

DID THE CONQUERED ULTIMATELY ABSORB AND CONQUER THE ARAB CONQUERORS?

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In the *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society*, (Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1982), the editor O.H.A. Juynboll reviewed the following thesis: “Islamic civilization originated in a 'barbarian' conquest of lands with ancient cultural traditions. Unlike other such conquests, this one did not end with the conquerors being absorbed into the societies they ruled but led to the creation of a new social and intellectual framework within which the cultures developed. This process can be said to have occurred in the century and a half which lie between the conquests and the firm establishment of Abbasid rule (roughly, the second half of the seventh and the whole of the eighth century). The way in which it took place is by no means clear. The existing cultures of the Middle East, which provided most of the raw materials of the new civilization, are reasonably well-known to us, and so is the end-product, the 'classical' Islamic civilization. But since the conquerors took some time to settle down, their own version of the process by which the new society and culture were created is a belated one and open to considerable doubt. If we rely on it alone, we shall form a picture of a discontinuity between the pre-Islamic and Islamic worlds which strains the imagination; if on the other hand we begin by assuming that there must have been some continuity, we need either to go beyond the Islamic sources or to reinterpret them.”

Juynboll notes: “For the first time in our lives many of us became acquainted with the outlook of non-Arab, non-Muslim historians on the conquests and its perpetrators.” He adds that “confrontations with Syriac and Hellenistic source material for once really pricked the balloons of such Islamic historians as swear exclusively by Arabic sources.” In his paper, S.O. Brock reports that “the worsening conditions of Christians “led to the rise of the apocalyptic literature, around 690, which found a ready audience in all three religious communities,” (p. 21), which is quite evident in the Pahlavi texts of the time.”

G.R. Hawting's paper, along with Patricia Crone and Cook's, traced the earlier history of Islam and the Kaba to “Jewish/Judaic influences rather than allowing for a development of originally Arab/Islamic

ideas.”

In his paper I.M. Pavidus argues that “the pre-Islamic Arabian Bedonin society of Mecca had already developed many features similar to those of the empire societies, which led to the conquests being achieved more smoothly.”

In his paper, “Conquerors and Conquered: Iran,” Michael Morony depicts how Iranians adopted Islam and Arabism but he also shows “to what extent the conquerors adapted themselves to the law of the land and were eventually assimilated.”