only with the help of (the crafts). One needs skill to learn them, and since the Berbers did not practise them, they had no interest in buildings, let alone towns.

Furthermore, they have (various) group feelings and common descent. No (Berber group) lacks these things. Common descent and group feeling are more attracted to desert (than to urban life). Only tranquillity and quiet call for towns. The inhabitants of (towns) come to be dependent on their militia. Therefore, desert people dislike settling in a town or staying there. Only luxury and wealth could cause them to settle in a town, and these things are rare among men.

Thus, the whole civilization of Ifrîqiyah and the Maghrib, or the largest part of it, was a Bedouin one. People lived in tents, (camel) litters, and mountain fastnesses.

On the other hand, the whole civilization of the non-Arab countries, or the largest part of it, was one of villages, cities, and districts. This applies to Spain, Syria, Egypt, the non-Arab 'Irâq, and similar countries. Only in the rarest cases do non-Arabs have a common descent which they guard carefully and of which they are proud when it is pure and close. It is mostly people of common descent

## THE CONDITIONS OCCURRING THERE

who settle in the desert, because close common descent constitutes closer and stronger bonds than any other element. Thus, the group feeling that goes with common descent likewise is (stronger). It draws those who have it to desert life and the avoidance of cities, which do away with bravery and make people dependent upon others. This should be understood and the proper conclusions be drawn from it.

### *8 The buildings and constructions in Islam are comparatively few considering Islam's power and as compared to preceding dynasties*

The reason for this is the very same thing that we mentioned concerning the Berbers. The Arabs, too, are quite firmly rooted in the desert and quite unfamiliar with the crafts. Furthermore, before Islam, the Arabs had been strangers to the realms of which they then took possession. When they came to rule them, there was not time enough for all the institutions of sedentary culture to develop fully. Moreover, the buildings of others which they found in existence were sufficient for them.

Furthermore, at the beginning, their religion forbade them to do any excessive building or to waste too much money on building activities for no purpose.

The influence of Islam and of scrupulousness in such matters then faded. Royal authority and luxury gained the upper hand. The Arabs subjected the Persian nation and took over their constructions and buildings. The tranquillity and luxury they now enjoyed led them to (building activities). But that also was the period close to the destruction of the dynasty. There was only a little time left for extensive building activities and town and city planning. This had not been the case with other nations. The Persians had had a period of thousands of years. The same was the case with the Copts, the Nabataeans, and the Romans. They had a great deal of time, and the crafts became firmly established among them. Thus, their buildings and monuments were more numerous and left a more lasting imprint (than the buildings of the Muslim Arabs).

### *9 Buildings erected by Arabs, with very few exceptions, quickly fall into ruin*

The reason for this is the Bedouin attitude and unfamiliarity with the crafts. The buildings (of the Arabs) are not solidly built.

There may be another aspect, more pertinent to the problem. That is, the Arabs pay little attention in town planning to making the right choice with regard to the site, the quality of the air, the

water, the fields, and the pastures. Differences with respect to these things make the difference between good and bad cities as regards natural civilization. The Arabs have no interest in these things. They only see to it that they have pastures for their camels. They do not care whether the water is good or bad, whether there is little or much of it. They do not ask about the suitability of the fields, the vegetable plots, and the air, because they move about the country and import their grain from remote places. In the desert the winds blow from all directions, and the fact that the Arabs travel about guarantees them winds of good quality. Winds turn bad only when people settle and stay in one place and there are many superfluities there.

One may cite the Arabs' planning of al-Kûfah, al-Başrah, and al-Qayrawân. All they looked for when planning them was pasturage for their camels and nearness to the desert and the caravan routes. Thus, (those cities) do not possess a natural site. They had no sources from which to feed their population later on. Such a source must exist if civilization is to continue.

#### *10 The beginnings of the ruin of cities*

When cities are first founded, they have few dwellings and few building materials, such as stones and quicklime, or the things that serve as ornamental coverings for walls, such as tiles, marble, mosaic, jet, (mother-of-pearl), and glass. Thus, at that time, the buildings are built in Bedouin (style), and the materials used for them are perishable.

Then, the civilization of a city grows and its inhabitants increase in number. Now the materials used for (building) increase, because of the increase in (available) labour and the increased number of craftsmen. (This process goes on) until (the city) reaches the limit in that respect.

The civilization of the city then recedes, and its inhabitants decrease in number. This entails a decrease in the crafts. As a result, good and solid building and the ornamentation of buildings are no longer practised. Then, the available labour decreases, because of the lack of inhabitants. Materials such as stones, marble, and other things are now being imported scarcely at all, and (building materials) become unavailable. The materials in the existing buildings are reused for building and refinishing. They are transferred from one construction to another, since most of the (large) constructions, castles, and mansions stand empty as the result of the great decrease in (population) as compared with former times. (The same materials) continue to be used for one castle after another and for



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one house after another, until most of them are completely used up. People then return to the Bedouin way of building. They use adobe instead of stone and omit all ornamentation. The architecture of the city reverts to that of villages and hamlets. The mark of the desert shows in it. (The city) then gradually decays and falls into complete ruin, if it is thus destined for it.

*11 With regard to the amount of prosperity and business activity in them, cities and towns differ in accordance with the different size of their population*

The reason for this is that the individual human being cannot by himself obtain all the necessities of life. All human beings must co-operate to that end in their civilization. But what is obtained through the co-operation of a group of human beings satisfies the need of a number many times greater than themselves. For instance, no one, by himself, can obtain the share of the wheat he needs for food. But when six or ten persons, including a smith and a carpenter to make the tools, and others who are in charge of the oxen, the ploughing of the soil, the harvesting of the ripe grain, and all the other agricultural activities, undertake to obtain their food and work toward that purpose either separately or collectively and thus obtain through their labour a certain amount of food, (that amount) will be food for a number of people many times their own. The combined labour produces more than the needs and necessities of the workers.

If the labour of the inhabitants of a town or city is distributed in accordance with the necessities and needs of those inhabitants, a minimum of that labour will suffice. The labour (available) is more than is needed. Consequently, it is spent to provide the conditions and customs of luxury and to satisfy the needs of the inhabitants of other cities. They import (the things they need) from (people who have a surplus) through exchange or purchase. Thus, the (people who have a surplus) get a good deal of wealth.

It will become clear in the fifth chapter, which deals with profit and sustenance, that profit is the value realized from labour. When there is more labour, the value realized from it increases among the (people). Thus, their profit of necessity increases. The prosperity and wealth they enjoy leads them to luxury and the things that go with it, such as splendid houses and clothes, fine vessels and utensils, and the use of servants and mounts. All these involve activities that require their price and skilful people must be chosen to do them and be in charge of them. As a consequence, industry and the crafts thrive. The income and the expenditure of the city increase. Affluence comes to those who work and produce these things by their labour.

When population increases, the available labour again increases. In turn, luxury again increases in correspondence with the increasing profit, and the customs and needs of luxury increase. Crafts are created to obtain (luxury products). The value realized from them increases, and, as a result, profits are again multiplied in the town. Production there is thriving even more than before. And so it goes with the second and third increases. All the additional labour serves luxury and wealth, in contrast to the original labour that served (the necessities of) life. The city that is superior to another in (population) becomes superior to it also by its increased profit and prosperity and by its customs of luxury which are not found in the other city. The more numerous and the more abundant the population in a city, the more luxurious is the life of its inhabitants. This applies equally to all levels of the population.

This may be exemplified, for instance, in the Maghrib, by comparing the situation of Fez with other Maghribi cities, such as Bougie, Tlemcen, and Ceuta. A wide difference, both in general and in detail, will be found to exist between (them and Fez). The situation of a judge in Fez is better than that of a judge in Tlemcen, and the same is the case with all other population groups. The same difference exists between Tlemcen on the one hand and Oran or Algiers on the other, and between Oran or Algiers and lesser cities, until one gets down to the hamlets where people have only the necessities of life through their labour, or not even enough of them.

The only reason for this is the difference in the labour (available) in (the different cities). They all are a sort of market for their labour (products), and the money spent in each market corresponds to (the volume of business done in it). The income of a judge in Fez suffices for his expenditure, and the same is the case with a judge in Tlemcen. Wherever income and expenditure (combined) are greater, conditions are better and more favourable. (Income and expenditure) are greater in Fez, since its production thrives because of luxury requirements there. Therefore, greater opulence exists in Fez. The same applies to Oran, Constantine, Algiers, and Biskra, until, as we have stated, one gets down to the cities whose labour does not pay for their necessities. They cannot be considered cities. They belong to the category of villages and hamlets. Therefore, the inhabitants of such small cities are found to be in a weak position and all equally poor and indigent, because their labour does not pay for their necessities and does not yield them a surplus which they can accumulate as profit. They have no increasing profit. Thus, with very few exceptions, they are poor and needy.

This can be exemplified by the condition of the poor and the beggars. A beggar in Fez is better off than a beggar in Tlemcen or

Oran. I observed beggars in Fez who, at the time of the sacrifices (of the *'Id* festival), begged for enough to buy their sacrificial animals. I saw them beg for many kinds of luxuries and delicacies such as meat, butter, cooked dishes, garments, and utensils, such as sieves and vessels. If a beggar were to ask for such things in Tlemcen or Oran, he would be considered with disapproval and treated harshly and chased away. At this time, we hear astonishing things about conditions in Cairo and Egypt as regards luxury and wealth in the customs of the inhabitants there. Many of the poor in the Maghrib even want to move to Egypt on account of that and because they hear that prosperity in Egypt is greater than anywhere else. The common people believe that this is so because property is abundant in those regions, and (their inhabitants) have much property hoarded, and are more charitable and bountiful than the inhabitants of any other city. However, this is not so, but, as one knows, the reason is that the population of Egypt and Cairo is larger than that of any other city one might think of.

Income and expenditure balance each other in every city. If the income is large, the expenditure is large, and vice versa. And if both income and expenditure are large, the inhabitants become more favourably situated, and the city grows.

No (phenomenon) of this sort one may hear about should be denied, but all these things should be understood to be the result of much civilization and the resulting great profits which facilitate spending and giving bounties to those who ask for them. This might be compared with the difference existing in one and the same town with regard to the houses dumb animals keep away from or frequent. The premises and courtyards of the houses of the prosperous and wealthy (inhabitants of the town), who set a good table and where grain and breadcrumbs lie scattered around, are frequented by swarms of ants and insects. There are many large rats in their cellars, and cats repair to them. Flocks of birds circle over them and eventually leave, satiated and full with food and drink. In the premises of the houses of the indigent and the poor who have little sustenance, no insect crawls about and no bird hovers in the air, and no rat or cat takes refuge in the cellars of such houses.

God's secret design in this respect should be scrutinized. One may compare the swarms of human beings with the swarms of dumb animals, and the crumbs from tables with the surplus of sustenance and luxury and the ease with which it can be given away by the people who have it, because as a rule they can do without it, since they have more of it. It should be known that favourable conditions and much prosperity in civilization are the results of its large size.

*12 Prices in towns*

All markets cater for the needs of people. Some of these needs are necessities, foodstuffs, for instance, such as wheat and barley; corresponding foods, such as beans, chick-peas, peas, and other edible grains; and wholesome foods such as onions, garlic, and the like. Other things are conveniences or luxuries, such as seasonings, fruits, clothes, utensils, mounts, all the crafts, and buildings. When a city is highly developed and has many inhabitants, the prices of necessary foodstuffs and corresponding items are low, and the prices for luxuries, such as seasonings, fruits, and the things that go with them, are high. When the inhabitants of a city are few and its civilization weak, the opposite is the case.

The reason for this is that the different kinds of grains belong among the necessary foodstuffs. The demand for them, therefore, is very large. Nobody would neglect (to provide for) his own food or that of his establishment for a month or a year. Thus, the procurement of (grain) concerns the entire population of a city, or the largest part of them, both in the city itself and in its environs. This is inevitable. Everybody who procures food for himself has a great surplus beyond his own and his family's needs. This surplus is able to satisfy the needs of many of the inhabitants of that particular city. No doubt, then, the inhabitants of a city have more food than they need. Consequently, the price of food is low, as a rule, except when misfortunes occur owing to celestial conditions that may affect the food supply in certain years. If people did not have to store food against such possible mishaps, it could be given away entirely gratis, since it would be plentiful because of the large population (of the city).

All other conveniences, such as seasonings, fruits, and whatever else belongs to them, are not matters of general concern. Their procurement does not engage the labour of all the inhabitants of a city or the largest part of them. Then, when a city has a highly developed, abundant civilization and is full of luxuries, there is a very large demand for those conveniences and for having as many of them as a person can expect in view of his situation. This results in a very great shortage of such things. Many will bid for them, but they will be in short supply. They will be needed for many purposes, and prosperous people used to luxuries will pay exorbitant prices for them, because they need them more than others. Thus, as one can see, prices come to be high.

Crafts and labour also are expensive in cities with an abundant civilization. There are three reasons for this. First, they are much needed, because of the place luxury occupies in the city on account

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of its large population. Second, industrial workers place a high value on their services and employment, (for they do not have to work) since live is easy in a town because of the abundance of food there. Third, the number of people with money to waste is great, and these people have many needs for which they have to employ the services of others and have to use many workers and their skills. Therefore, they pay more for (the services of) workers than their labour is (ordinarily considered) worth, because there is competition for (their services) and the wish to have exclusive use of them. Thus, workers, craftsmen, and professional people become arrogant, their labour becomes expensive, and the expenditure of the inhabitants of the city for these things increases.

Foodstuffs in small cities that have few inhabitants are few, because they have a small (supply) of labour and because, in view of the small size of the city, the people fear food shortages. Therefore, they hold on to (the food) that comes into their hands and store it. It thus becomes something precious to them, and those who want to buy it have to pay higher prices. They also have no demand for conveniences, because the inhabitants are few and their condition is weak. Little business is done by them, and the prices there, consequently, become particularly low.

Customs duties and other duties that are levied on (foods) in the markets and at the city gates on behalf of the ruler, and that tax collectors levy on profits from business transactions in their own interest, enter into the price of foodstuffs. Prices in cities, thus, are higher than prices in the desert, because customs duties and other duties and levies are few or nonexistent among (the Bedouins), while the opposite is the case in cities, especially in the later (years) of a dynasty.

The cost of agricultural labour also enters into the price of foodstuffs. It is reflected in these prices. This has happened in Spain at the present time. The Christians pushed the Muslims back to the sea coast and the rugged territory there, where (the soil) is poor for the cultivation of grain and little suited for (the growth of) vegetables. They themselves took possession of the fine soil and the good land. Thus, (the Muslims) had to treat the fields and tracts of land, in order to improve the plants and agriculture there. This treatment required expensive labour (products) and materials, such as fertilizer and other things that had to be procured. Thus, their agricultural activities required considerable expenditure. They calculated this expenditure in fixing their prices, and thus Spain has become an especially expensive region, ever since the Christians forced (the Muslims) to withdraw to the Muslim-held coastal regions, for the reason mentioned.

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When they hear about the high prices in (Spain), people think that they are caused by the small amount of foodstuffs and grain in the country. This is not so. As we know, the (people of Spain), of all civilized people, are the ones most devoted to agriculture. It rarely happens among them that a man in authority or an ordinary person has no tract of land or field, or does not do some farming. The only exceptions are a few craftsmen and professional people, or fighters in the holy war who are newcomers to the country. The ruler, therefore includes, in the allowances these men receive, rations consisting of the grain for food and for fodder.

The Berber countries are in the contrary position. Their fields are fine and their soil is good. Therefore, they did not have to procure anything (from outside) for their agriculture, which is widely and generally practised there. This is the reason for the cheapness of foodstuffs in their country.

### *13 Bedouins are unable to settle in a city with a large population*

The reason for this is that luxury increases in a city with a large population, as we have stated before. The needs of the inhabitants increase on account of the luxury. Because of the demand for (luxury articles), they become customary, and thus come to be necessities. In addition, all labour becomes costly in the city, and the conveniences become expensive, because there are many purposes for which they are in demand in view of the prevailing luxury and because the government makes levies on market and business transactions. This is reflected in the sales prices. Conveniences, foodstuffs, and labour thus become very expensive. As a result, the expenditure of the inhabitants increases tremendously in proportion to the population of the city. Under these circumstances, they need a great deal of money for expenditure, to procure the necessities of life for themselves and their families, as well as all their other requirements.

The income of the Bedouins, on the other hand, is not large, because they live where there is little demand for labour, and labour is the cause of profit. Bedouins, therefore, do not accumulate any profit or property. For this reason, it is difficult for them to settle in a big city, because conveniences there are expensive and things to buy are dear. In the desert, they can satisfy their needs with a minimum of labour, because they are little used to luxuries.

Every Bedouin who is attracted to city life quickly shows himself unable (to compete) and is disgraced. The only exceptions are such as have previously accumulated property and obtained more of it than they needed and therefore achieved the amount of tranquillity and luxury that is natural to civilized people. They, then, may move

to a city, and their condition, as regards customs and luxury, can blend with that of its inhabitants. This is the way the civilization of cities begins.

*14 Differences with regard to prosperity and poverty are the same in countries as in cities*

The condition of the inhabitants in regions that have an abundant civilization and contain numerous nations and many inhabitants is favourable. They have much property and many cities. Their dynasties and realms are large. The reason for all this is the great amount of available labour and the fact that it brings wealth. A great surplus of products remains after the necessities of the inhabitants have been satisfied. This provides for a population far beyond the size and extent of the actual one, and comes back to the people as profit that they can accumulate. Prosperity, thus, increases, and conditions become favourable. There are luxury and wealth. The tax revenues of the ruling dynasty increase on account of business prosperity. Its property increases, and its authority grows. It comes to use fortresses and castles, to found towns, and to construct cities.

This may be exemplified by the eastern regions, such as Egypt, Syria, India, China, and the whole northern region, beyond the Mediterranean. When their civilization increased, the property of the inhabitants increased, and their dynasties became great. Their towns and settlements became numerous, and their commerce and conditions improved.

At this time, we can observe the condition of the merchants of the Christian nations who come to the Muslims in the Maghrib. Their prosperity and affluence cannot be fully described because it is so great. The same applies to the merchants from the East and what we hear about their conditions, and even more so to the Far Eastern merchants from the countries of the non-Arab 'Irâq, India, and China. We hear remarkable stories reported by travellers about their wealth and prosperity. These stories are usually received with scepticism. The common people who hear them think that the prosperity of these peoples is the result of the greater amount of property owned by them, or of the existence of gold and silver mines in their country in larger number (than elsewhere), or of the fact that they, to the exclusion of others, appropriated the gold of the ancient nations. This is not so. The only gold mine about whose existence in these regions we have information, lies in the Sudan, which is nearer to the Maghrib (than to any other country). Furthermore, all the merchandise that is in their country is exported by them for commerce. If they possessed ready property in abundance,

they would not export their merchandise in search of money, and they would have altogether no need of other people's property.

Astrologers have noticed this and been amazed by the favourable conditions and abundance of property in the East. They came and said that the gifts of the stars and the shares (of good fortune) were larger in the nativities of the East than in those of the West. This is correct from the point of view of the correspondence between astrological judgments and terrestrial conditions. But astrologers give us only the astrological reason. They ought also to give us the terrestrial reason; this being the large extent and concentration of civilization in the eastern regions. A large civilization yields large profits because of the large amount of available labour, which is the cause of (profit). Therefore, the East enjoys more prosperity than all other regions. This is not exclusively the result of the influence of the stars. Our previous indications have made it clear that the influence of the stars cannot produce such a result all by itself. A correspondence between astrological judgments and terrestrial civilization and nature is something inevitable.

The relationship between prosperity and civilization may be exemplified by the regions of Ifriqiyah and Barca. When their population decreased and their civilization shrank, the condition of their inhabitants decayed. They became poor and indigent. The tax revenues decreased. The property of the dynasties that ruled there became small. . . .

*15 The accumulation of estates and farms in cities. Their uses and yields*

The accumulation of numerous estates and farms by the inhabitants of towns and cities does not come all at once. No one person would have enough wealth to acquire limitless (real) property. Even if prosperity were as great as possible, the acquisition and accumulation of (real) property would be gradual. It may come about through inheritance from one's forefathers and blood relatives, so that eventually the property of many comes to one person, who thus possesses much. Or it may be through fluctuation in the (real-estate) market. When one dynasty ends and another begins, the militia vanishes. There is no protection, and the city collapses and is ruined. At that time, real estate does not make a person happy, because it is of little use in the general upheaval. (Real-estate) values fall, and real estate can be acquired for low prices. It then passes through inheritance into the possession of someone else. By that time the city has regained its youthful vigour as the new dynasty flourishes, and conditions in it are in excellent shape. The result is that one may be happy with the possession of estates and farms, because they will then be very



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useful. Their value increases, and they assume an importance they did not have before. This is the meaning of 'fluctuation in (the real-estate market)'. The owner of (real estate) now turns out to be one of the wealthiest men in the city. That is not the result of his own effort and business activity, because he would be unable to achieve such a thing by himself.

Estates and farms do not yield their owner a sufficient income for his needs; the income from them will not pay for the customs of luxury and the things that go with it. As a rule, it serves only to help provide for the necessities of life.

We have heard from scholars that the motive in the acquisition of estates and farms is a concern for the helpless children a person may leave behind. Income from (real estate) serves to provide for their education, care, and upbringing, as long as they are unable to earn their own living. When they are able to earn their own living, they will do it by themselves. But there often are children who are unable to earn their own living because of some weakness of the body or some defect in the mind. Real property then becomes their support. This is the motive of persons who spend a great deal of money acquiring it.

(The motive is) not to accumulate capital through such acquisitions or to provide for extravagant living. This is achieved only by a few and is achieved only rarely through market fluctuations, through the acquisition of a great deal of (real estate), and through the upgrading of real estate as such and its value in a certain city. But then, if someone achieves it, the eyes of amirs and governors are directed to him. As a rule, they take it away, or they urge him to sell it to them. It spells harm and hardship to its owners.

### *16 Capitalists among the inhabitants of cities need rank and protection*

This is because a sedentary person who has a great deal of capital and has acquired a great number of estates and farms and become one of the wealthiest inhabitants of a particular city, who is looked upon as such and lives in great luxury and is accustomed to luxury, competes in this respect with amirs and rulers. The latter become jealous of him. The aggressiveness that is natural to human beings makes them cast their eyes upon his possessions. They envy him and try every possible trick to catch him in the net of a government decision and to find an obvious reason for punishing him, so as to confiscate his property. Government decisions are as a rule unjust, because pure justice is found only in the legal caliphate that lasted only a short while. Muḥammad said: 'The caliphate after me will last thirty years; then, it will revert to being tyrannic royal authority.'

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Therefore, the owner of property and conspicuous wealth in a given community needs a protective force to defend him, as well as a rank on which he may rely. (This purpose may be met by) a person related to the ruler, or a close friend of (the ruler), or a group feeling that the ruler will respect. In its shade, he may rest and live peacefully, safe from hostile attacks. If he does not have that, he will find himself robbed by all kinds of tricks and legal pretexts.

*17 Sedentary culture in cities comes from the dynasties. It is firmly rooted when the dynasty is continuous and firmly rooted*

The reason for this is that sedentary culture is a condition that is the result of custom and goes beyond the necessary conditions of civilization. How far beyond, differs in accordance with unlimited differences in the prosperity and the numerical strength or weakness of the nations. (Sedentary culture) occurs in nations when much diversity develops among its various subdivisions. It is thus on the same level as the crafts. Each particular kind of craft needs persons to be in charge of it and skilled in it. The more numerous the various subdivisions of a craft are, the larger the number of people who practise that craft. In the course of time, as each craft becomes more distinct, the craftsmen become experienced in their various crafts. Long periods of time and the repetition of similar (experiences) add to establishing the crafts and to causing them to be firmly rooted.

This happens mostly in cities, because cities have a highly developed civilization and their inhabitants are very prosperous, and the dynasty is at the root of it, because the dynasty collects the property of the subjects and spends it on its inner circle and on the men connected with it who are more influential by reason of their position than by reason of their property. The money comes from the subjects and is spent among the people of the dynasty and then among those inhabitants who are connected with them. They are the largest part (of the population). Their wealth, therefore, increases and their riches grow. The customs and ways of luxury multiply, and all the various kinds of crafts are firmly established among them. This is sedentary culture.

Therefore, cities in remote parts of the realm, even if they have a large population, are found to be predominantly Bedouin and remote from sedentary culture in all their ways. This is in contrast with towns that lie in the middle, the centre and the seat of the dynasty. The only reason is that the government is near them and pours its money into them, like the water (of a river) that makes green everything around it, and fertilizes the soil adjacent to it, while in the distance everything remains dry. For dynasty and government are

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the world's market-place. All kinds of merchandise are found in the market and near it. Far from the market, however, goods are altogether nonexistent. As a particular dynasty continues to rule and its rulers succeed each other in a particular city, sedentary culture becomes increasingly firmly established and rooted among the inhabitants of that city.

This may be exemplified by the Jews. Their rule in Syria lasted about 1,400 years. Sedentary culture thus became firmly established among them. They became skilled in the customary ways and means of making a living and in the manifold crafts belonging to it as regards food, clothing, and all the other parts of (domestic) economy, so much so that these things, as a rule, can still be learned from them to this day. Sedentary culture and its customs became firmly rooted in Syria through them and through the Roman dynasties which succeeded them for six hundred years. Thus, they had the most developed sedentary culture possible.

The same was the case with the Copts. Their political power lasted three thousand years. The customs of sedentary culture were thus firmly rooted in their country, Egypt. They were succeeded there by the Greeks and the Romans, and then by Islam, which abrogated everything. The customs of sedentary culture have, thus, always continued in Egypt.

The same was the case with the sedentary culture in the 'Irâq which, for thousands of years, was ruled continuously by the Nabataeans and the Persians, that is, the Chaldaeans, the Achaemenids, the Sassanians, and, after them, the Arabs. Down to this time there has never been upon the face of the earth a people with more sedentary culture than the inhabitants of Syria, the 'Irâq, and Egypt.

The customs of sedentary culture also became firmly rooted in Spain, which, for thousands of years, was ruled continuously by the great Gothic dynasty, later succeeded by the Umayyad realm. Both dynasties were great.

Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib had no great royal authority before Islam. The Romans and European Christians had crossed the sea to Ifriqiyah and had taken possession of the coast. The allegiance the Berbers who lived there paid them was not firmly grounded. They were there only temporarily. No dynasty was close to the people of the Maghrib. From time to time, they offered their obedience to the Goths across the sea. When the Arabs took possession of Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib, Arab rule lasted for only a short while at the beginning of Islam. At that time they were in the stage of Bedouin life. Those who stayed in Ifriqiyah and the Maghrib did not find there any old tradition of sedentary culture, because the original

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population had been Berbers immersed in Bedouin life. Very soon, the Berbers of Morocco revolted and never again later reverted to Arab rule. They were independent. If they rendered the oath of allegiance to Idrīs, his rule over them cannot be considered an Arab rule, because the Berbers were in charge of it, and there were not many Arabs in it. Ifrīqiyah remained in the possession of the Aghlabids and the Arabs who were with them. They had some sedentary culture as the result of the luxury and prosperity of the royal authority and the large civilization of al-Qayrawān that were theirs. The Kutāmah and then the Ṣinhājah after them inherited it from the Aghlabids. But all that was brief and lasted less than four hundred years. Their dynasty ended, and the stamp of sedentary culture changed, as it had not been firmly established. The Hilāl, who were Arab Bedouins, gained power over the country and ruined it.

Some obscure traces of sedentary culture have remained there down to the present time. They can be found in the (domestic) economy and the customs of these people. They are mixed with other things, but the person who comes from a sedentary environment and knows about (sedentary culture) can discern them. That is the case with most cities in Ifrīqiyah, but not in the Maghrib and the cities there, because since the time of the Aghlabids, the Fāṭimids, and the Ṣinhājah, the ruling dynasty in Ifrīqiyah has been firmly rooted there for a longer period (than the dynasties in the Maghrib).

The Maghrib, on the other hand, has received a good deal of sedentary culture from Spain since the dynasty of the Almohads, and the customs of sedentary culture became established there through the control that the ruling dynasty of the Maghrib exercised over Spain. A good many of the inhabitants of (Spain) went over to the Almohads in the Maghrib, voluntarily or involuntarily. One knows how far-flung the influence (of the Almohad dynasty) was. It possessed a good deal of firmly established sedentary culture, most of it due to the inhabitants of Spain. Later on, the inhabitants of Eastern Spain were expelled by the Christians and moved to Ifrīqiyah. In the cities there, they left traces of sedentary culture. Most of it is in Tunis, where it mixed with the sedentary culture of Egypt and Egyptian customs imported by travellers. Thus, the Maghrib and Ifrīqiyah had a good deal of sedentary culture. But emptiness took its place, and it disappeared. The Berbers in the Maghrib reverted to their Bedouin ways and Bedouin toughness. But, at any rate, the traces of sedentary culture are more numerous in Ifrīqiyah than in the Maghrib. The old dynasties had lasted longer in Ifrīqiyah than in the Maghrib, and the customs of the people of Ifrīqiyah had been close to the customs of the Egyptians because of the great amount of intercourse between them.

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This secret should be understood, because it is not generally known. It should be recognized that these are related matters: The strength and weakness of a dynasty, the numerical strength of a nation or race, the size of a town or city, and the amount of prosperity and wealth. This is because dynasty and royal authority constitute the form of the world and of civilization, which, in turn, together with the subjects, cities, and all other things, constitute the matter of dynasty and royal authority. The tax money reverts to the people. Their wealth, as a rule, comes from their business and commercial activities. If the ruler pours out gifts and money upon his people, it spreads among them and reverts to him, and again from him to them. It comes from them through taxation and the land tax, and reverts to them through gifts. The wealth of the subjects corresponds to the finances of the dynasty. The finances of the dynasty, in turn, correspond to the wealth and number of the subjects. The origin of it all is civilization and its extensiveness. If this is considered and examined in connection with the dynasties, it will be found to be so.

*18 Sedentary culture is the goal of civilization. It means the end of its life span and brings about its corruption*

We have explained before that royal authority and the foundation of dynasties are the goal of group feeling, that sedentary culture is the goal of Bedouin life, and that any civilization, be it a Bedouin civilization or sedentary culture, whether it concerns ruler or commoner, has a physical life, just as any individual has a physical life.

Reason and tradition make it clear that forty years mean the end of the increase of an individual's powers and growth. When a man has reached the age of forty, nature stops growing for a while, then starts to decline. It should be known that the same is the case with sedentary culture in civilization, because there is a limit that cannot be overstepped. When luxury and prosperity come to civilized people, it naturally causes them to follow the ways of sedentary culture and adopt its customs. As one knows, sedentary culture is the adoption of diversified luxuries, the cultivation of the things that go with them, and addiction to the crafts that give elegance to all refinements, such as the crafts of cooking, dressmaking, building, and (making) carpets, vessels, and all other parts of (domestic) economy. For the elegant execution of all these things, there exist many crafts not needed in desert life with its lack of elegance. When elegance in (domestic) economy has reached the limit, it is followed by subservience to desires. From all these customs, the human soul receives a multiple stamp that undermines its religion and worldly well-being.

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It cannot preserve its religion, because it has now been firmly stamped by customs that are difficult to discard. (It cannot preserve) its worldly (well-being), because the customs (of luxury) demand a great many things and (entail) many requirements for which (a man's) income is not sufficient.

This is explained by the fact that the expenditure of the inhabitants of a city mounts with the diversification of sedentary culture. Sedentary culture differs according to the differences in civilization. When a civilization grows, sedentary culture becomes more perfect. We have stated before that a city with a large population is characterized by high prices in business and high prices for its needs. These are then raised still higher through customs duties; for sedentary culture reaches perfection at the time when the dynasty has reached its greatest flourishing, and that is the time when the dynasty levies customs duties because then it has large expenditure. The customs duties raise the sale prices, because small businessmen and merchants include all their expenses, even their personal requirements, in the price of their stock and merchandise. Thus, customs duties enter into the sale price. The expenditure of sedentary people, therefore, grows and is no longer reasonable but extravagant. The people cannot escape this because they are dominated by and subservient to their customs. All their profits go into their expenditure. One person after another becomes reduced in circumstances and indigent. Poverty takes hold of them. Few persons bid for the available goods. Business decreases, and the situation of the town deteriorates.

All this is caused by excessive sedentary culture and luxury. They corrupt the city generally in respect to business and civilization. Corruption of the individual inhabitants is the result of painful and trying efforts to satisfy the needs caused by their (luxury) customs; (the result) of the bad qualities they have acquired in the process of satisfying (those needs); and of the damage the soul suffers after it has obtained them. Immorality, wrongdoing, insincerity, and trickery, for the purposes of making a living in a proper or an improper manner, increase among them. The soul comes to think about (making a living), to study it, and to use all possible trickery for the purpose. People are now devoted to lying, gambling, cheating, fraud, theft, perjury, and usury. Because of the many desires and pleasures resulting from luxury, they are found to know everything about the ways and means of immorality, they talk openly about it and its causes, and give up all restraint in discussing it, even among relatives and close female relations, where the Bedouin attitude requires modesty (and avoidance of) obscenities. They also know everything about fraud and deceit, which they employ to defend themselves against the possible use of force against them and against the

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punishment expected for their evil deeds. Eventually, this becomes a custom and trait of character with most of them, except those whom God protects.

The city, then, teems with low people of blameworthy character. They encounter competition from many members of the younger generation of the dynasty, whose education has been neglected and whom the dynasty has neglected to accept. They, therefore, adopt the qualities of their environment and company, even though they may be people of noble descent and ancestry. Men are human beings and as such resemble one another. They differ in merit and are distinguished by their character, by their acquisition of virtues and avoidance of vices. The person who is strongly coloured by any kind of vice and whose character is corrupted, is not helped by his good descent and fine origin. Thus, one finds that many descendants of great families, men of a highly esteemed origin, members of the dynasty, get into deep water and adopt low occupations in order to make a living, because their character is corrupt and they are coloured by wrongdoing and insincerity. If this (situation) spreads in a town or nation, God permits it to be ruined and destroyed. This is the meaning of the word of God: 'When we want to destroy a village, we order those of its inhabitants who live in luxury to act wickedly therein. Thus, the word becomes true for it, and we do destroy it.'<sup>1</sup>

A possible explanation of this (situation) is that the profits (the people) make do not pay for their needs, because of the great number of (luxury) customs and the desire of the soul to satisfy them. Thus, the affairs of the people are disordered, and if the affairs of individuals one by one deteriorate, the town becomes disorganized and falls into ruin.

This is the meaning of the statement by certain experts, that if orange trees are much grown in a town, the town invites its own ruin. Many common people avoided the growing of orange trees around their houses on account of this ominous statement. But this is not the meaning intended. What is meant is that gardens and irrigation are the results of sedentary culture. Orange trees, lime trees, cypresses, and similar plants having no edible fruits<sup>2</sup> and being of no use, are the ultimate in sedentary culture, since they are planted in gardens only for the sake of their appearance, and they are planted only after the ways of luxury have become diversified. This is the stage in which one must fear the destruction and ruin of a city, as we have

<sup>1</sup> Qur'ân 17. 16 (17).

<sup>2</sup> This is what Ibn Khaldûn says, but since the various citrus plants can be used for some kind of nourishment, he is apparently thinking of their seeming lack of basic nutritive qualities.

stated. The same has been said with regard to oleander, which is in the same category. Its only purpose is to give colour to gardens with its red and white flowers. That is a luxury.

Among the things that corrupt sedentary culture, there is the disposition toward pleasures and indulgence in them, because of the great luxury (that prevails). It leads to diversification of the desires of the belly for pleasurable food and drink. This is followed by diversification of the pleasures of sex through various ways of sexual intercourse, such as adultery and homosexuality. This leads to destruction of the species. It may come about indirectly, through the confusion concerning one's descent caused by adultery. Nobody knows his own son, since he is illegitimate and since the sperm (of different men) got mixed up in the womb. The natural compassion a man feels for his children and his feeling of responsibility for them is lost. Thus, they perish, and this leads to the end of the species. Or, the destruction of the species may come about directly, as is the case with homosexuality, which leads directly to the nonexistence of offspring. It contributes more to the destruction of the species (than adultery), since it leads to no human beings being brought into existence, while adultery only leads to the (social) nonexistence of those who are in existence. Therefore, the school of Mâlik is more explicit and correct with regard to homosexuality than the other schools. This shows that it understands the intentions of the religious law and their bearing upon the (public) interest better (than the other legal schools).

This should be understood. It shows that the goal of civilization is sedentary culture and luxury. When civilization reaches that goal, it turns toward corruption and starts being senile, as happens in the natural life of living beings. Indeed, we may say that the qualities of character resulting from sedentary culture and luxury are identical with corruption. Man is a man only inasmuch as he is able to procure for himself useful things and to repel harmful things, and inasmuch as his character is suited to making efforts to this effect. The sedentary person cannot take care of his needs personally. He may be too weak, because of the tranquillity he enjoys. Or he may be too proud, because he was brought up in prosperity and luxury. Both things are blameworthy. He also is not able to repel harmful things, because he has no courage as the result of luxury and his upbringing under the impact of education and instruction. He thus becomes dependent upon a protective force to defend him.

He then usually becomes corrupt with regard to his religion, also. The (luxury) customs and his subservience to them have corrupted him, and his soul has been stamped by habits of luxury, as we have stated. There are only very rare exceptions. When the strength of a



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man and then his character and religion are corrupted, his humanity is corrupted, and he becomes, in effect, transformed into an animal.

It is in this sense that those government soldiers who are close to Bedouin life and toughness are more useful than those who have grown up in a sedentary culture and have adopted its character traits. This can be found in every dynasty. It has thus become clear that the stage of sedentary culture is the stopping point in the life of civilization and dynasties.

### *19 Cities that are the seats of royal authority fall into ruin when the ruling dynasty crumbles and falls into ruin*

We have found out with regard to civilization that, when a dynasty disintegrates and crumbles, the civilization of the city that is the seat of the ruler also crumbles and in this process often suffers complete ruin. There hardly ever is any delay. The reasons for it are several:

First: At the beginning of the dynasty, its necessary Bedouin outlook requires it not to take away people's property and to eschew (too great) cleverness. This causes the taxes and imposts, which provide the dynasty with its substance, to be kept low. The expenditure is small, and there is little luxury. When a city that was a royal capital comes into the possession of a new dynasty that knows little of luxury, luxury decreases among the inhabitants of that city controlled by it, because the subjects follow the dynasty. They revert to the character of the dynasty, either voluntarily, because it is human nature to follow the tradition of their masters, or involuntarily, because the character of the dynasty calls for abstention from luxury in all situations and allows little profit, which is what constitutes the material for (the formation of luxury) customs. As a result, the sedentary culture of the city decreases, and many luxury customs disappear from it. That is what we mean when we speak about the ruin of a city.

Second: Royal authority and power are acquired by a dynasty only through superiority, which comes only after hostilities and wars. Hostility implies incompatibility between the people of two dynasties and mutual disapproval with regard to (luxury) customs and conditions. The victory of one of the two rivals causes the disappearance of the other. Thus, the conditions of the previous dynasty, especially the conditions of luxury, are disapproved of and considered detestable and evil by the people of the new dynasty. They disappear among them, because the (new) dynasty disapproves of them. Eventually, however, new luxury customs gradually originate among them. They produce a new sedentary culture. The period in between

sees a dwindling and decrease of the first sedentary culture. This is what is meant by disintegration of civilization in a city.

Third: Each nation must have a home, where it grows up and from which the realm takes its origin. When (its members) take possession of another home, (the latter) is ranked second to the first (home), and its cities are ranked second to those of the first. When the realm expands and its influence grows, it is inevitable that the seat of government be amidst the provinces belonging to the dynasty, because it is a sort of centre for the whole area. Thus, the (new seat of government) is remote from the site of the former seat of government. The hearts of the people are attracted to the (new seat of government), because the dynasty and government (are centred there). The population moves there and disappears slowly from the city that was the former seat of government. Sedentary culture depends upon an abundant population. (With the transfer of the population), the sedentary and urban culture (of the former seat of government) decreases. This is what is meant by its disintegration.

This happened to the Saljûqs when they moved their seat of government from Baghdad to Işfahân; to the Arabs before them when they moved from al-Madâ'in to al-Kûfah and al-Basrah; to the 'Abbâsids when they moved from Damascus to Baghdad; and to the Merinids in the Maghrib when they moved from Marrakech to Fez. In general, when a dynasty chooses a city for its seat of government, it causes disintegration of the civilization in the former seat of government.

Fourth: When the new dynasty achieves superiority over the previous dynasty, it must attempt to transfer the people and partisans of the previous dynasty to another region where it can be sure that it will not be secretly attacked by them. Most of the inhabitants of a capital city are partisans of the (ruling) dynasty. They belong either to the militia who settled there at the beginning of the dynasty, or they are the dignitaries of the city. All their various classes and types have, as a rule, some contact with the dynasty. Most of them have grown up in the dynasty and are partisans of it. Even though they may not be (connected with the dynasty) through power and group feelings, they are (connected with it) through inclination, love, and faith. It is the nature of a new dynasty to wipe out all traces of the previous dynasty. Therefore, it transfers (the population) from the capital city (of the old dynasty) to its own home, which is firmly in its possession. Some are brought there as exiles and prisoners, others as honoured and well-treated guests, so that no antagonism can arise. Eventually, the capital city (of the previous dynasty) holds only salesmen, itinerant farm workers, hoodlums, and the great mass of common people. The place of the

(transferred population) is taken by the militia and partisans of (the new dynasty). They will be sufficient to fill the city. When the various classes of dignitaries have left the city, its inhabitants decrease. This is what is meant by disintegration of civilization in a (capital city).

Then, (the former capital city) must produce a new civilization under the shadow of the new dynasty. Another sedentary culture corresponding to the importance of the dynasty arises in it. This may be compared to a person who has a house the interior of which is dilapidated. Most of the installations and conveniences of the rooms do not agree with his plans. He has the power to change these installations and to rebuild them according to his wishes and plans. Thus, he will tear down the house and build it up again. Much the same sort of thing happens in cities that once were seats of government. We have personally seen it and know it.

In sum, the primary natural reason for this (situation) is the fact that dynasty and royal authority have the same relationship to civilization as form has to matter. (The form) is the shape that preserves the existence of (matter) through the kind (of phenomenon) it represents. It has been established in philosophy that the one cannot be separated from the other. One cannot imagine a dynasty without civilization, while a civilization without dynasty and royal authority is impossible, because human beings must by nature cooperate, and that calls for a restraining influence. Political leadership, based either on religious or royal authority, is inevitable. This is what is meant by dynasty. Since the two cannot be separated, the disintegration of one of them must influence the other, just as its nonexistence would entail the nonexistence of the other.

A major disintegration results only from the disintegration of the entire dynasty. This happened to the dynasties of the Persians, the Byzantines, and the Arabs in general as well as the Umayyads and the 'Abbāsids. An individual reign, such as those of Anōsharwān, Heraclius, 'Abd-al-Malik b. Marwān, or ar-Rashīd, cannot exercise a sweeping disintegrating influence. Individuals follow upon each other and take over the (existing) civilization. They preserve its existence and duration, and they are very similar to each other. The real dynasty, the one that acts upon the matter of civilization, belongs to group feeling and power. These remain with the individual members of the dynasty. But when the group feeling is lost and replaced by another group feeling, a great disintegration sets in.

*20 Certain cities have crafts that others lack*

This is because it is clear that the activities of the inhabitants of a city necessitate each other, since mutual co-operation is innate in

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civilization. The necessary activities are restricted to certain inhabitants of the city. They are in charge of them and become experts in the crafts belonging to them. These activities become their particular job. They make their living through them and derive their sustenance from them, because these are matters of general concern in the city and generally needed. On the other hand, activities not required in a city are not regarded, since there is no profit in them for those who practise them.

The activities required for the necessities of life, such as those of tailors, smiths, carpenters, and similar occupations, exist in every city. But activities required for luxury customs and conditions exist only in cities of a highly developed culture, that have taken to luxury customs and sedentary culture. Among such activities are those of glassblowers, goldsmiths, perfumers, cooks, coppersmiths, biscuit bakers, weavers of brocade, and the like. (These activities) exist in different degrees. In accordance with increase in the customs of sedentary culture and the requirements of luxury conditions, there originate crafts for this kind (of luxury requirements). Such crafts will exist in a particular city but not in others.

(Public) baths fall into this category. They exist only in densely settled cities of a highly developed civilization as a kind of indulgence resulting from luxury and wealth. Therefore, public baths do not exist in medium-sized towns. It is true that some rulers and chiefs desire (to have baths in their medium-sized cities). They construct them and put them into operation. However, since there is no demand for them from the mass of the people, they are soon neglected and fall into ruin. Those in charge of them speedily leave them, because they have little profit and income from them.

### *21 The existence of group feeling in cities and the superiority of some of the inhabitants over others*

It is clear that it is in the nature of human beings to enter into close contact and to associate with each other, even though they may not have a common descent. However, such association is weaker than one based upon common descent, and the resulting group feeling is proportionately weaker too. Many inhabitants of cities come into close contact through intermarriage. This draws them together and, eventually, they constitute individual related groups. The same friendship or hostility that is found among tribes and families, is found among them, and they split into parties and groups.

When senility befalls a dynasty and its shadow recedes from the remote regions, the inhabitants of the cities of that dynasty have to take care of their own affairs and to look after the protection of their

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own place. Souls, by their very nature, are prone to seek superiority and domination. Because the air is clear of forceful government and dynasty, the elders desire to gain complete control. Everybody vies with everybody else. They try to have followers, such as clients, partisans, and allies, join them. They spend whatever they possess on the rabble and the mob. Everybody forms a group with his fellows, and one of them achieves superiority. He then turns against his equals, and persecutes them with assassination or exile. Eventually, he takes away all executive power from them and renders them innocuous. He obtains sole control of the entire city. He then comes to believe he has created a realm that he may leave to his descendants, but the same symptoms of power and senility to be found in a large realm are also to be found in his smaller realm.

Some of these people occasionally aspire to the ways of the great rulers who are masters of tribes and families and group feelings, who go into combat and wage wars, and who control large regions and provinces. They adopt the custom of sitting upon a throne. They use an 'outfit', organize cavalcades for travelling about the country, use seal rings, are greeted (ceremoniously), and are addressed as Sire, which is ridiculous in the eyes of all who can observe the situation for themselves. They adopt royal emblems to which they are not entitled. They were pushed into following such (improper aspirations) only by the dwindling influence of the (ruling) dynasty and the close relationships they had established and that eventually resulted in group feeling. Some refrained from (improper aspirations) and lived simply, because they did not want to make themselves the butt of jokes and ridicule.

This happened in our own time in the later (years) of the Hafsîd dynasty in Ifrîqiyah to inhabitants of places in the Jarîd, including Tripoli, Gabès, Tozeur, Nafta, Gafsa, Biskra and the Zâb, and adjacent regions. They acquired such aspirations when the shadow of the dynasty had been receding from them for some decades. They seized power in their respective cities and took control of the judicial and tax administration away from the dynasty. They paid (the ruling dynasty) some allegiance and treated it with some politeness, kindness, and submissiveness. However, they did not mean it. They passed their position on to their descendants, who (are living) at this time. Among their successors, there originated that cruelty and tyranny which is common among the descendants and successors of rulers. They thought that they ranked with (true) rulers, despite the fact that they had only recently been common people.

As a rule, such leadership goes to members of great and noble houses who are eligible for the positions of elders and leaders in a city. Sometimes, it goes to some person from the lowest class of

people. He obtains group feeling and close contact with the mob for reasons that fate produces for him. He, then, achieves superiority over the elders and people of the higher class when they have lost their own group support.

## 22 *The dialects of the urban population*

The dialects of the urban population follow the language of the nation or race that has control of (the cities) or has founded them. Therefore, the dialects spoken in all Muslim cities in the East and the West at this time are Arabic, even though the habit of the classical Arabic language has become corrupted and its vowel endings (*i'ráb*) have changed. The reason for this is the fact that the Muslim dynasty gained power over foreign nations. Religion and religious organization constitute the form for existence and royal authority, which together constitute the matter for religion. Form is prior to matter. Religion is derived from the religious law, which is in Arabic, because the Prophet was an Arab. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid using any language but Arabic in all the provinces of Islam.

This may be exemplified by 'Umar's prohibition against using the idiom native among the non-Arabs. Since Islam avoided the non-Arab dialects, and the language of the supporters of the Muslim dynasty was Arabic, those dialects were avoided altogether in all its provinces, because people follow the government and adopt its ways. Use of the Arabic language became a symbol of Islam and of obedience to the Arabs. The (foreign) nations avoided using their own dialects and languages in all the cities and provinces, and the Arabic language became their language. Eventually, it became firmly rooted as the (spoken) language in all their cities and towns. The non-Arab languages came to seem imported and foreign there. The Arabic language became corrupt through contact with (foreign languages) in some of its rules and through changes of the word endings, even though it remained unchanged semantically. (This type of Arabic) was called 'the sedentary language' (and was used) in all the cities of Islam.

Furthermore, most of the inhabitants of the cities of Islam at this time are descendants of the Arabs who were in possession of these cities and perished in their luxury. They outnumbered the non-Arabs who lived there and inherited their land and country. Now, languages are inherited. Thus, the language spoken by the descendants has remained close to that of their forefathers, even though its rules have gradually become corrupted by contact with non-Arabs. It was called 'sedentary' with reference to the inhabitants of settled

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regions and cities, in contrast to the language of the desert Arabs, which is more deeply rooted in Arabism.

When non-Arabs became the rulers and obtained royal authority and control over the whole Muslim realm, the Arabic language suffered corruption. It would almost have disappeared, if the concern of Muslims with the Qur'ân and the Sunnah, which preserve Islam, had not also preserved the Arabic language. This (concern) became an element in favour of the persistence of the sedentary dialect used in the cities. But when the Tatars and Mongols, who were not Muslims, became the rulers in the East, this element in favour of the Arabic language disappeared, and the Arabic language was absolutely doomed. No trace of it has remained in these Muslim provinces: the non-Arab 'Irâq, Khurâsân, Southern Persia, eastern and western India, Transoxania, the northern countries, and Anatolia. The Arabic style of poetry and speech has disappeared, save for a (remnant). Instruction in (what little Arabic is known) is a technical matter using rules learned from the sciences of the Arabs and through memorizing their speech. (It is restricted) to those persons whom God has equipped for it. The sedentary Arabic dialect has largely remained in Egypt, Syria, Spain, and the Maghrib, because Islam still remains and requires it. Therefore, it has been preserved to some degree. But in the provinces of the non-Arab 'Irâq and beyond to the East, no trace or source of (the Arabic language) has remained. Even scientific books have come to be written in the Persian language, which is also used for teaching Arabic in class.

