

Al-Maqrīzī

Book of Exhortations and Useful Lessons in Dealing with Topography and Historical Remains (al-Khiṭaṭ)

Part IIa



TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY

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EDITED BY

FRÉDÉRIC BAUDEN & CLOPPER ALMON

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Dealing with Topography and Historical
Remains*

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Edited by Frédéric Bauden

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With an Introductory Essay by

Frédéric Bauden

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Al-Maqrīzī, *Book of Exhortations and Useful Lessons in Dealing with Topography and Historical Remains* (al-Khiṭaṭ). Part IIa

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1. The Cities and Towns of Egypt

[1] (The verb) *madana*, (*scil*) in a place (name), says Ibn Sīdah,⁽¹⁾ means ‘he dwelled, lived’ (in it), and (the noun) *madīnah*, (meaning) ‘a fortified place built in the heart of a land’, is etymologically derived from it; its plural is *madā’in* and *mudun*. On that basis, Abū ’l-Ḥasan, as transmitted by al-Fārisī,⁽²⁾ ruled that *madīnah* is a *Fa’īLah* (pattern).

[2] The learned Athīr al-Dīn Abū Ḥayyān⁽³⁾ says: (The noun) *madīnah*, of known meaning, is derived from (the root) *m-d-n* and therefore a *Fa’īLah* (form). Those who hold the opinion that it is a *maF’īLah* (pattern) of *dāna* (root: *d-y-n*) argue on weak ground, because the Arabs are in unanimous agreement on the glottal stop in its plural. For they say *madā’in*, with *hamz* (’), and no (form) *madāyin* with *y* is preserved and attested. There is no need at all to claim that it is a *maF’īLah* of *dāna*; it is proven that it is a *Fa’īlah*, of which they form a plural on (the pattern) *Fu’ūL*. Because they say *mudun*, the same way they use *ṣuḥuf* (as the plural) in the case of *ṣaḥīfah* (sheet, leaf).

[3] One should know that Egypt’s cities and towns are many, some obliterated in history, their names and vestiges unknown,

¹ Abū ’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ismā’īl, Hispano-Arab lexicologist and lexicographer (1007-1066); see ‘Ibn Sida’ (M. Talbi) in *EF*.

² The grammarian Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan b. Ahmad b. al-Ghaffār (901-987), a Persian from Fārs, who served both the Ḥamdānīd Sayf al-Dawlah in Aleppo and later the Buwayhid ‘Aḍud al-Dawlah. His source *Abū ’l-Ḥasan* is presumably the Baṣran grammarian Sa’īd b. Mas’adah al-Mujāshī’ī, known as “al-Akhfash the Middle” (d. 831), or possibly the Baghdadi grammarian ‘Alī b. Sulaymān, known as “al-Akhfash the Younger” (d. 927). Cf. “al-Fārisī” (C. Rabin), “al-Akhfash” (C. Brockelmann-Ch. Pellat) in *EF*.

³ I.e., the Hispano-Arab grammarian and philologist Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Gharnāṭī (d. 745/1344 in Cairo), one of the teachers of Maqrīzī’s maternal grandfather Ibn al-Ṣā’igh; cf. “Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī” (S. Glazer) in *EF*.

others whose name is known and whose vestiges survived, and still others which are populous and thriving (to this day).

[4] The earliest city known by name in Egypt is the city of *Am-sūs*, which was obliterated by The Flood. It has a well-known history, and from there Egypt was ruled before The Deluge. Then, after The Flood, the city of *Memphis* became Egypt's capital and the seat of government of the Copts and Pharaohs, until it was laid in ruins by Nebuchadnezzar. After Alexander, the son of Philip the Macedonian, had become the ruler of the Greeks, he founded the city of *Alexandria*, which remained the capital of Egypt until 'Amr ibn 'Aṣ came with the Muslim armies and conquered the country. The latter founded *Fuṣṭāṭ-Miṣr*, which was Egypt's principal city until General Jawhar arrived from North Africa with the troops of al-Mu'izz-li-dīni-'llāh Abū Tamīm Ma'add, took control of Egypt, and founded *Cairo*, which then became Egypt's capital, until the Fāṭimid regime came to an end at the hands of Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb. He then built the Citadel, and Cairo remained Egypt's capital to this day.

[5] In Egypt are several cities and towns which are not a royal residence, namely: al-Fayyūm (Arsinoë); Dalāṣ (Nilopolis); Ihnās (Heracleopolis); al-Bahnasā (Oxyrhynchos); al-Qays (Cynopolis); Ṭahā (Theodosiopolis); al-Ushmūnayn (Hermopolis); Anṣinā (Antinoupolis); Qūṣ (Cos); Suyūt (Asyūt, Lykopolis); Fāw (Phbow); Ikhnīm (Chemmis, Panopolis); al-Balyanā (Tpourani); Hiw (Diospolis Parva); Qinā (Kainepolis); Dandarah (Tentyra); Qift (Koptos); al-Uqṣur (Luxor, Diospolis Magna); Isnā (Latopolis); Ar-mant (Hermonthis); Idfū (Edfu, Apollonopolis Magna); and the frontier town of Uswān (Aswan, Syene), which in our youth was still a town (of Egypt).⁽⁴⁾

⁴ I.e., before it was lost to the Banū 'l-Kanz (cf. Pt. I, ch. 39, and below, ch. 33).

These are the towns of Upper Egypt. The Egyptians used to call the Copts living in Upper Egypt *marīs*, and the Copts living in Lower Egypt *biyamā*.⁽⁵⁾

In Lower Egypt are the towns of Nūb (*Nūb Ṭarīf*) in the Delta's Eastern Ḥawf; 'Ayn Shams (Heliopolis); Atrīb (Atribis); Natū (Leontopolis), with the rural commune of Zankalūn among its villages; Tamī (Thmuis); Baṣṭah (Bubastis), the site of which today is called *Tall Baṣṭah*; Farbayṭ;⁽⁶⁾ al-Bathanūn (Pathanon); Minūf (Onouphis); Ṭawah; Minūf again;⁽⁷⁾ Sakhā (Xois); al-Awsīyyah, which is identical with Dimīrah; Tīdah (Toit); al-Afrājūn (Phragonis), with Nishā (Nexis) as one of its villages; Naqīzah; Banā;⁽⁸⁾ Shubrā Sunbāt (*Shubrā al-Yaman*); Samannūd (Sebennytos); Nawasā; Santā (?);⁽⁹⁾ al-Bujūm, which was overwhelmed by sands and salt marshes, and of which today (only) the village of Idkū on the coast⁽¹⁰⁾ between Alexandria and Rosetta is known; Tinnīs; Dimyāt (Damietta); al-Faramā (Pelusium); al-'Arīsh (Laris, Rhinokorura); Ṣā (Saïs); Tarnūt (al-Ṭarrānah); Qarṭasā; Agnū (Akhnā); Rashīd (Rosetta); Maryūt (Mareotis); Lūbiyah; Marāqiyah. Beyond Lūbiyah and Marāqiyah is only the Pentapolis, which is identical with Barqah (Cyrenaica).

⁵ The former is the Coptic *marēs*. In the latter de Sacy wants to recognize the "Bashmuris" of other writers, while Quatremère identifies them with the *Boukoloī*, i.e., the inhabitants of the "Bucoliae" in the Delta (cf. de Sacy, *Relation de l'Égypte*, 13-14, 502, 507).

⁶ I.e., ancient *Pharbaethus*, the present-day *Hurbayṭ* (distr. of Kafr Ṣaqr, Sharqiyyah). The form *Qurbayṭ* in the Bulaq text is from al-Qudā'ī's *Khiṭaṭ*; it was therefore so rendered in Pt. I, ch. 25, sections 3,5.

⁷ Presumably Minūf al-Suflā, the present-day *Maḥallat Minūf* north of Ṭanṭah, as distinguished from Minūf al-'Ulyā near the apex of the Delta, the present-day capital of Minūf district and of the Minūfiyyah governorate; cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:222. — The vanished community of Ṭawah (of uncertain location) is sometimes mentioned in conjunction with the first Minūf (e.g., in Qudā'ī's list in Pt. I, ch. 25,5).

⁸ I.e., Banā Abū Ṣīr in the district of Samannūd (Gharbiyyah), listed as "Banā and Buṣīr" by Qalqashandī (*Ṣubḥ* 3:382) and al-Qudā'ī (I, 25,5). Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:70).

⁹ Reading uncertain; HC: *S-n-b-tā*, Bulaq text: *S-btā*; Wiet edition leaves a blank. — *Santā* is mentioned in *Tuhfat al-irshād* as a vanished community of the Sharqiyyah (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 287).

¹⁰ The village of Idkū (distr. of Rosetta) is located on the southern shore of the narrow neck of land separating the Mediterranean from Lake Edku.

In the southeastern districts lie the towns of Fārān (Paran), al-Qulzum (Klysma), Rāyah (Raithu), Aylah (Elath), and Madyan (Midian). Most of these towns are in ruins, but some of them have a history that is well known.

Some new towns were founded in the Islamic period, and an adequate account of that will be given, God willing, later on.

[6] Today, Egypt consists of two parts, Upper and Lower Egypt, both of them together forming fifteen provinces governed by a *wālī*.

Upper Egypt is the larger of the two, consisting of nine provinces: Qūṣ, the largest, including Uswān and Gharb Qamūlah, Uswān being the farthest point of the country to the south; Ikhmīm; Suyūt; Manfalūt; al-Ushmūnayn, including al-Ṭaḥāwiyyah; al-Bahnasā; al-Fayyūm; Iṭfih; and al-Gīzah.

Lower Egypt consists of six provinces: al-Buḥayrah, which extends (southward) from Alexandria and the Cyrenaica; al-Gharbiyyah, which is a single island comprising the land between the two arms of the Nile, the Damietta and the Rosetta branches; al-Minūfiyyah, including Ibyār,⁽¹¹⁾ which is (now) called “Jazīrat Banī Naṣr” the province of Qalyūb; the Sharqiyyah province; and the province of Ushmūm Ṭanāḥ, which includes the (former) Daqahliyyah and Murtāḥiyyah provinces;⁽¹²⁾ here are located the ports of al-Burullus and Rosetta, as well as (the city of) al-Manṣūrah.

In Lower Egypt are also located Alexandria and Damietta, two cities without a province attached to them.

^{11.} An ancient town (now belonging to the district of Kafr al-Zayyāt) and capital of the Mamluk province of *Jazīrat Banī Naṣr*, the “island” formed by the Rosetta arm in the west and the Bugāriyyah canal and its branches in the east. Cf. below, end of ch. 62; Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:119, I, 213.

^{12.} The two provinces were merged in 1315, and Ushmūm Ṭanāḥ, one of the oldest towns of Egypt, became their joint capital until the end of the Mamluk period. Its present-day name *Ushmūn al-Rumān* (distr. of Dikrnis) derives from the Coptic *Shemoun Erman*. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 1:229.

[7] Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Mas'ūdī mentions in his *Akḥbār al-zamān* that the Kūkah, a people from Aylah, took over and ruled the land. [8] They divided Upper Egypt into eighty districts and made it four provinces. There were thirty Egyptian cities in the districts of these four provinces, which contained all the wonders and included such districts as Ikhmīm, Qifṭ, Qūṣ, and the Fayyūm.

[9] It is said⁽¹³⁾ that Miṣr, the son of Bayṣar, divided the land among his children. To his son Ushmūn he gave (the land extending) from the town named after him to the beginning of the sea all the way to Damietta; to his son Anṣinā he gave (the land extending) from Anṣinā to the Nile cataract, to his son Ṣā (the land) from Ṣā in the Delta to Alexandria, to his son Minūf, the center of Lower Egypt, namely, Memphis and its environs, to his son Qifṭ the western part of Upper Egypt to the Nile cataract, and to his son Atrīb the eastern part of the land all the way to the desert, that is, the desert of Fārān. And to his three daughters—al-Faramā, Sarabām, and Badūrah—he gave specific parcels of Egyptian land within (the territories divided) among their brothers.

¹³ The essence of this legend, derived from Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, has already been told in Pt. I, ch. 7 (sections 6, 12, 18).

2. The City of Amsūs: Its Wonders and Its Rulers

[1] Master Ibrāhīm ibn Waṣīf Shāh al-Kātib says in his book on the history and wonders of Egypt: The name of ancient Egypt was *Amsūs*.

[2] The first ruler of Egypt was *Naqrāwus* the Giant, son of Miṣrāyim. The name *Naqrāwus* means ‘first ruler of his people.’

The son of Marākīl, son of Dāwīl, son of ‘Arbāq, son of Adam (peace be upon him) had set out with some seventy horsemen of ‘Arbāq’s descendants, giants one and all, in search of a place where they could live, as they were fleeing from their ancestor’s descendants at the time when mutual oppression and jealousy had erupted among them. In his case, it was the descendants of Qābīl, the son of Adam, who oppressed him. They kept on riding until they reached the Nile, and when they saw the spaciousness and the beauty of the country about it, they liked it and stayed there and set up permanent buildings. *Naqrāwus* founded *Miṣr*, which he named after his father Miṣrāyim. But later he abandoned it and had another city built which they called *Amsūs*.

[3] The knowledge for all that, says Ibn Waṣīf Shāh, had come to him from the sciences which Darābīl had taught to Adam, upon him be peace. So he was able to erect lofty buildings and towering columns, to construct basins for collecting rain water, to open mines, to set up talismans, to dig canals, and to build towns and cities. Whatever noble science the Egyptians possessed, they owed it to the knowledge of *Naqrāwus* and his companions. And all of that was recorded in cryptic signs on stones which were later interpreted by Philemon the Priest, who rode with Noah, peace be upon him, in the Ark.

It was Naqrāwus who founded the city of Amsūs.⁽¹⁾

[4] In it he made many wondrous things. One of them was a bird that would whistle twice at sunrise and twice at sundown, so that people could infer from its whistling what events were going to happen and could prepare for them. Another was an idol of black stone in the center of the city with a matching idol facing it: when a thief visited the city, he could only get away by passing between the two, and as soon as he did, they closed in over him and he was caught. He also made on a tall tower a copper image that would forever be topped by a cloud, and when someone asked it for rain, it would dispense the amount of water he wanted. Or he erected on the border of the country hollowed-out copper idols which he filled with sulfur and which he entrusted to the demon of fire so that, when someone approached them, those idols would emit from their mouths a fire that burned the intruder up. On top of Jabal Buṭrus he erected a tower which sent out a jet of water and irrigated the fields about it.

These creations were still there when The Flood wiped them out.

[5] He is said to have been the one who improved the course of the Nile, which before his time used to be diffused between two mountain ranges, and who sent a team of men to Nubia who, having measured it, dug a huge canal from it along which they built towns and planted trees.

He also wanted to find out where the Nile came from, so he set out and traveled until he was beyond the Equator and, standing above the Pitch-Black Sea, saw the Nile flow along the sea like so many threads until it entered beneath the Mountain of the Qumr and emerged on the other side flowing into lakes. It is said that it was he who made the statues there.

¹ The legendary Amsūs—the name is perhaps a corruption of “Ramses”—was located, according to Qalqashandī, “outside Alexandria below the Mediterranean coast” (*Ṣubḥ*; 3:315).

After his return to Amsūs, he divided the country among his sons: to his oldest son by the name of Naqrāwus he assigned the western part, to his son Shawrab the eastern part, and for his youngest son, named Miṣrām, he built the city of Barsān⁽²⁾ and had him live there.

[6] He remained ruler over Egypt for one hundred and eighty years. After his death, his body was daubed with preservatives and placed in a coffin of solid gold. A gold-plated sarcophagus was made for the coffin which was then placed inside it together with the king's treasures, an elixir, and golden vessels too numerous to count. On the sarcophagus they inscribed the date of his death, and over his tomb they erected a talisman to protect it from nefarious flying creatures.

[7] After him ruled Naqrāwus, son of Naqrāwus. Like his father he was versed in the science of the priests and in talismans. He was the first to build a colossal edifice in Egypt in which he set up images of the seven planets. On the statue of each planet he inscribed its beneficial and its harmful influences. He had all of them draped in splendid robes and appointed servants and custodians for them.

He set out from Amsūs, heading westward, until he reached the Encircling Sea. Along its shore he erected massive columns with idols on top whose eyes would shine brightly at night. He then proceeded across the land of the blacks all the way to the (source of the) Nile. He ordered the construction of a wall alongside the Nile and built in it gates from which the water would issue.

In the western desert beyond the Oases he built three cities on massive columns with battlements of translucent colored stones. Each city contained several storehouses of ancient wisdom. In one of them was an idol of the Sun with a human face and the body of a bird, made of solid gold and its eyes of a yellow gemstone, seated on a throne of magnetite with a book of the sciences in its hand. In another was an idol with the head of a man and the body of a bird,

² Thus the HC and the Bulaq text (1:130), Qalqashandi; Wiet: *Yarbiyān*.

and with it the image of a sitting woman made of solidified mercury, with two strands of hair hanging down, a mirror in her hands and the image of a planet on her head, her arms holding the mirror up to her face. In another was a vessel with seven kinds of liquid flowing into it without one changing the other. In one of them was the image of a sitting teacher made of turquoise, with several boys seated in front of him, all of them made of carnelian. In another was the image of Hermes—that is, of Mercury—gazing at a table in front of him made of ammoniac and resting on legs of gold, with a plate of gemstone in its center which had the image of an emerald eagle with topaz eyes worked into it, and with a blue serpent made of silver before him, its tail coiled about his legs and its head raised as if hissing at him. (Naqrāwus) also placed there the image of Mars riding on a horse, holding a drawn sword of green iron in his hand. He erected there a pillar made of red gemstone and topped by a golden dame with the image of Jupiter inside. He also put there a dome made of red coral (?) resting on four columns of blue onyx, with the images of the Sun and the Moon on its ceiling facing each other in the likeness of a man and a woman in conversation. And he put there a golden pavilion containing the image of Venus in the shape of a woman clutching her tresses, and beneath her a man made of emerald, a book with one of their sciences in his hand and apparently reading to her from it. Into the remaining storehouses he put uncountable treasures of money, gems, jewelry, the alchemical elixir, and all sorts of drugs and lethal poisons. Over the gate of each city he placed a talisman to protect it against intruders, and he had interconnected subterranean tunnels dug to them, each tunnel three miles long.

(Naqrāwus) also built a city in Egypt called Gilgilah, and there he laid out a garden, its walls overlaid with gemstones illuminated with gold, where he planted all sorts of trees and beneath which he led water channels. In that garden he planted a certain exotic tree that would yield every kind of fruit. He also built in that city a pavilion of reddish alabaster topped by an idol that turned with the sun. He put devils in charge of that city, and when someone left his

house at night he would perish. And he erected there massive columns on which he inscribed all the sciences and the descriptions of the diverse drugs with their beneficial and harmful properties. He also had tunnels dug to that city which connected with the tunnels of the other three cities, each tunnel leading to that city twenty miles long.

All of these cities remained in existence until they were destroyed by The Flood.

When (Naqrāwus) was dead, after having ruled Egypt for one hundred and nine years, he was taken to a tomb protected by a talisman and buried there.

[8] After him ruled his brother *Miṣrām*, son of Naqrāwus the Giant, son of Miṣrāyim. It is said that (the name) “Miṣr” (for Egypt) comes from his name.

He was a sage. Thus he built a colossal temple of the Sun made of marble overlaid with gold, with a horse made of blue gemstone in its center bearing the image of the Sun in red gold and with a glass candelabrum on its head containing a specially prepared stone that shone brighter than any lamp. Furthermore, he tamed lions and rode on them, and he traveled to the Surrounding Sea and built in the middle of it a white citadel topped by an idol of the Sun on which he inscribed his name and description. He also made another idol of copper on which he inscribed:

I am Miṣrām the Great
 Revealer of Secrets, Victorious Potentate.
 True talismans have I made
 and talking statues did I create.
 Tremendous structures made I grow
 where seas and oceans ebb and flow.
 Let those who follow be aware
 no mightier king was ever there.

Then he returned to Amsūs and secluded himself from the people for thirty years. He appointed as his deputy a man by the name of

‘Anqām, a descendant of ‘Arbāq son of Adam, who was a priest and a sorcerer. As time went by, the people of Egypt wished to see (Miṣrām). So ‘Anqām, after having so informed Miṣrām, had them all gather, and then Miṣrām showed himself to them high up on a throne embellished with all sorts of adornments in so awesome an appearance that it filled their hearts with terror and they fell down in prostration, invoking God’s blessing on him. Then he had food brought to them and they all ate and drank, after which he bade them to return to where they had come from. And they never saw him again thereafter.

[9] After him ruled his (former) deputy *Anqām*. The Egyptians have told stories about him that the rational mind can hardly believe.

It is said that Idrīs (Enoch), peace be upon him, was raised to heaven in his time, and that he saw in his books predicting the future that there would be The Flood.

Then he had a palace made of copper built beyond the Equator at the foot of the Mountain of the Moon. In it he had eighty-five copper statues made from whose mouths the water of the Nile would issue to shed into a lake that extended all the way to Egypt. He then went there from Amsūs in order to see with his own eyes the wise design of its construction and the elaborate decoration of its walls with their pictorial representations of the celestial spheres and other things. It was a palace where lamps were lit at night and tables were set up with so much of every kind of wonderful food served in priceless vessels on them that, were a whole army to eat from it, not even a tiny morsel would be missing in the end; no one knew who prepared it nor who put it there. In the center of the palace was a pond of water which was frozen on the surface, but which one could see move beyond the frozen part. Having admired what he saw, he returned to Amsūs, where he appointed his son ‘Arbāq as successor, turned the kingdom over to him and gave him last advice. Then he went back to that palace and remained there until he died.

To this ‘Anqām is attributed the book of the Copts which contains their histories and all the things that will come to pass at the end of time.

[10] After him came his son *‘Arbāq*—or, according to others, *Arbāq*—son of ‘Anqām. He is called The Sinner.

He created wondrous works, among them a yellow tree which had iron branches with hooks: when an evildoer came near it, they would grab him and not let him go until he had confessed his evil-doing, and (promised to) desist from it, to his opponent. Another was an idol made of black tuff which he called “Saturn’s servant.” People used to appeal to it in litigations, and he who deviated from the truth would remain transfixed on the spot and could not extricate himself from it until he had made fair amends for himself, even if he had to stay there for a whole year. Also, when someone was in need of a thing, he would rise at night and, gazing at the planet, humbly beg and utter the name of *‘Arbāq*. And in the morning he would find what he needed on his doorstep.

[11] He also made an iron tree with branches that he daubed with a specially prepared drug. It would then attract all sorts of hoofed animals and lions and wild beasts so that one could catch them.

[12] When he was angry at the people of some region, he would sick wild beasts and lions on them, and sometimes he would dole out their water by drops.

[13] (The two angels) *Hārūt* and *Mārūt* are said to have lived in his time. And he is said to have built a huge garden and to have abducted beautiful women whom he made live in it. But one of them plotted his destruction and poisoned him so that he died.

[14] After him ruled *Lūgīm*,⁽³⁾ son of *Naqrāwus*—but others say he is a son of *Naqrāwus* the Giant. He is known as “Young *Lūgīm*.” It is he who took away the kingdom from *‘Arbāq*, son of

³ Probably = *Lūdīm*, son of *Mizraim* (Gen. 10:13), via Coptic *Loudjīm*.

‘Anqām the Priest, and returned it to the line of Naqrāwus, after it had been lost without war or murder.

He was quite knowledgeable in the priestly arts and in talismans and created wondrous works. For instance, when ravens and crows multiplied dangerously in his time and destroyed the crops, he had four towers built on the four sides of Amsūs, each tower topped by the image of a crow holding a snake in its beak that was coiled around it. From that time on, the harmful, birds shunned people and came no longer close, until the towers were destroyed by The Flood.

He was a decent man, fair to his subjects, just, and a friend of the priests. After his death he was buried in a tomb with his treasures beside him, and a talisman was placed over it to protect it.

[15] After him ruled his son *Khaṣlīm*.⁽⁴⁾ He was a learned man, a scholar and a priest and created wondrous works.

He was the first to make a device for measuring the rise of the Nile’s water, by calling the men of science and engineering together who then designed a house of marble on the edge of the Nile that had a small copper basin in the center containing a measured quantity of water and two copper eagles on either side of the latter, one male and the other female. At the beginning of the month during which the Nile begins to rise, he opened that house and had the priests gather there in his presence. The priests would then mumble their invocations until one of the eagles gave off a whistling sound: If it was the male, then the water level would be perfect (that year); if it was the female that whistled, then the rise would fall short, in which case they would prepare for rising prices to the best of their ability.

⁴ Perhaps inspired by Kasluḥīm, a son of Mizraim and Biblical ancestor of the Philistines (Gen. 10:14).

It was also he who built the bridge across the Nile in Nubia. After his death, he was placed in a tomb with his treasures beside him and a talisman over it.

[16] After him ruled his son *Harṣāl*—or *Hūṣāl*, according to others, meaning “servant of Venus,” or *Sūṣāl*, according to still others—son of *Lūgīm* the king in the line of *Naqrāwus* the Giant. It is said that Noah, peace be upon him, was born in his time. He was a learned man, a priest, a man versed in magic and talismans.

[17] Wondrous things were made by him. Thus, he built a city in the center of which he placed an idol of the Sun which revolved like the planet, sinking into night at sunset and reemerging in the morning at sunrise. He also made a tunnel beneath the Nile that ran all the way through the Earth, and he emerged from it in disguise in order to reach the city of Babylon and discover the things its kings had accomplished.

Noah, peace be upon him, lived in his time. Twenty sons were born to him and to each he assigned a guardian, while he was the chief of the priests. For one hundred and seventeen years he remained on the throne, but finally he retired permanently to the temples and set up his sons on their own, each in his part (of the kingdom) that his father had given him, for seven years. After that time, they agreed on one from their midst and made him their king. His name was *Qadrashān*—or *Qadrasān*, according to others.

[18] After he had become king, he banished all of his brothers to the inner cities in the west and contented himself with a woman, a cousin of his, who was a sorceress. She built him a wooden palace which had the representations of the planets painted on the inside. He had it beautifully furnished and moved to ride on water, and there he would then hold court. One day, while he was on board, a strong wind came up so that the water became agitated. The (floating) palace capsized and broke up, and he and those with him drowned inside.

[19] After him ruled his brother *Namrūd* the Giant—or Shamrūd, according to others—son of Harṣāl.

He led an upstanding life, treated his subjects with fairness and dispensed justice liberally. He called his brothers together and distributed among them their (late) brother's treasures. As a result, people were happy with him.

He sent for his brother's wife, the sorceress, but she fled with her son to a town in Upper Egypt and protected herself against him by means of her sorcery. After she had stayed there for some time, the sorcerers rallied around her son, whose name was Būsaydūn, and incited him to seek the kingdom. So he marched out and Shamrūd and his brothers took the field against him. They fought a tremendous battle in which victory fell to Būsaydūn, who then killed his brother and ruled after him.

[20] Thus *Būsaydūn*, son of Qadrashān, ruled over the kingdom in the city of Amsūs. He was a scholar and learned man who acquired great power thanks to his mother's sorcery.

She created extraordinary works for him. For instance, a glass dome in the shape of the terrestrial globe that would revolve with the revolution of the celestial sphere. On its inside she depicted representations of the planets through which people could learn of the secrets of nature and the sciences of the universe.

When his mother, the sorceress, died after sixty years of his reign, her body was daubed with something to protect it against decay and vermin and buried beneath the idol of the Moon. It is said that after her death one used to hear the voice of some spirit coming from where she was buried; it would tell people of wondrous things and answer any questions it was asked.

When Būsaydūn died after having ruled for one hundred years, an image of glass was made for him, divided into two halves, and his body, after having been treated with decay-preventing substances, was placed inside. Then the image was closed around him and sealed airtight. (His body) was then set up in the temple of the

idols, with his treasures buried nearby, and henceforth a festival was celebrated in his honor.

[21] After him ruled his son *Sarbāq*—or *Sharbāq*, son of *Būdaydūn*, son *Qadrashān*, son of *Harsāl*. Like his father, he was versed in the priestly science, in magic and in talismans.

He made wondrous things. Among them, over the gate of the city of Amsūs, a copper duck standing on a column: When a stranger entered from any direction, it would flap its wings and quack, whereupon that stranger would be apprehended and interrogated to find out with what business he had come. He also dug a canal from the Nile extending all the way to the cities of the west and built along its course road marks, towns and parks.

[22] In his time, a king from among the descendants of *Furāshā*, son of Adam—or a descendant of *Ṣawānītā*, son of Adam, according to others—set out from Mesopotamia and, having conquered Syria, headed for Egypt in order to make himself its ruler. “You will never be able to accomplish it,” he was told, “because of the magic those people possess.” So he disguised himself and (tried to) enter (the country) with a group of his nobles in order to find out about the people of Egypt. But as he reached the very border of Egypt, he and his companions were detained by the officials in charge of that border until the king could issue appropriate orders with regard to them. A description of them was sent by the border officials to the king.

Now, *Sarbāq* had had a dream vision: He appeared to be on a high tower and a huge bird was swooping down on him in order to carry him away; he moved so far away from it that he almost fell off the tower, and the bird passed him and he was safe. He woke up in terror and told his dream to the high priest, who said to him, “A certain king is after you, but he will not prevail.”

(*Sarbāq*) then consulted his stars and saw that the king who was after his kingdom had already entered Egypt. That was the time when the messengers arrived with the descriptions of the people

that had reached the border of Egypt. So (Sarbāq) gave orders that they be brought into his presence, after having been shown around to see the wonders of Egypt. And they bound (the intruders) and took them around and told them all about the wonders of Egypt and the talismans there, until they got to Alexandria, then to Amsūs, and finally to the garden built by Miṣrām, where King Sarbāq was staying at the time.

Having arrived at the garden, they were shown by the sorcerers the wondrous statues, and then they entered in the king's presence. He was surrounded by the priests, and in front of him was a fire which one had to walk through before one could get to him. Those who were innocent were not hurt by it, but someone who had evil designs on the king or harbored an evil thought against him was seized by the fire. One by one the people walked through the fire without being harmed by it, until it was finally the Mesopotamian king's turn. And as he approached the fire, it engulfed him with its heat, and he turned and fled.

They pursued him until they caught him, and then had him stand before Sarbāq until he confessed. The king ordered him to be crucified, and this was carried out on top of the fortress whence he had set out, while public criers went about proclaiming, "This is the punishment of someone who sought what he could not attain." The rest of them were pardoned by the king. They left Egypt and talked about the wonders they had seen, and henceforth the rulers of the Earth ceased to harbor designs on the rule of Egypt.

Sarbāq died after having ruled Egypt for one hundred and three years. He was placed in a tomb with his possessions by his side and a talisman to guard him against intruders.

[23] After him ruled his son *Sahlūq*, who was knowledgeable in priestly lore and talismans.

He measured out the water of the Nile so that every area would receive its fair share, and he reorganized the state.

[24] He also built a fire temple and was the first to worship fire.

[25] At Amsūs he created wondrous works, one of them a tree on the highest of the mountains with which one was able to distribute the winds that keep away anyone (and anything) intending to bring harm and ruin to Egypt, be it a demon or a human, a wild beast or a bird.

[26] Within the city he erected a seven-cornered composite pavilion with seven entrances, one on each corner and in the center of that pavilion another pavilion of bronze topped by the images of the seven planets, and underneath that pavilion still another pavilion suspended on seven columns.

At the first entrance of the (main) pavilion were a lion and a lioness made of bronze, both of them crouching, to which he would sacrifice a black cub, and which he censured with its hair. At the second entrance were a bull and a cow, to which he would sacrifice a calf, and which he censured with its hair. At the third entrance were a boar and a sow, to which he sacrificed a shoat, and which he censured with its hair. At the fourth entrance were a ram and a ewe, to which he sacrificed a lamb, and which he censured with its hair. At the fifth entrance were a fox and a vixen, to which he sacrificed a whelp, and which he censured with its hair. At the sixth entrance were an eagle and its female, to which he sacrificed an eaglet, and which he censured with its feathers. And at the seventh entrance were a vulture and its female, to which he sacrificed a vulture chick, and which he censured with its feathers.

He would smear each pair of them with the blood of the animal sacrificed to them, and all sacrificial animals would be completely burned and their ashes were placed under the thresholds of the pavilion's doors. He appointed custodians for that pavilion, who would keep the lamps lit night and day.

He also divided the people of Egypt into seven classes, each having their respective entrance to that pavilion. When a litigant stepped

up to one of those images, and he was in the wrong, he would remain stuck to the pavilion and could not escape from it until he had absolved himself of the due he owed, male to male and female to female. In that way they could tell the wrongdoer from the one who was wronged.

That pavilion remained in Amsūs until it was destroyed by The Flood.

[27] He is said to have seen his father in his dreams who ordered him to set out for one of Egypt's mountains, which he described to him. In it he would find an aperture of such-and-such description with a two-headed viper at its entrance. As he would approach it, it would bare its fangs to him. "Take two small birds with you, a male and a female. Sacrifice them to the viper and throw them to it. It will pick them up with its two heads and retire with them into an underground passage. When it is gone, enter the aperture, and you will find there an immense woman made of dry hot light. She will rise before you, and you will sense the heat coming from her. Do not get close to her, or you will burn up. Rather, sit down opposite her and greet her.

She will then speak to you, so listen carefully to what she says to you and do what she tells you. Because you will be greatly honored by that, and she will show you the way to the treasures of your ancestor Miṣrām. For she is guarding them."

When he woke up, he did what his father had told him to do. And after he had sat down next to that woman and had made his salaams, she asked him, "Do you know me?" "No, I don't," he said. "I am the image of the fire that was worshiped among peoples past. I hereby want you to revive my memory and to build me a new temple where you will light for me an eternal fire in a single bowl. You will establish an annual festival in my honor which you and your people will attend. For in doing so you will extend a help to me for which I shall give you honor in addition to your present honor, and power in addition to your present power; I shall protect you from

those who have evil designs on you, and shall show you the way to the treasures of your ancestor Miṣrām.”

After he had assured her that he would do everything she had ordered him to do, she gave him directions to the treasures under the Suspended Cities and taught him how to get there, and how to guard against the spirits that are in charge of them, and what would save him from them. Then he said to her, “How can I see you again at another time?” And she answered, “Do not come back, for the viper will not let you pass. Rather, burn incense in your house with such-and-such (ingredients) and I shall come to you.” He was glad at that, and after she had disappeared, he went to carry out the construction of the fire temple the way she had ordered. And he received the treasures of Miṣrām.

[28] After his death he was placed in a tomb with all his treasures beside him and a talisman over it to guard it against intruders.

[29] After him ruled his son Sawrīd, who was a distinguished sage. He was the first to collect the land tax in Egypt, the first to order payments from his treasuries to the sick and the chronically ill, and the first to introduce the custom of the morning report (to the sovereign).

He created extraordinary works, among them a mirror made of certain (magic) substances in which he was able to see the different regions, so that he knew what was going on there and which of them would have a fertile year and which would face poor crops. He had that mirror, which was made of copper, set up in the center of the city of Amsūs.

He also made in Amsūs the image of a sitting woman holding a boy on her lap whom she was nursing. To the women of Egypt (the image of) that woman meant that, when one of them had an ailment in some part of her body, she would come to that image and rub that part of her body against the equivalent part of the image, and the ailment would go away. If a woman did not have enough milk,

she would rub her breasts against the breasts of the statue, and her milk would flow copiously. If her menstrual flow was insufficient, she would rub her vulva against the vulva of the image, and her menstrual flow would increase, but if she lost too much blood, she would rub a spot below her knees against a matching spot of the image. If a woman had a hard time with childbirth, she would rub the head of the boy on the image's lap and give birth (at once). If she wanted to make herself attractive to her husband, she would stroke the image's face and say, "Do such and such!" But when an adulteress laid her hand on the image, it would shudder and tremble until she repented.

That image was still there until it was destroyed by The Flood. The books of the Copts say that it was found after The Flood, and that most of the people worshiped it.

Sawrīd also made an idol of many (magic) ingredients, and when someone was afflicted with an ailment in some part of his body, he would wash that particular part with water and then drink that water, and he would be cured.

It was this Sawrīd who built the two large Pyramids of Egypt, which are ascribed (by other people) to Shaddād ibn ʿĀd.

The Copts, on account of the power of their magic, deny that the ʿĀdites could have invaded their country.

[30] After Sawrīd had died, he was buried in the (great) Pyramid together with his treasures. He is said to have lived three hundred years before The Flood [32] and to have ruled for one hundred and ninety-nine years.

[33] After him ruled his son *Hargīt*, who was like his father an outstanding sage in the science of magic and talismans.

He created wondrous works, mined a lot of minerals, supported the science of alchemy, and built the pyramids of Dahshūr, to which he moved immense treasures, precious stones, drugs and poisons, and over which he appointed spirits as guardians.

When a man wounded another man, he had his fingers cut off, and when a man stole another's property, he turned the thief over to the victim of the theft as a slave.

After his death he was buried in the (respective) pyramid, together with all his possessions and treasures.

[34] After him ruled his son *Manāwus*—or Manqāwus, according to others—who was like his father versed in ancient wisdom. He was, however, a wicked, bloodthirsty tyrant who snatched women from their husbands and permitted that practice to his noblemen as well.

He made wondrous things, unearthed treasures, and built palaces of gold and silver to which he channeled streams, and where he used all sorts of precious gems as gravel.

He also made a despotic man by the name of Qurmās the overlord of the people. He sent him forth to make war on the western peoples, of whom (Qurmās) killed scores.

After his death he was buried in one of his palaces together with his treasures, and a talisman was placed over (his tomb) to guard and protect it against intruders.

[35] After him ruled *Afrāwus*, who was like his father versed in science and ancient wisdom.

As a king, he practiced justice and led an upstanding life. He returned the women who had been abducted in his father's time to their husbands.

He built a pavilion, fifty cubits long by a hundred cubits in width, and had on its sides bronze birds mounted which would sing, without a moment's letup, with various delightful voices.

In the center of the city of Amsūs he erected a column with a human head made of bronze on top: it would emit a cry whenever an hour of day or night had passed, and people who heard the cry would know that an hour had elapsed.

He also built a tower topped by a dome of gilded bronze to which he applied several coatings, and when the sun went down, the dome would light up and illuminate for him the city of Amsūs all night long, bright as daylight, neither wind nor rain being able to extinguish its light. And when it was day again, the light of the dome would go out.

To one of the Babylonian kings he gave as a gift an unguent container made of chrysolite, five spans in diameter; it is said to have been found after The Flood.

On the eastern mountain he erected a huge idol standing on a pedestal, with a coating of gilded bronze. He made it face toward the sun, and the idol would turn with it until the sun went down. Then it would turn during the night until it faced east by the time of dawn, and when the sun came up, the idol would have its face turned in its direction (again).

In the western desert he founded many towns where he deposited enormous treasures.

He married three hundred women, yet no son was born to him. For God Almighty had already made the wombs barren in anticipation of the destruction of the world by The Flood and the death of man and beast He intended to wreak upon it.

[36] After his death he was placed in a tomb in the eastern mountains, together with his treasures and a talisman over it.

[37] After him ruled *Armālīnūs*. He created wondrous works, founded cities, towns and villages, and made new talismans.

He had a cousin by the name of Far‘ān, who was a very powerful man. So the king got him out of his way by putting him in command of an army which he took on a campaign on the king’s behalf. Far‘ān conquered kings, killed mighty nations, and captured rich spoils. After his return, one of the king’s wives fell madly in love with him. She kept on pursuing him until he took her to bed and they consorted with one another. They kept this up for some

time, but then they began to fear that the king might find out about them. So the woman slipped a poison in Armālinūs' drink from which he died.

[38] After him ruled *Far'ān*, son of Maysūr. No one dared to challenge him on account of his valor and political skill.

[39] But he had not ruled for many years when Philemon the Priest had a vision of white birds descending from heaven; proclaiming that those who wanted to be saved must join the Man of the Ark.

[40] People had known of the coming of The Flood ever since the time of Sawrīd, and his construction of the Pyramids for that (eventuality). Now they took to glass-lined subterranean vaults in which the winds had been trapped by clever design. *Far'ān* had built several of them for himself and his family.

[41] But (Philemon) did not hesitate to gather his wife and children and disciples about him and to join Noah, peace be upon him. He believed in Noah and stayed with him so that he was able to ride in the Ark.

The Flood came in the days of *Far'ān*. It submerged the entire land of Egypt, destroyed its man-made structures, and wiped out all of those remarkable creations. For six months the water remained over the land and its level reached halfway up the two great Pyramids.

[42] The story of that will be told, God willing, when we discuss Egypt's afflictions in this book.

[43] It is said that *Far'ān* was an arrogant, tyrannical man who unlawfully seized property and abducted women, and that he wrote to al-Darmasīl son of Mehujael in Babylon, advising him to have Noah, peace be upon him, killed; that he made light of the priests and the temples so that the land of Egypt went from bad to worse in his time, with crops falling short and poverty prevailing in the rural areas, all because of his persistence in error and injustice and his sole interest in his own pleasure and amusement; that peo-

ple followed his example so that mutual oppression and injustice became rife; and that, when The Flood came and the rains were pouring down, he got up, stone-drunk, intending to flee to the Pyramid, but the ground shook under him and, as he was heading for the entrances, his legs gave way and he fell feebly to the ground and died, while those who were already inside the shelters died of distress. But God alone knows the truth.

3. The City of Memphis and Its Kings

[1] This city used to be on the western side of the Nile at a distance of twelve miles from the city of Fuṣṭāṭ-Miṣr. It was the first city to be rebuilt in Egypt after The Flood and became the royal residence and capital, after Amsūs just discussed, until it was laid in ruins by Nebuchadnezzar.

[2] It is mentioned by God Exalted in His Book, when He says, “*And he [Moses] entered the city, at a time when its people were unheeding.*”⁽¹⁾

[3] Imām Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī relates in his (Koran commentary entitled) *Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān* on the authority of al-Suddī,⁽²⁾ who said:

As Moses, peace be upon him, was growing up, he used to travel on Pharaoh’s boats and dress the way Pharaoh dressed; he was in fact, called “Pharaoh’s son.” Then one day Pharaoh set out on a boat without Moses, and when Moses, peace be upon him, arrived, he was told that Pharaoh had gone out on a boat, so he boarded another boat to follow him, when siesta time came upon him at a place called *Manf*. He entered it at noontime, while its markets were all locked up and not a soul was in the streets. And this is the place that God Exalted speaks of when He says, “*And he entered the city, at a time when its people were unheeding.*”

[4] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam relates on the authority of ʿAbd-Allāh ibn Lahīʿah⁽³⁾ that the first man to reside in Egypt, after God had drowned the people of Noah, peace be upon him, was Bayṣar son

^{1.} Koran 28 (The Story):15.

^{2.} Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, Kūfan authority on Koranic exegesis, the Prophet’s military campaigns and early Muslim history, died 745. —The passage is from Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 20:26.

^{3.} *Futūḥ Miṣr* (ed. Ṣabīḥ) 18.

of Ham, son of Noah. He lived in Memphis, which is the first city that was rebuilt after The Flood, together with his offspring who numbered thirty souls, among them four of his sons who had come of age and had married, [5] namely, Miṣr, Fāriq, Māj and Yāj, Miṣr being the oldest one. [6] For that reason the city was called *Māfah*, because *māfah* in the language of the Copts means “thirty.”⁽⁴⁾ [7] Before that time they had lived at the foot of the Muqaṭṭam where they had carved out numerous dwellings.

[8] Ibn Khurradādhbih says in his *Routes and Countries*:⁽⁵⁾ The city of Memphis is the city of Pharaoh where he resided and for which he built seventy iron gates. He also made the walls of the city of iron and bronze. In that city were the streams that flowed beneath his throne, four in number.

[9] It has been related⁽⁶⁾ that the city of Memphis was all bridges and dikes, carefully designed and crafted, so that water did indeed flow beneath their houses and courtyards and they could trap and release it at will. And that is what God Exalted speaks of in the words of Pharaoh: “*Do I not possess the kingdom of Egypt these rivers flowing beneath me? What, do you not see?*”⁽⁷⁾

[10] There used to be many idols there that were still standing upright, until they toppled, with all other idols, at the moment when the Prophet, peace and blessings upon him, on the day Mecca was conquered, pointed at the idols with a rod in his hand, as he walked around them and said, “Truth is here and falsehood has come to nothing!” And falsehood was indeed dying: For as soon as

⁴ The Greek *Memphis*, Copt. *Memfi* (hence Arabic *Manf*) is derived from *Menfe*, a later shortened form of *Men-nefru-Mirē* (‘the beauty of King Mirē remains’), the name of a new quarter and residence founded by Pharaoh I (Mirē) of the 6th Dynasty (G. Steindorff in Baedeker, *Egypt*², 143-4). Muslim tradition, however, adopted the—obviously Coptic—etymology which operates with an etymon *Māfah* (cf. its Biblical name *Mōph* in Hosea 9:6), allegedly derived from Copt. *māb* (Eg. m-‘b-’) ‘thirty.’ Hence the significance of the numeral thirty in the following traditions relating to Memphis: it was *thirty* miles long, Manqāwus built it for his *thirty* daughters, etc.

⁵ *K. al-masālik wa-l-mamālik* (ed. de Goeje) 161.

⁶ *Futūḥ Miṣr* 16.

⁷ Koran 43 (Ornaments): 51.

he pointed an idol in the face, it would topple on its back, and as soon as he pointed at its nape, it would fall on its face, until there was not an idol left that had not fallen down. At that moment, all the idols on earth from east to west fell down, and those who worshiped them were left wondering, not knowing what was the cause of their downfall. Ever since that moment the idols of the city of Memphis have remained fallen.

[11] Among them were two large idols next to the Green House that housed the idol of al-ʿAzīz.⁽⁸⁾ It was made of solid gold and its eyes were two rubies the likes of which one could never make again. Both the idols and the Green House were later cut up into pieces sometime after the year 600.

[12] It is said that Memphis was thirty miles long and twenty miles wide, and that a descendant of Japhet, son of Noah, constructed at the time of Miṣrāyim a device which carried water to the top of the wall of the city of Memphis. Actually, he made the device (a series of) hollowed-out steps, and whenever the water reached one step, the next one (above it) would fill up so that the water would be raised that way to the top of the wall, from where it descended and flowed into all the houses in the city. Then it would flow at a certain spot outside the city.

[13] There used to be in Memphis a house built of green granite so hard that iron could not work off a chip of it. Inside were engraved pictures and an inscription, and on the face of its door were the images of cobras with their necks expanded. It was so huge and heavy that, had thousands of people joined force to move it, they could not have done it. The Ṣābians claim that it was the House of the Moon. This house was one of seven that used to be in Memphis (dedicated) to the seven planets.

⁸. "The Mighty One," the Koranic term (K 12:30, 51, 78, 88) for Potiphar (Gen. 37:36), whose name appears below (sect. 106; ch. 82, sect. 2) also in the corrupted form *Atfir*.

[14] This green house was demolished by Emir Sayf al-Dīn Shaykhū al-ʿUmarī after 750 (A.D. 1349). Some parts of it are found in the Sufi convent he founded and in his mosque, both of which are located in the Ṣalibah quarter outside (Fāṭimid) Cairo.⁽⁹⁾

[15] Abū ʿAbd-Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (al-Māzinī) al-Qaysī reports in his *Gift to the Hearts*: I saw in Pharaoh's palace a large room made from a single rock and as green as myrtle, in which there is a representation of the celestial spheres and the stars; we have never seen a marvel more beautiful than that.

[16] Abu ʿl-Ṣalt Umayyah ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Andalusī relates: The capital of Egypt in ancient times was the city of Memphis, which was located on the western side of the Nile at a distance of twelve miles from al-Fuṣṭāṭ. Then, after Alexander had founded the city of Alexandria, people had a desire to build it up and see it prosper, and it became the seat of learning and the center of wisdom, until it was conquered by the Muslims at the time of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him. Then ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ founded his own city called al-Fuṣṭāṭ, and the Egyptians and others, Arabs and foreigners alike, gradually took up residence there so that it became the capital of Egypt and its (administrative) center down to our own time.

[17] Master Ibrāhīm ibn Waṣīf Shāh al-Kātib, after having discussed the history of the city of Amsūs and the destruction of Egypt's civilization by the Flood of Noah, peace be upon him, reports:

After the water had subsided, the first man to rule Egypt after The Flood was Bayṣar son of Ham son of Noah, who had with him thirty of the giants from his family and offspring. They all joined forces and built the city of Memphis,⁽¹⁰⁾ where they took up residence;

⁹ On the Khānqāh Shaykhū cf. *Khiṭaṭ* 2:421; the Shaykhū Mosque, *Khiṭaṭ* 2:313. The *Khuṭṭ al-Ṣalibah* is the area near the Mosque of Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn in the present-day Qism al-Khalifah of Cairo.

¹⁰ The founder of Memphis was, according to Herodotus, King Menes (*Meny*), who united Egypt around 3400 B.C. Modern Egyptologists (e.g., G. Steindorff

Philemon the Priest, already mentioned in connection with the history of the city of Amsūs, was one of them. He had given his daughter to said Bayṣar in marriage, and she came with her husband to Egypt and bore him a son whom he named Miṣrāyim.

[18] After Bayṣar had died,⁽¹¹⁾ he was buried on the site of Dayr Abī Hirmīs—or Dayr Abī Hirmis, according to others—west of the Pyramids. It is said to have been the earliest burial ground in Egypt.

[19] He died eighteen hundred and six years after the time of The Flood.

[20] Someone else has said: Then Miṣrāyim founded a city which he named after himself. Later on came a man, a descendant of Japhet, and built him a rising wall which he crafted in steps, and then, in a masterful design, made the water flow in such a way that it kept rising to the top of the wall from where it flowed down into the city so that one could benefit from it without trouble or cost. After which it would flow off on another side. On that wall he had inscribed: This is the work of a mortal, not the work of an immortal.

[21] After Bayṣar ruled his son *Miṣrāyim* son of Bayṣar. Philemon (the Priest) helped him to get possession of the treasures of Egypt, taught him how to read their writing, and initiated him to their secret sciences.

Miṣrāyim founded towns, dug canals and planted trees. He founded a large town which he named *Darasān*,⁽¹²⁾ which is identical with al-ʿArīsh. He married a woman from the priestly class, and she bore

in Baedeker, *Egypt*⁷, xclx, 143; A. Scharff, *Geschichte Ägyptens*, 43 f.) ascribe to him merely the construction of a fortress called “the White Walls” to keep Lower Egypt subjugated; around it then grew the metropolis of Memphis (cf. note 4 above).

^{11.} This passage from Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (*Futūḥ Miṣr* 18) was already cited in Pt. I, ch. 7; cf. there n. 20.

^{12.} Presumably, Persian *dar-i āsmān* ‘gate of heaven.’

him a son whom he named Qufṭīm. He also founded the town of Raqūdah¹³ on the site of (latter-day) Alexandria.

After his death, an underground vault, one hundred and fifty cubits long and lined with white marble, was built for Miṣrāyim, and in the center of it a reception room overlaid with gold leaf was built that had four entrances, each with a statue of solid gold wearing a golden crown and seated on a golden throne with chrysolite legs; each statue had magic signs to ward off evil engraved on its chest. They enclosed Miṣrāyim's body in a coffin-like body of emerald, forty cubits long, in which he was buried, together with all the gold and silver and gems in his treasuries. These included a thousand pieces of turned chrysolite, a thousand statuettes of precious gemstone, a thousand golden amphoras filled with priceless pearls, a thousand golden vessels, and a number of silver ingots.

Over the tomb a talisman was placed to protect it from intruders, and on the tomb they inscribed: "Miṣrāyim, son of Bayṣar, son of Ham, son of Noah, died two thousand and six hundred years"—seven hundred years, according to others—"after The Flood. He did not worship idols. He has gone to a Garden where there is neither decrepitude nor sickness, neither sorrow nor sadness." And the name of God Almighty was written on it so that no one could get to it except a king who would come at the end of time, professing the religion of the Divine King and believing in the Resurrection and the Koran, and in the Prophet who would call to the Faith at the end of time.

Above the underground vault they piled up huge boulders for a roof, on which they poured so much sand that they created a barrier between two facing mountains.

¹³ The ancient Egyptian village of *Rhakotis* opposite the island of Pharos between the Mediterranean and the Mareotic Lake (*Buḥayrat Maryūt*), which later formed the western quarter, mainly inhabited by Egyptians, of newly founded Alexandria (cf. Baedeker, *Egypt*⁷, 12, 13).

[22] It is said that Mişr son of Bayşar⁽¹⁴⁾ was with his great-grandfather Noah, peace be upon him, in the Ark. Then (Noah) prayed for him that the Lord settle him in the Good and Blessed Land, which is the mother of all countries and the sustainer of humankind, and whose river is the best of all rivers, and that He bestow the amplest of blessings upon him and make the land subservient to him and his descendants and give them power over it. Then (Mişr) asked (Noah) about that land, and he described it to him and told him about it.

[23] Bayşar son of Ham had become old and feeble, so his sons, Mişr and all of his brothers, led him to Egypt, and they camped there. And that is why (the country) is called *Mişr*.

[24] After (Mişrāyim) ruled his son *Qubṭīm* son of Mişrāyim, who was the first to create wondrous works after The Flood. He mined minerals, dug canals, erected landmarks and towers, and made talismans.

[25] It is said that after Mişrāyim's death his sons—Qibṭ being the youngest of them—quarreled (about the succession). So they met near the Pyramids and agreed that whoever defeated his brother in combat would take the kingdom. First, Ushmūm and Atrīb fought with one another and Atrīb was defeated, then Şā and Ushmūm fought and Ushmūm lost, and finally Qibṭ fought with Şā and Qibṭ was the winner.

So *Qibṭ* got the kingdom after his father's death, and his brothers submitted to him. He resided in Memphis, his father's capital, and married a woman who bore him four sons: Quṭṭarīm, Ashmūn,

¹⁴ This tradition and the following one—incongruously interpolated here—are taken from Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (*Futūḥ Mişr* 17,18) and have already been cited in Pt. I, ch. 7. They are by no means the only instance of poor organization in this diffuse chapter, in which original research slips inserted by the author somehow got worked into the text. Indeed, most of the chapter gives the distinct impression of being a mere draft. Its numerous inconsistencies, name switches, jagged transitions, abrupt jumps in time, and obvious incongruities are hardly worth cluttering the critical apparatus with corrective notes.

Atrīb, and Sā. They propagated and multiplied and colonized the country.

[26] Later on, when he was about to die, he divided the land among his four sons. To his son Quṭṭarīm he assigned (the land) from Uswān to Qift, to his son Ashmūn (the land) from the city of Qift to the city of Memphis, to his son Atrīb he gave the entire Ḥawf, and to his son Šā (the land) from al-Buḥayrah all the way to the West. He gave the primateship over them to Quṭṭarīm and ordered each of them to build himself a city in his respective territory.

[27] For himself he built an underground vault beneath the large mountain and had it faced with marble. In it he made vents for the wind, which would come blowing into it with a tremendous roar. In the vault he set up painted copper busts which shone like lamps night and day. After his death, his body was put into that vault in a trough of solid gold, after having been dressed in robes woven with pearls and coral. By his head, a marble column was erected with a shining gemstone on top. Around the sarcophagus were built chests made of multicolored stones surrounded by the books of wisdom. His possessions, treasures and riches were placed by his side. And on his tomb they carved an inscription as they had done on his father's tomb.

[28] Each of his sons moved to his assigned territory. Šā moved with his wife and children and took up residence in the city of Saïs that will be discussed later.

[29] It is said that the confusion of tongues occurred at the time of Qibt, that God Exalted inspired him with the Coptic language, and that he ruled for four hundred and eighty years. After his death he was buried in the region of the Oases.

[30] After him ruled his brother *Ashmūn* son of Miṣr. Others, however, have claimed that (Qibṭ) established his son Quṭṭarīm⁽¹⁵⁾ in his territory while he was still alive.

[31] (Ashmūn) began to build and colonize. He was a towering giant. He unearthed minerals such as no one before him had ever done. The city of Dandarah was founded by him, and on the mountain of Qifṭ he built a tower from which one could see the Eastern Sea. There he discovered mercury mines. He also built a pond which he called the 'bird trap.'

Toward the end of his days, the 'Ād⁽¹⁶⁾ were destroyed by the storm. During his time, the devils exhumed the idols that had been submerged by The Flood, and they were worshiped (again).

[32] He ruled for four hundred and eighty years and died.

[33] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam⁽¹⁷⁾ mentions Qifṭ son of Miṣr (as the ruler) after Miṣr son of Bayṣar, and (relates) that the next ruler after Qifṭ was his brother Ashmūn, followed by Aṭrib son of Miṣr, then Ṣā son of Miṣr, then the latter's son Badāris son of Ṣā, then his son Māliq son of Badāris, then his son Khirbitā son of Māliq, and then his son Kalkan son of Khirbitā.

[34] It is said that, while Ashmūn was king after his brother, Shaddād ibn Haddād ibn Shaddād ibn 'Ād marched against him and took over as ruler of Egypt. He demolished its buildings, built pyramids, and proceeded to the site of Alexandria and founded that city. He stayed for a long time. Then the 'Ādites left Egypt and Ashmūn returned as its ruler. It is said that after him ruled his brother Ṣā, then after Ṣā his son Badāris.

During (Badāris') time, God sent (the prophet) Ṣāliḥ to the Thamūd. After his death, his son Māliq became king.

¹⁵ Inspired, no doubt, by *Kaphtorim*, a son of Mizraim (Gen. 10:14).

¹⁶ On this ancient tribe mentioned repeatedly in the Koran cf. the article "'Ād" by F.Buhl in *ET*.

¹⁷ Cf. *Futūḥ Miṣr* 18.

[35] *Al-Būdāshīr*, who was a towering giant, made great things. For instance, a tower topped by a four-cornered pavilion with an aperture on each corner, from which, on a specific day of the year, different-colored smoke would curl up, and from each color people could learn something; If the smoke came out green, it signified prosperity and fertility in that year; if it came out white, it meant drought and scarcity; if it came out red, it signaled wars and the invasion of enemies; if it came out yellow, it meant fires and calamities would befall the kingdom; if it came out black, it signified rains and torrents and the ruin of some of the land; and if it came out mixed, it pointed to much injustice and mutual oppression among people.

He also made a tree of copper that attracted all the wild beasts so that, as soon as they got to it, they could not move until they were caught; thus the Egyptians were able to eat their fill on wild game.

It so happened that a raven hacked a boy from the priestly class in the eye and gouged it. So (the king) made a tree of copper with a raven on top, its wings spread, a snake in its beak, and with writing on its back. The ravens would alight on that tree and, unable to leave, would die.

During his time, the sands encroached dangerously on the land of Egypt out of the west. So he made an idol of black granite on a base of the same material, with a basket containing a shovel on its shoulder. He carved inscriptions on its face, chest and arms and made it face west. The sands receded, the winds drove them back, and they became tall mounds.

[36] He also sent Hermes the Sage to the Mountain of the Moon, from which the Nile flows. (Hermes) built the copper statues and regulated both sides of the Nile, which until then had flown copiously in some places and not at all in others. Then he headed west to see what was beyond that. He came upon a wide land with intermittent water and trees. Having built pleasant retreats in it, he stayed there and brought several members of his family in who colonized and cultivated those parts so that the

entire region of the West became populous and flourishing. But then the Berbers intermingled with them and many wars broke out between them which eventually wiped them out. And those communities fell into ruin and nothing survived of them other than the Oases.

[37] Furthermore, al-Būdashīr secluded himself from the public and rarely showed his face outside his home. Sometimes he spoke to people from a place where they could not see him.

[38] Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Mas'ūdī says in his *Akhbār al-zamān* that the first king to be thoroughly versed in the priestly arts and to change the religion and worship the planets was al-Būdashīr. The Copts maintain that the planets used to communicate with him and that there are many wondrous things connected with him. For instance, that he remained concealed from the people for a number of years of his reign. But he would appear to them, time after time, once every year, namely, when the sun entered the sign of Aries. Then people would come to him and he would address them while they could see him. He would order them to do things or forbid them to do others or warn them from going against his orders. At certain times of the year he would sit in audience and speak to them from a place where they could not see him. Later on, a pavilion of gilded silver was built for him, and he would sit on its highest point, a magnificent appearance, and speak to them. Or he would sit in the clouds with a different appearance in the guise of a man. He remained like that for some time, and then he vanished and they did not see him any more. For a while they remained without a king, but then they saw his image in the Temple of the Sun at the time when the planet entered the sign of Aries. He ordered them to entrust the kingdom to 'Adīm son of Quṭṭarīm, informing them that he would not return to them. And that is what they did.

[39] After his death ruled his son Arqalīmūn, who was a priest and a sorcerer. He did great things. For instance, he would sit in the clouds and people could see him in the guise of a huge man. He re-

mained like that for some time, but then he vanished from their sight and the Egyptians were without a king. Then they saw an image opposite the body of the sun as it entered the beginning of the sign of Aries, and it ordered them to entrust the kingdom to 'Adīm son of Quṭṭarīm, informing them that the king would not come back to them any more.

[40] So they installed as their king of Egypt 'Adīm son of Quṭṭarīm, who was a towering giant. He was the first to order a crucifixion in Egypt. Namely, a man and a woman had committed adultery, and he had them crucified, back to back.

He built four cities in which he deposited enormous treasures and over which he placed talismans and several wondrous things. On the Eastern Sea he built a tower topped by an idol facing east, to prevent the sea from encroaching on the land of Egypt. In Nubia he built a bridge across the Nile.

[41] He ruled for one hundred and forty years and died at the age of seven hundred and thirty years.

[42] After him ruled his son *Shaddāt* son of 'Adīm. He is the one that the common people call "Shaddād ibn 'Ād." He was a scholar, a priest and a sorcerer. It is said that it was he who built the pyramids of Dahshūr. He did great things and made extraordinary talismans.

[43] He founded towns on the eastern side (of the Nile); Qūṣ was built in his days. He invaded the Abyssinians and led them into captivity. He ruled for ninety years. He was the first to use predators for hunting and to breed saluki dogs. In the pond of Asyūṭ he set up crocodile statues to which the crocodiles came flocking from the Nile so that he could kill them and use their hides to make boats.

It so happened that one day, while pursuing some game, his horse stumbled and threw him into a precipice so that he was killed. Once, he had become angry at one of his servants and had tossed the man from a high mountain so that he was shattered to pieces,

and then saw (in a dream) that he was going to meet with a similar fate. After he had thus perished, he was placed in a tomb and his treasures were buried with him, and a talisman was made to protect it against intruders. On the tomb was written: A man of power must not deviate from duty, nor do what he is not allowed to do, or he will be punished for his deed. This is the tomb of Shaddāt son of 'Adīm. He did something he had no right to do, and was punished in like manner.

[44] After him ruled his son Manqāwus. He was a distinguished sage and a priest who left amazing works and built astounding things, such as a temple for the images of the planets eight parasangs from Memphis. He amassed uncountable treasures, and more mines were opened up for him than for anyone else.

[45] He traveled south for a day, then headed west for a day and part of the next, and on the third day he finally came to a black mountain. Under it he had subterranean vaults and grottos built, and in these he buried his treasures, with inscriptions over (their entrances). It is even said, because of the magnitude of the treasures, that he buried twelve thousand cartloads of gold and jewels, and that for four years he kept sending annually many carts to put these underground. [46] For a long time, the tracks left by the carts could still be seen in the area between Memphis and the West. He also built a temple in honor of the Moon.

[47] it is said that it was he who founded the city of Memphis for his daughters, who were thirty in number. And that he made it a duty for people to practice alchemy, and they would apply themselves to it untiringly night and day, so that eventually he had an enormous amount of money and a lot of jewels.

[48] It is he who built the city of Heliopolis.

[49] He divided the land tax of Egypt into four equal parts: one fourth to go to the king, one fourth for the army, one fourth to

be spent for the good of the land, and the fourth quarter to be buried against some eventuality.

It is also he who divided Egypt into one hundred and three nomes. He ruled for ninety-one years and died.

[50] After him ruled his son *ʿAdīm* son of Manqāwus, who was an unbearable tyrant. In his time, the two angels who teach people magic came down from heaven. The Copts claim that they stayed in Egypt first and then moved on to Babylon.

[51] After him ruled his brother *Manāwus* son of Manqāwus, who was a distinguished scholar and priest like his father.

[52] He built numerous places in the mountains and the deserts where he hoarded enormous treasures, and over which he erected lofty landmarks. In the western desert he founded a city for which he built a tower and all around which he buried enormous treasures; inside it he put a tree which would bring forth every kind of fruit.

[53] He was the first to worship cows in Egypt. He was forever in quest of wisdom and would draw on the books that dealt with it.

And thus every one of their rulers would endeavor to produce some extraordinary work of his own which had not been made for anyone before him, and which would be recorded in their books and inscribed on stones.

[54] After his death ruled his son *Hermes*. He had little wisdom and made none of the things his forefathers had made. He died after having ruled for eleven years.

[55] After him [*sic*] ruled *Ashmūn* son of Qubṭīm, son of Miṣr, son of Bayṣar, son of Ham, son of Noah. His territory extended from Ushmūn to Memphis in the west, and in the east all the way to the sea directly across from Barqah, Egypt's farthest boundary (westward), and from Upper Egypt to the confines of Ikhmīm. His residence was in the city of al-Ushmūnayn (Hermopolis Magna), which was twelve miles long and twelve miles wide. He founded

east of the Nile the city of Anṣinā, where he constructed a huge palace and numerous buildings, theaters and wondrous structures. He also founded the city of Ṭuhrāṭīs. He was the first to play polo.

He is said to have built numerous cities in which he created wondrous things, among them a city at the foot of the mountains that had four gates, one at each cardinal point: over the eastern gate was the image of an eagle, over the western gate the image of a bull, over the northern gate the image of a lion, and over the southern gate the image of a dog. Those images were inhabited by talking spirits. No stranger could enter (the city) without permission of the officials in charge of (the gates). Underneath each of those statues he buried some kind of treasure.

In that city he planted an exotic tree which would yield every kind of fruit. He also erected a tower eighty cubits high, topped by a dome which would change color every day until, after seven days, it would revert to its first color. By reason of those colors, the city would be bathed in rays like the color of the dome. Around that tower he channeled water which he brought in through a canal from the Nile, and in which he put fish of every variety. He also erected all around the city talismans in the guise of human beings with the heads of monkeys.

In that city he settled the sorcerers, so that it became known as "Sorcerers' City." They used to practice all sorts of magic there. Close by he built another city which became known as "The One with the Wonders."

[56] In the middle of the Nile he built reception rooms lined with colored glass. He also built an underground passage from al-Ushmūnayn all the way to Anṣinā.

It is said that it was he who founded the city of Heliopolis, and that he ruled for eight hundred years, and that, after six hundred years, the Ād wrested the kingdom from him. They remained in Egypt for ninety years, but then were stricken by an epidemic from which they fled to al-Dithnah (?) on the Hejaz road (and from there) to

Wādī al-Qurā. After the ‘Ādites had left, Ashmūn returned to rule Egypt. He was the first to institute the Coptic New Year in Egypt. The town of al-Bahnasā was built in his time.

After he had died, a tomb was built for him on the outermost limit of al-Ushmūnayn and he was buried in it together with his enormous treasures and his many wonders, among them a thousand clay vessels containing preparations for the various alchemical practices. On his tomb they inscribed his name and genealogy, and a talisman was placed over it to protect it against intruders.

[57] After him ruled his son Ṣā, and then after Ṣā his son Badāris.⁽¹⁸⁾

[58] It has been said: *Manāqiyūs* became the (next) ruler. He was an outstanding hero. He resumed colonization, built villages, erected lofty landmarks and made stupendous wonders. He founded towns, among them the town of Ikhmīm, where he transferred the priests. After having ruled for over forty years, he died and was buried in the eastern Pyramid together with his treasures.

After him ruled his son; there has been disagreement as to his name. He was a good man, resolute, and highly esteemed by the Egyptians. He was the first to build a hospital and the first to build an exercise field. In his time, the town of Santariyyah (Sīwa) was founded in the desert of the Oases. Later on, his wives became jealous over him and one of them killed him with a knife. He was buried in a tomb together with his treasures, and a talisman was placed over it to guard it.

[59] After him ruled his son *Marqūrah*, who was a sage and a priest. He was the first to tame lions and to ride on them. He built towns, renovated temples and erected idols. After his death, a tomb was prepared for him in the western desert and he was buried with his treasures.

^{18.} The interpolated sentence is a sudden switch back to Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam’s genealogy.

[60] He was succeeded by his son *Bilāṭis*, who was still a boy (at the time), so that his mother ran the kingdom. She was an energetic woman and managed things in the best way possible. She displayed justice and exempted people from paying the land tax. So they loved her. When her son had grown up, he wished to go hunting, so his mother made astonishing things for him. After having been king for thirteen years, (*Bilāṭis*) contracted smallpox and died, and the kingdom passed to his paternal uncles.

[61] After him ruled *Atrīb* son of Qubṭīm son of Miṣrāyim, who is the thirteenth of the Egyptian kings after The Flood. It is he who built the city of *Atrīb*. He lived five hundred years, of which three hundred and sixty is the time of his reign.

[62] The Nile is said to have stopped flowing at the time of *Atrīb* for one hundred and forty years, so that people ate all the livestock in Egypt and there was not a single domestic animal left (in the end). *Atrīb* himself was seen walking along, stretching and clenching his hands with hunger, and the common people of Egypt were starving to death. Then, after that, they found relief and there was great opulence that lasted for two hundred years. An ardeb (of grain) was sold for one-sixth of a dirham or even less.

After (*Atrīb*'s) death, his brother Ṣā was suspected of having murdered him, and the Egyptians fought him for nine years and killed him.

[63] After him ruled his daughter *Tadūrah*, who was priestess and a sorceress. She conducted the affairs of the kingdom with great skill and governed the country extremely well. [64] She made wondrous talismans, such as one that kept wild beasts and birds from drinking from the Nile, so that most of them died of thirst. In her time occurred a cry which made the earth shudder, and she perished.

[65] After her ruled her brother *Faylamūn* son of *Atrīb*, who was an outstanding sage. He was a builder and made talismans. In his days, the first city of Tinnīs was built [66] and the city of Dami-

etta was founded. Having ruled for ninety years, he died and was buried in a tomb.

[67] After him ruled his son *Qarsūn*. He was a learned man and a priest who built cities and renovated temples.

While still a young man, he was attacked by a certain Ḥimyarite king who came at the head of a huge army. He moved out against him and met him at the town of Aylah. He engaged him in such fierce combat that most of the two sides annihilated one another. The Egyptians then demonstrated some of their magic, and the Ḥimyarite with a small band of followers was put to flight. Qarsūn killed all of the Ḥimyarite's men, took their possessions, and returned in triumph to the city of Memphis.

[68] On the Sea of al-Qulzum he built a lighthouse with a mirror on top which pulled ships in to the shore (and held them) until the toll they owed was collected.

(Qarsūn) ruled for two hundred and sixty years, and after he had died, he was buried in a tomb behind the eastern black mountain. Inside the tomb was built a pavilion comprising twelve rooms, each containing some wondrous thing. With him was buried his treasure, and a talisman was placed over the tomb to protect it.

[69] After him ruled some four (kings), [70] then the kingdom passed to *Ṣā* son of Qubṭīm; he was the youngest of his father's offspring and the dearest one to him.

[71] After he had died, he was succeeded by *Qūniyah* the Priestess, who was a sorceress. She would sit on a throne of fire, and when someone appealed to her for a legal decision, and that person spoke the truth, he could walk through that fire without being harmed by it, but if he was lying, the fire would consume him. She also would appear every day in a variety of guises. Then she built a palace in which she secluded herself. In its wall she installed hollow copper pipes, and on each pipe she wrote a different kind of legal case that people brought before her for adjudication. When a man came to her for a hearing, he would stand near the pipe that

had his case written on it, say what he wanted and ask for it in a soft voice. When he was finished, he put his ear to the pipe and hear through it the response to what he had asked. That palace with the pipes survived until it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

[72] After her ruled *Marqūnis*, who was a distinguished man and a sage. [73] His mother was the daughter of the king of Nubia. She created wondrous things. In his days, every unusual thing was made. [74] He ruled for seventy-three years and died at the age of two hundred and forty.

[75] After him ruled his son *Ansād*, who was forty-five at the time of his accession. He was a greedy tyrant. He had carnal relations with his father's wife, and his affair with her came out in the open. His greatest concern was amusement and play. He gathered in his kingdom every known creed, rejected the sciences, neglected the temples and priests, and showed no longer any interest in the people. Along the Nile he built palaces for his amusement. He squandered most of the treasures in play. [76] People detested him and he detested them, so finally they poisoned him and he died at the age of one hundred and twenty.

[77] After him ruled his son *Ṣā*. It is said that *Ṣā* was the son of *Marqūnis*, in other words, the brother of *Ansād*.

After he had become king, he took up residence in Memphis and promised the people that good times were ahead. He was the ruler of all the territories and created in them wondrous works and talismans. The priests he restored to their former stations, and he banished the public entertainers and the peddlers of vice. He set up the eagle his father had made and honored its temple and prayed to it. He built a city inside the Oases and erected numerous landmarks near the sea. At the far ends (of the kingdom) he posted informers who were to report to him what was going on on their borders, and along both banks of the Nile he built towers on which fires were lit whenever something was about to happen (to the Egyptians) or someone was about to attack them. On the shoreline of the sea he built a tower by means of which one could learn what

was going on at sea. It is said that he built most of Memphis and every stately building in Alexandria.

After having taken over as ruler of the entire country, he assembled the sages and consulted the stars, about which he was quite knowledgeable. He then saw that Egypt would inevitably be flooded by its Nile, and that it would be laid in ruins by a man who would come from the direction of Syria. As a result, he called up every laborer he could find in Egypt and built a city in the outermost Oasis.

[78] He was invaded by the king of the Franks, who took the city of Memphis from him. With (that king) had arrived one thousand ships. He destroyed most of Alexandria, then penetrated from Rosetta up the Nile and eventually captured Memphis. Šā fled from him to the inner cities and entrenched himself there against his enemy. For many days the cities remained protected by the talismans. Then things turned in (Šā's) favor and his enemy withdrew in defeat. (Šā) then returned to Memphis, where he persecuted the priests, killing many of them.

He ruled for sixty-seven years and lived to be a hundred and seventy.

[79] Then ruled his son *Badāris*. He took possession of all the provinces, and the whole kingdom of Egypt belonged to him. He was astute and experienced, forceful and strong, and knowledgeable about things. He displayed justice and served the temples and priests well. He built a temple in honor of Venus.

[80] He also dug the Sakhā canal.

He waged war against one of the Amalekites of Syria and advanced into Palestine, where he killed many people and led some of the population into captivity in Egypt. He also invaded the Blacks, Negroes as well as Abyssinians, and sent out three hundred ships on the Nile. He met the Blacks, who numbered about one million, and defeated them, killing most of them and taking many of them prisoner. He brought elephants and panthers with him back to

Egypt. On the borders of his country he had towers erected on which he inscribed his name, his campaign and his victory.

[81] In his time, God sent His prophet Ṣālīḥ to the Thamūd. It is said that it was he who settled the Nubians where they are now. The story is that, as he was pressing deep into the land of the Abyssinians, killing the nations of the Blacks, he found among them a nation that could read the scrolls of Adam, Seth and Enoch. So he was kind to them and settled them at a distance of about a month's journey from the land of Egypt. They were called *al-Nūbah*, the Nubians.

He died in Memphis.

[82] After him ruled his son *Mālīq*, who was judicious, generous, well-intentioned, and experienced, but opposed to his father, and the Egyptians, in the question of worshiping the planets and cows. He is said to have been a monotheist, following the faith of his forefathers Qubṭīm and Miṣrāyim. The ancient Egyptians would censure him for that.

[83] He ordered the people to take every swift horse, to buy arms and campaign gear, and to build two hundred ships in the Sea of the West. Then he set out with a huge army by land and sea and met the Berbers in battle. He defeated them and exterminated most of them. He reached Ifrīqiyyah and proceeded to Spain, heading for (the land of) the Franks. Whatever nation he passed on the way, he would wipe them out. The king of the Franks massed an army against him and fought him for a month, then he sued for peace and was granted a truce. (*Mālīq*) then left him and subjugated the nations living along the Green Sea. The Copts relate that he saw (there) seventy wonders. Along the sea he built structures on which he inscribed his name and (the record of) his campaign. (Finally) he destroyed the towns of the Berbers and returned home.

The people of Egypt received him with all sorts of aromatic preparations and sundry entertainments, and they festooned the streets for him. The other kings stood in awe of him and brought him gifts.

He remained a monotheist to his death.

[84] Then ruled his son *Khiritā*, who was gentle and easygoing. His father had taught him monotheism and had forbidden him to worship idols, but after his death (*Khiritā*) abandoned that and returned to the religion of his people.

He invaded the Indians and the Blacks, after having built a ship in the manner the Indians do and loaded it with the necessary equipment. He took along his wife and prominent members of his entourage. His son *Kalkan*, who was still a boy, he appointed as his deputy over Egypt, and he gave him a Vizier and a priest by his side. Then he proceeded along the coast of the Yemen, ravaging its cities, and reached Ceylon, where he attacked the population. He got to an island between India and China, and its people submitted to him. He roamed for years in those islands, so that it is said that he spent seventeen years on that campaign, after which he returned home with rich booty. The other kings stood in awe of him. He built several temples in which he set up statues in honor of the planets.

Later on, he invaded the Syrian region and its population pledged their obedience, and after his return he raided the Nubians and the Blacks and imposed on them a tribute which they had to deliver to him.

He raised the status of the priests and of their scriptures, because he believed that he had achieved all those triumphs with the help of the planets.

He died after having ruled for seventy-five years.

[85] Then came his son *Kalkan* and was crowned in Alexandria, where he stayed for a month before coming to Memphis. He was an idolator and the Egyptians loved him for it.

He was much given to ancient wisdom and the performance of wondrous things, and he befriended and rewarded those who engaged in such practices. He himself practiced alchemy and hoarded enormous treasures in the deserts of the West. Indeed, he was the

first who openly practiced alchemy in Egypt. It had been a secret science and the earlier kings before him had been ordered to leave its practice alone. But Kalkan practiced it and filled the houses of wisdom with the results, so that there was at no time more gold in Egypt than in his days. Nor was there a land tax, because (the amount of gold) was one hundred million and some ten million *mithqāls*. And the Egyptians could dispense with mining minerals.

He also made a lot of things from colored, translucent stones. From turquoise (alone) he made and invented things which are beyond the grasp of the rational mind, so that he was called “the sage among kings.” He outdid all the priests together in their sciences and would tell them what was hidden and unknown to them.

In his time lived the Nimrod of Abraham, peace be upon him,⁽¹⁹⁾ and when news of Kalkan’s wisdom and magic power reached Nimrod, he asked him to come and see him. This Nimrod was a perverted tyrant who lived in southern Mesopotamia. God had given him strength, power and ruthlessness, and he had conquered many of the nations. The Copts say that, when this Nimrod had invited Kalkan, he set out to meet him at such-and-such a place. (Kalkan) arrived at the place carried by four winged horses, surrounded by a light like fire, and with frightful images about him. He came galloping along on the horses, enwrapped by a serpent that was partly slung around his waist like a belt and had its mouth wide open, while (Kalkan) kept striking it with a wand of green myrtle. When Nimrod saw him (like that), he was struck with terror and, acknowledging that he did indeed possess great magic wisdom, asked (Kalkan) to be on his side.

(The Copts) also say that (Kalkan) used to go and sit on top of the western Pyramid under a dome looming above his head, and whenever some unexpected thing befell the people of the town, they

¹⁹ On the role of the Biblical Nimrod, son of Cush and grandson of Ham (Gen. 10:8-10), in Muslim legend cf. the article “Namrūd” by B. Heller in *ET*. —The remainder of this section, with some textual variation, has already been presented in Pt. I, ch. 10 (sect. 16).

would gather around the Pyramid. He would go for days without taking food or drink. Then he disappeared for some time, so that people thought he had died.

The (other) kings eagerly sought to overcome him. Thus, he was attacked by a king from the West with a huge army that got as far as the Wādī Hubayb. (Kalkan) went forth and enveloped them by means of his magic with something like a very hot cloud. For days they remained under it, not knowing which way to go. Then he rushed back to Miṣr and ordered the people to take the field against that army. And they discovered that they had all died, together with their animals.

The priests stood in greater awe of him than of anyone before him. He lived for a long time and then went into occultation, and nothing more was known about him.

[86] Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam relates⁽²⁰⁾ that Kalkan son of Khirbitā ruled the Egyptians for about one hundred years; then he died without offspring and his brother *Mālīya* son of Khirbitā ruled as king.

[87] Ibn Waṣīf Shāh reports: Then came his brother, who was a glutton given to eating and drinking, solely interested in luxurious living, and without the slightest concern for wisdom. He had his vizier run the country and busied himself with women, of whom he had eighty. He was attacked, while drunk, by his son Ṭūṭīs, who killed him and a woman in his company.

[88] After him ruled his son *Ṭūṭīs*. It is said that he is identical with ‘Amr son of Imru’ al-Qays,⁽²¹⁾ son of Bābalyūn, son of Ḥimyar, son of Sabā, son of Yashjub, son of Ya’rub, son of Qaḥṭān—or with al-Walīd ibn al-Rayyān, according to others—and that he is one of the pharaohs of Egypt in the line of Dān, son of Fahlūj, son of Am-rāz, son of Ashūr, son of Shem, son of Noah. The pharaohs of Egypt,

²⁰. *Futūḥ Miṣr* 18-19.

²¹. Cf. Pt. I, ch. 7, sect. 8.

it has been said, are descendants of the first ‘Imlāq, son of Lāwudh, son of Shem, son of Noah.

[89] He was a bold, intrepid and awesome giant. The Copts claim that he is the first of the Pharaohs in Egypt, namely, the Pharaoh of Abraham, peace be upon him. It is said the Pharaohs are seven, of whom he is the first.

[90] He dug a canal on the eastern side of Egypt from the foot of the mountains all the way to the anchorage in the (Red) Sea and used to deliver to Hagar, Ishmael’s mother, whom he had given to Abraham, peace be upon him, wheat and all sorts of staples that would find their way to Jidda. For some time then he had the country of the Hejaz tilled and made productive, and it is said that everything the Kaaba was adorned with from that time on was a gift of the ruler of Egypt.⁽²²⁾ The Arabs, because of the many things he delivered to the Hejaz, called him *man jarhama ‘l-Ṣādūq*—He-who-made-every-effort-for-Ishmael.

[91] It says in the book of Orosius that government of the Egyptians at the time of Abraham, the Friend of God, peace be upon him, was in the hands of a people called Banū Fāliq ibn Dār-ish; their rule in Egypt lasted for one hundred and twenty years.

[92] Ibn Ishāq relates on someone’s authority that the pharaohs of Egypt were descendants of Dān, son of Fahlūj, son of Amrāz, son of Ashūr, son of Shem, son of Noah. It is well known, he says, that they were Amalekites. Among them are al-Rayyān ibn al-Walīd—or al-Walīd ibn al-Rayyān, according to others—the Pharaoh of Joseph, al-Walīd ibn Muṣ‘ab, the Pharaoh of Moses, and also Sinān ibn ‘Alwān.⁽²³⁾

²² An interesting tradition that can hardly be older than the 13th century. It not only reflects Muslim Egypt’s role as the traditional supplier and protector of western Arabia, but establishes, as it were, the historical precedent for annually furnishing the *kiswah* for the Kaaba, a practice instituted by the Mamlūk sultan Baybars.

²³ This is the name given by Ṭabarī (*Tārīkh* 1:292/1, 326), Yāqūt (at least in one place) and Abū ‘l-Fidā’ in lieu of “Ṭūṭis,” or its variants, in other sources.

[93] Ibn Waṣīf Shāh relates: The reason the man was called “pharaoh” was because he was a murderous killer. He had only a daughter, who was a sensible and intelligent woman. Living in fear because (her father) had killed so many people, she poisoned him. He had ruled for one hundred and seventy years.

[94] After him ruled *Ḥūriyā*.⁽²⁴⁾ She promised the people to do good, amassed treasures, advanced the priests, wise men and leading sorcerers and raised their status, and built new temples. Those who were not pleased with her went to the city of Atrīb, where they made a man in the line of Atrīb their king; his story has already been told⁽²⁵⁾ in connection with Alexandria. [95] *Ḥūriyā* was the first woman among the descendants of Noah, peace be upon him, to rule Egypt. She died

[96] and after her ruled her cousin *Dulayfah*, Māmūn’s daughter, who was a sensible, intelligent maiden. She promised the people to be kind.

Against her rose Ayman al-Atrībī. He asked the king of the Amalekites for assistance, and the latter sent a general to accompany him. (*Dulayfah*) led an army against him and they met at al-‘Arīsh. They fought until many of them had died, then *Dulayfah*’s men were routed and fled to Memphis, closely pursued by the others. *Dulayfah* then set out for Upper Egypt and camped at al-Ushmūnayn. There were several battles between her and the troops of the Amalekites in which the latter were defeated. They pulled out of Memphis, after having ravaged the city, and crossed over to the Ḥawf, where they entrenched themselves. Egypt was thus divided in half between them. Later on, *Dulayfah* resumed the war. It went

²⁴. One could possibly discern in her Queen Hatshepsut, as did Aḥmad Bey Kamāl (cf. *B.I.E.*, 1903, pp. 115-18). “Ṭūṭīs” would then be Thutmose I (1540-1501 B.C.). But such attempts at matching these legendary names with real historical personalities prove rather fruitless on the whole. See, for example, n. 35.

²⁵. Actually, it follows, quite incongruously, in sect. 6 of the next chapter. Maqrīzī evidently wrote the Alexandria chapter before he drafted the story of Memphis.

on for three months, and eventually she had to flee to Qūṣ, with Ayman on her heels. And when she was certain that she would be captured, she poisoned herself and died.

[97] Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam relates:⁽²⁶⁾ Ṭūṭīs son of Māliyā then died. As his successor he had appointed his daughter Ḥūriyā daughter of Ṭūṭīs, for he had no other offspring than her. Then Ḥūriyā died, after having designated her cousin Dulayfah daughter of Māmūn son of Māliyā as successor. She lived for a very long time, and (the Egyptians) multiplied and grew in number and filled the entire land of Egypt. Then the Amalekites had strong designs on the Egyptians, and they were invaded by al-Walīd ibn Dawma‘, who fought them in fierce battles until they finally agreed to make him their king. He then ruled them for some one hundred years. He was tyrannical, overweening and an open miscreant, so God sicced a lion on him which killed him and ate his flesh.

[98] The Pharaohs who ruled Egypt are five.

[99] Ayman ruled as a powerful sovereign and killed many of those who waged war against him.

The Amalekite al-Walīd ibn Dawma‘ had set out at the head of a numerous army.⁽²⁷⁾ He sent a slave by the name of ‘Awn to Egypt who conquered the country. After him then came (al-Walīd), and made free with the Egyptians, taking their possessions. Later on, he set out to learn about the source of the Nile. He saw the Mountain of the Moon and, after an absence of forty years, returned to Egypt.

[100] During his absence ‘Awn had had an affair with his wife⁽²⁸⁾ and he fled from (al-Walīd).

^{26.} *Futūḥ Miṣr* 20.

^{27.} This story was told in greater detail in Pt. I, ch. 15 (sect. 9). —The incoherence of the following sections—mere odds and ends culled from different sources—is further indication that the entire chapter is only a draft.

^{28.} Suggested emendation: *wa-qad khālafahū ‘Awnun ilā ahlihī* (cf. Lane, *Lexicon*, 2:794). —In the Bulaq text, the name of the slave is *Fir’awn*. Here is perhaps a clue to the intent of the interpolated passage: to hint at a possible etymological connection between *fir’awn* (pharaoh) and *farra’awn* (‘Awn fled). Arab writers are always ready for such “explanations” of incomprehensible foreign

[101] He [al-Walīd] enslaved the people of Egypt. He ruled them for one hundred and ten years until he died (an unnatural death).

[102] His son *al-Rayyān* ibn al-Walīd ibn Dawmaʿ, another Amalekite, then became king. He was the strongest man on earth and the most powerful king in his time.

[103] The Amalekites are the descendants of ʿAmaliq, son of Lāwudh, son of Shem, son of Noah.

[104] He [al-Rayyān] is the Pharaoh of Joseph, peace be upon him. The Copts call him *Nahrāwus*.

[105] It has been said that the name of the Pharaoh of Joseph was al-Rayyān son of al-Walīd, son of Layth, son of Fārān, son of ʿAmr, son of ʿAmaliq, son of Balqaʿ, son of Eber, son of Aslikhā, son of Lud, son of Shem, son of Noah. It has also been said that the Pharaoh of Joseph was the grandfather—the father’s father—of the Pharaoh of Moses, whose name was Narkhū.

[106] (Nahrāwus) was of noble character and handsome. Having promised the people to be kind, he exempted them for three years from paying the land tax and distributed money among them. He invested with regal authority a man from his household by the name of Aṭfir⁽²⁹⁾—he is the one called “al-ʿAzīz” (in the Koran). He was a prudent and cultured man who applied justice and encouraged prosperity. (Nahrāwus) had a throne of silver set up for him in the royal palace, and (Aṭfir) would sit on it and issue (orders), with all the scribes and viziers in attendance. In that way he spared Nahrāwus the trouble of ruling and, by handling all of his affairs, left him free to indulge in his pleasures. For some time (Nahrāwus) kept on reveling and carousing, while the country was prospering.

names.

²⁹. A corrupted form of *Potiphar* (Gen. 39:1), the Hebrew transcription of Eg. *Pet-p-ra* ‘belonging to the sun.’

[107] Then he was attacked by an Amalekite who marched on Egypt and inflicted defeat on his armies. (Nahrāwus) led an army against him, engaged him in battle and put him to flight. He pursued him and invaded Syria, where he wreaked havoc. The other kings stood in awe of him and showered him with flattery. It has been said that he got as far as Mosul. He imposed the payment of tribute on the Syrians and set out to invade the country of the Maghrib at the head of an army of nine hundred thousand. He passed through the country of the Berbers, dislodging many of them, and proceeded all the way to the Green Sea. Then he marched southward and came to Nubia, whereupon he returned to the city of Memphis.

The story of what happened between Joseph and him has been told in the chapter dealing with the Fayyūm.⁽³⁰⁾

[108] After him ruled his son *Darīmūs*, who is also called Dārim son of al-Rayyān; he is the fourth of the Pharaohs.

Going against his father's practice, whose trusted deputy was Joseph, he would sometimes accept the latter's advice and at other times act against it. In his days, a silver mine came to light, and he extracted huge quantities (of ore) from it. Joseph, upon him be peace, died in his time, and he appointed after him as his vizier a man who incited him to hurt the people and take their possessions away, which affected them most grievously. Furthermore, he became so high-handed and overbearing that he snatched every beautiful woman in Memphis from her family. As soon as he heard of some beautiful woman some place, he sent out people and had her brought to him. The people became upset; they denounced him and laid down work and closed the markets, whereupon he cracked down on them and caused a great bloodbath among them. Things got to a point where people were agreed that he must be deposed. But he appeared with great pomp in public, exempted them

³⁰ See below, ch. 82.

from paying taxes for three years and distributed money among them, so that they were silenced.

In his time, the Copts rose against the Israelites and demanded from the vizier that he oust them from Egypt. He pursued them relentlessly until they were all rounded up. When news of that reached the king, who had just set out for Upper Egypt, he threatened the Egyptians with dire consequences, whereupon they revolted against him, rallied in force and engaged him in open battle. Many of them were killed. He vanquished the survivors and had them killed and crucified along both banks of the Nile. Then he reverted to his worst practice of seizing property and women and forcing the Coptic nobility and the Israelites into his service. He was unanimously denounced by everyone.

Then one day he was on an outing on the Nile and a storm came up and he drowned. His body was found as far away as Shaṭṭanawf, [109] or, according to others,⁽³¹⁾ between Ṭurā and Ḥulwān.

[110] The vizier then brought (Darīmūs') son *Ma'ādiyūs* to the throne, who was still a boy; he is also called Mi'dān. He exempted the people from the same amount of taxes as his father had done, and pledged to do right, so that he had things under control again. He also returned the women of the people (to their families). He is the fifth of the Pharaohs.

In his time occurred the cataclysmic event that befell Egypt. The Israelites more and more blamed the idols (for it) and were therefore isolated some distance away from the town so that no one else could mingle with them. They were given a piece of land south of Memphis where they were all concentrated and where they built a house of worship.

Also, a certain Canaanite conquered Syria and refused to pay the tribute which the Syrians owed to the king of Egypt. [111] The people rallied in support of Mi'dān and urged him to launch a military

³¹ The last phrase is from Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (*Futūḥ Miṣr* 25).

expedition against him. But he refused to go and never left the temple.

They claimed that, while he was worshiping in the temple of Saturn, Saturn revealed himself to him and spoke to him, saying, "I have made you lord over the people of your country and have given you power over them and others. I shall raise you up to me, so do not fail to iterate my name."

[112] Henceforth he had visions of grandeur of himself, acted haughty and tyrannical, ordered people to call him 'Lord,' and considered himself above showing interest in anything that had to do with the kingdom. So his son *Aksāmis* was put in charge of it.

[113] Then his son *Aksāmis* ruled as king—or *Kāshim* son of *Mi'dān*, according to others.

He organized the people in social classes and divided (the country into) provinces and districts. He ordered the opening up of colonies and the support of crafts and industries and expanded the people's livelihood. He also ordered that the temples be cleaned and given new drapings and ceremonial vessels, and he increased the number of sacrificial offerings.

He is the one who is called *Kāshim* son of *Mi'dān*, son of *Dārim*, son of *al-Rayyān*, son of *al-Walid*, son of *Dawma'* the Amalekite; he is the sixth of the Pharaohs.

[114] They were called *farā'inah* (pharaohs) after *Far'ān* the First; later (the term) became the generic name for anyone who was tyrannical and powerful.

[115] (*Aksāmis*) ruled for a long time. He erected numerous lofty structures around Memphis, built many cities, set up towers for lighting fires, and made talismans. For seven years he continued to rule under the best of conditions. Then, after his father's vizier had died, he appointed as his deputy a man from the royal house by the name of *Ṭalmā* son of *Qūmis*, who was a hero, a sorcerer, a priest, a scribe, a sage versed in every art, but who, in his heart, contested the right to the kingdom. He brought reforms to the

kingdom and founded towns on both sides (of the Nile), and when he saw in the stars that some (untoward) event was going to happen, he had theaters and cisterns built in the area of Rhakotis and in Upper Egypt.

[116] When the Copts complained to him about the Israelites, he answered, "They are your slaves!" and from then on they brought them low.

He set out toward the (land of the) Berbers and wreaked havoc, killing and taking captives.

[117] In (Aksāmis') time, the Lighthouse of Alexandria was built, and the sea became agitated and engulfed many of the villages, gardens and cisterns.

Aksāmis died after a rule of thirty-one years, during eleven of which Ṭalmā had run the country. After his death, the people became restless and accused Ṭalmā of having poisoned him.

[118] He was succeeded by *Lāṭīs* son of Aksāmis, who was brash, vain and boastful. He ruled with absolute power and forced the people to do their work, proclaiming, "I shall be straightforward and honest as long as you are, but if you shirk your duty, I will turn my back on you." He demoted a number of people and dismissed Ṭalmā as deputy, appointing someone else instead. Then he sent Ṭalmā to Upper Egypt at the head of a sizable group of Israelites.

He built new temples, founded villages, opened a lot of mines, and stored several treasures in the eastern desert. He was also fond of ancient wisdom.

But then he became arrogant and overbearing. He gave orders that no one, neither priest nor anyone else, must sit in his assembly, but all must remain on their feet until they departed. He inflicted more and more injustice and harsh treatment on the people, not allowing them to keep what they possessed and holding them short of food. He collected their possessions and money and was after women, many of whom were taken by force. (In short) he did more

(of this sort of thing) than anyone before him. He also enslaved the Israelites and killed a goodly number of priests.

So Ṭalmā stirred Upper Egypt into revolt, writing letters to the leaders of the people. When Lāṭīs sent written orders to have Ṭalmā dismissed, the latter balked and fought (the king's) soldiers, and then kept advancing until he entered Memphis.

[119] *Ṭalmā* son of Qūmis is the Pharaoh of Moses. His (real) name is said to have been al-Walīd son of Muṣ'ab, son of Arāhūn, son of Hallūth, son of Fārān, son of 'Amr, son of 'Amalīq, son of Balqa', son of Eber, son of Aslikhā, son of Lud, son of Shem, son of Noah. He was an Amalekite. He was of short stature, had a long beard and deep-blue eyes, his left eye smaller than the other, and was lame.

Some people have maintained that he was a Copt, and that his lineage and that of his house are well known to them. [120] But there are still other versions. (Anyway) his story is told in connection with the synagogue of Dumūh.⁽³²⁾

[121] After God had drowned Pharaoh, relates Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam,⁽³³⁾ Egypt was left, after the drowning of his people, without a single nobleman, and only slaves, hired hands and women were still alive. Since the highborn women in Egypt deemed it impractical to entrust one of the former with authority, they decided unanimously that they should be governed by a woman by the name of *Dalūkah*. Thus came to rule Dalūkah daughter of Zabbā [or Dalūkah daughter of Zafān, according to others], who was smart, savvy and experienced and was honored and held in high esteem by her sisters. She was one hundred and sixty years old at the time.

She then built in six months a wall—the Wall of the Old Woman—surrounding the entire land of Egypt, [122] with which she protected Egypt against enemies. It extended from Rafaḥ all the way to

³² *Khiṭaṭ* 2:464.

³³ *Futūḥ Miṣr* 30; the passage in square brackets is from a different source. — The tradition has already been quoted in greater detail in Pt. I, ch. 10.

Ifriqiyah (and from there) to the Oases (and then) to Nubia. On every part of it were guards on duty day and night who kept fires lit in such a way that they would never go out.

[123] In her days, Tadūrah the Sorceress built the temples in the center of Memphis.

[124] Dalūkah⁽³⁴⁾ ruled (the Egyptians) for twenty years, until a boy from one of their noble families by the name of *Darkūn* son of Balūṭis had come of age, [whom the Egyptians then made their king.] Then he died, after having designated his son *Būris* as successor. Then *Būris* son of *Darkūn* passed away, after having appointed his brother *Laqās* son of *Tadāris* [*sic*] as successor. He lasted only three years before he died, after having designated, [since he left no male offspring,] his brother *Marīnā* son of *Marīnūs* [*sic*] as successor. Then (*Marīnā*) passed on, after having appointed *Istamāris* son of *Marīnā* as successor. He was an oppressor, an overweening swaggerer, a shedder of blood and an open miscreant, so that the Egyptians deposed and killed him and pledged allegiance to one of their noblemen by the name of *Balūṭis* son of *Manākīl*, who then ruled them for forty years. Then he died and was succeeded by his son *Mālūs*. Then *Mālūs* died, after having designated his brother *Mīnākīl* son of *Balūṭis* son of *Manākīl* as successor, who was their king for a long time. Then he died, after having appointed his son *Būlah* son of *Mīnākīl* as successor, who ruled the Egyptians for one hundred and twenty years. He is “the Cripple,” who led the king of Jerusalem into captivity in Egypt. He was overbearing and despotic to an extent not reached by anyone before him since Pharaoh, [so that God killed him:] His mount threw him [and crushed his neck], and he died.

[125] He was called “the Cripple” because, after he had raided and sacked Jerusalem and had taken its king Josiah son of Amon son of Manasseh son of Hezekiah captive,⁽³⁵⁾ he thought of climb-

³⁴ *Ibid.* 31; passages in square brackets are restored from the original source.

³⁵ Cf. II Kings 23:29-30. This would make “*Būlah*” identical with Pharaoh Necho (609-593) of the 26th dynasty. But, for one, King Josiah was not captured, but

ing on the throne of God's prophet Solomon son of David. But the throne had a mechanical device that allowed a person to get up on it only with both feet at the same time. He, however, did it with one foot only, the right one, and the device turned over his other leg and it got crushed, so that he walked with a limp to the end of his days. And that is why he was called "the Cripple."

[126] (Būlah)⁽³⁶⁾ then designated as successor *Marīnūs* son of Būlah, who ruled the Egyptians for a long time. Then (Marīnūs) died, after having appointed as successor his son *Qarqūrah*, who was their king for sixty years. Then he died, after having designated his brother *Naqās* son of Marīnūs to succeed him. In his time, the temple (built by the sorceress Tādūrah) went to ruin, without anyone finding a way to repair it.⁽³⁷⁾ Then Naqās died, after having made his son *Fūmīs* son of Naqās the successor. He then ruled the Egyptians for a long time.

[127] Nebuchadnezzar waged war against him and killed him. He destroyed Memphis and other cities and carried the Egyptians into captivity, leaving no one behind, so that for forty years Egypt remained a wasteland without a single inhabitant.

[128] In the translation of the book on empires and wars by the Spaniard (Paulus) Orosius it is reported that, between the time of Pharaoh's drowning until one hundred and seven years later,

rather fatally wounded in the battle of Megiddo (cf. II Chron. 35:20-24). More important, however, is the fact that Necho was subsequently dealt a crushing defeat by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish on the upper Euphrates, which would point rather to the "Naqās" mentioned in sect. 126 as his equivalent, where "Fūmīs" could be the Greek *Psammis* (i.e., his son Psammētichos II, 593-88 B.C.). —Qalqashandī (*Ṣubḥ* 3:413), on the other hand, lists a king "Nūlah" as the successor of "Mayākīl," who, according to Mas'ūdī, was the the Cripple who invaded the Israelites and destroyed Jerusalem. This Nūlah is "the one who invaded *Ruhub'um* (Rehoboam) son of Solomon in Syria"—in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam rendered as Marḥab 'amm Sulaymān 'Marbab, uncle of Solomon—and this invader is then identified as Shishāq (the "Shishak" of the Bible), i.e., the Libyan Shoshenq I (ca. 935-919), first king of the Bubastite 22nd dynasty, who in 930 captured and sacked Jerusalem (cf. II Chron. 12:1-12).

³⁶ Resumption of the text of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (*Futūḥ Miṣr* 31).

³⁷ See Pt. I, ch. 10, sect. 29.

there was in Egypt a king by the name of *Būsiridis*⁽³⁸⁾ who used to kill foreigners and visitors and offer them in sacrifice to his idols, making their blood an immolation to them.

[129] (Orosius also reports) that three hundred and twenty-eight years after Pharaoh's drowning there was in Egypt a king by the name of *Bazūbah*.⁽³⁹⁾ He was a mighty, powerful ruler who captured most of the regions of the South through war by land and sea. He was the first to wage war against the (kind of) Greeks who were thereafter called al-Qūṭ—the Scythians. He had sent envoys to them, calling on them to submit to him and threatening them with war, but their answer to him was: "It is not (a sign of) good judgment for a rich king to wage war against a poor people, in view of the many calamities of warfare and the vicissitudes of victory and death. We shall not wait for you to come to us; rather, we will hasten to invade you." And they followed their words with action. Pharaoh led an army against them and they rushed forth to meet him, sending his troops into headlong flight, despoiling his soldiers and capturing his possessions, his gear, and all of his stores. Then they went on and pillaged Egypt, so that they almost conquered the country, had it not been for mires which stood as a barrier between them and the land beyond them.

Next, they turned on Syria in continuous warfare, until they had decimated its people or made them pay tribute. For fifteen years they kept fighting anyone who opposed them in their raids, without ever returning to their country, until some of their women came to them and told them, "Either you will leave (for home) or we shall take other husbands and seek offspring from our neighbors!" Only then did they leave for their country, their hands filled with treasures, loaded with abundant spoils. Behind them they left a terrible memory.

³⁸. Compare *Historiae* (ed. Teubner) I, 11, par. 2.

³⁹. "Vezozes" in the *Historiae* (I, 14).

[130] It is said that the kings of Midian ruled Egypt for five hundred years after the drowning of Pharaoh and Dalūkah's death, until they were driven out by God's prophet Solomon son of David and the kingdom reverted after them to the Copts. Also that, after David had slain Goliath son of Mālūd, the latter's son Goliath son of Goliath went to Egypt, which was then under the rule of the kings of Midian, and the king of Egypt had him settle on the west bank (of the Nile). He stayed there for some time and then proceeded to the country of the West.⁽⁴⁰⁾

[131] It is said that the Copts ruled Egypt after Dalūkah and her son [*sic*] for six hundred and twenty-six years, the number of their kings being twenty-seven. These are:

Diyūsfilītā, whose reign lasted seventy-eight—or, according to others, eighty-eight—years.⁽⁴¹⁾

Then after him ruled *Samānādūs* (Smendis) for twenty-six years. He was succeeded by *Sūsānās* (Psousennēs) for one hundred and one years. Then ruled *Nafkharās* (Nephercheris) for four years. Next ruled *Amānāfūtās* (Amenōphthis) for nine years, then *Uskhūrīs* (Osochōr) for six years, then *Fasīnākhīs* (Psinachēs) for nine years, then *Fasūsānīs* (Psousennēs) for thirty-five years.⁽⁴²⁾

Then ruled *Sasūnākhūsīs* (Sesonchōsis) for twenty-one years.

⁴⁰ The Philistines, according to a Muslim tradition, are believed to be the ancestors of the Berbers.

⁴¹ This sentence covers the 20th (Theban) dynasty (1200-1090 B.C.), comprising the kings Seth-nakht and Ramses III through XII. In *Diyūsfilītā*, misunderstood by Maqrīzī's Arab source as the name of a king, one recognizes the "Diospolitans"—from *Diospolis hē megalē* 'the great city of Zeus (Amon)'; the Greek name for Thebes (*Diospolis Magna* to the Romans)—whose reign is given by Eusebius as 178 years.

The following section rests on the chronological epitomes of the Egyptian priest Manetho of Sebennytos, the only surviving fragment of his original three-volume "History of Egypt" (*Aigyptiaka Hypomnēmata*), which he wrote in the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.). Maqrīzī obviously copied from an Arabic source. I have added the Greek names of the pharaohs as they appear in Eusebius' transmission in parentheses in the text.

⁴² These seven kings comprise Manetho's 21st (Tanite) dynasty (1090 – 945 B.C.). —The regnal period of Psousennēs I is given by Eusebius as 41 years.

Then ruled *Asārāthūn* (Osorthōn) for fifteen years, then *Ṭāqālūtīs* (Takelōthis) for thirteen years.⁽⁴³⁾

Then (ruled) *Faṭāḫābāṣṭās* (Petoubastis) for twenty-five years, then *Asārāthūn* (Osorthōn) for nine years. Then ruled *Fasāmūs* (Psammous) for ten years.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Then (ruled) *Ūḫānaqūris* (Bocchoris) for forty-four years.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Then (ruled) *Sābāqūn* (Sabakōn) for twelve years, then *Sabkhas* (Sebikōs) the Ethiopian for twelve years, then *Ṭarākhūs* (Tarakos) the Ethiopian for twenty years.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Then ruled *Ammarās the Ethiopian* (Ammheris Aithiops) for twelve years, then *Iṣṭafīntās* (Stephinatis) for seven years, then *Nākhafāsūs* (Nechepsōs) for six years. Then ruled *Nākhū* (Nechaō) for eight years, then *Fasāmāmāṭīqūs* (Psammētichos) for forty-four years. Then ruled *Nakhtūfā* (?)⁽⁴⁷⁾ for six years, then *Fasāmūtās* (Psammouthis) for seventeen years, then *Wāḫrīs* (Ouaphrēs) for twenty-five years, then *Amāsīs* (Amōsis) for forty-two years.

After those, Egypt was ruled by five kings of Babylon [*sic*]. These are:

⁴³ They are the pharaohs Shoshenq I, Usarken I, and Tekerut I and belong to Manetho's 22nd (Libyan) dynasty (945-745 B.C.).

⁴⁴ They comprise Manetho's 23rd (Libyan) dynasty (745-720 B.C.).

⁴⁵ The only king given by Manetho for the 24th dynasty (*ca.* 720-715). He is Pharaoh Bakenrenef, son and successor of Tefnakhte, Prince of Saïs and Memphis.

⁴⁶ They comprise Manetho's 25th (Ethiopian) dynasty (715-663 B.C.) and represent the pharaohs Shabaka (715-700), Shabataka (700-688) and Taharka (688-664), the last one called *Tirhakah* in the Bible (II Kings 19:9; Isaiah 37:9).

⁴⁷ A conjecture suggested by five of Wiet's mss. and the way the name is written in the Bulaq edition, perhaps = Nektanebēs, founder of the 30th dynasty. Wiet's emendation *Nakhū thā[nin]* to be the equivalent of *Nechaō deuterios* (Necho II) in Eusebius is untenable on historical as well as grammatical grounds. Notice that Psammouthis, last but one ruler of the 29th dynasty, does not belong here either.

The correct sequence of the kings of the 26th (Saitic) dynasty (663-525 B.C.) is: Psammētichos I (663-609), Necho (609-593), Psammētichos II (593-588), Ouaphrēs (*Weh-eb-rē*, 588-569, the *Hophra* of the Bible), Amōsis (*Ahmōse*, 569-526), Psammētichos III (525).

Amartiyūs (Amyrthaios), for six years.⁽⁴⁸⁾

Then *Nāfartās* (Nepheritēs), for seven years, then *Awkharis* (Achōris), for twelve years, then *Fasāmūt* (Psammouthis), for two years. Then ruled *Mūtātūs* (Mouthēs) for seven years.⁽⁴⁹⁾

Then ruled three kings of the Assyrians [*sic*] who are Jurmūqids (*al-Jarāmiqah*)⁽⁵⁰⁾ that ruled Mosul, Nineveh and Upper Mesopotamia. These are:

Nāqātānabūs (Nektanebis), for thirteen years, then *Ṭūs* (Teōs), for seven years, then *Nāqātānībās* (Nektanebos), for eighteen years.⁽⁵¹⁾

Rule over Egypt then passed from them to Alexander son of Philippos, the Greek.

[132] These are Greek names, and they, or some of them, may perhaps interfere with the preceding account of Egypt's rulers after Dalūkah.

⁴⁸ Amyrthaios of Saïs (404-399)—his Hellenized name stands for Eg. 'It-is-Amon-who-gave-him'—represents the 28th dynasty in Manetho, who, as an Egyptian nationalist, ignored the seven Persian rulers counted as the 27th dynasty (525-338 B.C.). They were, however, not unknown to Muslim writers; see, e.g., Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* 3:413-14.

⁴⁹ The four kings represent Manetho's 29th dynasty (398-379 B.C.), which originated from Mendes in the eastern Delta. They are the pharaohs Nefarēt I, Hakor, Pshe-Mut, and Nefarēt II. —Their regnal periods are given by Eusebius as 6, 13, 1, and 1 years, respectively.

⁵⁰ Cf. Qalqashandī (*Ṣubḥ* 1:367; 4:315), quoting Ibn Sa'īd: "They are descendants of Jurmūq, son of Ashūr, son of Shem, son of Noah."

⁵¹ They represent Manetho's 30th dynasty (378-341 B.C.), which came from his hometown Sebennytos (Samannūd). Their regnal periods are given by Eusebius as 10, 2, 8 years respectively. They are the pharaohs Nekht-Har-Ehbēt ('Victorious-is-the-Horus-of-Ehbēt,' Ehbēt being the name of an Isis shrine near Sebennytos, 378-361), Tehor (360-359), who was deposed and died at the Persian court, and Nekht-nebof ('Victorious-is-the-bearer-of-this-name,' 358-341).

[133] Between Nebuchadnezzar and The Flood lie 2,356 years and some months. The number of years between The Flood and the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, computed on the basis of the events described in the Torah, adds up to 2,684 years. Both figures are at variance with what Mas'ūdī transmitted.⁽⁵²⁾

^{52.} Who gives 2,662 years as the interval between The Flood and the Babylonian exile of the Israelites (*Tanbih*, ed. al-Ṣāwī, p. 171).

4. The City of Alexandria

[1] This city is one of the largest and oldest cities in the world. It was built more than once: The first time was after The Flood in the days of Miṣrāyim son of Bayṣar (grand)son of Noah; it was then called *Rhakotis*. After that it was built two more times. Then, in the days of the Greeks, it was built completely new by Alexander son of Philippos the Macedonian, who vanquished Darius and ruled the Persian Empire one hundred and ten solar years after the destruction of Memphis by Nebuchadnezzar, and became then known by his name. Once it was founded by said Alexander, the royal residence was transferred from the city of Memphis to Alexandria, so that it became the capital of Egypt. It remained like that until the rise of Islam, the arrival of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ with the Muslim armies, and the conquest of The Fortress (of Babylon) and of Alexandria, when Egypt became Islamic territory, at which time the seat of government was transferred from Alexandria to Fuṣṭāṭ Miṣr, and al-Fuṣṭāṭ became, after Alexandria, the capital of Egypt.

I shall now tell, God Exalted willing, as much of Alexandria’s history as has come to my knowledge.

[2] Abū ‘l-Ḥasan al-Mas‘ūdī mentions in his *Akḥbār of-zamān* that the Kūkah, who were an ancient people of the Aylites, took possession of Lower Egypt and divided it into fifteen districts and four parts, each part (called) a nome. In each nome they built a city which had a king who sat on a golden throne and had his own temple, which was the House of Wisdom, as well as a lofty edifice that was dedicated to a certain planet and contained idols of gold. They made Alexandria, which was then called “*Rhakotis*,” into fifteen districts in which they installed the high priests. They set up more golden idols in its temples than they did in any others, so that they contained two hundred golden idols. Upper Egypt they divided

into eighty districts comprising four nomes and thirty cities that contained all the marvels.

[3] Ptolemy states in his *Geography*, as he describes the islands, seas and towns, that the city of Alexandria belongs to the sign of Leo and its signicator is the planet Mars; its hours (of the longest day) are fourteen, and its longitude is sixty degrees and one-half, which corresponds to four hours and one-third of one-tenth of an hour.

[4] Ibn Waṣīf Shāh relates in connection with the story of Miṣrāyim son of Bayṣar (grand)son of Noah:

They also taught them how to make talismans. There used to come out of the sea certain beasts which destroyed their fields, gardens and buildings, so they made talismans against them, whereupon (the creatures) disappeared and never came back.

They built in places other than along the Nile cities, among them the city of Rhakotis on the site of (latter-day) Alexandria. In its center they placed a dome resting on sturdy columns of gilded copper, the dome itself being gilded, and on top of it they mounted a mirror made of various ingredients, five spans in diameter; the height of the dome was one hundred cubits. Whenever someone from the nations around them was headed their way, and if this was something that caused them concern, and (the approach) was from the sea, they would do something to that mirror so that it cast its rays on that particular thing and burned it up. (That dome) continued to be there until it was engulfed by the sea. It is said that Alexander, in fact, built the Pharos in imitation of it: on top of it was also a mirror in which one could see anyone headed their way from the land of the Greeks. But one of their kings then devised a clever ruse against them and sent someone to (the city) who, being made of specially prepared glass, eliminated (the mirror).

[5] A certain Copt, he says (elsewhere), related that a man, a descendant of the priests whom Ansād, the King of Egypt, had killed, came to a king in the land of the Franks and told him of the

many treasures and marvels of Egypt, assuring him that he would help him to become its king and to get possession of its treasures, and that he would lift the baneful effect of the talismans from him so that he could attain everything he wanted. When word reached Šā son of Marqūnis, Ansād's brother—he was the king of Egypt at the time—that the lord of the country of the Franks was making military preparations against him, he headed for a mountain between the sea and the east bank of the Nile and had most of his treasures moved up there and domes sheathed in lead built on top of it.

Then the lord of the country of the Franks appeared with a thousand ships. Whatever edifices and homes in Egypt he passed on his way, he would demolish every single one of them and smash the idols with the help of that priest, until he came to the first Alexandria. He ravaged the country around it and destroyed most of the city's landmarks, until he entered the Nile by way of Rosetta and proceeded upriver to Memphis, the people of those parts all the time fighting him and he sacking and plundering whatever he passed through and killing whatever he could. Then he set out for the Inner Cities in order to capture their treasures, but he found them protected by powerful talismans, deep canals, trenches and engines of war. After having attacked them for many days in a row without being able to get to the treasures, he flew into a rage at the priest and killed him, because quite a number of his men had already perished.

Then the people of the area rallied, killed a large number of his men who were on the ships, and burned some of the boats. (Meanwhile) the Egyptians worked their magic and did their terrifying things so that storms rose which wrecked most of his ships and he, already wounded, could escape only with his life. The people then returned to their homes and villages and King Šā came back to Memphis, where he stayed for some time and made military preparations to invade the countries of the Greeks. He sent an army against them and brought utter destruction to the islands, so that

other kings stood in awe of him. He also persecuted the priests and killed a large number of them.

He ruled for sixty-seven years and died at the age of one hundred and seventy. He was buried underground in the center of Memphis, in the manner of his forefathers with his treasures, jewels, statues and talismans by his side, among them four thousand *mithqāls* in pure gold in the shapes of land and marine animals, a statue of an eagle made of a green stone, and the image of a sea monster made of solid gold. They inscribed above the treasures his name, his victories over other kings, and the story of his life. The crown then passed to his son Badāris.

[6] (Ibn Waṣīf Shāh) relates: After Ḥūriyā, daughter of Ṭūṭīs, the first of Egypt's Pharaohs—he is the Pharaoh of Abraham, the Friend of God, peace be upon him—had ascended the throne, after having killed her father, she pledged to the people to do right. She began to amass treasures and possessed eventually more than any king. She advanced the priests, the wise men and the leading sorcerers and raised their status, and she had new temples built.

Those who were not pleased with her went to Atrīb, where they chose as their king a man from the line of Atrīb by the name of *Andāḥis*. After he had crowned himself, and quite a number of people had rallied to his cause, she sent an army against him that defeated him and killed most of his followers. He then fled to Syria, where the Canaanites were, and appealed to their king for help. The latter provided him with a large army, whereupon Ḥūriyā opened the treasuries, distributed the treasures, and encouraged the sorcerers to apply their arts. And *Andāḥis* advanced with the Canaanite troops, who were under the command of one of their generals by the name of *Geron*. As they descended on Egypt, (Ḥūriyā) sent, unbeknown to *Andāḥis*, one of her wet nurses, a wise woman, to the general to inform him of her desire to marry him: that she would not choose anyone from her house and that, if he killed *Andāḥis*, she would marry him and hand over the rule

over Egypt to him. He was happy about that and poisoned Andāḥis with a poison she had sent him, and killed him.

After Andāḥis' murder, however, she sent word to him, telling him, "I cannot marry you until you have demonstrated your power in my country and built me an unusual city." In those days people took pride in building, in erecting lofty structures, and in creating wondrous things. "Move from where you are," she said (in her message), "to the western part of my country. There we have many antiquities. Imitate those works and build accordingly!" And he did, and built in the desert of the West a city called Qandūmah, to which he led a canal from the Nile, and around which he planted many saplings, and where he erected a high tower topped by a lookout overlaid with bold, silver, glass and alabaster. All the while, she supplied him with money, but also wrote letters to his friend and sent him presents without the general's knowledge. After he was done with that city, she told him, "We have another city, a fortified place, which was built by one of our early ancestors; but certain parts of it are now in disrepair and its fortifications have crumbled. Proceed to it and work on its repair, while I myself will move to this city you have just built. And when you are finished with the repair of that other city, then send your soldiers to me so that I can come and join you and absent myself from my own city and my family, for dislike that you should consummate our marriage with them close by." Whereupon he went and applied himself to building the second Alexandria.

The historians say that it was al-Walīd ibn Dawma' the Amalekite, the second of the Pharaohs, who invaded her. The reason for invading her was that he had some illness and had sent people to the various countries to have their water brought to him so that he could find out which would agree with him. To the kingdom of Egypt he dispatched a slave who was to acquaint himself with its many resources and to bring back to him its water and the delicacies of the country. After his return, the slave told him what Egypt was like, whereupon he set out at the head of a large army and also wrote to the queen, asking her to marry him. She consented and

was gracious and kind to him, but she laid down as a condition that he must build her a city to demonstrate his might and strength and give it to her as a dowry. He complied with her request and traversed Egypt toward the west. She then sent him all sorts of aromatics and fruit, and had the faces of the animals (in his army) perfumed with *khalūq*. He proceeded all the way to Alexandria, which lay in ruins since the ʿĀdites had left it, and, by moving its available stones, structures and columns, laid the foundations of a large city. He sent one hundred thousand laborers there and it took him quite some time to build it, and in the process he spent all the money he had with him. But every time he built something, certain beasts would come out of the sea and completely destroy it, and in the morning he would not find anything he had built. Which filled him with grave concern.

Ḥūriyā had sent him a thousand head of milch goats whose milk he used in his kitchen; they were in the care of a trusted herder who pastured them there. It so happened (one day) that, when he was about to leave in the evening, there emerged from the sea a maiden so beautiful that his heart yearned for her. When he spoke to her, she laid down as a condition that he must (first) wrestle with her: if he threw her, she would be his, but if she threw him, she would take two of the goats. Day after day she would throw him to the ground and take the goats until she had already more than half of the herd, and the remaining ones went from bad to worse, because he was so preoccupied with his love for the girl that he no longer tended them. He lost weight and became emaciated.

Then one day his master passed by and asked him how he was doing, and he told him the whole story, fearful that he would be severely punished by him. But he put on the clothes of the herder (instead) and took over tending the goats that same day until evening. When the maiden came out, she gave him the same condition and he agreed. He wrestled her, threw her and pinned her down, whereupon she said to him, "If I must be captured, turn me over to my former master, for he is gentler with me!" So, having been tormented by her for a while, he returned her to the herder and told

him, "Ask her about that construction we are undertaking, and which disappears overnight: Who does that, and is there any way for us to preserve it?"

When the goatherd asked her about it, she answered, "It is the beasts of the sea which are tearing down your buildings." "Is there anything one can do about it?" he asked. "Indeed there is," she replied. "You build cases of thick glass with lids, and put inside them people who are good painters, equipped with sheets (of papyrus), brushes, and provisions to last them for days. These cases, after having been secured with ropes, should be loaded on ships. When you are out at sea, have⁽¹⁾ the painters paint everything that passes before their eyes. Then those cases should be removed, and when you have familiarized yourselves with those pictures, make replicas of them in bronze, or stone, or lead, and set them up, on the side facing the sea, in front of the construction you are building. For when those beasts come out and see their own images, they will flee and never come back." And after the herder had informed his master about that, he carried it out, and the construction was completed, and he built the city.

Certain people have claimed that the man who did the building and owned the goats was Geron "of the Subverted Cities,"⁽²⁾ whose invasion with his people occurred before al-Walīd, and that al-Walīd came to (the Egyptians) and conquered them and ruled Egypt after Ḥūriyā's death. These people related that all the money which Geron had with him was used up in (building) that city so that it remained unfinished, whereupon he had the herder inform the maiden, who said: "In the city which is now in ruins there is a round amphitheater surrounded by seven columns with upright bronze statues on top. Sacrifice to each of those statues a fat bull,

^{1.} Read: *murū*, for *amarū* in Wiet/Bulaq, which is a copyist's mistake caused by the preceding *tawassatū* (= *tatawassatū*).

^{2.} Arabic: *Jayrūn al-Mu'tafikī*, his *nisbah* referring to the *mu'tafikāt* in the Koran (9:70, 53:53, 69:9), the "Subverted Cities" which sinned against God and His Messenger and were punished with obliteration, commonly interpreted as a reference to Sodom and Gomorrha.

daub the column beneath it with the bull's blood and cense it with hair from its tail and some parings from its horns and cloven hooves, and ten say, 'This is a sacrifice to thee, now release to me what thou hast.' Then measure from each column in the direction in which its statue is facing one hundred cubits and start digging at a time when the Moon is in opposition with the Sun and Saturn is progressive. After fifty cubits you will come to a huge flagstone. Daub it with the bull's bile and remove it. You will then descend into an underground passage fifty cubits long at the end of which is a locked treasure chamber. The key to the lock is under the threshold of the door. Take it, smear the door with the remainder of the bull's bile and blood, cense it with the parings from its horns and hooves and the hair of its tail, and enter. You will be faced by an idol with a bronze tablet around its neck on which everything contained in the treasure chamber is recorded. Take whatever you want, but do not interfere with a corpse you find, nor with anything on it. Do likewise with each column and its statue, and you will find a similar treasure chamber. These are the tombs of seven kings and their treasures." When (Geron) heard that, he was overjoyed. He carried out the instructions and found things beyond description, as well as many marvels. Thus the construction of the city was completed. But when the news of it reached Ḥūriyā, it displeased her, because she had intended to tire him out and destroy him by means of this ruse. Among the things he found is said to have been a sealed drawer of gold containing a chrysolite kohl jar. In it was a green powder, and with the jar came a small red stick: when someone old applied some of that powder with the stick to his eyelids, he would become a young man again and his hair would turn black and his eyesight would become so clear that he could perceive the spirits. He also found a golden statue: when brought to light, the sky would cloud over and it would rain. And the image of a raven of stone: when asked about something, it would caw and provide the answer. In each treasure chamber he found ten wondrous things.

After he had finished building the city, he sent word to her urging her to come to him. Thereupon she had sumptuous carpets and

cushions delivered for him to spread in his usual audience room, and she told him: "Divide your army into thirds and send to me one third of it. Then, by the time I have reached one third of the way, send me the other third, and when I have passed the halfway point, send the remaining third; that way the soldiers will follow behind me, lest anyone see me as I come to visit you. Also, you must only have boys in your trust who will serve you, and I will come to you with slave girls, who will save you the trouble of servants, and in whose presence I shall not feel ashamed." This was done, while she continued to have her trousseau and treasures delivered to him so that he would know she was coming.

After he had sent one-third of his army, she prepared for the soldiers poisoned food and drink which were carried down by her bondmaids and her servants. They set the food and drink before the soldiers and offered them perfume and sundry amusements, and in the morning not a single one was still alive. Ḥūriyā went on and was met by the other third, to whom she did the same thing, all the while sending word to Geron that she had dispatched his army to her palace and her kingdom to guard and protect them. At last she and her wet nurse and her bondmaids were in his presence, and at that point her nurse blew in his face with a puff that rendered him stunned, and sprinkled on him a liquid she had brought with her so that his limbs began to shake, and he exclaimed, "Whoever thinks he can get the better of women has let himself be deluded, and women have already bested him!" Then she opened his veins, muttering, "The blood of kings cures things!" (Ḥūriyā) then took his head and had it sent to her palace and had it mounted on top of it.

Those treasures she turned over to the city of Memphis, and in Alexandria she built an obelisk on which were inscribed his and her names, and what she had done to him, and the date of these events. When other kings heard her story, they stood in awe of her and sent her gifts and presents.

She made many wondrous things in Egypt. On the borders of Egypt toward Nubia she built a fortress and a bridge over the river Nile. Then she became ill and, having installed her first cousin Dulayfah daughter of Māmūn in office, she died.

[7] It has been transmitted, says Ibn Khurradādhbih,⁽³⁾ that Alexandria was built in three hundred years; that for seventy years its inhabitants would walk about the city during the daytime only with pieces of black cloth (over their eyes), since they feared for their eyesight on account of the intense whiteness of its walls and of its extraordinary Pharos resting on a glass crab out in the sea; and that there lived, aside from its native population, six hundred thousand Jews in it as chattels of the Alexandrines.

[8] Ibn Waṣīf Shāh relates:⁽⁴⁾ The cultivated land used to extend from the sand flats of Rosetta and Alexandria all the way to Barqah. A man could travel in Egypt without needing provisions, thanks to the abundance of fruit and other good things, and he would travel at all times in shade shielding him from the heat of the sun.

King Ṣā, son of Qubṭīm, had solid houses built in those (former) deserts, and trees planted, and canals led there from the Nile. One used to be able to travel from the west bank (of the Nile) all the way to the West through uninterrupted cultivated land. And when those people died out, their relics remained in those deserts, after those dwellings had fallen into ruin and their inhabitants had vanished forever. People who penetrated those deserts still tell of the remains and wonders they saw.

[9] Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam relates:⁽⁵⁾ The man who built and founded Alexandria was Dhū ‘l-Qarnayn the Greek. His name was Alexander, and Alexandria got its name from him. He was the first

³ BGA VI, p. 160. — Read with this text *khawalan*, for Wiet/Bulaq *khuwwila*, at the end of the section.

⁴ The passage is quoted out of context (cf. beginning of ch. 20 below) and obviously irrelevant here.

⁵ *Futūḥ Miṣr* 36-38.

to make a silk fabric (called *washy*). His father was the first of the Caesars.

Others have claimed that he was an Egyptian by the name of Marzubā son of Marzbih, a descendant of Yūnān son of Japheth son of Noah (peace and blessings on him).

Someone has said that he came from Lūbiyah, one of the western districts of Egypt, and Ibn Lahī'ah added: The people there are Greeks.

One also says: He is a man from Ḥimyar. A certain Ḥimyarite king declaimed:

A man resigned in God was Dhū 'l-Qarnayn, my agnate,
a king obeyed by other kings who rallied to his side.
He reached the far-flung corners of the world
in quest of knowledge from a guiding sage,
And saw the sun at eventide descend
into a spring of mud and blackish muck.

(The first hemistich) is also transmitted as "A man resigned in God was Dhū 'l-Qarnayn *before me*."⁽⁶⁾

I was told by 'Uthmān ibn Ṣāliḥ: It was transmitted to me by 'Abd-Allāh ibn Wahb, who heard it from 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ziyād ibn An'um, who had it from Sa'd ibn Mas'ūd al-Tujībī on the authority of two old men from his clan, who related:

We were in Alexandria and found our day sort of dragging, so we said, "How about going to 'Uqbah ibn 'Āmir⁽⁷⁾ to hear some traditions at his house?" We went to his place and found him sitting in his courtyard. When we told him that we found our day rather long

⁶ So, e.g., by Ṭabarī (*Tārīkh* 2:109-10/I, 906-08), who quotes 23 verses of the poem. —The third verse in the above fragment is a paraphrase of Koran 18:86. It is adduced in slightly different versions in three places of the *Tāj al-Ārūs* (1:240, 2:335, 5:113), none of them conforming with the one above.

⁷ A Companion, later governor of Egypt (665-667); he died in 678.

and tiresome, he replied, "It's the same with me; only, I went outside when that happened to me." Then he turned to us and said:

"I was with the Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him, as his servant. And whom should I find (one day) but some men of the People of Book who had brought their scrolls or books with them and said, 'Announce us to the Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him!' So I went and told him where these men were, whereupon the Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him, exclaimed: 'What have I got to do with them that they should ask me about things I do not know? I am but a servant who has no other knowledge than what my Lord has taught me!' Then he added, 'Bring me water for the ritual ablution!' He performed the ablution and then went to the prayer place in his house where he performed two *rak'ahs*. And he never stopped until I recognized joy and happiness on his face, at which point he said, 'Have them come in, and whichever companion of mine you find at the door, have him come in also!' So I ushered them in, and after they had pushed and jostled into the presence of the Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him, he told them: 'If you wish, I shall tell you about the things you want to ask me before you say a word, but if you prefer, speak first and I shall tell you then.' They said, 'No, tell us before we speak!' 'You have come,' he said, 'to ask me about Dhū 'l-Qarnayn, and I will tell you the way you find it written in your books: First of all, he was a Greek lad who was given a kingdom. Then he set out and came to the coast of Egypt where he built a city called Alexandria. After he was done with his construction, an angel came to him who ascended with him and carried him high up in the air and told him, 'Behold what is beneath you!' He said, 'I see my city and other cities with it.' Then the angel carried him higher and said, 'Look again!' He said, 'Now my city has become mingled with the other cities and I cannot tell them apart.' Then the angel carried him even higher and said, 'Now look!' He said, 'I see my city alone and do not see any other.' Whereupon the angel said to him: 'Verily, this is the entire Earth, and that which you see surrounding it is the Sea. Your Lord only wanted to show you the Earth. He has given

you sway over it, and the ignorant shall know and the wise shall be confirmed in truth.” (Dhū ’l-Qarnayn) then set out and reached the place where the sun sets. Then he marched until he reached the place where the sun rises. Then he came to the two barriers, which are two soft mountains from which every thing slides off, and built The Barrier.⁽⁸⁾ Then he passed beyond Gog and Magog and found a people with dog faces who were at war with Gog and Magog. Then he traversed their land and found a nation of short people who were at war with the dog-faced people, and a nation of cranes who were at war with the short people. Then he went on and discovered a nation of serpents so large that one of them could swallow a huge boulder. And finally he came to the sea which surrounds the Earth.’ At that point, (the people with a scripture) said: ‘We bear witness that his story is indeed the way you have told it, and that we find it so written in our Book.’”

(Ultimately) from Khālīd ibn Ma’dān al-Kalāʿi:⁽⁹⁾ When the Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him, was asked about Dhū ’l-Qarnayn, he said: “A king who surveyed the Earth from underneath by means of ropes.”

(But) Khālīd (also) said: When ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, heard a man call out, “Hey, Dhū ’l-Qarnayn!” he exclaimed: “God have mercy! Are you not content with being named after prophets, so that you should get your names from angels?”

(On the other hand) Qatādah (ibn Di‘āmah) transmitted on the authority of al-Ḥasan (al-Baṣrī): Dhū ’l-Qarnayn was a king and a righteous man, and the reason he was given the name *Dhū ’l-Qarnayn* ‘the Two-Horned’ was [—as we were told by Wathimah (ibn Mūsā), from Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah, from Ibn Abī Ḥusayn, from Abū

^{8.} Cf. Koran 18 (The Cave):93 ff.

^{9.} Pious traditionist of Yemenite origin who resided in Ḥimṣ, where he served as police chief (*ṣāhib al-shurṭah*) under the second Umayyad caliph Yazīd. He died in 722.

’l-Ṭufayl—]⁽¹⁰⁾ that ‘Alī, God be pleased with him, when asked about Dhū ’l-Qarnayn, replied: “He was neither an angel nor a prophet, but a righteous servant who loved God and was loved by God, one who acted in good faith toward God and who received counsel from God. God Exalted and Sublime sent him to his people, but they smote him on his horn so that he died. Then God brought him back to life and sent him once more to his people, who again smote him on his horn so that he died. And thus he was called “He of the Two Horns.”

It is also said that the reason he was called “The Two-Horned” was because he went beyond the two “horns” of the sun⁽¹¹⁾ in the west and in the east. And others have claimed: He was called “The Two-Horned” because he had two braids of hair dangling from his head, so long that he would step on them, but others said: No, he had two little horns which were concealed by the turban.

And Ibn Shihāb (al-Zuhri) transmitted that the reason he was called “Dhū ’l-Qarnayn” was that he reached the last rays (*qarn*) of the sun at the place of its setting and the first rays (*qarn*) of the sun at the place of its rising.

From ‘Abd-Allāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, who said: Alexandria began when Pharaoh built there pavilions and assembly places. He was the first to develop it and build there, and the city continued to be the way he had founded it and with his constructions. Then, after him, it passed from king to king—meaning, the kings of Egypt—and then Dalūkah daughter of Zabbā built the Pharos of Alexandria and the lighthouse of Abūqīr after Pharaoh’s time. After Solomon son of David, peace upon him, appeared on earth, he built there an assembly place and a place of worship. Later on, Dhū ’l-Qarnayn took possession of it, and he demolished whatever the kings and pharaohs and others had built, except for the buildings

¹⁰. The *isnād* in square brackets is restored from the original to show the Shi’ite provenience of the tradition.

¹¹. I.e., the two extremities of its course. Read, correctly with the Bulaq text: *qarnay*.

erected by Solomon; he neither destroyed nor changed these, but rather repaired such as had become dilapidated, and he also restored the Pharos to its former condition. Then he built Alexandria from scratch in such a way that it resembled its former appearance. After his death, the city then passed from king to king of the Greeks and others, and there was not a king who did not erect in Alexandria some building of his own which was then named after him and attributed to him.

Ibn Lahī'ah said: I have heard that in Alexandria a stone was found which bore the inscription: "I am Shaddād son of 'Ād. I am the one who erected the columns and built the labyrinth (?)⁽¹²⁾ and blocked The Valley with his arm. I built all of these when there was neither hoariness nor death, and the stones were pliable as clay."

[10] In one transmitted account (it says): "And I buried in the sea a treasure twelve cubits deep: no one will raise it until it shall be raised by the community of Muḥammad, peace and blessings upon him."

[11] A "labyrinth," said Ibn Lahī'ah,⁽¹³⁾ is something like *maghārr*—'blind leads.'

[12] Abū 'Alī al-Qālī⁽¹⁴⁾ says in his *Book of Dictations*: Ibn al-A'rābī, and others, cited these verses:

About my years she asks, how old I am.
I said: Were I to live to the lizard's age,
As long as Noah in primeval time,
were I endowed with Solomon's ken,

¹² Arabic: *ḥayyada 'l-aḥyād*. The meaningless phrase, perhaps coined by analogy with *ḥayyara 'l-ḥīrah*, occurred already in Pt. I, ch. 40 (sect. 37), where it gave rise to much speculation by Graefe and A. Fischer. It appears to be a dim echo of the maze of catacombs found at Kōm al-Shuqāfah.

¹³ Resumption of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's text (p. 38).

¹⁴ Ismā'īl b. al-Qāsim b. 'Aydhūn (901-967), famed philologist, anthologist and man of letters from Qālīqālā in Armenia who, after long peregrinations, settled in Cordova, where he taught grammar. See "al-Qālī" (R. Sellheim) in *EF*. —Of the following verses, only the first verse and the first hemistich of the second conform with the quoted source (*al-Amālī* 1:234).

And lived an eon in primeval time—
I still would age, or else be killed!

[13] In one transmitted version (the last two hemistichs read):

As Solomon knew the speech of ants,
while rocks were soft as miry mud.

Someone else has said: The *zaman al-fitaḥl* or “primeval time,” that was when the stones were soft and moist. People believe that the *zaman al-fitaḥl* was a time after The Flood during which there was great fertility and people prospered.

Certain people have said that the *zaman al-fitaḥl* was a time when nothing was yet created.⁽¹⁵⁾

As for the expression *ʿilm al-ḥukl*, a *ḥukl* is any creature whose voice is inaudible.⁽¹⁶⁾

The following verses in the meter *rajaz* are by Ruʿbah ibn al-ʿAjjāj⁽¹⁷⁾ ibn Ruʿbah ibn Labīd ibn Ṣakhr ibn Kathīf ibn Ḥayy ibn Bakr ibn Rabīʿah ibn Saʿd ibn Mālik ibn Saʿd ibn Zayd Manāḥ ibn Tamīm. And the story behind them is that he came to a water hole of the ʿUkl and saw a girl whom he liked. So he proposed to marry her, and she said, “I see age, but is there also property?” “Yes,” he replied, “a herd of camels.” “And is there any silver?” she asked. “No,” he said. “O ʿUkl clan!” she exclaimed. “Is it out of pride, or because we have become so poor (that we must ask such questions)?” Whereupon Ruʿbah recited:

When she disdained my cash and thought my camels few,
it was by habit that she stood by ʿUkl,
My bride-to-be⁽¹⁸⁾ and shook her head, inquiring more:

¹⁵ Read: *lam yukhlaq fihi baʿdu* (cf. Lane, *Lexicon* s.v. *fitahl*). Wiet/Bulaq: *lam yakhluf baʿdu* (?).

¹⁶ But *al-Ḥukl* is also a name for Solomon (cf. al-Firūzābādī, *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* 3:370), because he knew the speech of the ants (*ḥukl*).

¹⁷ A Baṣran authority on *rajaz* poetry and Arab folklore, died after 763.

¹⁸ Read: *khiṭbī*, as in *Simṭ al-laʿālī* (1:533). Wiet/Bulaq: *ḥazẓī* ‘my lot,’ with no dis-

4. The City of Alexandria

about my years she asked, how old I was.
 I said: Were I to live to the lizard's age,
 as long as Noah in primeval time,
 When rocks were moist as a mire's mud ...

or in one transmitted version:

Were I endowed with Solomon's ken,
 as Solomon knew the speech of ants ...

[14] I asked Abū Bakr ibn Durayd⁽¹⁹⁾ about the *zaman al-fitahl*, and he said: The Arabs claim that it is a time during which the stones were soft and moist.

[15] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam relates:⁽²⁰⁾ It is said that it was Shaddād ibn 'Ād who built Alexandria, and God alone knows the truth.

Alexandria was actually three cities located side by side: *Mannah*, which is the site of the Pharos and the area adjoining it,⁽²¹⁾ *Alexandria*, the site of the inner city of present-day Alexandria; and *Naqīṭah*.⁽²²⁾ Each of them was protected by a wall, and beyond that was still another wall surrounding all three cities.

It has been said that Alexandria was protected by seven strong fortresses and seven trenches.

When Dhū 'l-Qarnayn built Alexandria, said [Khālīd and Abū Ḥamzah], he tiled it with white marble, both its house walls and its ground. People used to dress in black and red there; for that reason

cernible referent. The hemistich is missing in *Lisān al-Arab* and *Tāj al-Arūs* (s.v. *fitahl*).

¹⁹ Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, Baṣran philologist, lexicographer, genealogist and poet (837-933). —The paragraph is the continuation of the *Amālī* text cited in section 12.

²⁰ *Futūḥ Miṣr* 38-39.

²¹ The *Hennas* of the Greeks, comprising the area between the eastern and the western harbors (cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 422).

²² The Greek *Nikētas*, which was the name of the middle part of ancient Alexandria (*ibid.* I, 463).

monks wore black habits (in contrast) with the bright whiteness of the marble. Because of the whiteness of the marble, people would not light lamps there at night, and when there was a moon, a man sewing at night by moonlight could thread a needle, owing to the whiteness of the marble.

Some people say: Alexandria was built in three hundred years, was inhabited for three hundred years, and lay in ruins for three hundred years. For seventy years no one would enter it without a piece of black cloth over his eyes on account of the whiteness of its gypsum and its tiling, and for seventy years no one needed to light lamps there.

Alexandria was so white, said [al-Aṭṭāf ibn Khālīd], that it gave off light by night and day. After sunset no one would leave his house, and those who did lost their eyesight. There was a shepherd among them who tended his flock along the sea shore, and something used to come of the sea and take some of his sheep. He lay in wait at a certain spot until that thing came out again, and it turned out to be a maiden. He hung on to her hair, and she tried to fend him off, but he got the better of her and took her to his home. After she had become used to people, she noticed that they did not leave their houses after sunset. So she asked them, and they told her, "If one of us leaves his house, he loses his eyesight." Thereupon she prepared talismans for them. She was the first one in Alexandria who set up talismans in Egypt.

It has been said that marble had been made so pliable for them that it had the consistency of dough in the early morning hours and by noontime it hardened.

[16] Quite a number of savants have related, says al-Mas'ūdī⁽²³⁾ that, after Alexander the Macedonian was firmly established as king in his country, he set out to choose a land with healthy air, soil and water and eventually came to the site of Alexandria. There he

²³. *Prairies d'or* 2:420 ff. Maqrīzī, though, used Ibn Waṣīf Shāh's account drawn from Mas'ūdī.

found vestiges of buildings and numerous marble columns, and in the middle of them was a huge column bearing the following inscription in *musnad* writing, which is the earliest form of the scripts of the Ḥimyarites and the 'Ādite kings:

"I am Shaddād, the son of 'Ād. With the strength of my arm I stemmed The Valley, quarried gigantic columns, clove lofty mountains and towering peaks. I built Iram Dhāt al-'Imād, the like of which was never created in any other land, and intended to build on this site a city like Iram to which I would bring every intrepid and noble-minded man from all the tribes and nations. That was at a time when there was neither fear nor decrepitude, neither sorrow nor sickness. But I was afflicted with something which bade me to hasten and deprived me of carrying out my intended work. And as that happened, my concern and anxiety became prolonged and my sleep and peace of mind diminished. Thus I set out safely from my homeland, not to subdue some mighty king, not in fear of some lumbering army, not driven by avid desire, nor with the aim of oppression, but to fulfill my destiny and to devote myself to leaving lasting monuments and carrying out the divine mandate. He who sees the work I leave behind and learns who I was, how long I lived, what perspicacity and great circumspection I possessed, will not be deluded by this world after my time. For it is deceptive and perfidious, taking what it gives and recalling what it bestows. Much has been said to show the transitoriness of this world and to guard against being deluded by it and having faith in it."

And Alexander paused in deep thought, pondering and weighing these words. Then he sent for artisans from the various towns to fgather, and traced out the foundation, making it miles in length and width. He had columns and marble collected on its site, and ships carrying all sorts of alabaster and marble and stones arrived from the island of Sicily, from North Africa, from Crete, and from the remotest part of the Byzantine Sea next to where it flows into the Great Ocean; from the island of Rhodes, too, (materials) were brought to him. He ordered the laborers and artisans to build all around the foundation he had traced for them the wall of the city.

In each parcel of the land he had a wooden pole erected and ropes strung from pole to pole, each connected with the other, and all of that he connected with an alabaster column that stood in front of his tent. On top of that column he suspended a large resounding bell, and he gave orders to the men and to the foremen of the masons and laborers and artisans that, as soon as they heard the sound of that bell and the ropes moved, on each section of which he had hung a small bell, they must make every effort to lay the foundations of the city from all sides at once. Now, Alexander would have liked to do all that at a time of his choosing and under a lucky ascendant. But he became drowsy and fell asleep while waiting for that propitious time, and a raven came and lit on the (main) rope leading to the large bell on top of the column, setting it in motion. The bell rang out, the ropes moved, and the small bells mounted on them began to vibrate, for the whole thing worked with mechanical devices and hermetic tricks, and when the craftsmen realized that those ropes had moved and heard the sounds (of the bells), they laid the foundations all at once. A clamor of voices in praise and glory of God rose in the air so that Alexander awoke from his sleep. When he asked what had happened, he was told about it. He was struck with amazement and exclaimed: "I intended one thing, but God intended another, and God allows only what is in His intention! I wanted the city to live for a long time, but God wanted it to die and perish quickly and be passed down the line in rapid succession by future kings!"

After Alexandria was firmly built and its foundations were laid and night had descended on its people,⁽²⁴⁾ certain sea monsters came forth and destroyed everything that had been built. The following morning Alexander exclaimed, "This is the beginning of the city's ruination!" For he was certain that the Creator intended it to per-

²⁴. The following story, which appears to have its origin in a Greek legend of a snake that frightened the workmen who were building Alexandria (cf. *The Muqaddimah*, transl. F. Rosenthal, 1:73, n.3), is singled out by Ibn Khaldūn as a good example for the mindless and uncritical acceptance and transmission of "absurd information" by some historians (*K. al-ʿIbar*, Bulaq ed., 1:30; *The Muqaddimah* 1:73-74).

ish, and saw an evil omen in what the monsters had done. Every day the builders kept building and constructing, and although someone was put in charge to fend off the monsters when they emerged from the sea, every morning they found everything that had been built (the day before) destroyed. Alexander was profoundly alarmed by that and frightened by what he saw. He began to think about what to do and which device might help him in that matter in order to avert evil from the city. And then the way out came to him (one day) while he was alone, handling affairs of state. The next morning he summoned the artisans, and they built him a wooden box, ten cubits long and five cubits wide. Inside were placed sheets of glass which were enclosed all around by the wood of the box. All of that was then caulked with tar and pitch and other water-repellent coatings in order to prevent water from getting into the box—(this) after holes had been made in the glass sheets for holding ropes. Alexander then stepped inside the box with two of his scribes, both of them expert draftsmen, and had the doors closed on him and caulked with the above materials. He also had two large ships taken out to the middle of the sea. On the underside of the box, weights of lead, iron and stones were suspended which were to pull the box down. The box was then placed between the two ships, which had been connected with a rigid wooden brace lest they drift apart, and the ropes of the box were tied to the ships and gradually fed out, so that the box sank in the water until it reached the bottom of the sea. There they looked through that transparent glass at the monsters and creatures of the sea in the clear water: There were images of devils in the likeness of human beings, some of them with something like lion heads, holding axes in their hands, and some others holding saws and crooks, thus imitating the artisans and laborers in the city with their building tools in their hands. These images in all their variety and with all the misshapeness of their bodies and figures were carefully recorded by Alexander and his companions and their likeness was copied on sheets of papyrus. Then he pulled on the ropes, and when the people on the ship felt that, they stretched the ropes and

raised the box. Out came Alexander and ordered the craftsmen working with iron, copper and stone to make effigies of those monsters the way they were depicted, and after they were done with them, the images were placed on columns by the seashore. Then he ordered people to resume construction. (This time) after nightfall, when the monsters and vermin appeared from the sea, they looked at their own images on those columns facing toward the sea, and they retreated and never came back thereafter.

And so Alexandria was built and erected. On its gates, Alexander had the following inscribed: "This is Alexandria. I intended to build it for prosperity, success and comfort, for happiness and joy, for permanence across the ages, but the Almighty Creator, King of Heaven and Earth and Destroyer of Nations, did not want it to be so built. Still, I built it, and I built it well, and erected its wall. God Exalted and Sublime gave me knowledge and wisdom in all things and facilitated for me the various roads to success, so that nothing I desired in the world proved impossible for me to achieve, and nothing strove for was denied to me, by the grace of God Exalted and Sublime, by His favor to me, and for the welfare of His servants among my contemporaries. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds. There is no God save He, the Lord of All Things." And after that inscription he recorded the events that would befall his country after him in future times, be they blights or prosperity or ruination, and what these events would result in, all the way down to the time when the world would be obliterated.

Alexandria was built on several levels, with arcades beneath the city and its houses on top of them; a horseman carrying a lance could ride with ease and make the rounds of those vaults and arcades beneath the city. These arches and vaults were provided with holes and apertures for light and vents for air. Alexandria would shine at night without the help of a single lamp on account of the intense whiteness of the alabaster and marble. Its markets, streets and alleys were all arcaded so that no one would ever be exposed to the rain. It was protected by seven walls built with various kinds of stones of different color, with moats between them and sec-

ondary walls between each moat and wall. Sometimes pieces of green silk would be hung in the city, because the intense whiteness of the marble robbed people of their eyesight.

After (Alexander) had built the city and settled it with people to live in it, monsters and denizens of the sea—according to the claim of the traditionists from both Fustāt and Alexandria—used to abduct people of the city at night so that, when they woke up in the morning, a great many of them would be missing. When Alexander learned about that, he mounted talismans on top of certain pillars in that area that are called “obelisks,” and which have survived down to this day. Every one of those pillars is shaped like a cypress, and the height of each is eighty cubits over supports of copper. Below the talismans he put pictures, symbols and an inscription.

[17] I say: In the foregoing narration of Ibn Waṣīf Shāh there is evidently an error in what al-Mas‘ūdī transmitted, namely, that it was Alexander who had the box built in order to depict the shapes of the sea creatures. Ibn Waṣīf Shāh knows the traditions of the Egyptians better than that. Likewise, it is also an error when al-Mas‘ūdī reports that the obelisks are a work of Alexander’s. Rather, those obelisks are the towers on which one used to light fires and the landmarks which the ancient kings of Egypt used to erect; they are the work of the early Coptic kings and of the Pharaohs who ruled Egypt in ancient times.

5. Alexander

[1] He is Alexander son of Philippos son of Amyntas son of Heracles the Giant, who was the son of Alexander the Great.

His father, Philippos, reigned as king in the country of Macedon for twenty-five years, during which time he came up with more kinds of outrage and more sorts of mischief than any other of its kings before him. Initially, he had been sent by his brother Alexander as a hostage to the court of a Greek prince, with whom he stayed for three years. The prince was a philosopher and (Philip) thus learned at his court the different disciplines of philosophy. After his brother Alexander had been killed, the people were unanimously in favor of putting Philippos on the throne. So they made him a prince and he remained in power for a long time. He fought the Greeks and vanquished them and then proceeded to the open country where he killed people by the thousands and conquered cities. A multitude so ungovernable and an army so unchallengeable rallied to his side that he was able to subjugate all of the Greeks. In one of the wars he lost an eye. To countries and cities he brought indiscriminately invasion and destruction, enslavement and plunder. Then he called up all the people of Greece and mobilized an army of two hundred thousand foot and fifty thousand horse—not counting his own Macedonian followers and various Ionians belonging to it—with the aim of invading Persia. While in the process of assembling that multitude, he turned his attention to marrying a daughter of his by the name of Cleopatra to a relative on his wife's side, namely, his wife's brother and the maternal uncle of his son Alexander. Two days before the wedding, while sitting and talking to his generals, he was asked which kind of death was most worthy for a man to wish for. He replied that an honorable, powerful, victorious, experienced man must surely wish in his heart for no other death than a sudden one by the sword, lest disease torment him and pain sap

his strength. His wish was indeed swiftly fulfilled at that wedding! The story goes that, while attending some equestrian game between his son Alexander and his son-in-law Alexander, a young Greek, at a moment when he had a chance to get to him alone, suddenly stabbed and killed him to avenge the blood of his father.

[2] After the death of his father Philippos, Alexander then assumed the reins of kingship. The first instance in which he demonstrated his power and determination was in the land of the Greeks, who had just switched allegiance from the Macedonians to the Persians: He wiped them out completely, devastated their cities and reduced them to slavery, and all of their towns and districts had to pay tribute to him. Next, he killed all of his male in-laws and most of his own kin, while at the same time mobilizing an army to fight the Persians. The total number of his troops was thirty-two thousand horsemen and sixty thousand foot soldiers, and his fleet consisted of five hundred and eighty ships. With that fighting force he then stirred the great kings of this world into action.

Setting out for Alexandria, he entered Jerusalem, where he offered a sacrifice to God Exalted, and then marched out in order to fight Darius. The army of Darius, the king of the Persians, consisted of six hundred thousand fighting men at their first encounter, but Alexander defeated him. It was at the time a disgraceful event for the Persians and a terrible catastrophe, in which a countless number of them were killed, while Alexander's army lost only one hundred and twenty horsemen and ninety foot soldiers as casualties.

As Alexander went on, conquering and sacking towns, he received word that Darius had mobilized (again) and was headed in his direction with a huge multitude. Fearing that Darius might catch up with him in the mountain defile where he was at the time, Alexander covered with extraordinary speed some one hundred miles in order to reach the city of Tarsus, almost dying on the way from a cold so excessive that his veins contracted. Darius met him with an army of three hundred thousand foot and one hundred thousand

horse. When the two armies met, Alexander almost panicked in view of the multitude led by Darius and the small number of his own men. Fierce fighting began between them, with the generals personally engaged in combat. Heroes dismounted and lined up for battle, stabs and blows were exchanged, and the battlefield was teeming with warriors. Both kings, Darius and Alexander, engaged in personal combat, Alexander being the most accomplished, the most courageous, and the physically strongest horseman of his time. The two kept fighting until both were wounded, and the battle went on until Darius was put to flight and the Persians were defeated. Close to eighty thousand of their foot soldiers were killed and some ten thousand of their knights, and about forty thousand of them were taken prisoner, while only two hundred and thirty foot soldiers and one hundred and fifty knights of Alexander's army were killed in action. Alexander then despoiled the entire Persian camp, where he found countless treasures of gold and silver and exquisite effects. Among the captives were found the mother of Darius, his wife, his sister, and his two daughters. Darius sought to ransom them with half of his empire, but Alexander did not grant his request. So Darius mobilized an army for the third time, calling up the Persians from the remotest corners of their country and recruiting every able-bodied man from other nations.

Alexander, after having dispatched a general with a fleet to invade Persia, proceeded to Syria, where he was met by the kings of this world, who all submitted to him. Some of them he pardoned, some he sent into exile, and some of them he had killed. Then he went on to the area of Tarsus. It was a flourishing, ancient, important town, whose population had been confident to receive help from the people of Ifrīqiyyah, because they were linked by marriage with them. Alexander besieged them until the city was captured, and proceeded from there to Rhodes and then to Egypt, sacking them both. In Egypt he built the city of Alexandria.

[3] There are long accounts as well as instructions by him dealing with its construction, says Orosius, with which we did not wish to unduly lengthen our own book.⁽¹⁾

[4] After Darius had lost all hope of reaching a peace agreement, he approached with an army of four hundred thousand foot soldiers and one hundred thousand horsemen. He met Alexander, who was coming from Egypt, in the area of Tarsus, and an extraordinary, terrible battle was fought between them: the Greeks doing their utmost in anticipation of a victory to which they had become accustomed by then, and the Persians fighting with the desperation of people who are mentally resigned to die and who prefer death to slavery. Rarely has there been a battle reported in which more killing took place than in that encounter. When Darius saw his followers being vanquished and defeated around him, he decided to hasten his own death in that battle by engaging personally in combat and boldly facing to be killed in action, but some of his generals were kind to him and smuggled him out of the fray.

And so he was defeated, and the power and might of the Persians was gone and their sway brought low thereafter. The entire East came under the dominance of the Greeks, and for four hundred and fifty years the Persian Empire ceased to exist.

For thirty days Alexander was busy collecting the spoils he had found in the Persian camp, sifting them and distributing them to his own soldiers. Then he went on to Persepolis, which was their capital, and where all the treasures and riches of the world were amassed. He destroyed it and plundered everything in it. When word reached him that Darius was by then with certain people, fettered in silver shackles, he made preparations and set out at the head of six thousand men. He found the king by the wayside, covered with many wounds from which he died before long.

^{1.} The passage must have been interpolated by the Arab translator, since almost all of this chapter is a summary of Orosius' account (*Historiae* 3:12 ff.).

Alexander mourned him and ordered him to be buried in the royal tombs.

There is a lesson in those three battles for those who are willing to learn from it, and a warning for anyone ready to heed it: In them were killed, of the people of one empire, some fifteen million men, both horse and foot, from the population of an Asian country, namely, Mesopotamia. And of the population of that same empire, some sixty years earlier, anywhere from nineteen million to one million men, horse and foot, had been killed from the people of Mesopotamia, Syria, Tarsus, Egypt, the island of Rhodes, and all the countries (later) obliterated by Alexander in their entirety.

[5] World dominance was divided among his generals, after he had shaken the entire world to its roots with his enormous calamities and had brought to its population universally either terrible death, or a sense of resignation in death and the need to cope with its terrors.

[6] At the time of his death he willed that after him every leader among the Greeks must be given the surname *Ptolemaios* in order to strike terror in the hearts of enemies, for its meaning is *al-ḥarbī*—the warlike.

[7] This, then, is the true story of Alexander, and no attention should be paid to anything at variance with it.

[8] He is said to have been blue-eyed and blond.

[9] He was the first to engage in nightly conviviality, and who had people to make him laugh and to tell him stories, all of which he did not so much for pleasure and enjoyment, but to preserve his kingdom and to protect his own person. Kings followed his exam-

ple in those nightly chats and in employing court jesters and storytellers.⁽²⁾

^{2.} Compare Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* (ed. Dār al-Maʿārif, p. 423): “The truth is, God willing, that the first person to have evening gatherings was Alexander, who had people to make him laugh and to tell him stories. The purpose behind it was not enjoyment, but rather to keep and preserve. For the same reason, other kings after him used the (Persian) *Hazār Afsān* (A Thousand Tales), which comprises a thousand nights but fewer than two hundred nightly sessions, because a story might be told during several nights.”

6. Alexander's Calendar

[1] Abū 'l-Rayḥān Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī says:⁽¹⁾ The calendar of Alexander the Greek, whom some people call *Dhū 'l-Qarnayn*, is based on the years of the Greeks. Most of the nations have been going by it ever since he set out from Greece at the age of twenty-six to fight Darius, the king of the Persians.

When he came to Jerusalem, he ordered the Jews to abandon the calendar of Moses and David, peace be upon both, and to switch to his own calendar. They complied and changed over to his calendar, using it for whatever needs they had, after having made it begin with the twenty-sixth year from his birth, which is the beginning of the time when he set out on military campaigns, in order to round out one thousand years since the time of Moses, peace be upon him. They have been adhering to that calendar and using it ever since.

The Greeks also go by it; before it, they used to reckon time from the exodus of Yūnān son of Bawris from Babylon to the West.

[2] Alexander's calendar begins with Monday, the first of *Tishrīn al-Awwal* (October), which corresponds to the fourth day of (the Coptic month of) Bābih.⁽²⁾ Their days are based on the time from sunrise to sunset and then until morning and sunrise again, so that one gets a complete day of twenty-four hours. The months are based on a constant number which is always followed in the same order. Their year consists of twelve months, of which some are different from others in the number (of days). Here are their names and the number of days in each:

^{1.} *The Chronology of the Ancient Nations*, ed. E. Sachau, p. 28.

^{2.} According to the Julian calendar. By the Gregorian calendar, the 4th of Bābih corresponds to the 12th or 13th of October.

<i>Tishrīn al-Awwal</i> (October)	31 days
<i>Tishrīn al-Thānī</i> (November)	30 days
<i>Kānūn al-Awwal</i> (December)	31 days
<i>Kānūn al-Thānī</i> (January)	31 days
<i>Shubāṭ</i> (February)	28 $\frac{1}{4}$ days
<i>Ādhār</i> (March)	31 days
<i>Nisān</i> (April)	30 days
<i>Ayyār</i> (May)	31 days
<i>Ḥazīrān</i> (June)	30 days
<i>Tammūz</i> (July)	31 days
<i>Āb</i> (August)	31 days
<i>Aylūl</i> (September)	30 days

Thus, seven months have thirty-one days each, four months have thirty days each, and one month consists of twenty-eight days and one-fourth of a day. Or more precisely: for three consecutive years they give *Shubāṭ* twenty-eight days, but in the fourth year they make it twenty-nine days. Hence, the number of days in their year is $345 \frac{1}{4}$ days: for three years in a row they give their years 365 days, and to the fourth year they assign 366 days and call it a “leap year.” The reason why they add one-fourth of a day each year is to approximate the number of days in their year to the number of days in a solar year, so that their affairs will always follow the same pattern: the cold months and the hot months, the times of planting, of pollination, of reaping the fruit will always be at a given time of the year, and the season for each one of these will never change.

The first leap year was the third year of Alexander's reign.

Between Monday, the first day of this calendar of Alexander, and Thursday, the first of al-Muḥarram of the year in which our Prophet Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd-Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him, emigrated from Mecca to Medina, elapsed 933 years and 155 days. Between that same Monday and Friday, the first day of The Flood, lie 2,992 years and 193 days. And between the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and

the first day of Alexander's calendar passed 435 solar years and 238 days.

[3] Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Qays ibn Waḥshiyyah says in his *Nabataean Agriculture*: In the account of the Nabataeans, according to what I have found written in their scriptures, the month called *Tammūz* is actually the name of a man with a long and extraordinary story, namely: That (this man) called on a certain king to worship the seven planets and the twelve signs of the zodiac, and that the king had him killed (for it), but he lived after having been killed; whereupon the king had him killed again and again in an ever more nasty manner, and each time he lived again, until he finally died of the last killing. In fact, each of these months they have is the name of an outstanding, learned man who was in ancient times one of the Nabataeans that lived in the region of Babylon prior to the Kasdānians. Which is to say that this Tammūz was not a Kasdānian, nor a Canaanite, nor a Hebrew, nor an Assyrian, but one of the early Janbānians. Therefore, they speak of all of their months as names of men of the past: that Tishrīn al-Awwal and Tishrīn al-Thānī (for instance) are the names of two brothers who were outstanding in the sciences; that the same holds true for Kānūn al-Awwal and Kanūn al-Thānī; and that Shubāṭ is the name of a man who married a thousand women, virgins one and all, but never sired progeny and was never born offspring, and for that failure to produce offspring he was relegated by them to last place in the months, and that is also why the month has fewer days than the others.

To this day, the Ṣābians, both the Babylonian and those of Ḥarrān, mourn and weep for Tammūz in the month called *Tammūz* during a feast related to Tammūz which they celebrate in that month. They raise a great lamentation, especially the women, for these all rise then and there and bewail and lament Tammūz, babbling a lengthy rigmarole about him.

(Otherwise) he (Ibn Waḥshiyyah) knows no more about (Tammūz) than the fact that they (the Nabataeans) say: Thus we found our

forefathers wailing and weeping over Tammūz during that feast dedicated to him.⁽³⁾

[4] The Christians commemorate a man named *Jūrjīs*,⁽⁴⁾ a disciple of Jesus, peace be upon him, who called on some king to adopt the Christian religion and was tortured by that king with those multiple killings. I do not know (whether) the story of Tammūz (somehow) came to the Christians and they substituted the name of St. George in it. (At any rate) they differ from the Šābians with regard to the time (of their respective feasts), because the Šābians remember Tammūz on the first day of July, while the Christians commemorate St. George on the last day of April.

[5] It is said that a certain king of Rome added January and February to the Greek months, because up to his time they had only ten months, each with thirty-six days.

[6] It is said that *Fanūfalūs*⁽⁵⁾ was the first man to rule the city of Rome, and that he reigned for forty-three years. He proclaimed February to be one of the Roman months, since until that time there had been only ten months, each consisting of thirty-six days.

[7] The reason why February is two days short is that there was an invasion at the time of *Qabṭan*,⁽⁶⁾ the commander of the

³ A mournful festival dedicated to the god Tā'ūz is mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm in the *Fihrist* (transl. B. Dodge p. 758). Ezekiel, in his vision at Jerusalem, finds "women weeping for Tammuz" (Ez. S;14). —Tammuz (Sumerian *Dunu-zi* 'true son') was the ancient Mesopotamian deity of vegetation, whose death and return to earth with his sister-spouse Ishtar, goddess of love and fertility, after her tearful search for him, was reenacted in a ritual celebrating the eternal cycle of dying and new growth. The cult, even after its decline in Babylonia and Assyria, spread in popular observance over large parts of the Near East and was associated in Egypt with the very similar figures of Osiris and Isis. In Syria, Tammuz was identified with Adonis, whose cult is mentioned in the Ras Shamra-Ugarit texts. Cf. D.A. Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, 2:27 ff.; "Tammuz" in W. Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

⁴ On this legend of St. George see, e.g., Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:24-36/1, 796-812.

⁵ I.e., (Numa) *Pompilius*, the legendary second king of Rome. So identified by Wiet (III, 319) on the basis of the text of Agapius of Manbij, the source of Maqrīzī's account.

⁶ I.e., (Manlius) *Capitolinus*. —The text is still by Ibn Waḥshiyyah; cf. Wiet's note 4.

Roman army, accompanied by quarrels and wars between him and (a man named) *Farbūriyūs* (Februarius) which ended in Qabṭan's victory and his taking over the kingdom of the Romans. He then ordered *Farbūriyūs* to be publicly denounced (with the words) *aghbā Fururiyā!* which, translated, means 'Out with you, February!'⁽⁷⁾ He drowned, later on, in the sea.

They named the month of Shubāṭ "Februarius" in commemoration of the evil he had done. For all this took place on the 29th and 30th of February, and so they took these two days out of February and added them to July and January, thus making each of these two months thirty-one days. Then after some time came another king who said, "It is not good that February be in the middle of the year," and he moved it to the end of it. Ever since that time, the Romans have always seen an evil omen in February.

⁷ The first word of the preceding phrase is the Syriac transliteration (*agbé*) of Greek *ékba* 'get out!'

7. On the Difference between Alexander and Dhū 'l-Qarnayn, Who Are Actually Two Men

[1] One should know that the learned traditionists have established that the Dhū 'l-Qarnayn mentioned by God in His Book with the words "*They will question thee concerning Dhool Karnain. Say: 'I will recite to you a mention of him.'* We established him in the land, and We gave him a way to everything, and he followed a way"⁽¹⁾ was an Arab.

[2] He is mentioned many times in the poetry of the Arabs. His name is al-Ṣa'b ibn Dhī Marāthid ibn al-Ḥārith al-Rā'ish ibn al-Hammāl Dhī Shaddād ibn 'Ād ibn Dhī Minaḥ ibn 'Āmir al-Milṭāṭ ibn Saksak ibn Wa'il ibn Ḥimyar ibn Saba' ibn Yashjub ibn Ya'rūb ibn Qaḥṭān ibn Hūd ibn 'Ābir (Eber) ibn Shālikh (Salah) ibn Ar-fakhshad (Arphaxad) ibn Sām (Shem) ibn Nūḥ (Noah), peace be upon him. He was a king of the Ḥimyar, who are the genuine Arabs—*al-'arab al-'āribah*, also called *al-'arab al-'arbā'*. Dhū 'l-Qarnayn was a crowned *tubba'*. After he had ascended the throne, he was at first haughty and overbearing, but later he humbled himself before God and joined up with al-Khaḍir.

[3] Those who believe that Alexander son of Philippos is identical with the Dhū 'l-Qarnayn who built The Barrier, are in error. For the term *dhū* is Arabic, and *dhū 'l-qarnayn* is a title of the Arab kings of the Yemen, whereas the former was a Greek.

[4] Abu Ja'far al-Ṭabarī reports:⁽²⁾ Al-Khaḍir lived at the time of King Afrīdūn son of Athfayāh, according to the learned men among the people of the First Scripture, and before Mūsā ibn 'Imrān, peace be upon him. It has been said that he was in command of

^{1.} Koran 18 (The Cave):83-85.

^{2.} *Tārikh* 1:365/I, 414-15.

the vanguard of Dhū 'l-Qarnayn the Elder, who lived at the time of Abraham the Friend of God, peace be upon him, and that he reached with Dhū 'l-Qarnayn, at the time when the latter was on the march through the lands, the River of Life, where he drank from its water, without being aware of it and unbeknown to Dhū 'l-Qarnayn and his companions, so that he was made immortal, being alive, as they think, down to the present time. Others have said: The Dhū 'l-Qarnayn who lived during the age of Abraham the Friend, peace be upon him, is identical with Afrīdūn son of Ath-fayān, and the commander of his vanguard was al-Khaḍir.

[5] Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hishām says in his *Kitāb al-tijān fī ma'rifat mulūk al-azmān*, after having mentioned the same genealogy of Dhū 'l-Qarnayn that we have given (above): He was a crowned South Arabian king. After he had ascended the throne, he was at first haughty and overbearing, but later he humbled himself. [6] He met with al-Khaḍir in Jerusalem and traveled with him to all corners of the earth. He was given a way to everything, as God Exalted has reported, and he built The Barrier against Gog and Magog. He died in Mesopotamia. [7] As for Alexander, he was a Greek and is known as Alexander the Macedonian. [8] Ibn (al-)Abbās, God be pleased with him, when asked about Dhū 'l-Qarnayn, where he came from, replied: "From Ḥimyar. He is al-Ṣa'b ibn Dhī Marāthid, whom God Exalted established in the land, and to whom He gave a way to everything. He reached the two extremities (in the course) of the sun and the top of the earth, and he built The Barrier against Gog and Magog." "And Alexander?" he was asked. "He was an upright, wise Greek man," he answered, "who built a pharos on the seashore in Afrīqis, captured the land of Rome, and came to the Sea of the West, where he left along its shore in the west numerous constructions and cities." And when Ka'b al-Aḥbār was asked about Dhū 'l-Qarnayn, he replied: "The truth in our opinion, as told in our traditions and by our ancestors, is that he was a Ḥimyarite and that he is al-Ṣa'b ibn Dhī Marāthid. Alexander (on the other hand) was a Greek, a descendant of Esau son of Isaac son of Abraham the Friend, peace be upon him.

Alexander's men, among them Galen and Aristotle, lived to see the Messiah, Mary's son."

[9] In his *Genealogies*, al-Hamdānī reports: Kahlān ibn Saba' begat Zayd, and Zayd begat 'Arīb, Mālik, Ghālib, and 'Amīkarib. But al-Haytham⁽³⁾ said: 'Amīkarib ibn Saba' is the brother of Ḥimyar and Kahlān. 'Amīkarib then begat Abū Mālik Fadraḥ and Mahala'il, sons of 'Amīkarib, and Ghālib begat Junādah ibn Ghālib, who ruled after Mahala'il ibn 'Amīkarib ibn Saba', and 'Arīb begat 'Amr. 'Amr then begat Zayd and al-Hamaysa', whose formal name is "Abū 'l-Ṣa'b" and who is the first Dhū 'l-Qarnayn. He is the great surveyor and builder of whom al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr⁽⁴⁾ says:

What man could vie with us for nobler kin,
when Dhū 'l-Qarnayn is one of us, and Ḥātim!

And of whom al-Ḥārithī⁽⁵⁾ says:

Name one of you, and we shall know him
as bearing regal name in pagan times,
Such as both Kings,⁽⁶⁾ and Dhū 'l-Qarnayn. This meets assent
by men of wit. No truer words than those one heeds.

And of whom Ibn Abī Dhi'b al-Khuzā'i⁽⁷⁾ says:

He who went off to East and West is one of us,
he who went up and down in every land.
He reached the rising and the setting sun
and at Gog's rampart did he build, erect.

³ Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Haytham b. 'Adīy al-Thu'li, Kūfan authority on poetry, folklore, and genealogy; died 822.

⁴ Medinan poet, a Companion, died 684.

⁵ Presumably the Kūfan poet Abū 'l-Faḍl Yahyā b. Ziyād al-Ḥārithī, cousin (on the mother's side) of the first 'Abbāsīd caliph Abū 'l-'Abbās al-Saffāh, died ca. 776.

⁶ I.e., of Ḥimyar and Ḥaḍramawt.

⁷ Medinan transmitter of traditions, died 775.

He's Dhū 'l-Qarnayn, who caused Kahlān to boast
a host, it's said, too large to count.

The learned men of Hamdān, says al-Hamdānī, maintain: Dhū 'l-Qarnayn is al-Ṣa'b ibn Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith al-A'lā ibn Rabī'ah ibn al-Jabbār ibn Mālik. There are many (different) reports on Dhū 'l-Qarnayn.

[10] Imam Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī⁽⁸⁾ says in his Koran commentary: One of the reasons why one must contradict those who claim that Alexander is identical with Dhū 'l-Qarnayn is that Alexander's teacher was Aristotle, whose every order and injunction he obeyed. Aristotle's beliefs are well known, and Dhū 'l-Qarnayn was a prophet. So how can a prophet follow the orders of an infidel? That is what is unclear!

[11] Al-Jāḥiẓ reports in his *Book of Animals*:⁽⁹⁾ Dhū 'l-Qarnayn's mother Fayrā was a human and his father 'Ibrī was an angel. That is why 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, on hearing a man call out, "Hey, Dhū 'l-Qarnayn!" exclaimed: "Have you run out of names of prophets and moved up to the names of angels?" And al-Mukhtār ibn Abī 'Ubayd⁽¹⁰⁾ transmitted that 'Alī, God be pleased with him, whenever he mentioned Dhū 'l-Qarnayn, used to add, "That hairless angel!"

⁸. Prolific, encyclopedic Shāfi'ite scholar ("Imam of the world in the rational and legal sciences"), died 1209 in Herat. —The passage is from his *Mafātiḥ al-ghayb* (Keys to the World of Mystery), 5:510.

⁹. *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* 1:86.

¹⁰. He is the extremist Shi'ite rebel who in 685 led an anti-Umayyad revolt in Kūfah in the name of 'Alī's son Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyyah (cf., e.g., al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, 2:258-67); died 687.

8. The Rulers in Alexandria after Alexander

[1] In the *Book of Orosius*, the author states⁽¹⁾ that Alexander ruled the world for twelve years. The world was held in thrall by him as long as he was in power, and at his death he left it to his generals, who had served as deputies under his command. He was, with regard to them, comparable to a lion that throws his prey to his cubs which then fight over it after he has left. For they divided the countries among themselves, and Egypt, all of Ifrīqiyyah, and the country of the West fell to his general and cavalry commander who had assumed power in Alexander's stead, that is, *Baṭlamīyūs ibn Lāwī*—or *Baṭlamīyūs ibn Arnabā*,⁽²⁾ in another version. The author then mentions the kingdoms of the other generals, from the remotest part of India to the end of the country of the West, and continues: After Alexander's death, wars broke out between them, the cause of them being a message that had come from Alexander's headquarters, to the effect that all exiled foreigners were to return to their respective countries and were to be released from slavery and bondage. The king of Greece found that hard to take, since he feared that, once the foreigners and exiles had returned to their countries and homes, they would seek revenge for themselves. And that matter was the reason why (the Greeks) renounced allegiance to the Macedonians.

[2] Someone else has said that this Ptolemy enslaved the Ma'add tribe after having invaded Palestine. Later on, he set them free, but collected in tribute from them gemstone vessels which

^{1.} Compare *Historiae* (ed. Teubner) 3:23, sections 6-14.

^{2.} Syriac *arn'bā* 'hare', the translation of Greek *Iagos*, i.e., Ptolemy (I Soter I) son of Lagos (323-285 B.C.). The preceding *Lāwī* is an attempt to render the Latin equivalent *lepus*. —The variant transliterations of *philadelphos* 'loving one's brother' in sections 3 and 5, and the confusion of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-247) with Ptolemy I in section 3, indicate that Maqrīzī also copied from a source other than Orosius.

had been placed in the Temple of Jerusalem. He ruled for twenty years—forty, according to another, or thirty-eight, according to still others.

[3] His name is said to have been *Filadilfūs*, which means ‘he who loves a brother.’ He was a Macedonian, and it was he who captured the Jews as war booty, and many of them were moved to Egypt. In his time lived the philosopher Zeno, and that king himself was a philosopher.

Bardīqā (Perdiccas), one of Alexander’s generals, marched on Egypt with a huge host and vast army, and control of Macedonia all the way to the country of Macedon became divided into two parts. But then Ptolemy gathered the troops of Egypt and North Africa, met Perdiccas in the field, and defeated him, dealing a punishing blow to his army. Then he killed him and got everything Perdiccas had with him. He waged war against several of Alexander’s generals.

[4] Someone else has said⁽³⁾ that this Ptolemy was a sage and learned man, and a skilled politician and administrator. He was the first to acquire hunting falcons, to hunt with them and to set them on game. No king before him had hunted with them.

[5] After his death, Alexandria was ruled by his successor Ptolemy II, whose name is *Filadilfis* (Philadelphus), and who is also called *muḥibb al-akh* ‘he who loves a brother.’ His reign lasted thirty-eight years. It is he who released the Jews who were in captivity in Egypt and returned the sacred vessels to the prophet Ezra. He is also the one who selected from among the Jewish scholars the seventy translators who translated the books of the Torah and of the Prophets from Hebrew into Greek and Latin. He was a philosopher and astrologist. He died, [6] and after ‘him ruled his son *Baṭlamīyūs Abaryātīs* (Ptolemy III Euergetes), which means ‘the artisan,’ for twenty-six years.

³ The source is Mas‘ūdī (*Prairies d’or* 2:278).

[7] After him then ruled his brother *Baṭlamīyūs Filūbaṭūr* (Ptolemy IV Philopator), known as *muḥibb al-ab* ‘he who loves a father,’ for seventeen years. He is the one who killed some sixty thousand Jews and made himself their master.

[8] He is said to be the author of “The Science of Astronomy and the Stars” and of “The Almagest.”⁽⁴⁾

[9] As his successor then ruled his son *Baṭlamīyūs Abīfānīs* (Ptolemy V Epiphanes) for twenty-four years.

[10] He was succeeded by his son *Baṭlamīyūs Falūmāṭar* (Ptolemy VI Philometor)—*muḥibb al-umm* ‘he who loves a mother’—for thirty-five years. It is he who defeated the king of Syria⁽⁵⁾ and inflicted all sorts of tribulation and punishment on the Jews.

[11] Alexandria was then ruled after his death by his son *Baṭlamīyūs Abaryāṭīs* (Ptolemy IX Euergetes II)—he is “the Alexandrine”—for twenty-nine years.⁽⁶⁾ During his time, the Romans conquered Spain⁽⁷⁾ and the city of Carthage went up in flames. For seventeen days the fires burned in the city, which was destroyed and its very foundations were uprooted, so that the marble of its walls turned to dust. And that seven hundred years after its foundation! Its entire population was sold into slavery, with the exception of a handful of their elite and nobility. Those in charge of its destruction were the generals of Rome.

⁴ This confusion of the Alexandrine astronomer-geographer Claudius Ptolemaeus A.D. (100-178) as one of the Ptolemies is common among Muslim writers as late as Qalqashandī, who lists him as the fifth in the Ptolemaic line (*Ṣubḥ* 3:414), although al-Masʿūdī had already corrected his own error in his *Tanbih* (114-5): “Claudius Ptolemy, author of “The Almagest” and other works, is not one of the Ptolemies and was not a king.”

⁵ I.e., during the brief reconquest of Coele-Syria by the Egyptians in 147 B.C.

⁶ A telescoped and much simplified version of the dynastic struggles between 171 and 127, omitting the very short reign of his older brother Ptolemy VII Eupator and the interregna (130-127) of his wife Cleopatra (Philometor Soteira) and of his son Ptolemy VIII Neos Philopator.

⁷ What is meant is the Roman conquest of Carthage in 146 B.C. The error is due to a confusion by Arab copyists of *Cartagena* with Carthage, both *Qarṭājīnah* in Arabic.

[12] After him then ruled his son *Baṭlamīyūs Sūṭār* (Ptolemy X Soter II), who is called “*al-Jadīd*” (Neos), for seventeen years. He was an evil man. In one report about him he married his sister and then left her in a worse state than when he had married her. Then he married his stepdaughter, who was his sister’s daughter, and then gave her in marriage to his son that his sister had born him. So numerous were his vile deeds that the Alexandrines banished him. He died in exile.

[13] Then ruled his brother *Baṭlamīyūs al-Iskandar* (Ptolemy XI Alexander I)—*al-Ḥawwāl* ‘the Cunning’—for ten years.

[14] After him then ruled his son *Baṭlamīyūs Diyūnishīsh*⁽⁸⁾ for thirty-eight years. During his time, the general of the Romans conquered Jerusalem and made the Jews pay tribute to him. In that time also appeared frightful signs in the sky. Toward the east of Rome, for instance, and then toward the south appeared a huge blazing fire. When people broke bread in a ritual that they have, liquid blood would spurt from the bread. For seven days in a row, a hail storm containing stones and potsherds fell on the city of Rome. The ground opened up and a huge chasm appeared in it, and from it rose a flame that burned so high that people thought it reached the sky. At that time, the people of Rome saw a column the color of gold extending from the earth to the sky which was so huge that it almost eclipsed the sun.

[15] Alexandria was then ruled after him by Cleopatra for two years. Thus, the kingdom of Alexandria, in other words, the Macedonian regime, lasted until the time of the first Caesar, who is the first of the Roman emperors, for 281 years. Caesar then sent two generals with many troops to conquer Egypt. One of them then married Cleopatra, the daughter of Dionysos surnamed Ptolemy, killed the other general, and opposed Caesar (Augustus), where-

⁸ I.e., Ptolemy XIII Theos Philopator Philadelphus Neos Dionysos (80-52 B.C.), popularly called *Auletes* ‘the flute-player.’ The joint reign (81-80) of Ptolemy XII Alexander II and his wife Cleopatra Berenice is omitted.

upon Caesar personally marched against him. After some wars, things finally ended with the conquest of Alexandria. Caesar took over the kingdom of and killed Cleopatra and her two sons; he also killed the general who had married her. But according to others she poisoned herself when she was certain that Caesar would vanquish her. She is said to have been a woman of determination, knowledge, and political skill, and that she had the Canal of Alexandria dug through which she channeled water from Egypt.

[16] In Alexandria she built wondrous structures, among them the Temple of Saturn, in which she erected an idol made of black copper. The people of Alexandria and Egypt (in general) used to celebrate a feast in its honor on the 12th day of Hātōr (21/22 November), and the Greeks used to make a pilgrimage to it from all other countries and offer countless sacrifices to it. When the sect of the Christians appeared in Alexandria, they converted the Temple of Saturn into a church which survived until its destruction by the armies of al-Mu‘izz-li-dīni-llāh, when they came to Egypt from the West in 358 A.H.

[17] It is said that Cleopatra is the one who built the Wall of the Old Woman, but that seems to be untrue.

[18] It is also said that she built a Nilometer at the city of Ikhmīm and another at Anṣinā. The time of her reign is said to have been thirty years, but that is incorrect.

[19] With the death of Cleopatra, the kingdom of Egypt came to an end and the country came under the sway first of the Roman emperors of Rome and then of the Roman emperors of Constantinople. It remained under their dominance—they appointing their governors there at will, who would come to Alexandria and reside there—until the time when ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ arrived with the Muslims and God conquered through him The Fortress (of Babylon) and Alexandria and the entire land of Egypt.

[20] It is said that (the name) Cleopatra means ‘the weeping woman.’

[21] The total time between the disappearance of the Ptolemaic dynasty from Alexandria and the arrival of 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ in Egypt and its (Muslim) conquest was six hundred seventy and some years.

[22] During that time, the kings of Persia gained supremacy over the Roman emperors. They seized Syria from them and took possession of Egypt and Alexandria at the time of Khusraw Parvīz, son of Hormuz. He sent a general to Egypt who seized Alexandria and killed the Byzantines. The Persians remained in Alexandria for ten years. After Heraclius had made himself autocrat in the Byzantine Empire and had set out from Constantinople to collect taxes from all of his kingdom, he captured Hama and Damascus and came to Jerusalem, which the Persians had completely destroyed. He ordered its reconstruction and proceeded from there to Egypt, where he entered Alexandria and killed all the Persians living there. Having installed a patriarch in the city, he returned to Constantinople. After his departure, Egypt then remained under the dominance of the Byzantines until it was taken possession of by the Muslims.

[23] It is said that every building made of baked bricks in Egypt goes back to the Persians, and that every stone building there was erected by the Greeks. Only God knows the truth.

9. The Lighthouse of Alexandria

[1] As to the Lighthouse of Alexandria, says al-Mas'ūdī,⁽¹⁾ most of the Egyptian, and (especially) Alexandrine, traditionists dealing with the history of their country believe that Alexander son of Philippos the Macedonian was the one who built it. Some of them are of the opinion that Queen Dalūkah built it as a lookout against a potential enemy coming to their country. There are some people who think that it was the tenth in the line of the Egyptian Pharaohs who built it. And there are others who hold the view that it was the founder of Rome who also built the city of Alexandria, its lighthouse, and the pyramids in Egypt, and that Alexandria was attributed to Alexander only because of his fame for having taken possession of most of the kingdoms of the world, so that the city became known by his name. These people adduce with regard to that numerous traditions with which they try to prove their claim: that no enemy ever came to Alexander over that sea, nor did he ever have to fear a king who might come to his country and invade him in his homeland, so that it should be he who had to make it a lookout.

Whoever built it, erected it on a glass support in the shape of a crab in the sea on the end of a land spit jutting out from the land into the water. On top of it he placed statues made of copper and other materials, among them a statue always pointing with its right index finger at the sun, no matter what its position in the firmament: When it rose in the sky, the finger of that right hand would point toward it, and when it descended, the statue's hand would also move down, following the sun's revolution. Another statue pointed with its hand at the sea. When an enemy came to it, let us say, dur-

^{1.} *Prairies d'or* 2:431. —The Pharos of Alexandria, regarded by the ancients as one of the wonders of the world, was built by Sostratus the Cnidian during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and completed in 280-79 B.C.

ing some night, and when he was close enough to be seen with the eyes, a terrifying sound would come from that statue that could be heard for two, three miles around, so that the population of the city knew that an enemy had approached them and they could look at him with their own eyes. There was another statue from which, whenever an hour of night or day had passed, people heard a sound quite unlike the one it had made the hour before, and it was a melodious sound.

During the reign of al-Walīd ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, the Byzantine emperor (at the time) had sent out a eunuch from his immediate entourage, a man of judgment and shrewdness, on some mission. The man arrived, asking for safe conduct, at a certain border station, bringing with him a nice equipage and being accompanied by a group of people. He then came to al-Walīd and told him that he belonged to the inner circle of the Emperor, and that he intended to kill him because of some personal grudge. He told many a phony story about himself, that he felt lonesome and desired to become a Muslim. And indeed he converted to Islam through al-Walīd and subsequently became a dear friend of the caliph, acting as his adviser on buried treasures which he unearthed for him in the area of Damascus and other parts of Syria with the help of books he had brought along that contained the descriptions of those treasures. When al-Walīd received those monies and jewels, he became greedy and his cupidity was aroused.

(One day) the eunuch told him: “Commander of the Faithful, indeed there are treasures and jewels and buried caches right here!” Questioned by al-Walīd about it, he replied: “Underneath the Lighthouse of Alexandria are all the treasures on earth! Namely, when Alexander came into possession of the treasures and jewels that used to belong to Shaddād ibn ‘Ād and the kings of Egypt, he built underground chambers for them, which he spanned with domes and bridges and vaults, and deposited those treasures of gold and silver coin and jewels in them. On top of that he built that lighthouse, which rose one thousand cubits in the air, had a mirror

at its highest point, and had criers seated around who, whenever they saw an enemy out at sea in the light of that mirror, would shout to those near by and unfurl flags for those at a distance, so that people would be put on their guard and the town would be alerted, and the enemy could accomplish nothing against them.” Whereupon al-Walid sent with the eunuch a body of troops and some of his trusted advisers and members of his retinue. Half of the lighthouse was then demolished from the top down and the mirror was removed. There was a public outcry about that, and people realized that this was but a ruse and a trick that had something to do with the lighthouse. When the eunuch found out that (popular sentiment) was rife and would be brought to al-Walid’s ears, and knowing that he had accomplished what he wanted, he fled by night on a boat he had secretly readied for that purpose. His trick worked, and the lighthouse has remained the way we have described it down to this time, which is the year 332 (A.D. 943/4).

There used to be out at sea around the Pharos of Alexandria a place where people would dive and come up with fragments of gemstone, from which ringstones were made in a variety of precious stones. It is said that these were part of the implements which Alexander used for drinking. After his death, they were broken by his mother and thrown into those parts of the sea. There are some people who hold that Alexander himself made that kind of jewelry and sank it in the water around the Pharos in order to make sure that there would always be people about it, for it is in the nature of jewelry that it is forever sought after in every age.

[2] It is said⁽²⁾ that the reason for mounting the mirror on top of the lighthouse was that the Greek kings after Alexander’s death were at war with the kings of Egypt and Alexandria, so the kings in Alexandria put up that mirror to show them which of their enemies was coming across the sea.

² The source is still Mas’ūdī (*op. cit.* 2:439).

Whoever entered the lighthouse would get lost in it, unless he knew how to get in and out, on account of its many rooms and floors and corridors. It has been reported that, when the Berbers in the army of the Lord of the West came (to Alexandria) during the caliphate of al-Muqtadir,⁽³⁾ a group of them, mounted on their horses, entered the lighthouse and got lost in it and in the pathways ending in chasms that suddenly drop toward the glass crab below, in which there are holes going all the way down to the sea. Their mounts fell down, and many of them were lost and were never heard from again. It is said that they crashed on a support in front of the lighthouse.

At the present time, the lighthouse contains a mosque where irregular troops of the Egyptians and others are stationed

[3] In 179 (A.D. 795), the top of the lighthouse fell down as the result of an earthquake.

[4] It is said that the Pharos of Alexandria was built of well-hewn stones sealed with lead over glass arches resting on top of a crab. Inside the lighthouse were three hundred rooms, one on top of the other. Animals would carry their loads up to all the rooms inside the Pharos. Those rooms had apertures overlooking the sea. On the eastern side of the Pharos was an inscription which, in Arabic translation, read: "This overlook was built by Qarībā daughter of Marīnūs, the Greek, for observing the planets."

[5] Ibn Waṣīf Shāh, after having told the story of Miṣrāyim son of Bayṣar son of Ham son of Noah, relates: They built towns in places other than along the Nile, among them Rhakotis on the site of (latter-day) Alexandria. In the center of it they erected a dome resting on sturdy columns made of gilded copper, the dome itself being gilded, and on top of it they mounted a mirror made of sundry ingredients, five spans in diameter. The dome was one

³ This refers to either the first or the second temporary occupation of Alexandria by the troops of the Fāṭimid 'Ubayd-Allāh al-Mahdī in 914 and 919 respectively; cf. ch. 17 below.

hundred cubits high. Whenever someone from the nations around them was headed their way, and if this was something that caused them concern, and (the approach) was from the sea, they would do something to that mirror so that it cast its rays on that particular thing and burned it up. It remained intact until the sea encroached upon it and carried it away. It is said that Alexander, in fact, built the Pharos in imitation of it: on top of it was also a mirror in which one could see anyone headed their way from the land of the Greeks. But one of their kings then devised a clever ruse and dispatched someone to do away with it. It was made of specially treated glass.

[6] Mas'ūdī relates in his *Notice and Review*:⁽⁴⁾ After al-Mutawakkil's vizier 'Ubayd-Allāh ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khāqān had been banished to Barqah by orders of al-Musta'in, which happened in 248 (A.D. 862), he arrived in Alexandria, Egypt, and saw the red sun above the local lighthouse at the time of sunset. Assuming that he must not break his fast unless the sun had set in all parts of the earth, he told a man to climb with a stone to the highest point of the lighthouse and wait for the exact time when the sun dropped below the horizon: as soon as it did, he should drop the stone. The man did that, and the stone hit the ground below after the second evening prayer. Henceforth, when ('Ubayd-Allāh) was fasting, he broke the fast at such time, and when he returned to Sāmarrā, he still did not break the fast until after the second evening prayer, in the belief that this was his religious duty, and that the two times (in Egypt and the Iraq) were the same. Which is about as little as one can know about one religious duty and about the way east and west work!

(Incidentally) Aristotle mentioned in his *Meteorologica* that there is a very lofty mountain in the direction of summer sunrise, and that its height is indicated by the fact that the sun does not leave it

⁴ *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa-l-ishrāf*, ed. de Goeje, p. 46 (ed. al-Ṣāwī 41-42). The anecdote reflects Mas'ūdī's sentiments with regard to the "dumb" Turks.

until three hours into the night, and that it shines on it three hours before morning.

The Lighthouse of Alexandria is one of the architectural marvels of the world. It was built by one of the Ptolemies in the line of Greek kings after the death of Alexander son of Philippos on account of wars between (the Egyptians) and the kings of Rome by land and sea. For they built this lighthouse as a lookout, topped by a huge mirror made of a sort of translucent stones, in order to observe from it ships approaching from Rome at a distance not perceptible to the eye. They would thus watch all that in that mirror and get ready for (the enemies) before they arrived.

The height of the lighthouse at the present time is approximately 230 cubits. In ancient times, its elevation was about 400 cubits.⁽⁵⁾ But in the course of time and in a succession of earthquakes and rains it was gradually demolished. For in Alexandria it rains, and the city is not like Fustāṭ, where most of the time little rain falls. Its construction is in three shapes: close to one-half, but more than one-third, is quadrangular in shape and built of white (lime)stones to a height of approximately 110 cubits; from there on it is octagonal and built of brick and plaster to a height of sixty and some cubits, and all around it runs a platform on which one can walk around; the top of it is round. Ahmad ibn Ṭulūn had part of it repaired and had it topped by a wooden dome to which one ascended inside the lighthouse over a flat sloping ramp without steps. On the north side of the Pharos is an inscription in Greek writing done in sunk lead, each letter one cubit high and one span wide. The ground surface of the lighthouse is about one hundred cubits (square), and the water of the sea reaches its base. One of its west-

⁵ 590 feet, the measurement given by Strabo (63 B.C.?-A.D. 24?) in the 17th book of his Geography. The "land spit" mentioned further down was actually an embankment built by Ptolemy I or his son Philadelphus to connect the island of Pharos with the mainland. It was known as the *Heptastadium*, since it was seven stadia (1,400 yards) long.

ern corners of the part adjacent to the sea collapsed and was rebuilt by Abū 'l-Jaysh Khumārawayh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn.

At the present time, it is at about a miles distance from the city of Alexandria. It is located at the tip of a land spit washed on both sides by the sea. It is built at the mouth of the harbor of Alexandria, not the ancient harbor, because that is in the old city and no ships anchor there on account of its distance from the settled area. A "harbor" is a place where seagoing ships anchor. The people of Alexandria relate from their forefathers that these saw as much (land) between the lighthouse and the sea as there is nowadays between the city and the pharos, but the sea engulfed it within a short time, and that process is still on the increase.

In the month of Ramaḍān of the year 334, says (al-Mas'ūdī), some thirty cubits of the top of the lighthouse were demolished within one hour by the earthquake which hit Egypt and much of Syria and the West, according to consistent reports we received while we were in Fustāt. It was a very large, terrifying, horrible earthquake which lasted for about half an hour. That was at noon on Saturday, the 18th of that month, which corresponds to the 5th of January (956) and the 9th of Ṭūbah.

[7] That lighthouse had a regular congregational gathering on Maundy Thursdays,⁽⁶⁾ when all the people of Alexandria would go out to it from their homes, bringing along their own food, some of which had to be lentils. Then the doors of the lighthouse would be opened and people would go inside, some of them invoking God's name, some of them praying, and some of them just having a good time. They would stay until noontime and then leave. And from that day on, one was protected at sea from enemy attack.

[8] In the lighthouse were people on regular pay to keep the fire going all night long, and people traveling on ships would head for that fire from a distance. When those men attending the fire

⁶ *Īd al-'adas*, the Feast of Lentils; cf. ch. 90, sections 22-24.

saw something suspicious, they would light the fire on the side toward the city, and when the guards saw it, they would sound bugles and ring bells, whereupon the people would move out to fight the enemy.

[9] The lighthouse is said to have been located once at a distance from the sea. But at the time of Constantine son of Constantine the sea became agitated and submerged many places and numerous churches in Alexandria. It has been gaining on the city and taking one part after the other from it ever since.

[10] Someone has reported⁽⁷⁾ that he measured the lighthouse, and (its elevation) was 233 cubits in three layers: the first one square and 121.5 cubits high, the second octagonal and 81.5 cubits high, and the third one round and 31.5 cubits high.

[11] Ibn Jubayr reports in his *Travels*⁽⁸⁾ that the Lighthouse of Alexandria is visible at a distance of more than seventy miles; that he measured one of its four sides in 578 (A.D. 1182) at over fifty *bā's* (ca. 100 m); that the height of the lighthouse is over 150 fathoms (270 m); and that on top of it is a mosque where people seek blessing in prayer.

[12] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam relates:⁽⁹⁾ It is said that the person who built the Pharos of Alexandria was Queen Cleopatra, who also dug her own canal all the way into Alexandria. The water (of the Nile) did not reach the city then, but used to turn away at a village called Kissā opposite al-Karyūn. And so she had that canal dug and (the water) brought all the way into Alexandria. She is also the one who had its bottom paved.

⁷ Taken from 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdadī (de Sacy, *Relation de l'Égypte*, p. 133).

⁸ *Rihlat Ibn Jubayr* (Beirut ed.) 15. On the Hispano-Arab traveler (1145-1217) cf. "Ibn Jubayr" (Ch. Pellat) in *IEP*.

⁹ *Futūḥ Miṣr* 38. The passage was already cited in Pt. I, ch. 23 (sect. 10).

[13] After Aḥmad ibn Ṭulūn had taken over Alexandria, he had a wooden dome built on top of the lighthouse, but it was later blown away by the winds.

[14] During the time of al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars, one corner of the lighthouse crumbled and fell down. He had the part that was destroyed rebuilt in 673 (A.D. 1274/5).

[15] He built [*sic*]⁽¹⁰⁾ in lieu of that dome a mosque.

[16] (The lighthouse) was destroyed in 702 (A.D. 1303) in the course of the earthquake and then (partially) rebuilt during the months of 703 by Emir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Jāghshnagīr. It has survived to this day.⁽¹¹⁾

[17] How excellent is al-Wajih al-Dharawī⁽¹²⁾ where he speaks of the Lighthouse of Alexandria:

Lights guide, high up, the nocturnal traveler
 when night descends on gloomy wings.
 They became my cloak—of being home,
 Pharos a beacon to remember friends.
 On top, a dome arched over me on which
 I glimpsed the stars of my companions.
 The sea beneath, I fancied, was a cloud,
 with me encamped deep in the sky.

^{10.} The source of sections 13-15 is the *Mabāhij al-fikar wa-manāhij al-ibar*, an encyclopedia of natural sciences and geography written by the Egyptian historian “al-Waṭwāt” (Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā, died 1319; cf. *GAL*² 2:67 S 2:53; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 3:296-9). Suyūṭī cites the same text (*Husn* 1:90), but sect. 15 precedes sect. 14 and reads: “In lieu of (the dome) a mosque was built at the time of the Lord of Egypt al-Malik al-Kāmil.” Still, this is in contradiction with Ibn Jubayr (sect. 11), who, half a century earlier, already speaks of a *mosque*, not a dome.

^{11.} This cannot be Maqrīzī speaking, since the lighthouse disappeared completely not long after the earthquake of 1326—“during the time of Qalāwūn or his son,” according to Ibn Faḍl-Allāh (Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 1:90), i.e., at least before 1341, the year of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s death. The source of this passage is perhaps Ibn al-Mutawwaj, who died in 1330.

^{12.} Wajih al-Dīn Abū ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, Egyptian poet of the Ayyūbid period (cf. Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 1:565).

[18] And Ibn Qalāqis has these verses:

A structure soaring past Orion's height,
 as if it housed the Vultures two,⁽¹³⁾
 Of firm foundation, lofty spread, possessing
 tale after tale of Jonah and the Lord.
 It was there I gave the muse free rein,
 and forth stormed racing steeds of verse.

[19] And the vizier Abū 'Abd-Allāh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Abd Rabbiḥ said:

Ah, Alexandria's Pharos! How many eyes
 are raised to it from far away,
 Like haughty people, nose in air!
 On the horizon's rim it beckons dimly
 To full-sailed ships, a sight as welcome
 as sleep descending on an insomniac's lids.

[20] 'Umar ibn Abī 'Umar al-Kindī says in his *Merits of Egypt*: Certain scholars report that the Pharos used to be in the center of Alexandria until (parts of) the city were engulfed by the sea and sank under the water. Indeed, to this day one can clearly see the buildings and foundations in the sea.

[21] And 'Abd-Allāh ibn 'Amr said: "The wonders of the world are four: a mirror which used to be mounted on top of the Lighthouse of Alexandria, and anyone sitting beneath it could see the people in Constantinople, although there is the whole wide sea between the two places." He then mentioned the (remaining) three.

¹³ I.e., the 'Flying Vulture' (*al-nisr al-ṭā'ir*) in the constellation Aquila, and the 'Falling Vulture' (*al-nisr al-wāqī'*) in Lyra.

10. The Stadium Which Used to Be in Alexandria, and Other Wonders

[1] One of the wonders of Egypt, says al-Qudāʿī,⁽¹⁾ is Alexandria with its marvels, among them the Pharos, Pompey's Column—and the Stadium, where people used to congregate on a certain day of the year and then throw out a ball, and the person in whose lap it landed would rule Egypt. ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ attended one of their festivities, and the ball landed in his lap so that he ruled the country thereafter under Islam. The stadium could be attended by one million people (at a time), and there was not a man who could not see the face of another across from him. When some proclamation was read, they could all hear it, and when some game was played, they could see it to the last man, no one having to stretch and strain any more than (to see) the upper and lower tiers.

[2] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam relates:⁽²⁾ In the year 18 of the Hijrah (A.D. 639), after ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, had arrived in al-Jābiyah,⁽³⁾ ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ took him aside and asked his permission to march on Egypt. ʿAmr had already visited Egypt in pagan times, and he knew its roads and had seen the many things there.

The reason why he had been to Egypt before was that he had once come with a group of Quraysh to Jerusalem for trading, and there they met this Greek deacon from Alexandria who had come to pray in Jerusalem. (One day) the deacon had gone roaming about in some of the local hills, while ʿAmr was tending his own camels and

^{1.} The passage was already cited in Pt. I, ch. 10 (sect. 2). Cf. also A.J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, p. 369.

^{2.} *Futūḥ Miṣr* 46.

^{3.} A place some fifty miles SSW of Damascus where the caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb convened an assembly of his field commanders in that year.

those of his companions—because they took turns in tending the animals. While ‘Amr was tending his camels, that deacon passed by him. It was a very hot day, and he was extremely thirsty, and so he stopped by ‘Amr and asked him for a drink. ‘Amr let him drink from a goatskin he had, and the deacon drank his fill and fell asleep on the spot. There was a hole next to where the deacon was sleeping, and from it emerged a big snake. ‘Amr saw it and killed it with an arrow. When the deacon woke up, he looked at the big snake that God had just saved him from and asked, “What is this?” When ‘Amr told him that he had shot and killed it, the deacon approached him, kissed him on the head and said, “Twice God has given me new life through you, once (by saving me) from parching thirst, and once (by saving me) from this snake! What has brought you to this country?” “I came with friends of mine, seeking a profit in our business,” replied ‘Amr. “How much would you hope to make in your business?” inquired the deacon. “I hope to make enough to buy a camel,” said ‘Amr, “for I only possess two camels. So I hope to acquire another camel to make it three.” “How much would you say is your conventional blood money for one of you?” asked the deacon. “A hundred camels,” answered ‘Amr. “We are not camel owners,” said the deacon, “but we are people who have money.” “In that case it would be one thousand dinars,” said ‘Amr. “I am a stranger in these parts,” said the deacon, “and I have only come to pray in the church of Jerusalem and to wander about these hills for month. I did it to fulfill a personal vow. Now I have accomplished it and want to return to my country. Would you like to follow me there when I give you my solemn pledge before God that I will pay you two times the blood money? Because God Exalted has given me my life back twice through you.” “Where is your country?” asked ‘Amr. “Egypt,” said the deacon, “in a city called Alexandria.” “I do not know it and I have never been there,” ‘Amr told him. “If you had been there,” said the deacon, “you would know that you have never been to a place like it before!” “And you will keep your pledge to me, bound by solemn covenant?” said ‘Amr. “Yes,” answered the deacon, “you have my solemn pledge before God that I will live up

to my promise to you, and that I will return you to your friends." "How long will I be gone?" asked 'Amr. "A month," said the deacon. "You will go with me on the way there for ten days, you will stay with us for ten days, and you will make your return trip in ten days. And you have my promise that I will protect you on the way there, and that I will send someone to protect you on the way back." "Wait for me," said 'Amr, "so that I can consult my companions about it." 'Amr then went to his friends and told them about the deacon's pledge to him, saying, "You will wait for me until I return, and I pledge to you that I will give you half of the money, on the condition that one of you whose company I like will go with me." They agreed and sent a man with him.

'Amr and his companion then set out with the deacon for Egypt and eventually came to Babylon. 'Amr saw its prosperity, its many people, its treasures and wealth, all of which amazed him greatly. "I have never seen the like of Babylon," said 'Amr, "and such treasures as it contains!"⁽⁴⁾ He went on to Alexandria, and when 'Amr saw its many treasures, the prosperity, its excellent architecture, its numerous population, he was even more amazed.

'Amr's entrance into Alexandria coincided with a great festivity there during which their rulers and their nobility all gather together. They have a golden ball adorned with precious stones which their rulers toss to each other, catching it with their sleeves, and through which they would seek to establish, according to a rule laid down by someone in the past, that the man in whose sleeve the ball lands and stays will rule them before he dies.

On 'Amr's arrival in Alexandria, the deacon showed him every honor and gave him a brocade robe to wear, and 'Amr and the deacon

⁴ There is no agreement in the texts on this passage. I have chosen the version of Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam, also followed by al-Suyūṭī (*Husn* 1:95), as the most likely one. The Bulaq edition (1:159) has: "And 'Amr said to the deacon: 'I have never seen the like of that!'" Wiet's "'I have never seen the like of 'Amr!' said the deacon and went on to Alexandria" seems, even with the explanations in his notes, rather unconvincing. —The sequence of 'Amr's visits coincides, of course, with that of his subsequent conquest of Egypt.

then sat with the people in that gathering where they toss the ball around, catching it with their sleeves. One of their men then threw the ball out, and it came falling down and landed in 'Amr's sleeve. That amazed them, and they said, "Never has this ball deceived us, except this one time. Could it be that this Bedouin Arab will be our ruler (some day)? Such a thing will never come to pass!"

Now, that deacon went around among the Alexandrines and told them that 'Amr had saved his life twice, and that he had assured him of receiving two thousand dinars, asking the people to collect that sum for him among themselves. They did, and they paid the money to 'Amr. Then 'Amr and his companion departed, and the deacon sent a guide and a messenger with them, after having supplied them with provisions and honored them, and eventually 'Amr and his companion returned to their friends.

So that is how 'Amr learned how to get in and out of Egypt, and how he saw enough of it to realize that it is the best and the wealthiest of all countries.

After 'Amr had returned to his friends, he paid them one thousand dinars between them and kept one thousand for himself, saying, "It was the first money I made by having my mind set on it."

11. Pompey's Column

[1] This column is a speckled red stone—that is, of first-rate granite—which used to be surrounded by some four hundred other columns that were broken up by (Fakhr al-Dīn) Qarājā, governor of Alexandria at the time of Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb, and dumped on the seashore in order to make access for an approaching enemy more difficult. It is reported that it once belonged to the columns which supported the portico, where Aristotle taught philosophy, and that (the hall) was a house of science containing a library that was burned down by ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ on the instruction of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.⁽¹⁾ It is also said that the height of this column is seventy cubits and its diameter five cubits. Someone has reported that its height from base to capital is 62 1/6 cubits, and since it rests on a socle 23.5 cubits high, its total height is 85 2/3 cubits. Its base measures twelve cubits around, its capital six cubits and a half.

^{1.} Pompey's Column—called *‘amūd al-sawārī* ‘pillar of columns’ by the Arabs—rises on the elevation where once stood the Serapeum, the temple of Serapis, whose worship was introduced by the Ptolemies, and may at one time have belonged to the temple. Its name goes back to the medieval belief that it marked the tomb of Pompey the Great. It was probably erected by Emperor Theodosius in commemoration of the triumph of Christianity and the destruction of the Serapeum in A.D. 391.

The Serapeum, or some building adjacent to it, housed the second Library of Alexandria (the original one, located in the Bruchion quarter, went up in flames during Julius Caesar's Alexandrine war in 48 B.C.), and that library was then destroyed by the Christian mob with the temple, if it had not already been removed prior to 391 (cf. A.J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 419-25). That it was destroyed by ‘Umar's order is a myth, probably of later Coptic provenience. In Muslim literature, its alleged destruction by the Arabs is mentioned for the first time over five hundred years after the Arab conquest by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (died 1231), and it is Bar Hebraeus (ed. Pococke, p. 114 transl., p. 180 text) later in the 13th century who first tells the well-known anecdote concerning ‘Umar's reasoning behind his decision. But the same reply by ‘Umar is recorded by Ibn Khaldūn (*The Muqaddimah*, transl. Rosenthal, 3:114) also in connection with the destruction of books and scientific papers in Persia.

[2] Mas'ūdī reports:⁽²⁾ In the eastern part of Upper Egypt is a very large hill of marble from which the ancients used to hew columns; (sometimes) they would leave things they made just lying in the sand after they had carved (the stones). As for the columns, bases and capitals which the Egyptians call *uswānī* (i.e., from Aswan), and from which (nowadays) millstones are made, those were carved out by the ancients hundreds of years before the emergence of Christianity. To these belong the columns in Alexandria and (in particular) the enormous column which has no known equal in the world. I saw in the hills of Uswān the twin of that column. It was all dressed and carved, but not separated from the hill, nor was the visible part of it adorned. Rather, they were expecting it to be separated from the hill and then moved to where people wanted.

[3] There were⁽³⁾ in Alexandria massive columns and various stones and marble slabs so huge that any one of them could be moved only by thousands of people. They were suspended between heaven and earth more than a hundred cubits high on top of the capitals of columns, each from fifteen to twenty cubits in circumference, and the stone above it measuring ten by ten by ten cubits, (all of it) in unusual colors.

[4] There was⁽⁴⁾ at Alexandria a magnificent palace, without equal in the civilized world, sitting on a large elevation opposite the city gate. It was five hundred cubits long and half as much wide. Its entrance was built in the grandest and most perfect manner, each door post being one solid stone and its lintel one solid stone. It contained some one hundred columns, and in front of it stood a huge column the like of which one had never heard of, thirty-six spans thick and so high that someone throwing a stone could not hit its top. It was topped by a capital of perfect workmanship,

² *Prairies d'or* 2:381. The passage in square brackets is restored from the original.

³ Cf. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ* (Beirut, al-Ḥayāt), p. 141.

⁴ Taken from al-Bakrī's *Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamālik*.

indicating that there had once been some structure above it, and under it was an equally solid base of red stone, each side twenty spans wide by eight spans in height. The column was encased at the bottom in a support of iron with which the ground had been broken. When there were high winds, one could see it sway; and sometimes one would place stones under it, which it crushed with its vehement swaying.

[5] This column was one of the wonders of the world.

[6] Some⁽⁵⁾ have claimed that it is one of the works made by the jinn for Solomon son of David, upon both be peace, since people have a habit of attributing anything they consider too large to have been built (by humans) to the work of the jinn. But that is not so. Rather, it was a work of the ancient Egyptians.

[7] In the center of (that palace) was a pavilion with columns all around it, and over the whole was a dome made of one piece of white marble, as beautiful a specimen of workmanship as one will ever see.

[8] It is said:⁽⁶⁾ When a certain ruler of Egypt visited Alexandria, he was impressed by that palace and wanted to have one like it built for himself. So he summoned artisans and architects to have them build him a palace exactly like it. But every one of them had to admit that he was incapable of building something like it. Except an old man among them, who undertook to make the like of it. The king was overjoyed and gave him permission to requisition whatever machines and stores and men he needed. The old man said, "Bring me two sturdy oxen and a large cart!" These were brought at once, and the old man went (with them) to the ancient graveyards, where he dug up a grave from which he exhumed a skull so enormous that it took several men to lift it on the cart. The oxen with all their strength could pull it only with great effort and

⁵ Drawn from al-Māzinī's *Tuḥfat al-albāb*.

⁶ Continuation of al-Bakrī's text in sect. 4, on the authority of the Egyptian traditionist Ḥamzah b. Muḥammad al-Miṣrī (d. 968).

strain. After having hauled it before the king, the old man said, "May God make our lord prosper! If you bring me a people whose heads are like this head, then I will build you the like of this palace!" With that the king was convinced that his contemporaries were not capable of erecting anything like that palace.

It has also been reported that there was in Alexandria a human molar in the possession of a butcher who weighed meat with it. Its weight was eight *ratl*.

[9] It is said that the *'amūd al-sawārī* which is now outside the city of Alexandria is one of seven pillars, of which one⁽⁷⁾ was brought by the *'Ādite al-Batūt ibn Murrah*, who carried it under his arm from the red mountain of Barīm (Primis) south of Uswān toward Alexandria. But he faltered (on the way), because he was not strong enough. That weighed heavily on (his lord) Ya'mur ibn Shaddād ibn 'Ād, who said, "Wish I could make up for it with half of my kingdom!" Another pillar was brought by the Thamūdite Jaḥdar ibn Sinān. He was strong, and he carried it under his arm all the way from Uswān. Then came the rest of their men, each with a pillar. The seven pillars were erected by al-Jārūd ibn Qaṭan al-Mu'tafikī. They were set up after they had chosen an auspicious star for them, as was their custom in all things they undertook.

[10] Several people have reported that the rocks in ancient times were soft and pliant, so that the pillars of Nā'it, Ma'rib, Baynūn, and (other) glories of the Yemen, as well as the columns of Damascus, of Egypt, of Midian, of Palmyra, were then made from them; also that every thing used to speak with a human voice (at that time). Umayyah ibn Abī 'l-Ṣalt said:

When they were naked without garment
and when their stones were moist and plump.

⁷ Read with the Bulaq text: *bi-aḥadihā*; Wiet: *bi-aḥadihimā* (?). — Compare al-Qalqashandī (*Ṣubḥ* 3:319), who cites Ibn al-Athīr's *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt*. There, two stones are involved, one of them carried by the Thamūdite Miqdām ibn Ya'mur ibn Abī Righāl (cf. Pt. I, ch. 11, sect. 1).

[11] Certain people have said that Pompey's Column is only one of several columns that used to support a stoa called House of Wisdom. That is because the sciences of the Occidentals eventually came down to five groups, namely: the Stoics of the school of Alexandria, the Stylites (? *aṣḥāb al-uṣṭuwān*) in Baalbek, the Skenites (? *aṣḥāb al-maẓāll*) in Antioch, the temple priests in Upper Egypt, and the Peripatetics in Macedonia.

[12] Someone with little knowledge might hold it against me that I cite this (last but one) section, thinking that it is something absurd and something which the storytellers have concocted and must therefore be strenuously denied. Let my relating of it not distress you, but listen to what God Almighty has to say about the 'Ād, Hūd's people: *"And remember when He appointed you as successors after the people of Noah, and increased you in stature broadly,"*⁽⁸⁾ meaning, in height and physical size. 'Abd-Allāh ibn al-'Abbās, God be pleased with him, said: The tallest one of them measured one hundred cubits, and the shortest one sixty cubits; this excessive size was the way their forefathers—or according to others, Noah's people—were created. And Wahb ibn Munabbih said: The head of any one of them was like a huge dome, and the eye (socket) of any one man was (large enough) for wild beasts to whelp in it and the same is true of their nostrils. Shahr ibn Ḥawshab⁽⁹⁾ transmitted on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that any man of the 'Ādites was capable of using the two leaves of a door (as a shield): were five hundred of our own people to gang up on such a man, they would not stand a chance against him; also, that any one of them was capable of stomping the ground with his foot and enter into it.

'Abd-Allāh ibn Lahī'ah transmitted from Yazīd ibn 'Amr al-Ma'āfirī, who heard it from Ibn Ḥujayrah: Seventy men of the people of Moses, peace be upon him, could seek shelter from the sun inside the skull of a single Amalekite. And from Zayd ibn Aslam: I have

⁸ Koran 7 (The Battlements):69.

⁹ Syrian traditionist and Koran expert, died 718.

heard it said that a hyena with her young ones were raised in the eye socket of an Amalekite. And God Exalted says, "*Hast thou riot seen how thy Lord did with Ad, Iram of the pillars, the like of which was never created in the land.*"⁽¹⁰⁾

[13] Al-Mubarrad⁽¹¹⁾ says: When she—that is, al-Khansāʾ—uses the term *rafiʿ al-ʿimād*, she intends to express height, tallness. One speaks of a man as *muʿtamid*, meaning that he is tall. Hence the words of the Lord *Iram Dhāt al-ʿImād* 'Iram of the pillars,' i.e., of the tall men.

[14] Al-Baghawī⁽¹²⁾ says: They (the ʿĀdites) were called *Dhāt al-ʿImād* because they were nomadic tent-dwellers—*ahl ʿumud sayyārah*. This is what Qatādah (ibn Diʿāmah), Mujāhid, and al-Kalbī said, and is so transmitted by ʿAṭāʾ (ibn al-Sāʿib) on the authority of Ibn (al-)ʿAbbās. Some people have claimed that they were called *Dhāt al-ʿImād* on account of their tall stature meaning, said Ibn (al-)ʿAbbās, that they were as tall as pillars. The height of any one of them, said Muqātil (ibn Sulaymān al-Balkhī), was twelve cubits.

[15] In the *Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī (we read):⁽¹³⁾ "*The like of which*"—(meaning) the like of the ʿĀdites—"was never created in the land"—(meaning) with respect to physical size and strength. The height of any one of their men was four hundred cubits. Such a man would come to a huge boulder, pick it up, hurl it against a whole tribe, and destroy them all.

¹⁰. Koran 89 (The Dawn):7-8.

¹¹. Abū ʿl-ʿAbbās Muḥammad ibn Yazīd, renowned Baṣran philologist and literature expert (826-899). The passage is from his *Kāmil* (ed. Wright, p. 739). — On al-Khansāʾ (Tumādīr bint ʿAmr b. al-Ḥārith), the famed poetess (died 645) in the Prophet's time, see, e.g., Nicholson, *Literary History of the Arabs*, 126-27.

¹². Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Masʿūd, nicknamed *Muḥyī al-Sunnah* (Reviver of the Sunnah): Shāfiʿite jurist, traditionist and Koran commentator (*Maʿālim al-tanzīl*), died 1117; cf. "al-Baghawī" (J. Robson) in *EF*.

¹³. *Al-Kashshāf*, ed. Bulaq 1281/1864, 2:470. — On the author, the Persian philologist, lexicographer and Koran commentator Abū ʿl-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Zamakhsharī (1075-1144), see *GAL*² 1:344, S 1:507.

[16] Several people have reported that, during the caliphate of al-Muqtadir-bi-'llāh Abū 'l-Faḍl Ja'far ibn al-Mu'taḍid (908-932), a treasure was found in Egypt containing a human rib fourteen spans long and three spans wide.

[17] One should be aware that the eyes of humans are narrow in vision when they themselves have grown up in a small place. And when such people are told of something which goes beyond the scope of their minds or the extent of their senses, they will, since they have no other standard by which to measure the information than what they can see with their own eyes, perforce rush into skepticism and be quick to doubt what they have been told. Except someone who possesses knowledge and understanding, for he will inquire into what he has been told and easily wrestle a whole night over whether to accept or reject it. But how can one reject stories like the following?

[18] (It says) in (Bukhārī's) *Ṣaḥīḥ*: The Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him, once said God created Adam sixty cubits tall. Then man has kept shrinking in size down to our time.

[19] Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Sulaymān ibn Rabī' al-Qaysī al-Gharnāṭī reports in his *Gift to the Hearts*: Al-Sha'bī relates in his *Sīyar al-mulūk* that when La'm ibn 'Āmir fled from al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn 'Alwān to the north, the latter sent two princes, each accompanied by a group of giants, to look for him, one of them heading for the (land of the) Bulgars and the other for the (land of the) Bashqirs. Those giants then stayed on in the land of the Bulgars and of the Bashqirs.

I myself, says al-Uqlishī,⁽¹⁴⁾ saw their images in the land of the Bashqirs and their graves there. Among the things I saw was the incisor of one of them, four spans long and two spans wide. In the land of the Bashqirs I once had in my possession half of the root of the incisor, which had been extracted for me from the giant's lower

¹⁴ Yet another *nisbah* of al-Māzinī (cf. Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5:62).

jaw. It was a span wide and weighed twelve hundred *mithqāls*. I weighed it with my own hands. It is now in my house in the land of the Bashqirs. The jaw of that 'Ādite measured seventeen cubits around. In the house of a friend of mine in the land of the Bashqirs is the upper arm of one of them, measuring twenty-eight cubits in length, as well as his ribs, each rib three spans or more wide, looking like an alabaster tablet. I had half of the wrist of one of them unearthed for me; I could not pick it up with one hand and had to use both hands to lift it.

In 530, he says, I saw in the land of the Bulgars a tall man who was a descendant of the 'Ādites. His height was more than seven cubits, and his name was Danaqī. He would carry a horse under his arm the way an ordinary man carries a baby. When there was fighting in that area, he would fight with an oak tree, which he held in his hand like a stick. If he had struck an elephant with it, he would have killed it. Yet he was a good and humble man who would, whenever I met him, salute me and welcome and honor me, although my head did not come up to his loins. He had a sister as tall as he was. I saw her several times in the land of the Bulgars. Judge Ya'qūb ibn al-Nu'mān, that is to say, the Qāḍī of Bulgaria, told me that this tall 'Ādite woman had killed her husband. His name was Adam, and he was one of the strongest men among the Bulgars. She clutched him to her bosom and broke his ribs, and he died instantly. He said there was in the land of the Bulgars no bathhouse large enough to accommodate these giants, except one with (extra) wide doors.

[20] I was told by the *hadīth* expert Abū 'Abd-Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Furriyānī,⁽¹⁵⁾ who heard from

¹⁵ Tunisian Mālikite jurist who, on his return from the pilgrimage, settled in Cairo in 1410. In 1432 he changed over to the Shāfi'ite rite and became in the same year judge of Nābulus. He died in January 1455 in Latakia. Maqrīzī thought highly of him as a reliable source of historical information—he specialized in miraculous and unusual traditions—while Ibn Ḥajar and al-Sakhāwī repeatedly accuse him of fabrications and shoddy scholarship. Cf. Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 7:67-70.

axes so that it was smashed to pieces. It turned out to be hollow, its whole height filled with a man standing on his feet, and from the top of it a lot of dinars came raining down on them. In dividing the money up, they got into such an argument and had such a disagreement that their story got out in the open and they had to appear before the Sultan. He then sent someone out to explore the cave, and the man found the stone and the pillar which had been smashed, whereupon the Sultan took whatever money they had in their possession away from them. But he found no one who knew what was written on the stone.

When word got around about the incident, people went to the cave and amused themselves with the cadaver inside. Someone who saw a tooth of that dead man told me that it was black and the size of an eggplant, and that his shinbone from foot to knee measured five cubits, which would make his height twenty cubits or more. The pulp of a single one of his teeth was the size of an eggplant and resembled nothing more than a big bubble.

[22] I was told by the Venerable Sherif, Chief Justice of Damascus, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥusaynī, known as "Ibn 'Adnān" or "Ibn Abī 'l-Jinn,"⁽¹⁶⁾ that, in 814 (A.D. 1411), he was standing in the cemetery near the south gate of Damascus by the side of a grave in which one of their dead was about to be buried. When the grave was all prepared and there was nothing left to do but to lower the deceased into it, it (suddenly) caved in and out of it came a swarm of large blue flies so big that it almost darkened the sun. The gravediggers went down into the hole, and there they found a grave twenty-two cubits long, and in it from end to end a dead man who had turned to something like ashes.

¹⁶. He was, like his father and grandfather, dean of the Prophet's descendants (*naqīb al-ashrāf*) in his native Damascus and held several important positions there, but not the office of Shāfi'ite chief justice, as Maqrīzī says. In 1429 he succeeded Jalāl al-Dīn Ibn Muzhir as head of the Chancery (*Kātib al-sirr*) in Egypt. The following year he was stabbed to death in Cairo. Cf. Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, 2:5-6.

The judge also told me that in that same graveyard he saw with his own eyes a man's molar with three roots; a piece of it was missing, and it was the size of a watermelon. He said it was weighed in his presence and came to two *raṭls* and nine *ūqiyahs*, in terms of the Syrian *raṭl*. The piece that had broken off weighed about two *ūqiyahs* in terms of the Syrian weight, so that the weight of that molar would be approximately twelve Egyptian *raṭls* (5.4 kg).⁽¹⁷⁾

^{17.} That is, on the basis of the *raṭl* of Tripoli = 1.968 kg, which is apparently meant by the "Syrian" *raṭl* (cf. Hinz, *Islamische Masse*, 30,31).

12. Some Things People Have Said about Alexandria

[1] ‘Umar ibn Abī ‘Umar al-Kindī said: People are in complete agreement that Alexandria is the only city in the world that is built in three layers. When ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Marwān visited Alexandria, he asked one of the learned men of the Byzantines about the city and the size of its population. “I assure you, Emir,” replied the man, “that is something none of the rulers has ever managed to find out. What I can tell you, though, is how many Jews used to live in the city, for the Byzantine emperor had a census of them made, and their number was six hundred thousand.” “Why then this ruin and decay on all sides?” asked ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. “I have heard of a certain king of Persia at the time when the Persians ruled Egypt,” said the man, “who ordered a tax of one dinar to be imposed on every adult male in order to rebuild Alexandria. Whereupon the prominent citizens of the city and their learned men came to that king and said: ‘Save yourself the trouble, Sire. For Alexander spent three hundred years building the city, it prospered for three hundred years, and it has been in ruins for the past three hundred years.’”

For seventy years its population walked about the city by day only with pieces of black cloth in their hands, for fear they would lose their eyesight on account of its intense whiteness.

Among its merits is what some of the learned commentators have said, namely, that it is the city which God Exalted and Sublime describes in His Book when He says, “*Iram of the pillars, the like of which was never created.*”⁽¹⁾

¹ Koran 89 (The Dawn):7-8.

Aḥmad ibn Ṣāliḥ⁽²⁾ related: Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah once asked me, “Say, Egyptian, where do you live?” “I live in Fuṣṭāṭ,” I said. “Are you going to visit Alexandria?” he inquired. I said, “Yes, I am.” “That is God’s quiver,” he said, “in which He puts His choicest arrows!”

‘Abd-Allāh ibn Marzūq al-Ṣadafī⁽³⁾ related: When I received word of the death of my cousin Khālīd ibn Yazīd, who had passed away in Alexandria, Mūsā ibn ‘Ulayy ibn Rabāḥ, ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Lahī‘ah and al-Layth ibn Sa’d came to me separately, but all of them saying, “Did he not die in Alexandria?” I would say yes, and they would say, “He is alive in the eyes of God and provided for, and he will receive the wage of his perseverance (in faith) as long as this world lasts! To him is the reward of a martyr, and as such he will be called up (on the Day of Judgment)! ”

[2] (Ibn al-Kindī also related:) People who study climates and countries and the relative position of climes and cities have said that in no other area live people as long as they do in Mareotis in the district of Alexandria, and in the Farghānah Valley.

[3] Abū ‘l-Ḥasan Ibn Riḍwān said: As for Alexandria, Tinnīs, and similar towns, the fact that they are located close to the sea, and that people living there enjoy a moderate climate and receive the east wind, are things that improve their inhabitants’ wellbeing, refine their nature, and raise their energies. They are certainly not what the people of al-Bushmūr are, namely, churlish and stupid.

[4] The people of Alexandria have also been characterized as misers. [5] Jalāl al-Dīn Mukarram ibn Abī ‘l-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥabaqah al-Khazrajī, “king of *ḥadīth* experts,” said:

No more than water’s offered to the guest in Alexandria,
or an account, perhaps, of Pompey’s Column.
For entertainment he’s regaled with air made pleasant,

² Important Egyptian traditionist, cited as an authority by al-Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmidhī, died 662. Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah was one of his teachers, as was al-Shāfi‘ī. Cf. al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyyah al-Kubrā*, 2:6-8.

³ Died about 786 (cf. Guest, “Writers, Books,” in *JRAS*, 1902, p. 115).

and pointed out, perchance, the famous Lighthouse.
 About the sea he's told, its waves and wavelets,
 the tall Greek ships may be described to him
 But let him never wish for bread to eat from:
 that word is bound to strike all but deaf ears!

[6] Ibn Khurradādhbih said: From al-Fuṣṭāṭ to Dhāt al-Sāḥil⁽⁴⁾ is a distance of 24 miles, from there to Tarnūt (Ṭarrānah) 30 miles, then to Kōm Sharik 22 miles, from there to al-Rāfiqah⁽⁵⁾ 24 miles along the Nile, then to Qarṭasā 30 miles, then to Karyūn 24 miles, and from there to Alexandria 24 miles.

[7] And another⁽⁶⁾ said: Once the floodwater of the Nile is absorbed by the ground, the road to Alexandria runs between towns and villages. That is, when you proceed from Shaṭṭanawf to *Subk al-ʿAbīd*,⁽⁷⁾ which is a way station with pleasant gardenland; the distance between the two is 12 miles.⁽⁸⁾ Then from Subk al-ʿAbīd to the town of *Minūf*—a large place with baths and markets, and a resident population enjoying a certain prosperity and counting a number of prominent people in their midst; the distance between the two places is 16 miles. Then from Minūf to *Maḥallat Ṣurad*⁽⁹⁾—which has a mosque, a bathhouse, inns, and a good-sized market—the distance is 16 miles. From Maḥallat Ṣurad to *Sakhā*—a large town with baths and markets, seat of an extensive tax district and important region with its own tax director with soldiers and constabulary, where, in addition to large amounts of wheat, a great

⁴ Ibn Mammātī lists it as a village in the Gīzah district (*Qawānīn* 142); it is no longer mentioned by Ibn Duqmāq. —One reads the passage in *BGA* VI, p. 84.

⁵ The old name of the village of *Zāwīyat al-Baḥr* (distr. of Kōm Ḥamādah, Buḥayrah), located at the mouth of the Maḥmūdiyyah (Alexandria) canal (cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs* II, 2:337).

⁶ Cf. Ibn Ḥawqal, *BGA* IV, 89-90 (Beirut ed. 131-33).

⁷ An ancient village, Coptic *Sip*, now called *Subk al-Aḥad* (distr. of Ushmūn, Minūfiyyah); cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:160.

⁸ On the term *saqs*, a loan word from Coptic, cf. K. Vollers, "Beiträge zur Kenntniss der lebenden arabischen Sprache in Aegypten," in *ZDMG*, L, p. 655.

⁹ Present-day *Ṣurad* (distr. of Ṭanṭā, Gharbiyyah), already recorded in its abbreviated form by Ibn Mammātī (*Qawānīn* 92).

deal of flax and radish oil is produced—the distance is 16 miles. From Sakhā to *Shubrāmiyyah*⁽¹⁰⁾—a large town with a cathedral mosque and several baths—the distance is 16 miles. From Shubrāmiyyah to *Misr*,⁽¹¹⁾ another large town with a cathedral mosque and baths, the distance is 16 miles. From Misr to *Sanhūr*⁽¹²⁾—a town with a sizable region around it, having several baths and a senior tax collector—the distance is 16 miles. From Sanhūr to *al-Bujūm*, a district seat with baths, inns and markets, the distance is 16 miles. From al-Bujūm to *Nastirāwah*⁽¹³⁾—once a nice town on the shore of Lake Bushmūr—the distance is 20 miles. From Nastirāwah to *al-Burullus*—a town known for its extensive fishing from the lake (of the same name), and having several baths—the distance is 10 miles. From al-Burullus to *Agnā* (Agnū), which is a fortified place on the seashore, the distance is 10 miles. From Agnā to *Rashīd* (Rosetta)—a town on the Nile where the river flows into the sea in an estuary called “al-Ushtūm,” which means ‘entrance’⁽¹⁴⁾—the distance is 30 miles. Rosetta had several good-sized markets and a bathhouse. It has [numerous] date palms [and a vast tax revenue], as well as (the right to collect) a toll on [maritime] goods coming from [and going to] Alexandria.⁽¹⁵⁾

This road from Shaṭṭanawf to Rosetta may be impassable (in some places) when the Nile is high.

¹⁰ This is Ibn Ḥawqal's corrupted version of the name of the ancient village of *Shubrāmannah* (Ibn Mammātī 167: *Shubrā Lamnah*), modern Shubra al-Namlah in the district of Ṭanṭā. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs* II, 2:100.

¹¹ An ancient village, now belonging to the district of Kafr al-Shaykh (Gharbiyyah).

¹² Now called *Sunhūr al-Madīnah* (distr. of Dasūq, Gharbiyyah); cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:47.

¹³ Once a flourishing fishing town located west of al-Burullus on the sand barrier separating Lake Burullus from the Mediterranean, it was engulfed and swallowed by the sand. On its former site is the present-day village of Kōm Maṣṭūrah (distr. of Dasūq). —The name is spelled *Nastirawah* by Ibn Ḥawqal, and also by Ibn Mammātī (*Qawānīn* 194). Wiet's *Nastarā*, Yāqūt's *Nastarū* (5:284) are corruptions. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 459.

¹⁴ The name derives from Greek *stoma*, ‘mouth.’

¹⁵ Parts in square brackets are restored from the original.

[8] The garments woven in Alexandria are without equal and are exported to the countries of the world. Among the garments of Alexandria are some of which a dirham's weight of linen made into a garment sells for a dirham in silver, and others, embroidered, which sell for the equivalent of several times their own weight (in silver). The latter are called *sharb*.

13. The Conquest of Alexandria

[1] Abū ‘Umar al-Kindī reports: After the Muslims had taken possession of The Fortress (of Babylon) and everything in it, ‘Amr (ibn al-‘Āṣ) decided to march on Alexandria. He set out for it in the month of Rabī‘ I of the year 20 (February/March 641). [2] But someone else has said: No, he started out in Jumādā II of that year.⁽¹⁾

[3] Sayf ibn ‘Umar mentioned that ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, while besieging Heliopolis, sent ‘Awf ibn Mālīk (with a detachment) to Alexandria. He camped outside the city and sent word to the people inside that, if they wished to surrender, they would be assured safe-conduct. They agreed and sent a message (to that effect) to (the Muslims), while the people of Heliopolis (still) held off the latter, expecting that something untoward would happen to them.⁽²⁾ Meanwhile, the Muslims made captives.

^{1.} Neither date can be right. Al-Kindī’s (*Wulāh*, ed. Guest, p. 9) is too early, since ‘Amr cannot possibly have set out before the surrender of Babylon, which—according to John, the Coptic bishop of Nikiou, who wrote in the late 7th century, very likely from the accounts of eyewitnesses—took place on Easter Monday, April 9, 641. The second is too late, since Nikiou, the first target of ‘Amr’s advance, fell—again according to John of Nikiou—on May 13, while Jumādā II began on May 18. (None of the Muslim sources mentions the first battle of Nikiou.) The correct month must, therefore, be Jumādā I, which began on April 17. Cf. A.J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 275–85, and App. D, pp. 530, 534.

^{2.} The texts disagree significantly in this ambiguous passage from Ṭabarī (*Tārīkh* 4:108/I, 2586–7). The translation follows the original. The Wiet text has: “They agreed and sent them (the Muslims) a message and waited for the (Muslim) army at Heliopolis.” The Bulaq text (1:163): “They agreed and he (‘Awf?) sent a message to them, and they waited for the army at Heliopolis.” —The story is clearly a fable. The Arabs were in no position at that time to move freely across the Delta, let alone to demand the capitulation of a heavily fortified city like Alexandria.

[4] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam relates: It is said that al-Muqawqis⁽³⁾ did did not engage in peace negotiations with 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ on behalf of the Romans until the time when 'Amr was laying siege to Alexandria.

Al-Layth ibn Sa'd said: When 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ conquered Alexandria, he besieged its garrison for three months. He harried them, and they feared him, and al-Muqawqis (eventually) asked him for peace on their behalf, the way he had (earlier) concluded a peace agreement with him on behalf of the Copts on the condition that he would have to await the emperor's decision.

We⁽⁴⁾ were told by Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb that the Roman al-Muqawqis, who was the viceroy of Egypt, made peace with 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ on the condition that those Romans who wanted to leave should be allowed to do so, and those who wanted to stay should be allowed to stay, in accordance with an order he had specified.

When news of that reached the Byzantine emperor Heraclius, he was furious and denounced the deal sharply. He sent troops, and they recaptured Alexandria and declared war on 'Amr. Al-Muqawqis then went to 'Amr and told him: "I am asking you for three things." "What are they?" asked 'Amr. "Do not grant the Romans the same generous terms you have granted me," he replied, "for I have acted in good faith toward them, and they have suspected me of deceit; do not break your agreement with the Copts, because no breach of agreement has come from them; and when I am

³ I.e., Cyrus, the Melkite Patriarch and Imperial Viceroy of Egypt (cf. Pt. I, ch. 9, n. 46). —One reads the traditions of this section in *Futūḥ Miṣr*, ed. Ṣabīḥ, 56-57.

⁴ That is, al-Layth b. Sa'd, since Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam and Yazid b. Abī Ḥabīb are separated by more than a hundred years. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's immediate source is 'Abd-Allāh b. Ṣāliḥ.

dead, have me buried in Abū Yuḥannis.”⁽⁵⁾ “The last one,” said ‘Amr, “is the easiest for us to do!”⁽⁶⁾

‘Amr then set out with the Muslims (for Alexandria) as soon as they were able to do so, and with him came a group of Coptic leaders. They repaired the roads for the Muslims, built bridges, and set up markets for them, and thus the Copts became their helpers in their intended fight with the Romans. When the Romans (in Alexandria) heard about it, they made their preparations and mobilized troops, and many ships came to them from Byzantium, carrying a large army with equipment and weapons. ‘Amr moved out against them from al-Fuṣṭāṭ, heading for Alexandria, but he did not come across a single one of them until he reached Tarnūt (Ṭarrānah), where he encountered a detachment of Romans that engaged him in a skirmish. God Exalted defeated them, and ‘Amr proceeded with his men until he met the main army of the Romans at Kōm Sharīk. After fighting for three days, God gave victory to the Muslims and the Romans turned and fled.

It is said: No, ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ sent Sharīk ibn Sumayy in pursuit of (the Romans) and he caught up with them at the mound (now)

⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam (hence, al-Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 1:118) has: *bi-l-Iskandariyyah* ‘near Alexandria,’ which suggests that it is the name of a convent rather than the ancient village *Abū Yuḥannis* (now called Abū Nishshābah) in the present-day district of Kōm Ḥamadāh (cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:330). Notice also Balād-hurī (*Futūḥ al-buldān* 1:253): “in a church at Alexandria which he named.” The name should probably read *Abbā Yuḥannis*.

⁶ This tradition, dating from a time less than a hundred years after the actual events, presents a curious blend of several disparate elements and helps explain the confusion among Muslim historians, the earliest of whom tried to reconstruct the details of the conquest from oral traditions of this kind about two hundred years later, as to what was really going on during that crucial period in Egypt’s history. It begins with Cyrus’ (alleged) surrender of the Roman fortress of Babylon in 641, then switches abruptly to the temporary reconquest of the city by the Byzantines, which was five years after Heraclius’ death. That Cyrus concluded the peace agreement on behalf of the Copts, and that he should later seek to defend them, is obviously an absurd claim, since he had spent the ten years since his installment in 631 in cruel persecution of the Coptic Church. The “Muqawqis” of the last anecdote, which also belongs into the reconquest time, can therefore not be Cyrus, who was long dead by then, but must be the Coptic Patriarch Benjamin (consecrated 623, died 662).

called Kōm Sharīk, where he fought and defeated them. Sharīk was in command of 'Amr's vanguard, while 'Amr was still at Tarnūt.

[When Sharīk encountered (the Romans) at Kōm Sharīk—he was in command of the vanguard of 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, while the latter was still in Tarnūt—]⁽⁷⁾ they forced him to retreat to the mound. He held firmly on to it, and the Romans surrounded him on all sides. When Sharīk ibn Sumayy realized that, he ordered Abū Nā'imah Mālīk ibn Nā'imah al-Ṣadafī—he owned the sorrel-colored horse called the “Ṣadaf roan,” which had no match in speed—to gallop down from the mound toward the Romans. They took after him but could not catch up with him, and he came to 'Amr and informed him (of the situation), whereupon 'Amr approached in the direction (of Sharīk's band). When the Romans heard about it, they withdrew.

Then they met at Sulṭays,⁽⁸⁾ where they fought a fierce battle, and God put the Romans to flight. Next, they met at al-Karyūn (Chaereum), where they fought for more than ten days. In command of the vanguard then was 'Abd-Allāh ibn 'Amr, and the standard-bearer in those days was Wardān, 'Amr's freedman. 'Abd-Allāh ibn 'Amr received many wounds and said, “Wardān, please fall back a little so that we find relief from pain!” But Wardān answered: “Relief you want? Relief is ahead of you, not behind you!” And 'Abd-Allāh moved forward. Then came a messenger from his father, inquiring about his wounds, and 'Abd-Allāh said:

I tell them when they throb and boil:

Go easy! You'll have praise—or rest!

The messenger returned to 'Amr and told him what he had said, and 'Amr exclaimed, “He is my son indeed!”

⁷ Maqrīzī has conflated different traditions so that his account is somewhat confusing. The passage in brackets has therefore been restored from the original.

⁸ Present-day *Sunṭays* (and already so spelled by Ibn Duqmāq) in the district of Damanhūr.

[5] This verse is by ‘Amr ibn al-It̥nābah.⁽⁹⁾ The story behind it is that a man of the Banū al-Najjār, who was under the protection of Mu‘ādh ibn al-Nu‘mān, was slain, whereupon Mu‘ādh exclaimed, “For him I shall kill only one man—‘Amr ibn al-It̥nābah!” Who was then the noblest of the Khazraj. And ‘Amr declaimed:

Is there no ransom save my life?
 Oft good advice will reach the giver.
 For one of you, in not evoking
 my share of words both veiled and frank,
 Will quickly rue what he has done!
 What trace is there from tongue to wound?
 My virtue balks, as does my valor.⁽¹⁰⁾
 My taking praise for handsome price,
 My paying funds for loathsome cause,
 my bearing down on cautious braves,
 My saying, when it heaves and churns,
 ‘Hold still! you shall have praise, or rest!’—
 All’s in defense of glorious feats,
 protecting yet an honor true,
 With lance as white as limpid salt,
 a soul averse to evil deed.

(The term) *shaṭḥ* (in the last verse) means ‘green palm fronds;’ its unit noun is *shaṭḥah*. *Jasha‘at* (in the antepenult verse) means ‘it (viz. the stomach) heaved with grief or fear,’ and *jāshat* ‘it turned to heaving;’ it has been said that both are used in the sense of ‘to heave.’ And *al-mushīḥ* (in the verse preceding it) means ‘one who embarks (on something) reticently, with caution.’

⁹ He is the pre-Islamic hero poet ‘Amr b. ‘Āmir b. Zayd Manāh al-Kalbī al-Khazrajī (see Marzubāni, *Mu‘jam al-shu‘arā*, 8-9). —Mu‘ādh b. Nu‘mān was the leader of the Aws and their confederates in the Aws-Khazraj war.

¹⁰ Read with the Bulaq text: *balā‘ī*, as also in *Simṭ al-la‘ālī* 574 (*al-Amālī* 1:258), Marzubāni, *loc. cit.* Wiet: *bilādī* (?).

[6] On that day, 'Amr performed the prayer under combat conditions.⁽¹¹⁾ Then God gave the Muslims victory, and they inflicted a great carnage and pursued the Romans all the way to Alexandria. There the Romans were safe, for they had strong, unassailable fortifications, one behind the other, around them. The Muslims set up camp [in the area between Ḥulwah and Qaṣr Fāris, and beyond],⁽¹²⁾ and with them were the leaders of the Copts who supplied them with the food and animal fodder they needed.

[7] ['Amr camped at Ḥulwah]⁽¹³⁾ and stayed there for two months, then he moved [to al-Maqs], when suddenly the (Roman) cavalry, under cover of the fortress, was sent against him from the lake side. They engaged him in battle, and on that day twelve men of the Muslims were killed in action.

(Meanwhile) the messengers of the Byzantine emperor kept coming and going in Alexandria by ships bringing supplies to the Romans. And the Byzantine emperor⁽¹⁴⁾ kept saying, "If the Arabs conquer Alexandria, that will be the end of the Byzantine Empire and the death of the Romans!" For the Greek Orthodox have no more magnificent churches than the ones in Alexandria. In fact, at the time when the Arabs were conquering Syria, the main festival of

¹¹ For the *ṣalāt al-khawf* (prayer of fear) cf. Koran 2:239 : "And if you are in fear, then [pray] afoot or mounted." Also Koran 4:102, allowing a shortened prayer in a hostile environment. —This is the continuation of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (*Futūḥ* 58), who cites a tradition specifying 'Amr's prayer as "one *rak'ah* and two *sajdahs*."

¹² Restored from the original to show that the Muslim "siege" (cf. Butler, *Arab Conquest*, 293-95) was restricted to the area southeast and east of the city. Ramzī has located *Ḥulwah* on the site of modern Kafr al-Bāshā (distr. of Shibīn al-Qanāṭir, Qalyūbiyyah). *Qaṣr Fāris* ('Fort of Persia') was the fortress built by the Persians early in the 7th century to protect the eastern landing-place of Alexandria (cf. Butler, *op. cit.*, 90, n. 1).

¹³ *Futūḥ Miṣr* 58. —Al-Maqs (= Umm Dunayn) was located in what is now the heart of Cairo.

¹⁴ At that time, Heraclius II, or Heracleonas, a weakling and puppet in the hands of his mother Martina. But the context clearly implies that the traditionist has Heraclius in mind, whose death is made the turning point in Muslim fortunes during the siege of Alexandria. Heraclius died February 11, 641, two months before the surrender of Babylon, and nine months before the capitulation of Alexandria.

the Greeks took place in Alexandria, and that is why the emperor said, "If they capture Alexandria from us, the Romans will die and their rule will have come to an end." So he ordered preparations to be made for him to go to Alexandria in order to direct the fighting there personally, as a demonstration of the city's importance. He gave orders that not a single Roman must stay behind, arguing, "What (chance of) survival is there for the Romans⁽¹⁵⁾ after (the fall) of Alexandria?" When he was finished with his preparations, God struck him down and made him die, and thus saved the Muslims the trouble of having to cope with him. His death occurred in the year 19 (*sic*, A.D. 640). With his demise, God broke the van of the Romans, and a large number of those who were already on their way to Alexandria returned home.

Al-Layth (ibn Sa'd) said: Heraclius died in the year 20, the year in which Caesarea in Syria was conquered.

Now the Muslims turned into lions and harassed the defenders of Alexandria with heavy fighting.⁽¹⁶⁾

(One day) a detachment of Romans sallied from the gate of the fortress of Alexandria. They attacked the Muslims and killed a man of the Mahrah tribe, cut his head off and left with it. The Mahris were furious and said (to 'Amr), "We shall never bury him without his head!" 'Amr replied: "You are acting as if you are angry with someone who should care about your anger! Attack those people when they come out, and kill one of their men. Then cut his head off and throw it to them, and they will throw your friend's head to you." (The next time) the Romans made a sortie against them, they fought and one of their generals was killed. (The Mahris) cut his

¹⁵ Read with the original: *wa-mā baqā'u 'l-Rūm* (Wiet: *wa-mā baqiya 'l-Rūm*).

¹⁶ The following traditions would seem to pertain to the Muslim reconquest of Alexandria four years later, since there was little fighting going on during their first siege. 'Amr had left before the annual rise of the Nile for Babylon (see above). Cyrus joined him there later in the year, probably at the end of October, to negotiate the surrender of Alexandria. They signed the treaty of capitulation on November 8, 641. Cf. Butler, *Arab Conquest*, p. 318-27. The alleged text of the treaty can be found in Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 4:109/1, 2588-9.

head off and flung it to the Romans, and the Romans threw the head of the Mahri to them. "There you are now!" said 'Amr. "Go ahead and bury your companion."

'Amr used to say: "There are three tribes in Egypt: the Mahrah, who are people who kill and don't get killed; the Ghāfiq, who are people who get killed and don't kill; and the Baliy, who have the most men that were Companions of the Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him, and who are the best horsemen."

[8] A man⁽¹⁷⁾ said to 'Amr: "Perhaps you should set up a mangonel and bombard them with it, and their wall will come down!" And 'Amr answered, "You may not comprehend your station in the ranks!"

People said to 'Amr, "The enemy has deceived you before, and we fear for Rā'iṭah!"—meaning his wife. "In that case, let them wear plenty of face covers!"⁽¹⁸⁾ replied 'Amr.

When [during heavy fighting at Alexandria] the battle became heated, one of the Romans challenged Maslamah ibn Mukhallad in single combat. The Roman felled and unhorsed Maslamah and jumped from his horse to finish him off, when one of Maslamah's companions (rushed up and) shielded him with his body, with Maslamah not making a move to resist him. But such things are a matter of fate. The Romans rejoiced, but the Muslims were much troubled by the incident and 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ was furious about it. Maslamah was a fleshy, heavyset man, and 'Amr at the time exclaimed, "Why should a fat-assed⁽¹⁹⁾ fellow who looks like a woman meddle with the affairs of real men and try to be like them!" Maslamah was angry at that (remark), but he did not answer back. Then the fighting resumed with new vehemence, and the Arabs eventually stormed the fortress of Alexandria and fought the Ro-

¹⁷. These are still the traditions of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (*Futūḥ* 59-60).

¹⁸. In Arabic a verbal pun on *rayṭah* "a woolen cloth wrapped around the head and face so that only the eyes are visible" (Dozy, *Supplément*, 1:575).

¹⁹. Read with the original: *al-mustah*. Wiet: *al-musannah* (?).

mans inside. But then the Romans rallied against them and drove them all out of the fortress (again), with the exception of four men who were scattered in different places and were now locked in by the Romans and prevented from rejoining their companions, one of them ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, the other Maslamah—the (names of the) other two (Khālid ibn Najīḥ, the transmitter) could not remember—although the Romans did not know who they were. When ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ and his companions realized their predicament, they sought refuge in an underground vault of one of the Roman *thermae* and remained on their guard. Then (the Romans) told one of their men to speak to them in Arabic, and the man said to them: “You are now prisoners in our hands, so give yourselves up and do not get yourselves killed.” The four refused to have anything to do with them. Then the man said to them: “Your people are holding several men of ours that they captured. We pledge to you to ransom you for our men and not to kill you.” They rejected that also. When the Roman realized what their attitude was, he said to them: “How would you feel about a shoot-out? That is, we line up, and if our man beats your man, you surrender to us and give your lives into our hands. If your man defeats our man, we will let you go back to your companions.” To that they agreed, and they made a compact on it, while ‘Amr, Maslamah and their two companions were still inside the fortress in that underground vault. Then the two sides called each other out for the duel, and one of the Romans stepped forward, a man in whose bravery and strength the Romans had every confidence. “Now let one of your men challenge our man!” they demanded. ‘Amr wanted to step forward, but Maslamah stopped him, saying: “What, will you make a mistake twice? You will be separated from your companions, you, their leader! They depend on you and their hearts are attached to you. They would not know what your orders are. You must not agree to this duel and risk getting killed! For if you are killed, it will be a great misfortune for your men. Stay where you are! I shall protect you, God Exalted willing.” “Be careful then,” said ‘Amr, “perhaps God will bring the issue to a happy ending through you!” So Maslamah and the Roman

engaged in single combat and circled each other for a while. Then God helped Maslamah against his opponent and he killed him, whereupon Maslamah and his companions retreated. The Romans stood by their pledge to the four men and opened the gate of the fortress for them, and they left, with the Romans still unaware that the commander of the (Muslim) army was one of them. When they heard of it later, they regretted what they had done and bit their hands in fury at what they had missed. After the four men were out, 'Amr felt ashamed of what he had said to Maslamah in anger and said then, "Forgive me for what I have said to you!" And Maslamah forgave him. "Only three times have I ever used obscene language," said 'Amr, "twice in the days before Islam, and this third time (with you), and each time I felt regret and shame. But not once was I more ashamed than of the things I said to you. By God, I just hope I will not do it again for the fourth time as long as I live!"

'Amr (had already) spent months besieging Alexandria.⁽²⁰⁾ When word of it reached 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, he said, "The only reason why they are so slow with the conquest is this novel attitude they have developed!" And he wrote to 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ:

To the point then: I have been wondering why you keep delaying the conquest of Egypt. You have been fighting them for two years by now! This is

^{20.} There can be little doubt that the following traditions refer, as a composite, to the siege of Babylon rather than the siege of Alexandria, as Butler already indicated (*Arab Conquest* 273, n. 1). Several clues in the text would support this conclusion: (1) The city (or fortress) in question was conquered on Friday, early in the year 20 (which began December 21, 640), whereas Alexandria capitulated toward the very end of that year. (2) The caliph in his letter wants the attack to be made on Friday around sundown, and the Muslim assault on Babylon was indeed carried out in the evening of Good Friday, April 6, according to John of Nikiou. (3) 'Umar speaks of two years since his general's invasion of Egypt: 'Amr entered Egyptian territory toward the end of the year 18. (4) Heraclius died about two months before the capture of Babylon. (5) It would seem odd that 'Amr should seek advice on how to fight the enemy after his conquest of the two strong fortresses of Babylon and Nikiou. I think the key to the confusion lies in the last word of the first sentence of Umar's letter. Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam, judging by his arrangement, apparently understood *Miṣr* to mean 'Egypt' in this tradition by Zayd b. Aslam. But *Miṣr* is also the name of the town which was located on the eastern bank of the Nile to the north of the fortress of Babylon.

only because you have lately become as enamored with this world as your enemies are. God Exalted grants victory only to people with sincere determination! I have already dispatched four men to you, and I hereby inform you that each one of them, as I have known for some time, can hold his own against a thousand men, yet their bloodwit shall be the same as that of others. When this letter of mine reaches you, address the army and spur them on to fight their enemy. Awaken their desire to be steadfast and determined. Station those four in the front lines and order the entire army that they must clash (with the enemy) as one man! This shall happen on Friday around sundown, for this is the hour when divine mercy descends, and the time when prayers are heard. Let the troops implore God for help and ask Him to grant them victory over their enemy!

After having received the letter, 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ assembled the troops and read to them the letter of 'Umar, God be pleased with him. Then he called up those four men and stationed them in front of the troops. He told the troops to perform the ablution and to pray two *rak'ahs*, and then to implore God Exalted and Sublime and ask Him for victory. They did, and God granted them success.

It has been said: (One day) 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ consulted Maslamah ibn Mukhallad, saying, "Advise me on how to fight those people!" And Maslamah told him: "I think you should look for a man with knowledge and experience, one of the Companions of the Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him, and entrust him with the command of the troops. It will be he who directs the fighting, saving you the trouble of doing so yourself." "And who would that be?" asked 'Amr, and Maslamah replied, "'Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit!"⁽²¹⁾ So 'Amr summoned 'Ubādah, and he came to him on horseback. When he was close, he wanted to dismount, but 'Amr told him, "I beseech you not to dismount! Hold out the tip of your lance!" 'Ubā-

²¹ Died 654. In Muslim tradition he is the man who headed the Arab delegation that negotiated the first surrender of Babylon in October 640. Emperor Heraclius angrily rejected the treaty and recalled Cyrus to Constantinople, where he was punished with exile. Cyrus' encounter with 'Ubādah, a towering Negro over seven feet tall, affords revealing insights into the mentality of both sides; the detailed account of it follows in ch. 4 of Pt. III. (Also, Butler, *Arab Conquest* 257-59; *Futūḥ Miṣr* 56; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm* 1:12 ff.; Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 1:110-15).

dah did, and ‘Amr took off his turban and, turning over the command to him, put him in charge of fighting the Romans, so that ‘Ubādah was now in command instead of him. The Romans then lined up in battle formation and ‘Ubādah engaged them in combat, and through him God conquered Alexandria on that very same day.

The siege of Alexandria lasted nine months after, and five months before, Heraclius’ death. It was conquered on Friday, early in the year 20.

[9] Abū ‘Umar al-Kindī says:⁽²²⁾ ‘Amr invested Alexandria for three months and then conquered it by force of arms; that is the first conquest. But it has also been said that ‘Amr conquered the city at the beginning of the year 21.

[10] And al-Qudā‘ī said on the authority of al-Layth (ibn Sa‘d): ‘Amr spent six months at Alexandria, besieging and then conquering the city. Then he returned to al-Fuṣṭāṭ and built it up as a capital in the month of Dhū ‘l-Qa‘dah.⁽²³⁾

[11] Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam relates:⁽²⁴⁾ After God Blessed and Exalted had defeated the Romans and conquered Alexandria, the Romans fled by land and sea. ‘Amr left one thousand of his men in Alexandria and set out with the rest in pursuit of the Romans who had fled overland. But the Romans who had fled by sea returned to Alexandria and killed the Muslims inside—except the ones who managed to flee. When the news of that reached ‘Amr, he turned around and reconquered the city. He stayed there and wrote to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him: “God has laid open

^{22.} *Wulāh*, ed. Guest, p. 9. —December 10, 641, the beginning of the year 21, is the day on which the Arabs appeared before Alexandria to collect the first payment of tribute under the terms of the capitulation treaty of Alexandria (cf. Butler, *Arab Conquest*, 333).

^{23.} Ibn Duqmāq (4:2) adds: “of the year 20.” The first of Dhū ‘l-Qa‘dah of that year fell on October 12 (641), and Fuṣṭāṭ was built during the winter 641-42. The six months’ siege of Alexandria also comes out about right, considering that the first (futile) Muslim attack on Alexandria was launched at the end of June of that year.

^{24.} *Futūḥ Miṣr* 61-63.

to us Alexandria by force of arms, without covenant or treaty." And 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, wrote back to him, expressing disapproval of his decision (to leave the city with such inadequate protection) and ordering him (henceforth) not to move beyond the city.⁽²⁵⁾

Ibn Lahī'ah said: This is the second conquest of Alexandria. The means by which this conquest of the city was achieved was that a man by the name of Ibn Bassāmah, who was a gatekeeper, asked 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ to assure him of security for himself, his land and his family, and he would open the gate for him. 'Amr granted that request and Ibn Bassāmah opened the gate to him, and 'Amr (thus) entered (the city).

From the time of the events involving Alexandria until the city's fall, twenty-two Muslims were killed.⁽²⁶⁾

'Amr ibn al-Āṣ sent Mu'āwiyah ibn Ḥudayj⁽²⁷⁾ as a delegate to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, to announce the happy news of the conquest. "Aren't you going to give me a written report to carry?" asked Mu'āwiyah. "What would I do writing the letter?" answered 'Amr. "Aren't you an Arab man who can convey a message and relate what he has seen and witnessed?" Later, when Mu'āwiyah was in the presence of 'Umar, he informed him of the

²⁵ Traditions of this sort, like this one by al-Layth b. Sa'd, can only have compounded the confusion of later historians. The interval of more than four years between the two conquests of Alexandria is simply ignored and both events are merged in one continuous sequence, thus blurring not only the facts but also the legal implications.

²⁶ This casualty figure applies to the time until the surrender of the city, showing that there was virtually no fighting, and certainly no siege in the proper sense, going on prior to it; but even then it seems unbelievably low.

²⁷ He was the son of the famed poetess Kabshah bint Ma'di-Karib b. al-Zabidi (died about 640) and later fought on Mu'āwiyah's side in the battle of Ṣiffīn, after which he secured Egypt for the Umayyad by killing its governor at the time, the first caliph's son, Muḥammad. He died in 672. — Suyūṭī (*Ḥusn* 1:585) lists him among the governors of Egypt (47-50/667- 670), and this error has strayed into his vita in Zirikli's *A'lām* (8:171). Uqbah b. 'Amir's successor as governor in 47 was Maslamah b. Mukhallad (cf. ch. 55, sect. 7, also Pt. III, ch. 9, Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nuḡūm*, 1:133).

conquest of Alexandria, whereupon ‘Umar fell down in prostration, exclaiming, “Praise be to God!”

Mu‘āwiyah ibn Ḥudayj related: ‘Amr ibn al-Āṣ sent me to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, with the news of Alexandria’s conquest. I arrived in Medina at noontime and made my camel kneel down at the entrance to the mosque. Then I entered the mosque, and while I was inside, suddenly a bondmaid came out of the residence of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. When she saw me, all haggard and still wearing my traveling clothes, she came to me and asked, “Who are you?” I said, “I am Mu‘āwiyah ibn Ḥudayj, the messenger of ‘Amr ibn al-Āṣ.” And she left me. Then she came back in such a hurry that I could hear the rustle of her skirt against her legs. When she was close, she said, “Rise, and obey the order of the Commander of the Faithful. He summons you.” So I followed her, and when I entered, there was ‘Umar reaching for his robe with one hand and tightening his loincloth with the other. “What news have you got?” he asked. I answered, “The best, Commander of the Faithful! God has conquered Alexandria!” He then left with me for the mosque and told the muezzin, “Call the people together for the congregational prayer!” After the people were assembled, he said to me, “Stand up, and tell your friends!” So I rose and told them the news. Then, having performed the public prayer, he went inside his house, where he faced toward Mecca and prayed several personal prayers. Then he sat down and said, “Say, girl, is there any food in the house?” And she brought bread and oil. “Eat!” he said, and I ate timidly. Whereupon he urged, “Eat! Because people who travel love food. If I had not already eaten, I would eat with you.” I complied timidly. Then he called out, “Hey, girl, are there any dried dates?” And she brought dates on a tray. Again he told me to eat, and I ate with diffidence. Then he said, “What was it you said when you came to the mosque, Mu‘āwiyah?” “I said”—recalled Mu‘āwiyah—“the Commander of the Faithful was taking a midday nap.” “What a bad thing for you to say!” he exclaimed, “or, for that matter, what a bad thing for you to think! If I sleep by day, I will surely lose my

flock, and if I sleep at night, I will surely lose my soul. So how can there be any sleep with these two alternatives, Mu'āwiyah?"

Later on, 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ wrote to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb: "I have conquered a city with things in it of which I can describe at this time only that much: that I found there four thousand villas with four thousand baths, and forty thousand tributary Jews, and four hundred places of amusement (fit) for kings."

From Abū Qabīl: When 'Amr conquered Alexandria, he found there twelve thousand grocers selling green groceries.

[From Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd al-Hāshimī:] During the night in which 'Amr entered the city, or during the night in which they feared he would enter it, seventy thousand Jews left Alexandria.

[From Ḥusayn ibn Shufayy ibn 'Ubayd:] There were in Alexandria, among the baths counted, twelve thermae, the smallest of them large enough to accommodate a thousand sitting-rooms, each sitting-room big enough to hold a large group of people. The number of Romans in Alexandria was two hundred thousand men. The fighting men left for the land of the Romans on board ships; there were one hundred large ships on which were carried thirty thousand with their property, effects and dependents. Among the surviving prisoners of war were those who had to pay tribute; at the time, six hundred thousand were counted, not including women and children. The army was in disagreement with 'Amr on how to divide them up, most of the troops favoring that (the city) be divided into shares, but 'Amr maintained, "I cannot do that until I have written to the Commander of the Faithful (for instructions)." So he wrote to the caliph, telling him about the conquest of the city and its importance, and informing him that the Muslims demanded to have it divided up. 'Umar wrote back: "Do not divide up the city, and leave those people alone. Their tribute will be the collective booty of the Muslims and a source of strength in their holy war against their enemy." So 'Amr left the city intact, had its population counted, and imposed the payment of tribute on them. All of Egypt

was territory captured by peaceful agreement against a levy of two dinars on every adult male; no one was taxed additionally in his personal poll-tax more than two dinars; a man, however, was obligated to pay commensurately with any increase in land and crops. Not so Alexandria, for people there were paying both *kharāj* and *jizyah* at a rate determined by their governors, because Alexandria was conquered by force of arms without covenant or treaty, and they had neither a peace agreement nor a covenant of protection.⁽²⁸⁾

Some villages in Egypt had put up armed resistance, and (the Muslims) captured of these a place called Balhīb, another called al-Khays, and another called Sulṭays. The captives from those engagements wound up in Medina and other towns, but ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb sent them back to their villages and made them, together with the community of the Copts, protected people.

From Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb: ‘Amr took captive the population of Balhīb, Sulṭays, Qarṭasā, and Sakhā. Subsequently, they became scattered (in various places), and the earliest ones of them came to Medina by the time (the Alexandrians) broke their treaty (with the Muslims). ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb then wrote to ‘Amr, telling him to send them back (to their villages), and ‘Amr repatriated those he could find.

Another tradition:⁽²⁹⁾ ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb wrote concerning the people of Sulṭays in particular: Whosoever is in Muslim hands, let

^{28.} The question of which parts of Egypt were conquered by peaceful agreement or by force, with all its legal implications for the taxation of the population, occupies a prominent position in the histories of Egypt from Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam onward. Maqrīzī devotes the 5th chapter of Part III to it. The uncertainty and arguments of later legists spring, of course, from their dim perception of the circumstances of the conquest due to the sketchy, ambiguous, and often contradictory, accounts of the Muslim traditionists and historians, of which the traditions in this chapter are but a small sample.

^{29.} Again by Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb. —Al-Balhībī—Abū ‘l-Muhājir ‘Abd al-Rahmān after his conversion—was among the captives of his native village Balhīb. He was freed by the al-A‘jam clan of the Tujīb and rose to positions of honor under Mu‘āwiyah I. Cf. Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-buldān*, 1:492.

him choose between Islam (and his religion). If he converts, then he is a Muslim with the same rights and duties. If he opts for his own religion, let him go in peace to his village." At the time, al-Bal-hībī had been given the choice, and he chose Islam.

Another tradition [by Yaḥyā ibn Ayyūb] says that the people of Sulṭays, Maṣīl⁽³⁰⁾ and Balhīb supported the Romans against the Muslims with a fighting force of their own. After the Muslims had vanquished them, they considered them lawful property, saying, "These people belong to us as collective booty, together with Alexandria." Whereupon 'Amr wrote to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, concerning that matter, and 'Umar wrote back to him that he should make Alexandria and those three communities a protectorate of the Muslims; they should impose payment of tribute on the population, and that tribute, as well as what the Copts had peacefully agreed to pay, would be a source of strength for the Muslims against their enemy; they must neither make (the land) collective property nor enslave the population. And the Muslims did so.

It is said that the reason why 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, sent them back (to their villages) was that they had a previous agreement (with the Muslims).

[12] Ibn Lahī'ah related: 'Amr collected the poll-tax of Alexandria at the rate of 600,000 dinars, because he found there 300,000 protected people and he taxed them at two dinars each, so that the poll-tax came to that amount. But it has also been said: the poll-tax of Alexandria was 18,000 dinars, and during the caliphate of Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik it came to 36,000 dinars.

It is said: 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ spared the people of Alexandria and neither killed nor enslaved them, but rather made them protected people like the Nubians.

³⁰ The village (Yāqūt 5:145) was located in the Western Ḥawf (al-Buḥayrah). Its archeological mounds are known today as *Kōm al-Madīnah* in the area of Bis-intāwāy (distr. of Abū Ḥummuṣ). Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 412; II, 2:114.

14. Things the Muslims Did in Alexandria, and the Rebellion of the Greeks

[1] Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam relates:⁽¹⁾ In Alexandria there were no assigned lots (as in Fuṣṭāṭ, for instance). Rather, (land and houses) were for the take: whoever took a place to stay would settle there together with his father’s sons. After ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ had conquered Alexandria, he and ‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit came all the way to the top of the mound on which (nowadays) the Mosque of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ stands, and Mu‘āwiyah ibn Ḥudayj said, “Let us choose a place to stay!” So ‘Amr chose the Palace as his residence, and Abū Dharr (al-Ghifārī) settled down in a dwelling which used to be west of the oratory near the Mosque of ‘Amr next to the sea and which is now destroyed, and Mu‘āwiyah ibn Ḥudayj settled on top of that elevation, and ‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit was assigned a building in which he continued to live until he left Alexandria.

It is said that Abū ‘l-Dardā⁽²⁾ was also with (‘Amr that day), but God alone knows the truth.

When (the Muslims) had the country under control, ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ detached of his men one-fourth of the army to garrison Alexandria, one-fourth (he stationed) in the coastal towns, and half of it stayed with him. In Alexandria alone, the fourth (of the army) would be there in the summer for six months, and these would then be followed by a winter garrison for six months. Each *‘arīf* had a large building to himself where he and the men under him lived and where they occupied requisitioned billets.

^{1.} *Futūḥ Miṣr* (ed. Ṣabīḥ) 92-93. The entire chapter, with the exception of sect. 9, is drawn from this source.

^{2.} ‘Umaymir b. ‘Āmir (or b. Mālik) al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, a Companion renowned for his valor and ascetic rife style. Mu‘āwiyah, then governor of Syria, appointed him, by order of the caliph ‘Umar, as the first *qāḍī* of Damascus. He died 652 in Syria. Cf., e.g., al-Jazārī, *Ghāyat al-nihāyah*, 1:606.

From Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb:⁽³⁾ When Muslims lived in Alexandria on garrison duty, then returned home, then went out on active duty again, they would seek to beat each other (to lodgings): A man would come to a billet that had been his before and would seek to secure it for himself (again) and live in it. While they were on a military campaign, ‘Amr said (one day), “I fear that you will ruin the lodgings when you occupy them in turn!” And when he was near al-Karyūn, he told the men, “Go ahead with God’s blessing. Whosoever of you implants his lance in a compound, that compound shall belong to him and his father’s sons.” So a man would enter a compound and plant his lance in one of its lodgings, and then another would come and implant his lance in some house of that compound, and (that way) the compound would belong to two or three clans who would live there until, when they returned home (from garrison duty), it was reoccupied by the Greeks, with the obligation to see to its repair.

Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb used to say: “No money from the rent of such a compound is legal, nor can it be sold, nor can any part of it be bequeathed. Rather, it is theirs to live in for the duration of their garrison duty only.”

[2] From Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb:⁽⁴⁾ When ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ had conquered Alexandria and saw its houses and buildings vacated, he intended to have people live in them. “Quarters we’re now free to occupy!” he said, and wrote to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, asking his permission for it. ‘Umar asked the messenger, “Is there a body of water which will lie between me and the Muslims?” The man answered, “Yes, Commander of the Faithful, when the Nile is high.” Whereupon ‘Umar wrote to ‘Amr: “I do not like the idea that you settle with the Muslims in a place where a body of water separates me from them in the winter, nor (for that

³ One reads the following traditions in Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 1:261 (Hitti, *Origins*, 349).

⁴ *Futūḥ Miṣr* 68. Both traditions are also cited by Suyūṭī (*Ḥusn* 1:130).

matter) in the summer.” And so ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ moved from Alexandria to al-Fuṣṭāṭ.

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb wrote to Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ,⁽⁵⁾ while he was encamped at Ctesiphon, to his governor at al-Baṣrah, and to ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, who was then staying in Alexandria, telling them “not to put a body of water between me and you. Whenever I want to ride on my camel to you, I must be able to reach you!” Whereupon Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ moved from Ctesiphon to al-Kūfah, the governor of al-Baṣrah moved from the place where he was at the time to take up residence in al-Baṣrah, and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ moved from Alexandria to al-Fuṣṭāṭ.

[3] Every year⁽⁶⁾ ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb used to send out a contingent of Medinese raiders to be stationed at Alexandria, and those in charge there were under orders never to neglect the city and deplete its garrison, and never to entrust Greeks with (running) it. And ‘Uthmān, God be pleased with him, wrote to ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Sarḥ: “I have come to realize how great the concern of the Commander of the Faithful was for Alexandria. Therefore maintain a regular garrison in Alexandria, then see to it that the troops receive their pay, and rotate them every six months.”

[4] (Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam) relates:⁽⁷⁾ Alexandria had risen in revolt, and the Romans under the command of the eunuch Manuel arrived in ships and anchored at Alexandria. The Greeks living in the city collaborated with them, but al-Muqawqis⁽⁸⁾ had made no move, nor did he break his agreement (with the Muslims). By that time, ‘Uthmān, God be pleased with him, had already dismissed ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ and had appointed ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Sarḥ as governor. Now that the Romans had landed, the army at Babylon

⁵ The Muslim field commander on the Persian front, conqueror of the Iraq, died 675.

⁶ *Futūḥ Miṣr* 130 (Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 1:163).

⁷ *Futūḥ Miṣr* 119-20 (Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn*, 1:160-61).

⁸ Here, as the context suggests, the Coptic Patriarch Benjamin.

requested 'Uthmān to reinstate 'Amr so that he could finish fighting the Romans, for he had experience in warfare and the respect of the enemy, and 'Uthmān complied with their request. Now, Alexandria was still protected by its wall, and 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ swore that, should God give him victory over the Romans, he would raze its wall so that (the city) would become "like the house of a harlot where people come and go." Then he took on the Romans on land and on the River.

The Copts loyal to al-Muqawqis joined his side, but of the Greeks not one obeyed his orders. Khārijah ibn Ḥudhāfah⁽⁹⁾ urged 'Amr, "Fight them before their reinforcements become too many! I am not sure that all of Egypt will not rise in insurrection." But 'Amr replied, "No, I shall rather leave them be until they take the field against me, because they will bring distress on anyone they pass and God will cause them to disgrace one another." The Romans then left Alexandria, accompanied by those villagers who were in rebellion. They would camp at a village, drink its wine, eat their food, and plunder wherever they went. Still, 'Amr did not oppose them, until they reached Niqyūs.⁽¹⁰⁾ There the Muslims met them on land and on the river. The Romans opened hostilities with the Copts, pouring a hail of arrows into the water, so that on that day 'Amr's horse, still on land, was struck by an arrow in the throat and wounded, and 'Amr abandoned it. Then they came out of the river and joined forces with the troops on land, showering arrows on the Muslims, and the latter fell back some distance. They launched an

⁹ 'Amr's lieutenant, commander of the garrison of Babylon since spring 641, when 'Amr began his march on Alexandria (Balādhuri 1:259, Hitti, *Origins*, 346). He died in 660.

¹⁰ The ancient fortified town of *Nikiou*, once an episcopal see, on the east bank of the Rosetta arm of the Nile north of Babylon. The Arabs had battled the Romans there five years earlier (cf. note 1 in the preceding chapter). Its location is not quite certain. Butler (*Arab Conquest* 16), following Quatremère, locates it at the present-day village of Shabshīr Ṭamalāy (distr. of Minūf), while Ramzī (*Qāmūs*, I, 463-4), and before him E. Butcher in *The Story of the Coptic Church*, sees its site in the archeological mound north of the present-day hamlet of Zāwiyat Razīn (distr. of Minūf). —The second battle of Nikiou was fought in the spring of 646 (cf. Butler, *Arab Conquest*, 472-74).

attack on the Muslims which made the Muslims reel, and Sharīk ibn Sumayy with his cavalry were put to flight. The Romans had (meanwhile) formed ranks after ranks. At that point, a general, one of those who had arrived from Byzantium, rode forth on a horse, bedecked with gilded armor, and called for a man-to-man duel. And a man of the Zabīd by the name of Ḥawmal, and with the formal name of Abū Madhḥij, stepped forward to accept the challenge. The two fought for a long time with lances, chasing each other around. Then the general threw away his lance and took the sword, and Ḥawmal did the same. Ḥawmal was known for his bravery. ‘Amr kept shouting, “Abū Madhḥij!” and he would answer, “Here I come!”—the Muslim troops all the while standing in battle formation on the bank of the Nile. The two circled each other for some time, sword in hand. At last the general lunged at Ḥawmal, who was a man of slender build, and Ḥawmal bore up under his attack. Ḥawmal then drew a dagger, which he had in his belt or in his sleeve, and plunged it into the base of the throat of the infidel, or into his collar bone, immobilizing him. He then fell upon him and took his spoils. A few days later, Ḥawmal himself died, God have mercy on his soul. ‘Amr was seen (personally) carrying his bier between the two poles of his pall when he had him buried at the Muqaṭṭam. Then (after the duel) the Muslims attacked the Romans, and they were put to flight. The Muslims pursued them and eventually pressed them hard in Alexandria. And God gave them victory and the eunuch Manuel was killed.

‘Amr kept killing them and penetrated deep into the city. Then someone spoke to him about it, and he gave orders that the sword be lifted from them. On that very spot where he had stopped the killing he had a mosque built; it is the mosque in Alexandria that is called *Masjid al-Raḥmah*, the Mosque of Mercy. It is so called because ‘Amr stopped the killing there. He had the entire wall of the city razed and had whatever booty he had captured from the Romans brought together in one place. Then the people of the villages that had not rebelled came to him and said, “We abided by your peace agreement, and those thieves came upon us and took

our property and animals. The matter is now in your hands.” And ‘Amr returned to them whatever property they were able to identify and furnish proof for. Some of them said to ‘Amr, “It was not lawful for you to do what you have done to us! We had a right to expect that you would defend us, because we are under your protection and did not violate our covenant. As for those who rebelled, God’s curse on them!” And ‘Amr, feeling regret, answered, “I wish I had met them in battle at the time they came out of Alexandria!”

The reason for the insurrection at Alexandria was that Ṭalmā, the lord of Akhnā (Agnū), (one day) came to ‘Amr and said, “Tell us how much tribute one of us owes so that we can live with it.” And ‘Amr answered, pointing to a corner of a church: “If you gave me (enough to fill this church) from floor to ceiling, I would not tell you how much you owe. You people are like a treasure house for us: If there are heavy demands on us, we will lay it heavy on you, and if things ease up on us, we will go easy on you.” The lord of Akhnā was angry, went to the Romans, and joined them in their attack. But God defeated them, and he was captured and brought before ‘Amr. “Kill him!” demanded the troops, but ‘Amr replied, “No! Go you in peace! We have come with a different army!” (Instead) he bestowed on him a bracelet and a crown and he dressed him in a robe of purple, and (Ṭalmā) agreed to pay the tribute. Someone said to (Ṭalmā): “How about going to the Emperor?” And he answered, “If I went to him, he would have me executed!” adding, “I am responsible for the death of my comrades.”

[5] From Abū Qabil:⁽¹¹⁾ ‘Utbah ibn Abī Sufyān entrusted the command of the garrison of Alexandria to ‘Alqamah ibn Yazīd al-Ghuṭayfī and sent with him twelve thousand men. Then, at a time of peril for himself and his men, ‘Alqamah wrote to Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, complaining about ‘Utbah, and Mu‘āwiyah wrote back to him: “I have sent you as reinforcements ten thousand men of the

¹¹ *Futūḥ Miṣr* 131 (the first tradition also Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 1:163). — ‘Utbah served as governor of Egypt (663-664) by appointment of his brother Mu‘āwiyah I. He died in 664.

Syrian army and five thousand of the army of Medina.” Thus there were twenty-seven thousand troops protecting Alexandria.

And in a tradition [by Ibn Lahī‘ah]: ‘Alqamah ibn Yazīd was in command of the garrison of Alexandria with twelve thousand men. One day he wrote to Mu‘āwiyah: “You have put me in charge of Alexandria, and I have only twelve thousand men. We are so few, we can barely see each other.” And Mu‘āwiyah wrote back: “I have sent you as reinforcements ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Muṭī⁽¹²⁾ with four thousand men of the army of Medina, and I have ordered Ma‘n ibn Yazīd al-Sulamī⁽¹³⁾ to stand by at Ramlah with four thousand horse on ready alert. They will cross over to you whenever you sound an alarm.”

Ibn Lahī‘ah said: ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ used to say: “As governor of Egypt you can muster as many troops as the caliph.”

[6] On his way to Alexandria,⁽¹⁴⁾ ‘Amr laid waste the village which today is known as *Khīrbat Wardān*.⁽¹⁵⁾

We have heard different versions of why it was completely destroyed. Sa‘īd (ibn Kathīr) ibn ‘Ufayr told us: While ‘Amr was on his way to Niqyūs (Nikiou) to fight the Romans, (his freedman) Wardān went aside to relieve himself one morning and was abducted and carried off by the people of al-Khīrbah. When ‘Amr noticed that he was missing, he inquired about him and finally tracked him down. They found him in one of their houses. ‘Amr

¹² Later appointed governor of Kūfah by the counter-caliph Ibn al-Zubayr during the second civil war, he was driven out by the extremist Shī‘ite rebel al-Mukhtār and died, with Ibn al-Zubayr, in the course of al-Hajjāj’s siege of Mecca in 692. Cf. Ziriklī, *A‘lām*, 4:282.

¹³ Companion, who fought in the battle of Ṣiffin on Mu‘āwiyah’s side. He died, fighting for the Qaysite cause, in the battle of Marj in 674. Cf. Ziriklī, *A‘lām*, 8:193.

¹⁴ In 641, obviously (cf. Butler, *Arab Conquest*, 282, n. 2). The traditions are out of place here as well as in the original (*Futūḥ Miṣr* 120-21).

¹⁵ Recorded as *Kharāb Wardān* by Ibn Mammātī (*Qawānīn* 132). It was located on the site of the present-day village of Wardān (distr. of Imbābah, Gīzah). Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 3:65; Baedeker, *Egypt*⁷, 32.

then ordered the village to be destroyed and its people to be removed.

It has been said:⁽¹⁶⁾ The people of al-Khīrbah were all monks, who double crossed and killed some men of ‘Amr’s rearguard after he had reached al-Karyūn (Chaereum). ‘Amr then stopped and sent Wardān against them, who killed them and destroyed the village. It has remained waste to this day.

It has also been said: The people of al-Khīrbah. were brigands and miscreants. ‘Amr sent someone to their land to fetch him a sack filled with some of its soil. Then he summoned them and spoke to them, but they showed themselves completely unresponsive. So he had them taken from his presence. Then he had the soil brought and spread under his prayer mantle on which he sat down. He then summoned them and spoke to them again, and this time they complied with everything he wanted. Then he had the soil removed, and when he summoned them in his presence, they again showed themselves totally unresponsive. This he did several times over. And when ‘Amr realized what was going on, he exclaimed, “This is a community that is fit only to be leveled with the ground!” and ordered its destruction. [God alone knows the truth.]

After God had routed the Romans,⁽¹⁷⁾ ‘Uthmān, God be pleased with him, wanted ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ to be in command of the army, and ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa’d (ibn Abī Sarḥ) to be in charge of the taxes. But ‘Amr refused, saying, “In that case, I would be like someone holding the cow by the horns while the other milks it.”

^{16.} The tradition is by Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam’s father, who appears to have associated the name of the village with *khurbah* ‘crime,’ or *kharabah* ‘vileness, wickedness.’

^{17.} The tradition opens a new chapter in Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam’s text. It, as well as the next two, clearly belong to sect. 4 above. Suyūṭī cites it in *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍarah* (1:162). 13. *Futūḥ Miṣr* 121.

[7] That conquest of 'Amr's by force⁽¹⁸⁾ occurred during the caliphate of 'Uthmān in the year 25 (A.D. 646), and there is a four-year interval between it and the first conquest.

Al-Layth (ibn Sa'd) said: The first conquest of Alexandria was in the year 22 and the second in 25.⁽¹⁹⁾

The troops of the Delta Copts⁽²⁰⁾ kept on fighting for seven years after the conquest of Miṣr (Babylon), owing their success to all that water and all those jungles there.

[8] (Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam) relates:⁽²¹⁾ Later on, 'Abd-Allāh (ibn Sa'd) ibn Abī Sarḥ fought (the naval battle called) *Dhū 'l-Ṣawārī* ('The Many-Masted Fleet') in the year 34 (A. D. 654/5). Traditions on that battle go like this:

While 'Abd-Allāh ibn Sa'd made his dispositions for that battle, he had half of the army under the command of Busr ibn Abī Arṭāt⁽²²⁾ pitch camp on land. After these had moved out, someone came to 'Abd-Allāh ibn Sa'd and said, "Whatever you were going to do when Heraclius' son attacks you with a thousand ships, do it now!"

The Muslims had at that time a little over two hundred ships at their disposal. So 'Abd-Allāh ibn Sa'd stood up amid the troops and said, "I have received word that Heraclius' son is on his way to you with one thousand ships. Let me have your counsel!" But not a sin-

^{18.} *Futūḥ Miṣr* 121.

^{19.} This is quite correct, since the actual occupation of Alexandria by the Muslims did not take place until the expiration of the eleven-month armistice contained in the capitulation treaty to allow for the evacuation of the city by the Romans, that is, in Dhū 'l-Qa'dah 22 (October 642).

^{20.} Arabic: *jaysh al-bīyamā* (see ch. 1, sect. 5). —There is considerable confusion about this sentence, which is clearly corrupted (cf. the marginal note in the Bulaq edition; also, al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 1:263, and Hitti, *Origins*, 351). The translation is based on the emendation ...*mimmā yuṣṭaḥu 'alayhim*, for *mimmā yaḥṭaḥūna* (?) *'alayhim* in the other texts.

^{21.} *Futūḥ Miṣr* 129-30. —Ṭabarī (*Tārīḥ* 4:288/1,2865), on the authority of al-Wāqidī, assigns the following naval battle to the year 31.

^{22.} As Mu'āwiyah's general, he subdued in 659/60 Medina, occupied Mecca, and hunted down the partisans of 'Alī. In 670 he commanded the first Muslim naval attack on Constantinople. He died, mentally deranged, either in Damascus or Medina in 705 at the age of about 90. Cf. Zirikli, *Alām*, 2:23.

gle man among the Muslims spoke to him. So he sat down for a while to let them think it over. Then he rose a second time and spoke to them, but again no one answered him, so he sat down once more. Then he rose for the third time and said, "There is no time left. Give me your advice!" Whereupon a man from the army of Medina, a volunteer serving under 'Abd-Allāh ibn Sa'd, got up and said: "Emir, God—His praise be exalted!—says, *'How often a little company has overcome a numerous company, by God's leave! And God is with the patient.'*"⁽²³⁾ 'Abd-Allāh then ordered, "Board the ships [in the name of God]!" Which was done. But each ship carried only half its fighting crew, because the other half was encamped on land with Busr. (The Muslims) then engaged (the Romans), fighting with arrows, and Heraclius' son fell back, lest he suffer defeat. Boats kept coming and going, bringing him news (of the battle). "What have they done?" he asked. "They have fought with arrows," (the messengers) answered. "The Romans are defeated!" he exclaimed. Some time later they came to him, and he asked, "What have they done?" And they answered, "They have run out of arrows and are now hurling stones." "That's the end of the Romans!" he said. Then others came, and he asked, "What have they done?" And they reported, "They have run out of stones and have tied the ships to one another, fighting (man-to-man) with swords." And again he exclaimed, "The Romans have had it!"

(Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb) said: In those days, ships were linked together with chains in combat. On that day, the ship with 'Abd- Allāh, the governor, on board got tied up to one of the enemy ships which was about to drag 'Abd-Allāh's vessel toward the enemy. Whereupon 'Alqamah ibn Yazīd al-Ghuṭayfī, who was with 'Abd-Allāh on the same ship, got up and struck the chain with his sword, severing it. Later on, 'Abd-Allāh asked his wife Busaysah, the daughter of Ḥamzah ibn Yashrah—she was with 'Abd-Allāh on that day, because the troops would go on a naval raid with their wives on

²³ Koran 2 (The Cow): 249.

board—who, she thought, had fought the hardest. “Alqamah,” she answered, “the man who struck the chain!” (One should know that) when ‘Abd-Allāh had asked Busaysah’s father for her hand in marriage, (Ḥamzah) had told him: “‘Alqamah has already asked for her hand, and I am beholden to him with regard to her. But if he gives her up, I shall go along with it.” So ‘AbdAllāh spoke to ‘Alqamah, who did indeed give her up, and thus ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa’d had married her. Then ‘Abd-Allāh died, leaving her a widow, and ‘Alqamah ibn Yazīd married her after him. Then ‘Alqamah died before her time, and Kurayb ibn Abrahah⁽²⁴⁾ married her. She died in his lifetime.

It has been said:⁽²⁵⁾ In 35 (A.D. 655/6), the Romans went to Constantine, the son of Heraclius, and said, “Are we going to leave Alexandria, which is our largest city, in the hands of the Arabs?” He replied, “What should I do with you? You would not be able to hold your own for one hour, when you meet the Arabs in battle!” They said, “Then go forth on the premise that we shall die!”—and on that they made a pact. He then set out with a thousand ships, heading for Alexandria. The days were very windy as he sailed along, and God sent a storm upon them which drowned them all except Constantine, who escaped with his ship and was tossed ashore by the storm in Sicily. People there inquired what had happened to him, and he told them. “You have brought bad luck⁽²⁶⁾ on Christendom,” they said, “and have caused men of them to be annihilated! If the Arabs were to invade us, we would find no one to repel them.” He protested, “We were mighty and powerful when we set out, but then we were afflicted by this!” Then, after having prepared a bath for him, they rushed in on him. “Woe unto you!” he exclaimed,

²⁴. Yemenite prince, chief of the Himyarites in Syria, died 694. —Busaysah died January 27, 685, the same day the Lakhmid chief al-Akdar b. Ḥamām, a partisan of Ibn al-Zubayr, was executed in Fustāt. Because of the execution, her husband Kurayb did not attend her funeral (*Futūḥ* 130).

²⁵. The tradition is by “someone other than al-Layth (b. Sa’d).” Suyūṭī (*Ḥusn* 1:162) ascribes it to Numayr b. Lahī’ah.

²⁶. Thus Suyūṭī: *sha’amta* (‘alā) ‘l-Naṣrāniyyah. Wiet, following the *Futūḥ* text: *shattatta* ‘you have dispersed’ (?).

“your men are gone, and you are about to murder your (former) emperor!” They said, “It shall be as if he had drowned with them,” and killed him. Those who were with him on the ship they let go.

[9] Abū ‘Umar al-Kindī says:⁽²⁷⁾ The reason the encounter was called the Battle of the Many-Masted Fleet was the great number and concentration of ship masts (in that battle).

^{27.} *Wulāh*, ed. Guest, p. 13.

15. The Lake of Alexandria

[1] Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam relates:⁽¹⁾ (What is now) the lake of Alexandria used to be all vineyards belonging to the wife of al-Muqawqis, who would collect the land tax on them from (the people working them) in the form of wine, as a fixed impost on them. Soon she had so much wine that she got tired of it. “I do not need any more wine,” she said. “Pay me money!” They said, “We do not have any!” Thereupon she sent down water on them which submerged the vineyards, and (the area) became a lake where one caught large fish. Eventually, the ‘Abbāsid caliphs had that converted into plowland by closing its dikes and planting crops on it.

[2] Then it became a lake (again), a day’s sailing long and equally wide. Its water would come from a mouth on the Byzantine Sea and would issue from it into another lake below through a canal along which were located two towns, one of them al-Jiddiyyah⁽²⁾ and the other Idkū, the latter with many cucumber and melon fields and palm groves, all of it surrounded by sand. A canal from the Nile called *al-Ḥāfir*, half a day’s sailing long and containing a lot of waterfowl and fish and vegetation, used to terminate in that lake. The fish, since that lake was in Alexandria, were extremely plentiful and were sold at very low prices. Then, twenty years ago, the water was cut off from that lake (and it dried up).⁽³⁾ God Praised and Exalted alone knows the truth.

¹ *Futūḥ Miṣr* (ed. Ṣabīḥ) 17 (Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 1:87).

² An ancient community, until the 14th century called *al-Jadidiyyah*. It is located opposite the village of Birinbāl (distr. of Fuwwah, Gharbiyyah) and belongs now to the district of Rosetta. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:299.

³ Cf. Pt. I, ch. 39, sect. 31.

16. The Canal of Alexandria

[1] Queen Cleopatra is said⁽¹⁾ to have been the one who had the canal of Alexandria brought all the way into the city, which (until then) had not been reached by the water (of the Nile). She had the canal dug all the way into Alexandria and had its bottom paved with marble from one end to the other. That pavement is still there to be seen.

[2] Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Makhzūmī says in his *Kitāb al-minhāj*:⁽²⁾ As for the canal of Alexandria, it has no dam anywhere from its mouth up to the secondary canal of Bū Durrah. (The villages along that stretch are) Bū Mangūg, Maḥallat Bitūk, Asmaniyyah, Ūrīn, Maḥallat Farnawā, Maḥallat Ḥasan, Munyat Ṭarrād—also known as al-Qā'ah—and (the twin communities of) Maḥallat Naṣr and Maḥallat Masrūq.

As to the secondary canal of Naqqānah, that one opens after the first seven days of (the month of) Tūt, while the new canal is opened on the 16th of Tūt.

The secondary canal of Bū Durrah one opens tafter the first seven days of Tūt.

The secondary canals of Bū Yaḥyā, Bū al-Siḥmā and al-Quhūqiyyah have no dams at all (and are open throughout the year).

The secondary canal of al-Shirāk one opens after the 9th of Tūt.

^{1.} Cf. *Futūḥ Miṣr* 38. The tradition has already been cited in a version closer to the original in Pt. I, ch. 23 (sect. 10).

^{2.} Cf. Pt. I, ch. 37, n. 6. —His colleague Ibn Mammātī deals with the same subject (*Qawānīn* 223-29). The two texts agree in long passages verbatim. —The names of the communities in this section are given the way they appear in Ibn Mammātī and in Muḥammad Ramzī's *Qāmūs*. Only discrepancies in the texts are noted.

The secondary canal of Bū Kharāshah and the *tur‘at al-birbīt* ('splasher canal') supply irrigation to (the communities of) Disyū, Sumakhrāt, Surunbawayh, Munyat Ḥammād, Sanamādah, and part of Maḥallat Māriyah.

The secondary canal of Fiṣhat Balkhā one opens on the 12th of Tūt, but (lately) it has become customary to open it on Coptic New Year's Day.

The secondary canal of Baywīt: The sluice of Samadīṣah is also opened on the 22nd of Tūt, the sluice of Yāṭis on the 19th of that month. After the latter sluice was blocked up, a secondary canal was built which irrigates the southern portion of the community, and that is opened on Coptic New Year. After the construction of the new secondary canal of Iflāqah, which runs through the land of Yāṭis, it has become customary, once the southern portion of Iflāqah is irrigated, to open said canal over the northern portion of Yāṭis until it is completely irrigated.

The *tur‘at al-qārūrah* ('bottle canal') is a recent construction.

The secondary canal of Niqrihā is opened on the 12th of Tūt.

The secondary canal of Iflāqah one opens on the 10th of Tūt.

The secondary canal of Askanīdah (modern *Saknīdah*) is opened on the 6th of Tūt.

The secondary canals of the Baḥr Damanhūr are opened between the 20th of Misrā and the 6th of Tūt. That main canal supplies water to part of Ṭāmūs, part of Kunayyisat al-Ghayṭ, part of Qarṭasā, and Damanhūr.

The *tur‘at al-qawādīs* ('canal of the water-wheel scoops') supplies Shubrā al-Nakhlah and Kōm al-Tulūl⁽³⁾ with irrigation water. The

³ Thus, correctly, the Bulaq text. The village was once located near Niqrihā (cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 392). —Wiet: Kōm al-Thalāthūn (?).

feeder canals of Shubrā al-Nakhlāh are opened to flood its elevated sections from the first of Tūt onward.

The secondary canal of Baṣṭarā one opens on the 15th of Misrā.

The secondary canal of Qabīl is opened on the 8th of Tūt.

The secondary canal of Bisintawayh one opens on, the 18th of Tūt.

The main canal of Dimshawayh (modern *Zāwīyat Ghazāl*) is opened on the 20th of Misrā and provides irrigation for Munyat Zarqūn, Saṭṭ Kardāsah, Dimshaway, Maḥallat al-Shaykh, and Maṣīl. The branch canal of Dimshawayh one opens on the 9th of Tūt and the water remains on its land for seventeen days; it is then opened toward Maḥallat al-Shaykh and Maṣīl, where the water remains for thirty days on the land. Seven days after, the water is dammed off from Dimshawayh, Saṭṭ (Kardāsah) and Munyat Zarqūn.

The secondary canal of Barsīq used to be opened on the first of Tūt; Maḥallat Barsīq has no dam (now).

(The secondary canal of) Maḥallat al-Kurūm one opens on the 8th of Tūt. It provides irrigation for several places, namely, Maḥallat al-Kurūm and its communes: Dubaysah, Kōm al-Walā'id, Kōm al-Ṣakhrāh, Dayr Ams, and al-Ṣafāṣif. The area beyond its communes, namely, Tilimsā and al-Galamūn, falls under the jurisdiction of Maḥallat Kīl, which supplies irrigation to the western side.

Shubrābār⁽⁴⁾ has no dam (now), nor does al-Sharā'ī.

The secondary canal of Qāfilah used to be opened on the 8th of Tūt, but nowadays it has no dam.

The secondary canal of Balaqṭar with its communes one used to open on the 9th of Tūt, but there is no dam there now.

⁴ The *Chabrias* of Strabo, located at the halfway point between the mouth of the canal and Alexandria. On its site rose in the early 19th century the present-day district seat of *Abū Ḥummuṣ*. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:237. —No place called *al-Sharā'ī* could be located anywhere.

The secondary canal of al-Rāhib has no dam.

The secondary canal of Disūnis al-Maqārīdī irrigates al-Ḥalfāyah and is opened on the 8th of Tūt. The same opening day applies to the canal of Marginā and al-Maʿlafīyyah, the canal of Bayt Lāmah and Babshāy, and other canals of the Ḥujayjiyyah (?) area.

The secondary canal of al-Karyūn one opens on the 8th of Tūt.

The secondary canal of Baslaqūn used to be opened on the 9th of Tūt, but there is no dam there now.

The secondary canal of Irsāg one opens on the 12th⁽⁵⁾ of Tūt.

The secondary canal of Ablūq is opened on the 6th of Tūt.

As to the Ḥawf Ramsīs: One used to block off the main canal of Ramsīs against the secondary canals of Ramsīs from the beginning of the Nile's rise until the 17th of Tūt; the villages and communes depending for irrigation on that dam are: Ramsīs, Maḥallat Jaʿfar, Qilishān, part of Ityayh,⁽⁶⁾ al-Naqīdī, part of Khirbitā, part of al-Balakūs, part of Būlin, part of Maḥallat Wāqid, al-Bayḍāʾ, and part of Tumlās. Then one opens the dam of Dakdūkah, which is a recent construction; the water remains behind it for ten days and provides irrigation for Dakdūkah, Maḥallat Maʿn, Munyat Asāmā,⁽⁷⁾ and part of Ṣayfiyyah. Next, one cuts the dam of al-ʿIẓāmī,⁽⁸⁾ which is also of recent construction and provides irrigation for part of Ganbawayh, Tilabānah al-Baḥriyyah, al-Nibīriyyah, Abū Ḥimār, and al-Buhūṭ.⁽⁹⁾

⁵ Thus Ibn Mammātī (p. 224) and the Bulaq text. Wiet: *fī thānī ʿishrīn*.

⁶ So Ibn Mammātī (p. 225), i.e., modern Ityāy al-Bārūd. Wiet/Bulaq: *abniyat*.

⁷ So the Bulaq text. It is the old name of (the present-day district seat) of *Kōm Ḥamādah* (cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:339). — Ibn Mammātī (p. 225): *Munyat Ityayh*. Wiet: *Munyat Ibyānā* (?).

⁸ Thus Ibn Mammātī (225, 98); it is so recorded by al-Idrīsī (cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 85). Wiet: *al-ʿIẓāmī*.

⁹ The four sentences which follow here in both *Khīṭaṭ* texts are clearly an interpolation by some copyist. They are redundant and the language is garbled. They read: "Then one cuts the dam of Disūnis and Abū Dīnār (*sic*). The secondary canal of Ṭabaranbah irrigates Dīnshāl and Ṭalamūs (*sic*); the water remains in it for six days; Munyat ʿAṭīyyah and Sulṭays receive their water from the canal."

As to the main canal of Damanhūr, it remains closed toward Sulṭays until the 17th of Tūt. It provides irrigation for Sulṭays, Zuhṛā, part of Ṭāmūs, part of Qarṭasā, part of Kunayyisat al-Ghayṭ, and Damanhūr. Then one cuts the dam of Nidibah, which is of recent construction. (The flood water) remains (in it) for eight days. It irrigates Nidibah, Diqris, al-ʿUmayriyyah, and al-Basrīr. Then (the main canal) is opened (toward Sulṭays) and dammed up toward Maḥallat Ḥaḥṣ, Maḥallat Kīl and Maḥallat Numayr. After that, one channels the flood water to the newly constructed dam of Sulṭays where it remains for ten days, after the two bodies of water in the main canals of Damanhūr and Ramsīs have merged. Finally, the flood water is channeled to the dike of Malūlah, which feeds Tarūgah, Arsīs, al-Marāsī, Ghābat al-Aʿshāsh,⁽¹⁰⁾ part of Samrū, and Maḥallat Numayr; it remains there until the end of the Nile's rise.

As to the secondary canal of Ṭabaranbah (now *Ṭarābanbā*), it is of recent construction. When Ṭabaranbah is completely irrigated, one opens the canal toward Disūnis Umm Dīnār⁽¹¹⁾ and then channels the water to Ṭāmūs according to its irrigation needs. Next, one opens the canal at the time of the Nile's peak to flood the area of Qarāqīs and releases the flood water for Qarṭasā and Kunayyisat al-Ghayṭ.

The main canal of al-Ṭayriyyah: When the water leaves the canal, it provides irrigation from the beginning of the Nile's rise until (the 17th of Tūt) when the dike of Shubrā Waṣīm is cut. It irrigates Shubrā Waṣīm, part of al-Balakūs, Khunnīzah, al-Zaʿfarānī, part of Būlīn, Masjid Ghānim, al-Ṣawwāf, Kōm Sharīk, Munyat Maghnīn, Tall al-ʿIẓām, and Maḥallat Wāqīd. Next, one channels the water to the dam of Dilingah, which irrigates part of Khirbitā, part of Qilishān, part of Būlīn, al-Bayḍāʾ, Dibist, Tilabānat al-Abrāg, Tall

^{10.} So Ibn Mammātī (p. 226); it seems to be identical with *al-Ghābah* in the present-day district of Abū Ḥummuṣ. —Bulaq: *Ghābat al-Aʿsās*; Wiet: *Ghāyat* (?) *al-Aʿsās*.

^{11.} In the present-day district of Damanhūr, as distinguished from Disūnis al-Maḡārīdī in the district of Abū Ḥummuṣ (cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:284). —Ibn Mammātī (p. 227): *Disūnis Bū Dīnār* (compare n. 9).

Baqā, al-Ḥaddēn, al-Yahūdiyyah, Absūm, Abū Ṣamādah, al-Ḥiṣn, Qalāwat Banī ʿUbayd, Ṭukh Dagānah, Dirshā, Shaqrā, Dilingah, Qamḥah, and Ṭibah. Then the water is released on Munyat Warzāfah, al-Ḥagar al-Maḥrūq, part of Gabāris, Afrīm (?), Abū Simād (?), and Umm al-Ḍurūʿ.

The Ibn Zalūm canal, also known as Ibn Ḍalūm canal: The dam on the other end of al-Naḳīdī is not opened until ten days into the month of Tūt. The canal provides irrigation for Shābūr, Kunayyisat Mubārak, part of Sirsīqah, part of Damatyūh,⁽¹²⁾ Munyat Yazīd, Ḥawḍ al-Māšīlī, Ḥiṣṣat Salamūn, part of Shisht, part of al-Naḳīdī, and part of Qilishān. Then (the dam) is opened, and it irrigates Im-līt, part of Ityāy, part of Kunayyisat ʿAbd al-Malik, part of Armaniyyah, Dimīsnā, part of Maḥallat ʿIbīd, Saṭṭ Khālīd, Barqāmah, Shubrā Nūnah, Kīmān Shirās,⁽¹³⁾ and part of Damatyūh. Guards are posted on the dike of Saṭṭ Khālīd until the village's irrigation is complete, at which time the dike is cut.

Surplus water from the canal of Alexandria provides irrigation for people of the lower Delta and the Buḥayrah who dwell in ravines and wadis, that water being a gift. Those are people of the Zanātah, the Rumḥānah, the Banū Birzāl,⁽¹⁴⁾ and (other) Berber tribes, who use the water to raise their crops and are liable to pay the full land tax.

From the area east of al-Faramā around Gurgīr⁽¹⁵⁾ and Fāqūs to the farthest point irrigated by the canal of Alexandria is a distance of

¹². So Ibn Mammātī (p. 228); it is the immediate neighbor of Sirsīqah in the present-day district of Kōm Ḥamādah (cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:336). —Wiet (here and a few lines below): *Dinshawayh* (?).

¹³. The village was built on the ruins of the ancient city of Naucratis. Its present name Giʿf (district of Ityāy al-Bārūd) dates from the early Ottoman period. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:338.

¹⁴. Wiet: *Banū Yazāl* (?). Cf. Maqrīzī, *al-Bayān wa-l-i-rāb*, 53; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-ʿArab*, 498.

¹⁵. Once an important community on the road to Syria, and so mentioned by travelers and geographers as early as Ibn Khuradādhbih. Its site is the archaeological mound called *Tall al-Garrah* just outside the modern village of al-Munāgāt al-Ṣuḡhrā in the district of Fāqūs. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 200; II, 1:121. —Voweled *Jarjir* by Yāqūt (2:123).

one month's journey. All of it used to be under cultivation and prospering, both as free holding and under lease, until after the middle of the 4th century of the Hijrah, but most of it (subsequently) went to ruin.

[3] Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī⁽¹⁶⁾ cites a tradition on the authority of one of the professors in Alexandria that says: I remember living in Alexandria when the people were allowed to fish freely in the canal. Fish were so plentiful that they churned up the water, and children were able to catch them with rags. But then the Director⁽¹⁷⁾ made them a government monopoly and prohibited people from fishing, and they all disappeared, so that to this day one sees hardly more than a fish here and there in the canal.

[4] Abū ʿUmar al-Kindī says in his *Kitāb al-Mawālī*⁽¹⁸⁾ about al-Ḥārith ibn Miskīn that he was appointed (Mālikite) judge of Egypt by the caliph Jaʿfar al-Mutawakkil in 237 (A.D. 851). He then gives his biography and says: He had the canal of Alexandria dredged. The letter ordering his dismissal arrived in the month of Rabīʿ II, 245 (July 859).

¹⁶. Muḥammad b. al-Walid, known as "Ibn Abī Randaqah" (1059-1126). Born in Tortosa, he studied Mālikite law at Zaragoza and literature at Seville. At the age of 24 he left Spain on the pilgrimage, then lived in Iraq, Damascus, Jerusalem, and eventually in Egypt, where a fortunate marriage allowed him to open his own school for traditions and Mālikite law in Alexandria. His *Mirror for Princes* entitled *Sirāj al-mulūk*, completed in 1122 and dedicated by him to the Fāṭimid vizier al-Ma'mūn al-Baṭā'ihi was probably written in competition with al-Ghazālī's *al-Tibr al-masbūk*. His other works include an abridgment on al-Tha'labī's Koran commentary and several legal treatises. Cf. *GAL*² 1:459, S 1:829; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 4:262-65.

¹⁷. I.e., the finance director (861-68) Aḥmad b. al-Mudabbār (cf. Pt. I, ch. 39, sect. 30).

¹⁸. Kindī's *Kitāb mawālī ahl Miṣr* (The Clients among the Muslims in Egypt) is lost, but the passage is also cited in his *Quḍāh* (ed. Guest, p. 468).

[5] The biographer of Aḥmad ibn Ṭulūn⁽¹⁹⁾ reports: In Rabīʿ I, 259 (January 873), Aḥmad ibn Ṭulūn gave orders to dredge the canal of Alexandria.

[6] Masʿūdī relates:⁽²⁰⁾ Before 332 (A.D. 943/4), the villages of Alexandria were cut off from the Nile. Alexander the Great had built the city of Alexandria astride that (earlier-mentioned) canal from the Nile. A major portion of the Nile's water would be carried through it to the city and provide irrigation for Alexandria and the area of Mareotis. The latter was then in a state of utmost prosperity, and contiguous gardens would stretch all the way to Barqah. Ships would sail on the Nile and come to the markets of Alexandria. Inside the city, (Alexander) had the bed of its canal paved with stone and marble. But then, due to certain obstructions which caused the canal be become clogged up and prevented the water from entering it, the city was cut off from the Nile and its population had to depend on wells for water. The Nile was then a day's journey away from them.

[7] Al-Musabbiḥi mentions that (the Fāṭimid caliph) al-Ḥākim-bi-amri-ʾllāh Abū ʿAlī Maṣṣūr ibn al-ʿAzīz in 404 (A.D. 1013/4) released 15,000 dinars for dredging the Alexandria canal. It was then dredged in its entire length.

[8] In 662 (A.D. 1264), al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars dispatched Emir (ʿIzz al-Dīn) ʿAlī, commander of the Sultan's bodyguard, to have the canal of Alexandria dredged. Its mouth had filled up with mud and there was a water shortage in Alexandria. He began the dredging from al-Naqīdī, where he founded a mosque. The direction of that dredging operation was in the hands of Master Taʿāsīf,⁽²¹⁾ the superintendent of government bureaus.

¹⁹. Although repeatedly cited by Maqrīzī, he is never identified by name. One thinks of the biographer of the Ṭulūnids, Ibn al-Dāyah (Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-Baghdādī al-Miṣrī, d. 340/952) as the likely source. Cf. Becker, *Beiträge*, 2:151; "Ibn al-Dāyah" (F.Rosenthal) in *EF*.

²⁰. *Prairies d'or* 1:209.

²¹. Perhaps the son of the renowned mathematician and architect Qayṣar Taʿāsīf

[9] Later, in 664, the Sultan sent Emir ‘Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Surūrī to have that canal dredged. Then the Sultan went with all the emirs and the *ḥalqah* troopers and directed the dredging operation personally. He put the emirs and all the troops to work on it until the sand on the bank between al-Naqīdī and the mouth of the canal was all gone. Then he crossed over to Bārinbārah.⁽²²⁾ There he had boats scuttled and a stone (retaining) wall built. His objective accomplished, he returned to the Citadel.

[10] Later on, the yearlong steady flow of water in the canal was disrupted and the canal would quickly dry up⁽²³⁾ about two months after the water had entered it. The people in Alexandria had to depend all year round on water drawn from cisterns in which they kept it stored, until, in 710 (A.D. 1310), Emir Badr al-Dīn Baktūt al-Khāzindārī, known as “Amīr Shikār,”⁽²⁴⁾ the governor of Alexandria, came to the Citadel and depicted to Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn the excavation of the canal in a most favorable light, pointing out the advantages of such a project: Firstly, grain and all sorts of goods could be brought to Alexandria by boat, which would mean a saving in costs and an increase in fiscal revenue; secondly, the land on both sides of the canal could be developed and cultivated by establishing landed estates and digging irrigation ditches, which would mean a significant increase in land-tax revenue; thirdly, people would benefit from it when they

(‘Alam al-Dīn Qayṣar b. Abī ‘l-Qāsim al-Asfūnī, 1178-1251)? — Cf. also *Sulūk*, I, 2:510.

²² This is the ancient village now called *Birinbāl* in the district of Fuwwah (cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:112). — Wiet/Bulaq: *Bārinbār*.

²³ Suggested emendation: *wa-ṣāra yajiffu*. Wiet: *wa-ṣāra yujarru* (?); Bulaq: *wa-ṣāra yuḥfaru* (?).

²⁴ “Master of the Hunt,” an office he had attained under Sultan al-Malik al-‘Ādil Kitbughā (1295-1297). A former mamlūk of Baybars’ vicegerent Bilik al-Khāzindār, he rose to prominence as a protégé of Salār and as governor of Alexandria acquired great wealth. He died, defamed and dismissed, exactly one year after the beginning of the excavation on 28 Rajab 711 (10 December 1311) in Cairo. His mosque is near Bāb Zuwaylah. Cf. *Sulūk*, II, 1:111-113; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:489.

cultivate their orchards and can use its water year round for irrigation.

The Sultan liked the idea and delegated Emir Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Kīdighdī, (known as) “Ibn al-Wazīr,”⁽²⁵⁾ to join Baktūt in order to implement it. The latter requested all emirs of the Sultan to send out their local administration officials in order to bring in the men of the villages in their fiefs for work on the excavation. He also wrote to the police chiefs of the tax districts, asking them to keep an eye on the operation. In that way, some forty thousand men from the rural communities were mustered and assembled within about twenty days.

Work began in the month of Rajab (December) of that year. All people of a given village were assigned one section which they were to excavate until it was finished. The excavation from the mouth (of the canal) on the Nile to the village of Sanbār⁽²⁶⁾ was measured at 8,000 Ḥakimite *qaṣabahs*, and the same from there to Alexandria.⁽²⁷⁾ The water used to enter the original canal at Sanbār. So, (beginning at the other end) people kept digging toward the mouth of that canal, making the excavation six *qaṣabahs* (23.94 m) deep and eight *qaṣabahs* wide, and after they had reached the earlier canal, it too was excavated in the same manner as the new canal, so that both were now one single canal, along which dams and bridges were built. One found in the earlier canal in the course of its excavation a very great deal of construction lead beneath the cisterns, but the Sultan had no interest in any of it and gave it all to Emir Baktūt.

The hardship involved in digging that canal was tremendous. For the section adjacent to the Nile would be under water and the men

²⁵ So in *Sulūk* throughout. Wiet: Kandighdī (?). He died 16 Sha'bān 716 (November 4, 1316) in Damascus (cf. *Sulūk*, II, 1:169).

²⁶ It is the village now called *Sanābādah* (district of al-Maḥmūdiyyah), *Sanābādah* in Ibn Duqmāq (5:91); cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:271.

²⁷ This gives a total of 63.8 km, about half the length of the old Alexandria canal (122.2 km) given by Ibn Mammāti (cf. Pt. I, ch. 23, sect. 12).

had to work immersed in it, scooping up the mud from its bottom; then the water would rise and one had to build ditches to drain it off. But all of that was mitigated by the enormous benefit derived from the canal: Ships sailed on it all year round; the people of Alexandria no longer depended for drinking water on the cisterns; land was quickly taken under cultivation on both sides of the canal, and before long, land that used to be salt swamps was converted into over 100,000 feddans of new cropland, more than 600 new irrigation ditches were built to water colocasia, indigo and sesame crops, over 400 new rural estates (were established), and more than a thousand fields (were put to the plow) near Alexandria. Many villages prospered from it, and a vast number of people came to settle on the new land.

After the work on the canal was finished, Emir Baktūt began the construction of a dike, with money out of his own pocket. For people used to suffer tremendous hardship when the sea was high, since the water would flood the marshlands. He spent three months to build a mole, with layers upon layers of stone and with lead as its foundation topped by stone and lime. He built there thirty houses and founded an inn for people to stay. He also posted watchmen there and endowed a *rizqah* for its upkeep. His expenditures came to some 60,000 Cairene dinars—without counting the stones he got by dismantling an ancient castle that used to be outside Alexandria, without counting the lead he found in an underground passage beneath that castle, a passage that would take one almost to the sea, and without counting the lead that was found in the (old) canal and which was given to him (by the Sultan).

The canal continued to carry water all year round until after 770 (A.D. 1363/9). Then the flow stopped, and the water would enter it only at the time of the Nile's rise, but it would dry up again when the inundation receded. Because of that, most of Alexandria's gardens became waste and many of the villages along that canal decayed and disappeared. The cause of the interruption of its water flow was that sand overwhelmed the mouth through which sea wa-

ter flowed to the lake of Alexandria, so that the lake dried up. The winds would dump sand into the canal so that its mouth became clogged up and the canal began to fill up from the bottom.

[11] The rulers of Egypt in our own lifetime intended more than once to have that canal re-excavated, but nothing ever came of it, until the time when al-Malik al-Ashraf Barsbāy was sultan. He commissioned Emir Jirbāsh al-Karīmī, known as “Qāshiq,”⁽²⁸⁾ to clean it out. Jirbāsh then set out for the area and gathered whatever men of the villages he could find for the project. Their number was eventually 875 men. They began the dredging operation on the 11th of Jumādā I, 826 (April 22, 1423) and worked for a full ninety days until the 11th of Shaʿbān (June 22). When their work was done, the water flowed (again) all the way to the end of the canal in the city of Alexandria and ships would sail on it, which made everybody very happy. When they computed the money paid to the excavation workers, both those from the villages along the canal and those who normally work the gardenlands in and around Alexandria, (it turned out that) there was during the dredging operation, thank God, no great abuse of the kind that is customarily practiced by the police chiefs on such occasions. When Emir Jirbāsh arrived at the Citadel, the Sultan bestowed a robe of honor on him and thanked him; then he made him chief chamberlain.

All of that did not last very long, and the canal was again engulfed by sand and became passable for boats only when the Nile was high.

²⁸. He died, after a long and distinguished career, at the age of about 90 in Muḥarram 861 (December 1456). Cf. al-Sakhāwī, *Dawʿ*, 3:66. —Bulaq and Sakhāwī: “also known as ‘Ashiq’ (Lover Boy).”

17. An Overview of Events That Affected Alexandria

[1] In 199 (A.D. 814/3), there was extensive fighting in Egypt between al-Muṭṭalib ibn ‘Abd-Allāh al-Khuzā‘ī, the governor of Egypt, and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn al-Wazīr al-Jarawī, the rebel in Tinnīs.

[2] Al-Muṭṭalib⁽¹⁾ (had) entrusted the command of the garrison of Alexandria to Muḥammad ibn Hubayrah ibn Hāshim ibn Ḥudayj, who then appointed as his successor his maternal uncle ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mu‘āwiyah ibn Ḥudayj, who was called “‘Umar ibn Mallāk.” But three months later, al-Muṭṭalib dismissed him and replaced him with his own brother, al-Faḍl ibn ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Mālik.

There were also at Alexandria (at the time) the ships of the Andalusians, who had just returned from their naval raid.

[3] The reason those ships had come (to Alexandria in the first place) was what had happened to the people of Cordova in the Battle of the Suburb at the hands of al-Ḥakam ibn Hishām in 182 (A.D. 798).⁽²⁾ The latter had subsequently expelled a large number of them, and these had eventually arrived in Alexandria, more than ten thousand strong.

The cause of their (present) rebellious state was that a butcher from Alexandria had thrown tripe in the face of one of their men.

^{1.} Cf. al-Kindī, *Wulāh* (ed. Guest), 157. Most of the first half of this chapter is drawn from this source in a loose adaptation. A more detailed and coherent account of the events, taken from the same source, follows in ch. 19.

^{2.} The date indicates that Maqrīzī has confused the so-called “Day of the Foss” (*yawm al-ḥufrah*)—a massacre of disaffected elements in Toledo early in the reign of the Umayyad Emir al-Ḥakam I (796-822)—with the *waq‘at al-rabaq*, the brutal finale to the insurrection of a “suburb” south of Cordova in 198/813 (cf. Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 2:158).

They were upset by the incident and complained about it, and (that is how) they became what they were at the time.

[4] That is to say: When (the Andalusians)⁽³⁾ came ashore at al-Raml (east) of Alexandria in order to buy whatever suited their purpose, but the military commanders did not allow them to set foot in the city, people would simply go out to their place to do business with them there. Now, after the dismissal of ‘Umar ibn Mallāk, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jarawī (in Tinnīs) wrote to him and told him to launch a surprise attack on Alexandria and to have his (al-Jarawī’s) name pronounced in the Friday prayer in the city. So ‘Umar ibn Mallāk sent word to the Andalusians, inviting them to make common cause with him in ousting al-Faḍl from the city. They joined him, and he drove al-Faḍl out and had al-Jarawī’s name proclaimed in the mosques. Then the Alexandrians attacked the Andalusians, drove them out, and reinstated al-Faḍl. A number of Andalusians were killed (in the process) and the survivors fled to their ships.

Al-Muṭṭalib then dismissed his brother and appointed as governor of the city Ishāq ibn Abrahah ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ in the month of Ramaḍān 99 (April/May 815). Then he dismissed him, too, and replaced him with Abū Dhikr⁽⁴⁾ ibn Junādah al-Ma‘āfirī.

[5] Later on, when al-Sarīy ibn al-Ḥakam and al-Muṭṭalib ibn ‘Abd-Allāh fought it out between themselves and al-Sarīy was governor of Egypt, ‘Umar ibn Mallāk⁽⁵⁾ attacked Abū Dhikr, drove him out of Alexandria, and again had al-Jarawī’s name proclaimed in the Friday *khutbah*. When the Andalusians came to him and stirred up dissension, he ordered them back to their ships, which they resented strongly.

There appeared in Alexandria (at the time) a faction called “al-Ṣūfiyyah.” They enjoined doing good but were antinomian in their attitude. Their leader was a man from their midst by the name of

³ Kindī 158.

⁴ So also Ibn Taghribirdī (*Nujūm*, 2:168). Kindī: Abū Bakr.

⁵ Kindī 161.

Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfī. These made common cause with the Andalusians and asked the Lakhm, who were the most powerful tribe in the area of Alexandria, for support. Then (one day) a dispute with Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfī over some woman was brought before ‘Umar ibn Mallāk, and when he ruled against Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, the latter was deeply hurt by it, went straight to the Andalusians, and arranged an alliance between them and the Lakhm. Since the people from Spain were hoping to have a chance to get their revenge on ‘Umar ibn Mallāk, they marched against him, some ten thousand strong, and laid siege to his castle. Fearing that the castle would not be able to protect him against them and that they might take it by force and dishonor his women, he performed the major ablution, wrapped himself in a shroud, and told his people to lower him at the end of a rope over the wall. This was done, and he was set upon with swords and killed. Next, his brother Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd-Allāh, nicknamed “Jayūsh,” was lowered over the wall, and he, too, was killed. Then ‘Abd-Allāh “al-Baṭṭāl” ibn ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mu‘āwiyah ibn Ḥudayj was lowered to the besiegers and killed, then his brother Abū Hubayrah al-Ḥārith, and finally Ḥudayj ibn ‘Abd al-Wāḥid. Then the besiegers left. That was in the month of Dhū ’l-Qa‘dah.⁽⁶⁾

After Ibn Mallāk’s death, relations between the Lakhm and the Andalusians soured and fighting broke out between them. The Lakhm were defeated and the Andalusians were able to take Alexandria in the month of Dhū ’l-Ḥijjah (July 816). They made Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfī governor of the city, but (under him) corruption, looting and killing reached unheard-of proportions and the Andalusians dismissed him and made one of their own men, known as al-Kinānī, governor.

Then the Banū Mudlij fought with the Andalusians. The Andalusians defeated them and banished them from the area. The Mudlij

^{6.} Of the year 200, according to al-Kindī; it corresponds to June 816.

could not return to the area of Alexandria until al-Sarīy asked the Andalusians to bring them back. They then gave them permission, and they came back.

Abū Qabil used to say: "We are in control of Alexandria by the grace of forty ships loaded with Muslims. Only, they are not Muslims who arrive at the end of summer (and then leave again). They make me fear more for the city than the Romans do." Then someone would say, "So, what are those forty ships amid all these people (here). Suppose they went up in flames!" And Abū Qabil said, "Hush! Woe unto you! From those ships and those on board will come the ruin of Alexandria and everything around it!"

When 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jarawī received word of Ibn Mallāk's death, he set out at the head of 50,000 troops and descended on the fortified city of Alexandria, which he besieged until he had worn down the people inside. But then he had word that al-Sarīy ibn al-Ḥakam had sent a military expedition against Tinnīs, and he turned around and returned home in Muḥarram 201 (August 816). And the Andalusians proclaimed al-Sarīy's name from the pulpits.

[6] Later on,⁽⁷⁾ when the army in Egypt renounced (the caliph) al-Ma'mūn and prayed for (his uncle) Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdī (instead), which was al-Jarawī's doing, al-Jarawī appeared before Alexandria, besieged the Andalusians, and eventually entered the city by peaceful surrender. And his name was pronounced in the *khutbah* there.

[7] From there⁽⁸⁾ he then marched on Fustāt to battle against al-Sarīy, whose son (Maymūn) was killed in the fighting. Then he left, and the Andalusians rose in rebellion against al-Jarawī's tax collector (Mu'āwiyah ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid) and drove him out of Alexandria. They renounced al-Jarawī and prayed (again) for al-Sarīy. Al-Jarawī then marched on them in Ramaḍān 203 (March

⁷ Kindī 168-69.

⁸ Kindī 170.

819). On the way he was opposed by the Copts of Sakhā, reinforced by the Banū Mudlij, a fighting force of 200,000 men.⁽⁹⁾ He put them to flight and sent his troops on to Alexandria, which they invested.

[8] There was also fighting between al-Sarīy and the army of Upper Egypt.

[9] Then⁽¹⁰⁾ al-Jarawī marched on Alexandria for the fourth time. He invested the city and set up mangonels against it for seven months, from the first of Shaʿbān 204 until the end of Ṣafar 205 (January 21 to August 14, 820). (In the process) al Jarawī was hit by a stone fragment from one of his own mangonels, and he died on the last day of Ṣafar, 205.

[10] After his death, his son ʿAlī took over. And the disorders with the Andalusians continued until the arrival in Egypt of ʿAbd-Allāh ibn Ṭāhir, appointed governor by the caliph al Maʾmūn.

[11] He⁽¹¹⁾ ousted (then-governor) ʿUbayd-Allāh ibn al-Sarīy from Egypt and marched with the Persian generals of the Khurāsānian army on the first of Ṣafar 212 (May 2, 827) on Alexandria, which he invested for over ten days until its garrison surrendered to him on terms of safe-conduct. The Andalusians made a peace agreement with him according to which he was to let them leave Alexandria for whatever place they wanted to go to, on the condition that they must not take with them on their ships any Egyptian, nor any slave or run-away, should they do so, they would forfeit their lives and it would constitute a breach of their agreement. When they (were about to) set sail, Ibn Ṭāhir sent some people to search their ships, and these found indeed quite a number of persons the Andalusians had pledged not to take with them, whereupon he ordered their ships burned. Then they asked him to grant them the original conditions once more, which he did.

⁹ This excessive figure seems to be a scribal error; al-Kindī: 80,000.

¹⁰ Kindī 172.

¹¹ Kindī 183.

[12] They proceeded then to the island of Crete and took possession of it. Their commander was Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn ʿĪsā, and after his death his son ruled the island. The Andalusians lived on the island until it was invaded and taken over by the Byzantines in 340 (A.D. 951/2) after a long blockade.

[13] (ʿAbd-Allāh ibn Ṭāhir)⁽¹²⁾ appointed as governor of Alexandria Ilyās ibn Asad ibn Sāmān and returned to Fuṣṭāṭ in Jumādā II (September 827). Then he set out for the Iraq.

[14] In Jumādā I, 216 (June/July 831),⁽¹³⁾ when the lower Delta was in revolt and the Afshīn, accompanied by the governor of Egypt, ʿĪsā ibn Manṣūr al-Rāfiqī, was fighting the insurgents, he sent ʿUbayd-Allāh ibn Yazīd ibn Mazyad al-Shaybānī on a military expedition to the Gharbiyyah province. But he was defeated and driven back to Alexandria, and the Banū Mudlij, having mobilized against him, besieged him there in the month of Shawwāl (November/December). Whereupon the Afshīn moved out, fighting anyone on his way, until he and his troops reached Alexandria, where he was met by a detachment of the Mudlij. He defeated them twice, taking some of them prisoners and killing (others), and entered Alexandria on the 20th of Dhū ʾl-Ḥijjah (January 28, 832). Their leaders then fled. The governor of the city (at the time) was Muʿāwiyah ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muʿāwiyah ibn Ḥudayj. Having restored order in the city, (the Afshīn) then moved against the people of al-Basharūd. They held out against him until al-Maʾmūn came to Egypt (in February 832).

[15] The latter came to al-Basharūd while the Afshīn was fighting the Copts there, as has already been reported.⁽¹⁴⁾

¹². Kindī 184.

¹³. Kindī 190-91.

¹⁴. See Pt. I, ch. 30, sect. 9.

[16] After Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aghlab⁽¹⁵⁾ had assumed the reign over Ifrīqiyyah in 261 (A.D. 875), he proved to be a good ruler. Caravans and traders used to travel on safe roads, and he had fortresses and guard posts built along the Mediterranean coast. Signal fires would be lit all the way from the town of Ceuta to Alexandria, so that a message from the former would reach Alexandria within a single night, although there is a distance of several months' travel between the two places.

[17] In Muḥarram 302 (August 914),⁽¹⁶⁾ Ḥabāsah at the head of the armies of Ifrīqiyyah occupied Alexandria. He came with 100,000 men or more, and troops arrived from the East as reinforcements for the governor of Egypt, Takīn. When Ḥabāsah marched out of Alexandria, a call to arms was proclaimed in Fustāt on the 19th of Jumādā II (January 10, 915). No one, high or low, failed to report at Gīzah, except some who could not go because of illness or some legitimate excuse. As Ḥabāsah approached the Egyptian forces, he was met and defeated by them. But then he performed a circling maneuver with his cavalry and killed some ten thousand of the Egyptian troops. Although Ḥabāsah then moved on (back) to Ifrīqiyyah, people in Egypt remained very much upset.

[18] Then, in Ramaḍān (March/April), Mu'nīs the Eunuch⁽¹⁷⁾ arrived from the Iraq with numerous troops. After Takīn's dismissal in Dhū 'l-Qa'dah (May/june), Dhakā "al-A'war" took over as gover-

¹⁵ He is Ibrāhīm II (852-902), the ninth in the line of the Aghlabid emirs of Kairouan. —The passage is in part from Ibn Khaldūn's *Ibar* (Bulaq ed., 4:203).

¹⁶ Kindī 269-70. —Ḥabāsah b. Yūsuf was a general of the Fāṭimid 'Ubayd-Allāh al-Mahdī. He died in battle in the same year (cf. Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 3:172-73, 184; Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 10:149-50/III, 2292). His son Dāwūd died four years later in an epidemic during the second Fāṭimid occupation of Alexandria (*Nujūm*, 3:196). —Emir Takīn b. 'Abd-Allāh, a Khazar Turk, served three times as governor of Egypt (910-15; 919-21; 923 until his death in 933).

¹⁷ Mu'nīs al-Khādīm, the powerful Turkish generalissimo (*amīr al-umārā'*) of the caliphs al-Muqtadir and al-Qāhir; died 933. —Emir Abū 'l-Ḥasan Dhakā al-Rūmī "the One-Eyed" served as governor from 28 August 915 until his death on 11 August 919. —The passage is a summary of al-Kindī's account (pp. 273-74).

nor in Ṣafar 303 (August 915). (Mu'nis) then left with his troops for Alexandria, where he tracked down all persons who were pointed out to him as having been in written contact with the lord of Ifrīqiyyah (ʿUbayd-Allāh). Some of them were imprisoned by him, many were executed.

In Shawwāl 304 (April 917), the people of Lūbiyah and Marāqiyah evacuated their towns and came to Alexandria, for fear of the (Fāṭimid) lord of Barqah.

[19] In 307 (A.D. 919),⁽¹⁸⁾ he vanguard of the Mahdī ʿUbayd-Al-lāh advanced, coming from Ifrīqiyyah on Lūbiyah with his son Abū ʿl-Qāsim (in command). The people of Alexandria fled and evacuated the city, and (the governor's son) Muẓaffar ibn Dhakā "al-Aʿwar" left it with his troops. The (Fāṭimid) soldiers occupied the city on Friday, the 8th of Ṣafar (July 9). People in powerful positions fled from Fuṣṭāṭ to Syria. Dhakā, the governor of Egypt, then went out to Gīzah, where he began to muster an army. But then he became ill and died, in fulfillment of his duties, in Gīzah in Rabīʿ I. After his death, Takīn then took over as governor for the second time by appointment of (the caliph) al-Muqtadir.

While (Takīn) was staying in Gīzah, the fleet of the Lord of Ifrīqiyyah under the command of Sulaymān al-Khādim (the Eunuch) came to Alexandria, and shortly thereafter arrived Thamīl al-Khādim, commander of the fleet of Tarsus.⁽¹⁹⁾ The two fleets met and engaged in battle off Rosetta in Shawwāl (March 920). And God sent a storm over Sulayman's ships which tossed them ashore, where most of them were smashed to pieces. Their crews were picked up and most of them were killed. The survivors were taken

¹⁸. Kindī 275-78.

¹⁹. The Fāṭimid fleet of 80 ships was sent by ʿUbayd-Allāh al-Mahdī in support of his son al-Qā'im, who had problems in Alexandria. Sulaymān shared the command with a Berber by the name of Ya'qūb al-Kutāmi. The fleet from Tarsus, dispatched by orders of al-Muqtadir, consisted of 25 ships "loaded with Greek fire and munitions." Cf. *Itti'āz*, 1:71.

prisoner and marched to Fustāṭ; some seven hundred of their men were then executed.

Abū 'l-Qāsim (al-Qā'im) ibn al-Mahdī marched from Alexandria on the Fayyūm, occupied Jazīrat al-Ushmūnayn and the Fayyūm, and eliminated the Egyptian garrison force there. Whereupon Thamīl the Eunuch sailed with his ships to Alexandria, where he fought the Mahdist troops (left) in the city. He scored a victory over them and, after having moved the people of Alexandria to Rosetta, returned to Fustāṭ. From there he proceeded to al-Lāhūn,⁽²⁰⁾ where he was joined by the troops (of Mu'nis). (Their combined force) retook the Fayyūm in Ṣafar 309 (June 921), and Abū 'l-Qāsim Ibn al-Mahdī left for Barqah. There was no more fighting (from then on) and the troops returned to Fustāṭ.

[20] Still, Alexandria and its districts continued to be in a state of unrest until the arrival of the troops of al-Mu'izz li-dīni-llāh under the command of General Jawhar in 358 (A.D. 969). His army captured the city and it remained continuously (in Fāṭimid hands) until Nizār ibn al-Mustaṣṣir's (brief) rule there (in 1095). His story will be told in connection with the storehouses of the Great Palace.⁽²¹⁾

[21] In 612 (A.D. 1215),⁽²²⁾ three thousand Frankish traders gathered in Alexandria, and a two-master with two Frankish princes on board arrived in the harbor. Their intention was to riot, kill the townspeople and take over the city. Al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Abū Bakr ibn Ayyūb rushed to Alexandria, arrested those traders and the people on board the two-master, confiscated their property, and locked them up in prison. He also imprisoned the two princes. Several

²⁰ E.g. *Le-hōne* (mouth of the canal), the Greek *Ptolemais*, a very ancient village on the south side of the Fayyūm; nearby is the tomb pyramid of Sesostris II. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 3:97; below, ch. 83, sect. 3.

²¹ Pt. IV, ch. 33.

²² In 608 (1211/2) in *Sulūk* (I, 1:175).

things came to pass until the Sultan released the women of those people and returned to Cairo.

[22] In 554 (A.D. 1159), (the Fāṭimid vizier) al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ṭalā'ī' ibn Ruzzīk built a mud-brick fortification for the protection of Bilbays.⁽²³⁾

[23] In 562 (A.D. 1167) was the battle of al-Bābayn⁽²⁴⁾ between the (Fāṭimid) vizier Shāwar and (the Nūrid general) Asad al-Dīn Shīrkūh. Shīrkūh's soldiers were defeated and a contingent of them went on toward Alexandria. Then it was Shīrkūh's turn to get the better of Shāwar, who had to flee to Cairo, and Shīrkūh (himself) proceeded to Alexandria. The people of the town came out to meet him, among them the governor of the city, Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Maṣāl,⁽²⁵⁾ its judge, Ashraf al-Dīn Ibn al-Khabbāb, and its superintendent (of finances), Rashīd al-Dīn Ibn al-Zubayr.⁽²⁶⁾ They were glad that he had arrived and handed the city over to him.

(Shīrkūh) then marched out of Alexandria, heading for Upper Egypt (to collect taxes), after having left his nephew Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb with one thousand knights in charge of the city. At that point, Shāwar, in alliance with Murīy,⁽²⁷⁾ King of the Franks, descended upon the city. The townspeople, however, stood by (Saladin) and prepared to fight Shāwar, fielding, among other forces, 24,000 archers. Shāwar promised he would exempt them from paying the special imposts and taxes and let them keep the double

²³. This is obviously a research note misplaced by Maqrīzī. Notice also that the preceding story is chronologically out of order.

²⁴. A former village south of al-Minyā in the *kūrah* of al-Ushmūnayn. —The battle was fought on 15 Jumādā 11/18 April. Cf. Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz* 3:284.

²⁵. He was a son of the Fāṭimid vizier (1139-47; 1149) Abū 'l-Faṭḥ Sulaym b. Muḥammad b. Maṣāl al-Lukkī; cf. *Itti'āz*, 3:283.

²⁶. A black from Uswān, he was an Ismā'īlī missionary and eventually grandmaster (*dā'ī al-du'āh*) in the Yemen, where he proclaimed himself caliph and even struck his own coins. Brought in chains to Qūṣ, he was freed by intervention of the Fāṭimid vizier Ṭalā'ī' b. Ruzzīk. An unusually versatile scholar and poet, he had assumed the office of superintendent, against his will, only three years earlier. Cf. Yāqūt, *Irshād*, 1:416-22; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Nujūm*, 5:373-74.

²⁷. French *Amaury*, i.e., Amalric I, count of Jaffa and Ascalon and King of Jerusalem (1163-1174).

tithe, if they handed Saladin over to him, but they rejected that and insisted on fighting him. So he besieged them until their food began to run out.

Shīrkūh, who had meanwhile mustered large contingents of Bedouins, set out to come to their relief. Shāwar at once sent emissaries to him and offered him 5,000 dinars on the condition that he return to Syria. When Shīrkūh accepted, the city fell. Saladin then betook himself to Amalric, King of the Franks, and negotiated with him. Shāwar wanted Amalric to turn Saladin over to him, but the king refused. Rather,⁽²⁸⁾ he sent Saladin on his way to his uncle Shīrkūh by sea to Acre, (whence he proceeded) with his companions to Damascus.

Shāwar occupied Alexandria on the 17th of Shawwāl (August 6). Ibn Maṣāl went into hiding and then fled to Syria. Ibn al-Khabbāb was arrested and tortured, until his family was able to ransom him for a large sum of money. One could not get hold of Ibn al-Zubayr (at this time), who escaped to Rosetta.⁽²⁹⁾ Besides, the jurist Abū Ṭāhir Ibn ‘Awf and a sizable number of men had taken refuge in the Lighthouse to make a stand. When Shāwar prepared to attack them, Ibn ‘Awf appealed to him, saying, “Forgive us, Supreme Com-

^{28.} Read with the Bulaq text: *bal sayyarahū*, instead of Wiet’s incomprehensible *fi sayrihi*. —Actually, the release of Saladin and his garrison involved a little more than that, namely, the payment of 30,000 dinars to the Crusaders and Shīrkūh’s relinquishing of all booty made during his campaign (*Itti’āz*, 3:285). But this is not the only detail in Maqrīzī’s preceding account which does not tally with other Muslim sources. According to al-Nuwayrī, for instance, the Alexandrians defended themselves with 24,000 crossbowmen against Shāwar’s siege, although food was already getting short in the city. It was then that Shāwar made his offer mentioned above, which was rejected by the Alexandrians with the words: “God help us! We are not going to turn over Muslims to Franks and Ismā‘ilis!” Then, at the news that Shīrkūh was approaching—he had been in the area collecting taxes—the Egyptians and Crusaders asked him for peace, which he granted on the condition that the Crusaders must leave Egypt, and that not a single Egyptian village must be handed over to them. Peace was then concluded on those terms and the Egyptians got Alexandria, while Shīrkūh returned to Damascus on the 18th of Dhū ‘l-Qa’dah (September 5). Cf. *Itti’āz*, loc. cit., note.

^{29.} *Itti’āz*: He had fled westward toward Barqah, was apprehended and then decapitated —(3:288) on the 24th of Dhū ‘l-Hijjah (October 10), or (3:289) after brutal torture in Muḥarram 563 (after October 17).

mander, and show us leniency for what we have done." And he pardoned them.

After having appointed Judge Ashraf al-Dīn Abū 'l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Manṣūr ibn Najā superintendent of finances, Shāwar left with Amalric, King of the Franks, for Cairo. Amalric then returned to his own country.⁽³⁰⁾

[24] In 671 (A.D. 1272/3), when news arrived that the Franks were on the move against the Egyptian frontier districts, al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars ordered the war galleys to be readied and had some one hundred mangonels set up on Alexandria's walls.

[25] On Thursday, the 5th of Rajab, 727 (May 28, 1327), some Frankish trader went to the area outside the Bāb al-Baḥr where the common people gather to have a good time. He accosted a beardless youngster, trying to seduce him, and when one of the Muslims in the area objected and pointed out that this kind of thing was against the law, the Frank took a slipper he carried in his hand and struck the man in the face with it. The man called out to the people (around him) who came running to his side. The Franks, in turn, stood by their man, and the disorder widened so that in the end the governor of the city⁽³¹⁾ rode out, ordered the city gates closed, and searched for the people that had stirred up the trouble. But they had fled, and he returned to his mansion, leaving the gates locked.

Outside the city was now a big crowd of people who had, as usual, gone out with their household effects and who suddenly found themselves cut off from their houses. Night fell, and they were still standing in front of the gates, shouting and yelling. Finally, the notables of the town went to see the governor. They kept pleading

³⁰. The Wiet text adds: *wa-nazala 'alā Ṣaydā* 'and he attacked Sidon.' It seems to be an addition of a later copyist, since Sidon had been firmly in Frankish hands since 1110. The sentence is omitted in the Bulaq text.

³¹. His name is given as (Rukn al-Dīn) al-Karakī in the *Sulūk* (II, 1:284); also, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Travels*, 1:27.

with him until he opened (the gates), whereupon the people outside all rushed in at once, crowding and jostling each other. More than ten people got killed, many suffered broken limbs, and a good many turbans, kerchiefs, etc., were lost (in the process). Throughout the night there was much weeping and screaming.

The next day, when the governor rode out to investigate what was going on among the people, they crowded in on him and pelted him with stones so that he had to flee to his mansion. But they followed him and battled with him, and he had to fight them off from the roof of the house, so that much blood was shed between the two sides. The mob set his house on fire and looted other houses in the neighborhood.

At that point, the governor wrote out an urgent appeal for help to the governor of Damanhūr and the Bedouins around him, and they came and surrounded the city. He also sent a message by carrier pigeon to the Sultan, reporting that the Alexandrians were in open revolt.

The Sultan was very angry, since he feared (the rebels) might free the imprisoned emirs.⁽³²⁾ He sent for the (four) justices and, having assembled them in his presence, asked them for a legal opinion with regard to fighting the insurgents. After they had made out the necessary written orders, Mughulṭāy al-Jamālī,⁽³³⁾ the vizier (and majordomo), Ṭūghān (al-Shamsī),⁽³⁴⁾ chief inspector of finances, Eldemir,⁽³⁵⁾ commander of the Sultan's body-guard, several Royal Mamluks, and the Superintendent of the Privy Purse⁽³⁶⁾ set out to

³² There were ten of them at the time; their names and their fate after their transfer to Cairo are mentioned in the *Sulūk* (II, 1:286).

³³ On Emir 'Alā' al-Dīn Mughulṭāy b. 'Abd-Allāh al-Jamālī "Horoz" (Rooster) see *Khīṭaṭ* 2:392-93.

³⁴ Described by Ibn Baṭṭūṭah (*Travels*, transl. R.A.R. Gibb) as "a stony-hearted tyrant, and suspect in his religion—it was said that he used to worship the sun." Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 2:227.

³⁵ I.e., Sayf al-Dīn Eldemir al-Ruknī (died 1330). Cf. *Sulūk*, II, 1:285; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 1:407.

³⁶ Judge Ṭāj al-Dīn Abū Ishāq Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, who held the office from 1322 until his death in 1331 (Wiet, note 5).

deal with the rebellious Alexandrians. The Vizier carried a royal re-script which authorized him to execute the troublemakers, to confiscate the property of a large number of people, to exact fines from the townspeople, to seize the weapons furnished for the attack, to arrest the judge and the notaries, and to transfer the imprisoned emirs to Cairo.

They left on the 10th of that month and arrived in Alexandria three days later. The Vizier, after having set himself up in (the administration building for the collection of) the double tithe,⁽³⁷⁾ imposed on the population the payment of 500,000 Cairene dinars and had the chief justice ‘Imād al-Dīn⁽³⁸⁾ and his deputy brought to him in irons. He censured the two for having been the ones who proclaimed the call to take up arms for the faith in town, but both denied that such a call had come from them, (contending) that it came from others and that it was not in their power to turn the mob back. The Vizier ordered a severe flogging for the deputy judge Ibn al-Nafīsī (?) and had him pay a fine of 600,000 dirhams, while the judge was fined 500,000 dirhams. (Actually) the latter had already been sentenced by royal decree to be hanged, but the Vizier spoke kindly of him in a letter to the Sultan, adducing extenuating circumstances for him and exculpating him, so that the Sultan pardoned him.

The populace was severely persecuted by the Vizier, and thirty men were cut in half by his orders on Friday, the 13th. People hurried to their houses in fear, and a number of turbans got lost (in the panic). For twenty days this fear kept mounting, as letter after letter arrived from the Sultan, ordering a crackdown on the townspeople and the imposition of heavy fines, and the Vizier carrying out the

³⁷ He is ‘Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Muḥammad al-Bilbaysī (*Sulūk*, II, 1:286). — Ibn Baṭṭūṭah (*Travels* 130) gives his name as “‘Imād al-Dīn al-Kindī” and reports that he was replaced by the judge of Damanhūr, Fakhr al-Dīn Ibn Miskīn, who allegedly paid 25,000 dinars to get the post.

³⁸ The reading is uncertain and almost arbitrarily chosen by Wiet (cf. his note 4) from a bewildering number of variants in the mss. — Bulaq: Ibn al-Shaybī.

orders well, until he (finally) sent the imprisoned emirs on their way (to Cairo) and himself left town.

He had run an inventory on the weapons there and had found 6,000 complete sets of armament, all of which he placed in a hall which he sealed up. The money collected from the population came to more than 200,000 dinars. The whole affair was one in a series of great afflictions and horrible incidents.

18. The City of Atrīb⁽¹⁾

[1] That city was built by Atrīb son of Qubṭīm, son of Miṣr, son of Bayṣar, son of Ham, son of Noah, upon him be peace.

[2] Ibn Waṣīf Shāh relates: Atrīb had moved to his possession, namely, the city his father had built for him, after his father's death.

It was ten miles long and had twelve gates. Along its most magnificent avenue he built three lofty domed buildings resting on pillars, one on top of the other—one in the center of the city and two on either end of it. Over each gate he put a large observation tower, and on every side of the city he built a theater, assembly halls, and elevated retreats. On the western side of the city he dug a canal and spanned it with bridges above which he built contiguous assembly halls. Around the bridges and both sides of the canal were residential quarters ending in causeways that led to cultivated flower gardens, beyond which were gardens and orchards.

On top of each gate was some wondrous thing: statues, moving idols, and idols to ward off harmful intruders. Inside each gate he erected bronze effigies of devils: when approached by a good person, the devil on the right side of the gate would laugh, but if it was a wicked person, then the devil on the left side of the gate would weep.

Each retreat he stocked with every accepted kind of domesticated animals and songbirds. On top of the city's domed edifices he

¹ Egyptian *Hat-hir-ab* 'the palace in the middle,' Greek *Athribis*, in Pharaonic times the capital of the 10th nome of Lower Egypt, Kemi. Its decay and ultimate disappearance began in the 14th century, although its name continued to be carried in the administrative and financial records for some time after. The small community of *Atrīb* north of Banhā was created on its former site in 1942. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 1:18; I, 11.

placed effigies which gave off a whistling sound when the wind was blowing, and he set up mirrors which showed distant places.

Opposite Atrīb to the east he built another city and put in it theaters and towering idols in various shapes, with a pond in its center on which passing waterfowl would alight and stay until caught. For its protection he built a fortress having twelve gates, with a statue doing some wondrous thing on top of each gate. All around that city he laid out gardens, and close by on the east side he built a decorated assembly hall resting on eight columns and topped by a dome with a bird with outspread wings on top which whistled three times a day, in the morning, at noon and at sunset. Inside the city he erected idols and numerous wondrous things. He founded many cities. He also set up in that city a man by the name of Barasān, who practiced alchemy and by means of it struck dinars, each dinar containing seven *mithqāls* (of gold) and bearing Atrīb's image.

Atrīb lived as a king for three hundred and sixty years and died at the age of five hundred. A tomb chamber was built for him in a mountain to the east, and under it they dug a tunnel to it lined with glass and marble. His body was placed on a bier of inlaid gold and his treasures were brought to him (in his tomb chamber). Over its entrance they placed the image of a sea monster which destroyed anyone approaching it. Then they heaped sand over it and inscribed on it his name and the dates of his reign.

[3] There are four *kūrahs* in Egypt, says Ibn al-Kindī, which are unsurpassed anywhere on earth and have no match under the sky: the *kūrahs* of the Fayyūm, of Atrīb, of Sammanūd, and of Anṣinā.

[4] The *kūrah* of Atrīb is a district of the Delta and consists of 108 villages.

[5] One used to say: The “cities of the sorcerers” in Egypt are seven, namely, Armant, Banā, Būṣīr, Anṣinā, Ṣān,⁽²⁾ Atrīb, and Ṣā.

² The Greek *Tanis*, Biblical *Zoan* (Numb. 13:22; Psalms 78:12; Is. 19:11,13; Ez. 30:14), in the northeastern Delta, believed to have been the seat of the court at the time of Moses. The Egyptians called it *Pa-Avar* (‘house of departure’), and its cult centered around the god Seth. Modern Egyptologists recognize in it *Aouaris*, the fortified city of the Hyksos. It was the capital of the 21st (Tanitic) dynasty. The name of the modern-day village of *Ṣān al-Ḥagar* (district of Faqūs, Sharqiyyah) on its former site dates from the Ottoman period. Cf. A. Scharff, *Geschichte Ägyptens*, 161, 171; W. Smith, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 3637-39; Ramzi, *Qāmūs*, II, 1:116.

19. The Town of Tinnīs

[1] Tinnīs⁽¹⁾ is a town of Egypt which is surrounded on all sides by water. It belongs to the *kūrat al-Khalīj* or Canal District, and was named after Tinnīs son of Ham son of Noah. It is said to have been founded by Philemon, a descendant of Atrīb son of Qibt, a king of the Copts in ancient times.

[2] Ibn Waṣīf Shāh relates: After Atrīb ruled his daughter (Badūrah). She managed and directed the affairs of the kingdom with authority and strength for thirty-five years and died, and after her ruled her sister's son, Philemon the King. He restored the viziers to their (former) ranks and gave the priests their (high) positions, never issuing an order without consulting them first. He was a serious builder and earnest in his quest of ancient wisdom. In his time was built the first Tinnīs, which was (later) submerged by the sea. There used to be quite a distance (in those days) between the sea and the town, which was surrounded by fields, trees, vineyards, villages, wine presses, and the best cultivated land anywhere. The king then had reception halls for himself built in the center of Tinnīs, crowned with domes and embellished with the finest ornamentation and painting, and had those lavishly furnished and decorated. And (every year) when the Nile began to rise, he would move there and remain until the Coptic New Year, and then return (to the capital). The king also had there trusted officials who would distribute the water and give each village its fair share. Those villages were protected by a fortress which enclosed aqueducts. Every subsequent king would give orders to build there and add on to it, making it his pleasure retreat.

^{1.} Vowel specification omitted. The passage seems to be taken from al-Qudā'i. —Tinnīs was located on the now uninhabited *Jazīrat Tinnīs* 5 1/2 miles southwest of Port Said (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 198).

It is said that the “two gardens” of which God Exalted speaks in His Glorious Book with the words, “*And strike for then a similitude: two men, to one of them We assigned two gardens of vines,*”⁽²⁾ belonged to two brothers of the royal household to whom the king had given the place in fief. Both of them did a good job in cultivating, measuring and developing it, and the king would sometime drop in on them to relax and was then served exotic fruits and greens, and whatever food and drink he liked was prepared for him. One of the two brothers was proud of that distinction, for he was very hospitable and munificent and would distribute his money for all sorts of charity. The other was thrifty and would ridicule his brother when he gave his money away. Whenever (the generous brother) sold a part of his share, the other bought it up, until in the end the first one had no property left and all those gardens had become the property of his brother, and he had to beg from him. But his brother scolded him and drove him away and berated him for having wasted his money, saying, “I kept advising and telling you to hold your money together, but you never did! My thriftiness has served me well, and now I have more property and offspring than you do.” And he turned his back on his brother, happy with his money and his garden. Whereupon God Exalted and Sublime ordered the sea to rise above those villages and engulf them one and all. And their owner came lamenting and wailing “*saying, ‘Would I had not associated with my Lord any one!’*” And God Almighty says, “*But there was no host to help him.*”⁽³⁾

At the time of Philemon the King, Damietta was founded. Philemon reigned for ninety years. He built himself a tomb in the eastern hills and had his money and jewelry and the rest of the treasures moved to it. Inside the tomb he placed swiveling statues with swords in their hands which cut down any intruder, and to the right and left of the tomb he stationed two gilded-bronze lions on

² Koran 18 (The Cave):32.

³ *Ibid.*, 42 and 43.

swivels which destroyed anyone who approached it. On the tomb he inscribed: This is the tomb of Philemon son of Atrīb son of Qubṭīm son of Miṣrāyim. He lived a long time, and when he was approached by death, he had no defense against it. Let those who reach his body not rob it of its accoutrements, but take only what is in front of it.

[3] People say that Tinnīs was a brother of Dimyāṭ.

[4] Mas'ūdī relates in his *Golden Meadows*:⁽⁴⁾ The lake of Tinnīs was once a stretch of land unequaled in all of Egypt with regard to temperateness of climate and quality of soil. It used to consist of gardens, palm groves, vineyards, trees and farmland and had elevated water channels. People had never seen a finer land than this, nor one with more contiguous gardens and vineyards. In all of Egypt there was no district that one could say resembled it, except the Fayyūm. The Nile water would flow down to it without interruption, summer and winter, and people there were able to irrigate their gardens and also their fields whenever they wanted; the rest of the water would then flow through its various channels toward the sea and (into it) at a place known as “al-Ushtūm”—The Mouth. It was a day’s journey from that land to the sea coast. There was also a passable road (at the time) between al-‘Arīsh and the island of Cyprus which pack animals could negotiate on dry feet, and it did not take long to travel between al-‘Arīsh and the island of Cyprus by boat either. But eventually the water rose above the road that used to connect the two places. Then, 251 years after the reign of Diocletian, the water from the sea invaded some of the places which today are called the lake of Tinnīs and submerged them, and

⁴ *Prairies d’or* 2:374. There it is a 130-year-old Copt who gives the following account to Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn. —Ibn Ṭūlūn indeed visited the town in 882. On the occasion, he had several cisterns, known as *ṣahārīj al-Amīr* and many shops in its bazaar built (Yāqūt 2:52). —A. Butler points out that the flooding of the island must have happened much earlier than in the 6th century, since a Roman report dating from the end of the 4th century already speaks of “Thinnesus” as completely beset by sea and salt marshes (cf. *Arab Conquest*, 352, n. 1).

this process would increase every year until the water had submerged them all. Those villages which were at the bottom of the land were submerged, but those which were on high ground survived, such as Tūnah, Būrā, etc., and are still there to this day, surrounded by water on all sides. The people of the villages in that lake used to take their dead to Tinnīs and bury them there, one on top of the other. The permanent submersion of that land in its entirety happened one hundred years before the (Muslim) conquest of Egypt.

There had been, someone has said, wars between a king of the nations, whose residence was at al-Faramā, and one of the archons of Balyanā and its hinterland, in the course of which ditches and canals were built that were opened and filled with water all the way from the Nile to the sea in order to keep each party from the other. And that was the reason why the water branched out from the Nile and engulfed that land.

[5] In his *Akhbār al-zamān* (al-Mas‘ūdī) says: Tinnīs was a very large city with one hundred gates.

[6] (But) Ibn Buṭlān⁽⁵⁾ states: Tinnīs is a small town on an island in the middle of the sea. Its declination to the south is five degrees over the middle of the Fourth Clime. Its land is a salt marsh and its weather is variable. The people there drink water stored in cisterns which are filled annually when the sea water is sweet thanks to the inflow of Nile water. All necessities of the town are brought in by boats. The main diet of the population consists of fish, cheese and cow’s milk. The royal tax concession for cheese is 700 dinars, computed on a basis of one dinar and a half per thousand loaves, and the fish concession is 10,000 dinars.⁽⁶⁾ The people

⁵ Abū ’l-Ḥasan al-Mukhtār b. al-Ḥasan, a Christian physician and traveler from Baghdad. In 1049 he visited Egypt to meet his colleague and literary rival Ibn Riḍwān and stayed there for three years. He later retired to a monastery in Antioch, where he died in 1066. See “Ibn Buṭlān” (J. Schacht) in *IEP*.

⁶ Yāqūt, citing the author of a *History of Tinnīs*, enumerates 79 varieties of fish and seafood (*Muḥjam al-buldān* 2:53-4).

living there have an easygoing, docile temperament and their nature is inclined to softness and femininity.

[7] The physician Abū 'l-Sarīy reports: Two hundred effeminate used to be born in Tinnīs every year. They like cleanliness, gentleness, singing and pleasure. Most of them spend the nights drinking. They get little exercise because the town is so cramped, and their bodies are (therefore) full of (harmful) substances and susceptible to an ailment called “the Tinnīs hiccups.”

He lived for thirty years among the people there.

[8] The compiler of the *History of Damietta*⁽⁷⁾ relates: In charge of Tinnīs (at the time of the Muslim conquest) was a man by the name of Abū Thawr, a Christian Arab. After the fall of Damietta, the Muslims marched on Tinnīs and Abū Thawr took the field against them with an army of some 20,000 made up of Christian Arabs, Copts and Romans. There were several engagements which ended with the capture of Abū Thawr by the Muslims and the defeat and flight of his men. The Muslims then entered the town, rebuilt its church as a mosque, divided the spoils, and moved on to al-Faramā.⁽⁸⁾

[9] Tinnīs remained in Muslim hands until Bishr ibn Ṣafwān al-Kalbī was governor of Egypt, appointed by Yazīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik in Ramaḍān 101 (March/April 720). The Byzantines then landed at Tinnīs and Muzāḥim ibn Salamah al-Murādī, the governor of the town, at the head of a troop of *mawālī* was killed in action. It is to them that the poet addresses the words:

⁷ The same source is cited in ch. 23, again without identification by name. In both instances, the events described fall into the earliest stage of the Muslim conquest. It is likely that Maqrīzī's account of Damietta (ch. 61) is drawn from the same source.

⁸ Yāqūt says that Tinnīs at the time of the conquest was no more than a community of reed huts and was therefore known until the early Umayyad period as *Dhāt al-Akhṣāṣ*. Solid houses (*quṣūr*) were not built until the middle of the 8th century. Late in 844, under governor 'Isā b. Maṣṣūr al-Rāfiqī, construction of a city wall was begun by the Turk Ītākh and completed nine years later under governor 'Anbasah b. Iṣḥāq. Cf. *Mu'jam al-buldān*, 2:51-52.

Did you not sit to hear the men's account
of what the clients met with at Tinnīs?

[10] Tinnīs used to be a large town and contained numerous antiquities of the earliest Egyptians. Its population was prosperous and wealthy, most of them being weavers.

In Tinnīs one used to weave the *sharb* garments, the like of which is manufactured nowhere else in the world. One would make there for the caliph a doublet called *badanah*, into which go only two *ūqīyahs* of yarn for warp and woof and the rest of it is woven with gold threads in such perfect workmanship that it requires neither cutting nor stitching; it is worth a thousand dinars. There is no brocade in the world with a foundation of linen of which a single garment, plain and not interwoven with gold, fetches a price of one hundred dinars in cash, except the brocade of Tinnīs and Damietta.

When the Nile water was released, people as far away as the area east of al-Faramā, around Gurgīr and Fāqūs, would get their irrigation water from there through the main canal of Tinnīs and its irrigation canals.

[11] Tinnīs used to be one of the most important towns in Egypt. Although⁽⁹⁾ one used to manufacture delicate fabrics also in Shaṭā, Dabqū (Dabīq), Dimīrah, Tūnah and on some of the islands near by, none of that comes close to the fine fabrics called *tinnīsī*, *dīnyāṭī* and *shaṭawī*. Until after 360 (A.D. 971), the (annual) export (of this fabric) from (Tinnīs) to the Iraq (alone) used to amount to between 20,000 and 30,000 dinars. But after the (Fāṭimid) vizier Ya'qūb ibn Killis had taken over the financial administration, he wiped all of that out with extraordinary imposts.

[12] The island of Tinnīs and (the town of) Damietta used to be inhabited by protected Christians.

⁹ Text from Ibn Ḥawqal (*BGA* IV, 101-2, Beirut ed. p. 143).

The people of Tinnīs used to catch quail and other birds⁽¹⁰⁾ at their very front doors. The quail is a bird that comes out of the sea and is trapped in those nets (they have).

Ships would ply between Tinnīs and al-Faramā, which is on the sea coast.

[13] After Hārūn al-Rashīd had died (in 809) and had been succeeded by his son Muḥammad al-Amīn, who then sought to eliminate (his brother ‘Abd-Allāh) al-Ma’mūn with perfidy and treachery, the governor of Egypt was Ḥātim ibn Harthamah ibn A‘yan,⁽¹¹⁾ an appointee of al-Amīn. When the troops in Natū and Tamī rose in rebellion against him, he sent al-Sariy ibn al-Ḥakam and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jarawī against them, and the two defeated the Yemenites in the month of Shawwāl, 194 (July 810).

Later on, Emir Jābir ibn al-Ash‘ath al-Ṭā’ī took over as governor and Ḥātim ibn Harthamah was dismissed. Jābir was a mild-mannered man. When the rift between Muḥammad al-Amīn and his brother ‘Abd-Allāh al-Ma’mūn widened, and when Muḥammad disowned his brother as crown prince by ceasing to have his name pronounced from the pulpits, and, instead, made his son Mūsā the heir apparent, bestowing the title “al-Shadīd”⁽¹²⁾ on him and having the

^{10.} Yāqūt lists over 130 species of birds and other wildlife (*Mu‘jam* 2:53-4).

^{11.} In sections 13-16 Maqrīzī summarizes al-Kindī’s account of the political, tribal and religious struggles that characterize the years between 810 and 832 in Egypt (al-Kindī, *Wulāh*, ed. Guest, pp. 147-82). Some of the events have already been mentioned in ch. 17 in connection with Alexandria.

Ḥātim had been deputy governor and chief of the constabulary (*ṣāhib al-shurṭah*) during the brief governorship of his father in 794. His own term of office as governor and director of finance lasted only about a year and a half. He was dismissed in March 811, probably because his father Harthamah was a prominent general in the army of al-Ma’mūn, and died in the same year. Cf. al-Kindī, *Wulāh*, 147; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 2:144.

^{12.} So the text. Maqrīzī copied the error from al-Kindī. The title given to Mūsā—a boy of six at the time—was “al-Nāṭiq bi-’l-Ḥaqq.”—The source of the error seems to be one “Shadīd” mentioned in this context, namely, a Persian by the name of Rustam b. Dastān al-Shadīd (cf. Mas‘ūdī, *Tanbīh*, ed. al-Ṣāwī, p. 300), an ancestor of Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn “Dhū ’l-Yamīnayn,” the Khurāsānian general in command of al-Ma’mūn’s victorious army in his bid for the caliphate and founder of the Ṭāhirid dynasty of Khurāsān (821-873), the father of ‘Abd-Allāh b. Ṭāhir, governor of Egypt (826-827).

people pray for him, there was talk in the garrison army of the capital of disowning Muḥammad in favor al-Ma'mūn. Jābir sent word to the troops, forbidding them to go through with it and trying to frighten them with the consequences of disorder and strife, but al-Sarīy ibn al-Ḥakam (nonetheless) began to call on the troops to disown Muḥammad. (Sarīy) was one of the soldiers of al-Layth ibn al-Faḍl that had come to Egypt during the reign of (Hārūn) al-Rashīd, an undistinguished man who subsequently became famous for his role in disowning Muḥammad al-Amīn. (Meanwhile) al-Ma'mūn wrote to the Prophet's descendants in Egypt, appealing to them to support his cause, and they heeded his call and pledged allegiance to al-Ma'mūn in the month of Rajab, 196 (March/April 812). They fell on Jābir and, having ousted him, and made 'Abbād ibn Muḥammad⁽¹³⁾ governor.

When word about that reached Muḥammad al-Amīn, he wrote to the (Arab) chiefs⁽¹⁴⁾ of the (Eastern) Ḥawf and told them to make Rabī'ah ibn Qays al-Jarashī governor. He was the chief of the Qays in the Ḥawf, and all the troops of the Ḥawf, Yemenis and Qays alike, followed him, supporting the cause of al-Amīn and the deposition of al-Ma'mūn. They marched on Fuṣṭāṭ to fight the troops there, and in the ensuing battle there were fatal casualties on both sides. They left then, but returned several times to fight again. 'Abbād ibn Muḥammad (in turn) put 'Abd al-'Azīz (ibn al-Wazīr) al-Jarawī in command and dispatched him with an army to fight those people on their home territory.

¹³ He is Abū Naṣr 'Abbād b. Muḥammad b. Ḥayyān al-Balkhī, a *mawlā* of the Kindah, who, up to this point, had administered the estates of al-Ma'mūn's general (and ex-governor of Egypt) Harthamah b. Ayan as his *wakīl*. His term as governor was one year and seven months. Three years later he appears once more in the political arena as the opponent of Sulaymān b. Ghālib (see next section), so that Ibn Taghrībirdī's claim (*Nujūm* 2:154) that he was executed by al-Amīn in 198/813 must be an error. This invalidates Zirīklī's brief vita (*A'lām* 4:29).

¹⁴ It is useful to bear in mind that in the struggle for the caliphate, al-Amīn, a "pure Arab" on both the father's and the mother's side, derived his support mainly from the Arab element in the Empire, while al-Ma'mūn, whose mother was Persian, relied to a great extent on Persian support.

(Al-Jarawī) moved out in Dhū 'l-Qa'dah 197 (July 813) and joined battle with (the Arab tribal forces) at 'Amrīt.⁽¹⁵⁾ Al-Jarawī was defeated and proceeded with his troops, composed of Lakhm and Judhām, to Fāqūs. At that point, some people told him, "Why not have your own name pronounced in the *khuṭbah*? Surely, you are not inferior to those who have taken over the land!" So he went on with his followers to Tinnīs and occupied the town. (From there) he then sent out his agents to collect the taxes in the Lower Delta. Rabī'ah ibn Qays (in turn) dispatched (troops) to prevent him from doing so.

In the month of Muḥarram, 198 (September 813), the (Arab) army of the Ḥawf marched (again) on Fustāṭ and in the fighting quite a number of people were killed on both sides. But when the troops of the Ḥawf learned that al-Amīn had been killed, they dispersed, and (al-)Muṭṭalib ibn 'Abd-Allāh al-Khuzā'ī assumed the governorship of Egypt on behalf of al-Ma'mūn.

He took office in Rabī' I (November 813) and made 'Abd al-'Azīz (al-Jarawī) his chief of police.⁽¹⁶⁾ Then he dismissed him (from that office) and entrusted him with the command of the troops of the Lower Delta. (Seven-and-a-half months later the caliph) dismissed al-Muṭṭalib and appointed in Shawwāl (June 814) as governor al-'Abbās ibn Mūsā ibn 'Īsā, who then reappointed 'Abd al-'Azīz (al-Jarawī) chief of police.

When the military garrison of the capital revolted and restored al-Muṭṭalib in Muḥarram 199 (September 814), al-Jarawī fled to Tinnīs, and al-'Abbās ibn Mūsā ibn 'Īsā came from Mecca to the Ḥawf, where he camped at Bilbays and called on the Qays to support him.⁽¹⁷⁾ He then went to meet al-Jarawī in Tinnīs and (January/Feb-

¹⁵ An ancient village near al-Zaqāzīq, now in the district of Abū Ḥammād; cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 1:74.

¹⁶ It is a sign of the severe disorder in Egypt at that time that al-Muṭṭalib in his brief first term in office changed his police chief five times. 'Abd al-'Azīz was actually his third choice (cf., e.g., *Nujūm* 2:157), a fact not brought out by Maqrīzī's account.

¹⁷ After his appointment, al-'Abbās had sent his son 'Abd-Allāh as his deputy to

ruary 815) (al-‘Abbās) returned to Bilbays, and there he died of poison in some food al-Muṭṭalib had slipped to him through the Qays. Now the Arabs of the Ḥawf submitted to al-Muṭṭalib and pledged allegiance to him. They came hurriedly to the Jubb ‘Amīrah (i.e., the Birkat al-Ḥujjāj) and, after meeting with al-Muṭṭalib, made peace with him.

Al-Muṭṭalib also sent word to al-Jarawī, ordering him to report to al-Fuṣṭāṭ, but he refused to obey the order and moved with his boats on Shaṭṭanawf. Al-Muṭṭalib now dispatched al-Sarīy ibn al-Ḥakam at the head of a sizable detachment of the garrison troop to ask al-Jarawī to come to terms. The latter agreed at first, but then tried to doublecross them. When they caught on to his scheme, he retreated to Banā. They pursued him and engaged him in fighting. Then he returned and, addressing al-Sarīy in flattering tones, invited them to make peace. So al-Sarīy went out in a barge to meet him, and al-Jarawī did the same, and the two met in the middle of the Nile opposite Sandafā.⁽¹⁸⁾ Now, al-Jarawī had prepared ropes inside his barge and had left instructions with his men in Sandafā that, as soon as he was alongside al-Sarīy’s barge, they should pull the ropes toward them. Thus, when al-Jarawī was alongside al-Sarīy’s barge, he tied it to his own and had the ropes pulled. Having thus captured al-Sarīy, he took him to Tinnīs where he threw him in prison. That happened in Jumādā I. (About two months later) al-Jarawī returned and fought again, and al-Muṭṭalib’s troops met him

Egypt. The latter, accompanied by al-Ḥasan b. ‘Ubayd b. Lūṭ al-Anṣārī, arrived toward the end of June and the two put al-Muṭṭalib in jail. This, and al-Anṣārī’s imprudent policies, brought on the revolt of the garrison troops, the reinstatement of al-Muṭṭalib, and the expulsion of ‘Abd-Allāh, a scion of the House of ‘Abbās, from Egypt. See Pt. III, ch. 11, sect. 47; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 2:161.

^{18.} Originally *Sandabah*, a vanished community once located on what is now the southern section of al-Maḥallah al-Kubrā; cf. Yāqūt 3:268 and 5:63 (s.v. *al-Maḥallah*); Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 285.

in battle at Saft Salīṭ⁽¹⁹⁾ in Rajab (February/March 815), with al-Jarawī emerging as the winner.

Also, after his dismissal as governor of Alexandria, ‘Umar ibn Mal-lāk revolted with the help of the Andalusians and had al-Jarawī’s name pronounced in the *khutbah* (there). In Muḥarram 200 (August/September 815), ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Mūsā ibn ‘Īsā came to Egypt seeking blood revenge for his brother al-‘Abbās. He stayed with ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jarawī and then advanced with him at the head of numerous troops overland and on the river, eventually camping at Gīzah. Al-Muṭṭalib with the troops stationed in Miṣr took the field against ‘Abd-Allāh and they fought him in battle in Ṣafar (September/October). Al-Jarawī then retreated to Sharqiyyūn⁽²⁰⁾ and ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Mūsā left for the Hejaz. When al-Muṭṭalib learned that it was Abū Ḥarmalah Faraj al-Aswad who had corresponded with ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Mūsā and had egged him on to march (against him), he sought to have him arrested, but he escaped to join al-Jarawī.

Al-Muṭṭalib now took the Jarawī affair seriously in hand. At that point, al-Jarawī brought al-Sarīy ibn al-Ḥakam from prison and proposed to him a formal agreement and pledge that he would stage a coup against al-Muṭṭalib and remove him from office. Al-Sarīy, having made that pledge, was then released. (First) he gave the troops in the capital to understand that a letter (from the caliph) had arrived with his appointment as governor, and indeed the Khurāsānians of the garrison army accepted and welcomed him as their commander, while the Egyptians (in the garrison force) refused to recognize his appointment.⁽²¹⁾ After al-Sarīy had settled

¹⁹ The modern-day village of *Hūt Khalaf* (district of Shibīn al-Kōm, Minūfiyyah); cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs* II, 2:195.

²⁰ The counterpart of Sandafā, i.e., the northern part of al-Maḥallah al-Kubrā (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 297; Yāqūt 5:63).

²¹ The military garrison of the capital (*al-jund*), by that time a kind of praetorian guard that made and unmade governors seemingly at will, was undergoing a gradual transformation into a more and more Persian-dominated institution, and one can here sense the growing tension between the Arab and the Persian elements in it: Al-Sarīy came from Balkh and was therefore acceptable to the Khurāsānians, while the “Egyptians” would rather stick with the

down in his house in al-Ḥamrā' (in Fustāṭ), the Qays supplied him with a sizable contingent of their men, and (with these reinforcements) al-Sarīy then took on the Egyptians.

He defeated them and killed a number of them. Al-Muṭṭalib asked for safe-conduct, which was granted, and left Egypt, and al-Sarīy ibn al-Ḥakam made himself governor of Egypt on the first day of Ramaḍān (April 4, 816).

[14] After the Andalusians had killed 'Umar ibn Mallāk in Alexandria (in June 816), al-Jarawī marched on the city with fifty thousand men, whereupon al-Sarīy sent a military expedition against Tinnīs and al-Jarawī turned and retreated to Tinnīs in Muḥarram 201 (August 816).

In Rabi' I (October), when the military garrison of the capital revolted against al-Sarīy and pledged allegiance to Sulaymān ibn Ghālib, (the former governor) 'Abbad ibn Muḥammad rose against him and removed him from office, and 'Alī ibn Ḥamzah ibn Ja'far ibn Sulaymān ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd-Allāh b. 'Abbās took over as governor on the first of Sha'bān (February 23, 817).⁽²²⁾ But when 'Abbād refused to pledge allegiance to him, he joined al-Jarawī, and then Sulaymān ibn Ghālib, too, came over to al-Jarawī's side. And al-Sarīy became again governor of Egypt in Sha'bān, with strengthened powers.

In Muḥarram 202 (July/August 817), al-Sarīy received al-Ma'mūn's letter in which the caliph ordered him to pledge allegiance to his designated heir apparent, (the Shī'ite Imam) 'Alī ibn Mūsā (al-Kāẓim) al-Riḍā. And this was done in Egypt. At the same time, to

Arab al-Muṭṭalib.

^{22.} Sulaymān b. Ghālib, who a few years earlier had been *ṣāhib al-shurṭah*, was brought down, after a strife-ridden tenure of only five months, by the same forces that had brought him to power, the Khurāsānians, in alliance with the former governor 'Abbād b. Muḥammad. He eventually became one of al-Ma'mūn's generals and was sent by the caliph against the emerging Persian rebel Bābak (Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 2:168-69). 'Alī b. Ḥamzah was apparently the nominee of the *jund*, and not real governor—as suggested by Maqrīzī's account.

thwart the designation, Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdī rose (as counter-caliph) in Baghdad, and he wrote to the leaders of the Egyptian garrison, ordering them to declare al-Ma'mūn and his heir apparent deposed and to fall upon al-Sarīy. And that was done by al-Ḥārith ibn Zur'ah ibn Qaḥzam⁽²³⁾ in Fustāṭ by 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn al-Wazīr al-Jarawī in the Delta, and by Salāmah⁽²⁴⁾ ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Ṭahāwī al-Azdī in Upper Egypt, all of whom opposed al-Sarīy and had Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdī's name pronounced in the *khuṭbah*. As their leader in that rebellion they chose 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Azdī, whom al-Sarīy fought and defeated in Ṣafar (August/September 817). All who were loath to profess allegiance to 'Alī al-Riḍā now joined up with al-Jarawī because of the latter's impregnable position in Tinnīs and his great power. (Al-Jarawī) then marched on Alexandria and took possession of the city, and (Ibrāhīm's) name was thus pronounced from the pulpits there as well as in Upper Egypt. Next, he set out at the head of a large army to fight al-Sarīy. Each of them prepared to meet his opponent with the mightiest force he could muster. Al-Sarīy sent his son Maymūn against al-Jarawī and the two joined battle at Shaṭṭanawf, where Maymūn was killed in Jumādā I, 203 (November 818). Al-Jarawī then advanced with his boats (upriver) to Fustāṭ to burn it down. But the mosque officials came out and asked him to desist, and he left without inflicting any harm on the city.

[15] (Al-Jarawī) waged war against Alexandria several times. He was killed there, hit by a stone from his own mangonel, at the end of Ṣafar 205 (mid August 820). Al-Sarīy died three months later at the end of Jumādā I (November 11).

Al-Jarawī was succeeded after his death by his son 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Jarawī, who fought Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn al-Sarīy, the

²³ Al-Sarīy's former chief executive officer. His grandfather's name should probably read *Qaḥdham*.

²⁴ Thus in al-Kindī and Ibn Khallikān (*Wafayāt* 1:71). Wiet (apparently on the basis of Ibn Duqmāq 4:24): *Salamah*; Bulaq: *Maslamah*. —He is the grandfather of the renowned Ḥanafite jurist Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Azdī al-Ṭahāwī (d. 933).

governor of Egypt after his father's death, at Shaṭṭanawf. Later on, they had another encounter at Damanhūr. It is said that 7,000 men were killed on that day between the two sides. Ibn al-Sarīy was driven back to al-Fuṣṭāṭ, pursued by Ibn al-Jarawī's boats, which then returned home. Abū Ḥarmalah Faraj (al-Aswad) then intervened between them and they finally made peace. Ibn al-Sarīy died in Sha'bān 206 (January 822) and was succeeded as governor by his brother 'Ubayd-Allāh ibn al-Sarīy, who stayed clear of Ibn al-Jarawī.

(Meanwhile) al-Ma'mūn (had appointed) Khālīd ibn Yazīd ibn Mazyad al-Shaybānī⁽²⁵⁾ (governor and had) sent him with an army of Rabī'ah bedouins to Egypt. But 'Ubayd-Allāh ibn al-Sarīy refused to yield to him and opposed him, and they fought at Fāqūs. 'Alī ibn al-Jarawī joined the side of Khālīd ibn Yazīd, supplying him with food and other aid, and (Khālīd) advanced and attacked the entrenched position of 'Ubayd-Allāh ibn al-Sarīy (at Fuṣṭāṭ). The battle took place in Rabī' I 207 (August 822) (and Khālīd was driven off). There was more fighting between them after that and Khālīd, as a result, had to move up into the (Eastern) Ḥawf. Ibn al-Jarawī resented that and, by ruse and deceit, managed to get him to move out of his province to the western side of the Nile, where (Khālīd) camped at Nahyā,⁽²⁶⁾ while Ibn al-Jarawī withdrew to Tinnīs. Khālīd found himself now in a difficult position. In Ramaḍān (January/February 823), Ibn al-Sarīy mounted an expedition against (Khālīd) and, having captured him, forced him to leave Egypt by sea for Mecca.

Al-Ma'mūn now sent word that he was confirming 'Ubayd-Allāh ibn al-Sarīy as governor of the territory he controlled, namely, al-Fuṣṭāṭ, Upper Egypt and the western part of the country, and that

²⁵. He was appointed in 821 and served, after his unsuccessful attempt to assert himself against 'Ubayd-Allāh in Egypt, as governor of Mosul and Diyār Rabī'ah. He died 845 on al-Wāthiq's Armenian campaign. —The text has been emended, where needed, on the basis of the original source (al-Kindī, *Wulāh*, pp. 173-76).

²⁶. Cf. Ibn Mammātī 338; a vanished village on the site of modern-day *Kafr al-Abḥar* in the district of Talkhā (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:89-90).

he had appointed ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jarawī governor of Tinnīs and the Eastern Ḥawf, with the right to collect the land tax there. But when Ibn al-Jarawī actually began to collect the tax, the people of the Ḥawf put up resistance and wrote to Ibn al-Sarīy, asking him for military support against Ibn al-Jarawī, which the latter provided through his brother.

The two sides encountered at Bulqīnah⁽²⁷⁾ in the district of Banā (Abū Ṣīr) and fought a battle in Ṣafar 209 (June 824). The fighting continued between them until sometime in Rabī‘ I (July), with both sides coming out about even. Then Ibn al-Jarawī with his men withdrew to Damietta, and Ibn al-Sarīy advanced on Maḥallat Sharqīyyūn,⁽²⁸⁾ which he sacked. He sent expeditions against Tinnīs and Damietta and took possession of both, while Ibn al-Jarawī first made it to al-Faramā, then went from there to al-‘Arīsh, and finally camped in the area between al-‘Arīsh and Gaza. But then he returned and raided al-Faramā in Jumādā II (October). Ibn al-Sarīy’s men fled from Tinnīs, and Ibn al-Jarawī advanced on Shaṭṭanawf. Ibn al-Sarīy took the field against him and they engaged in battle, with Ibn al-Jarawī carrying the first part of the day. But then he was ambushed by Ibn al-Sarīy and lost the battle. That happened in Rajab (November). (Ibn al-Jarawī) then proceeded to al-‘Arīsh, while Ibn al-Sarīy advanced on Tinnīs and Damietta. Then, in Muḥarram 210 (May 825), Ibn al-Jarawī was on the offense (again) and took Tinnīs and Damietta without a fight. Ibn al-Sarīy subsequently sent several expeditions against him which Ibn al-Jarawī took on in battle.

While they were still engaged in all that, there suddenly arrived ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Ṭāhir on the scene. Ibn al-Jarawī received him with money and provisions and joined his side, and (‘Abd-Allāh)

²⁷ An ancient village, now belonging to the district of al-Maḥallah al-Kubrā (cf. Yāqūt 1:489; Ramzī, *Qāmūs* II, 2:19).

²⁸ The present-day *al-Maḥallah al-Kubrā* (cf. Yāqūt 5:63).

camped at Bilbays. Ibn al-Sarīy, however, (when invited to do likewise) refused and defied Ibn al-Jarawī.

The latter took his time to deal with ‘Ubayd-Allāh. He sent his agents into the countryside to collect taxes and, camping at Ziftā, sent ‘Īsā (ibn Yazīd) al-Jalūdī against Shaṭṭanawf over a causeway he had built from Ziftā. He put Ibn al-Jarawī, because of his familiarity with (river) warfare, in command of his ships, which had by now arrived from Syria,⁽²⁹⁾ and (Ibn al-Jarawī) defeated the river fleet of Ibn al-Sarīy in Muḥarram 211 (April/May 826).

[16] Ibn Ṭāhir made peace with ‘Ubayd-Allāh ibn al-Sarīy (a month later) in Ṣafar. He bestowed a robe of honor on him, gave him a present of 10,000 dinars, and told him to leave for al-Ma’mūn’s court.

[17] With ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Ṭāhir, the disorders and revolts in Egypt quieted down.

[18] In 377 (A.D. 987), a nanny goat in Tinnīs gave birth to a kid with several horns, its head connected directly to its chest and body, with white wool covering its front and black fur its rear part, and with the tail of a sheep. And a woman gave birth to a lamb (?)⁽³⁰⁾ with a round head, two hands and feet, and a tail.

On the 27th of Dhū ’l-Ḥijjah of that year (April 18, 988), there was in Tinnīs a thunderstorm accompanied by a strong wind and a tremendous blackness in the air. Then, at dawn, there appeared a column of fire in the sky and heaven and earth became suffused with the most intense red. And so much dust rose in the air that people almost suffocated. It took the sun four hours into daylight to become visible. This continued for five days.

²⁹. Where ‘Abd-Allāh b. Ṭāhir had settled a rebellion before coming to Egypt (Kindī, *Wulāh*, 179).

³⁰. Thus the Bulaq text: *salkhah*. Wiet has left a blank, since the mss. contain no recognizable alternative.

[19] In 332 (A. D. 944), a man and a woman appeared before the judge of Tinnīs, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Abī Dibs. The woman demanded that the man be told to perform his marital duty. “I married her five days ago,” the man contended, “and discovered that she has both what men and what women have.” The judge sent for a woman to look (the plaintiff) over, and she reported that the woman had indeed on her lower abdomen a penis with two testicles, and beneath them a vulva, the penis being uncircumcised, and that she had an awesome vagina.⁽³¹⁾ The husband divorced her.

[20] Abū ‘Umar al-Kindī reports: I was told by Abū Naṣr Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī, who said he was told by Yāsīn ibn ‘Abd al-Aḥad, who claimed to have heard his father say:

When ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Ṭāhir came to Fuṣṭāṭ, I was among those who paid him a visit. I said ⁽³²⁾(to Ibn Ṭāhir): “We were told by ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Lahī‘ah, from Abū Qabīl, from Tubay‘ (ibn ‘Āmir al-Ḥimyarī), who once said: ‘How will it be with you Egyptians when you have unrest and strife in your country and are governed at such a time first by a cripple, then by a choleric, then by a womanish youth, and then comes a man from al-Ḥusayn’s progeny, strong and unbendable, whose banners will stretch to the Green Sea, who will fill the country with justice?’ And now that has come to pass! There was unrest and strife, and the country was governed by al-Sarīy, who was the cripple; the choleric was his son Abū ‘l-Naṣr; the womanish youth was ‘Ubayd-Allāh ibn al-Sarīy; and you are ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Ṭāhir *ibn al-Ḥusayn!*”

[21] ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Ṭāhir then marched on Alexandria, put its house in order, and sent Ibn al-Jarawī on his way to the Iraq.

³¹ Suggested emendation: *wa-annahā rā’ī‘atu ‘l-ḥīrr*, for Wiet’s *rā’ī‘atu ‘l-khayr* (?).

³² Thus, clearer, in the original (Kindī, *Wulāh*, 182). Wiet/Bulaq: *fa-qāla*.

[22] Later,⁽³³⁾ in Dhū 'l-Ḥijjah 215 (January/February 831), the latter was brought back to Egypt by the Afshīn, who was under orders to reclaim from him the tax money he still possessed; if he turned it over to him, very well, if not, he should execute him. Since (Ibn al-Jarawī), in answer to the demand, did not pay him a penny, (the Afshīn) had him brought forth three days after the (ʿĪd) al-Adḥā (i.e., on February 1) and executed.

[23] In Jumādā II 219 (June/July 834),⁽³⁴⁾ Yaḥyā ibn al-Wazīr (al-Jarawī) revolted in Tinnīs. Al-Muẓaffar ibn Kaydar, the (new) governor of Egypt, moved against him, fought him in the lake area of Tinnīs, and took him prisoner. Yaḥyā's followers (of Lakhm and Judhām bedouins) dispersed.

[24] In 239 (A.D. 853/4), (the caliph) al-Mutawakkil ordered the construction of a fortress to guard the Nile at Tinnīs.⁽³⁵⁾ In charge of the project was ʿAnbasah ibn Ishāq, then governor of Egypt, who spent an enormous amount of money on it, as well as on the fortification of Damietta and al-Faramā.

[25] In 249, the lake of Tinnīs contained sweet water in summer and winter. Then it became salt again all year round. Before that time, it used to remain sweet for six months and salt for the other six.

[26] In 548 (A.D. 1153) came ships from Sicily and sacked Tinnīs.

[27] In 378 (A.D. 988), people caught at the mouth of Tinnīs⁽³⁶⁾ a whale 28 1/2 cubits long. Its head alone measured nine cubits in

³³ Text from al-Kindī (*Wulāh* 189).

³⁴ Text from al-Kindī (p. 194). —The revolt was in protest against al-Muʿtaṣim's order to have the Arabs stricken from the pension roster and their stipends cut off (cf. Pt. I, ch. 34, sect. 15).

³⁵ A Byzantine fleet of 300 ships had staged a devastating attack on Damietta the year before (Suyūṭī, *Husn*, 2:275-76). —Construction of these fortifications actually began nine years earlier (cf. n. 8 above).

³⁶ I.e., the Tanitic mouth in the sand bar sealing off Lake Manzalah from the Mediterranean northwest of Tall Tinnīs.

length, and the circumference of its belly and back was 15 cubits. The aperture of its mouth measured 29 spans, and its tail was 5 1/2 cubits wide. It had two front fins to paddle with, each three cubits long, was smooth, the color of dust, thick-skinned, and had black and white stripes on its belly. Its tongue was red, and in (its mouth) it had whalebone about one cubit long, from which one makes combs that look like mother-of-pearl. Its eyes were like the eyes of a cow. The emir of Tinnīs, Abū Ishāq Ibn Tawbah, had its belly slit open and (the carcass) salted with one hundred *irdabbs* of salt. Its upper haunch was propped up with a long wooden pole, and a man carrying salt baskets could walk inside its body cavity, erect and without bending down. It was taken to The Palace so that (the Fātimid caliph) al-ʿAzīz-bi-ʿllāh could see it.

[28] During the night of Friday, the 18th of Rabīʿ I, 379 (June 27, 989), the people of Tinnīs saw nine columns of fire blazing on the northern horizon. People went outside the town to pray to God, and the following morning those fires disappeared.

In the same year, people caught in the lake of Tinnīs a large fish one cubit long. Its front half had a head with two eyes and a neck, a chest like that of a lion, and the two front limbs protruding from its chest had claws. Its rear half had the shape of a fish without scales. It was taken to Cairo.

[29] In 377, a bondmaid gave birth to a baby girl with two heads, one of them with a light-skinned, round⁽³⁷⁾ face and the other with a dark-skinned, somewhat haggard one, each face having one neck over one body with two arms and legs, a vulva, and an anus. (The infant) was brought to (the caliph) al-ʿAzīz to see, who gave her mother some money. She then returned to Tinnīs, where she died a few months later.

³⁷ Thus the Bulaq text: *mustadīr*, which seems to fit the context best. Wiet's emendation *mutarrak* (III, 320, Add. et Corr.) to mean 'Turkified, Turkoid' does not conform with Arabic usage.

[30] In 571 (A. D. 1175/6), some forty galleys of the fleet of Sicily appeared before Tinnīs. They blockaded the town for two days and sailed away.

[31] Then, in 573, again some forty ships came to Tinnīs from Sicily, and (this time) they fought with the local garrison and eventually took the town. Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, the commander of the fleet, who found himself cut off from his ships, repaired with a band of Muslims to the oratory of Tinnīs and then, after nightfall, attacked with his men from⁽³⁸⁾ the town the Franks, who were taken by surprise. He captured 120 of them and had their heads chopped off. But the next morning the Franks moved in on the oratory and battled the Muslims there. Some 70 Muslims were killed and the survivors made off to Damietta. The Franks then turned on Tinnīs, which they put to the torch and burned down. Then they left, loaded with booty and captives, in the direction of Alexandria, after a stay of four days at Tinnīs.

[32] Later on, in 575, the Franks of Ascalon attacked the area of Tinnīs with ten fire ships, commanded by one of their men by the name of ...⁽³⁹⁾ who made quite a number of captives. Egypt was (at the time) governed by al-Malik al-ʿĀdil, (as vicegerent) appointed by his brother al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf when the latter went off to campaign in Syria. (The Frankish commander) then left, but he returned and plundered and made prisoners (again). At that point, the Muslims took up arms against him and fought him, and God gave them victory. They seized him, cut off his hands and feet, and crucified him.

[33] In 577 (A.D. 1181/2), the Sultan (Saladin) turned his attention to rebuilding the citadel of Tinnīs and refurbishing its war machines, at a time when the people of Tinnīs were living in ever

^{38.} Insert in both texts *min* before *al-balad*.

^{39.} It is not possible to ascertain the name, since the incident is mentioned nowhere else. The variants in the mss. lean toward *ʿl-f-r* and suggest a Western name beginning with Al-, perhaps Alfred.

greater fear of staying there.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The cost of rebuilding the old wall on its remaining foundations was estimated at 3,000 dinars in terms of supplies and mud bricks.

[34] In 588 (A.D. 1192), (Saladin) issued a written order to have Tinnīs evacuated and its population moved to Damietta. In Ṣafar (February/March), the town was cleared of dependents and movable property (of the garrison) and only the fighting men in its citadel were left behind.

[35] In Shawwāl 624 (September/October 1227), al-Malik alKāmil Muḥammad ibn al-ʿĀdil Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb ordered the town of Tinnīs to be razed to the ground.

[36] It used to be an important town, where sharp garments were made, and where the *kiswah* for the Kaaba was manufactured.

[37] In the *Meccan Chronicles*, al-Fākihī reports:

I saw a *kiswah*, right next to the western corner—meaning, of the Kaaba—bearing the inscription:

As ordered by al-Sariy ibn al-Ḥakam and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn al-Wazīr al-Jarawī, at the behest of al-Faḍl ibn Sahl Dhū ʿl-Riʿasatayn and Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn. Anno 197.⁽⁴¹⁾

And I saw a piece of Egyptian *qabāṭī* material in the center (of the *kiswah*); someone, however, had written in the corners of the field in a delicate black hand:

As ordered by the Caliph al-Maʿmūn. Anno 206.

And I saw a *kiswah* of al-Mahdī, bearing the inscription:

In the name of God. God's blessing on the servant of God al-Mahdī Muḥammad, the Commander of the Faithful, may God prolong his life. As

⁴⁰ In the *Sulūk* (I, 1:72), Maqrīzī reports another Frankish raid on Tinnīs in July/August of that year.

⁴¹ In 197/813, the two arch-rivals in Egypt, al-Sariy and al-Jarawī, were still colonels in the army of governor ʿAbbād b. Muḥammad. (Abū ʿl-Abbās) al-Faḍl b. Sahl (d. 818) was al-Maʿmūn's vizier, and Ṭāhir, of course, is the famed general (cf. n. 12). —None of the quotations here and in sect. 46 can be found in the *Akhbār Makkah*.

ordered by Ismāʿil ibn Ibrāhīm to be made in Tinnīs brocade by al-Ḥakam ibn ʿUbaydah. Anno 162.

I also saw a *kiswah* in Egyptian *qabāṭī* material with the inscription:

In the name of God. God's blessing. By orders of the servant of God al-Mahdī Muḥammad, the Commander of the Faithful, may God render him prosperous, to Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān to have the *kiswah* of the Kaaba made in the brocade of Tinnīs by al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Maslamah, his agent. Anno 159.

[38] Among the events of the year 384 (A.D. 994), al-Musabbiḥ reports: In Dhū 'l-Qa'dah (December) arrived Yaḥyā ibn al-Yamān from Tinnīs, Damietta and al-Faramā with his tribute, consisting of baskets, chests, money boxes, horses, mules, donkeys, three parasols, and two *kiswahs* for the Kaaba.

[39] In Dhū 'l-Ḥijjah 402 (July 1012) arrived the annual tribute of Tinnīs, among other things: five she-camels with accoutrements, one hundred horses complete with saddles and bridles, several armor paddings and gold and silver ornaments, three *dabīqī* mantles with insignia of rank, flags and banners, plus the prescribed quantities of utensils, money and dry goods.

[40] After the disappearance of (the Fāṭimid caliph) al-Ḥakim, his sister, the Lady Sayyidat al-Mulk, demanded in her brother's name from the tax collector of Tinnīs that he transfer posthaste previously collected tax money. The amount is said to have been one million dinars and two million dirhams, which had accumulated over a period of three years from the town's revenue, and which al-Ḥakim had ordered to be left with the tax agent. The money was delivered to her, and with it she financed her intrigues.

[41] In 415 (A.D. 1024), it was reported to the (Fāṭimid) caliph al-Zāhir-li-ʿi-zāz-dīni-'llāh Abū Ḥāshim 'Alī ibn al-Ḥakimbi-amri-'l-lāh that the Sudanese and other troops were in revolt in Tinnīs. They demanded their pay and had given the tax agent such a rough time that he had to flee. (The report said) that they were causing havoc in town, were stealing from the people, engaged in banditry, and had taken 1,500 dinars from the public treasury. (The vizier

Ṣafīy al-Dīn Abū ‘Alī) al-Jarjārā’ī was very much upset and exclaimed, “How can anyone do this to the royal treasury! It makes no difference whether this was done in Tinnīs, or to the central treasury!” He dispatched fifty horse to arrest the evildoers.

[42] Tinnīs continued to be a thriving town, unmatched in beauty and solidity of construction by any other town in Egypt, until it was completely destroyed by orders of al-Malik al-Kāmil Muḥammad ibn al-‘Ādil Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb in 624 (A.D. 1227). It has remained waste, and nothing is left of it but its vestiges in the middle of the lake.

[43] Būrā and its *munyaḥs*, Abwān,⁽⁴²⁾ and Shaṭā were part of the prefecture of Tinnīs.

Nowadays one catches fish in the lake of Tinnīs. It has little depth and can be crossed on punts. Two ships may meet, one going up and the other down, under one and the same wind, each with full sails and both moving with equal speed.

[44] In the middle of the lake are several islands known today as *al-Uzab*—which is the plural of *‘uzbah*—that are inhabited by a group of fishermen. On some of them are salinas from which one obtains a pleasant, mild-tasting salt. The water of the lake is (normally) salt, but it may turn sweet during the time of the Nile’s rise.

[45] Tūnah

Part of the tax district of Tinnīs used to be a village called *Tūnah*,⁽⁴³⁾ where the *ṭirāz* of Tinnīs was made and where sometimes the *kiswah* for the Kaaba was woven, using this kind of brocaded embroidery.

⁴² A vanished community of mostly Christian craftsmen on Lake Manzalah (Yāqut 1:80; Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 19); its relative adjective is *būnī*.

⁴³ Coptic *Thoni*, once a fishing and manufacturing community famed for its cotton and silk fabrics. It was located on the present-day island of *Sidi Abdallah Ben Salām*, 2 1/2 miles east of al-Maṭariyyah in Lake Manzalah (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 198).

[46] Al-Fākihi reports: I also saw a *kiswah* of Hārūn al-Rashīd, made of Egyptian *qabāṭī* material and bearing the inscription:

In the name of God. God's blessing on the Rightly Guided Caliph, the servant of God Hārūn, the Commander of the Faithful, may God honor him. Made, as ordered, by al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabī' in the brocaded embroidery of Tūnah in the year 190.

[47] Sumannāy

A village of Tinnīs which was overwhelmed by the lake of Tinnīs and became an island.⁽⁴⁴⁾

In Rabī' I 837 (October/November 1433), when stones and mud bricks were cleared away, people discovered numerous glazed pottery sherds, some of them inscribed with the name of the Imam al-Mu'izz-li-dīni-'llāh, others bearing the name of the Imam al-'Azīz-bi-'llāh Nizār, still others that of al-Ḥākim-bi-amri-'llāh, some inscribed with the name of the Imam al-Zāhir-li-i'zāz-dīni-'llāh, and still others—and these were the most numerous—bearing the name of al-Mustanṣir. This I was told by someone who saw them with his own eyes.

[48] Būrā

It was located in the area between Tinnīs and Damietta.⁽⁴⁵⁾ From it is derived the name of the fish called *būrī* (gray mullet). From there also hails the al-Būrī clan, whose members used to live in Cairo and Alexandria.

⁴⁴ This community, once famous for its silk fabrics, was located on the present-day island of *Kōm al-Dhahab* in Lake Manzalah 7 miles east of Fāriskūr (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 281: *Sunannāh*). — Ibn Duqmāq (5:78) lists it as Sunnāwah.

⁴⁵ More commonly spelled *Būrah*. This once important fishing town halfway between Fāriskūr and Damietta on the right bank of the Damietta arm of the Nile has been known since Ottoman times as *Kafr al-Baṭṭikh*, obviously so named after its main crop to this day—watermelons. Yāqūt mentions, aside from the fish, turbans as its other claim to fame. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 176 ff.; II, 2:78; Baedeker, *Egypt*¹, 175.

[49] In 610 (A.D. 1213), the enemy came with his galleys to Būrā, and captured the town, but when the troops garrisoned in Rosetta arrived, the enemy withdrew from it.

[50] Al-Qays

A community after which the *qaysī* garments are named. Its remnants are still visible today on the sea coast between al-Sawādah⁽⁴⁶⁾ and al-Warrādah. Its distance from the town of al-Faramā is close to six *barīds* (90 miles) overland.

There is a large sand hill there jutting out into the Syrian Sea, where the Franks used to intercept passing travelers. In the vicinity of that hill is a salt marsh where salt is produced which the Arab nomads take to Gaza and al-Ramlah (in Palestine). Close to that salt marsh are wells near which melons and cucumbers are grown for the bedouins living in that steppe region.

⁴⁶ Qalqashandī (*Ṣubḥ*, 14:378) mentions it as a place on the postal route from Fuṣṭāṭ to Gaza between al-Muṭaylib and al-Warrādah.

20. The City of Saïs

[1] Ibn Waṣīf Shāh relates: After Qubṭīm son of Miṣrāyim had divided the land among Ashmūn, Atrīb, Qifṭ and Šā, each of them moved to his respective share and territory. And Šā with his wife and children and servants set out for his new possession, namely, the land of the Buḥayrah and of Alexandria, and eventually got as far as Barqah. He settled in the city of Saïs⁽¹⁾ before Alexandria was built.

Šā was the youngest of his father's sons and the one dearest to him. After he had taken possession of his assigned territory, he gave orders to attend to its colonization, the building of towns and villages and temples, and the creation of wondrous things, the way his brothers had done. Only, he wanted more of the same.

So Marhūn the Indian,⁽²⁾ who was his minister, built for him all the way from Saïs to Lūbiyah and Marāqiyah towers along the sea coast, and on top of these he mounted mirrors made of various magic substances: Some of them were designed to ward off sea monsters and their evil, others, when struck by the sun, would cast its rays on the ships of an enemy approaching from the Isles (of the Gentiles) and set them on fire, still others would show the cities on

^{1.} Arabic Šā [from Copt. Sa, Egyptian (secular) *Saw* (sacred *Hat Neit* 'Palace of the goddess Neit')], or sometimes *Šā al-Buḥayrah*. It was the capital of the 5th nome of Lower Egypt in pharaonic times. From Saïs began the recovery and unification of Lower Egypt by pharaoh Bekenranf (Bokchoris), son of Tefnakhte, Prince of Saïs and Memphis, of the 24th dynasty. Under the 26th dynasty (663-525 B.C.), Saïs was the capital of Egypt, unified for the last time by pharaoh Psametik (Psammetichos) I (663-609). — Ibn Ḥawqal in the 10th century describes it as "a town with a cathedral mosque, numerous churches, a magistrate (*ḥākim*), deputy governor (*sultān*), markets, and a bathhouse; there is also the spring known as "Ayn Mūsā' (Moses' Spring) where he is said to have been imprisoned" (Beirut ed., p. 134). — The name of the village *Šā al-Hagar* (district of Kafr al-Zayyāt, Sharbiyyah) south of its insignificant ruins dates from the Ottoman period. Cf. Ramzi, *Qāmūs*, II, 2:126.

^{2.} So all texts: *al-Hindī*. It should probably be *al-handasī* 'the architect' (cf. Wiet's n. 8: *al-muhandis* in *Merveilles*).

the opposite shore and what the people there were doing, and still others through which he could overlook the region of Egypt and find out which part of it would be fertile that year and which would have a drought.

In (the city of Saïs) he built self-lighting baths and constructed belvederes and promenades, and he would spend every day in one or the other place of them with his immediate servants and his retinue. Around the city he laid out parks in which he released song-birds and tamed animals, and which contained continuous canals and pleasant flower gardens. The battlements of his palaces he made of multicolored stones that would flash when struck by the sun and diffuse its rays over the surrounding area. Whatever the amenity and means of comfort, he would make use of it.

The cultivated land used to extend from the sand flats of Rosetta and Alexandria all the way to Barqah. A man could travel in Egypt without needing provisions, thanks to the abundance of fruits and other good things, and he would travel at all times in shade shielding him from the heat of the sun. (King Ša) had solid houses built in those (former) deserts, and trees planted, and canals led there from the Nile. One used to be able to travel from the west bank (of the Nile) all the way to the West through uninterrupted cultivated land. And when those people died out, their relics remained in those deserts, after those dwellings had fallen into ruin and their inhabitants had vanished forever. People who penetrated those deserts still tell of the remains and the wonders they saw.

[2] The author of the present book would like to add: I was told by a reliable source, who heard it from someone who had visited the city of Saïs and had walked around in its ruins: "He found a mud brick three spans long. He picked it up and began to contemplate it. Then he broke it apart, and there, inside, was an ear of grain the size of an ample span, (as fresh) as if it had just been reaped. He rubbed it in his hands and out fell large white wheat

kernels, each easily as big as a bean. He ate them all and discovered that they had not spoiled at all."

[3] And someone else visited Saïs shortly before 790 and carried away a mud brick one and a half cubits long and a cubit wide. He broke it apart, and there, inside, was an ear of wheat, each of its grains the size of the largest chick peas. He was unable to break the wheat open until he crushed it with rocks.

[4] People found there also a small idol, one finger long. One day it was accidentally dropped into a water jar and the water turned to wine. The idol came into the possession of a man from Tinnīs, who did very well thereafter by selling the wine. Emir al-Awḥad, lord of Tinnīs at the time, sent for the man and kept working on him until he got the idol.

21. The Ghurābī Desert

[1] One should know that this sand desert extends all across the Earth. Some⁽¹⁾ call it *al-Raml al-Habīr*.

Longitudinally, (it extends) from beyond the two mountains of Ṭayyī'⁽²⁾ until it reaches, in an easterly direction, the sea (the Persian Gulf). (Westward) it runs from beyond the two mountains of Ṭayyī' to Egypt, then to Nubia, and (then) extends (all the way across North Africa) to the Surrounding Sea over a distance of five months' travel. One branch of it runs from al-Qādisiyyah to al-Baḥrayn and beyond, then passes over the eastern parts of Khūzistān and Fārs until it reaches Sijistān, whence it continues eastward to Marw, following the course of the Oxus River through the Khwārizm steppe, and then continues across the land of the Kharlukh⁽³⁾ (and part of Tibet) in an easterly direction all the way to China and the Surrounding Sea, thus being the way I described it and traveled it myself from the Ocean in the east to the Ocean in the west.

In some parts of it are massive hills of little elevation, other parts run over level terrain where one moves easily from place to place. Some of its sands are yellow and soft to the touch, others blood-

^{1.} Such as Ibn Ḥawqal, from whom this passage is taken (*BGA* IV, p. 30, Beirut ed., p. 42). —The name *Raml al-Ghurābī* derives from *al-Ghurābī*, a way station in the northern Sinai between Habwah and Qaṭyā on the postal route from Fuṣṭāṭ to Gaza, mentioned by Qalqashandī (*Ṣubḥ* 14:377-8). —The adjective *habīr* applies to terrain fringed by hillocks or sand dunes.

^{2.} *Aja'* and *Salmā*, two mountains of the Jabal Shammar range west of Fayḍ, on the southern edge of the Nafūd sand desert; cf. Yāqūt 1:94 (where the romantic legend behind their names is told) and 3:238.

^{3.} *Bilād al-Khazlajīyyah*, as also in Ibn Khaldūn's *Ibar* (cf. *The Muqaddimah*, transl. Rosenthal, 1:103, n. 38). On the Turkic people of the Kharlukh: Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-'ālam*, 268 ff.; *The Muqaddimah*, 1:338, 149; al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-bilād*, 548.

red, sky-blue, pitch-black, deep-blue as the Nile, or white as snow; some are as fine as dust, others coarse and gritty to the touch.

[2] Someone has claimed that the Ghurābī desert with the adjoining region from al-‘Arīsh to the area of al-‘Abbāsah is of recent origin.

[3] A story with a useful lesson has been told about the cause of its existence, namely: Shaddād son of Haddād son of Shaddād son of ‘Ād, one of the ‘Ādite kings, came to Egypt, defeated with his mighty armies the king of Egypt, Ashmun son of Miṣr son of Bayṣar son of Ham son of Noah, and destroyed what the latter and his forefathers had built. He then built his own pyramids and erected towers on which he put magic inscriptions. He laid out the site of Alexandria and remained there for a long time, until he and his people were hit by an epidemic. Whereupon (the ‘Ādites) left Egypt for the Wādī al-Qurā in the region between Medina and Syria.

There they built arenas and basins for trapping the water that gathered from rains and torrents, each basin one square mile in capacity. They planted date palms and other trees and raised all sorts of crops in the region between Rāyah⁽⁴⁾ and Aylah all the way to the western sea (the Red Sea). Their camp grounds extended from al-Dafīnah⁽⁵⁾ all the way to al-‘Arīsh and the Jifār on a plain with perennial springs, fruit-bearing trees, and numerous fields. In that land they remained for a long, long time. But in the end they became wicked and unjust and arrogant and tyrannical, boasting, “We are the strongest, the toughest, the greatest conquerors!” Whereupon God released a wind upon them which destroyed them and reduced their basins and homes to sand.

⁴ A place in Hudhayl territory (Yāqūt 3:22 b, last line).

⁵ All texts: *al-D-th-nah*, for which no evidence can be found. According to Yāqūt (2:458), al-Dafīnah is a place in Sulaym territory. It is mentioned as a way station between Faljah and Qubā by Ibn Khurradādhbih (*BGA* VI, 146, 190). Cf. also ch. 79 (sect. 2), where the Bulaq text has its alternate form *al-Dathinah*. — On the *Jifār* see ch. 28.

[4] The sand flats one sees in the region of the Jifār in the area from al-‘Abbāsah, where there is the way station known today as al-Ṣālīḥiyyah,⁽⁶⁾ all the way to al-‘Arīsh have their origin in the sand of the ‘Ādites’ basins and their rock detritus, after God had caused them to perish from that wind and had destroyed them completely.

One should beware of disbelieving that because it seems so strange, for there is a passage in the Koran which attests to the truth of it, namely, where the Lord says, “*And also in Ad, when: We loosed against them the withering wind that left nothing it came upon, but made it as stuff decayed*”⁽⁷⁾—that is to say, (the last word *ka-’l-ramīm* means) ‘like something that has died and rotted away;’ some have said that *ramīm* means vegetation when it has dried out and is trodden underfoot, others have maintained that it means dry leaves reduced to debris resembling chaff, (and still others) that *ramīm* is the decayed residue of any thing.

[5] Marāqiyah

The town of Marāqiyah (was the seat of) one of the western districts of Egypt and (marked) the farthest point of Egyptian territory. On the far end of the area of Marāqiyah one comes to the region of Pentapolis, which is identical with Barqah. Its distance from the town of Santariyyah (Siwah) is about two *barīds* (30 miles). It used to be a large region with many date palms and fields, and with perennial springs. There are remnants there to this day. The fruit grown there is of extremely good quality, and of a crop seeded there, a hundred ears grow from every seed grain of wheat, or ninety at the least. The same applies to rice, which is of excellent quality and pure. To this day there are still a number of garden plantations there.

[6] In ancient times, Marāqiyah was inhabited by the Berbers, whom David, peace be upon him, had banished from Palestine.

⁶ See ch. 23.

⁷ Koran 51 (The Scatterers):41-42.

Several of their tribes then camped in the area of Marāqiyah, and from there the Berbers later dispersed: the Zanātah, Mughilah and Ḍarīсах making their camp grounds in the mountains, the Lawātah in the Cyrenaica, and the Hawwārah in (the area of) Tripoli. Subsequently the Berbers spread all the way to the Sous.⁽⁸⁾

[7] In Shawwāl 304 A.H. (April 917), the people of Lūbiyah and Marāqiyah evacuated (their towns and moved) to Alexandria, for fear of the lord of Barqah.

[8] (The town) continued to be in disorder until it ceased to exist in our own time. (Still) there are some well-preserved remnants there (even) after that.

[9] Kōm Sharīk

This place lies in the vicinity of Alexandria⁽⁹⁾ and is mentioned in the early chronicles. It was named after Sharīk ibn Sumayy ibn ‘Abd Yaghūth ibn Jaz’ al-Murādī al-Ghuṭayfī, one of the Companions—God be pleased with them. He commanded the vanguard of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ during the second (*sic*) conquest of Alexandria, and when the Roman troops became too many, Sharīk with his men withdrew to that mound and fought off the Romans until ‘Amr was able to link up with him.

[10] This Kōm Sharīk belongs to the Ḥawf Ramsīs.

[11] Ghayfah⁽¹⁰⁾

⁸. I.e., *al-Sūs al-Aqṣā*, “an area in the West called by the Greeks *Qanūniyah*” (Yāqūt 3:281), in other words, the hinterland of Tangier (cf. *al-Sūs al-Aqṣā* by J. Ruska in *EF*), as distinguished from *al-Sūs al-Adnā*, i.e., Sousse (in Tunisia), the ancient Hadrametum.

⁹. Actually, the old village of Kōm Sharīk (now, district of Kōm Ḥamadāh, Buḥayrah) is closer to al-Fuṣṭāṭ (76 miles) than to Alexandria (102 miles). But because of its role during the Muslim advance on Alexandria in 641, early chroniclers associated it with that city, an error uncritically adopted by Maqrīzī. —It is not clear what sections 9 through 13 have to do with a chapter on the Ghurābī desert.

¹⁰. Thus, correctly in the Bulaq edition, as also Ibn Mammātī (*Qawānīn* 165), Yāqūt (4:221), Ibn al-Jī‘ān (*Tuhfah* 37): *Ghayfah*. Wiet, anachronistically, gives its modern name Ghaytā, which is no older than the Ottoman period. Cf.

Ghayfah is a village located close to the town of Bilbays. The distance to it from al-Fuṣṭāṭ is two day's journeys. It used to be a way station of the pilgrimage caravan.

[12] It is said that the king's goblet that was missing from the city of Miṣr⁽¹¹⁾ was found in the baggage of Joseph's brothers, peace be upon him, in this Ghayfah.

[13] Samannūd⁽¹²⁾

There used to be a temple (at Samannūd) on top of which was the likeness of a shield with an inscription on it.

[14] Ibn Zūlāq relates from one Abū 'l-Qāsim Ma'mūn al-'Adl that the latter copied that inscription on a piece of papyrus and then painted it on a shield. "As soon as I faced someone with it," said (Abū 'l-Qāsim), "that man would turn and flee."

[15] There were also statues and effigies of the rulers of Egypt there, among them people wearing skullcaps and carrying lances, bearing the inscription: These men rule Egypt.

Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 1:103.

^{11.} Genesis 44:1-12; Koran 12 (Joseph):72.

^{12.} The town is located on the Damietta arm of the Nile some five miles from al-Maḥallah al-Kubrā, near the scanty ruins of ancient *Sebennytos* (Eg. *Zeb-nuter* 'sacred land'), capital of the 30th dynasty (378-332 B.C.) and birthplace of Manetho the Priest (cf. ch. 3, n. 46).

22. The Town of Bilbays

[1] In the Torah it is called “the land of Goshen.”⁽¹⁾ It is there that Jacob camped on his way to see his son Joseph, peace be upon both. Joseph then made his father settle in the land of Goshen, which is Bilbays (and the area) toward al-‘Alāqimah, on account of their herds and flocks.

[2] Ibn Sa‘īd⁽²⁾ reports: As far as Bilbays extends the authority of (the governor of Egypt, and beyond) to al-Warrādah, which is the farthest point on Egyptian soil. Up to Bilbays, commercial transactions are handled in common silver and (from there onward) people deal in copper coins. Beyond (al-Warrādah one reaches) al-‘Arish, which marks the beginning of Syria or, according to others, the end of Egypt.

[3] Abū ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī states: *Balbays*, with *a* after the first consonant, a vowelless second, followed by *bā’* again and a quiescent *yā’*, and then *sīn*: a well-known place in the vicinity of Miṣr.

[4] And Ibn Khuradādhbih mentions in his *Book of Routes and Countries* that the distance between Bilbays and the city of Fustāt-Miṣr is 24 miles.

[5] It is related by al-Wāqidi⁽³⁾ that the Muqawqis gave his daughter Armanūsah in marriage to Constantine, Heraclius’ son.

¹ Bilbays (Copt. *Phelbes*, Greek *Biblos*) is located on the edge of the Arabian Desert some twenty miles southwest of al-Tall al-Kabīr (on the ruins of ancient *Pithom*), where the Wādī al-Ṭumilāt, believed to be the location of *Eretz Goshen* (Gen. 45:10, etc.), begins. In the Arabic translation of the Pentateuch, “the land of Goshen” is indeed rendered as *al-Sadīr*—Wādī al-Sadīr being the older name of the Wādī al-Ṭumilāt. —The village of *al-‘Alāqimah* (now belonging to the district of Hihyā), founded in the early Islamic period, is named after the Arab ‘Alāqimah tribe, who had their camp grounds there (cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 1:115).

² Nūr al-Din Abū ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Mūsā, Hispano-Arab poet, anthologist, historian and geographer (1214-1268); cf. “Ibn Sa‘īd al-Maghribī” (Ch. Pellat) in *EP*.

³ *Al-Maghāzī*, ed. von Kremer, pp. 19-20. Cf. also Butler, *Arab Conquest*, 216, n. 2.

He provided her with her trousseau of money, servant girls, pages and servants so that she could go to her husband and have the marriage consummated in the city of Caesarea on the Syrian littoral. But when she learned after her departure that the Arabs had launched an attack on Caesarea and were besieging the city, she went back to Bilbays and established her residence there. She then sent her grand chamberlain with two thousand knights to al-Faramā (with orders) to guard the road and let no one, Romans or other, cross over into Egypt. The Muqawqis (in turn) sent his messengers to his country's border areas with Syria (with instructions) not to let any one enter Egypt, for fear that such persons might talk about the Muslim conquest of Syria and dismay might strike the hearts of his soldiers.

[6] After 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb had come to al-Jābiyah,⁽⁴⁾ and while 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ was advancing on Babylon, the latter attacked Bilbays, where Armanūsah, the daughter of the Muqawqis, lived. In the battles with its Roman garrison, he killed close to a thousand knights and took three thousand prisoner; the survivors fled in defeat to join the Muqawqis. Armanūsah with all her property was captured, and so was everything the Copts in Bilbays possessed. 'Amr, who wanted to be obliging to the Muqawqis, later sent his daughter Armanūsah with full honors and with all her property to him, escorted by Qays ibn Abī 'l-Āṣ al-Sahmī, and the Muqawqis was delighted when she arrived. 'Amr then advanced on the Qasr (al-Shama' of Babylon).

[7] (Bilbays) continued to be one of the major towns of Egypt, so that Amalric (I), King of the Franks, attacked and took the city by force after a long siege (in 1169),⁽⁵⁾ killing thousands of its population.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32. —The fighting took place in February/March 640 and lasted for over a month. The fall of Bilbays opened the way for the Muslim advance on Babylon (cf. Butler, *Arab Conquest*, 215-6). —The Companion Qays b. Abī 'l-Āṣ was the first *qāḍī* of Miṣr. He died in 644 (Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, 3:243).

⁵ See Pt. IV, ch. 3, sect. 19.

[8] The town has a long history. Ever since the events in Egypt following the year 806 (A.D. 1403/4), it has fallen into decay and ruin. Yet we remember seeing it in our youth full of life and activity, containing a number of garden plantations, its population prosperous and living in superb comfort.

23. The Community of al-Warrādah

[1] Al-Warrādah is part of the Jifār.

[2] ‘Ubayd-Allāh ibn ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Khurradādhbih says in his *Book of Routes and Countries, with a Description of the Earth*:⁽¹⁾ The road from al-Ramlah to Azdūd is 12 miles, from there to Gaza 20 miles, [then to Rafaḥ 16 miles,] from there to al-‘Arīsh 24 miles through sand desert, then to al-Warrādah 18 miles, [from there to al-Thumāmah 18 miles,] then to al-‘Udhayb 20 miles, and from there to al-Faramā 24 miles; as the Caliph al-Ma’mūn has said:

Indeed, your nights spent in the field
seemed shorter than Pelusian nights.
A stranger finds in Egypt’s towns
much cause for worry and distress.

Then to Gurgīr it is 30 miles, from there to al-Qāṣīrah⁽²⁾ 24 miles, then to Maṣjīd Quḍā’ah 18 miles, from there to Bilbays 21 miles, and finally to al-Fuṣṭāṭ, the capital of Egypt, 24 miles.

[3] The compiler of the *History of Damietta* reports: After the conquest of Damietta and Tinnīs, when the Muslims had taken al-Faramā, they advanced first on al-Buqqārah, whose people became Muslims, and from there on al-Warrādah. Thus the population of the town, as well as of the surrounding area toward Ascalon, was now under Muslim rule.

[4] Among the events of Muḥarram 567 (September 1171), al-Qaḍī al-Faḍīl reports: We made al-Warrādah in the morning and spent the night off its harbor, and then we entered the town. I no-

^{1.} BGA VI, p. 80. — Passages in square brackets are restored from the original.

^{2.} In the original: *al-Ghāḍīrah*. Ramzī Bey thinks it is the same as Yāqūt’s *al-Qawāṣīr* (4:411) and Maqrīzī’s *al-Quṣayr* (*Khīṭaṭ* 2:301) and identifies it with modern-day *al-Ga’āfirah* in the district of Fāqūs (*Qāmūs*, II, 1:111).

ticed that the date on its congregational mosque was 408 (A.D. 1017), and the name of al-Ḥākim-bi-amri-'llāh was inscribed on it.⁽³⁾

[5] Al-Warrādah is part of the Jifār. Its name is said to be derived from *wurūd* 'arrival.' Its congregational mosque continued to be full of people, and Friday prayers were conducted there, until past 700 (A.D. 1301).⁽⁴⁾

The old community of al-Warrādah lies to the east of the way station which today is called "al-Warrādah;" there are the relics of former life and activity there, and a few date palms.

[6] Al-Ṣālihiyyah.

This small community was laid out by al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb ibn al-Kāmil Muḥammad ibn al-ʿĀdil Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb ibn Shādhī in the area of al-Sāyih⁽⁵⁾ and al-ʿAlāqimah at the beginning of the sand desert between Egypt and Syria. He had solid houses, a mosque and a market built there, intending it to be a rest-and-recovery station for the troops coming out of the sand desert. That was in 644 (A.D. 1246). He (himself) stopped there.

³ Not much later, Yāqūt, who traveled the route repeatedly, describes the place as a station on the way to Egypt from Syria surrounded by sand and sea water, with a market and dwellings for people living on handouts (*mutaʿayyishūn*), a small mosque, and a cote for carrier pigeons... In the old days, it was a sizable town with a bazaar, a cathedral mosque and several inns... but nowadays it is the way we described it: it lies among desolate sand hills." (*Muʿjam* 5:369-70).

⁴ This can hardly be the large mosque al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil and Yāqūt referred to, but seems to be the mosque built by the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl (1290-1294) "out on the road as a night shelter for travelers," next to which Fakhr al-Dīn Kātib al-Mamālik then added an inn (Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 14:378, citing al-ʿUmari's *Taʿrīf*). —Ramzī has located al-Warrādah on the site of modern-day *Maḥaṭṭat al-Mazār*, about 61 miles east of al-Qanṭarah, in the northern Sinai (*Qāmūs*, I, 125).

⁵ The area on either side of the Saʿīdiyyah canal in the district of Fāqūs, its name deriving from its function as a catchment basin (*sāʾih*); cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 68. —Wiet: *al-Sāniḥ*; Bulaq: *al-Masāniḥ*.

24. The Town of Aylah

[1] Ibn Ḥabīb⁽¹⁾ mentioned that *Uthāl* is (the name of) the wadi of Aylah.

[2] Aylah⁽²⁾—on the pattern *Fa'Lah*—is a town on the seashore between (Fusṭāṭ) Miṣr and Mecca. It was named after Aylah, the daughter of Madyan, the son of Abraham, peace be upon him.

[3] At Aylah begins the Hejaz. It used to be a town of great importance on the seacoast, with much commercial activity and a mixed population. In ancient times it marked the farthest point of the Roman Empire. One mile outside town is a vaulted gate in honor of some emperor which had served as a border post for collecting customs. Aylah and Jerusalem are six day's journeys apart, and from the mountain on which God spoke to Moses, peace be upon him, it is a day's and a night's journey to Aylah.

Under Muslim rule it was (at first) a camp ground of the Banū Umayyah, most of them clients of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, who supplied the pilgrims with water. (Later) there was much learning and literary activity in that town, as well as thriving businesses and markets, and it had many palm groves and fields. One cannot ascend the steep mountain road leading to Aylah on horseback, (although) it was improved by Fā'iḳ, the freeman of Khumārawayh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭulūn, who leveled its road bed and repaired the

^{1.} Abū Ja'far Muḥammad, Baghdadi philologist, authority on tribal dialects, poetry and folklore, died 860. Cf. Suyūṭī, *Bughyah*, 1:73; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, 6:473. — On *Uthāl* as the name of numerous other places, Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, 1:89-90.

^{2.} Text from al-Bakrī (*al-Masālik wa-'l-mamālik*, I, 135). — Aylah is the Biblical *Elath* (Deut. 2:8; 1 Kings 9:26, etc.) near King Solomon's naval outlet on the Red Sea, Ezion-geber, but not identical with the latter (see last sentence in sect. 17 below). The town was destroyed by an earthquake in 1024 A.D. It was replaced by a former part of it, *Aqabat Aylah*, or al-'Aqabah for short, with which it is often identified.

parts of it that needed repair. Aylah used to have numerous mosques.

In the town live a great many Jews. They claim to possess the mantle of the Prophet, peace and blessings on him, which he allegedly sent to them as a token of protection. They used to produce it—a precious outer garment wrapped in pieces of cloth, of which only the length of one span was actually visible.

[4] Aylah is said to be the community referred to by God Exalted in His Glorious Scripture, when He says, “*And question them concerning the township which was bordering the sea, when they transgressed the Sabbath, when their fish came to them on the day of their Sabbath, swimming shoreward, but on the day they kept not Sabbath, they came not unto them. Even so We are trying them for their ungodliness.*”⁽³⁾

There have been different opinions (however) as to the identity of that ‘township.’ Ibn (al-)‘Abbās, God be pleased with him, ‘Ikrimah,⁽⁴⁾ and al-Suddī say that it is *Aylah*. But there is also a tradition from Ibn (al-)‘Abbās (saying) that it is a town between Aylah and al-Ṭūr. According to (Ibn Shihāb) al-Zuhārī, it is *Tiberias*. And Qatādah (ibn Di‘āmah) and Zayd ibn Aslam maintain that it is a coastal town on the Syrian littoral between Madyan and ‘Aynūnah, called *Maqnāh*.⁽⁵⁾

When al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Faḍl was asked if he could find in the Book of God (a passage to illustrate the saying) ‘That which is lawful never comes but as steady sustenance, the forbidden comes haphazardly in unknown quantity,’ he replied, “Yes, indeed, in the story of

³ Koran 7 (The Battlements):163.

⁴ Abū ‘Abd-Allāh ‘Ikrimah b. ‘Abd-Allāh al-Barbarī (645-723), freedman of ‘Abd-Allāh b. al-‘Abbās, an expert on Koranic exegesis and the Prophet’s campaigns. Cf. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 3:265-66.

⁵ Yāqūt (5:178): *Maqnā*. A Jewish settlement near Aylah (Caetani, *Annali*, II, a, 225, n. 1). —‘Aynūnah is not, as Wiet believes, identical with ‘Aynūn (near Jerusalem), but rather with ‘Ayn Unā on the Red Sea coast between al-Ṣalā and Madyan (Yāqūt 4:180).

Aylah: ‘When their fish came to them on the day of their Sabbath, swimming shoreward, but on the day they kept not Sabbath, they came not unto them.’”

[5] The story of the people of that township goes as follows: They were Israelites and God had forbidden them to work on the Sabbath. But Satan conjured up a trick in their minds, saying, “All you were forbidden is to *catch* fish on the Sabbath. So, use the basins!” And they would indeed herd the fish on Friday into the basins, where they remained, unable to escape because the basins were shallow, and then catch them on Sunday. It has been said that someone would take a piece of string, tie a noose in it—(the word for it is) *wahqah* or *wahaqah* (and means) a rope like a length of cord—and slip it over the tail of a fish, while the other end of the string was tied to a peg, and leave it like that until Sunday. Later on, people devised ever new ways when they realized that those who did so suffered no punishment, so that more and more fish were caught and offered for sale in the markets. But the ungodly act of catching fish that way was brought into the open, and a group of Israelites publicly denounced the practice and seceded from the others, saying, “We shall no longer live with you!” So they divided the community with a wall. Then, one day, when those who rejected the practice gathered in their assemblies in the morning, not one of the transgressors showed up. “Something must have happened to those people,” they said, and climbed up on the wall to see. And they found them all turned into monkeys!⁽⁶⁾ They climbed down to them, and the monkeys recognized their human kin and came to them and sniffed their clothes and wept. And when the law-abiding ones told the monkeys, “Did we not tell you to abstain?” they nodded their heads in assent.

⁶ Cf. Koran 7:167.

Qatādah (ibn Di‘āmah) said: The young men were turned into monkeys, the old men became swine. And only those who had denounced the practice were saved; the others all perished.

This is said to have happened at the time of God’s prophet David, peace be upon him.

[6] It has been said that (the name) Aylah comes from Īliyā and that it is mentioned as such in the Torah.⁽⁷⁾

[7] The Sharīf Muḥammad ibn As‘ad al-Jawwānī claims that the Dakkālah Berbers are a subtribe of the Maṣmūdah. But other people maintain that the Dakkālah are the descendants of Aylah—or Ayyil, according to others—after whom ‘Aqabat Aylah named, their cousins being the Dagħfal ibn Aylah, and that they trace their ancestry to the Nizārīs. They (themselves) claim to be descended from Rabī‘ah ibn Faras, but there is great controversy about that.

[8] Mas‘ūdī mentioned⁽⁸⁾ that Joshua son of Nun, peace be upon him, waged war against al-Samīda‘ son of Hūbar⁽⁹⁾ son of Mālik the Amalekite, King of Syria, in the land of Aylah toward Madyan. He killed him and took possession of his kingdom. This is what ‘Awf ibn Sa‘īd al-Jurhumī said about that event:

Have you not seen that Hubār’s son, the Amalekite,
that night at Aylah saw his allies ripped to shreds?
Whole hosts of Jews bore down on him,
eighty times thousand strong and armor-clad.

The ode has many verses.

[9] Ibn Ishāq relates: When the Apostle of God, peace and blessings on him, reached Tabūk, he was met by the lord of Aylah,

⁷ Cf. Yāqūt’s (1:293) complicated phonological speculations on Īliyā’, the Roman *Aelia* (Capitolina), i.e., Jerusalem.

⁸ *Prairies d’or* 1:98-99.

⁹ The names have a familiar ring and could be inspired by Shemida (Sh’mīda) and Hephher (Hēpher), the descendants of Manasseh (Josh. 17:2).

Yuḥannah ibn Ru'bah, who concluded a peace agreement with him and paid him the expected tribute. The people of Jarbā' and Adhruḥ⁽¹⁰⁾ also came to the Prophet and paid tribute. He had a document written for (each of)⁽¹¹⁾ them, which is in their possession. For Yuḥannah ibn Ru'bah he wrote:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Beneficent. This is a pledge of safety made by God and His Apostle, Muḥammad the Prophet, to Yuḥannah ibn Ru'bah and the people of Aylah, their ships and their caravans, on land and at sea. They have the protection of God and of Muḥammad the Prophet, as do those among them who are Syrians, Yemenites, and seafarers. Should, however, any one of them cause a hostile incident, then that person's property shall not stand between him and his life, but shall be lawful possession of him who takes it of the Muslim army. Nor shall it be lawful for them to deny the Muslims access to any water hole they come to, nor any road they wish to travel, by land or by sea.

[This was written by Juhaym ibn al-Ṣalt and Shuraḥbil ibn Ḥasanah at the behest of the Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him.]⁽¹²⁾

This took place in the year 9 after the Hijrah (A.D. 630).

[10] The town of Aylah continued to be thriving and populous.

[11] In 415 (A.D. 1024), 'Abd-Allāh ibn Idrīs al-Ja'farī, together with someone from the Banū 'l-Jarrāḥ, hit Aylah and sacked the town. He carried away 3,000 dinars and a certain amount of revenue in kind and enslaved the women and children. He was then

^{10.} *Jarbā'*, or *al-Jarbā'*, was a village in the Balqā' district of Syria near 'Ammān, in the vicinity of Mount al-Sharāḥ (Yāqūt 2:118). — *Adhruḥ* was the seat of the district of al-Sharāḥ in southern Syria (Yāqūt 1:129).

^{11.} Cf. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 3,108/1,1702. The document text has been emended to conform with the version in the *Sīrah* (4:138) and in Caetani's translation (*Annali*, II, a, 254).

^{12.} The sentence in square brackets is an addition by Ibn Sa'd.

dismissed⁽¹³⁾ as the governor of the Wādī al-Qurā, and a cavalry detachment set out from Cairo to fight against him.

[12] Al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil reports: In 566, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf had ships built in sections which he loaded on camels and with which he set out at the head of a large army to attack the citadel of Aylah, where the Franks, after capturing it, had taken up defensive positions. He began the assault on the fortress in Rabīʿ I (November/December 1170) by assembling and outfitting the ships and launching them, loaded with fighting men and weapons, into the sea, and continued the battle for the citadel of Aylah by land and sea until he captured it on the 20th of Rabīʿ II (January 1, 1171), killing (some of) the Frankish defenders and taking (the others) prisoner. After having stationed there a contingent of his most reliable troops and strengthened them with the necessary arms and supplies, he returned to Cairo at the end of Jumādā I (early February).

[13] In [5]77 (A.D. 1181) arrived a letter from the *nāʾib* in the citadel of Aylah saying that the fleet was in a state of alert and very apprehensive of the Franks.

[14] Then (in November of that year), The Prince⁽¹⁴⁾—God's curse on him!—arrived before Aylah. He secured the access road and sent out his soldiers toward Tabūk. He also secured the side toward Syria, because he feared that (Muslim) troops might come after him either from Syria or from Egypt.

¹³ This is not true. ʿAbd-Allāh b. Idrīs had sought to be *reinstated* as governor of the Wādī al-Qurā and had approached Ḥassān b. Jarrāḥ, chief of the Banū ʿl-Jarrāḥ, to act as his mediator with the Fāṭimid caliph al-Zāhir. When the latter turned down his request, ʿAbd-Allāh sacked Aylah (and later al-ʿArish) in retaliation (*Ittīʿāz* 2:143). —The text is taken from al-Musabbihī (cf. Becker, *Beiträge*, 1:45, n. 1).

¹⁴ Arabic: *al-Ibrans* (from French *le prince*), i.e., Reynald (*Arnāt*) of Châtillon, prince of Antioch and lord of Oultrejourdain, the Arabic-speaking arch-villain of the Muslim chroniclers. —The date has been added from the *Sulūk* (I, 1:75).

In Sha'bān (December) of said year, heavy rains fell in the hills opposite the citadel of Aylah, and so much water accumulated there that the garrison of the fortress could get by for two months without depending on spring water. (At the same time, however) the buildings of the citadel felt the effect of the continuous rain and, since they were built on weak foundations, they began to give. But the people occupying them attended to them and repaired them.

[15] Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Mas'ūdī mentions in his *Akhbār al-zamān wa-man abādahu 'l-ḥidhān* the Kūkah, a nation that had four kings who held sway over the land of Aylah of the Hejaz. Each of them founded a city which he named after himself, and the rest of the land they made tent communities (?)⁽¹⁵⁾ which they divided into thirty districts organized in four provinces, each province having a king who sat on a golden throne in his capital. Each built a temple, which was the House of Wisdom, and a lofty edifice in honor of one of the planets where he placed idols made of gold, each idol having its proper station. And there was Alexandria, which (at that time) was called "Rhakotis." To it they assigned fifteen districts, and there they put the high priests, and in its temples they erected more golden idols than anywhere else; there were two hundred idols of gold in that city. Upper Egypt they divided into eighty districts which they organized in four parts. There were in Egypt, within its districts, thirty cities which contained all the wonders.

[16] It has been said: When Ḥimyar the Elder—whose name was al-'Aranjaj, son of Saba' the Elder, whose name, in turn, was 'Āmir, and who is known as 'Abd Shams ibn Yashjub ibn Ya'rub ibn Qaḥṭān—became king after his father's death, he gathered his armies and set out to subjugate nations and blot out empires, the way his father had done. He kept pushing eastward beyond Gog and Magog to the point of the rising sun and then returned to the west, where certain tribes of the Yemenites, descendants of Hūd

¹⁵ Wiet/Bulaq: *khaymāt* (?). The text is clearly corrupted here. Compare ch. 4, sect. 2 above.

son of Eber son of Salah son of Arphaxad son of Shem son of Noah, came to him, complaining about Thamūd son of Ghāthir son of Iram son of Shem son of Noah and the injustice they had suffered at the hands of his people. So he had the Thamūdites removed from the Yemen and settled at Aylah, which they colonized from Aylah all the way to Dhāt al-Iṣād and beyond to the borders of the highland of Najd. There the Thamūdites cut rocks and carved dwellings out of the hills. Yet they became overbearing and despotic, and God sent Ṣāliḥ as a prophet and apostle among them. But they called him a liar and asked him to conjure a she-camel out of a rock (as a sign of his divine mission). He did, but they hamstrung it, and God made them perish by The Cry, “*and morning found them in their habitation fallen prostrate.*”⁽¹⁶⁾

[17] It has been related that Moses, peace be upon him, led the Israelites after the death of his brother Aaron to the land of the descendants of Esau (son of Isaac son of Abraham), which is the land known as “Mount al-Sharāh,” where the town of al-Shawbak⁽¹⁷⁾ is located. From there he then moved on to Aylah, and after a few days he set out for Turabat al-Ḍibāb,⁽¹⁸⁾ where the region of al-Karak is located, and finally he fought with all those peoples.

There used to be next to Aylah a large important town called *ʿAṣyūn*.⁽¹⁹⁾

[18] Mareotis⁽²⁰⁾

A district of Alexandria—where, because of the intense whiteness of its buildings, one did not realize nightfall until some

^{16.} Koran 7:78, 91; 11:67, 94; 15:78 ff.; 29:37.

^{17.} The *Mons Regalis*, or *Montréal*, of the Crusaders, east of the Dead Sea.

^{18.} A long valley extending from Mount al-Sharāh to the Najd (Yāqūt 2:21). Wiet: *Turabat Bāb*; Bulaq: *Barriyyat Bāb*.

^{19.} The Arabic transliteration of Hebrew *ʿEṣyōn*, i.e., Ezion-geber (cf. n. 2 above).

^{20.} The remainder of this chapter has obviously nothing to do with Aylah, on the opposite side of Egypt, and should be somewhere in the earlier chapters dealing with Alexandria. This text portion was apparently copied on a stray sheet, because some of the mss. insert it in other, no less incongruous, places (cf. Wiet III, 232, n. 15).

time after its occurrence, and where people moved about carrying pieces of black cloth, for fear they might lose their eyesight. And on account of its intense whiteness the monks wore black.

[19] The area of Mareotis⁽²¹⁾ used to be in a state of utmost florescence and development and had gardens all the way to the land of Barqah. [20] But today it is just one of several villages of Alexandria where fruit and other things are grown.

[21] It was endowed as a *waqf* for charitable institutions connected with the Mosque of al-Ḥākim in Cairo by al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Jāshnagīr.⁽²²⁾

[22] It has a cathedral mosque which was renovated in 666 (A.D. 1268).

[23] Later on, in 821 (A.D. 1418), it was leased by (Sultan) al-Malik al-Muʿayyad Shaykh al-Maḥmūdī, who recultivated its garden plantation,⁽²³⁾ which had become waste due to repeated incursions of the Cyrenaican Labīd bedouins. It has remained under the administration of the Royal Dīwān.

[24] Wādī Hubayb

This wadi lies in the western part of Egypt in the area between Mareotis and the Fayyūm. One mines salt and natron there.

It was named after Hubayb ibn Mughfil⁽²⁴⁾ ibn al-Wāqīʿah ibn Ḥarām ibn Ghifār al-Ghifārī, a Companion of the Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him, who witnessed the conquest of Egypt. On his authority transmitted Abū Tamīm (ʿAbd-Allāh ibn

^{21.} Ancient *Marea*, or Mareotis (hence the Arabic name *Maryūt*), was the seat of a nose and even the capital of Lower Egypt in the old Egyptian Empire. It declined with the rise of Alexandria, and Strabo knew it as a small town, mostly famed for its wine. Its ruins 12 miles west of Alexandria are barely recognizable today.

^{22.} Cf. *Khiṭaṭ* 2:278.

^{23.} Cf. Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 14:74.

^{24.} Thus Yāqūt (*Muʿjam* 5:346) and al-Suyūṭī (*Husn* 1:240). Wiet/Bulaq: Hubayb b. Muḥammad b. Mughfil, which can hardly be right, since his father was obviously a pagan.

Mālik) al-Jayshānī, (Abū ‘Imrān) Aslam, the freedman of Tujīb, and Sa‘īd ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ghifārī.⁽²⁵⁾ At the time of the revolt against ‘Uthmān, God be pleased with him, (Hubayb) had retreated to that valley, which was then named after him.

(Hubayb) used to say: There must be no separation when paying the debt of Ramaḍān, nor should the two prayers be separated during travel.⁽²⁶⁾

[25] This valley is also called Wādī al-Mulūk, Wādī al-Naṭrūn, Barriyyat Shihāt, Barriyyat al-Asqīṭ, and Mīzān al-Qulūb.

There used to be a hundred Christian monasteries and convents there, of which seven have survived. They will be discussed when we speak of the monasteries in this book.⁽²⁷⁾

[26] It is a valley with many (natural) resources: It contains natron, which yields a great deal of tax revenue; it has rock salt and *milḥ sultānī* (? “royal salt”), the latter occurring in the shape of marble slabs; it also contains *w-k-t*,⁽²⁸⁾ stibnite and alkali; one finds there *māsikah*, which is a yellow earth enclosed in black stone that one scrapes into water and drinks against a stomach ache; and there grows papyrus for making mats.

In the valley is also the ‘Ayn al-Ghurāb, which is a water hole in the shape of a pond, fifteen cubits long and five cubits wide, inside a

²⁵. This seems rather odd, since he is credited with the transmission of only one *ḥadīth*, namely, the Prophet’s pronouncement “He who trails his *izār* in vanity will tread on it in hellfire” (Bukhārī, *Anbiyā’* 54, *Libās* 5); cf. Yāqūt, *loc. cit.*

²⁶. I.e., compensatory fasting for time missed during Ramaḍān—the “debt of Ramaḍān”—must be done on consecutive days, and the performance of two adjoining prayers (*zuhr-‘aṣr* and *maghrib-‘ishā’*) as one, which Islamic law allows to Muslims traveling, should be left unchanged.

²⁷. *Khīṭaṭ* 2:508-9. —Today, only four of them are still inhabited: the Jacobite convent (*Dayr al-Suryān*) and, close by, the convent of St. Pshoi (*Dayr Abū Bishāy*), *Dayr Baramūs* to the north, and the convent of St. Macarius (*Dayr Abū Maqār*) at the southern end of the valley.

²⁸. Quatremère (*Mémoires*, I, 463) translates this mysterious word as *zinc*, also Alī Pasha Mubārak (*Khīṭaṭ Tawfiqiyyah* 17:49): *tūtiyā*. U. Bouriant (*Description*, 535) gives “ammoniac,” as usual without hesitation. Perhaps borax?

mountain cave. No one knows where (the water) comes from, nor where it goes. It is pure sweet water.

[27] It is related that 70,000 monks, each carrying a crosier, set out from that valley to meet ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ at al-Ṭarrānah on his return from Alexandria, seeking his assurance of protection for their lives and their monasteries. He had a document to that effect drawn up for them which remained in their possession. He also set down in writing for them the food allowance for Lower Egypt, which they continued to receive from then on: It came to 5,000 *irdabbs* in a year with a plentiful Nile rise. Nowadays it is less than 100 *irdabbs*.

25. The Town of Madyan

[1] One should know that Madyan, the people of Shu‘ayb,⁽¹⁾ are the descendants of Midyān, the son of Abraham—peace be upon him. Their (ancestral) mother is Keturah (*Qanṭūrā*), the Canaanite daughter of Joktan; she bore (Abraham) eight sons, from whom descended tribes.

[2] Madyan on the Sea of al-Qulzum (the Gulf of Suez) is located about six day’s journeys opposite Tabūk. It is larger than Tabūk. It has a well from which Moses drew water for the grazing stock of Shu‘ayb,⁽²⁾ and over which a tent was erected.

[3] Madyan, says al-Farrā’,⁽³⁾ is the name of a town and of a region. Some have said it is the name of a tribe which was named after their ancestor Madyan—or, according to Muqātil⁽⁴⁾ and others, Midān—the son of Abraham.

The general consensus holds that *madyan* is a foreign word, but others have said it is Arabic. If it is Arabic, then it is probably a *Fa‘L* (pattern) of *m-d-n* (i.e., *madīn*) for the place where (Madyan) lived, which is a rare—according to some, an obsolete—pattern, or a *maF‘aL* of *dāna*, in which case the conversion of the semi-vowel *y* to a consonant is irregular. At any rate, it is a diptote, regardless whether it is the name of a region or of a tribe, whether foreign or Arabic.

¹ The Muslim name of *Jethro*, prince and priest of Midian, mentioned in eleven places in the Koran as a prophet. Early traditions recorded by Ṭabarī already identify him with *Yatrūn*, or *Yathrā*, the father of Moses’ wife *Ṣafūrah* (Zipporah); cf. *Tārīkh* 1:325/1,365, 1:400/1,462; the article “Shu‘aib” by F. Buhl in *EF*.

² Exodus 2:16-17.

³ Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā b. Ziyād, Kūfan grammarian and philologist, died 822. Cf. “al-Farrā’” (R. Blachère) in *EF*.

⁴ Abū ‘l-Ḥasan Muqātil b. Sulaymān al-Balkhī, a member of the oldest school of Koranic exegetes that tried to reconcile Muslim with Jewish-Christian traditions, died 767 in Baghdad. Cf. *GAL*² S 1:332.

[4] The scripturalists, says al-Mas‘ūdī,⁽⁵⁾ have been arguing about (the identity of) the people of Shu‘ayb, son of Nūyil, son of Ra‘ūyil (Reuel), son of Murr, son of ‘Ayfā, son of Madyan, son of Abraham, peace be upon him, whose native tongue was Arabic. Some have held that they belonged to the vanished Arabs and bygone tribes and were part of the ancient nations we have mentioned. Others have been of the opinion that they are descendants of al-Miḥṣan, son of Jandal, son of Ya‘ṣub, son of Madyan, son of Abraham the Friend of God, and that Shu‘ayb was their brother by descent.

There had been several kings who spread out over neighboring kingdoms, among them the ones named Abjad, Hawwaz, Huṭṭī, Kalaman, Sa‘faṣ, and Qarashat, who are, as we have said above, descendants of al-Miḥṣan son of Jandal. The names of these kings are the same as the *ahṛuf al-jummal*, that is, the 22 letters⁽⁶⁾ on which computation by means of their numerical value is based. Other significations of these letters than the ones mentioned by us have been discussed by people.

Abjad was the king of Mecca and of the adjoining territory of the Hejaz; Hawwaz and Huṭṭī were kings in the land of Wajj, which is the area of al-Ṭā‘if, and of the adjoining territory of the Arabian plateau; and Sa‘faṣ and Qarashat were kings in Midian—in Egypt, according to others, and Kalaman was the ruler of Midian.

There are people who hold that the rule of all those we have named was a joint one extending over the area mentioned by us, and that the punishment on the Day of Shadow⁽⁷⁾ happened during

⁵ *Prairies d’or* 3:301-5.

⁶ So, quite correctly, the Bulaq text (Wiet: 24). The six names are the mnemonic words for the sequence of the Semitic, and primitive Arabic, alphabet, where each letter has an assigned numerical value: alif = 1, b = 2, j = 3, etc., in three groups each of units, tens and hundreds, plus 1,000. The six letters for peculiarly Arabic sounds not distinguished by other Semitic languages, the so-called *rawādif*, namely, *thakhudh* and *ḍaḏagh* with numerical values of 500 to 1,000, are here omitted. Cf. the article “Abjad” by G. Weil in *EP*.

⁷ Cf. Koran 26 (The Poets):189.

the time when Kalamān was their ruler, and that Shu'ayb appealed to them (to be godfearing) and, when they called him a liar, threatened them with the punishment of the Day of Shadow. Whereupon God opened a gate of heaven upon them, one of fire, and Shu'ayb and those who were believers with him escaped to a place known as Aykah,⁽⁸⁾ which is a thicket in the vicinity of Midian. And when those people felt the distress, and the heat became stronger and stronger, and they were certain to die, they sought out Shu'ayb and his faithful followers, who had been shielded by a white cloud with a pleasant breeze so that they did not suffer the agony of the punishment, and ousted Shu'ayb and his fellow believers from their stations and removed them from their places, fancying that it would save them from the catastrophe descending upon them.⁽⁹⁾ Whereupon God sent a fire upon them that wiped them out.

[5] Jāriyah, Kalamān's daughter,⁽¹⁰⁾ who was in the Hejaz at the time, mourned her father in an elegy, where she says:

Struck down was Kalamūn, my prop,
 he died amidst the camping ground.
 Death came to him, the people's chief,
 as fire in the midst of Dark
 Formed as a roaring blaze, so that
 my people's home became as naught.

[6] And al-Muntaṣir ibn al-Mundhir al-Madyanī said:

Indeed, Shu'ayb, you spoke your word,
 delivered it to 'Amr's tribe,⁽¹¹⁾
 Who ruled Hejaz with mighty men
 like sun rays in a full moon's guise,
 Dwelled in the Sacred House and graced

^{8.} Cf. *ibid.*, 176 ff.

^{9.} Cf. Koran 15 (El-Hijr):78.

^{10.} In the *Fihrist* (p.6, transl. B. Dodge p.7): his sister.

^{11.} 'Amr is the name of Judhām, ancestor of the Banū Judhām b. 'Adiy b. al-Ḥārith mentioned in section 11 (cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharah*, 420).

whole lands with glory, noble traits,
The kings of Ḥuṭṭī's clan, of Sa'faṣ, noble lord,
of Hawwaz—al-Thaniyyah's lords and of al-Ḥijr, too.

[7] Those kings, says al-Mas'ūdī, have an extraordinary record of wars and campaigns, of how they conquered those kingdoms and made them their own, and how they exterminated the people that had lived and ruled there before their time.

[8] It has been said⁽¹²⁾ that the Thicket (*al-Aykah*) referred to in the words of the Lord Exalted, "*The men of the Thicket cried lies to the Envoys*,"⁽¹³⁾ and again, "*Certainly the dwellers in the Thicket were evildoers, and We took vengeance on them*,"⁽¹⁴⁾ is identical with Madyan. But according to others (it designates the area) from the seacoast to Madyan. Others maintain that it is a jungle in the vicinity of Madyan, and still others⁽¹⁵⁾ have said that 'the dwellers in the Thicket,' to whom Shu'ayb was sent as a prophet, rather lived near Tabūk between al-Ḥijr⁽¹⁶⁾ and the beginning of Syria, and that Shu'ayb was not one of them, but rather came from Madyan.

[9] Abū 'Ubayd al-Bakrī says:⁽¹⁷⁾ There are two traditions by Ibn (al-)Abbās, God be pleased with him, about the Thicket mentioned in the Book of the Lord Exalted that was the camping ground of Shu'ayb's people, one saying that the Thicket is the area from Madyan toward Shaghb and Badan, the other that it is the area from the seacoast to Madyan, and that the 'bushes' of those people were doom palms.

¹² Cf., e.g., Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:326-29/I,366-70.

¹³ Koran 26:176.

¹⁴ Koran 15:78-79.

¹⁵ These are, according to Yāqūt (1:291), the people of Tabūk themselves.

¹⁶ Cf. Koran 15:80. Al-Ḥijr, in Muslim tradition the dwelling place of the Thamūdites, is the modern-day *Madā'in Šālīh*.

¹⁷ *Mu'jam mā 'sta'jam*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, I,135.

The word *aykah*, say the lexicologists, means ‘intertwined bushes,’ and (the people living there) were (therefore) ‘dwellers among intertwined bushes.’

Some people have claimed that *al-Aykah* means ‘the Thicket’ and *Laykah* is the name of the country surrounding it, just as one spoke of *Makkah* and *Bakkah*.⁽¹⁸⁾ But Abū Ja‘far “(Ibn) al-Naḥḥās”⁽¹⁹⁾ retorts: There is no known *Laykah* as the name of a region.

[10] Ibn Qutaybah says: Someone used to claim that *Bakkah* is (the name of) the site of the house of worship (mentioned in the Koran), whereas the area around it is called *Makkah*, the way a distinction was made between *al-Aykah* and *Laykah*, so that one said *al-Aykah* is the Thicket and *Laykah* is the country around it.

[11] (When) al-Bakrī says:⁽²⁰⁾ “Madyan is a well-known town in Syria opposite Gaza; it is the one mentioned in the Book of God”—that is an error, because Madyan belongs to Egypt.

(He continues:) The Apostle of God, peace and blessings on him, sent a cavalry detachment under the command of Zayd ibn Ḥārithah⁽²¹⁾ against Madyan. The latter made captives among the people of Maythā’—which, according to Ibn Ishāq, is (the name of) the coastal area—who were to be sold, mothers separated from their children, into slavery. When the Apostle of God, peace and blessings on him, went out to see them, they were crying. “What is the matter with them?” he asked, and he was told their story. “Sell them only together!” he ordered.

18. Cf. Koran 3 (The House of Imran):96 : “*The first House established for the people was that at Bekka, a place holy, and a guidance to all beings.*” Also Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 2:284/1, 1132.

19. He is the Egyptian grammarian Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Murādī, known as “the Coppermith’s son,” a student of al-Akhfash the Younger, al-Mubarrad, Nifṭawayh and al-Zajjāj; died 950. Cf. Suyūṭī, *Bughyah*, 1:362.

20. *Mu‘jam mā ‘sta‘jam*, II, 515.

21. The Prophet’s adopted son and protégé, one of the few person’s mentioned by name in the Koran (33:37). —On that campaign, Caetani, *Annali*, I, 705, *Chronographia*, I, 55.

Madyan is one of the camping grounds of the (Banū) Judhām ibn ‘Adiy ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Murrah ibn Udad ibn Zayd ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Arīb ibn Zayd ibn Kahlān (ibn Saba’), and Shu‘ayb, the prophet who was sent to the people of Madyan, belonged to the Banū Wā’il ibn Judhām. There is a tradition that the Apostle of God, peace and blessings on him, addressed a delegation of the Judhām with the words, “Welcome, Shu‘ayb’s people and kin of Moses by marriage! Before long, the Messiah will get married in your midst and a son will be born to him.”

Muḥammad ibn Sahl al-Aḥwal transmitted: Madyan, too, is a tribal dependency of Medina, like Fadak, al-Fur‘ and Ruhāṭ.

[12] The author of the present book, God have mercy on him, adds: There used to be in the land of Madyan (Midian) a great number of towns which, their people having passed away, fell to ruin and became waste. Of these, some forty intact towns have survived to this day, which is the year 825 (A.D. 1422), some known by name, others whose name is unknown (to us). There are sixteen towns known by name between the Hejaz, Palestine and Egypt, ten of which are located in the direction of Palestine, namely, al-Khalaṣah, al-Sabiṭah, al-Madarah, al-Minyah, al-A‘waj, al-Khuwayriq, al-Bīrayn, al-Mā‘ayn, al-Sab‘, and al-Mu‘allaq. The most important of these ten communities are the towns of al-Khalaṣah and al-Sabiṭah; stones from the latter are oftentimes moved to Gaza where they are used in construction. Among the towns of Midian toward the Sea of al-Qulzum and al-Ṭūr are Fārān, al-Raqqah, al-Qulzum, Aylah, and Madyan. In the town of Madyan one finds to this day unusual relics and massive pillars.

[13] Sometime in the seven-sixties (1360s), people found in the town of al-A‘waj in its citadel a gaping well shaft about a hundred fathoms deep. On the bottom of it were several parchment scrolls. One of them, two cubits or more long and enclosed in two wooden cover boards, was hauled away. The writing on it was Ḥimyaritic, its *alifs* and *lāms* about a span high. Someone was found in the area of al-Karak who could read it, and it turned out to be one of several

scriptural writings. The man began to read: "With God's praise," and then: "The exodus of Moses from the land of Egypt to the land of Midian, and the princes of the Midianites after Shu'ayb's death." It gave several names of Moses, peace be upon him, among them his name in Arabic, *Mūsā ibn 'Imrān*, in Hebrew, *Mōshē*, in Persian, *Dārān*, and in Coptic, *Harūhasīs*. It mentioned that Moses married the daughter of Shu'ayb, and that he stayed in Midian "for eight pilgrimages," after which he said to the son of Shu'ayb: "I have fulfilled your condition, yet of my own free will I shall give you years more, as a favor from me."

26. The Story of the Town of Madyan Continued⁽¹⁾

[1] And Moses, says (the chronicler), set out for Egypt, at the time when the ruler of Madyan was Abjad.

As Abjad became more and more powerful and tyrannical, he took possession of the Hejaz and Yemen. He had five sons: Hawwaz, Ḥuṭṭiy, Kalaman, Saʿfaṣ and Qarashat. For one hundred years Abjad ruled the Yemen. Before he died, he had designated his son Kalaman as his successor in the Yemen. His son Hawwaz he made the ruler of the Hejaz, and his son Ḥuṭṭiy the ruler of Egypt. To his son Saʿfaṣ he gave the Jezirah and its towns, including Mosul and Ḥarrān, all the way to the Iraq, and to his son Qarashat the Iraq and its highlands toward Khurāsān. Qarashat was the tyrant among them, Saʿfaṣ, Hawwaz and Kalaman were just and astute rulers, and Ḥuṭṭiy was a man of violence and war.

At the time, the Israelites were in Syria, for Abjad's sons neither ruled nor possessed Syria. Their reign lasted for about 150 years so that, together with the reign of their father Abjad, their dynasty lasted for 300 years or more. After them, the Israelites came under the sway of Rūzīb son of Hawwaz and ʿAzarīb son of Ḥuṭṭiy son of Abjad, for about seven years. And then the descendants of Abjad lost their empire.

[2] This writing⁽²⁾ remained with them for a long time. Then they returned it to the well shaft in the citadel of al-Aʿwaj. This story was told to me by a man of perfect and precise memory, namely,

^{1.} This chapter heading is missing in a number of mss. (cf. Wiet's note 5). In fact, the entire "chapter" is nothing but stray notes put together by some bewildered copyist. Section 1 was apparently intended to be inserted somewhere after section 6 of the preceding chapter. Section 2 is clearly the continuation and conclusion of section 13 in chapter 25; Maqrizi must have written the note after he had met and befriended al-Furriyānī, some time after 1420. Section 3 may have been intended as the wind-up of the preceding chapter.

^{2.} See sect. 13 of the preceding chapter.

Abū ‘Abd-Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Furriyānī al-Tūnisī al-Mālikī, who said he heard it from Shattā ibn Ghunaym al-‘Āmirī, a sheikh he met in Palestine, who claimed he had seen the above writing with his own eyes and had memorized the parts of it quoted earlier.

[3] It has been said: Mālik ibn Du‘r ibn Ḥujr ibn Jazīlah ibn Lakhm had 24 male descendants, and they, in turn, had many sons who founded towns and villages and fortified places, colonized all of the lands of Midian, and held sway over Syria, Egypt, the Hejaz, and other lands, for five hundred years. Others have said: The rule of the Midianite kings over Egypt was five hundred years after the drowning of Moses’ Pharaoh and the death of Dalūkah, daughter of Zaffān,⁽³⁾ until they were driven out by God’s prophet Solomon son of David, and after them the rule reverted to the Copts.

³ In ch. 3, and elsewhere: *Zabbā*.

27. The Town of Fārān

[1] This town—one of the Amalekite cities—is located in the coastal region of the Sea of al-Qulzum on a hillside between two mountain ranges. In those mountains are countless tunnels filled with dead bodies. The distance from there to the Sea of al-Qulzum is one day's journey. (The littoral) there is called "the coastland of the Sea of Fārān," the latter being the sea in which God drowned Pharaoh. The distance between the town of Fārān and (Wādī) al-Tīh is two day's journeys.

[2] It has been said that *Fārān* is the name of the mountains of Mecca—or a name for the mountains of the Hejaz, according to others—and is identical with the one mentioned in the Penta-teuch.⁽¹⁾ The truth is that Fārān and al-Ṭūr are two of Egypt's southern districts, and (Fārān) is different from the *Paran* mentioned in the Torah.

[3] It has also been claimed that it was Fārān son of 'Amr son of 'Amlīq (Amalek) who gave his name to the mountains of Mecca, which were thereafter called *Jibāl Fārān*.

Someone (even) says: Jibāl Farān—when it is a well-known fact that *Farān* is Fārān ibn Balīy ibn 'Amr ibn Ilhāf; after him is named Ma'din Farān.⁽²⁾

^{1.} In Muslim tradition, Abraham, at God's command, exiled Hagar and Ishmael to "Fārān, the mountains of Mecca beyond Syria and Aylah" (cf., e.g., *The Muqaddimah*, trans. F. Rosenthal, 2:250). Moreover, on the basis of Deut. 33:2, God came from Sinai when he spoke to Moses; He shone forth from the mountain in Palestine called *Sā'ir* when He revealed the Gospel to Jesus; and He manifested Himself from the mountains of *Fārān* when He sent down the Koran to Muḥammad (cf., Yāqūt 4:225, from Ibn Mākūlā). It would seem that by *Sā'ir* (Hebr. šē'ir 'rugged') in Palestine is meant the *Har Šē'ir* mentioned in Josh. 15:10, a mountain on the northern boundary of Judah, which was then associated with the other *Har Šē'ir* in Gen. 14:6: "mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is by the wilderness."

^{2.} The name of a water hole (*mā'*) of the Banū Sulaym (Yāqūt 4:245); cf. also al-

[4] Fārān used to be a town of Midian. To this day one finds there numerous fruit-bearing date palms whose fruit I have tasted myself. There (was) also a large canal there. But the town is (now) in ruins⁽³⁾ and only bedouins pass through it.

Bakrī, *Muʿjam mā ʿstaʿjam*, II, 712.

³ Ramzī locates that vanished community in the Wādī Firān, 37 miles north of Mt. Sinai (al-Ṭūr) and 32 miles east of Cape Sharātīb on the Gulf of Suez (*Qāmūs*, I, 342).

28. The Region of the Jifār

[1] One should know that *al-Jifār* is a name for five towns, namely, al-Faramā, al-Buqqārah, al-Warrādah, al-‘Arīsh, and Rafaḥ. The entire Jifār is sand desert.

It was named *al-Jifār* because it is very hard for man and beast to travel there, due to the abundance of its sand and the great distances between its way stations: in the Jifār, camels *tajfuru*, [that is, they fear to go because the way stations are so far apart],⁽¹⁾ and so it was given that name. That is along the same line as when one speaks of a rope with which one ties up—*yuhjaru bih*—a camel as a *hijār* and something one blocks and obstructs with—*yuhjazu bih*—is called *hijāz*, that which one hobbles with—*yu‘qalu bih*—is called *‘iqāl*, the thing one girths (a camel) with—*yubṭanu bih*—is called *biṭān*, the band one slips over a camel’s nose—*yukḥṭamu bih*—is called *khiṭām*, and that which one bridles a camel with—*yuzammu bih*—is called *zimām*. Al-Buqqārah is derived from *baqar* ‘cattle,’ al-Warrādah from *warīd* ‘vein,’ and al-‘Arīsh from *‘arsh* ‘throne.’ Rafaḥ is said to be a man’s name.

[2] In the old days, the Jifār used to be inhabited by Judhām bedouins. It is said⁽²⁾ that the region of the Jifār was in earliest times and in bygone ages continuous cultivated land with numerous blessings and famed for its resources, because the people there

^{1.} The explanation in square brackets is added from Ibn Duqmāq (5:52), who cites Ibn Muṭarrif (d. 802) for this spurious etymology. —The only plausible explanation of the name—“because of the great number of *jifār*, i.e., shallow water holes, there”—is provided by Yāqūt, who, having crossed it several times himself, also has the best factual description of this vast desert in the northern Sinai (*Mu‘jam* 2:144-45). He gives as its two terminal points *Rafaḥ* in the east and *al-Khashabī* in the west (the latter now occupied by ‘Izbat Tall al-Maskhūṭah in the district of Kōm Hammād 10 miles west of al-Is-mā‘iliyyah)—that is, the desert extended considerably farther west in the 13th century than it does today. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 41, 54, 193.

^{2.} Cf. Ibn Ḥawqal (Beirut ed., 136.11), citing Ibn al-Faḥh; Mas‘ūdī, *Prairies d’or*, 3:342.

grew a good deal of saffron, safflower and sugarcane. Its water was plentiful and salt-free. Then came date palms, which surrounded it on all sides—until God “destroyed it utterly.”⁽³⁾ And to this day it has remained a huge sand flat through which one travels to al-‘Arīsh and beyond to Rafah, all of it desert, part of which is known as the Ghurābī Desert, with little water and no pasture at all, and not a living soul about. Praised be He Who transforms things!

³ An allusion to Koran 7:137.

29. Upper Egypt (Ṣaʿīd Miṣr)

[1] Ṣaʿīd means land which is elevated; or, land rising from lowland; or, any type of land not interspersed with sand and salt marshes; or, the surface of land; or, arable land; or, any good soil.

The designation of that part of Egypt by that name goes no farther back than to the Islamic conquest. The Arabs named it so because it is a region more elevated than the part of Egypt below it—that is why it is also called *Aʿlā ʿl-Arḍ* ‘the Highland’—and because there are neither sand nor salt marshes there, but all of it is blessed arable land. One also calls Upper Egypt *al-wajh al-qibli* ‘the southern region.’

[2] Master Ibrāhīm ibn Waṣīf Shāh relates: When death came to Miṣrāyim, he designated his son Qubṭīm as his successor, having already divided the land of Egypt among his grandsons: To Quṭṭarīm he had assigned (all the land) from Qifṭ to Uswān; to Ashmūn (the land) from Ushmūn to Memphis; to Atrīb the entire Ḥawf; and to Ṣā (the land) from the region of Ṣā al-Buḥayrah to the vicinity of Barqah. To his brother Fāriq he said, “To you belongs (the land) from Barqah to the west.” Fāriq is thus the lord of Ifriqiyyah, and his descendants are the *Afāriq*, or Africans. And he ordered each of his grandsons to build himself a capital in his assigned area.

[3] And Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam relates:⁽¹⁾ And after Miṣr’s sons and their children’s children had become many, Miṣr gave to each of his sons a piece (of the land) for him and his descendants to possess. He also gave (each of) them a share of this Nile. To his son Qifṭ he gave the site of Qifṭ, which he settled and which was so named after him, as well as the land upriver to Uswān and downriver to Ush-

¹ *Futūḥ Miṣr* (ed. Ṣabīḥ) p. 18. The tradition, like the one preceding, was already quoted in Pt. I, ch. 7 (sections 7 and 18).

mūn to the east and west (of the Nile). To Ashmūn he gave (the land) from Ushmūn down to Memphis east and west (of the river), and, Ashmūn resided in Ushmūn and it was named after him. To Atrīb he gave the land between Memphis and Şā, and he resided in Atrīb, which was named after him. And to Şā he gave the land between Şā and the (Mediterranean) Sea, and he made Saīs his residence and it was named after him. All of Egypt was thus divided into four parts, two of them in Upper Egypt and two in the Delta.

[4] Abū ʿl-Faḍl Jaʿfar ibn Thaʿlab ibn Jaʿfar al-Idfuwī⁽²⁾ says in *The Lucky Star in the History of Upper Egypt*: The entire length of the region of remote Upper Egypt is twelve day's journeys by camel, and the width (of the fertile part) is three hours or more, depending on the (number of) populated places. Crosswise it extends in the eastern district all the way to the (Red) Sea and the territory of the Beja, and in the western district all the way to the Oases, since it is composed of two districts, an eastern and a western one, with the Nile forming the dividing line between the two.

The eastern district begins (in a north-south direction) at Marj Banī Humaym,⁽³⁾ which is next to the area of Girgā in the province of Ikhmīm, and ends south of Ubhur (Abū Hūr), next to which begins the territory of the Nubians. [5] In that district are located (the towns of) Bīj, Qift and Qūṣ.

The western district begins at Bardīs, whose land is contiguous with that of Girgā. In that western district is located Samhūd, and the farthest point (south) of the western district is Uswān.

² Egyptian historian, Shāfiʿite jurist, and philologist, a student of Abū Ḥayyān, died 1347; cf. *GAL*² 2:39. His biographical history of scholars entitled *al-Ṭālīʿ al-ṣaʿīd al-jāmiʿ li-asmāʾ nujabāʾ al-ṣaʿīd*—Maqrīzī gives the title in the version of Ibn Ḥajar (*Durar* 1:535)—was printed in Cairo (1914, 1919); sections 4-7 can be found there on pp. 7-12.

³ The area between Jabal Tūkh in the north and al-Khiyām (distr. of al-Balyanā) in the south, on the eastern bank of the Nile (cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 4:97, s.v. *al-Khiyām*; Ibn al-Jīʿān, *Tuhfat*, 195), equated by al-Idfuwī with “the area of Afyūd” (*arḍ Afyūd*).

[6] Upper Egypt's merits lie in the abundance of date palms on both sides (of the Nile). The land area covered with palms and garden plantations is close to 20,000 feddans.

[7] The ascendant of the region of Upper Egypt is Jupiter.

[8] There is said to have been in Upper Egypt a palm tree that bore ten *irdabbs* of dates (per year). But when some governor illegally appropriated it, it did not produce a single date that year. That tree used to be on the western bank, and at times of shortage and high prices its fruit was sold for (as much as) one dinar a *waybah*.

[9] It is said:⁽⁴⁾ When the world was described to the Caliph Hārūn ibn Muḥammad al-Rashīd, he found only the district of Suyūṭ in Upper Egypt to his liking, for it consists of 30,000 feddans of level land: were a drop of water to fall on it, it would spread all over the area.

[10] In Upper Egypt one finds remnants of ancient sorcery. The governor of Qūṣ at the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, Emir Tuqṣubā,⁽⁵⁾ told the following story:

I had arrested a woman, a sorceress, and I told her I wanted to see a sample of her witchcraft. "I am at my best," she said, "when I cast the spell of a scorpion on the name of a specific person, for it will without fail attack that person, strike him with its venom and kill him." I said, "Demonstrate that to me, and make me the target of your sorcery." So she picked up a scorpion and did whatever she pleased. Then she released the scorpion and (at once) it pursued me, I trying to get out of its way and the creature coming after me. Then I sat down on a seat which I had placed over a pool. When the scorpion got to the water, it tried to make its way toward me but did not succeed. Whereupon it moved on to a wall and, while I

⁴ Text from Ibn al-Kindī's *Faḍā'il Miṣr*.

⁵ Sayf al-Dīn Tuqṣubā al-Zāhiri, a mamluk of Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Bunduqdārī, made emir by Lājīn. As governor of Qūṣ, he invaded Nubia twice (1305, 1316). Vigorous and active into old age, he died, over a hundred years old, in 1344. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 2:225.

was watching it, climbed up on it until it reached the ceiling where it crawled along until it was directly overhead of me. Then it flung itself at me and kept coming toward me until it was very close. That is when I struck and killed it. Then I killed the sorceress, too.

[11] Upper Egypt abounds in small livestock, sheep and other, because they have so many young that a single ewe may generate 1,024 lambs within a span of ten years. And that is a safe estimate, based on the assumption that all ewes give birth to females and they, in turn, have young once a year, with one lamb per throw. Otherwise, if a ewe throws twice a year, with two lambs per throw, then the number will be a multiple of that. Think about the preceding calculation, and you will find it correct. It has often been observed that there are sheep in Upper Egypt which have young three times a year, and with three lambs a throw.

[12] The dominant element in Upper Egypt in both number and strength were six tribes: the Banū Hilāl, the Balīy, the Juhaynah, the Quraysh, the Lawātah, and the Banū Kilāb. Together with these, several other tribes used to camp there of the Anṣār, and of Muzaynah, Banū Razāḥ, Banū Kilāb, Thaʿlabah and Judhām.

[13] Such was the development and prosperity of Upper Egypt that, in the days of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn and for years thereafter, a man would travel from Cairo to Uswān without need for spending money. Indeed, in every town and hamlet he would find several guesthouses, and as soon as he entered one of them, fodder for his mount would be provided and he would be served appropriate food and such.

But nowadays the situation has gotten to the point where man would not find anyone between Cairo and Uswān to offer him hospitality, because of the straitened circumstances. Since the drought year of 776 (A.D. 1374/5) during the reign of al-Ashraf Shaʿbān ibn Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, the situation in Upper Egypt went from bad to worse, and there was more and more decline during the time of al-Zāhir Barqūq on account of the oppression and

injustice of the governors. The region remained in a state of recession down to the year 806 (A.D. 1403/4), when all of Egypt was left without irrigation due to the severe shortfall in the Nile's rise. As a result, the population of Upper Egypt was afflicted with indescribable disaster, so that in the town of Qūş alone 17,000 people died, in Asyūt 11,000, counting only those who received a proper burial, and in the town of Hiw 15,000—all of that without counting people who died discarded by the roadside, unknown strangers, and the like. Then Upper Egypt was utterly destroyed at the time of al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh, and only vestiges of it have remained, which the governors make every effort to erase.

30. The Cataracts, with a Sketch of Nubia

[1] *Jandal* means the amount of stones—or the whole stone, according to others—a man can carry; its unit noun is *jandalah*. It also stands for *janādīl* ‘cataract.’ People said *jandal*, says Sībawayh, meaning *al-janādīl*, and they declined it as a triptote, because there is nothing inherent in this pattern (*Fa‘LaL*) to make it a diptote. And *arḍ junadilah* signifies rocky terrain. According to some, a *jan-dal* is a rough, rock-strewn place, and a place described as *junadil* is one with many stones and rocks.

[2] ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Sulaym al-Uswānī writes in his *Akhbār al-Nūbah wa-’l-Maḡurrah wa-’l-Wah wa-’l-Bujah wa-’l-Nīl*:⁽¹⁾

Nubia begins at a village known as *al-Qaṣr*;⁽²⁾ it is located five miles (south) from Uswān. The last fortified place on Muslim territory is a river island known as *Bilāq*;⁽³⁾ the distance between it and the Nubian village (of *al-Qaṣr*) is one mile. It is the (last) anchorage (on the border) of Nubia. From Uswān to that place is a cataract in the river which boats can negotiate only by clever maneuver and with the help of experienced guides from among the fishermen who fish

¹ This work, written for the Fātimid caliph al-‘Azīz (975-996), is unfortunately lost, and only the parts transcribed by Maqrīzī in chs. 30-32 and in ch. 36 have come down to us. (The two brief excerpts in Pt. I, ch. 20, sect. 13, and Pt. II, ch. 34, are merely repeats.) The text of these fragments was edited by Arnold in his *Chrestomathia arabica* (Halle, 1853, pp. 54-56), and translated by Quatremère (*Mémoires*, II, 7 ff.), Burckhardt (*Travels in Nubia*, London, 1912, App. III, 493 ff.), and more recently by G. Troupeau (*Arabica*, 1954, pp. 276-88). A glimpse at the content of these meager remnants shows the magnitude of the loss. No other Muslim author offers an account anywhere comparable to this vivid, almost modern, firsthand report of an Ismā‘īlī missionary, who faithfully and accurately recorded his personal observations, together with information he gathered from trustworthy local informants.

² The name of the village, mentioned also by Mas‘ūdī (*Prairies d’or* 3:40) and Abū Ṣāliḥ (Evetts, *Churches*, 127), suggests that it was built around some Roman border fortress.

³ The Greek-Roman *Philae*. The older Arabic name derives from Coptic *Pilakh* (‘the Corner’), ultimately Egyptian *Pi-Lak* ‘island of Lak.’

in the area. Because the hills there are craggy and there are transverse reefs in the Nile, and as the river flows over them, there is a tremendous roar and a thunder which one can hear from a distance.

At that village (of al-Qaṣr) is a military border post and a gateway to enter Nubia.⁽⁴⁾ From there to the first cataract in Nubia it takes a journey of ten days. It is the area where the Muslims (still) move about freely, owning landed property in the nearer parts, and as traders in the parts upriver. There dwells a community of Muslims, but none of them speaks intelligible Arabic. It is a narrow, austere, mountainous region and (its cultivable land) does not extend far from the Nile, its villages being strung out along the river bank. Date and doom palms are the trees growing in the area. Its upper portion is wider than the lower one and has vineyards. The Nile does not provide direct irrigation for their fields because the land in those parts is too high up, and cultivation of the land is done—one, two, or three feddans (at a time)—by means of waterwheels (which are fed with water) carried on the backs of oxen. Wheat is rare among them, barley is more common, and also (a variety of spelt called) *suit*. Since (the area of arable) land is so narrow, people work it in successive crops. In the summer, after having rejuvenated it with manure and topsoil, they raise on it millet, sorghum, (a variety of millet called) *jāwars*, sesame, and beans.

In that area are located *Bakhurās*,⁽⁵⁾ the main town of the Marīs, and the fortress of *Ibrīm*,⁽⁶⁾ as well as a smaller fortress with a har-

⁴ I.e., the Second Cataract at Wādī Ḥalfā.

⁵ Thus Troupeau. It is the Coptic *Pakoras*, an episcopal see (cf. Evetts, *Churches*, 261, n. 2). Wiet: *B-j-rāsh*. —The Marīs (Copt. “the South”) is the region of Nubia from Aswan to the Third Cataract, where the land of the Maqurrah begins (Troupeau, 281, n. 1, and his map).

⁶ *Ibrīm* is the Roman *Primis*, a key strategic point and important provincial town; the fortress was destroyed by Ibrāhīm Pasha during his Nubian campaign in 1820 (cf. Ramzi, *Qāmūs*, II, 4:230; Baedeker, *Egypt*⁷, 402-3). —The identity of *Adwā* (?) is uncertain; it could be the unidentified ruined “small town close to the south slope of the castle-hill” mentioned in Baedeker (p. 403). Burckhardt (*Travels*, 494) thought it was “the castle of *Adde* and the colossal temple of Ebsambol” (i.e., Abu Simbel) to the southwest of Ibrīm. —

bor called Adwāʾ—where, it is said, Lokman the Sage and Dhū ʿl-Nūn came from—which has an unusual Egyptian temple.

The region has a governor appointed by the ruler of the Nubians and known as *Ṣāhib al-Jabal*, or Lord of the Mountain; he is one of their most important governors because of the proximity of his jurisdiction to Muslim territory. Any Muslim heading out for Nubia must deal through him, be it as a trader or as a bearer of gifts for him or for his sovereign. The governor accepts it all and repays the man with slaves, but allows no one, Muslim or other, to proceed upriver to his lord.

The cataract in Nubia begins at a village called *Baqwā*.⁽⁷⁾ It is an anchorage and the farthest point to go for the riverboats of the Nubians coming upstream from al-Qaṣr, the beginning of their country. No one, Muslim or other, is allowed to proceed upriver from there except by permission of their Lord of the Mountain.

From there to *al-Maqs al-Aʿlā* is a journey of six days. The place is all rocks and the worst area I have seen in their land, because it is so rugged and confined and its roads are so hard to negotiate. The river bed there is rocky, with crags across its course so that the Nile flows through ravines, and so narrow in some places, that the width from bank to bank is only fifty cubits. The shore there consists of narrow canyons and towering mountains, with trails so narrow that a rider cannot climb them and someone on foot who is not very strong finds them impossible to negotiate. To the west and east of it extend sand deserts. These mountains constitute their (natural) fortification where the people of the area adjoining Muslim territory downriver seek refuge in times of danger. On river islands one finds a few date palms and some sparse cropland. The main diet of the people living there is fish, the oil of which they use to coat their

As the alleged place of origin of Lokman (Koran 31:12,13) and of the Egyptian mystic Dhū ʿl-Nūn, also Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5:276, citing al-ʿUmari's *Masālik al-abṣār*.

⁷ Bulaq: *T-q-w-y*, hence Burckhardt's transcription *Takoa*, which he identifies with Wādī Ḥalfā.

bodies with. The area is part of the Marīs, the Southland, and the Lord of the Mountain is the governor of the people living there.

The commandant of the military post at al-Maqs al-A'lā, who is appointed by their king, runs a tight check on the post, so that, when their king passes through, the commandant will stop him and make as if he was searching him, then get around to (do the same with) his son and his vizier, and finally those below the two in rank. Neither dinar nor dirham passes beyond that area, for money transactions are effected only below the cataract with the Muslims. In the area above the cataract there is neither buying nor selling going on, but rather barter trade in slaves, small livestock, camels, iron, and grain. No one is allowed to go beyond the cataract except by permission of the king. Whoever violates that (rule) is punished with death, no matter who he is. Due to that precaution, whatever goes on there remains a tight secret, so that their soldiers may attack the area toward the desert, or other people, and no one has any knowledge of it.

Emery, which is used to polish gemstone, is hauled out of the Nile in those parts by diving for it. It feels cool (to the touch) and is quite unlike other stones. When in doubt whether it is emery, all one has to do is blow on it, and it will "sweat."

There are rocks (in the river bed) also from that military post (to) a village called Sāy. It is one of their provincial seats and they have a bishop there; it also has an ancient temple.

This is followed by the region of *Saqlūdhā*, which translates as "the seven governors." It resembles most closely the region adjoining Muslim territory, in that it is wide in some places and narrow in others and has date palms, grapevines, cultivated fields, and doom palms. There is also some cotton there, from which inferior garments are made, and olive trees. The governor of the region is appointed by their king and has under him several (sub-)governors with complete authority in their respective jurisdictions.

In that region is a fortress known as *Aṣṭanūn*. It marks the beginning of the Third Cataract, which is the most rugged one, because there is a mountain extending from east to west across the Nile and the river pours forth through three openings, or sometimes shrinks to only two when the water level is low. There is a tremendous roar (and one witnesses) an astounding spectacle, since the water falls down on the river below from the top of the mountain.

To the south of the cataract is a bed of rocks in the Nile extending over a distance of about three *barīds* (45 miles) to a village called *Bastū*, which is the last village of the Marīs and the beginning of the land of the Maqurrah.⁽⁸⁾ From that place to the border of Islamic territory the language of the people is Marīsī. It marks the end of their king's realm.

Next follows the region of *Baqūn*, which translates as "wonder;" and, indeed, it lives up to its name because it is so beautiful. Nowhere did I see along the Nile a land wider than it. I estimated that the width of the Nile in that area must be five day's journeys from east to west. The river is there interspersed with islands and between these run its secondary arms through low country past village after village and well-tilled fields, with pigeon cotes and goats and sheep. Most of their capital's food supply comes from that region. The birds one encounters there are the *taghtīt* (?),⁽⁹⁾ the *nūbī*, the parrot, and other beautiful species. The area is the most frequent retreat of their king. At one time I accompanied him, and we moved along on narrow canals shaded by trees on both banks. Crocodiles are said to do no harm there; I saw people swim across a lot of those river arms.

⁸ For the history of that Nubian people cf. J.S. Trimingham, *Islam in the Sudan* (London, 1949, pp. 59-72). Their kingdom between Marīs and 'Alwah disappeared early in the 14th century, when it was taken over by the Banū 'l-Kanz of Aswan.

⁹ Thus in the Wiet text, and then in ch. 32: *taghtīt*. One is as unlikely as the other. The Bulaq text has in both places *n-q-y-t*; HC 127r. *?-gh.t-?-t*; 129v. *?-gh-n-b-t*.

Then follows *Safad Baghl* (?),⁽¹⁰⁾ which is a narrow area reminiscent of the other end of their country (in the north), except that it has beautiful river islands. There are some thirty villages within less than two day's journeys, with beautiful buildings, churches and monasteries, with many palm groves, walled tree and garden plantations, fields, and large meadows where ordinary camels and blond camels kept for stud purposes graze. The region is often visited by their king, because its southern end is opposite their capital Dongola.

The city of Dongola, the capital of their kingdom, and Uswān are fifty day's journeys apart. [After giving a description of it, (al-Uswānī) adds:] The people there roof their assembly halls with acacia and teak wood which the Nile carries down at flood time (in the form of) hewn planks; no one knows where they come from. On some of them I noticed a strange mark.

The distance between Dongola and the beginning of the land of 'Alwah is greater than the one between Dongola and Uswān, and there are many more villages, estates, islands, herds of sheep and goats, date palms, trees, doom palms, fields and grapevines there than one finds in the region bordering on Muslim territory. In those parts are huge islands the size of several day's journeys, with mountains on them, and wild beasts and lions, and deserts where one fears to die of thirst.

The Nile curves from that area eastward over a distance of several days, so that someone going upriver becomes like someone going downriver, and then runs west (*sic*) again.⁽¹¹⁾ It is the area where the bends of the Nile touch the mine called *al-Shankah*, which is a place known as *Shanqīr*. It is from there that al-'Umarī [—i.e., Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd-Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn 'Abd-Allāh ibn

^{10.} Wiet: *S-f-dh B-^c-l*; Bulaq: *S-f-d B-q-l*; Troupeau: *S-f-d B-^c-l*; Burckhardt: *Sefidykal*; Quatremère: *Sefid-Bakl* (*Sefid-Baal?*, *Send-Bakl?*).

^{11.} This seems to be the intent of this somewhat garbled passage, because what is being described here is obviously the large bend in the Nile's course south of Dongola.

‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abd-Allāh ibn ‘Abd-Allāh ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb—] started out [after waging war against the Nubians and the Beja and defeating the army of Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn] and made himself the lord of that region, until he met his well-known fate.⁽¹²⁾

Hippopotamuses abound in those parts. From that place lead trails to Sawākin, Bāḍi‘ (Massawa), Dahlak, and the islands of the (Red) Sea. It is from these that the Umayyads who escaped (‘Abbāsīd persecution) by fleeing to Nubia crossed over (to Jiddah).⁽¹³⁾

In the area one finds a people of the Beja known as the *Zanāfiy*,⁽¹⁴⁾ who had moved into Nubia in ancient times and adopted the region as their home; they all share a pastoral life and (the same) dialect. They do not mix with the Nubians, nor do they live with them in their villages. They are under the authority of a governor appointed by the Nubian (king).

^{12.} The paragraph was already quoted in Pt. I, ch. 20 (sect. 13). —Al-‘Umarī, a direct descendant of the second caliph, was murdered in 873 by two of his slaves who wanted to ingratiate themselves with Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn (Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, 7:87). —The passages in square brackets are missing in the Bulaq edition.

^{13.} Cf. al-Mas‘ūdī, *Tanbih*, 330 (ed. al-Ṣāwī, 285-86).

^{14.} See also ch. 32, sect. 5.

31. How the Nile Branches out Beginning from the Land of ‘Alwah, and on the Peoples Living along Its Course

[1] One should know that the Nubians and the Maqurrah are two races with two (different) languages, both living along the Nile. The Nubians are the Marīs, who are immediate neighbors (to the south) of Muslim territory, the distance between the beginning of their country and Uswān being (a mere) five miles.

It is said that Salhā,⁽¹⁾ the ancestor of the Nubians, and Muqurrā, the ancestor of the Maqurrah, came from the Yemen; others have said that the Nubians and Muqurrā have their origin in Ḥimyar; but the majority of the genealogists are agreed that both are descendants of Ham son of Noah. There were wars between the Nubians and the Maqurrah before the advent of Christianity.

The land of the Maqurrah begins at a village known as *Tāfah*,⁽²⁾ a day's journey from Uswān, and their capital is called Bakhurās, less than ten day's journeys from Uswān. It is said that Moses, God's blessings upon him, invaded those people, before his call to prophethood at the time of Pharaoh, and destroyed Tāfah. They were (then) Sabians who worshiped the planets and erected statues in their honor. Later on, both the Nubians and the Maqurrah became Christians. The city of Dongola is the capital of their kingdom.

^{1.} Or *Salih*?

^{2.} The ancient *Teifa*, Greek *Taphis*, then *Hag' Tāfah*, a satellite of al-Ambarkāb in the district of Uswān (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 189), until its submersion by Lake Nasser. —For a more romantic version of Moses' exploit see Abū Ṣāliḥ (Evetts, *Churches*, 273-74).

The land of ‘Alwah begins at some villages on the east bank of the Nile known as *al-Abwāb*. That area has a governor who is appointed by the lord of the land of ‘Alwah and is known as *al-Waḥwāh*.⁽³⁾

From that region onwards, the Nile branches into seven rivers. There is a river, for instance, coming from the east and carrying muddy water. It dries out in the summer⁽⁴⁾ so that people can actually live in its bed. But at the time of the Nile’s rise, water wells up in its bed and the (few) pools in it begin to swell, and then come the rain and the torrents all around in the region and raise the level of the Nile. It has been said that the other end of that river is a very large spring which comes out of a mountain.

[2] The chronicler of the Nubians (al-Uswānī) reports: I was told by Simon, the crown prince of the land of ‘Alwah, that there lives under the mud in the bed of that river a large fish without scales which does not belong to any of the species found in the Nile. One must dig down a fathom or more in order to haul it out, and it is of considerable size.

Along that river lives a mixed race of ‘Alwah and Beja called “Dayḥis,” and another race called “Bāzah.” From (the area of) the latter comes a variety of pigeon which is known as *ḥamām bazīn*.⁽⁵⁾ Beyond those peoples begins the land of the Abyssinians.

Then there is the White Nile, which is a river that comes from the west and is as snow-white as milk. I asked a Maghribi who had traveled all over the land of the Blacks about the Nile in those parts and about its color, and he mentioned that it issues from the *Jibāl*

³ The text so far must be from a source other than al-Uswānī. Not only is the style completely different, but all data in it contradict the ones given in the preceding chapter—something which surprisingly escaped Wiet (cf. his note 2 on p. 259) and the translators of the Uswānī fragment. Troupeau, though, renders *ard al-Maḥurrah* in the third paragraph as “le pays des Nubiens,” apparently in an attempt to make the name of the capital tally with the one given in ch. 30.

⁴ This is the ‘Aṭbarah, which is dry from April to June. It originates northwest of Lake T’ana in the Ethiopian highland.

⁵ In Yāqūt (1:321) more plausibly: *ḥamām bāzī*.

al-Raml ('the Sand Mountains'), or *Jabal al-Raml*, and collects in the land of the Blacks in huge ponds, whence it flows to some unknown destination, and that it is (then) not white at all; it would have to acquire that color either from land it passes over or from another river that flows into it. On both sides of (the White Nile) live various races.

Then there is the Dark Nile,⁽⁶⁾ which is a river that comes from the southeast. It is dark green and (its water is) so clear that one can see the fish on its bottom. Its water has a different taste from that of (ordinary) Nile water and makes someone who drinks it quickly thirsty (again). The large fish in both rivers are of one and the same kind, but their taste is different. At the time of the Nile's inundation, it carries pieces of teakwood, brazilwood, bamboo, a kind of wood that smells like frankincense, and a coarse kind of wood which one dresses and from which one makes pestles;⁽⁷⁾ that wood also grows along its bank. Even frankincense is said to have been found in the river. On some of the hewn teakwood planks which the river carries at flood time I saw a strange mark.

These two rivers, the White and the Dark (Nile), join near the capital of the king of 'Alwah, but both retain their original color over a distance of close to a day's march, after which their waters blend, with huge waves between them as the rivers clash. I was told by someone that he took water from the White Nile and poured it into water from the Dark Nile, and for an hour it remained like milk before the two blended.

Between the two rivers is an island with no known end, just as no one knows where the two rivers end. The width of the former (at the confluence of the rivers) is known. Then it gets wider and wider until it is a month's journey wide, and from there on no one

^{6.} *Al-Nīl al-Akhḍar*, i.e., the Blue Nile.

^{7.} Suggested emendation: *madāqq*, since the context would seem to require a noun in the plural. Wiet/Bulaq: *miqdām* (?), which Burckhardt renders as 'helms (!) of ships' (Troupeau: proues 'bows'). Quatremère read *miqdhāf*, which is supposed to mean *rames* 'oars.'

can form a concept of how far apart the two rivers are, because the people living along their banks are afraid of each other. For along their banks live numerous races and many people. I heard that a certain ruler of 'Alwah marched across the island seeking to reach its farthest point, and after years of travel had not found it; also that in the southern part of it lives a race where people live with their animals in underground dwellings like tunnels during the day as protection against the extreme heat of the sun and only walk about at night; and among them are stark-naked people.

The remaining four rivers come simultaneously also from the southeast and their beginnings are equally unknown. Their width is less than that of the white and the dark river and they have fewer secondary arms and islands. All four rivers flow into the Dark (Nile),⁽⁸⁾ as does the first river I mentioned, which then unites with the White (Nile). All of them (flow through) inhabited, cultivated (land) and are navigable. One of the four comes straight from the land of the Abyssinians.

I asked many questions about them and sought information about them from people who claimed to have heard from other people, but I have yet to find an informant who could tell me that he actually knows all about the beginning of those rivers. All the information I was given by people who heard it from others boiled down to was that (one comes) to a wasteland, and that these rivers at flood time carry along boat gear, doors, and the like, which would indicate that there is civilized life beyond that wasteland.

As to the (annual) rise (of all those rivers), they are all agreed that it is caused by rains combined with some self-generating element. The latter is proven by the river that dries up, so that people can actually live in its dry bed, and then has springs well up in it at flood time. A wonder of the (Nile's annual) rise is that it occurs in all

8. Al-Uswānī seems to speak of the Rahat and Dinder rivers (with two tributaries), which join the Blue Nile at Wad Medani. In making the 'Aṭbarah flow into the Blue Nile, al-Uswānī obviously contradicts himself—if the last paragraph of the first section is by him (cf. note 3).

rivers together and in all regions and countries, in (Fusṭāt) Miṣr and the area (downriver) next to it, in Middle and Upper Egypt, at Uswān, in the countries of Nubia and ‘Alwah and the areas beyond, all in the same season and at the same time. The most one has discovered about this annual rise is that sometimes it may be observed at Uswān, for instance, but not at Qūṣ, only to occur there later, and (that) when they have heavy rains and the torrents flow continuously, one knows that it will be a year of irrigation, but when the rains fall short, one knows that it will be a year of drought.

I have been told⁽⁹⁾ by people who visited the land of the Zanj (the Negroes) how they travel there on the Sea of China under the north wind and by following the eastern coastline of the *Jazīrat Miṣr* until they reach a place known as *Ra’s Ḥafūnī* (Cape Hafun), which to them marks the farthest point of the latter. They then take a fix on a star and head (south)west. Then they head again due north until they come to Qanbaluh in the land of the Zanj, which is the capital of the Zanj ruler, and their direction of prayer is now toward Jiddah.

One of the four rivers, says (al-Uswānī), comes from the land of the Zanj, because on it float pieces of (a wood called) *khashab zanjī*.

Sōbah, the capital of the Aloan (ruler), is located (in the) eastern part of the great island formed by the White and the Dark Nile, at the northern end of it near the place where the two rivers join, and to the east of it is the river that dries up and whose bed is inhabit-

⁹ It is most unlikely that this paragraph is by al-Uswānī, and Troupeau indeed omits it. It is certainly out of place here in the middle of a description of the Sudan. —The term *Jazīrat Miṣr* ‘the Egyptian Peninsula,’ as distinguished from *Jazīrat al-‘Arab* ‘the Arabian Peninsula’ on the opposite side of the Red Sea, designates the northern part of the Horn of Africa, of which Cape Hafun (south of Cape Guardafui) is the easternmost projection. For the Ptolemaic concept of the Red Sea being part of the Sea of China cf. Pt. I, ch. 5. The last part of the itinerary here described is utterly puzzling (e.g., *Qanbaluh* is believed to be the island of Pemba, which is nowhere near a location from which the *qiblah* would run through Jiddah) and seems to have been mis-copied. See also Wiet’s lengthy note 3.

able (part of the year). The city has beautiful buildings, spacious houses, gold-filled churches, garden plantations, and a suburb inhabited by a colony of Muslims.

The ruler of 'Alwah is of higher status than the ruler of the Maqurrah and has the larger army; he also has more horses. than his Maqurran counterpart. His land is more fertile and spacious; he has very few palm groves and tree plantations, though. Their main cereal is white millet, which resembles rice and from which their bread and their beer are made. Meat is plentiful there because they have an abundance of small livestock and meadows so vast that it takes a man several days to reach the mountains (at the other end). They have pure-bred horses and blond Arabian camels.

They are Jacobite Christians and their bishops are appointed by the Patriarch of Alexandria, as is the case with the Nubians. Their scriptures are in Greek, and they interpret them and comment on them in their own language.⁽¹⁰⁾ They are less intelligent than the Nubians, and their king can enslave any one of his subjects he pleases, with or without (previous) offense, without their holding that against him. Indeed, they prostrate themselves before him and obey his order, despite the ignominy they suffer, shouting, "Long live the King! So be it!" He wears a golden crown, because gold is plentiful in his country.

One of the curiosities in his country is that there live on the big island between the two Niles a people known as the Kurasā (?),⁽¹¹⁾ who possess a vast stretch of land that is cultivated (with water both) from the Nile and from natural precipitation. Come planting time, every one of them goes out with his seed grain and marks off a plot commensurate with the seed he has brought along. He im-

¹⁰. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, the Nubians wrote for religious purposes in Syriac, Greek and Coptic (*Fihrist*, transl. B. Dodge, p. 36).

¹¹. Wiet: *al-K-r-sā*; Bulaq: *al-K-r-n-y-nā*. —It is doubtful that the remainder of this section with its miraculous stories and blatant incoherences is from the *Akhbār al-Nūbah*. It simply is not in keeping with al-Uswānī's factual description. This doubt was apparently shared by Monsieur Troupeau, whose translation breaks off at the preceding paragraph.

plants a little seed in the four corners of the plot, places the rest of the seed in the center of it together with a little beer, and leaves. And the next morning he finds the whole marked-off plot seeded and the beer drunk. At sharvest time, he again reaps a small amount of the crop and puts it down, together with some beer, in a place of his choosing. And again he will find the entire crop harvested and milled; and when he wants it threshed or winnowed, he will proceed likewise. Or someone may intend to weed his crop and pluck out by mistake some of the seedlings, and the next morning he will find the entire crop plucked up.

That region which contains the things I mentioned consists of vast tracts of land, two months by two months in extension, which are all planted at the same time. (In fact) the food supply for 'Alwah and their ruler comes from that region: they send out boats on which (the produce) is loaded, and sometimes fighting may break out among them.

This story is true, he says, and very well known among all the Nubians and the people of 'Alwah, and Muslim traders who have been all over that region have neither doubts nor suspicions about the matter. Still, were it not for the fact that it is too well known and too widely circulated as to allow the possibility of collusion, I would not mention any of it, because it is so scandalous. As far as the local people are concerned, they claim that demons do all that: that they appear to certain people and pelt them with stones, through which they become obedient to them, and then perform miraculous things for them; also, that the clouds obey them.

One of the strange things I was told by the ruler of the Maqurrah of the Nubians, he says, is that they go deep into the mountains and find there at once a kind of fish on the ground. I asked them what kind of fish that was, and they said it was of small size and had red tails. I met, he says, among those mentioned for the most part above, quite a number of people and certain races who acknowledge (the existence of) the Creator, praised be He, and seek to propitiate Him by means of the sun, the moon, and the stars; others

who do not know the Creator and worship the sun and daylight; and still, others who worship whatever they find appropriate, a tree perhaps, or an animal.

He mentions that he met a man at the court of the king of the Maqurrah. When he asked the man about his country, he replied that it was located at a distance of “three moons’ travel” from the Nile, and when he asked him about his religion, he answered, “My Lord, your Lord, the Lord of the King, the Lord of the common people they are all one and the same.” And when asked, “And where is He?” the man said, “In heaven, alone by Himself, praised be He!” When the rains are slow in coming, the man continued, or when (his people) are hit by a plague, or when an epidemic breaks out among their livestock, they go up on the mountain and pray to God, and their prayer is answered at once, and what they asked for is granted before they have descended from the mountain. When (the narrator) asked him whether a prophet had been sent among them, the man said no, so he told him about the mission of Moses and Jesus and Muḥammad, God’s blessings and peace upon them, and the miracles they had worked. Whereupon the man said, “If they have done all that, then they spoke the truth.” Then he added, “I hereby accept them as bringers of the truth, if they did.”

[3] The author of this book, God have mercy on him, adds: Nubia was conquered by the descendants of Kanz al-Dawlah⁽¹²⁾ and has been under their control since... In Dongola a cathedral mosque was built where foreign travelers seek shelter.

[4] One should know that along the bank of the Nile is also (the land of) the Kānim,⁽¹³⁾ whose king is a Muslim. Between it and

^{12.} *Kanz al-Dawlah* (Treasure of the Dynasty) was the hereditary title bestowed by the Fāṭimids on the chief of the Rabīʿah, Abū ʿl-Makārim Hibat-Allāh, who successfully quelled the rebellion of Abū Rakwah against the caliph al-Ḥākim (*Ittīʿāz*, 3:35, n. 3). —The year at the end of the sentence is left blank in all texts; it should be in the early 1300s.

^{13.} Most of this section is taken from Ibn Faḍl-Allāh al-ʿUmari’s *Masālik al-abṣār*, probably via Qalqashandi, who has exactly the same selections in *Ṣubḥ* 5:280-81. On the Kānim and their Saharan empire cf. the article “Kanem” by

the land of Mali is a very long distance. The capital of his kingdom is a place called *Jīmī*.⁽¹⁴⁾ His kingdom begins, coming from Egypt, at a place called *Dalā*.⁽¹⁵⁾ and ends, longitudinally, at a place called *Kākā*; the two are about three months' travel time apart.

The people there wear face veils, and their king remains secluded behind a veil, unseen by anyone except on the two days of the (Muslim) Feasts (al-Fiṭr and al-Aḍḥā) early in the morning and at the time of the afternoon prayer, while all year round he can only be addressed behind that veil.

They live mostly on rice, which grows wild. They also have wheat, sorghum, figs, lemons, eggplants, turnips, and dates. They do their trading with a fabric called *dindī*,⁽¹⁶⁾ which they weave themselves. Each piece of cloth is ten cubits long, of which they sell (anywhere) from one-fourth of a cubit and up (at a time). They also trade in seashells, beads, copper pieces, and raw silver, all pegged to the going rate of that fabric.

In the south of that country are forests and deserts inhabited by ferocious creatures similar to the ghoul, almost like humans in appearance, with which no horseman can keep up and which do harm to people. There also appears at night something resembling luminous fire pots.⁽¹⁷⁾ When someone walks up to them, they back

G. Yver in *El^e*. —The section is obviously out of place in this chapter and seems to have strayed here from the notes which Maqrīzī gathered apparently in preparation for a small treatise on the peoples of Africa. These notes, which found their way into about a dozen *Khīṭaṭ* manuscripts in various incongruous places, have been edited and translated by Dierk Lange in *Annales Islamologiques*, XV (1979), pp. 187-209 ("Un texte de Maqrīzī sur 'Les races des Sūdān'"). There, Maqrīzī says: "Kanem is a large region traversed by the Nile which flows toward Ghānah" (Lange 193, 201, no. 15), and it would seem that the same Nile, i.e., the "Sudanese Nile," is also meant here (cf. Lange's n. 1 on p. 201).

¹⁴ On the spelling of that name, Lange 198, n. 5.

¹⁵ Thus al-'Umarī. Wiet: *Z-lā*; Bulaq: *Z-r-lā*. —*Kākā*, "40 miles from *Jīmī*" (Njimi), according to al-'Umarī, was the capital of Bornu (*al-Barnū*).

¹⁶ Spelling uncertain.

¹⁷ Arabic: *qulal nār*, as in HC and in Qalqashandī (on the basis of the *Takmilah* of Abū 'Abd-Allāh al-Marrākushī). —Wiet: *filal* (?) *nār*; the Bulaq text omits the first word.

off, and even if he runs after them, he will never reach them; rather, they remain forever in front of him. But when he throws a rock at one of them and hits it, sparks will fly from it. Their calabashes grow so large that one can make boats from them with which one can cross the Nile.

This country between Ifrīqiyyah and Barqah (in the north) extends southward all the way to the middle route to the West. It is an arid, harsh and unhealthy region.

The first to spread Islam there was al-Hādī al-‘Uthmānī; he claimed to be a descendant of (the caliph) ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, God be pleased with him, [and eventually ruled the country.]⁽¹⁸⁾ After his death, the country passed into the hands of the Yazanite line of the Banū Sayf ibn Dhī Yazan.⁽¹⁹⁾

The people there adhere to the rite of the Imam Mālik ibn Anas, God rest his soul. Rectitude and equity are well established among them, and they are rigid and unbending in matters of the faith. In the 640s (1240s), they built a school for Mālikites in Old Cairo and their people have come to stay there ever since; it will be mentioned, God willing, in connection with the schools.⁽²⁰⁾

¹⁸. Passage in square brackets restored from Qalqashandī.

¹⁹. A subtribe of Ḥimyar (Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharah*, 478).

²⁰. *Khīṭaṭ* 2:365 (*Madrasat Ibn Rashīq*).

32. The Beja, who are said to be Berbers

[1] One should know⁽¹⁾ that the land of the Beja begins at a village called *al-Khirbah*, (which is) the emerald mine in the desert of Qūṣ. Between that place and Qūṣ is a distance of about two day's journeys.

[2] It was pointed out by al-Jāḥiẓ that this place is the only emerald mine in the world. The mineral is found in deep dark caves which one enters with lamps, and with ropes to guide one back as a precaution against getting lost. One digs for it with pick-axes, for it is found deeply embedded in rocks and surrounded by raw stone inferior in color and luster.

[3] The land of Beja ends where the land of the Abyssinians begins, since they live in the heart of that peninsula—I mean, the *Jazīrat Miṣr*⁽²⁾—all the way to the shore of the sea next to the islands of Sawākin, Bāḍi' (Massawa) and Dahlak.

The Beja⁽³⁾ are nomads who follow the vegetation wherever grazing is possible, (living) in tents made of animal hides. Their genealogy is matrilineal. Each of their subtribes has a chief, but they have no supreme ruler. Nor have they a religion. They have the sister's son and the daughter's son inherit before their own male offspring, claiming that the nativity of the sister's and daughter's son is legally more valid: whether he be from her husband or someone else, he is, at any rate, her progeny. In former times, they had a chieftain to

^{1.} Sections 1-6 are from al-Uswānī's *Akhbār al-Nūbah* (see end of section 6).

^{2.} See note 9 in the preceding chapter.

^{3.} The Beja (*al-Bujah*), a nomadic pastoral people speaking a Cushitic language, are the descendants of the ancient Blemmyes, whose frequent incursions and raids into Upper Egypt, from the early 2nd to the middle of the 5th century, contributed to the desolation of that part of the country and the gradual loss of Roman control of it.

whose authority all their chiefs deferred; he resided in a village called *Hajar*, which is the farthest point of the Beja enclave.

They ride excellent reddish-blond dromedaries which are a native breed. Also, camels of pure Arabian stock are quite numerous among them, and they have a very great abundance of livestock, such as cattle, goats and sheep. Their beef cattle, of which there is plenty, is handsome, flecked, and has enormous horns. Their rams, too, are spotted, and are fat in the rump.⁽⁴⁾

Their diet consists of meat and milk; rarely do they eat bread, although some of them do. Their bodies are healthy, their bellies lean, and their complexion is a bright yellow. They are swift runners who can outdistance other people.

Likewise, their camels are fleet of foot and possess great stamina in running and in going without water; on them they race horses and fight in combat, the animals following their every command, and with them they traverse distances for which the accounts vary. They fight on them in battle: One of them will hurl a spear, and if it lands in the target, the camel will fly to it so that the owner of the spear can pick it up again, and if it lands on the ground, the camel will lower its neck so that its rider can retrieve the spear.

At one time, there arose among them a man known as Kilāz,⁽⁵⁾ a strong and bold man, who had a camel swifter than any ever heard of. It was one-eyed, and so was its master. He pledged to his folk that he was going to look down on the oratory of (Fuṣṭāṭ) Miṣr on the day of the Feast (of Sacrifice), although the Feast was already so close that there was no real chance to get to Miṣr on time. Still, he kept his pledge and appeared on top of the Muqāṭṭam hills. Cavalry galloped after him in pursuit, but he could not be overtaken. This is the man who made it necessary to have, on the day of the Feast, an outpost stationed beneath the hills, and the Ṭulūnids and other

⁴ Read: *alyān*. Wiet/Bulaq: *wa-lahā albān* 'and they have milk' (?).

⁵ He was killed in a Muslim ambush in 256/870 (*Khīṭaṭ* 2:455).

emirs of Egypt would indeed position (henceforth) at every Feast a sizable troop at the foot of the Muqattam hills next to the place known as (Birkat) al-Ḥabash to keep an eye on the people until they left and went home after their celebration.

The Beja have a sacred custom: When one of them becomes the victim of deception, the injured party will hoist a piece of fabric on a spear and announce, "This is So-and-So's honor," meaning the perpetrator of the deception, so that (the deed) remains a public scandal for the other until he makes amends to the aggrieved party.

They also go to great lengths in hospitality. When someone has an overnight guest, he will slaughter an animal for him. When the visitors exceed three people, he will slaughter one of the sheep nearest to him, regardless whether it belongs to him or to someone else. And if there is nothing in the house, he will slaughter the guest's she-camel and compensate him with a better one.

Their (peculiar) weapon are "seveners" spears: the blade is three cubits long and the shaft measures four cubits, hence, they are called *subā'yyah* "seveners." The blade is as broad as a sword. Only sometime do they let go of those spears, for at the end of the shaft is something resembling a banded knob which prevents the spear from slipping from their hands. The makers of these spears are women who live in a certain place. No man other than an occasional buyer has any social contact with them. When one of these women (becomes with child) by (one of) those male visitors and gives birth to a girl, the women will let her live, but if she has a boy, they will kill him. They have a saying that men mean only trouble and fighting.

Their shields are made from cowhide with the hair on the outside. There are also shields with hair on the inside, called "Axumian," which are made of buffalo hide; likewise, "Dahlaki" shields are made from (the hide of) a certain sea animal.

Their bows are Arabian, large and thick, made from the lotus tree and the mountain yew; with them they shoot poisoned arrows.

That poison is made from the sap of the *ghalqah* shrub, which one cooks until it becomes like glue. When they want to test it, one of them will make an incision in his body and draw blood. Then he puts some poison into that blood: if the blood recedes, he knows that the poison is good and wipes the blood away, lest it return to his body and kill him. For someone struck by that poison will be killed instantly, even if a cupper were on hand to make an incision. Outside wounds and blood the poison has no effect, and if one swallows it, it does no harm.

Their whole country is full of mineral deposits. The farther south one penetrates, the better and the more plentiful the gold becomes. There are also deposits of silver, copper, iron, lead, magnetite, marcasite, amethyst, emerald, asbestos—when one soaks a strip of it in oil, it burns like a wick⁽⁶⁾—and other minerals which their search for gold has brought to their attention. But the Beja do not bother to mine any of these minerals.

In their valleys grow doom palms, myrobalan trees, *schoenanthum* rush, oriental wormwood, senna, colocynth, Egyptian willows, and the like. On the far end of their country one finds date palms, grapes, aromatic plants, and other things that grow wild. All sorts of wild beasts live there: lions, elephants, leopards, cheetahs, monkeys, caracals, civet cats, and an animal resembling a gazelle, handsome-looking, with two horns the color of gold, but of little stamina when hunted. Among their birds one finds the parrot, the *taghṭīṭ* (?), the *nūbī*, turtle doves, guinea fowl, *bāzīn* pigeons, etc.

Every one of their men is without a right nipple.⁽⁷⁾ As for their women, they have their labia vulvae cut off, and (their vagina) remains tightly closed until it is pierced open for the bridegroom

⁶ Compare Arabic *ḥajar al-fatīlah* (“wick-stone”) for the fine, silky asbestos called amianthus; otherwise, the preceding transliteration *bīshṭā* for “asbestos” is nowhere attested.

⁷ An unattested meaning of *bayḍah* demanded by the context, perhaps elliptic for *bayḍat al-ṣadr*. Or read *baḍ’ah* ‘lump of flesh’ in the sense of breast muscle (*baḍ’at al-ṣadr*)?

with (an instrument) the size of a man's penis; in later times, that practice of theirs has become rare, though. The reason for that, it is said, is that a king in ancient times, having waged war against them, made a peace treaty in which he stipulated that all new-born girls must have their breasts cut off and all new-born males their penises; by that means he intended to stop all future progeny. They did indeed fulfill the condition, only they reversed the intent by cutting off the breasts of the males and the vulvas of the females.

Among them live a people who have their front teeth removed, claiming that they "do not want to look like donkeys." They have another people at the very end of Beja country, called al-Bāzah, where all their women, and also their men, are called by the same name. Once a Muslim with certain good looks came to them, and they all called out to each other, "This must be God who has just descended from heaven!" while the man was sitting under a tree; and they kept eyeing him from a distance.

The snakes in their country are large and their species numerous. Once a snake was observed in a pool of water shooting out its tail, wrapping itself around a woman who had come to the water, and killing her. So strong was its squeeze that one could see her body fat come out of her anus. There is also a snake which has no head and whose two ends are the same; it has vivid markings and is not very big. When a man tracks it, he will die. And if it is killed and the man who killed it holds on to the thing he killed it with, like a piece of wood or a spear, instead of instantly throwing it away, he will also die. Once such a snake was killed with a pole, and the pole split right in half. Anyone looking at that snake, be it dead or alive, will fall victim to its harm.

There is evil in the Beja and they are quick to apply it. Both under Islam and before it, they have done considerable damage to the eastern part of Upper Egypt, where they completely destroyed numerous villages. The pharaohs of Egypt used to invade them and sometimes make peace with them, because they needed the mines (there). The same is true of the Romans, while they ruled Egypt.

They have left well-known relics in al-Ma'din,⁽⁸⁾ and their people (working the mines) were (still) there when Babylon had already been conquered.

[4] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam related:⁽⁹⁾ When 'Abd-Allāh ibn Sa'd ibn Abī Sarḥ was leaving Nubia, the Beja gathered for him along the bank of the Nile. He inquired about them and was told that they had no king to whose authority they deferred. So he attached no importance to them and left them without a formal treaty or peace agreement. The first person to conclude a formal peace treaty with them was 'Ubayd-Allāh ibn al-Ḥabḥāb al-Salūlī.⁽¹⁰⁾ (One of my teachers) reported that he found in Ibn al-Ḥabḥāb's letter to them the following: "Three hundred young camels per year for them to be allowed to camp in the (Egyptian) countryside in transit as non-resident traders, with the proviso that they must not kill a Muslim or a non-Muslim under Muslim protection, for if they do, their treaty will be forfeit; nor must they give shelter to slaves belonging to the Muslims, but must return their runaways when they come to them." It is said that they were made to abide by that. For every sheep taken by a Beja he had to pay four dinars, for every cow, ten. Their agent remained in the countryside as a hostage in Muslim hands.

[5] Subsequently, as more and more Muslims came to live in al-Ma'din, they began to mix with the Beja and intermarry with them, and many of the people known as the *Ḥadārib*⁽¹¹⁾ converted superficially to Islam. These represent the powerful elite of the people and their aristocracy. They live from the beginning of their territory in the border area of Upper Egypt all the way to al-'Al-

⁸. This seems to be the mining area in the *Wādī Khawānīb*, about 40 miles ESE of al-'Allāqī, where ancient mining equipment can still be seen today. Cf. Baedeker, *Egypt*, 397; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 5:274.

⁹. *Futūḥ Miṣr* (ed. Ṣabīḥ) 129.

¹⁰. Finance director of Egypt ca. 723-734.

¹¹. Qalqashandī (*Ṣubḥ* 5:274) considers the *Ḥadāribah* (sg. *Ḥudrubī*) Arab bedouins, perhaps because of their Muslim faith and their association with the Rabī'ah (described below in this chapter).

lāqī⁽¹²⁾ and 'Aydhāb, the crossing point to Jiddah and beyond. With them live another people known as the *Zanāfij*. Although more numerous than the Ḥadārib, they are the vassals of the latter and [serve as] their guards to protect them and to bring them goats and sheep as gifts. Every chief of the Ḥadārib has a band of Zanāfij among his porters; they are like slaves whom they inherit down the line, although the Zanāfij had once been dominant over them.

Later on, when the governors of Uswān came from the Iraq (i.e., in early 'Abbāsīd times), the Beja caused the Muslims so much trouble that their doings were brought to the attention of the caliph al-Ma'mūn, who sent 'Abd-Allāh ibn al-Jahm into the field to take care of them. The latter, after a number of armed clashes, concluded a treaty with them and wrote a letter (of agreement) between himself and their Great Chief Kanūn, who would (have had to) be (at the time) at the village of Hajar mentioned earlier. The document reads as follows:

This is a letter written at Uswān by 'Abd-Allāh ibn al-Jahm, freedman of the Commander of the Faithful, commander of the army of invasion, agent of Prince Abū Ishāq, son of the Commander of the Faithful al-Rashīd,⁽¹³⁾ may God preserve him, in the month of Rabī' I, 216 (April /May 831), to Kanūn ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, Chief of the Beja: You have asked and requested me that I assure you of safety for your person and for the people of the country of the Beja, and that I extend to you a guarantee of security to be binding for myself and for all Muslims. With this letter I hereby accede to your request of a formal assurance of safety to be binding for myself and for all Muslims, as long as you and your people abide by the terms you have offered and stipulated to me in this my writing, to wit:

That the plains and mountains of your country, from the outmost limit of Uswān in Egypt to the region between Dahlak and Baḍi' (Massawa), shall be a possession of al-Ma'mūn 'Abd-Allāh ibn Hārūn, the Commander of the Faithful, may God lend him strength, and you and all inhabitants of

^{12.} This community was located on the east bank of the Nile opposite al-Dakkah (the Egyptian *Per-Selket*, Greek *Pselchis*). It was until the 19th century a fiscal dependency of Ibṛīm and then, before its modern-day submersion by Lake Nasser, a village of the district of 'Inēbah (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 4:231).

^{13.} I.e., the future caliph al-Mu'taṣim bi-'llāh (833-842).

your country shall be slaves of the Commander of the Faithful, who is, however, confirming you in your country as ruler over whatever territory is (now) under your sway in the land of the Beja;

that you shall render to him the annual land tax in the amount owed by the Beja in the past, namely, one hundred camels, or three hundred dinars by weight to go to the Treasury, the option being the Caliph's and his governors', and that you have no right to withhold from him any of the land tax you owe;

that, if any one of you speaks of Muḥammad the Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him, or of the Book of God, or of His religion, in a manner that is inappropriate and unseemly, or if he kills any Muslim, be he a freeman or a slave, he shall have forfeited protection: the protection of God, the protection of His Apostle, peace and blessings upon him, the protection of the Commander of the Faithful, may God lend him strength, and the protection of the Muslim community, and he shall be an outlaw, as the people in the war zone and their progeny are outlaws;

that, if any one of you aids and abets those who fight the Muslims, or points out a weakness of the Muslims to such a person, or (in any way) detracts from their power, he shall stand in violation of the protection afforded by this covenant and shall be an outlaw;

that, if any one of you kills any Muslim, deliberately or by mistake, freeman or slave, or any one of the non-Muslims under Muslim protection, or if he takes away from any Muslim or non-Muslim under Muslim protection property in the land of the Beja, or in Muslim territory, or in Nubia, or in any place on land or at sea, then his bloodwit shall be the tenfold bloodwit for killing a Muslim, ten times the pecuniary value in the case of a slain Muslim slave, and the tenfold bloodwit at their respective rate for killing a protected non-Muslim, and for any property taken by you from Muslims and protected non-Muslims (the indemnity) shall be ten times its value. If any Muslim enters the land of the Beja as a trader, or a resident, or in transit, or as a pilgrim, he shall be safe among you as one of yours until such time as he leaves your country. You must not give shelter to any runaway slave of the Muslims, and should one come to you, he must be returned by you to the Muslims;

that you shall restitute money and property of Muslims, if now in your country, without undue trouble to its owners;

that, when you come down into the countryside of Upper Egypt for the purpose of trading or in transit, you shall not display weapons; nor shall you enter the towns and villages under any circumstance; nor shall you

prevent any Muslim from entering your country and engaging in trade there, on land and at sea; nor shall you make the roads insecure or waylay any Muslim or protected non-Muslim; nor must you steal property belonging to a Muslim or a protected non-Muslim;

that you shall refrain from destroying any part, or the whole, of the mosques built by the Muslims in Şanjah, Hajar, and all across the rest of your country, for if you perpetrate any such act, you shall be without covenant and without protection;

that Kanūn ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz shall remain and reside in the countryside of Upper Egypt as an agent to attend to the payment of the land tax as stipulated for the Beja and to make restitution for blood spilled and property taken by the Beja;

that none of the Beja shall cross the boundary line from al-Qaṣr to a village called Qubān in Nubia, on penalty of the law, not as a matter of trust.⁽¹⁴⁾

‘Abd-Allāh ibn al-Jahm, freedman of the Commander of the Faithful, hereby extends a guarantee of safety to Kanūn ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Chief of the Beja, on the terms designated and stipulated in this letter, and with the proviso that the letter shall be submitted to the Commander of the Faithful (for approval). Should Kanūn deviate (from its terms) or cause mischief, then he shall have neither covenant nor protection. It is incumbent on Kanūn that he permit the agents of the Commander of the Faithful to enter the land of the Beja for the purpose of collecting the elimosinary contributions of Beja converts to Islam. It is likewise incumbent on Kanūn to fulfill the conditions which he has stipulated to ‘Abd-Allāh ibn al-Jahm, and for which he has received God’s covenant of protection, with the utmost faithfulness and sense of obligation that he exacts from his own people. Kanūn ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and all Beja shall have the covenant and compact of God, the assurance of the Commander of the Faithful, the assurance of ‘Abd-Allāh ibn al-Jahm, and the assurance of the Muslims (altogether) to abide by the terms offered to him by ‘Abd-Allāh ibn al-Jahm, as long as Kanūn ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz discharges all obligations imposed on him. Should Kanūn make changes (in these obligations), or should any of the Beja make substitutions, then the protection of God, exalted be His name, the protection of the Commander of the Faithful, the protection of Prince Abū Ishāq, son of the Caliph al-Rashīd, the protection of ‘Abd-Allāh

¹⁴ The village of *Qubān*, the ancient *Beki*, was located just outside al-‘Allāqī to the south (cf. Baedeker, *Egypt*¹, 397).

ibn al-Jahm, and the protection of the Muslims shall be withdrawn from them.

The entire content of this letter was translated word-by-word by Zakariyyā ibn Šālīḥ al-Makhzūmī, a resident of Jiddah, and ‘Abd-Al-lāh ibn Ismā‘īl al-Qurashī. (The letter) was then given its final form by a group of notaries from Uswān.

For a while, the Beja abided by that, but then they reverted to raiding the countryside of Upper Egypt. As more and more outcries about them reached the caliph al-Mutawakkil-‘alā-‘llāh, he commissioned Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd-Allāh al-Qummī⁽¹⁵⁾ to make war on them. The latter asked permission to select the men he wanted, because, in view the difficult roads (in Beja territory), he had no desire for a large number of troops. He then set out from (Fusṭāṭ) Miṣr at the head of a strong force and some hand-picked men, and the ships sailed down the (Red) Sea.⁽¹⁶⁾

The Beja gathered to meet them in very large number; they were mounted on camels, which awed the Muslims. So (al-Qummī) distracted the Beja with a long letter which he wrote in *ṭumār* script⁽¹⁷⁾ and which he wrapped in a piece of cloth. And while the Beja were gathered to read it, he suddenly attacked them, his horses wearing bells around their necks, whereupon the camels, on account of the tinkling bells, shied under the Beja and refused to hold the line. The Muslims bore down on them in pursuit and cut down a great number of them. Their chief was killed and was succeeded by his

¹⁵ ‘Abbāsid general, for many years commandant of the annual pilgrimage escort, deputy governor and chief of the constabulary under governor (852-856) ‘Anbasah b. Iṣḥāq, died ca. 865. —For a more detailed account of his Beja expedition in 241/855 cf. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 9:203-06/III, 1429-33; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 2:295 ff.

¹⁶ Ṭabarī speaks of 20,000 men, horse and foot; Ibn Taghribirdī, of 7,000 combatants, not counting the train; both mention seven ships that sailed from al-Qulzum. The Beja army, according to Ṭabarī, outnumbered the Muslim force two to one.

¹⁷ A large script written with a palm quill or reed pen on the full-size page (*ṭumār*) and used, especially, in missives addressed to kings; cf. *Fihrist*, transl. B. Dodge, 13 ff. —The ruse of the letter is not reported by the other sources.

nephew,⁽¹⁸⁾ who sent emissaries to sue for a truce. He then concluded a peace agreement with the Muslims, on the condition that he must present himself personally to the Commander of the Faithful. So, having set out for Baghdad, he arrived at al-Mutawakkil's court in Samarra in 241 (A. D. 855/6). He was granted peace terms on the condition that he pay tribute and the *baqt*,⁽¹⁹⁾ and the further condition that the Beja must not interfere with the Muslim mining operations in al-Ma'din. Al-Qummī stayed on in Uswān for some time and left in its arsenals the weapons and raiding gear he had brought along, and (subsequent) governors (of that town) kept drawing on that store until they had nothing left.

As the number of Muslims in al-Ma'din increased, and as they began to mingle with the Beja, the mischief of the latter became rarer. Because so many people were searching for it, gold was discovered, and people, hearing about it from one another, came from other parts of the country. Then arrived Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd-Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-'Umarī, after having fought the Nubians in 255 (A.D. 869), and brought with him Rabī'ah, Juhaynah and other Bedouin Arabs. Thanks to them, (Muslim) colonization in Beja territory increased to such an extent that it took up to 60,000 camels to carry supplies to them from Uswān, not to mention the boats which brought provisions from Suez to 'Aydḥāb.

The Beja favored the Rabī'ah and married into their tribe. It has been said that the shamans of the Beja, before some of them converted to Islam, would call it the will of their idol that they obey the Rabī'ah and stand by them, and that is what they did. After al-'Umarī's murder, the Rabī'ah gained control of the Jazīrah (Meroë) with the help of the Beja. They drove out the Arabs that opposed them and became related by marriage to the chieftains of the Beja.

^{18.} Both Ṭabarī and Ibn Taghribirdī give the chief's name as *ʿAlī Bābā*, who, in their account, was not killed but sent to Baghdad, where al-Mutawakkil pardoned him. They also speak of his son, rather than his nephew, whom Ṭabarī calls *Laʿīs*, Ibn Taghribirdī *Layʿīs Bābā*; he was, according to the second, sent to Baghdad by his father.

^{19.} A tribute in the form of slaves; see ch. 36.

With that, the Muslims were no longer exposed to the harm and damage of the Beja.

[6] The Beja who live in the desert of the land of 'Alwah from the Red Sea coastal region all the way to the beginning of Abyssinian territory are, like the Ḥadārib, nomads who move with their herds from place to place in pursuit of pasture and a livelihood, and (they have the same) boats and weapons. Except that the Ḥadārib are braver and in possession of a higher religion, while the inland Beja persist in their unbelief as worshipers of the Devil and as followers of their shamans. Each tribe has its own shaman, who sets up a dome-shaped tent made of animal hide in which he reduces those people to the submissiveness of slaves. For when they wish to consult him on something they need, he will take off all his clothes and enter that tent with his back turned to them, and then come out to them, showing signs of madness and mental disturbance, and say (things like): Satan sends you greetings and tells you to abandon this journey, for such-and-such a band will pounce on you; or, You have asked about raiding such-and-such a place; go ahead, for you will be victorious and will make such-and-such booty; or, The camels which you will take from place X belong to me, as do such-and-such a girl you will find in such-and-such a tent and the sheep which look so-and-so, etc. They claim that in most of that he tells them the truth. When they capture booty, they single out the things he has specified and give them to the shaman so he can add them to his considerable wealth, and they deny the milk of their camel mares to anyone who is not favorably received (by him). When they are about to strike camp and depart, the shaman will load that (dome-shaped) tent on a single camel. That camel, they claim, can then rise only with great effort and also can walk only with difficulty and dripping with sweat; yet the tent is empty and there is nothing in it. Among the Ḥadārib are still some who practice that cult, and some who adhere to it despite their conversion to Islam.

The chronicler of the Nubians—it is from his book that I have excerpted the preceding account—says: “I read in the sermon on human races delivered by the caliph ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, God be pleased with him, a reference to ‘the Bujah and the Kujah,’ of whom he says: *shadidun kalabuhum, qalilun salabuhum*—‘they are strong on madness, but short on spoils.’ The Beja are like that; as for the Kujah, them I do not know.”

Here ends the account of ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Aḥmad (al-Uswānī), chronicler of the Nubians.

[7] Abū ’l-Ḥasan al-Mas’ūdī reports:⁽²⁰⁾ As to the Beja, they had their camps between the Sea of al-Qulzum and Nile of Egypt. They formed several branches and chose a king to rule them. In their country are gold—meaning, gold dust—deposits and emerald mines. Their bands and marauding parties, mounted on swift dromedaries, used to raid as far as Nubia. In earlier days, the Nubians used to be more vigorous than the Beja. (That was) until the time when the Muslim presence (in the area) became stronger and a considerable number of Muslims came and settled at the gold mine⁽²¹⁾ and in the areas of al-‘Allāqī and ‘Aydḥāb. In those parts settled (northern) Arab people of the Rabī‘ah ibn Nizār ibn Ma‘add ibn ‘Adnān. Subsequently they became more and more powerful and intermarried with the Beja, and thus the Beja gained in strength. Still later, a clan of the Rabī‘ah, thanks to the Beja, gained ascendancy over their declared enemies and rivals among the (southern Arab) Qaḥṭān and others dwelling in those parts.

The lord of al-Ma’din in our own day, which is the year 332 (A.D. 943/4), is Bishr ibn Marwān ibn Ishāq ibn Rabī‘ah.⁽²²⁾ He rides at the head of three thousand Rabī‘ah and their Mudar and Yemenite allies, and of thirty thousand Beja warriors, mounted on drome-

^{20.} *Prairies d’or* 3:32-34.

^{21.} Presumably the gold mines of *Umm Garāyāt* in the Wādī Khawānib (cf. Baedeker, *Egypt*⁷, 397).

^{22.} Thus in the Wiet and Bulaq texts; in the original: “Abū Bishr Marwān b. Ishāq, who is a Rabī‘ah.”

daries and armed with lances and Bejawi bucklers. They are the *Ḥadāribah*, who are the only Muslims among the Beja. The inland Beja are infidels who worship an idol they have.

[8] The homeland of the nomadic Beja, who own the emerald mine, borders on [the Wādī] al-‘Allāqī, which is the site of gold deposits.⁽²³⁾ Between [the Wādī] al-‘Allāqī and the Nile is a journey of fifteen days. The nearest outpost of civilization is the town of Uswān.

[9] The island of *Sawākin* is less than a square mile in size. Between it and the Abyssinian Sea is a short (arm of the) sea that can be forded. Its population is a Beja people called *Khāsah*. They are Muslims and have their own king.

[10] Al-Hamdānī says: Canaan son of Ham married Artīl,⁽²⁴⁾ the daughter of Batāwīl son of Tiras son of Japheth, and she bore him Khafā⁽²⁵⁾ and the dark (races): Nūbah, Fazzān, the Zanj, the Za-ghāwah, and (all) the races of the Sūdān. It has been said that the Beja are descended from Ham son of Noah, and others have claimed that they are descendants of Cush son of Canaan son of Ham.

[11] Someone has said: The Beja are a tribe of the Abyssinians. They live in goat-hair tents, and their complexion is of a deeper black than that of the Abyssinians. They wear the dress of the Bedouin Arabs. They have neither towns nor villages nor cultivated fields, and they live on the things brought to them from Abyssinia, Egypt and Nubia. The Beja used to worship idols, then they became Muslims at the time when ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Sarḥ was

²³. The section, badly condensed, is taken from al-Mas‘ūdī (*Prairies d’or* 3:50). It refers to the gold mines, worked since pharaonic times, in the Wādī al-‘Allāqī, east of the Nile between the First and Second Cataracts, the main gold-producing area of Nubia.

²⁴. Thus in Ṭabarī (*Tārīkh* 1:202/I,212); Bulaq: *Artīb*; Wiet: *Arsal*. —The passage is probably from al-Hamdānī’s *K. al-Iklīl* (cf. Guest, “Writers, Books,” p. 111).

²⁵. Thus Wiet, following Quatremère; Bulaq: *Ḥaqā* (hence Burckhardt *Haka*). It is missing in Ṭabarī.

governor of Egypt. One finds among them generosity and liberality. They are divided into tribes and subtribes, each subtribe having a chief. They are food-gatherers and their diet consists only of meat and milk.

33. The Town of Uswān

[1] “Uswān” comes from (the verb) *asiya—ya’sā—asan*, meaning ‘to be or become sad,’ and one speaks of someone (as) *asyān* or *aswān*, that is, grieving, mourning, sorrowful.⁽¹⁾

[2] Uswān is located at the very end of Upper Egypt. It is a regional frontier town which separates the Nubians from Egypt. One used to grow there a great deal of wheat and other cereals, as well as fruit, vegetables, and leguminous plants. The town has also a lot of livestock—camels, cattle, goats and sheep; their meat is of extremely good quality and extraordinarily rich, and has always been cheap in price. It also has commercial establishments, and goods are moved from there to Nubia.⁽²⁾

No Muslim territory borders on Uswān on its eastern side. To the south of it is a mountain which contains the emerald mine; it is located in an isolated steppe away from the civilized world. Fifteen day’s journey from Uswān is the gold mine (of al-‘Allāqī). On its western side, Uswān connects with (the region of) the Oases. One travels from Uswān to ‘Aydhāb and then continues to the Hejaz and on to the Yemen and India.

[3] The town of Uswān, says al-Mas‘ūdī,⁽³⁾ is inhabited by Arab people—Qaḥṭān, Nizār, Rabī‘ah, Muḍar, and numerous Quraysh, most of them from the Hejaz. The area is rich in date palms, fertile, and blessed with much good. All one has to do is stick a date pit into the ground and a palm tree will grow, and already two years later one can eat from its fruit.

¹ It is from the Coptic *Souan*, (Greek *Syēnē*) from Egyptian *Soun* ‘market.’

² This paragraph is taken from al-Idrisī.

³ *Prairies d’or* 3:41-43.

People near Uswān (to the south) own many estates, which lie inside Nubian territory and for which they pay the land tax to the king of the Nubians. Those estates were bought from Nubians in the early Islamic period, during the time of the Umayyads and the ‘Abbāsids. When (the caliph) al-Ma’mūn visited Egypt (in 832) the Nubian king had appealed to him for assistance against those people by sending a Nubian delegation to Fustāṭ that was to submit on his behalf: that certain individuals among his subjects and slaves had sold some of their estates to their neighbors in Uswān, that these had been his estates and the people involved slaves without property, their tenure of those estates being no more than the tenure of slaves who live on them. Al-Ma’mūn referred their case to the magistrate in Uswān and to the local learned doctors and sheikhs. When the people in Uswān who had bought those estates found out that they were going to be taken away from them, they came with a clever stratagem against the Nubian king: They proposed to those Nubians from whom (the estates) had been purchased that, when they appear before the magistrate for a hearing, they must not concede to their king to be his slaves and should argue: “We have to live in close association with the Muslims, you (Muslims) have to follow your sovereign, whom we (also) must obey and not act against; ergo, if you are slaves of your king and your property belongs to him, then the same applies to us.” Thus, when the magistrate confronted them with the representative of the (Nubian) king, they advanced this argument—and others along that line which the Uswānis had instructed them to adduce – to the magistrate, who ruled that the (original) sale was legal on the grounds that they did not admit to having been slaves of their king up to that time. People could now inherit those estates on Nubian territory in the region of the Marīs, and the Nubians, the subjects of that king, became of two kinds: one whom we would call freemen and non-slaves, while the other kind of his subjects are slaves; the latter are those living in (the parts of) Nubia outside the region adjacent to Uswān—in other words, the country of the Marīs.

[4] (For) the Nubians, he says earlier,⁽⁴⁾ split into two groups: One, east and west of the Nile, that settled on both banks of the river and whose homeland bordered on that of the Copts of Upper Egypt; the settlements of these Nubians kept expanding upriver along the bank of the Nile until they reached almost its uppermost beginning; they built a capital, which is a big city called *Dongola*. The other group of Nubians are called 'Alwah: they also built a big city, which they called *Sōbah*. The part of the Nubian kingdom adjacent to the region of Uswān is known as *Marīs*, whence derives the term *al-rīḥ al-marīsiyyah*—the south wind. That province of their king borders on the districts of Upper Egypt and the town of Uswān.

[5] In the eastern part of Upper Egypt, he says (elsewhere),⁽⁵⁾ is the very large hill of marble from which the ancients used to hew columns and the like. As for these columns, bases and capitals, which the Egyptians call *uswānī* (i.e., from Aswan) and from which (nowadays) millstones are made, those were carved out by the ancients hundreds of years before the emergence of Christianity. To these belong the columns in Alexandria.

[6] In Dhū 'l-Hijjah 344 (March/April 956) the king of the Nubians attacked Uswān and killed quite a number of Muslims. (A month later) in Muḥarram 345, at the behest of Ūnūjūr ibn al-Ikhshīd,⁽⁶⁾ Muḥammad ibn 'Abd-Allāh al-Khāzin marched against him at the head of the army of Egypt. They proceeded both on land and on the Nile and, after inflicting punishment on the Nubian king, sent back a number of Nubian captives who were then beheaded. Al-Khāzin kept advancing until he conquered the town of Ibrīm, whose population he led into captivity. In the middle of

⁴ *Prairies d'or* 3:31-32.

⁵ *Prairies d'or* 2:381. —The passage was already quoted in ch. 11 (section 2).

⁶ The son and successor of Muḥammad b. Ṭughj, *regn.* 946-61. —Five years earlier, the Nubians had launched a major attack on the Oases (see ch. 73, end).

Jumādā I (and of August) [3]45, he was back in (Fuṣṭāṭ) Miṣr with 150 prisoners of war and a number of (severed) heads.

[7] Al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil reports: The taxes collected from the frontier town of Uswān in 585 (A.D. 1189) came to 25,000 dinars.

[8] Kamāl al Dīn Jaʿfar al-Idfuwī relates:⁽⁷⁾ In Uswān used to be eighty bailiffs. In a single year one harvested at Uswān 30,000 *ird-abbs* of dates. We were told by someone that he had read a document containing (the names of) forty descendants of the Prophet alone, and that he saw in another document (the names of) sixty *sharīfs*, not including those others. I personally read a document containing (the names of) some forty chroniclers for the period after 620 A.H. (alone).

Near the frontier town of Uswān used to be the Banū ʿl-Kanz of the Rabiʿah—princes eulogized and sought after (by poets). The learned Abū ʿl-Ḥasan Ibn ʿArrām⁽⁸⁾ wrote for them a family history in which he records their exploits and the name of those who eulogized them and came to seek their patronage. When Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb sent an army against Kanz al-Dawlah and his men, the Banū ʿl-Kanz moved out of the region. As (the troops) entered their (abandoned) tents, they found there the odes of their panegyrists, among them the ode of Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn al-Zubayr, in which he says:

If Fate betrays someone and strikes, he's helped
by men of judgment when he's down.
When they protect, no one's in fear beneath the stars,
and when they give, there's none left destitute on earth.

⁷ *Al-Ṭālīʿ al-saʿīd* (Cairo ed.) p. 12; cf. also Ibn Duqmāq (5:34).

⁸ ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Rabaʿī, died 1184, (cf. Ziriklī, *Aʿlām*, 5:61) He was the nephew of the Uswān poet Abū Muḥammad Hibat-Allāh b. ʿAlī b. ʿArrām (d. 1155; *ibid.*, 9:62).

(The recipient) awarded him a prize of one thousand dinars for it and made him the waqf beneficiary of a waterwheel worth another thousand dinars.

[9] There used to be an armed garrison at Uswān to guard the frontier area against Nubian and Sudanese attacks. But after the Fāṭimid state had come to an end, all of that was neglected. As a result, the Nubian king, leading an army of ten thousand strong, moved out and camped opposite Uswān on an island whose entire Muslim population he took captive. [10] Subsequently, the frontier area continued to decline, and from 790 (A.D. 1388) onward it was taken over by the descendants of Kanz al-Dawlah, who caused much disorder and destruction. [11] They fought repeatedly with the governors of Uswān down to the time of the great afflictions, which began in 806 (A.D. 1403/4), and the consequent desolation of Upper Egypt. As a result, the frontier area of Uswān was abandoned by the sultanate, and the sultan had no longer a governor in the town of Uswān, and for several years the area's condition deteriorated even further. [12] Then, in Muḥarram 815 (April/May 1412), a large force of Hawwārah (Berbers) advanced on Uswān and fought and defeated the descendants of Kanz al-Dawlah, killing a great number of people and leading the women and children there into captivity. They enslaved all (the survivors), razed the city wall of Uswān, and departed with the captives, leaving the town waste and desolate without a single inhabitant.

[13] And it has remained that way, after it once had been such that 'Abd-Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Sulaym al-Uswānī could report in his *Nubian Chronicles*:⁽⁹⁾ "After Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd-Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-'Umarī had conquered al-Ma'dīn (after 255/869), he wrote to Uswān, asking the local merchants to bring him supplies by way of the road to al-Ma'dīn. Thereupon a man by the

⁹ Presumably al-Uswānī, the source of the preceding paragraph which was quoted before in ch. 32 (sect. 5).

name of ‘Uthmān ibn Ḥanjalah al-Tamīmī set out with a thousand camels loaded with supplies and wheat.

[14] It has been reported that, after al-‘Umarī had returned to the Beja region following his wars with the Nubians, (Muslim) colonization there increased to such an extent that it took up to 60,000 camels to carry supplies to them from Uswān, not to mention the boats which brought (provisions) from al-Qulzum to ‘Aydhāb.

[15] Among the things, he says, which several of our most trustworthy teachers in Uswān witnessed at a village called Ushāshī (?) two-and-a-half days from Uswān was that (once) they saw to the east of it on the Nile side a walled town with a sycamore tree outside its gate and people going in and out. But when they crossed over to the site, they found nothing. This (mind you) would be in the winter, not in the summer, and before the sun was up!⁽¹⁰⁾ Yet these people unanimously claim to have seen the town and that the story is true.

[16] Uswān used to have various kinds of dried and fresh ripe dates, among them a variety of the latter in the most vivid green color of chard. Hārūn al Rashīd had the different varieties of Uswāni dates collected for him, one date of each kind, and the collected samples measured one *waybah* (15 liters). There are no known *busr* (fully grown unripe dates) in the world that turn into *tamr* (overripe dried dates) before they become *ruṭab* (fresh ripe dates), except at Uswān.⁽¹¹⁾

^{10.} I.e. a mirage would have to be ruled out.

^{11.} The tradition is attributed by Yāqūt (*Muḥjam al-buldān* 1:191-92) to “al-Ḥasan b. Ibrāhīm al-Miṣrī,” i.e. Ibn Zūlāq (d. 997) who quotes one “Abū Rajā’ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad”—actually, Abū Rajā’ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Rabī’ b. Sulaymān b. Abī Maryam al-Uswānī, a noted Shāfi‘ite jurist, man of letters and poet, who died in 947 (cf. al-Subkī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, 3:70-71; al-Idfuwī, *al-Ṭalī’ al-sa‘īd*, 267). Maqrīzī’s adaptation of the passage is a rather poor one. — Ibn Duqmāq, incidentally, makes the same claim for the dates of al-Faramā (5:53).

34. Bilāq (Philae)

[1] Bilāq is the last Muslim fortification⁽¹⁾ (to the south). It is an island near the (First) Cataract surrounded on all sides by the Nile. On it is a large community inhabited by a great number of people. It has superb date palms and a regular Friday mosque.

[2] To Bilāq⁽²⁾ come the boats of the Nubians (from upriver) and the boats of the Muslims from Uswān. Between it and a village called al-Qaṣr, which is the first Nubian community, is a distance of one mile, and between it and Uswān, a distance of four miles. From Uswān to that place extends a cataract which boats can negotiate only by clever maneuver and with the help of experienced guides from among the fishermen who fish in the area. At al-Qaṣr is a military border post and a gateway leading to Nubia.

¹ The Arabs took over and restored a Roman fortress built by the emperor Diocletian. This may be the origin of one of the local names for the island—*al-Qaṣr*.

² This text by al-Uswānī was already quoted in ch. 30 (section 2, beginning).

35. The Wall of the Old Woman

[1] That wall was once a fortification of Egypt that encircled the entire country. It had guard stations and military border posts, and on the other side of it was a canal fed by running water and spanned by bridges. It was built by Dalūkah, the daughter of Zabbā. It became dilapidated and crumbled away, and only a paltry remnant of it is left on the eastern bank of the Nile toward Uswān.

[2] Abū 'l Qāsim 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Abd-Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam relates in his *Conquests of Egypt*:⁽¹⁾ After they—that is, Pharaoh and his troops—had drowned, Egypt was left without a single nobleman and only slaves and hired hands and women were still alive. Since the highborn women of Egypt found it hard to entrust the government to one of the former, they decided unanimously that they should be governed by a woman from their midst by the name of Dalūkah, the daughter of Zabbā. She had a good mind, was knowledgeable and experienced, and was honored and held in high esteem by them. At the time, she was one hundred and sixty years old. So they made her their queen. Now, Dalūkah feared that the rulers of the earth might receive her in an insulting way. She therefore assembled the women of the nobility and told them: “No one used to be after our land or (dare) cast a covetous eye on it. But now our grandees and our noblemen are dead and the sorcerers, through whom we used to be strong, are gone. So I have decided to build a fortification with which I will surround the entire country. I shall put watchtowers on it on all side, for we cannot be certain that (other) people will not seek to lay hands on us.” She then had a wall built with which she enclosed the entire land of Egypt, the cropland and the towns and the villages, and this side of

^{1.} *Futūḥ Miṣr* (ed. Ṣabīḥ) 30. —This tradition has already been quoted twice, in Pt. I, ch. 10 (sect. 25), and in an abridged version in chapter 3 of this part of the book.

it she built a canal fed by running water. Then she built bridges and secondary canals, and she positioned watchtowers and observation posts along the wall at three-mile intervals, and in between she put smaller guard posts a mile apart. Each guard station she manned with a garrison and had the men supplied with rations. She instructed them to perform their guard duty by means of bells: when someone to be feared approached them, they were to send bell signals to one another so that the news would reach (the Egyptians) within an hour from any direction and they could attend to the matter. In that manner she protected Egypt against anyone seeking to establish dominion over it. She finished the construction in six months, and this is the wall called "The Wall of the Old Woman" in Egypt. Numerous remnants of it have survived in Upper Egypt.

36. The “*Baqṭ*”

[1] The (term) *baqṭ*⁽¹⁾ designates the quota of Nubian slaves received annually and delivered to Egypt as part of the tribute owed by the Nubians.

If this term is Arabic (in origin), then it comes either from the saying “the land has *baqṭ* of herbage and grass”—that is, small pieces, or patches, of pasture, in which case it would mean ‘a small portion of property;’ or it comes from the saying “among the Banū Tamīm is a *baqṭ* of Rabī‘ah”—i.e., a group or splinter, in which case its meaning would be ‘a division, or portion, of something possessed;’ hence (the phrase) *baqṭ al-arḍ* ‘portion of land,’ and (the verb) *baqqaṭa l-shay* ‘to parcel out, apportion something.’ (The verbal noun) *baqṭ* means “the leasing of a garden for one-third or one-fourth (of its yield). (The noun) *baqṭ* also means ‘that which is lost of a harvest⁽²⁾ because the sickle missed it;’ in which case it would mean ‘the portion of the Nubians’ property that is lost’.

[2] One used to collect⁽³⁾ it from (the Nubians) at a village called al-Qaṣr, located five miles from Uswān between Philae and Nubia. This al-Qaṣr used to be a river harbor for (boats destined for) Qūṣ.

The first time this form of tribute was settled on the Nubians was while ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ was Emir (of Egypt), when the latter, after the conquest of Babylon, sent ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Sarḥ with an army of 20,000 against the Nubians in the year 20 (A.D. 641)—or

^{1.} Probably a loan word, viz., Greek *pakton* or Latin *pactus* ‘treaty, contract,’ although a possible Egyptian word *bakh* meaning ‘barter’ has also been suggested. Cf. “Bakṭ” (F. Løkkegaard) in *EF*.

^{2.} Read with *Tāj al-‘arūs* (5:10): *al-thamar*. Wiet/Bulaq: *al-tamr* (?).

^{3.} This section is taken from al-Uswānī.

21, according to others. ‘Abd-Allāh stayed in Nubia for some time, until ‘Amr wrote to him and ordered him to return home.⁽⁴⁾

After ‘Umar’s death (in 644), the Nubians broke the peace agreement between them and ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa’d and numerous bands of them roamed into Upper Egypt, causing ruin and destruction. Whereupon ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Sarḥ, who was then governor of Egypt during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān, God be pleased with him, invaded the Nubians a second time in the year 31 (A.D. 631/2). He threw a strong blockade around the town of Dongola and bombarded the Nubians with a mangonel, (a machine) unknown to them. He leveled their church with a stone—a feat that stunned them—and their king, by the name of Qulaydurūt,⁽⁵⁾ sued for peace. He came to ‘Abd-Allāh with all signs of meekness, despondency and humility, but ‘Abd-Allāh received him well, telling him to rise and approach him. Then he settled the peace with the king on the basis of an annual quota of 360 slaves; ‘Abd-Allāh (in turn) promised to supply him with grain any time he should suffer a food shortage in his country. He drew up a document for the Nubians which reads:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Beneficent. A formal commitment on the part of Emir ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Sarḥ to the ruler of Nubia and all the people of his kingdom, made to apply to the Nubians, old and young, from the confines of the area of Uswān to the boundary of the land of ‘Alwah, to the effect that ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Sarḥ extends to them the assurance of safety and a valid truce between them and the Muslims—those among the people of Upper Egypt who are their immediate neighbors and other Muslims, as well as protected non-Muslims:

You, the people of Nubia, are safe in the peace of God and the peace of His Apostle, the Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings upon him, in that we shall not wage war against you, nor engage you in fighting, nor in-

⁴ This first raid into Nubia in the year 20 ended in a draw, according to Ṭabari (*Tārīkh* 4:111/I, 2593). The Arabs, on the occasion, learned to dread the deadly aim of the Nubian archers.

⁵ The vowelizing is uncertain. Bulaq: *Q-l-y-d-w-r-w-th*.

vade your territory, as long as you abide by the conditions now established between us and you, to wit:

You shall enter our country only in transit as non-residents, and we shall enter your country only in transit and as non-residents; it shall be your duty to protect any Muslim, or non-Muslim under Muslim protection, staying at, or visiting, your country until such time as he departs from you.

You shall return any fugitive slave of the Muslims coming to you and promptly send him back to Islamic territory.

You shall return any Muslim who is engaged in fighting other Muslims and seeks asylum with you, and shall evict such a person from your country to Islamic territory, without befriending or defending him.

It shall be your duty to safeguard the mosque built by the Muslims within the confines of your town; you shall not prevent any worshiper from entering it and shall not stand in the way of any Muslim while he performs his spiritual exercises therein; it shall also be your duty to sweep it, see to its lighting, and show it proper respect and honor.

You shall deliver every year to the Caliph three hundred and sixty middle-age slaves of your country without physical defect, this number comprising males and females, but not old men and women, nor children below the age of puberty; delivery shall be made to the governor of Uswān.

No Muslim shall be obligated to ward off an enemy that arises against you, nor to defend you against him, from the boundary of the land of 'Al-wah to the area of Uswān.

Should you give shelter to a slave belonging to a Muslim, or kill a Muslim or a protected non-Muslim, or allow the mosque built by the Muslims within the confines of your town to be destroyed, or withhold any part of the (stipulated) three hundred and sixty heads (of slaves), then this truce and the assurance of safety shall be forfeit to you, and we and you alike shall have returned (to the status quo ante) "*until God shall judge*" between us; "*and He is the best of judges.*"⁽⁶⁾

We are bound in this matter by the covenant and compact and guarantee of protection of God and the guarantee of protection of His Apostle Muḥammad, peace and blessings upon him. You, in turn, are bound toward us in this matter by the greatest possible allegiance you owe to the covenant of the Messiah, the covenant of the Apostles, and the covenant

⁶. Koran 10 (Jonah):109.

of the venerated men of your religion and creed. God is witness between us and you in this.

Done by the hand of ‘Umar ibn Shuraḥbīl in Ramaḍān 31 (April/May 652).

The Nubians, before they broke (the contract), had delivered the *baqt* to ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ as stipulated in their peace agreement, and had given ‘Amr (in addition) forty head of slaves. But he did not accept these and returned the gift to the official in charge of the *baqt*, a man by the name of Saqmūs,⁽⁷⁾ who bought with it for (the Nubians) supplies and wine which he sent to (their king). ‘Abd-Al-lāh ibn Sa’d (in turn) sent the Nubians the grain he had promised them in the form of wheat and barley, as well as lentils, garments, and horses. This practice continued for a long time in that manner and became eventually a regular due which the Nubians collected at the time of the annual delivery of the *baqt*, and the forty slaves (initially) offered as a present to ‘Amr became in due time (a regular tribute) collected by the governors of Egypt.

From Abū Khalifah Ḥumayd ibn Hishām al-Buḥturī: The terms of peace agreement with the Nubians called for 360 slaves to go as collective property to the Muslims and 40 slaves to go to the lord of Egypt. He (in turn) would give them 1,000 *irdabbs* of wheat, and to the emissaries (of the Nubian king) 300 *irdabbs*, the quantities of barley being the same; 1,000 *aqnīn*⁽⁸⁾ of wine for the king, and for his emissaries 300; two horses from the governor’s foals; and 100 garments of various kinds, (among them) four *qabāṭī* robes for the king and three for his emissaries, eight *buḥṭuri* robes, five robes of the kind called *mu’lam* (i.e., having a distinguishing mark or badge), a velvet tunic for the king, ten “Abū Buḥṭur” shirts, and ten *aḥāṣī* robes, which are thick, coarse garments.

⁷ The vowelizing is uncertain. Bulaq: *S-m-q-w-s*. Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam speaks of “a high-ranking Copt by the name of *N-s-t-q-w-s*, who handles the matter for (the Nubians).” (*Futūḥ Miṣr* 129).

⁸ So Wiet, who, without the slightest support, equates it with *qinnīnah* ‘bottle.’ Bulaq: *ʿ-q-t-y-z*. Perhaps *ūqiyah*?

An itemized statement (like the foregoing), said Abū Khalīfah, one will find neither in the work of 'Abd-Allāh ibn Wahb nor in the book of al-Wāqidī. But I got it from Abū Zakariyyā,⁽⁹⁾ who said: I heard my father, 'Uthmān ibn Ṣālīḥ, relate this story and committed what I learned from him to memory. He said:

"(One day) I attended the assembly of Emir 'Abd-Allāh ibn Ṭāhir, who was then governor of Egypt, and he said, 'You are 'Uthmān ibn Ṣālīḥ, the man we approached concerning the document of the Nubian *baqt*?' I said, 'Yes, I am.' Whereupon he turned to Maḥfūz ibn Sulaymān⁽¹⁰⁾ and said, 'They are such a curious lot, the learned doctors of this town! We addressed a request to them, including this sheikh here, to let us have some of their knowledge, and not a single one could help us!' I replied, 'May God preserve the Amīr. I do have the information on the Nubians you requested! It has been orally transmitted by learned sheikhs on the authority of the learned men who were present there and witnessed the truce and the peace agreement concluded between 'Abd-Allāh (ibn Sa'd) ibn Abī Sarḥ and the Nubians. I then related their traditions the way I had heard them. When he disclaimed the wine allocation (to the Nubians), I pointed out that 'Abd-al-'Azīz ibn Marwān had already done that.'" This assembly took place in Fustāṭ Miṣr in the year 211 (A.D. 826) after ('Abd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir) and 'Ubayd-Allāh ibn al-Sarīy ibn al-Ḥakam al-Tamīmī, his immediate predecessor as governor, had come to terms.⁽¹¹⁾ (My father) 'Uthmān ibn Ṣālīḥ added: "The Amīr then sent someone to the *dīwān* behind the cathedral mosque in Fustāṭ and had the information on the Nubians copied out. He found it the way I had reported, which pleased him very much."

⁹ Yahyā b. 'Uthmān b. Ṣālīḥ, died 895; cf. al-Kindī, *Wulāh*, ed. Guest, Introduction 21-22.

¹⁰ Finance director of Egypt, first appointed by Hārūn al-Rashīd in 802. He later held the office a second time under al-Mutawakkil, who pardoned him after his arrest and incarceration for suspected graft, until his death in 868. Cf. al-Kindī, *Wulāh*, 140; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, 2:114.

¹¹ See ch. 19, sect. 15-16.

(It has been transmitted) from Mālik ibn Anas that he (personally) held the opinion that Nubia all the way to the boundary of ‘Alwah had surrendered peacefully, and he (therefore) did not consider the purchase of Nubian slaves lawful. But his students, such as ‘Abd-Al-lāh ibn Abd al-Ḥakam, ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Wahb, al-Layth ibn Sa’d, and Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb,⁽¹²⁾ and other jurists of Egypt, hold a contrary opinion. “We know Nubia better than Mālik ibn Anas does,” said al-Layth ibn Sa’d. “All that was agreed upon when we made peace with them was that we would not invade them and would not defend them against an enemy. Ergo, the purchase of slaves captured by their own king, or when they raid one another, is permissible. The purchase of slaves captured by Muslim oppressors and thieves, on the other hand, is not lawful—and quite a number of these had Nubian slave girls for their beds!”

The Nubians continued to deliver the *baqt* every year, and were (in turn) given the aforementioned things, until the time of the caliph al-Mu‘taṣim-bi-’llāh Abū Ishāq ibn al-Rashīd (833-42). The ruler of the Nubians at the time was Zachary son of John. Sometimes the Nubians were unable to pay the *baqt*, and in such cases Muslim governors would occupy certain border areas of their country and refuse to deliver the supplies.

George,⁽¹³⁾ the son of their king Zachary, (one day) reproached his father for submitting to someone else and called him too weak to resist. “So, what do you want to do?” asked his father. “Disobey and fight them!” answered the son. “That is something our ancestors considered the right thing to do,” said his father, “and I am afraid that will be something for you to handle. Go ahead and fight the Muslims! But (first) I shall send you as an envoy to their ruler, so that you can see how we live and how they live. If you then still

¹². Who was himself of Nubian origin.

¹³. Arabic *Girgā*. The spelling *Qirgā* in the Wiet text is al-Uswānī’s, a native of Upper Egypt, where *qāf* is pronounced /g/. In Abū Ṣāliḥ (Evetts, *Churches*, Arabic text 125): *Jirjā*, rendering the Lower Egyptian /g/ with its usual equivalent *jīm*. Notice that ‘Alī Pasha Mubārak (*Khūṭaṭ Tawfiqiyyah* 8:68) transliterates the name as *Kirkā*.

think that we are strong enough for them, then we will fight them with skill learned from (your) experience; if not, then I want you to ask him to be kind and generous to us.”

And so George traveled to Baghdad. The towns were decorated in his honor as he proceeded from city to city. With him traveled the chief of the Beja with his train, and the two (finally) met al-Mu‘taṣim face to face. Then they saw the dazzling condition of the Iraq, with its great many troops and its highly advanced state of civilization, in addition to the things they had already witnessed on their way (to the capital). An al-Mu‘taṣim made George his close companion and showed him every kindness. He accepted his present and gave him a multiple of it in return. “Make any wish,” he said, and when George asked him to release the prisoners in jail, which the caliph granted, he rose even more in al-Mu‘taṣim’s esteem. The caliph also gave him the mansion in which he was staying in the Iraq as a gift, and he told him to buy himself at every one of his way stations a house that would be at the disposal of (future) Nubian envoys, because (George) had refused to enter the house of anyone on his way up. In Egypt, he got for (George) a house in Gīzah and another one in the Banū Wā’il quarter of Fustāt, and he instructed the Dīwān in Fustāt to allocate the Nubians 700 dinars, a horse, a saddle, a bridle, an ornamented sword, a gold-brocade garment, a silk turban, one shirt and one gown each made of *sharb*, and unspecified garments for the emissaries of the Nubian ruler at the time of the arrival of the *baqt* in Egypt. (Normally) they are entitled to two lambs and robes of honor to be provided by the official in charge of receiving the *baqt*, and must pay given fees to the receiver of the *baqt* and his aides; anything given to them over and above that is unspecified, since it is in their opinion a free gift. Al-Mu‘taṣim (now) looked into the matter of what the Muslims were (actually) paying and found it to be more than the *baqt* (was worth). He rejected the wine allocation, approved⁽¹⁴⁾ (delivery) of

¹⁴ Suggested lection: *abarra*. Wiet: *asarra* (?) with a note that a Turkish translator renders the word as *saqladı* (he preserved). Bulaq: *ajrā* ‘he allocated.’

the grain and of the aforementioned garments, and determined that the *baqt* should be delivered at the end of every three years. He had a document to that effect drawn up for them which remained in Nubian possession.

The Nubians also accused certain people of Uswān of having (illegally) bought land from (the Nubian king's) slaves, and al-Mu'taṣim ordered an investigation of the matter. The governor of the town and the official chosen to rule on the matter therefore summoned the Nubian nationals involved and questioned them as to the claim of their lord regarding their sale. They denied it, claiming that they were (Muslim) subjects (at the time), and that was the end of (George's) claim.⁽¹⁵⁾

He also demanded other things, such as having the well-known military border post at al-Qaṣr removed from its present location to the actual boundary line between the Nubians and the Muslims, since it was now on Nubian territory, but the caliph turned down his request.

The ordinance governing delivery of the *baqt* in accordance with this decision (of the caliph), while the allocations determined by al-Mu'taṣim were to be given to the Nubians, remained in effect until the Fāṭimids came to Egypt.

This is the account of the chronicler of the Nubians (al-Uswānī).

[3] Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Mas'ūdī reports:⁽¹⁶⁾ The *baqt* is the quota of slaves received annually and delivered to Egypt as part of the tribute owed by (the Nubians). It consists of 365 slaves for the Treasury by the terms of the truce between the Nubians and the Muslims. Apart from the figure mentioned, the Emir (of Egypt) in Fustāt is entitled to 40 slaves; the Emir's deputy residing in Uswān, as the official in charge of receiving the *baqt*, is entitled to 20 slaves; the

¹⁵ Cf. ch. 33, (sect. 3), where this issue was decided twenty years earlier on the same grounds.

¹⁶ *Prairies d'or* 3:39.

magistrate residing in Uswān, who, together with the governor of Uswān, is present when the *baqt* is received, is entitled to five slaves, and twelve notaries from Uswān, who witness with the magistrate the taking over of the *baqt* are entitled to twelve slaves—in accordance with the procedure established in early Islamic times, when the truce between the Muslims and the Nubians was first concluded.

[4] And al-Balādhurī reports in his *Conquests*:⁽¹⁷⁾ The stipulated impost on the Nubians is 400 slaves (per year), for whom they receive food—that is, produce—in exchange. The caliph al-Mahdī Muḥammad ibn Abī Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr ordered that the Nubians be held responsible for 360 slaves and one giraffe.

[5] In 671 (A.D. 1272/73),⁽¹⁸⁾ there was mounting mischief on the part of David, the Nubian ruler, who advanced into the vicinity of Uswān where he burned down a number of waterwheels, after having caused disorder and damage at ʿAydḥāb. So the governor of Qūṣ set out after him. Being unable to catch up with the king, he seized the Lord of the Mountain⁽¹⁹⁾ with a number of Nubians and delivered them to the Sultan, al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Baybars al-Bunduqdārī, in the Citadel (in Cairo). He had them cut in half.⁽²⁰⁾

[6] [In 674],⁽²¹⁾ Shikandah,⁽²²⁾ the son of the Nubian ruler’s sister, came (to Cairo) with complaints against his uncle David. The

^{17.} *Futūḥ al-buldān* 281 (Hitti, *Origins*, 380-81).

^{18.} The punitive expedition of the governor of Qūṣ (his name was ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Khāzindār) is briefly mentioned in the *Sulūk* (I, 2:608) among the events of that year, hence the adjusted date (Bulaq: 674).

^{19.} I.e. the governor of the part of Nubia bordering on Muslim territory; see ch. 30 (sect. 2) and n. 33 below.

^{20.} This method of execution, called *tawsīt*, was common not only among the Mamluks. The condemned man’s body was severed with one stroke of the executioner’s sword delivered below the navel.

^{21.} Date added according to *Sulūk*, I, 2:621-23.

^{22.} Thus Wiet, following al-Mufaḍḍal’s *al-Nahj al-sadīd* (Patr. Orient., XIV, 234); Bulaq: *Sikandah*. No two sources agree on the name of that prince. It appears in *Sulūk* (I, 2:621; 3:973) as *Mashkad*, while Qalqashandī (*Ṣubḥ* 5:276-7), citing Ibn Khaldūn’s *Ibar*, renders it as *Marqashankuz*.

Sultan (at once)⁽²³⁾ detached Emir Shams al-Dīn Āq-Sunqur al-Fāriqānī, the majordomo,⁽²⁴⁾ and Emir ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak al-Afram, commander of the Sultan’s bodyguard,⁽²⁵⁾ to accompany the prince with a sizable force composed of foot soldiers and of provincial militia, Upper Egyptian bedouins, naphtha throwers, arbalesters, and fuse-men. They left Cairo on the first of Sha‘bān (January 21, 1276) and eventually arrived in Nubia.⁽²⁶⁾

(The Nubians), mounted on dromedaries, turned out to fight them, armed with lances and clad in flowing black robes. The two sides fought a great battle in which the Nubians were defeated and put to flight. Al-Afram (then) attacked the fortress of al-Dirr,⁽²⁷⁾ killing and taking prisoners, while al-Fāriqānī penetrated farther into Nubia overland and on the river, killing and capturing people. He also seized countless livestock. Having made camp near Mikā’il island,⁽²⁸⁾ he had the boats portaged across the desert to get around the cataract. At that point, the Nubians fled to the islands. When (al-Fāriqānī) wrote to Qamar al-Dawlah, the representative of the Nubian ruler David, assuring him of safe-conduct, the Nubian swore allegiance to Shikandah and summoned the fighting men of the Marīs and the people who had fled. (Meanwhile) al-Afram (with his troops) forced their way to a fortification tower in the river which they besieged until it was taken. He killed two hundred people in it and captured one of David’s brothers.⁽²⁹⁾ David (him-

²³. The account in al-Fayyūmī’s *Nathr al-junān* cited by Wiet (n. 6) strongly suggests that Baybars had been waiting for an opportunity to get even with King David for his raid on ‘Aydhāb three years earlier.

²⁴. On his career, *Khīṭaṭ* 2:369.

²⁵. Al-Ṣāliḥī: cf. Pt. III, ch. 20, n. 4.

²⁶. According to al-Fayyūmī, the expeditionary force reached Dongola (?) on the 13th of Shawwāl, (April 2), and the Nubians were commanded by King David and his brother.

²⁷. Until its submersion by the lake of the Aswan dam, a dependency of Uswān; cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 58; II, 4:233 (*al-Dīwān*).

²⁸. These river islands were part of the district of al-Dirr; cf. the account of the Nubian expedition of the Emir ‘Alam al-Dīn Sanjar al-Surūrī “al-Khayyāt” and Emir ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Kūrānī in Dhū ‘l-Ḥijjah 686/January 1288 (*Sulūk*, I, 3:736-37).

²⁹. The *Sulūk* account gives his name as *Shankū* (Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*,

self) fled (by boat), pursued for three days by the regular troops, who kept on killing and taking prisoners until those people submitted. David's mother and sister were among the captives, but of David (himself) one could not get hold.

Shikandah was then established as ruler in his stead, and he set for himself himself an annual contribution of three elephants, three giraffes, five female cheetahs, one hundred white riding camels, and four hundred head of breeding cattle, with the understanding that (the revenue of)⁽³⁰⁾ Nubia was henceforth to be (shared by) halves: half of it belonging to the Sultan, and half of it (to be earmarked) for the cultivation and protection of the country, with the exception of the Mountain Region,⁽³¹⁾ which belongs in its entirety to the Sultan because of its proximity to the region of Uswān; it comprises about one quarter of Nubian territory. Dates and cotton grown in the Mountain Region, as well as customary imposts of long standing (collected there), were to be delivered (to Egypt), and its population was to pay the poll tax as long as they remained Christian, at the rate of one gold dinar a year per adult male. The text of a formal oath⁽³²⁾ to that effect was drawn up in writing and king Shikandah was made to swear it, as well as a second oath, which his subjects had to swear.

The two Emirs had the churches of the Nubians destroyed, and everything in them was taken as booty.⁽³³⁾ Also, some twenty Nu-

28:108: *Sankuwā*).

³⁰ Maqrīzī's summary of the terms is truncated and misleading at this point. The text has been emended to conform with the wording of the treaty instrument mentioned below.

³¹ *Bilād al-jibāl* (Bulaq: *bilād al-janādil* 'the cataract region'). It appears to be the area controlled by al-Dirr and Ibrīm (*al-Nahj al-sadīd* 235: "... two strong fortresses not too far from Uswān, with a distance of seven day's journeys between them"), called *bilād al-'ulā wa-(bilād) al-jabal* in the *Sulūk* (I, 3:622, 973).

³² For the full text of this interesting document, see *Sulūk*, I, 3:973-74 (App. 5) and (in a slightly abridged version) al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 13:290-91 (where it is moved up in time and connected with the Nubian expedition of 686/1288 under Sultan Qalāwūn).

³³ The *Sulūk* mentions only the church of "Sūs" (Jesus?) to have been laid waste, and gives the equivalent of looted gold objects, such as crosses, as 4,640 1/2

bian princes were seized (as hostages), and all the Muslims from Uswān and ‘Aydhāb in Nubian captivity were released.

Shikandah was then crowned and installed on the royal throne after he had bound himself by oath to deliver all property and livestock of David and of all the people killed or captured to the Sultan, in addition to the ancient *baqṭ*, consisting of 400 slaves per year and one giraffe—of which 360 slaves used to belong to the caliph and forty to his representative in Egypt, with the understanding that the Nubians were to receive, at the time they delivered the *baqṭ*, complete: 1,000 *irdabbs* of wheat for their king and 300 *irdabbs* for his emissaries.

37. The Desert of ‘Aydhāb

[1] One should know that the pilgrims from Egypt and North-west Africa would, for over two hundred years, wend their way to Mecca—may God exalted honor it—exclusively through the desert of ‘Aydhāb, first traveling by boat up the Nile from the wharf of Miṣr al-Fuṣṭāṭ all the way to Qūṣ, then on camelback across that desert to ‘Aydhāb, and from there on boats to Jiddah, Mecca’s seaport. Likewise, traders from India, the Yemen, and Abyssinia would arrive by boat at ‘Aydhāb, then make their way across that desert to Qūṣ, and from there come to Fuṣṭāṭ.

[2] That desert used to be so full of activity and people, with all those caravans of traders and pilgrims coming and going, that one was apt to find whole cargoes of spices, such as cinnamon, pepper, and the like, just lying there, with traveling parties moving up and down the road and no one interfering with them, until they were picked up by their owner.⁽¹⁾

[3] The (‘Aydhāb) desert continued to be a route for pilgrims traveling in both directions for more than two hundred years, from the 450s to the 660s—that is, from the time of the Great Crisis during the days of the (Fāṭimid) caliph al-Mustanṣir-bi-‘llāh Abū Tamīm Ma‘add ibn al-Zāhir and the (temporary) interruption of the overland pilgrimage, until the time when the Sultan al-Malik al-Zāhir Baybars al-Bunduqdārī (instituted the practice of) providing the *kiswah* and a key for the Kaaba and then, in 666 (A.D. 1268), sent the pilgrimage caravan overland (by way of the Sinai and the Hejaz). As a result, fewer and fewer pilgrims took the route through that desert, although the merchandise of traders was still moved from ‘Aydhāb to Qūṣ, until that also came to an end after the year

^{1.} The text is clearly inspired by Ibn Jubayr’s *Riḥlah*, (Beirut ed., 43-44).

760 (A.D. 1359). From that time on, Qūṣ declined into insignificance.

That desert extends of over a distance of seventeen traveling days from Qūṣ to 'Aydhāb, and one goes in it without water for three days in row, sometimes four.

[4] 'Aydhāb⁽²⁾ is (a town) on the coast of the Sea of Jiddah. It is not walled and most of its houses are reed huts. It used to be one of the world's most important roadsteads on account of the fact that ships from India and the Yemen would unload their merchandise there and put out to sea (again), in addition to the incoming and outgoing pilgrim ships.

[5] After the ships from India and the Yemen ceased to come there, Aden in the Yemen became the great roadstead (in the area) down to the 820s (1420s), at which time Jiddah became the world's largest anchorage, and also Hormuz, which is an important roadstead (in the Persian Gulf).

[6] 'Aydhāb is situated in a desert with no vegetation whatsoever. Everything that is consumed there has to be brought in from the outside, even water. Its population would reap countless benefits from the pilgrims and the traders. They had a fixed impost on every load of flour they delivered to the pilgrims, and used to hire out the boats which carried the pilgrims across the sea to Jiddah and from Jiddah (back) to 'Aydhāb, from all of which they made a lot of money. There was not a man in 'Aydhāb who did not own a boat and thus add to his affluence.

In the sea off 'Aydhāb near some islands close to the town is a pearl fishery. At a certain time of the year, the divers go out to the islands

² An extinct community identified by Ramzī as the Greek *Myos Hormos*, once located near Cape Elba (*Ra's al-Ḥadāribah*) on a northern latitude of 22°20'; the desert Arabs of the area know its former site as *Sawākin al-qadimah* (cf. *Qāmūs*, I, 338-39). 'Aydhāb succeeded *Berenice*, founded in 275 B.C. by Ptolemy II about 200 miles north of it, as the chief entrepôt for the Red Sea trade with Arabia and India. —Sections 4 and 6 are from Ibn Jubayr's *Riḥlah* (pp. 45-48).

in skiffs and stay there for days, then they return with whatever luck has allotted to them. The diving there is done in shallow water.

The people of 'Aydhāb live like animals, and in their morals they are closer to wild beasts than to humankind.

The pilgrims on board the boats crossing the sea used to experience awesome horrors, for the winds would often toss them to anchorages in distant desert areas to the south, and then the Beja would come down to them from their mountains and hire out camels to them and lead them into an area without water; sometimes most of them would die of thirst and the Beja would take their belongings. Others would get lost and die of thirst, and even those who came out alive would arrive in 'Aydhāb looking like corpses unwrapped from a winding sheet, their appearance and nature changed. Most of the casualties among the pilgrims would occur at those anchorages. Some were helped by the wind that brought them (back) to the roadstead of 'Aydhāb, but those were very few.

Not a single nail is used on their boats which carry the pilgrims across the sea. Rather, their planks are sewn together with bast obtained from the coconut tree, and into the crevices they wedge dowels made of palm wood which they then saturate with ghee or castor oil or shark oil—the shark is a large marine fish that devours the drowning. The sails on those boats are made from the leaves of the doom palm.

The pilgrims are treated by the people of 'Aydhāb in a fiendish manner, for they overload a boat with passengers so that they are virtually stacked one on top of the other, all out of greed for wages. They do not care what happens to people at sea. Indeed, they have a saying: It's our job to provide the planks; it's the pilgrims' job to look out for their lives.

The people of 'Aydhāb are Beja and have their own ruler.

[7] There is also a governor in ‘Aydhāb who is appointed by the sultan of Egypt. I remember seeing the judge of the town here in Cairo; he was black.

[8] The Beja are a people without religion and without a rational mind. Their men and women go at all times naked, with rags covering their private parts. But many of them do not hide even these.⁽³⁾

[9] ‘Aydhāb is very hot on account of a scorching simoom.

³ Cf. Ibn Jubayr, p. 49 (*BGA* 72).

38. The Town of Luxor (*al-Aqṣur*)

That town is one of the important towns of Upper Egypt. It is said to be inhabited by *Marīs*—southern Copts. From that town come the Marīsi donkeys.⁽¹⁾

^{1.} These highly-prized donkeys came from *al-Marīs* (Yāqūt: *Marrīṣah*), an ancient village originally called *Shadūnbah*, and so recorded by Yāqūt (3:329), on the west bank of the Nile; it is today a dependency of Asmant in the district of Luxor. Ibn Mammātī (*Qawānīn* 159) lists it as a dependency of Qūṣ under the name *Shaṭaṭfanbah* (in Ibn al-Jīʿān, corrupted, *Shaṭaṭfanyah*). Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 4:163.

39. Al-Balyanā

[1] That town is located on the western side of the Nile.

[2] Kamāl al-Dīn al-Idfuwī mentioned⁽¹⁾ that, at one time, there was a dispute between the population of the area and the governor of Qūṣ. (The local people) went to Cairo and had the man dismissed, and someone else was appointed to the office. The preacher in al-Balyanā accompanied the new governor, whose fief was Tizmant,⁽²⁾ on his way up (to his post of assignment). When the governor arrived at Tizmant, the local population served him sixty platters of (a milk dish called) *ṭaʿām al-laban* as their hospitality tribute. “Is that sort of thing also (the custom) in your part of the country?” the governor asked the preacher. “(That) and halvah!” replied the latter. So when the governor reached Ikhmīm, the preacher went ahead to al-Balyanā, and by the time the governor arrived there, the local people brought him sixty platters of halvah and sixty platters of grilled meat.

(Someone else) has said: A certain magistrate stationed in al-Balyanā was eulogized on the occasion of some festival by (no less than) twenty-five poets—and there are people there who just do not want to laud a judge, and others whose standing is not high enough to do so!

[3] In Balyanā, says (al-Idfuwī), used to be a number of sugarhouses. The people living there are described as being generous and of noble character.

^{1.} *Al-Ṭālīʿ al-saʿīd* (Cairo ed.) p. 18.

^{2.} Modern-day *Tizmant al-Sharqiyyah* in the district of Banī Suwēf (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 3:159). —Ibn al-Jīʿān (*Tuḥfah* 165) puts its original cadastral value at 7,000 dinars (3,500 in his own time), a rather modest fief for the governor of the second most populous city in Egypt at the time.

40. Samhūd

[1] That town lies on the western side of the Nile.

[2] Al-Idfuwī says:⁽¹⁾ At Samhūd used to be seventeen sugar-cane presses. People say that mice do not eat the cane there.

^{1.} *Al-Ṭālī' al-sa'īd*, p. 9. — Samhūd (from Copt. *Semhout* or *Psemhout*) was a large agricultural community (Ibn al-Jī'ān gives its land area in the 15th century as 15,170 feddans) within the 'amal of Qūṣ (already so listed by Ibn Mammātī). Present-day Samhūd (district of Nag' Hammādi) is only one of five administrative units into which the original Samhūd was divided in 1829. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 4:197.

41. Irjinnaws

That town⁽¹⁾ is under the fiscal administration of al-Bahnasā. It has a church outside town which contains a small well called *Bīr Yasūs*—the Well of Jesus. There is a festival connected with it which is celebrated on the 25th of Bashans (June 5)—(Bashans being) a month of the Egyptian Copts. When six daytime hours have passed (on that day), the water (in the well) begins to rise until it overflows, and then returns to its former level. The Christians infer the annual rise of the Nile from how high the water rises out of the ground. They maintain that the whole thing has something to do with the Nile, and that the river's rise will be commensurate with the rise of the well water.

¹ The modern-day *al-Garnūs* in the district of Banī Mazār (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 3:213). —On the monastery of Irjinnaws (Monastery of Jesus) and the Jesus Well, *Khiṭaṭ* 2:505.

42. Ibwīt

That town, too, belongs to the Bahnasā district.⁽¹⁾ It had a solidly built tower which, when rocked by a man, would move from side to side. One could clearly see its inclination from the way its shadow moved.

^{1.} This community near Asyūt is the modern-day *Buwayṭ* in the district of al-Badārī (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 4:35). It is recorded as *Ibwīt al-Buṭaynah* by Ibn al-Jrān (*Tuhfah* 184). —There is another village called *Ibwīt* in Upper Egypt, in the present-day district of al-Wāṣṭā, but that can hardly be meant here in this context. See also Yāqūt s.v. “Abwayṭ” (1:82) and “Buwayṭ” (1:513). —The story of the swaying tower, probably taken from Ibn Duqmāq (5:3), has an almost exact parallel in ch. 62, where the same phenomenon is ascribed to the mud-brick minaret of al-Barzakh near Damietta.

43. Mallawī

That town is located on the west bank of the Nile. The land around it is known for the cultivation of sugarcane, and the town used to have several sugarcane presses.

Sugar growing was at its peak there when it was in the hands of the Fuḍayl clan, who had, at the time of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, every year 1,500 feddans of cane under cultivation. In 738 (A.D. 1338), al-Nashw,⁽¹⁾ the Superintendent of the Privy Purse, issued a sequestration order for their stock. Among their holdings were found 14,000 quintals of raw sugar which he moved to the sugar warehouse in Old Cairo—this without counting the molasses; he made them liable for delivering henceforth 8,000 quintals (of raw sugar per year) and released them. Later on they discovered that the Fuḍayls had another storehouse which al-Nashw had not been able to find, containing 10,000 quintals of raw sugar. This without counting their other possessions, such as slaves, grain, and the like.

¹ Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Faḍl-Allāh al-Kātib (d. 740/1339), a Coptic convert who literally rose from rags to riches and for a few years enjoyed a position of great influence, even intimacy, with Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, whose extravagant spending needs he tried to meet with ruthless property confiscations and rapacious imposts. When complaints from influential emirs mounted, the Sultan dropped him, and he and his entire family died under torture. Cf. Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, 2:429-30; *Sulūk*, II, 2:348 ff. —The sequestration order in this episode was triggered by the discovery, in the course of a general audit of the Upper Egyptian sugarmill owners, of blatant tax evasion on the part of the Fuḍayls (cf. *Sulūk*, II, 2:431).

44. The Town of Anṣinā

[1] One should know that Anṣinā is one of the ancient towns of Upper Egypt.⁽¹⁾

[2] It contains a number of curiosities, among them an amphitheater. It is said to have been a Nilometer and to have been built by Dalūkah, a ruler of (ancient) Egypt. It looked like an (inverted) *ṭaylasān*,⁽²⁾ and around its periphery were columns in the number of the days of the solar year, all made of solid red granite, each two columns spaced one human pace apart. The water of the Nile would flow into that amphitheater through an aperture during the annual rise of the Nile. And when the Nile water reached the level at which one was assured of sufficient irrigation for Egypt's land at that time, then the king would sit on a special raised platform and the members of his entourage would climb to the top of said columns and engage in a foot race with each other, some going that way and some coming this way, and (those who slipped) would tumble into that amphitheater, which was by then filled with water.

[3] Abū 'Ubayd al-Bakrī says:⁽³⁾ Anṣinā is a well-known *kūrah* of Egypt. From there came Māriyah, the concubine of the Prophet, peace and blessings upon him, and the mother of his son Ibrāhīm,

^{1.} Anṣinā is the Greek *Antinopolis*, founded in 130 A.D. on the site of the ancient Egyptian village of *Bēsā* by the Emperor Hadrian in honor of his favorite, Antinous, who drowned himself there in order to spare his master the grave loss predicted by an oracle. The Arabic form derives from its Coptic name, *Ensene*. On its ruins grew in the 19th century the present-day village of *al-Shaykh 'Ibādah* in the district of Mallawī (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 4:63, also I, 132).

^{2.} A kind of tippet or shoulder cape, worn especially by the members of the religious and clerical classes.

^{3.} *K. al-Masālik* 109.

namely from a village called *Ḥafn*,⁽⁴⁾ one of the villages of that district.

[4] It is said that Pharaoh's sorcerers came from there, and that he brought them from that place on the appointed day for the confrontation with Moses, upon him be peace.

[5] Crocodiles are said to do no harm along the bank of Anṣinā because of talismans erected in the town. When a crocodile out in the river reaches Anṣinā, one says, it will roll over on its back to swim past the town.

[6] The man who founded the town of Anṣinā is said to have been Ashmūn son of Miṣrāyim son of Bayṣar son of Ham son of Noah. It is located on the east bank of the Nile and used to have beautiful gardens and parks and many fruits. Now it is waste.

[7] Abū Ḥanīfah al-Dīnawarī said:⁽⁵⁾ The Egyptian acacia (*labakh*) grows only near Anṣinā. It is a timber tree from which one saws planks for ships; (the wood is so hard) that it sometimes gives the man sawing it a nosebleed. One plank from it sells for about fifty dinars. When one ties one plank to another and leaves them in water for a year, the two will fuse and become one plank.

[8] Anṣinā had an ancient wall⁽⁶⁾ which was raised by Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb. He made every boat going downriver carry one large stone (from it) to Cairo, and in that manner it was moved in its entirety to the capital.

⁴ The Greek *Hipponon*, Coptic *Hebnou* (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, I, 229-30). In 1981, an archaeological team of the University of al-Minyā claimed to have identified Ḥafn as the modern village of *ʿAbādah* in the district of al-Minyā; the find received much publicity in the Egyptian press at the time. Ramzī Bey's research has led him to the modern-day village of *al-Maṭāhrah al-Baḥriyyah* in the same district (cf. *Qāmūs*, II, 3:196).

⁵ Aḥmad b. Dāʿūd b. Wanand, a scholar of Persian origin in a wide range of disciplines, died ca. 895; cf. "al-Dīnawarī" (B. Lewin) in *EF*). —The quotation is from his botanical work *K. al-Nabāt* (see *Khīṭaṭ* 2:505).

⁶ Taken from Ibn Jubayr's *Riḥlah* (Beirut ed. p. 33, *BGA* p. 58).

45. Al-Qays

[1] One should know that Al-Qays is one of the communities in the immediate vicinity of the town of al-Bahnasā. In fact, one used to speak of “al-Qays and al-Bahnasā.”

[2] Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam relates:⁽¹⁾ ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ sent Qays ibn al-Ḥārith to Upper Egypt. He marched until he reached al-Qays, where he camped, and so the village was named after him.⁽²⁾

[3] And Ibn Yūnus said: Qays ibn al-Ḥārith al-Murādī al-Ka‘bī witnessed the conquest of Egypt. He transmitted on the authority of ‘Umar ibn Khaṭṭāb and used to formulate legal opinions in his time. From him transmitted Suwayd—or Shadīd, according to others—ibn Qays ibn Tha‘labah, and from the latter transmitted (Abū Thumāmah) Bakr ibn Sawādah (al-Judhāmī). (Qays ibn al-Ḥārith) is the one who conquered the village in Upper Egypt known as *al-Qays*, which was named after him.

[4] Ibn al-Kindī says (in his *Merits of Egypt*): The people there have woolen robes and goat-down garments. The latter are found nowhere in the world outside Egypt. A certain Egyptian recalled that Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān in his old age could no longer get warm. People were agreed that the only thing to keep (the caliph) warm would be garments made in Egypt from undyed amber goat-down wool. So, a number of them were made for him, but he needed only one (before he died).

^{1.} *Futūḥ Miṣr* 115.

^{2.} That the Arabs would later make this connection is not surprising. Actually, the Coptic town of *Kaïs* on the site of the Greek *Kynopolis*, their capital of the 17th nome of Upper Egypt where the god Anubis was worshipped, was an episcopal see around the time of the Muslim conquest. Its Coptic name goes back to the ancient Egyptian *Qīs*. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 3:214-15.

The people there also have the (characteristic) embroidery of al-Qays and al-Bahnasā used on drapes and tents, for which they are famous; from it derives the embroidery work of the rich.

[5] During the reign of the (Ayyūbid) sultan al-Malik al-Kāmil Muḥammad ibn al-ʿĀdil Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb, a subterranean channel was discovered there in the vicinity of al-Bahnasā. The governor of the Bahnasā district gave orders that it be explored, and a number of expert swimmers and divers were assembled for that purpose. They were well over two hundred men, and every single one went down into that tunnel without finding either a bottom or sides to it. Whereupon the governor had a long slender boat built which could be slipped through the tunnel entrance. He had it loaded with provisions and men and had ropes attached to it which were tied to stakes at the mouth of the cave. The men he provided with instruments by which they would know the times of night and day, and with a number of candles and other things with which one makes and lights a fire. He told them to proceed by boat in that tunnel until half of the provisions they carried were exhausted. They moved along by boat in pitch darkness, gradually giving slack to the ropes, but could find no sides to the body of water they were traveling on. They kept on going until their provisions began to run low, whereupon they stopped rowing the boat farther inside the cave and pulled on the ropes in order to return to where they had entered, and finally reached the mouth of the tunnel. They had been gone for six days, four of them spent penetrating the cave's depth and searching for its walls, and two to return to its entrance, yet in all that time they never discovered the end of that tunnel. The governor of al-Bahnasā, Emir 'Alā' al-Dīn Alṭunbughā reported that to al-Malik al-Kāmil, who was much amazed by it but could give the matter no attention at the time because the Franks were attacking Damietta. But after they had departed from Damietta and (the Egyptian troops) had returned to Cairo, he came personally and at last saw that cave with his own eyes.

46. Darūṭ Bilhāsah

One should know that *Darūṭ* is the name of three villages: *Darūṭ Ushmūm*,⁽¹⁾ belonging to (the district of) al-Ushmūnayn; *Darūṭ Sarabān*,⁽²⁾ also belonging to al-Ushmūnayn; and *Darūṭ Bilhāsah*⁽³⁾ in the area of al-Bahnasā in Upper Egypt. The last one has a cathedral mosque founded by Ziyād ibn al-Mughīrah ibn Ziyād ibn ‘Amr al-‘Atakī, who died in Muḥarram 191 (November/December 806) and who was buried near it. A poet said about him:

Liberality swore an oath which was honored by Ziyād.

No man like him has God created since:

He was a rain on Egypt in his days alive,

a hedge and safeguard he against harsh years.

His brother Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mughīrah died in 199 (A.D. 815). And about him a poet said:

Mughīrah's son, that's Ibrāhīm, was made of gold

that grows in beauty with the years of wear.

Had he possessed all things on earth, he would have sped them

to his guests, without concern for late reward.

And Aḥmad ibn Ziyād ibn Mughīrah died in Muḥarram 236 (July/August 850). A poet said of him:

He died in glory, and much missed,

^{1.} Modern-day *Dayrūt Umm Nakhlah* in the district of Mallawī (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 4:66).

^{2.} Coptic *Terot Saraban* (after the first-century Coptic saint Sarabamon), the present-day village of *Dayrūt al-Sharīf* just north of the branch-off point of the Baḥr Yūsuf canal in the district of Dayrūt (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 4:47). — In Part I, ch. 23 (sect. 14): *Darwat Sarabām*, following Yāqūt and Abū Ṣāliḥ.

^{3.} Modern-day *al-Shaykh Ziyād* in the district of Maghāghah (Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 3:225).

for Aḥmad was a laudable man.
Was an heir to fame—a father first, an uncle then;
the like of him will not exist.

47. Askar⁽¹⁾

It is part of the Itfih district. Opposite it is a wadi which, down to our own time, contains the stone image of a camel, larger and more handsome than any camel one sees in real life. It is standing upright on its four legs and had its head turned towards the east. On its right thigh is an inscription in their writing, consisting of three lines of disconnected letters. About one hundred and fifty paces from it is another camel exactly like the first. It faces the first camel, and there is no inscription on it. Between these two camels is what looks like load bags filled with merchandise, forty sacks laid out on the ground in two parallel lines of twenty each, all of them of stone. Whoever sees them has no doubt that they are loads of cloth. One hundred and fifty paces from these there is a third camel like the other two. It, too, stands upright, and its back is toward the back of the second camel and its face toward the mountain where the wadi ends; it has no inscription on it either.

I have this information from someone whose word I trust that he has seen all that.

¹ On the east bank of the Nile, "two days from Fustāt"—according to Yāqūt (1:182). It was believed to be the birthplace of Moses (e.g., Yāqūt, *loc. cit.*; Ibn Jubayr, *Rihlah*, 32; Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:280). —Ramzī Bey thought it might be identical with ancient *Sokar* (mentioned by Gautier) in the nome of Memphis, where Soker, the falcon-headed god of the dead, was worshiped. (*Qāmūs*, II, 3:25: *Uskur*).

48. Munyat al-Khaṣīb⁽¹⁾

That community is named after al-Khaṣīb ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, the finance director of Egypt appointed by the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd.

¹ In Pt. I, ch. 39 (sect. 21, 22, 39): *Munyat Banī Khaṣīb*, and so also in Ibn Mam-mātī (*Qawānīn* 192); Ibn al-Jīrān (*Tuḥfah* 150); in the yearbook for 1815: “Banī Khaṣīb known as ‘al-Minyā’.” Other variants: *Munyat Ibn al-Khaṣīb* (al-Idrīsī), *Munyat Abī ‘l-Khaṣīb* (Yāqūt), or sometimes abbreviated *al-Munyah* in other sources. It appears under its present name *al-Minyā* for the first time in the cadastre of 1236/1821. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 3:196-98.

49. Munyat al-Bāsāk⁽¹⁾

[1] This is a community in the Iṭfīḥ district. It was named after al-Bāsāk, the brother of the vizier (Tāj al-Mulūk) Bahrām al-Armanī at the time of the (Fāṭimid) caliph al-Ḥāfiẓ-li-dīni-'llāh Abū 'l-Maymūn 'Abd al-Majīd ibn Muḥammad. Appointed by his brother, al-Bāsāk took over as the governor of the city of Qūṣ in 529 (A.D. 1135); in those days, the governorship of Qūṣ was the most important one in Egypt.⁽²⁾ He began at once to bear down on the Muslims, and his tyranny and injustice towards them became more and more pronounced as time went on.

[2] When news arrived that Riḍwān ibn Walakhshī had challenged Bahrām, who had to flee from him, and had assumed the vizierate after him, the people of Qūṣ⁽³⁾ rose in revolt against al-Bāsāk in Jumādā II, 531 (March 1137) and killed him. They tied a dead dog to his leg, dragged his body through the streets, and finally dumped it on a rubbish heap. He was a Christian.

¹ So, correctly, Ibn al-Jī'an (*Tuḥfah* 150). Wiet: *Munyat al-Bāsik*; Bulaq: *Munyat al-Nāsik*; 'Alī Pasha Mubārak: *Munyat al-Bāsīl*. Ibn Mammātī records it as *Manīl al-Bāsāk*, Ibn Duqmāq (4:136) as *Manīl al-Bāsik*. —It is the village now called *al-Minyā* in the district of al-Ṣaff (Gīzah), under which name it appears already in the cadastre of 1228/1813. Cf. Ramzī, *Qāmūs*, II, 3:31.

² Of the four key governorships in Fāṭimid times, that of Qūṣ was the most prestigious, as it encompassed all of Upper Egypt. It was followed, in descending order, by al-Sharqiyyah, al-Gharbiyyah and Alexandria. Cf. Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 3:493-4, 396 ff. —Riḍwān b. Walakhshī had been al-Bāsāk's immediate predecessor as governor of Qūṣ and Ikhmīm (1134-35); cf. al-Minawī, *Wizārah*, 279.

³ Taken from Ibn Muyassar (*Akhbār Miṣr*, ed. Fu'ād Sayyid, p. 125). —The strong anti-Armenian backlash involved in the events is shown by the less condensed account in *Itti'āz* 3:159-61.

50. Al-Gīzah

[1] (The noun) *jīzah*, according to Ibn Sīdah, means ‘direction,’ ‘side;’ its plurals are *jīz* and *jīyaz*. (The singular noun) *jīz* means ‘side of a valley,’ for which one may also say *jīzah*.

[2] One should know that *al-Gīzah* is the name of a large, handsome village on the west bank of the Nile opposite the city of Fustāt-Miṣr; it has an important market every Sunday to which very many products from the surrounding rural area come and where a huge crowd of people gathers; it also has several congregational mosques.

[3] The learned traditionist Abū Bakr Ibn Thābit al-Khaṭīb⁽¹⁾ transmits from the traditions of Nubayṭ ibn Sharīṭ (al-Ashjaʿī): The Apostle of God, peace and blessings upon him, once said: “Al-Gīzah is a flower garden of Paradise, and Egypt is God’s storehouses on His earth.”

[4] It is said that the ark of Moses, peace be upon him, in which his mother cast him into the Nile,⁽²⁾ used to be in the Mosque of Repentance (*Masjid al-Tawbah*) in Gīzah. And near Gīzah is the date palm under which Mary nursed Jesus, and no other palm bore fruit (the like of it).⁽³⁾

[5] Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam relates on the authority of Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb:⁽⁴⁾ The (Banū) Hamdān and their clients took a liking to Gīzah. When ‘Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ wrote to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, reporting to the caliph what God had done for

¹ Presumably the famous traditionist and historian of Baghdad, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Thābit, 1002-1072; cf. *GAL*² 1:400, S 1:562 f.), who in Mecca met the Egyptian historian al-Quḍāʿī and heard traditions from him (*Yāqūt, Irshād*, 1:247).

² Cf. Koran 20 (Ta Ha):39.

³ Cf. Koran 19 (Mary):25.

⁴ *Futūḥ Miṣr* (ed. Ṣabīḥ) 91-2.

the Muslims, what He had conquered through them, what the Muslims did with their allotted lands, and how much the Hamdān wanted to settle in Gīzah, ‘Umar wrote back to him, praising God for all that had happened and saying: “How could you agree to have your men scattered! You should not have allowed any one of your men that a large body of water come between you and them! You cannot tell what may suddenly befall them, and you may not be able to come to their aid when something untoward happens to them. So bring them back to you. If they refuse to obey your orders, because they enjoy their position in Gīzah and like what is there, then build a fortification to protect them with funds from the collective booty of the Muslims.” When ‘Amr submitted the matter to the Hamdān, they promptly refused because they liked their place in Gīzah, as did their friends, such as the (Banū) Yāfi‘, and others, who also liked it there, and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ then began to build a fortification for them in 21 (A.D. 642), finishing its construction a year later in 22. (In another tradition) it is said that when ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ asked the men in Gīzah to join up in al-Fuṣṭāṭ, they protested, “It is a bridgehead we have established for the cause of God, we cannot leave it and return to another place.” And so the Yāfi‘ settled in Gīzah, among them Mubarraḥ ibn Shihāb (ibn al-Ḥārith al-Yāfi‘),⁵ as did the Hamdān and Dhū Aṣḥab, among the latter Abū Shamir Ibn Abrahah, as well as a group of (Azd of) the Ḥujr (ibn al-Hinw ibn al-Azd branch).

[6] And al-Qudā‘ī says:⁶ When ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ returned from Alexandria and made camp at al-Fuṣṭāṭ, he stationed a part of his army in Gīzah as a precaution against an enemy attack from that direction. He stationed there the Dhū Aṣḥab clan of the Ḥimyar, a numerous group, and the Yāfi‘ ibn Zayd ibn Ru‘ayn. He also stationed there the Hamdān, a group of Azdis of the al-Ḥujr ibn al-

⁵ A Companion; a quarter in Gīzah was named after him (cf. al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍarah*, 1:232).

⁶ Also cited by Yāqūt (*Muḥjam al-buldān* 2:200) and Ibn Duqmāq (*Intiṣār* 4:125-6), and translated by Caetani (*Annali*, IV, 557-8).

Hinw ibn al-Azd branch, and a group of Abyssinians affiliated with the Azd. Later, after having established himself in Fuṣṭāṭ, ‘Amr ordered the people he had left behind in Gīzah to rejoin him. But they resented that and protested, “This is a forward post we have established for the cause of God, and we have been there now as long as we did in some places we disliked, namely for months!” So ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ wrote to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, God be pleased with him, about that matter, informing him that the Hamdān, the Dhū Aṣbaḥ clan, and the Yāfi‘ and their followers wanted to stay in Gīzah. And ‘Umar wrote back: “How could you let your men be separated from you and let a large body of water come between you and them! You cannot tell what may suddenly befall them and perhaps may not be able to help them. Bring them back to you, and do not have them scattered. If they refuse, because they like the place where they are, then build a fortification to protect them with funds from the collective booty of the Muslims.” ‘Amr then called them together and informed them of ‘Umar’s letter, but they refused to leave Gīzah, and ‘Amr gave orders to build a fortification for their protection. They disliked that, too, and argued, “No fortress can protect us better than our swords!” Since both the Hamdān and the Yāfi‘ were against it, ‘Amr had them draw lots, and when the draw came out against the Yāfi‘, he began to build the fortification in their sector in the year 21, finishing its construction in 22. ‘Amr also ordered them to stake out *khiṭaṭ*—pieces of land to build on—in Gīzah: The Dhū Aṣbaḥ of the Ḥimyar staked their claim in the east⁽⁷⁾ and proceeded westward until they reached the tilth and the cropland; they were strictly against the fortification to be built on their territory. The *khiṭaṭ* of the Yāfi‘ ibn al-Ḥārith of the Ru‘ayn were in the center of Gīzah; the fortification was built on their turf, and a group of them moved out of the fortified place in disdain. The Bakīl ibn Jusham (ibn Khayrān) ibn Nawf of the

⁷ Ibn Duqmāq has here: ... *ilā ‘l-Saddārīn*, i.e., toward (a point opposite) the street called *al-Saddārīn* located between the ‘Amr Mosque and the Qaṣr al-Shama‘, in Fuṣṭāṭ.

Hamdān staked their claims on the southeastern side of Gīzah and (their brother clan) the Ḥāshid ibn Jusham (ibn Khayrān) ibn Nawf did so on the northwestern side of Gīzah. Of the Ḥayāwī tribe, the Banū ʿĀmir ibn Bakīl staked their claims on the south side of Gīzah, as did the Banū ʿAwf ibn Arḥab ibn Bakīl, while the *khiṭaṭ* of the Banū Kaʿb ibn Mālīk ibn al-Ḥujr ibn al-Hinw of the Azd were in the area between the Bakīl and the Yāfiʿ. The Abyssinians occupied allotments along the main road.

[7] The congregational mosque in Gīzah was built by Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd-Allāh al-Khāzin⁽⁸⁾ in Muḥarram 350 (March 961) at the behest of the Amīr ʿAlī ibn al-Ikhshid. Its construction had already been suggested to al-Khāzin by Kāfūr (the regent), who assigned a piece of state land to him. Before that, the people in Gīzah used to perform the Friday prayer in the mosque of the Hamdān, namely, the Mosque of Murāḥiq ibn ʿĀmir ibn Bakīl, which served as the Friday mosque in Gīzah. The construction of that (new) mosque was supervised, together with al-Khāzin, by Abū ʿl-Ḥasan Ibn Abī Jaʿfar al-Ṭaḥāwī.⁽⁹⁾ Since they needed columns for the mosque, al-Khāzin went out by night to a church in the Gīzah area, had its columns removed and replaced with props, and had them carted to the mosque. From that time on, Abū ʿl-Ḥasan Ibn al-Ṭaḥāwī, overcome with scruples, ceased to worship there. Yet Ibn al-Ṭaḥāwī, says (Abū ʿAbd-Allāh) al-Yamanī,⁽¹⁰⁾ would pray in the old mosque in Fustāṭ, although some, or even most, of its columns and the alabaster there came from churches in Alexandria and the

⁸. He was already mentioned twice: as the builder of a Nilometer on Rawḍah Island (Pt. I, ch. 17, sect. 2), and as the general in command of a punitive expedition against the Nubians in 956 (Pt. II, ch. 33, sect. 6). In 957, he built a hospital (*al-Māristān al-asfal*), two water fountains (*mīḍaʿah*) and two baths in Fustāṭ (Ibn Duqmāq, *Intiṣār* 4:99), and before his death in 968, he directed restoration work on the ʿAmr Mosque there, a project completed by his son ʿAlī in 969 (*Intiṣār* 4:68; *Khiṭaṭ* 2:250).

⁹. Son of the eminent Ḥanafite jurist and chief of the Ḥanafites in Egypt, Abū Jaʿfar (Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Salāmah) al-Ṭaḥāwī (853-933).

¹⁰. See Pt. I, ch. 43, n. 3. He was a student of Ibn al-Ṭaḥāwī's father, Abū Jaʿfar. — The text of this section is probably from al-Qudāʿī, who often cites al-Yamanī as a source.

Egyptian countryside, and part of it was built by Qurrah ibn Sharīk, the (tyrannical) governor (of Egypt) under al-Walīd ibn ‘Abd al-Malik.

[8] In Gīzah⁽¹¹⁾ is said to be the tomb of Ka‘b al-Aḥbār. It is also said that in (the heart of) Gīzah used to be alabaster stones with pictures of crocodiles on them, and (because of these) crocodiles did not show themselves in the Nile near Gīzah for three miles up and down the river.

[9] In 724 (A.D. 1324), (Sultan) al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn forbade the Wazīr⁽¹²⁾ to handle any of the tax money coming from Gīzah: all of it was henceforth to be turned over to the Sultan.

^{11.} The text is from Ibn Jubayr’s *Riḥlah* (Beirut ed., p. 30, *BGA* p. 55).

^{12.} The *wazīr* in question is Emir Mughulṭāy al-Jamālī (cf. *Khiṭaṭ* 2:393).

51. Joseph's Prison

[1] The prison of Joseph, peace be upon him, says al-Qudā'ī, is at Būṣīr (Abūṣīr al-Sidr) in the province of Gīzah. The experts among the Egyptians are agreed on the authenticity of that site, which contains the memorials of two prophets, one of them being Joseph. He was imprisoned there for what is said to have been seven years, and the divine revelation would come to him in that place. The flat roof of the prison is a location famed for having one's prayers answered; Kāfūr al-Ikhshīdī is said to have asked Abū Bakr Ibn al-Ḥaddād⁽¹⁾ about a place known for having one's prayers answered so that he could pray there, and Abū Bakr advised him to pray on the roof of the Prison. The other prophet is Moses, peace be upon him; a mosque known locally as "Masjid Mūsā" was built on the site of his historical presence.

Abū 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Sharafī⁽²⁾ told us about (his place of origin) *al-Sharaf*: Abū Muḥammad 'Abd-Allāh ibn al-Ward—his sister had died and he had come into some inheritance from her—used to relate to us traditions and we would study under him all the time. Now, there was a certain time (of the year) when people would go to Joseph's Prison and have a good time, and so, one day, Abū Muḥammad said to us, "My friends, this is the time for visiting the Prison and we all want to go there!" He took out ten dinars and handed them to his students, telling them to buy whatever their hearts desired. So all the hadith students went out and bought

^{1.} He is the Shāfi'ite jurispudent Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥaddād (878-955), twice (936 and 945) judge of Egypt; cf. al-Kindī, *al-Wulāh wa-'l-quḍāh* (ed. Guest), 551-57; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 4:197.

^{2.} (Blind) Shāfi'ite *faqīh* and traditionist, died 408/1017; cf. Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, 3:336 (Sharaf). —That al-Qudā'ī heard the following story directly from al-Sharafī—he even specifies the time: Jumādā II, 404 (December 1013), according to Ibn Duqmāq (*Intiṣār* 4:129)—is hard to believe, since he cannot have been more than a teenager then and must have still been in Baghdad, where he studied Shāfi'ite law and traditions before he came to Egypt.

what they wanted, and on Sunday we all crossed over to Gīzah, where we spent the night in the mosque of the Hamdān. The next morning we walked until we came to the Mosque of Moses, which is the one down in the plain; from there one begins the ascent to the Prison, which is separated from the mosque by a huge sand hill. "Who is going to carry me and take me to the Prison up there?" asked our professor. "To him I shall relate a tradition which I will not tell to anyone thereafter until my soul departs from this world!" So I picked up the old man and carried him until I reached the top of the hill. He got down and asked, "Have you got a sheet of paper with you?" I said, "No, I don't." "Then find me a flat stone," he said. He then took a piece of charcoal and wrote: I was told by Yaḥyā ibn Ayyūb, who heard it from Yaḥyā (ibn 'Abd-Allāh) ibn Bukayr, who had it from Zayd ibn Aslam, he from Bushayr ibn Yasār, and he from Ibn 'Abbās, who once said: —(The Archangel) Gabriel came to Joseph in that prison in that gloomy house and Joseph said to him, "Who are you? Ever since I have entered this prison, I have not seen anyone more handsome than you!" He answered, "I am Gabriel." Whereupon Joseph began to weep. "What is it that makes you cry, Prophet of God?" said Gabriel, and Joseph replied, "What is Gabriel doing in this abode of sinners?" "Has it not come to your knowledge," spoke Gabriel, "that God Exalted purifies certain places through His prophets? I swear to you, God has purified through you this prison and everything around it!" And before the day was over, Joseph was taken from that prison.

Al-Qudāṣī adds:⁽³⁾ There is a man missing between Zayd and Yaḥyā (in the *isnād* of that tradition).

The learned (Ḥanafite) jurist Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Salāmah al-Ṭaḥāwī⁽⁴⁾ said, as he spoke of Joseph's Prison: Were a man to travel all the way from the Iraq in order to pray there and to

³ The interpolated comment is Maqrizī's. Indeed, the Medinan jurist Zayd b. Aslam died in 753, and the Iraqi jurisprudent Yaḥyā b. 'Abd-Allāh b. Bukayr was born in 771.

⁴ See n. 9 of the preceding chapter.

behold it, I would not chide him for having made the long trip. And the learned jurist Abū Ishāq al-Marwazī⁽⁵⁾ said: If a man traveled all the way from the Iraq just to behold it, I would not blame him.

[2] Al-Musabbihī mentions among the events of the month of Rabīʿ II, 415 (June/July 1024):

The common people and the riffraff were going around the markets of Fuṣṭāṭ with drums and bugles, collecting from the merchants and shopkeepers spending money to go to Joseph's Prison. When the merchants told them they could not give them any because their hands were tied by the lack of food supplies—the dearth having become more severe—they brought their case to the attention of His Illustrious Highness—meaning, the Caliph al-Ẓāhir-li-īʿzāz-dīni-ʾllāh Abū ʾl-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥākim-bi-amri-ʾl-lāh—who ordered the chief of the security police of Fuṣṭāṭ, Sāmī ʾl-Dawlah Abū Ṭāhir Ibn Kāfī, to hold the merchants in preventive custody until they paid the people their customary dues. He bade the populace to go ahead and go out to Joseph's Prison and, having been promised that His Highness would double his bounty of the previous year to them, they left.

On Saturday, the 9th of Jumādā I (July 19), the Illustrious General ʿIzz al-Dawlah wa-Sanāhā (Abū ʾl-Fawāris) Miḍād the Black Eunuch rode at the head of all the Turks and of the prominent generals across town and proceeded with his troop down to the shipyards by the bridge (in Fuṣṭāṭ). He then set out from there and ferried at the head of the entire troop over to Gīzah, where he detailed soldiers to remain there with the Caliph for his protection. Because on Monday, the 11th, the Caliph, accompanied by his retinue and harem, crossed the river in four double-deck boats and with fourteen pack mules on his way to Joseph's Prison, where he stayed for two days and two nights, awaiting the return of the street

⁵ Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad, Shāfiʿite jurisprudent of Khorasanian origin and successor of Ibn Surayj al-Baghdādī (d. 918) as chief of the Shāfiʿites in Iraq. He died in 951 in Egypt. (Cf. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 1:26).

people who go out to the Prison with mummeries, burlesque shows, storytelling and grotesqueries. He laughed at them and found them amusing, and early on Wednesday morning, the 13th, he returned to his palace.

For about two weeks, the bazaar people kept roaming the streets with shadow plays, grotesqueries and mummeries. They went up to Cairo with their show so that the Caliph could see them, and came back carrying a royal order that had been written for them, to the effect that not one of them was to be interfered with in his coming and going and that they should be shown respect and protection. And that remained their status until all of them had returned to their senses. They had come back from Joseph's Prison on Saturday, the 16th of Jumādā I, and went through the streets with storytelling, grotesqueries and mummeries. People took off from work on that day, and large crowds gathered in the markets to watch them. For the better part of that day, people kept carrying on like that, and 8,000 dirhams were paid out to all of them while they were gathered in twelve markets, and they went home happy.

[3] Outside the town of Gīzah is a place known as "Abū Hurayrah." Ignorant people think that this is the Companion Abū Hurayrah. But that is not so. Rather, the place is named after the son of Abū Hurayrah's daughter.

52. The Village of Tirsā

[1] It has been reported, says al-Quḍā'ī, that al-Qāsim ibn 'Ubayd-Allāh ibn al-Ḥabḥāb, Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik's finance director of Egypt, founded in Gīzah a village known as *Tirsā*.⁽¹⁾

[2] This al-Qāsim came to Egypt and took over as deputy finance director for his father 'Ubayd-Allāh ibn al-Ḥabḥāb al-Salūlī during the caliphate of Hishām ibn 'Abd al-Malik. Later on, when his father left to assume the governorship of Ifrīqiyyah in 116 (A.D. 734), Hishām made him finance director of Egypt, an office he held until 124 (A.D. 742). Then he was removed from Egypt and both the Arab and the Persian troops stationed there rallied in favor of Ḥafṣ ibn al-Walīd, who then assumed the office of finance director and governor combined.

[3] It was near that Tirsā that (the last Umayyad) Marwān ibn Muḥammad al-Ja'dī fell in battle.

^{1.} Ramzī Bey has identified the village of Tirsā (about 5 km south of Gīzah) with the Roman *Tebersis*, which al-Qāsim b. 'Ubayd-Allāh apparently rebuilt and enlarged rather than "founded" (cf. *Qāmūs*, II, 3:11). In fact, in Ibn Duqmāq's quotation of the same passage (*Intiṣār* 4:131) the verb is *'ammara* instead of Maqrizī's *banā*. The village is recorded by Ibn Mammātī (*Qawānīn* 123); its cadastrally assessed value (*'ibrah*) is given by Ibn al-Jī'ān (*Tuḥfah* 142) and by Ibn Duqmāq (loc. cit.) as 8,500 dinars.



Karl Stowasser was born in 1925 in Grazlitz (now Kraslice) in Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic), only two miles from the German border. After the war, he entered the University of Erlangen and got a doctorate in Arabic from the University of Münster. In the 1950s, he served as an interpreter and translator in Syria. Beginning in 1961, he worked at Georgetown University. In 1970, he joined the Department of History at the University of Maryland. He retired in 1995 and died in 1997 of leukemia.

This annotated translation by Dr. Karl Stowasser has given new life in the English speaking world to an Arabic classic: Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī’s (d. 1442) *al-Mawā‘iẓ wa-l-i‘tibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-l-āthār*. It was a labor extending over twenty years and demanding the rich background of linguistic and historical knowledge that Dr. Stowasser brought to it. In his work on al-Maqrīzī, his aim was to produce not just a highly readable translation but a full scholarly edition as well. This translation, left unpublished at his death, is now entirely edited in three volumes covering roughly the first quarter of al-Maqrīzī’s work.