



IRAQ I. IN THE LATE SASANID AND EARLY ISLAMIC ERAS

IRAQ AND ITS RELATIONS WITH IRAN

i. IN THE LATE SASANID AND EARLY ISLAMIC ERAS

The late Sasanid era. The late Sasanid winter capital was located at the urban complex on the Tigris river called “the cities” (al-Madāʿen) by the Arabs that included Ctesiphon, Aspānpur, Veh-Antioḡ-e Ɣosrow, and Veh-Ardašir. That may have been because Iraq provided one-third of the land tax for the entire Sasanid state. Sasanid state lands and property owned by members of the Sasanid royal family were also located in Iraq, and there were royal palaces at Dastagerd on the road from Ctesiphon to Hamadān and at Qašr-e Širin in the southwest of Persian Kurdistan. The main defensive frontier was against the Byzantines to the west, and Persian garrisons were posted at places like Nisibis, Senjār, and Pērōz-Šāpūr (Anbār; q.v.). When the late Sasanian state was reorganized into four military divisions in the sixth century, the Quarter of the West (Xwārwarān) virtually coincided with that part of southeastern Mesopotamia that was included in the Sasanid state (see [Figure 1](#)).

The Persian population in Sasanid Iraq was clustered along the western and southern frontiers as military garrisons; noble Persian families lived in the main cities, and there were Persian farmers in some of the villages of the



Sawād. Some 12,000 Persians of good lineage (*ahl bayt*) from Eṣṭaḳr, Isfahan, and other regions are said to have been settled at Nisibis in the 4th century (Ṭabari, I, p. 843; tr., V, pp. 62-63; Dinavari, p. 50), and their descendents were still there at the beginning of the 7th century. Persians also lived at Takrit, Ctesiphon, Weh-Ardašir, and Kaskar, and the districts to the east of the Tigris along the foothills of the Zagros range were fairly heavily settled by Persians. For the most part the Persian soldiers stationed in Iraq, the noble Persian families of administrators and absentee landlords in the towns and cities, and the minor Persian landed notables (see [DEHQĀN](#)) in the countryside, were Zoroastrians. There were also Persian farmers around the capital and along the lower Tigris in the districts of Kaskar and Maysān. The inhabitants of an entire village near Kaskar in the early 7th century were descended from people who had been brought there forcibly from Khorasan (Browne, p. 221; Chabot, p. 235; Morony, 1976, pp. 41-42; Scher, II/2, pp. 597-98; Ṭabari, I, p. 843).

Late Sasanid coins found in Iraq from the reign of Kōsrow I indicate the establishment of economic relations with almost all parts of Persia. They had been struck in Armenia, Nehāvand, Hamadān, Ray, Aparšahr (Nišāpur), Abivard, Marv, Rāmhormoz, Ardašir Kōrra, Dārābjerd, Eṣṭaḳr, Aīram, Kermān, Zaranj, and Sistān. Although these coins are as likely to be a reflection of taxation as of commerce, late Sasanid Iraq was connected to the Iranian plateau by two main routes. One of them went northeastwards from the imperial capital via Ḥolvān through Hamadān and Ray to Khorasan with further extensions to Central Asia and China. The other went east from the lower Tigris to Khuzestan, Fars, and Sistān. There was also a commercial transit route from the ports of Fars in the Persian Gulf through Iraq to Byzantine Mesopotamia. When a rich Persian merchant of Rev-Ardašir in Fars sent his son to Byzantine territory with pearls in the late 6th century, the latter went by way of Nisibis, where he became a monk (see Scher, II/1, pp. 173-74, 199-200; see also Morony, p. 362). At the time of the Muslim conquest, we are told that a great monthly market was held at the town of Baghdad (“God gave” in Persian), which already existed in the 7th century, attended by merchants from Khuzestan, Fars, and elsewhere (Tabari, I, pp. 2203-204; tr., XI, p. 215; Dinavari, p. 116).

The Arab conquest of Iran. Sasanid Iran was conquered in the early seventh century by Muslim armies based in the garrison cities of Basra and Kufa. From 18/639 to 32/652 Basran forces conquered Khuzestan, the southern Jebāl, Fars,



Kerman, Sistān, and Khorasan; from 22/643 to about 30/650 the Kufan army conquered, and then re-conquered, Hamadān, Ray, Qazvin, and Azarbaijan. After the battle of Nehāvand in 21/642, the Kufans occupied the town and district of Nehāvand, while the Basrans took Dinavar. By the time Mo'āwia was appointed caliph (r. 41-60/661-80), the military population of Kufa had grown to the point that an increase in revenue was needed for its maintenance. Dinavar (with Kermānšāh) was reassigned to Kufa and called Māh al-Kufa (the Media of Kufa); Nehāvand and its district were reassigned to Basra and called Māh al-Basra (the Media of Basra). The difference between their taxes amounted to an increase in revenue for the Kufans. Māh al-Kufa and Māh al-Basra functioned as administrative units and as designations used by geographers until at least the 10th century (see [Figure 2](#)). Because of the close connection between ancient Media, called the Jebāl (the mountains) by the Arabs, with Iraq, the province of Jebāl came to be called 'Erāq al-'Ajami (Persian Iraq). Indeed, according to Richard Frye (p. 184), the western part of Iran "has been frequently more closely connected with the lowlands of Mesopotamia than with the rest of the plateau to the east of the central deserts."

The Muslim generals who conquered Persia were either the governors in Iraq themselves, such as 'Abd-Allāh b. 'Āmer b. Korayz (q.v.), who was governor of Basra from 29/649 to 35/655, or appointed and sent by them. The governors of Basra and Kufa also normally appointed the sub-governors over the provinces of Persia that had been conquered by their respective armies and dealt with revolts in Persia. Even Moḳtār appointed a governor for Isfahan, Qom, and their districts when he rebelled at Kufa in 66/685-86. Provincial governors in Persia were sometimes appointed or replaced directly by the caliph in Medina or Damascus, but when 'Ali b. Abi Ṭāleb was caliph (35-41/656-61), the caliphate was located at Kufa. That was during the first Muslim civil war, when Persia had largely slipped out of control, and 'Ali had mainly to deal with rebels there (see [ARAB ii. ARAB CONQUEST OF IRAN](#)).

The Omayyad caliphate. From the time of Mo'āwia there was an increasing trend to consolidate the responsibility for Persia in the hands of a single governor in Iraq. Zīād b. Abihi (d. 53/673) was made governor of Basra and its dependencies in 45/664. Beginning in 50/670, when he was also made governor of Kufa, he spent the summer in Kufa and the winter in Basra. For the remaining three years of his life he was viceroy of the eastern part of the Islamic empire on behalf of Mo'āwia with the combined responsibility for all



of Persia. Ziād is credited with reviving Sasanid royal and administrative practices such as holding formal audiences, having armed bodyguards, having the Sasanid epistolary style for Arabic used in his chancellery, and establishing a Sasanid-style department of the seal. Ziād's son, 'Obayd-Allāh, also held the combined governorship of Iraq and the east from 60/680 to 64/683. Under 'Abd-al-Malek the viceroy of the east was Hajjāj b. Yusof from 78/697 to 95/714. From 86/705 there was a single capital for Iraq and the east at Wāseṭ, built by Hajjāj midway between Basra and Kufa. Persia was ruled from Wāseṭ for the rest of the Omayyad period. When Kāled Qaṣri was governor of Iraq from 106/724 until 120/738 Khorasan and the eastern provinces were sometimes under his authority. When that was the case, his brother, Asad, was his governor over Khorasan (Tabari, tr., XVIII, pp. 76-87, 196-202; XXII, pp. 175-81).

By the early 'Abbasid period the caliphate itself was based at Baghdad and Samarrā'; as long as the 'Abbasids controlled Persia they did it from Iraq, but they did so with armies recruited from Khorasan. The special relationship between the 'Abbasids and Khorasan was symbolized by the fact that the northeastern gate of al-Mansūr's Round City at Baghdad was called the Khorasan Gate (Bāb Kōrāsān). Political and economic power was concentrated along an Iraq-Khorasan axis for the first half-century of 'Abbasid rule, and the early 'Abbasids developed the cities of Isfahan, Ray, Qazvin, and Qom in western Persia as provincial centers. In order to train his son in administration and to give him a provincial base of power that would ensure his succession, the caliph al-Manṣur appointed his son, Abu 'Abd-Allāh al-Mahdi as governor of Khorasan. Al-Mahdi actually resided at Ray as an intermediary between the Khorasanis and the caliph from 141/759-60 until 151/768. Al-Mahdi held court at Ray, built a new administrative district there, and secured his succession with the support that he gained among the Khorasanis. The connection between Khorasan and Iraq was at its height under the caliph Hārūn al-Rašid, when Yaḥyā b. Kāled b. Barmak (d. 189/805) virtually ruled the empire with his two sons, Faḏl and Ja'far, for 17 years, from 170/786 to 187/803 (see [BARMAKIDS](#)).

The Arabs who settled in Persia in the early Islamic period came most immediately from Iraq (see [ARAB iii. ARAB SETTLEMENTS IN IRAN](#)). At first they were garrisons belonging to the armies of Basra and Kufa posted to Nehāvand, Dinavar, Širavān, Saymara, Isfahan, Qazvin, Qom, Ray, Ardebil, Tawwaj, Zaranj, Nišāpur, and Marv. There were later garrisons established at



Ḥolvān, Barḡa'a, Balkh, Bukhara, and Samarqand. Garrisons on the frontiers tended to be reinforced by later waves of settlers and the retinues of governors.

The land grants made by 'Obayd-Allāh b. Zīād for governors in Persia when he was governor of Iraq in about 60/680 contributed to the formation of a new class of Arab landlords there. 'Obayd-Allāh granted land in Kermān to Šarik b. al-A'war Ḥāreṭi when the latter was made governor there, and when Kaṭir b. Šehāb was appointed governor of the Jebāl, 'Obayd-Allāh also granted many villages belonging to state land in that province to him. Ḥarb b. Zīād of Basra later bought the land from Šarik that had been granted to him in Kermān (Belāḡori, *Fotuhā*, pp. 308, 314, 392).

The Arabs who came from Iraq reflected the tribal composition of the armies of Basra and Kufa and mainly belonged to the tribes of 'Ejl, Tamim, Bakr, Rabi'a, and Azd. They took their tribal rivalries with them, especially to Khorasan, where there were more Arabs than anywhere else in Persia. In 51/671 25,000 Arabs from Basra and 25,000 from Kufa were sent by Zīād to Khorasan with their families, where they settled as a permanent garrison in the villages of the Marv oasis. They belonged mostly to the Tamim and Bakr tribes. Several thousand tribesmen of Azd were settled at Marv in 60/680. Conflict between the Azd and Tamim at Basra surfaced during the second civil war in the 680s. Thus, when many of the tribesmen of Azd from Iraq accompanied Mohallab, who was sent as governor of Khorasan by Ḥajjāj (q.v.) in 78/697, and settled at Nišāpur, they continued their conflict with Tamim in Khorasan, although this was also a matter of earlier against later settlers. One-half of the 20,000 Iraqis sent to Marv as a new garrison in 112/730 were from Basra; the other half were from Kufa. (see *EIr.* II, p. 213; Belāḡori, *Fotuhā*, p. 410; Frye, pp. 75-76, 78; Lapidus, p. 199; Ṭabari, II, p. 156; tr., XXVIII, pp. 101-3).

There was also independent migration by Arabs from Iraq, who sought political refuge and economic opportunities in Persia. They established themselves as landlords in Azarbaijan, in the environs of Isfahan, and the province of Kermān, and brought their agricultural and commercial skills with them. One good example is that of the 'Alids from Kufa, who settled at Qom after the failure of the revolts of Moḡtār (66/685-86) and Ebn al-Aš'aṭ (82/701). Another is Edris b. Ma'qel of the tribe of 'Ejl, a sheep-trader and perfumer, who settled in a village near Hamadān with his relatives in the 730s, where they bought many other villages. Wherever they settled, Muslim Arabs also established mosques and brought Islam to Persia most directly from Iraq. To



give only one example, ‘Ali b. Abi Ṭāleb settled some 400 Qur’an reciters (*qorrā*’, presumably from Kufa) at Qazvin and Ray before the battle of Ṣeffin in 36/657, because they preferred to fight unbelievers than to fight fellow Muslims (Lapidus, p. 193; Belāḍori, *Fotuhā*, p. 314; Dinavari, p. 165).

Nevertheless, sectarian conflict among Muslims in Iraq tended to spill over into Persia. Kharejite activities in early Islamic Persia were an extension of conflicts in Iraq into Khuzestan, Fars, Isfahan, Kermān, and Sistān. Kharejite rebels tended to catalyze local resentment of taxation; they often attracted followers in the countryside and were sometimes joined by native non-Muslims and *mawālī* who appreciated their egalitarian views and consideration for the rights of non-Muslims. The armies that defeated them also came from Iraq. During the first civil war the Kharejite rebel, Kerit b. Rašid, took his revolt from Iraq to Khuzestan and Fars, where he was defeated in 38/658. After the battle of Nahrawān in 38/658, where ‘Ali defeated the Kharijites, one of them, Ḥayyān b. Ḍabyān Solami, who had been wounded in the battle, escaped to Ray with ten companions. Ḥayyān returned to Kufa after ‘Ali was killed in 40/661, but when he rebelled in 58/678, he had partisans at Ray and in the mountains. After Ziād was made governor of Basra another Kharejite, Sahm b. Ḡāleb, left for Khuzestan, where he raised a revolt. During the second civil war Azraqi Kharejites from Basra raided through Khuzestan and Fars to Kermān, chased by a Basran army led by Mohallab. The Azraqites used Kermān as a base to return to Khuzestan and lower Iraq, but were driven out of Iraq by Mohallab and back to Kermān again in about 75/694, where they split up. The defeat of various Kharejite movements in the aftermath of the second civil war led the surviving relatively moderate groups in Basra to adopt more organized, subversive methods. Abu ‘Obayda Moslem b. Abi Karima was a Persian *mawlā* of the Banu Tamin and a disciple of the Ebāzi Kharejite leader at Basra, Jāber b. Zayd Azdi. Abu ‘Obayda had been jailed by Ḥajjāj for having supported the revolt of Ebn al-Aš’aṭ in 81-82/701-2. After he was released by Yazid b. Mohallab in about 101/720, Abu ‘Obayda began to send “bearers of knowledge” (*hamalāt al-‘elm*), whom he had instructed, as Ebāzi missionaries to the far reaches of the Muslim world, including Khorasan, where his first missionary was Ḥelāl b. ‘Aṭiya Khorasani. A sub-sect of the Ebāziya called the Yazidiya was founded about the same time by Yazid b. Onaysā of Basra, who taught that God would send a prophet from among the non-Arabs with a new scripture. Yazid was active in Gur just before the fall of the Omayyads. About the middle of the 8th century Rabi’ b. Ḥabib succeeded Abu ‘Obayda as leader of the Ebāzdi community at Basra. Hāšem b. ‘Abd-Allāh



journeyed from Khorasan to Basra, where he acquired the doctrine of Rabi' and brought it back to the Ebāzis of Khorasan, for whom he was their legal scholar and *mofti*. During the 8th and early 9th centuries there was a fairly large Ebāzi community in Khorasan that was oriented intellectually toward Basra at first (Madelung, pp. 56, 73-75).

During the third civil war there were Kharejite rebels in Azarbaijan with connections to the Jazira. When Ẓaḥḥāk b. Qays Ṣaybāni rebelled against Marwān II, one of his followers at Darband, Mosāfer Qaṣṣāb, also revolted and was joined by Kharejites at Ardabil, Bājarvān, Vartān, and Baylaqān. Even after Ẓaḥḥāk was defeated and killed in 128/746, Mosāfer continued his resistance in Azarbaijan until he, too, was defeated and killed in the caliphate of al-Saffāh.

Shi'ism originated in Kufa, and Shi'ites from Iraq also sought refuge and support in Persia. The followers of Moktār at Kufa survived the failure of his revolt in 66/685-86 as the Kaysāni sect. A sub-sect of the Kaysāniya, the HāsĀmiya, was used as a cover by Arab and Persian agents from Kufa working secretly on behalf of the 'Abbasid family among the Arab settlers in Khorasan from about 101/720. After the failure of the revolt of Zayd b. 'Alī at Kufa in 133/740, Zayd's son, Yaḥyā, escaped to Khorasan where he found shelter and some support until the Omayyad government forces pursuing him caught and killed him near Guzgān in 125/743. During the third civil war there was a Shi'ite rising at Kufa led by 'Abd-Allāh b. Mo'āwia (q.v.). When he and his followers were defeated outside of Kufa and then given a safe-conduct to leave in October, 127/744, they went to Isfahan and then to Eṣṭakr. Ebn Mo'āwia was recognized at Qom, Shiraz, and Qumes, and organized a brief, provisional state in parts of the provinces of the Jebāl, Fars, Kermān, Khuzestan, and Qumes and struck his own coins. Ebn Mo'āwia was joined by everyone hostile to the Omayyads: Kharejites, some of the Banu 'Abbās, and even some Omayyads who were opposed to Marwān II. Many Persians are believed to have been among the *mawālī* and escaped slaves who followed him. He was also supported by the sect of the Korramdiniya in western Persia that had adopted the doctrine of transmigration of souls from 'Abd-Allāh b. Ḥarb, the son of a *zendīq* from Madā'en. In 129/746-47 or 130/747-48 Ebn Mo'āwia was defeated by an army sent from Syria by Marwān II and fled through Sistān to Khorasan, where he was killed by the order of Abu Moslem (q.v.), whose aid he had sought. In the second half of the 8th century, the Aṣ'ari clan from Kufa that had settled at Qom became followers of the Imam Ja'far al-Šādeq and thus



proto-Imami Shi'ites (Madelung, pp. 7, 77, 79, 86; Tucker, pp. 42-44; Daniel, pp. 42-43, 80-81).

Morje'ite Islam also originated at Kufa among Muslims who thought it was wrong for them to fight each other and preferred to put off any decision between 'Otmān and 'Ali awaiting God's judgment. There were also some Morje'ites at Basra and some moderate Morje'ites in Khorasan already by the early 8th century. Ḥāreṭ b. Sorayj, who rebelled in Ṭokārestān from 116/734 to 128/746, is said, *inter alia*, to have been a Morje'ite. The moderate Morje'ite doctrinal and legal system of Abu Ḥanifa (d. 150/767-68, q.v.), himself of Persian descent, spread from Kufa to Ray, Qazvin, Gorgān, and Ṭokārestān (see [HANAFITE MADHAB](#)). In the early 'Abbasid period students from Khorasan journeyed to Iraq to learn from the various scholars there; those from Balkh gravitated to Abu Ḥanifa. The first Hanafite judge (*qāḏī*) was appointed at Balkh in 142/759-60, when Abu Ḥanifa was still alive, and by the 9th century Ṭokārestān and Central Asia were solidly Hanafite. The legal system of Abu Ḥanifa's contemporary at Kufa, Sofyān Ṭawri, which was based on Hadith, found early supporters in Isfahan, Dinavar, and Hamadān (Madelung, pp. 14, 18-19, 27, 29).

Mo'tazelite doctrine spread eastward from Basra into Khuzestan and Fars. It is said to have been popular with the people in Ahvāz, Rāmhormoz, Tostar, 'Askar Mokram, Sirāf, and Ṣaymara, presumably among the Hanafites. Rebels were sometimes taken back to Iraq for execution. When the Kharejite/Ḳorramdīn rebel, Yusof b. Ebrāhīm Barm, was captured with many of his followers in Sistān in 161/775, the governor sent them to Baghdad, where the caliph, al-Mahdi, had them beheaded and their bodies crucified on the upper bridge over the Tigris river (Ṭabari, III, pp. 470-71; tr., XXIX, pp. 181-82; Daniel, pp. 166-67, 168).

Persia thus provided a potential staging area for resistance to a regime based in Iraq. The army mutiny led by Ebn al-Aš'at̄ on the eastern frontier of Sistān in 81/700 showed how the dynamics of conquest could backfire. It was an Iraqi army of 40,000 men from both Basra and Kufa that rebelled, but they were joined by Arab settlers and local natives in Sistān and by others as they marched back through Kermān and Fars. They were defeated twice by Ḥajjāj in Iraq in 82/701, but they had set a dangerous precedent. Iraq would be conquered half a century later by an army of Muslim Arabs and Persians recruited in Khorasan. In 175/791 some Zaydi Shi'ites from Kufa joined the Ḥasanid Yaḥyā b. 'Abd-Allāh in Deylam when he was there briefly, but the



Zaydis did not have a territorial base in Deylam before the mid-ninth century.

During the first century of Muslim rule the wealth of the Iranian plateau was diverted to the garrison cities in Iraq in the form of booty, tribute, and eventually taxes. The booty from the battle of Nehāvand was sold in the mosque of Kufa in 21/642, where ‘Amr b. Horayṭ Maḳ-zumi, a Kufan merchant of Meccan origin, bought two baskets of gems for two million dirhams. He then sold one of the baskets at Ḥira (q.v.) for what he had paid for both (Belāḍori, p. 305; Ebn al-A‘ṭam Kufi, II, p. 62; Ṭabari, I, p. 2600; tr., XIII, pp. 183-84).

The tribute and taxes from Persia went to support the Muslim military establishment in Iraq. The revenues from Azarbaijan and the Jebāl were sent to Kufa; Basra received the income from Khuzestan, Fars, Kermān, Sistān, and Khorasan. Zīād also sent his relative, ‘Obayd-Allāh b. Abi Bakra of Basra to confiscate the wealth of the fire temples in Fars. Under the ‘Abbasids taxes came to Baghdad and Sāmarrā’. In terms of the direction of the flow of wealth and the exercise of power, there was little difference from the Sasanid period.

There was also a reverse current of Persian migration to the Arab garrison cities in Iraq. This began with the mailed cavalrymen (*asvārān*, *asāwera* [q.v.]) who surrendered in Khuzestan and settled in Basra in 21/642. They were joined there by landless Persian soldiers who converted to Islam. Individual migration is also indicated in the case of a lower-class Persian (‘*elj*’) who went to Basra sometime before 64/683, converted to Islam, and associated with the Kharejites. In the early 8th century a Persian nobleman, Māhān b. Bahman b. Nusk, migrated from Arrajān in Khuzestan to Kufa. Ruzbeh (‘Abd-Allāh b. al-Moqaffa’ after his conversion to Islam) was born in Fars in about 102/720. He was educated in Persian literature and the Zoroastrian religion in Khuzestan before his family moved to Basra. Ebn al-Moqaffa’ (q.v.) was an important early figure in the translation of Middle Persian literature into Arabic and the influence of Middle Persian *andarz* (q.v.) literature on Arabic *adab*, but all of this happened in Iraq. Such migration, however, did not necessarily mean conversion to Islam. Bar Sahde, who died in 745 at the age of ninety, had migrated from Eṣṭaḳr to Basra, where he studied in the schools of the Christian Church of the East (i.e., Nestorian) and became a monk (Belāḍori, *Fotuḥ*, pp. 372-74; Chabot, pp. 230-31; Ebn Kallekān, tr., I, pp. 20-22; Ṭabari, II, p. 461).

Most of the Persians brought to Iraq during the first century of Islam were captives. The surrender agreements in western Persia often provided that the



people should not be taken captive, and most captives came from the advancing edge of Muslim Arab campaigns to the north and east. Enslaved captives were included in the booty and tended to be moved west and south to the frontier settlements and then to the garrison cities in Iraq where captives from Khorasan and Sistān were taken. From the middle of the 7th century, captives from eastern Persia were being brought to the slave market in Basra. The parents of Ṣāleḥ b. ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān were taken captive at Našrud in Sistān in 30/650-51 and sold in the slave market at Basra. It was Ṣāleḥ who put the Persian accounts into Arabic for Ḥajjāj in 78/697, and he even became the main tax official (*ʿāmel*) of the Sawād in Iraq for the caliph, Solaymān (96-98/715-17). Most captives ended up as domestic slaves, but we hear of two women who belonged to the highest levels of the Persian nobility who were taken captive in Khorasan in 37/657-58 and brought to Iraq. They were given hospitality by a *dehqān* in Iraq, who fed them from golden dishes on silk cloth and returned them to Khorasan. ʿObayd-Allāh b. Zīād formed a unit of Sogdian archers out of two or four thousand prisoners that were taken captive at Paykand and Rametin in the territory of Bukhara in 54/673-74 and settled them at Basra. Ḥajjāj later settled this unit at Wāseṭ (Belāḍori, *Fotuhā*, pp. 40-41, 300-301; Naršaḳi, pp. 52-53; tr., pp. 37-38; Ṭabari, I, p. 3350, II, p. 464; tr., XVII, pp. 99-100, XX, pp. 43-44).

In the early 8th century the slave markets of Basra and Kufa were filled with captives from the campaigns of Qotayba b. Moslem in Central Asia. The ʿAbbasids brought workmen from Persia, as well as other places, for the building of Baghdad, and settled the army they had recruited in Khorasan there with their families. There were both Arabs and Persians in this army. The Ḥarbiya district was settled by Persian supporters of the ʿAbbasids in a neighborhood called the Suburb of the Persians around the Persian Quadrangle, where al-Manṣur gave land to his Persian followers. The neighborhoods where the soldiers from Chorasmia (q.v.) and from Marv were settled were next to it, but most of the Khorasani soldiers who brought the ʿAbbasids to power were Arabs. The grandfather of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal belonged to an Arab family from Basra that had settled at Marv. Both his grandfather and father had served in the ʿAbbasid army; his father moved to Baghdad, where Aḥmad was born in 164/780, shortly after the family settled there. Most of Aḥmad's religious support came from those districts in Baghdad where the Khorasanis had settled. By the 9th century, there were also Ḥanbalites at Ray, Qazvin, and Gorgān. The Khorasani army that conquered Iraq under Ṭāher b. Ḥosayn for al-Ma'mun in 198/813 was far more Persian than Abu Moslem's



army had been (Lassner, p. 152; Le Strange, pp. 17, 126-28; Madelung, pp. 22-23, 27; Mottahedeh, p. 73).

The main routes connecting Iraq to Persia in the early Islamic period were essentially the same as in the Sasanid period. The Khuzestan road from Basra to Kermān was used to send armies to the frontier in Makrān and Sistān. In 91/710 a Syrian army used this route to march through southern Persia via Makrān to the Indus valley. In the 3rd/9th century, this route was used by Jewish merchants to reach India. The Khorasan road went via Ḥolvān to northeastern Persia; the cities along this road were the main focus of early 'Abbasid interest. There may also have been a route from Mosul up the Greater Zāb river into southern Azarbaijan. Muslim pilgrims from Persia passed through Iraq on their way to Mecca and on their return.

Commerce continued to follow the old routes. In 59/679 a perfume dealer from Khuzestan was found riding his donkey near Mosul. The Kufan oil merchant, Ḥabib b. Zayyāt (d. 155/772), transported vegetable oil from Kufa to Ḥolvān and brought back cheese and walnuts. By the 'Abbasid period Iraq was a major consumer market for products from all over Persia. Dried fruit, dried fish, vegetable oil for cooking and lamps, spices, cotton clothing, embroidered garments, prayer rugs, and emeralds were exported from Persia to Iraq. Cheese and sugar came to Basra from Khuzestan, as did silk brocade, linen clothing, and pack saddles; citrons and violet oil came from Susa. Apples, fruit syrup, honey, salt, linen garments, mattresses, saffron, antimony, lead, and soap came from Isfahan, saffron and fox pelts from Hamadān, and saffron and leather from Qom. Ray exported prunes, cotton textiles, tall hats, woolen cloaks, mercury, and combs. Perfumes and swords came from Azarbaijan, leather from Ardabil. Oils of jasmine and water lily were imported to Iraq from Fars, as were swords, coats of chain mail, metal mirrors, and locks. From Fars, Fasā also sent nuts, linen clothing woven with silk, and glassware; Shiraz exported linen garments to Iraq. Dates and indigo came from Kermān, and cotton cloth from Yazd. Qumes sent woolen stoles, axes, and parasols; arrowheads came from Damāvand. Saffron and linen garments embroidered with silk were exported from Ṭabarestān. Jujubes, pheasants, raw silk, and woolen cloaks came from Gorgān. Raw silk and cotton cloth came from Nišāpur, raw silk, cotton textiles, clothing, carpets, and horses from Marv. Balkh exported mushrooms and soap. Raw cotton and silk textiles came from Central Asia, raw silk, cotton cloth, and paper from Samarqand. Sugar and musk were imported to Iraq from Chorasmia. Snow for refrigeration was



brought to Iraq from western Persia (Ṭabari, II, p. 195; tr., XVIII, p. 206; Ebn al-Nadim, p. 32, tr. I, p. 66; Jāḥeẓ, passim; Morony, 1993, pp. 702-5).

Relations between Iraq and Persia may thus be seen in political, military, religious, intellectual, demographic, and economic terms. Persia was conquered in the first place by Muslim Arab armies from Iraq, but Iraq was conquered twice by armies from Khorasan. The death of al-Ma'mun in 218/833 ended the special relationship between the 'Abbasids and Khorasan. The military base of the 'Abbasids shifted more to the Turks afterwards, and with the rise of territorial dynasties of local governors and rulers in Persia by the 9th century, effective control over Persia no longer resided in Iraq.

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