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EPISODES OF THE LAST RESTORATION OF THE KA^ĀBAH

(H. 1039-40/1629-30)

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A millenary had nearly elapsed, since the reconstructions (1) of the holiest temple of Islam, in H. 65/684 by Abdullah b. Zubayr and in H. 74/693 by Al-Hadjdjâj, when in 1020/1611, the Kabah appeared to be again in need of restoration (2). This was a matter of such gravity for the Islamic world that the Turkish Sultan-Caliph Ahmed I (H. 1012-26/1603-17) convoked a shûrâ (council) of theologians. The Shûrâ decided that no restoration could be attempted before some part of the Ka^Ābah had actually collapsed. A similar interpretation of the Sharî'ah (the Islamic law) had earlier been practised by the Turks, in the case of the peripheric monuments of the Ka^Ābah mosque and of the Mosque of the Prophet, in Madînah (3). The demolition and reconstruction of minarets, of buildings in the courtyards of the sanctuaries and of surrounding walls had only been done, when the danger of downfall seemed imminent. Furthermore, the rules established by Selîm I (H.918-26/1512-19), the first Turkish sultan-caliph, required, for any major change in Mecca, fatwâs (decrees, according to Islamic jurisdiction), not only from the Shaykh'ul-Islâm, the head Islamic scholar residing in Istanbul, but also from the Meccan imâms, the leaders of the Shafîî, Hanbalî, Mâlikî, Hanafî, congregations (4), as well as the idjmâ (consensus) of the citizens of Mecca. Confronted with the negative decision of the Shûrâ, Ahmed I resorted to palliatives, to preserve the Ka^Ābah (5). The engineers sent from Istanbul substituted new pillars to demaged ones and the walls of the Ka^Ābah were supported by iron belts which had been plated with silver and gold.

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(1) F. Wüstenfeld, *Akhbar Makkat'ul-musharrafa*, (Beyruth, 1964), vol. IV, pp. 133-36, 145-46.

(2) Eyyûb Sabrî, *Mir'at-i Mekke (Istanbul, H.1301)*, 502-606.

(2) Eyyûb Sabrî, *Mir'at-i Medde (Istanbul, H.1301)*, 502-606.

(3) Qutbuddîn'un-Nahravâlî, *Kitâb'ul-Fclâm biA^Ālâm i-But'il-Harâm* (Beyruth, 1964), F. wüstenfeld ed., repeatedly gives this information. See also Sabrî, op. cit. in note 2 supra.

(4) Nahravâlî, op.cit., note 3 sup., 420.

(5) See note 2 sup.

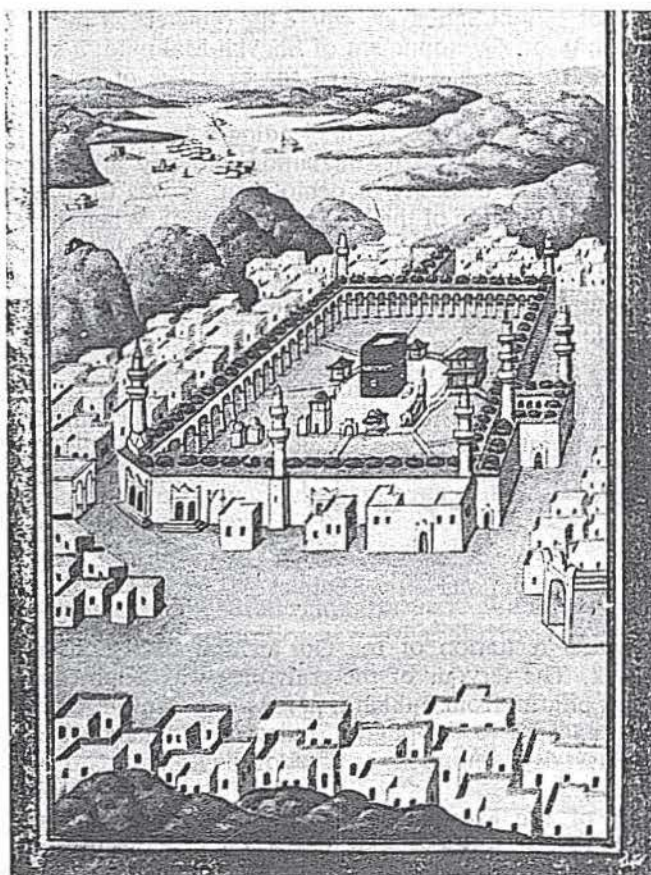
It was however the destiny of the Ottomans to achieve the historical restoration. A flood which occurred on the 19th of Sha'bân, in the year H.1039/1629, filled with water the courtyard of the Mosque and caused the fall of two of the rukns (corner-stones), the Damascene and the 'Irâqî, respectively situated on the west and north (6). The procedure of restoration could then be started. The reigning member of the dynasty of Sharîfs (descendants of the Prophet, by his daughter Fâtimah), the Amîr Mas'ûb.İdrîs wrote to Mustafa Agha, the Ottoman sandjaq-begî (administrative dignitary) residing from Mehmed Pasha, governor of Egypt, the urgent expedition of material, immediately needed, to prevent the fall of the crumbling walls of the Ka'bah. In the meantime, the engineer in charge of Meccan monuments 'Alî Shemsuddîn Efendi, hurried to strengthen with buttresses and timber-work, the shaken sanctuary. The Ka'bah, was then temporarily covered with a green cloth. Ahead of the repair material, Mehmed Pasha had sent from Cairo a superintendent, the Circassain Ridvân Agha, a member of the Sultan's palace-staff, in Istanbul, who had then been in Egypt. Ridvân arrived in Shawwâl 1039 and made at once preparations for the approaching Hadj (pilgrimage) season. A first concern was to clear from dregs the pipes which provide the Meccan fountains with drinking water. A momentary bitter taste of the Zamzam water had gradually disappeared from itself. The courtyard of the Ka'bah was then cleaned. The highest religious and administrative dignitaries were gathered, to collect the stones fallen from the north-western wall of the Temple. These were put to custody, under a tent, adjoining the *madrassa* of Sultan Süleymân (built in H. 974/1566), on the north western periphery of the Ka'bah's courtyard (on the left proper, in the illustration 1). The Sharîf of Mecca had made a list of the treasury, including the 51 candelabras which illuminated the path of circumambulation around the Ka'bah (there were 18 golden and 31 silver lamps). The treasury was entrusted to Ridvân Agha's care. The remnants of the flood, the parts of demolished periphiric edifices and heaps of hardened alluvium filled the Mosque's courtyard. To carry these away, it became unavoidable to use camel and horse-carts, the penetration of which, into the Mosque's courtyard, caused indignation among the Meccan population. However the accomplishment of the pilgrimage in the year H.1039 and the continuity of the *adhân* (call to the five ritual prayers) from the minarets of the Ka'bah, had been assured by Ridvân Agha's efficiency.

Ridvân had also sent to Mehmed Pasha a list of the material necessary for the restoration and these were shipped on galleys, under the supervision of Suverydân-zâde Mehmed Beg, naval commander of Suez. A first shipment, under the care of Mehmed Tchavush, arrived to Jeddah in Muharram H. 1040. Amongst other ships, one laden with marble, had been wrecked, in a storm. The report of the engineers, both local and sent by Mehmed Pasha stated that ka'ba's vacillating walls should be rebuilt and that the damaged stones must be replaced. The majority of the Meccan theologians, the Shaykh'ul-Islam Khâlid b. Ahmad'ul-Mâlikî, the Shafi'î *mufî* 'Abd'ul-'Azîz Zamzamî, the Hanafî *mufî* Ahmed b. Mehmed Aq Shamsuddîn agreed to the restoration (the Hanafî *mustî* may have been a descendant of the celebrated Aq Shemsuddîn -died in H.864/1459-, Mehmed II's monitor, who advised the Sultan to attempt the conquest of Byzantium and discovered, under its walls, the tomb of Khâlid Abû Ayyûb'ul-Ansarî, fallen there at the Islamic siege of the City. in H.50/670). Notwithstanding the assent of the majority of Meccan

(6) Ibid.

theologians, one of these, the Shafi'i Muhammad-'Ali b. 'Alân, objected to the restoration and succeeded, in winning to his opinion, a large group of Meccan citizens. The objectors considered the engineer's suggestions as impious and argued that no decision could be taken, before the receipt of a *fatwâ* from the Shaykh'ul-Islâm in Istanbul. Ridvân Agha summoned again to the Ka'bah an assembly of theologians who were able to persuade the Meccans that the restoration was unavoidable. Wooden screens were erected, behind which the demolition was to start, in Rabi'ul-akhar 1040.

Before the screen was even completed, a superintendent, accompanied by engineers and architects, sent from Istanbul, reached Mecca. The Ottoman government had confided an undertaking, with such momentous religious significance, to the theologian Seyyid Mehmed Efendi Anqaravî (a native of Ankara), simultaneously appointed judge of Mecca. Anqaravî Efendi was assisted



by an Egyptian theologian and by Turkish and other Muslim engineers and architects. Ridvân Agha was left in charge of administration, through the grant of the rank of *sandjaq-beği* of Jeddah. He pleaded that he preferred the then vacant post of Shykh'ul-Haram (custodian of the Prophet's Mosque) in Madînah and was given this dignity, in addition (to be able to remain in the Prophet's City, Ridvân Agha was later to decline a promotion which involved a return to Istanbul). The Sultan-Caliph's edict was read in public to the Meccan population, while the holders of offices put on the honorific robes, presented to the Sharîf, on this occasion, was taken to the palace by his deputy and brother. The Sharîf was ailing and died a few days later, to the consternation of the Meccans, who considered this event as a disapprobation, by Providence, of the projected restoration. After the funeral ceremony, at the Mu'allâ cemetery situated at the upper-town, Ridvân Agha, fearing disorders, summoned the heir-apparent, the Sharîf 'Abdullah, to « don the golden robe of the Amîrs of the Hdjâz ».

In Djuḡda'l-ulâ 1040, the work at last began. The Meccan dignitaries carried back to place the stones fallen from the Ka'bah, as well as these newly-cut, which were to be substituted to damaged older stones. The new stones had been cut from the rocks of Mount Shubayka, where the cemetery of the lower town was situated, in the vicinity of the monument of Shaykh Mahmûd, a son of the legendary king of khorâsân, who had preferred the existence of an errant mystic to princely rank, Ibrâhîm Adham (died in H.167/783). The objector theologian Mohammad-'Alî b. 'Alân appeared again, leading a large crowd of protestants. The reigning Sharîf, 'Alî b. Barakât, thereupon gathered all religious and civil dignitaries, to ascertain the necessity of demolition. It was then decided to have recourse to a public consultation of the Meccans (*idjmaâ'*). When these also came to the conclusion that demolition was unavoidable, the work began, behind double screens. The demolition stopped at the level of the huge greenish stones which constituted the foundation of the Ka'bah. The demolished parts, even the earth and dust, were preserved in the treasury, as relics.

On the 19th Djuḡda'l-ukhra 1040, the reconstruction of the twentyfive rows of stones, forming the Ka'bah, was begun, following scrupulously the ancient alinement. A commemorative verse was composed, which according to the numeral value attributed to Arabic letters by the Abdjad cryptography, disclosed the date of reconstruction : « رفع الله قواعد البيت »

(May God elevate the foundations of the Temple)

The uninterrupted recitation of the Qor'ân and of the Sûra Al-Fath, accompanied the work. The fervour of the craftsmen was heightened through the vision, seen by a sick pilgrim from Bukhârâ, in far-away Central Asia. The Prophet, clad in white had appeared to the pilgrim and stated that he was to be present, from the first to the last day, among the builders of the Ka'bah.

The courtyard of the Mosque was filled with stones and the suspicious Meccans had begun to whisper that Ridvân had sought an impious gain, by ordering an unnecessary amount of material. The unhappy Ridvân circumambulated every night the Ka'bah, praying that no stone should be left unused. His prayer was hearkened and not a superfluous stone remained, after completion.

While the reconstruction of the Ka'bah went on, the peripheric monuments were also repaired. The marbles of the Ka'bah's interior, of the *matâf* (the circular path of circumambulation), the low wall of the Hatîm, the spot where Hagar was said to be buried, (seen on the left-proper of the Ka'bah, in the illustration), were among repaired parts. The wooden pillars were varnished with protective saffron paint and Arabic gum. The kioks and loggias, in the Mosqu's courtyard, raised above the rock which was the station of Abraham, the Zamzam-well, the treasury, the seats of the *imâms* of the four sects were rebuilt. The numerous illustrations in Turkish manuscripts of the *Dalâ'il'ul-khayrât* variety, which served as guide to pilgrims, show the architecture of these secondary edifices, before and after the restoration. During the reconstructions of 1039-40, some kioks and loggias acquired a new aspect, they were roofed with lead, supported by beams painted in laquer red, curving upwards at corners, in a style which Turkish architecture had inherited from its eastern Asian past (ill.I). (7) All minarets, columns and gates were cared for and canals were dugged along the outer periphery of the Mosque, to prevent damage from future floods (8). The sand of the courtyard was washed and the minbar, presented by the Sultan Suleymân in H.956/1549, as well as the mobile stairway of the Ka'bah, were brought in. Commemorative inscriptions were carved on the *Tâq* (archway) in the courtyard and a stele, in marble, ornamented with gold and lapis-lazuli was erected, giving the date of reconstruction and the name of the reigning Sultan Murâd IV.

Special ceremonies occurred, when the corner-stones of the Ka'bah were placed. The southern *Yamanî rukn*, consolidated with molten lead, had first been put in. The *Hdjar'ul-aswad*, the Black stone which traditionally indicates the start of circumambulation, was last placed. Its protective copper frame had been covered with gold-plated silver. The Black stone was put into the eastern corner, on the 26th of Ramadân, by the Turkish engineer Shemsuddîn and 'Abd'ur-Rahmân b. Zeyd and the Indian engineer Mahmûd. The gate with golden columns (a gift of Sûltan Suleymân, H.950/1543) and gilded silver doors, presented by Ahmed I, together with a golden rain-water spout (*mizâb*) were mounted. The work of restoration was completed on Dhîl-qu'da 21st. The candles around the *matâf* were lit again. Lastly, the temporary green cover was removed and given. intoken of his service to Rivân Agha, who presented it to the Sultan. The usual double curtains, the interior red and the exterior black, were hung on the Ka'bah and raised, to allow the visitors to enter from the gate.

As stated in the *Qor'ân* (9), « the Ka'bah, the Sacred Temple, destined by God to stand, facing mankind », stood again, for perhaps another millenary. This is the Holy sanctuary which our generation of pilgrims also revere.

(7) The herewith given illustration is on folio 15 verso of the ms, dated in H.1123/1711, by Suleymân b. Zayn'ul-'Abidîn, Tevfîqî Khodja, a student of Mustafa of Kütahya, Topkapi Library, ms E.H. 1021.

(8) See note 2 sup.

(9) *Qor'ân*, V/97.