PART THREE

ISLAMIC SOCIAL HISTORY
CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE-EASTERN BOURGEOISIE IN EARLY ISLAMIC TIMES

"Nous ne connaissons pas l’histoire sociale de l’Islam. La connaissons-nous jamais?" asks Fernand Braudel. It is in the very nature of scientific progress that when such a question is asked, the answers are already in the air. The new, sociological, trend in Islamic studies was underlined by the late Professor J. H. Kramers of Leiden in his lecture "La Sociologie de l’Islam" at the Twenty-second International Congress of Orientalists at Istanbul in September, 1951, and again, with special emphasis on the economic factors, by Professor Cl. Cahen, then of Strasbourg, at the Congress held in Cambridge in August, 1954. A major confrontation with this problem occurred in September, 1961, when twenty Islamists from seven different countries convened in Brussels and devoted four days of deliberations and discussions exclusively to the social aspects of Islam.

As a matter of fact, the subjects covered by the term sociology have occupied the minds of Arabists for over a century. In the wake of Francois Guizot, H. T. Buckle and Jacob Burckhardt, Alfred von Kremer wrote his brilliant *Culturgeschichte des Orients unter den Chalifen*, and although he filled the gaps in our knowledge with more elegance than accuracy, this and other books of his cannot be overlooked by the sociologist. These were echoed in the *History of Muslim Civilization* by the able Christian Arab, Jirji Zaydan. The works of the great masters of Islamic studies, I. Goldziher, J. Wellhausen, Ch. Snouck Hurgronje, C. H. Becker and C. A. Nallino, are mines of information for the student of sociology.

4. Vienna, 1875-77.
5. Cairo, 1902-6; in Arabic.