
AL-MASUDI'S UNIVERSAL HISTORY: A DIALOGUE OF CIVILIZATIONS

By Pierre Beaudry, 2/7/2016

FOREWORD

Like all world conquering movements in history, the Islamic followers of Mohammed developed, from the 8th century to the 13th century, two tendencies that had two opposite effects on the world as a whole, one was an all-exclusive imperial tendency to impose their beliefs on the world, and the other was an all-inclusive movement of collaboration among different religions and peoples for the purpose of creating a universal dialogue of civilizations.

As the Greek achievements of Aeschylus, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato were literally forgotten in Europe, and most of their ideas had fallen into total oblivion during the first thousand years of early Christianity, the Islamic Renaissance of the Caliph Haroun-al-Rashid and of his son, Caliph al-Mamun, revived Plato's Academy in a completely new form under the name of "Baitul-Hikmah" (House of Wisdom).

During the 8th century, Poets and scholars from around the world were invited to participate in this extraordinary "Islamic School of Athens" which adopted the mission of transmitting to the future generations of the world, the gems of principles of discovery that past history had bequeathed to mankind, which were being translated in that Academy from the Greek, Latin, Persian, and Sanskrit languages into Arabic. It is in that revolutionary context that the works of Masudi must be understood and appraised. (See Hussein Askary, [BAGHDAD 767-1258 A.D. MELTING POT FOR A UNIVERSAL RENAISSANCE.](#))

INTRODUCTION

*“If a dog dies of hunger on the banks of the River Euphrates,
Umar will be responsible for dereliction of duty.”*

Umar (583-644)

This report on Al-Masudi's *The Meadows of Gold* has been written with the collaboration of Hussein Askary and with the intention of demonstrating how Masudi had developed an original study of Universal History. In that unique and original sense, Masudi's mind reflected the search for the truth of a Galactic Mind as opposed to the flat Earth method of simply gathering “curious” facts of past and current events. There is a real galactic motion hidden in Masudi's mind and the key which unlocks his genius lies in the truthfulness of what Friedrich Schiller had called the philosophical mind as opposed to the bread-fed scholar. As Schiller said:

“All his efforts are directed toward the perfection of his knowledge; his noble impatience cannot rest until all of his conceptions have ordered themselves into an organic whole, until he stands at the center of his art, his science, and until from this position outward he surveys its expanse with a contented look. [...] “Through always new and more beautiful forms of thought, the philosophical mind strides forth to higher excellence, while the bred-fed scholar, in eternal stagnation of mind, guards over the barren monotony of his school-conception.” (*Friedrich Schiller, Poet of Freedom*, Volume II, Schiller Institute, Washington D.C., 1988, p. 257)

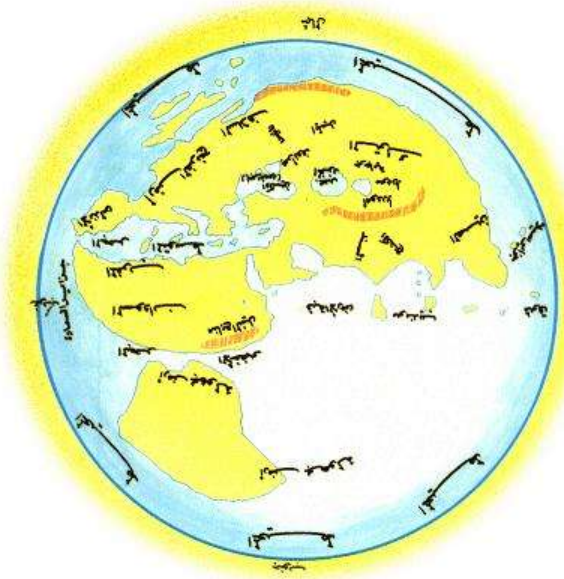
Schiller's words are a self-portrait of Masudi's mind. He is concerned with the truthfulness of his knowledge and seeks to fit everything he knows into a unique organic whole from the top down, which is best represented by the circular world map that came to be known as Masudi's World Map. (**Figure 1**) However, this is not a map of the world that speaks for its geographic accuracy; this is a triply-connected metaphor showing how Masudi was attempting to establish the “placement” of his mind into the Galaxy. The map is galactically accurate in its conformal projection onto a sphere that isn't there.

1. MASUDI'S METHOD OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY

"Of all of the human actions the most resembling those of the Creator is the beneficence to your fellow-man."

(Masudi, [*Les Prairies d'Or*](#), Vol. II, p. 275.)

The fundamental truth that Masudi discovered in his travels resides in the fact that no matter how different the physical and intellectual conditions of human



beings appear to be in different parts of the world, and no matter how different their languages, cultures, and beliefs may appear to be, from one end of the globe to the next, nations always end up, at one time or another, in a degenerate state of ignorance, because the population is forced to accept corrupt oligarchical leaders who have replaced the knowledge of art and science with the practicality of ideas that are complete falsehoods. As Masudi put it:

Figure 1 [Masudi's World Map](#).

"During our travels, we have met with several kings, as different by their habits and opinions as by the geographical location of their countries, and yet, in one case after the other, we have discovered the same agreement in recognizing that all traces of science had gradually disappeared; that its splendor had been extinguished; that the general diffusion of learning had lost its depth; that we could only find people full of vanity and ignorance, imperfect scholars who were content with superficial ideas and could no longer recognize the truth." (Masudi, [*LES PRAIRIES*](#)

[D'OR](#), Volume 1, French translation by Casimir Barbier de Meynard, Imprimerie Impériale, 1865, p. 6, English translation by Pierre Beaudry.)

Is this statement familiar to anyone? This extract reveals a lot about Masudi's character and method. It tells you that history cannot be reduced simply to a descriptive compilation of human affairs as reported by different historians



from different countries; it must be grounded on solid evidence from the Universal Historical Archives that relate to the interactions between peoples and nations, especially the relevant instruction material relating to war and peace among them. It is in that sense that Universal History is the history of the progress of the human mind and its continual fight against oligarchical manipulation of the world. The deadly conflict that Lyn identified between creativity and practicality that Aeschylus had dramatized in the theatrical form of a conflict between the Promethean fire giver and the Zeusian slave master, should always be the barometer for any study in Universal History.

Figure 2 Al-Masudi (896-956)

Also, there is an all-inclusive approach to the method that Masudi has used in *The Meadows of Gold*, which is resonant with the Old Silk-Road and with the win-win approach of Xi Jinping and Helga's conception of the New Silk-Road today. But, the English translations do not reflect that and are generally incomplete; therefore, I have to resort to the French translation of Casimir Barbier de Meynard. What is most significant, however, is the fact that Masudi's method of Universal History is entirely based on principles of discovery. As he said about his own investigation:

"By writing books on universal history, collecting the facts that the past had brought down to us from the remote times of the prophets, the kings and their kingdoms, the nations and their location on the globe, we were eager to follow in the footsteps of scholars and sages, and to leave posterity a glorious memory, a solid monument built with art. Authors who have gone before us seem to have sinned either by excess of details, or, conversely, by an exaggerated brevity. Although the materials have increased over time, and because of the events that gave rise to them, the wisest minds have often neglected some important parts; each of them devoting his attention to a specific object and limiting himself to studying the peculiarities offered him by his homeland. Therefore, he who has not left his home and who has limited his research to the narrow scope offered him by the history of his own country, cannot be compared with the courageous traveler who has consumed his life in remote explorations, and each day faced danger in order to persevere in excavating the mines of science and in snatching from oblivion the precious remains of the past." ([LES PRAIRIES D'OR](#), Volume 1, p. 9, translated by Pierre Beaudry.)

2. WISDOM OF THE EAST: THE QURAYSH AND THE CHINESE KING

"Listen for things that people don't know they are saying."

Dehors Debonneheure

The Islamic Arabs of the Baghdad House of Wisdom created an all-inclusive school with the collaboration of Christians, Jews, Jacobites, Nestorians, Persians, and Indians in order to restore to the world the lost knowledge of the past, a knowledge that not only had to be collected and translated with great care, but which also required to be understood in accordance with the truth of the ideas that were contained in them, but were not stated. The following is a French version of the historical role of the original Renaissance city of Baghdad, the *Madinat as-*

Salam or “city of peace”: <http://www.solidariteetprogres.org/documents-de-fond-7/histoire/bagdad-damas-cordoue-creuset-d-une.html>

The two Promethean and Zeusian tendencies, which already existed in ancient Greece, under the form of a conflict between Plato and Aristotle, were also current in the Islamic Renaissance under the opposition between the so-called “Islamic Renaissance” and the “Islamic Brotherhood.” The difference in method is that one is based on discovering underlying assumptions through what isn’t there and the other is based on sense certainty of what is there. The question is which of the two can improve the Ecumenical Dialogue of Civilizations.

Contrast, for example, the following Aristotelian statement of Ibn-Khaldun about the Muslim Brotherhood traveling the Silk Road with Masudi’s Platonic approach to the same Silk Road. Compare the sense certainty of Khaldun with the method of discovery of Masudi. Khaldun wrote:

“However many hundreds of miles the Muslim might journey from his native town, he could confidently hope for a welcome and generous hospitality at the hands of his co-religious, especially if he had any reputation for piety or religious knowledge, and he might even chance to come across a fellow townsman, even though his wanderings had carried him into the land of the infidels far beyond the boundaries of the Muslim Empire; thus Ibn-Batlita, an energetic traveler of the 14th century, to whom reference will be made later, tells us how on his arrival in a town in China, which he calls Kanjanfu, the Muslim merchants there came out to receive him with flags and a band of musicians with trumpets, drums and horns, bringing horses for him and his party, so that they rode into the city in a triumphal procession. This incidence was a characteristic of Muslim society during the Middle Age; it also reveals the enterprise that merchants and travelers showed in journeying such enormous distances and the facilities which their co-religionists provided for those who braved the perils of such arduous journeys. (Puja Mondal, [*Factors for the Growth and Development of Geographical Knowledge in Arab.*](#))

According to Khaldun, warmer climates make people more passionate and colder climates make them more reserved and more stolid. What does that tell you? This is a typical Aristotelian racial device made to manipulate people and to exclude them from what they have in common. On the contrary, Masudi considers what is common among different peoples in order to unite them behind the common purpose of mankind.

This is the sort of conflict-ridden situation that Masudi had to deal with, during his travels on the Silk Road, and this is the problem that must be resolved today in the dialogue of civilizations. The difference is that one is all-inclusive and the other is all-exclusive. Which way is the world going to go? That's the question.

THE STORY OF THE QURAYSH VISIT WITH THE CHINESE KING by Masudi, [*LES PRAIRIES D'OR*](#), Volume 1, pp. 312-322. Translated by Pierre Beaudry from the French translation of Casimir Barbier de Maynard.

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Here is another piquant story about Chinese kings, during the Basra adventure of the Zendjs leader, who, as everyone knows, was a noble and rich Quraysh, descendant of Habbar, son of el-Aswad. One day, he traveled to the city of Siraf, and from there, he set sail for the seas of India. After a long journey by water and by land, he finally arrived in China, and went to the city of Khanfou. From there, he fancied the idea of paying a visit to the royal residence, which was then in Hamdan, one of the larger cities of that region.

The Quraysh waited for a long time at the palace gate where he presented his petition to see the king, in which he stated that he was of the family of the prophet of the Arabs. In the end, the king accepted his request and gave orders that he be welcomed in a house where he would be provided with everything he wished. The king, then, wrote to the governor of Khanfou to ask if he could inform him of the Quraysh inquiries and of some information he would have gotten from traders about the assumption that he had made about being a relative of the prophet Muhammad.

After the Governor of Khanfou had confirmed the assertion of the Quraysh concerning his genealogy, the king gave him an audience and showered him with considerable amounts of gifts to bring back with him to Iraq. Now, this Quraysh was a clever old man who, after having been granted an audience, was reporting on how the king of China had questioned him about the Arabs, and about the means by which they had destroyed the kingdom of the Persians; to which he replied:

“They have won with the assistance of the true God, because the Persians had chosen instead to bow down to the sun and the moon and worship those two great luminaries at the exclusion of their Creator.”

The king added: "It is by the intelligence of its people that the Arabs were able to conquer the most noble, the most fertile, the richest, and the most remarkable and famous kingdom. But how do you rank all the other sovereigns of the world?"

- "I do not know," replied the Quraysh.

On this subject, the king addressing his interpreter, said: "Tell him that we have five kings; the most powerful of all is the one who rules Iraq because it occupies the center of the world and the other powers around it; that is why we call him the king of kings. After this empire there is ours; we consider it the kingdom of true human beings, because no kingdom is better governed nor more justly administered; nowhere are the subjects more obedient, and that's the reason why we are the kings of true human beings.

After us comes the king of the wild beasts; it is our neighbor, the king of the Turks, who are among men what wild beasts are among animals. He is followed by the king of elephants, or King of India, which we recognize as the king of wisdom, because wisdom comes from that country. Finally, the last is the king of Rum (Mediterranean Sea), which we regard as the king of the infantry, as no other country has men of a more perfect stature and more beautiful figure. These are the main kings; others are below them."

“The king,” said the Quraysh, “then addressed this question to me, through his interpreter”:

"-Would you recognize your master, that is to say, the Prophet, if you saw him?"

- "How could I see him," I answered, "since he is with God? "

- "I am not speaking of him in person," said the king, "I mean his portrait."

- "Very well," I said.

Then, the king ordered a little casket to be brought before him. He took a notebook from it and said to the interpreter: "Show him his master."

I immediately saw in the note book images of the prophets, and I greeted them in a low voice. The king, not suspecting that I recognized them, instructed the interpreter to ask me why I was moving my lips. "I always welcome the prophets with an invocation," I replied.

- "How did you recognize them?" He said.

- "By the characters of their story represented here: Here is Noah who took refuge with his family in a vessel, when God saved him with those who accompanied him, at the time He commanded the waters to flood the whole earth."

The king started laughing and said: "In the name of Noah, you're in the right; but as to the fact of the flood of the whole earth, we do not know about that here; the flood must have reached only your part of the land and did not reach our country. If the story you tell is true concerning this part of the world, it is certain that we, inhabitants of China, India, Sindh and other countries, we do not know about it, and our ancestors have left us nothing of this tradition; and yet, an event such as the flooding of the Earth is large enough to dampen the spirits of all and should be engraved in everyone's memory, such that all of the peoples of the world can pass it on by tradition."

The Quraysh thought in himself: "I was afraid to refute him and expose my arguments; because I knew he could reject them."

I continued: "Here you have Moses and his staff, with the children of Israel."

The king said; "Yes, he was a prophet, despite the narrow limits of his country and the revolts of the people against him."

"This is Jesus," I replied. "He mounts a donkey, and the apostles are accompanying him."

- "His prophecy," said the king, did not last long; it hardly exceeded thirty months."

Thus, he passed in review all of the prophets and their story, and said many other things which we have reported only in part. This Quraysh, who is known as Ibn Habbar, even claimed to have seen above the figure of each prophet a long epigraph that described his genealogy, his country, and the age he had, including everything about his prophecies and his life.

In the end, the Quraysh added: "I recognized the figure of our prophet, Mohammed, on a camel surrounded by his companions, who were wearing *Aden* shoes made of camel skin, and had toothpicks hanging from their belts made of ropes palm filaments. I was crying and the king wanted to know why from his interpreter."

"This is my prophet," I answered, "my master, and my cousin Muhammad, son of Abd Allah!"

- "You tell the truth," retorted the king! "He has reigned over the noblest of all of the peoples; only he did not see with his own his eyes the empire he had put under his law; this happiness was reserved to the Caliphs who came after him, and who ruled his people after him."

While examining the portraits of the prophets, I saw several who, by joining the index finger with the thumb formed the shape of a ring and seemed to indicate by the position of their hands that creation was like a circle; others were turning the index finger and thumb to the sky, as if they wanted to inspire to the creature the fear of what is above their heads.

The king, then, asked me questions about the caliphs, about their customs and about many of their institutions. I answered to the best of my knowledge, then, he said: "How old do you consider the world to be?"

- "Opinions differ about this," I replied. "Some say six thousand years, others say a bit more or a little less."

- "Does this opinion come from your prophet?" He continued.

- "Yes," I said.

He started laughing, and so did his Vizier, who was standing next to him, which proved their disbelief; then he added:

"I don't think your prophet was of that opinion."

I returned to the charge and said, "This is the prophet himself." Then, I saw the disbelief coloring their entire faces, and he ordered his interpreter to speak the following words:

"Now, pay attention to what you say, because one does not talk to kings unless one has the certainty of what one says. You made believe that there was a difference of opinion between you and your prophet on this question: therefore, this disagreement resides with a statement of your Prophet. However, when it comes to what the prophets have said, it is no longer permitted to have a difference of opinion. On the contrary, everyone must submit without questioning. So, be careful of what you say on questions such as those." Then, he again entreated me on other matters, but time has erased them from my memory.

He then asked me, "Why have you left your country when its geography and people are much closer to you than we are to you?"

I told him about the events in Basra, and how I had arrived at Siraf. "There," I continued, "I wanted to see you, O King! Because I had heard of the prosperous state of your kingdom, of your wisdom, of your justice and of the perfection of your government that takes care for all of its subjects. I wanted to see this empire with my own eyes."

Now, God willing, I shall return home to the kingdom of my cousin and I will tell everyone what I have witnessed about the flourishing state of your empire, its vast extent, its equitable administration, which extends to all, and your great qualities, O great prince! I will repeat every wonderful word I have heard here and I will boast every good deed I have seen."

Impressed by this speech, the King showered me with riches and beautiful clothing, and I was taken back to Khanfou by the mail-route. The king then wrote to his governor telling him to treat me exceptionally well and give me the highest priority among the distinguished persons surrounding him. He told him to heap kindness on me with all sorts of favors until I was ready to leave. So, I stayed with him, living in abundance and pleasure until I left China.

ADDENDUM: A MAGNETIC TEMPLE IN CHINA
(Translated by Pierre Beaudry)

According to reports from several curious scholars who wanted to know the world and study history, there exists, at the far end of China, a circular temple, made up of seven gates and covered by a seven sided dome, which is remarkable for its construction and its elevation.

At the top of the dome is placed a sort of precious stone larger than the head of a calf, and whose brilliance illuminates the whole area inside of the temple. Several kings have tried unsuccessfully to seize that stone; but all of those who tried to come close, at a distance of ten cubits, fell dead on the spot. If someone uses spears or some other instruments of the same size to reach it at the same distance, they are repelled and fall away from it. Any projectile launched against this stone has the same fate. In a word, any device thrown against it can succeed in reaching it, and anyone who tries to demolish the temple pays his audacity with sudden death.

According to some scientists, this phenomenon is caused by the use of magnetic stones, endowed with repelling properties. The temple contains a well whose opening is in the form of a heptagon, and, one who imprudently leans over too close to the edge is pulled down, head first, to the bottom. The well is

surrounded by a sort of necklace, around which the ancient inscription reads, I believe in *mosned* characters:

'This well takes you to the Archive books, where the chronology of the world, the knowledge of the heavens, and the knowledge of the past and of the future are located. The well leads you to the depository of all the treasures of the Earth. But, the man who wishes to enter and draw from these treasures must be equal to us in power, science and wisdom. Let he who is able to reach that goal be recognized as our equal; let the man whose attempts fail know that our power is greater than his, our wisdom greater, our science more extended, our sagacity more profound, and our vigilance more complete.'

The temple, its well, and its cupola are all grounded on a massive block of flint as steep as a mountain. It is also impossible to overthrow it or to dig holes in it. As soon as one sees the temple, the dome, and the well, one is overtaken by a sentiment of fright and sadness, and, at the same time, by a sort of perplexing attraction toward that building coupled with the fear that it might be damaged or destroyed. (Masudi, [*LES PRAIRIES D'OR*](#), Vol. 4, pp. 69-71, translated by Pierre Beaudry from the French translation of Casimir Barbier de Maynard.)

3. SECULAR KNOWLEDGE VERSUS RELIGIOUS BELIEF

The reason I chose these two stories of the Quraysh in China and the Magnetic Temple, is to show how Masudi was truthful to his purpose and that the performative demonstration of Quraysh only stands to prove it by means of a Galactic mirror effect between the microcosm and the macrocosm. This is the most important form of conformal mapping that can be used in relating human history to Galactic history. The story of the Magnetic Temple is a good example of the trepidations that goes on in someone's mind before he makes a discovery of principle.

The truth of the matter is that the wisdom of the Chinese King does not reflect the typical oligarchical court welcoming of strangers into a new land, but illustrates, rather ironically, the true workings of the creative process of a wise king who uses the dialogue of civilizations to get to the truth. The question is: What was Masudi's reason for choosing this story rather than any other?

The point that Masudi is making is that although ministers and diplomats generally lie to friends and enemies alike, in order to keep the truth for their King's ear only, the case of the Quraysh, who is a descendent of Ishmael and of the Banu Hashim clan that gave birth to the prophet Muhammad, is a reflection of the Islamic insight into the Platonic tradition of respect for the truth. It is crucial, here that the reader makes the connection between insight and truthfulness, because only an insightful person can be morally committed to the truth, no other.

Arabic Cartograms, used in Medieval Arabic School Maps



Figure 3 A stylized Masudi Map of the World made to resemble the Rete of an Astrolabe ironically centered on the region of Mecca instead of the Pole Star.

On the dimly lit wall of Plato's Cave, the king appears to be constantly attempting to satisfy his curiosity that the Quraysh is who he says he is, and the Quraysh keeps responding to the questions of the king apparently to make sure he

doesn't upset him, speaks out of reason, and does not manifest any particular religious zeal. But, there is a deeper level that Masudi is helping the reader to discover as a matter of principle.

If the reader digs under the surface and goes a little deeper, he will discover that it is the Galactic domain of looking for underlying assumptions that the story is all about; that is, about the nature of a universal dialogue of civilizations among completely different peoples who are seeking to apply a common governing principle to all of the peoples of the world. *That common denominator, in fact, could not be anything else but the sharing of the discovery of principle of understanding how to dig for gems of underlying assumptions. That principle is galactic in character, because it implies a proportional relationship between reason in the macrocosm of the Universe and reason in the microcosm of the human mind. That proportionality calls for relating anomalies or singularities of astrophysical scale to similar anomalies and singularities inside of the human mind.* That is what the story of the Quraysh is all about.

Take the part of the story where the Arabs are said to have won the war against the Persians and ask yourself: Why did the King of China believe in the superiority of the Creative God of the Arabs over the sun-god of the Persians? Look at the beautiful irony that Masudi developed, here. The Quraysh responded to the king's question by letting him know what he was not saying. He said:

“They have won with the assistance of the true God, because the Persians had chosen instead to bow down to the sun and the moon and worship those two great luminaries at the exclusion of their Creator.”

In other words, what the King of China recognized was the use of galactic creative thinking on the part of the Arabs, and the lack of it in the Persian camp. The weakness of the ancient Persians in war came from the fact that they were Zoroastrians (Greek rendering for Zarathustra) which is an ancient ecological cult based on the eternal dualist struggle between good and evil, the original historical mother of Manichaeism. Zoroastrian believers are natural Aristotelians who are incapable of understanding the Cusa idea of the unity of the opposites because they believe in sense certainty. As the notorious Aristotle worshiper, Nietzsche, later

made believe, everything in the universe must be submitted to the eternal return of either good or evil.

Because such a simplistic belief structure prevented them from looking into their own minds, the Persian army leaders were easily deceived and fell into a trap set by the Arabs at the decisive [Battle of Nahavand](#) in 642 AD.

During the period that led to this battle, Caliph Umar let it be known that he wanted peace and that he wished to put an end to his conquest of Persia. He said he was tired of fighting and tired of being constantly harassed in Mesopotamia by constant Persian raids. Therefore, he let it be known that he was satisfied with having conquered Mesopotamia, and that he wished to abandon the rest of Persia to the Iranians. Umar even circulated a public statement that said: ***“I wish there was a mountain of fire between us and the Iranians, so that neither they could get to us, nor we to them.”*** (A. I. Akram, *The Muslim Conquest of Persia*, Ch: 8, Maktabah Publications, 2009.)

The irony is that Umar's genuine intention did not convince the Iranians who chose to do exactly the opposite. They took the offensive in order to drive the Muslims out of Persian lands once and for all. In 642, the Iranian Emperor Yazdgerb III made a special appeal to his people calling on everyone from all parts of Persia to march to Nahavand in large numbers in order to fight a decisive battle against the Arabs. The idea was to give the Islamic army the *coup de grace*. After a short period of time, the Persian army had recruited 100,000 fighters for that last offensive.

The intelligence of the Persian military buildup at Nahavand was sent back to Umar who gave the order for the Governor of Busra, Abu Mussa, to march on Nahavand, and he took command of his own army to march toward Medina. The Muslim army only had a total of about 30,000 men, three times less. Everybody knew the Arabs were no match for the Persians in terms of numbers. So, everyone expected a total Muslim disaster.

Then, just before the battle was about to begin, Muslim intelligence reported that Caliph Umar had suddenly died, and the Arabs made sure the entire Persian

army would get the news. As a result, the Persian cavalry was emboldened and, full of confidence, mounted an immediate attack against the Arabs who swiftly retreated into a narrow but safe area which the Persians did not suspect was going to become a deadly trap.

Once the Arabs had reached for cover, the rest of the Muslim army, waiting and hiding in the pass, counter-attacked the Persian cavalry and closed the entrance of the pass behind them. Within a very short period of intense fighting, the surrounded Persian forces were decimated and their entire cavalry was destroyed from all sides. The battle was swift but decisive. The Islamic army won the day by using their minds; the Persian cavalry lost because they used their Zoroastrian belief in sense certainty. That battle became known to the Muslims as the “*Victory of Victories.*”

That is the Muslim victory that marked the dissolution of the Persian Empire as the Sassanian Imperial Army was never able to recruit men in such numbers ever again. The benefit to the Persians, however, was that they eventually abandoned their Zoroastrian cult in order to embrace the Muslim faith.

What Masudi did not report is that the Islamic army, which was highly trained in flanking maneuvers, knew precisely how to flank an army three times their size by understanding the underlying assumptions of its commanders. So, ask yourself: If you are a Zoroastrian sun-worshiper, or simply a practical Aristotelian: “Would you go to battle against an enemy commander who tells you, ahead of time, that he is no longer willing to fight you and who is reportedly dead just before the battle is about to begin?”

The issue, here, is *insightfulness*. What do you have to do in order to gain an *insight* into a battle that you have to win? Better still, how can you generate *insights* at will?

First of all, you have to consider that being insightful does not mean you are a genius. It simply means that you have disciplined your mind by taking the habit of doing a lot of hard work. In other words, you have given your sense of curiosity a good working over by exercising your mind in the science of looking for

relationships that other people don't see, and by listening for the voice of things that people don't say. Why? Because your life may depend on it.

4. THE MUSLIM GALACTIC METHOD OF SPHERICS

In this section of my report, I intend to pursue the hypothesis that Hussein Askary had initiated in his EIR report of October 18, 2013. At that time, Hussein had made a call for the revival of the Islamic Platonic Academy within the context of the LaRouche organization. Here is how he put it:

“Another example was the treatment of astronomy and geometry from both the fraudulent Ptolemaic method and the saner Pythagorean method of “Sphaerics.” The verification and the sorting process took some time, when Muslim scientists started to replicate and examine both the axiomatic and experimental aspects of what was delivered to them. Through the interventions of such great Muslim scientists and philosophers as Al-Kindi, Al-Razi, Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, in the 9th and 10th centuries, and even later, the dividing line started to become clearer. Critiques and outright refutations of Ptolemy's astronomy, Euclid's geometry, and Aristotle's methodology began to become a key aspect of the “dissertations” of upcoming scholars. Sorting out this crucial aspect of the history of the epistemological fight within the Islamic Renaissance has not been undertaken yet in any serious manner. Its time has come now. And with the type of historical work being carried out by LaRouche's young associates, it seems appropriate now to accomplish this unfinished mission.” (Hussein Askary, [BAGHDAD 767-1258 A.D. MELTING POT FOR A UNIVERSAL RENAISSANCE.](#))

It is not too late to respond to Hussein's call, although very few people, today, understand the epistemological difference between Plato and Aristotle that Hussein is implying; and unless that problem is resolved, the Renaissance that is urgently required, now, will be postponed proportionately. I can only hope that the world education system could remedy this question quickly for the sake of future generations. What is required is for people to think galactically; that is, in the same galactic frame of mind as during the Islamic Renaissance.

One of the best examples of this frame of mind is the contribution in epistemology of astronomy made by the Banu Musa Brothers (803-873) under the Caliphate of Al-Mamun during the early part of the 9th century. Hussein highlighted the galactic discovery of principle that the Banu Musa Brothers had made in replicating the Eratosthenes original discovery of the circumference of the Earth. He reported:

“The brothers came up with a new method of measurement. Rather than measuring the difference of the angle of the shadow cast by the Sun’s rays on two poles located in two different locations along the meridian (Eratosthenes’ method), Banu Musa used the celestial sphere as a reference point.

“They measured the angle of declination from the first location, in relation to the North Pole in the celestial sphere, and moving north until the angle in relation to the North Pole changed by one degree, all the time measuring the distance between the first location and the second. Knowing that each degree on the celestial sphere corresponds to one degree on the meridian circle of the surface of Earth, they came to the conclusion that the distance between the two locations, A and B, multiplied by 360° would give them the measure of the circumference of Earth. The result they reached was 40,253 km (in today’s units), missing only by about 133 km.

“They took the measurement once again, going south from the first location, and reached a figure very close to their first conclusion. With that accomplished, Al-Ma’moun was satisfied, and Muslim astronomy gained a new discovery of principle. The discovery was not that the Earth was spherical, a fact that was common knowledge then, but that the principle of proportionality between the celestial sphere and the sphere of the Earth, reflects the proportionality between the Platonic “Reason in the Heaven and reasoning that is within us” (*Timaeus* 47.C).” (Hussein Askary, [BAGHDAD 767-1258 A.D. MELTING POT FOR A UNIVERSAL RENAISSANCE](#))

The point I wish to make is that the Banu Musa Brothers had not only rediscovered the Eratosthenes measure of the Earth with a different projection of

the same experiment; it was altogether a different epistemological experiment. They had actually added a higher dimensionality to Eratosthenes's insight.

While Eratosthenes had established his discovery from a visual projection within the Solar system, the Banu Musa brothers added the mental construct of a Galactic sphere to their observation. That changed the experiment axiomatically.

This improved insight into the projection of the universe as a whole provided for a better understanding of how to correlate anomalies between the macrophysical domain of astronomy and the microphysical domain of the individual human mind without recourse to sense certainty. The benefit of such a form of correlation is what provides openings for new insights into scientific progress today. In fact, whenever one can correlate a Galactic anomaly with an epistemological anomaly, one is not far from being able to formulate a new principle of the universe. See the works of Tony Peratt on the [*Plasma Universe*](#).

In other words, the Banu Musa brothers excluded the fallacy of sense certainty and added to their discovery the Platonic proportionality that Ali bin Isa Al-Asturlabi (The Astrolabe-maker) had made with them when he invented the Astrolabe by means of a sphere that isn't there. Thus, the second school of Galactic-Platonic minds in history took roots during the Islamic Renaissance of Caliphate Harun al-Rashid and al-Mamun. As Hussein wrote in his conclusion to this crucial discovery:

“The irony of the Banu Musa brothers is that they acquired the measure of the circumference of the Earth from a relationship to a celestial sphere that could not be measured mathematically, simply because that sphere does not exist. So, the result of the Earth's measurement was discovered through a defect of perception, an inferential shadow that the mind used to discover the reflection of an ordering principle of the universe, a principle that is higher than mathematics, and that mathematics cannot account for, nor compute.” (Hussein Askary, Op. Cit., p. 53)

In his most recent EIR article, Hussein made a similar point by identifying Muhammad's crucial principle for solving the current madness of British

geopolitics and their clash of civilizations: “Seek knowledge even if it were in China! Seeking knowledge is a duty upon each Muslim.” (Hussein Askary, [*The Islamic Renaissance Was a Dialogue of Civilizations*](#), EIR, November 27, 2015, p. 23.) The irony, as Hussein showed, is that the Arabs took full advantage of Chinese discoveries of principle of their “knowledge based society” to get Europe out of the dark ages. Will they succeed in doing it again in the near future?

APPENDIX: UMAR'S TESTAMENT ON THE BENEFIT OF THE OTHER

“Be kind and generous to the Muhajirun and the Ansar. Those out of them who are good, be good to them; those who are bad overlook their lapses. Be good to the people of the conquered lands. They are the outer line of our defense; they are the target of the anger and distress of our enemies. They contribute to our revenues. They should be taxed only on their surplus wealth. Be gracious to the Bedouins as they are the backbone of the Arab nation. I instruct you to be good to the Dhimmis for they are your responsibility. Do not tax them beyond their capacity. Ensure that they pay the Jizya without undue inconvenience. Fear God, and in all that you do keep His pleasure in view. In the matter of people fear God, and in the matter of Allah do not be afraid of the people. With regard to the people, I enjoin upon you to administer justice with an even hand. See that all the legitimate requirements of the people are met. Be concerned for their welfare. Ensure the safety of their person and property. See that the frontiers of our domains are not violated. Take strong steps to guard the frontiers. In the matter of administration do not prefer the rich to the poor. Be hard against those who violate the law. Show them no mercy. Do not rest content until you have brought the miscreants to book. Treat all the people as equal. Be a pillar of strength for those who are weak and oppressed. Those who are strong but do wrong, make them pay for their wrong-doings. In the distribution of booty and other matters be above nepotism. Let no consideration of relationship or selfish interest weigh with you. The Satan is at large; it may tempt you. Rise above all temptations and perform your duties in accordance with the injunctions of Islam. Get guidance from the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Freely consult the wise men around you. Apply your own mind in difficult cases, and seek light from God. Be simple in your living and your habits. Let there be no show or ostentation about you. Lead life as a model Muslim. As you are the leader of the Muslims, justify your leadership by being the best among them all. May God bless you.” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umar>)

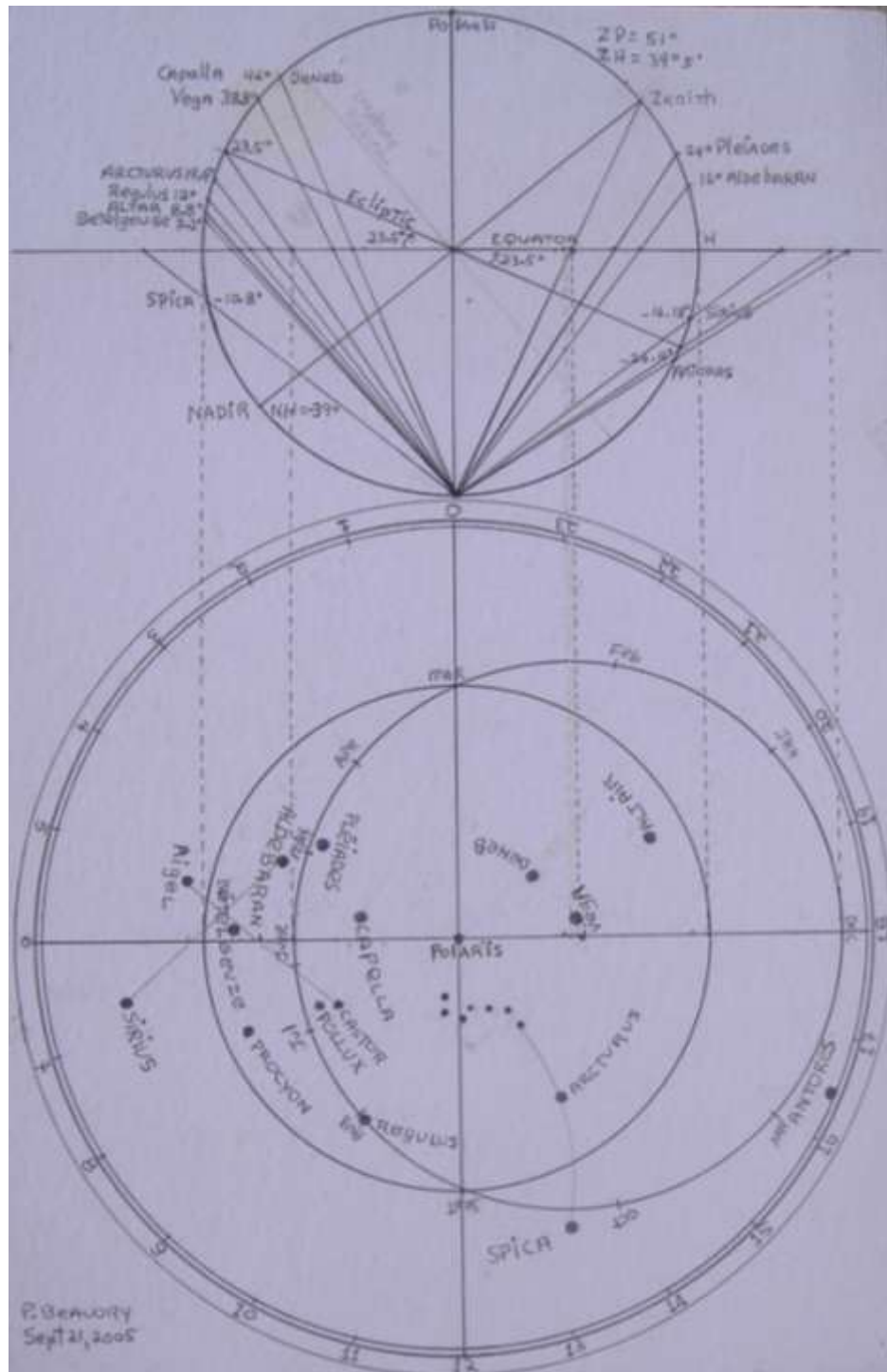


Figure 4 The imaginary sphere of the Universe invented by Asturlabi projecting stars around the North Star Polaris onto a circular ecliptic plane representing the Northern Celestial Hemisphere. (Astrolabe for Leesburg VA.) **FIN**