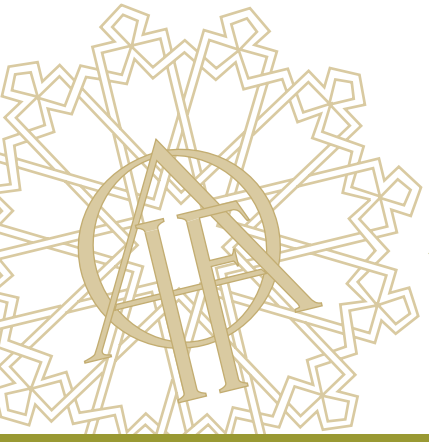
MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION NATIONALE, DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE



ANNALES ISLAMOLOGIQUES

en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne en ligne

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153

V. L. Ménage

The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .

Conditions d'utilisation

L'utilisation du contenu de ce site est limitée à un usage personnel et non commercial. Toute autre utilisation du site et de son contenu est soumise à une autorisation préalable de l'éditeur (contact AT ifao.egnet.net). Le copyright est conservé par l'éditeur (Ifao).

Conditions of Use

You may use content in this website only for your personal, noncommercial use. Any further use of this website and its content is forbidden, unless you have obtained prior permission from the publisher (contact AT ifao.egnet.net). The copyright is retained by the publisher (Ifao).

Dernières publications

9782724711219	*Gateway to Africa. Cultural Exchanges Across the Cataracts*	Valentina Gasperini (éd.), Gihane Zaki (éd.), Giuseppe Cecere (éd.)
9782724711264	*La chapelle d'Osiris Ounnefer Neb-djefaou*	Laurent Coulon
9782724711752	*Guide du Caire Islamique*	Hadrien Collet
9782724711660	*Mélanges de l'Institut dominicain d'études orientales 41*	Adrien Candiard (éd.)
9782724711745	*Bulletin archéologique des Écoles françaises à l'étranger (BAEFE)*	
9782724711271	*Du côté de chez Zeus*	Emmanuel Botte (éd.), Hélène Cuvigny (éd.), Michel Reddé (éd.)
9782724711677	*La Description de l'Égypte*	Paul-Marie Grinevald
9782724711714	*La pensée et la pratique pharmacologiques d'Avicenne*	Sylvie Ayari

© Institut français d'archéologie orientale - Le Caire

THE OTTOMANS AND NUBIA IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

V.L. MÉNAGE

Since 1963 excavations have been carried out under the auspices of the Egypt Exploration Society at Qaṣr Ibrīm, the fortress-town on the right bank of the Nile between the First and the Second Cataracts, which from the Pharaonic age into modern times dominated Lower Nubia [1]. Among the documents recovered are a number belonging to the period of Ottoman occupation, both in Arabic and in Turkish. Of the former, 61 — mostly legal certificates and agreements relating to sales, gifts, sharecropping and the like — have recently been published [2]. The Turkish texts are mostly small chits recording deductions to be made from the pay of various members of the garrison, with a small batch relating to similar deductions from the pay of soldiers at Sāy (Sali), the southernmost of the Ottoman fortresses, situated on an island in the Nile midway between the Second and the Third Cataracts and 350 kms up-river from Ibrīm. The extreme dates of the Arabic texts, published or soon to be published, are 1029 A.H. / 1620 A.D. and 1172/1759, and of the Turkish chits 998/1589 and 1152/1739, but a fragment of a pay-list relates to 983/1576 and a torn (and regrettably uninformative) personal letter is dated Ramaḍān 967 / June 1560. Our texts offer no clue to the strength of the garrison, either of Ibrīm or of Sāy, but figures published by S.J. Shaw, giving the total annual pay-bill for various years between 1005 / 1596-1597 and 1209 / 1794-1795, indicate that the garrison of Sāy was always more than twice as numerous as that of Ibrīm [3]. A Venetian traveller who in 1589, although he did not quite reach Ibrīm,

1. These excavations (1963, 1964, 1966, 1969, 1972 and thereafter biennially) began as part of the rescue operations carried out in anticipation of the submerging of the whole region with the completion of the Aswan High Dam. For a synthesis of recent work on the area, see W.Y. Adams, *Nubia : corridor to Africa,* London 1977; the citadel is illustrated in Plate XVI*b*.

2. Martin Hinds and Hamdi Sakkout, *Arabic documents from the Ottoman period from Qaṣr Ibrīm,* Egypt Exploration Society (Texts from excavations : eighth memoir), London 1986. A further volume, by Martin Hinds and V.L. Ménage, which will present another 24 Arabic texts and describe the Turkish material, is in preparation.

3. S.J. Shaw, *The financial and administrative organization and development of Ottoman Egypt, 1517-1798,* Princeton 1962, p. 395 and (summarized) p. 212.

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

stayed at the provincial headquarters at al-Dīwān, some 25 kms to the north, heard that the Ibrīm garrison consisted of 70 men [4].

One problem which has confronted us in preparing these texts for publication has been to determine when and why the Ottoman government installed garrisons at Ibrīm and Sāy. We cannot offer conclusive answers; but our investigations do throw a little light on the history both of this ill-documented region [5] and of Upper Egypt.

The belief, long generally accepted, that the Ottoman sultan Selīm I (1512-1520), the conqueror of Egypt, repaired and garrisoned the fortresses of Aswān, Ibrīm and Sāy has been given its quietus by Professor P.M. Holt [6], who demonstrated how this « myth » had developed from a local tradition recorded early in the last century by J.L. Burckhardt and adduced the detailed account of the contemporary Mamluk chronicler Ibn Iyās to show that Selīm engaged in no military operations south of Cairo. Holt accepted rather that the conquest of Lower Nubia (as well as the Red Sea littoral) was carried out by Özdemir, a former Mamluk officer in Ottoman service, in the reign of Sultan Süleymān (1520-1566), and probably about the middle of the tenth/sixteenth century. These conclusions may be reviewed in the light of some Turkish texts which deal with Selīm's conquest and its aftermath.

Even more detailed than Ibn Iyās's account is the campaign diary compiled by Ḥaydar Çelebi, a secretary of the Dīvān, which lists, very succinctly but day by day, the Sultan's movements and the main transactions in the Dīvān throughout the campaign [7]. This too shows that Selīm sent no regular expedition south of Cairo, even in the weeks when Ṭūmān Bāy had fled to Manfalūṭ and was seeking support among the Hawwāra tribesfolk of Upper Egypt, al-Ṣaʿīd. Just at this time, indeed, on 14 Ṣafar 923 / 8 March 1517, « The Amīr ʿAlī of the Banī ʿUmar [8], the ruler (*beg*) of al-Ṣaʿīd, came and kissed [the Sultan's] hand »; five days later « the region (*vilāyet*) of

4. His account is most recently published, in a critical text with French translation, by Carla Burri, in *Voyages en Égypte des années 1589, 1590 et 1591* (Voyageurs occidentaux en Égypte, vol. III), Cairo (I.F.A.O.) 1971. The reference to Qaṣr Ibrīm is at p. 146-147 (and n. 190).

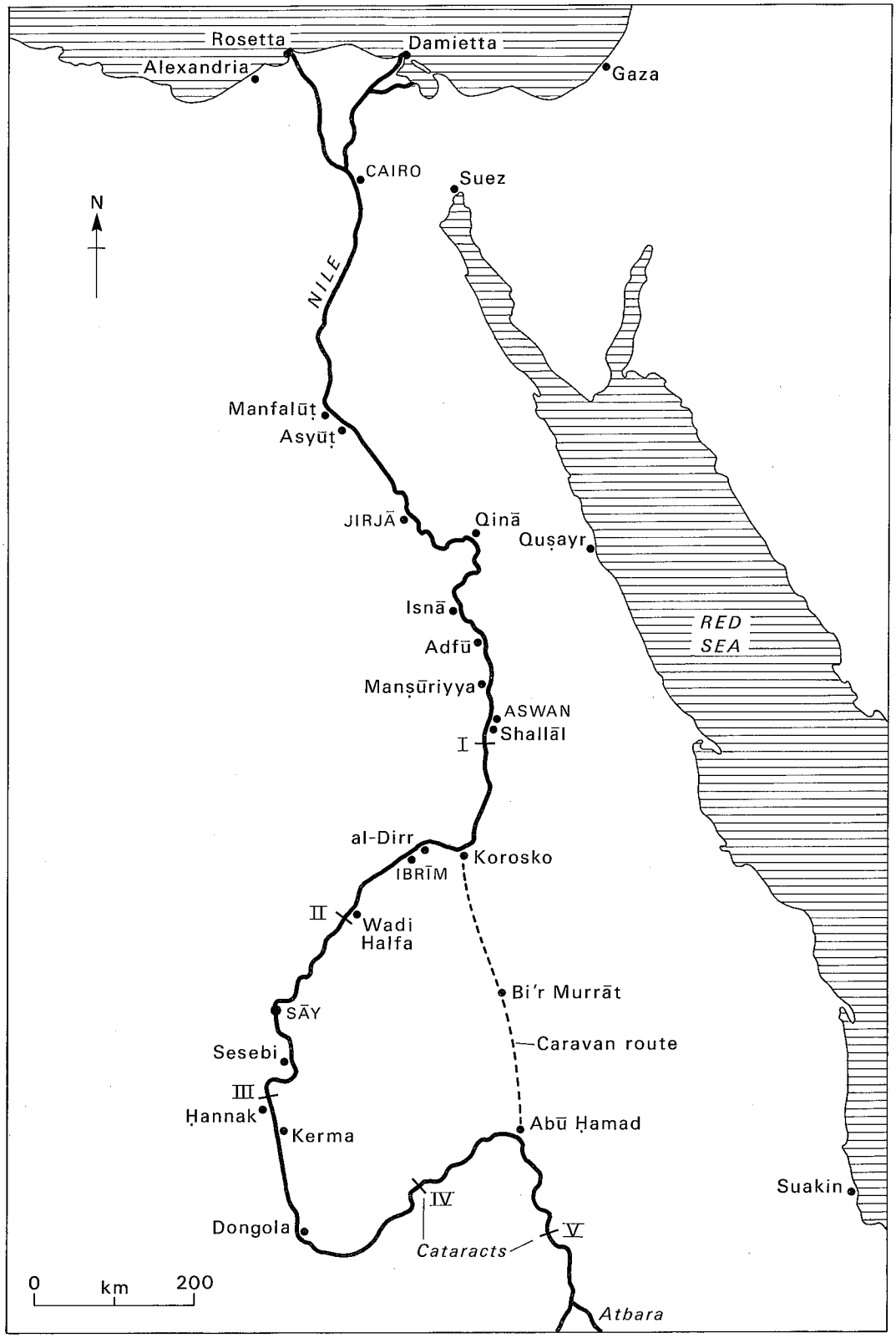
5. « If the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are a relative dark age in Southern Nubia, in the north they are pitch-dark » (Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 609).

6. P.M. Holt, « Sultan Selim I and the Sudan », in *Journal of African History*, 8 (1967), p. 19-23; reprinted in *idem, Studies in the history of the Near East*, London 1973, p. 81-84.

7. Ferīdūn, *Munšaʾāt al-salāṭīn*, 2nd ed., Istanbul 1274-5, i, p. 458-500.

8. This is ʿAlī b. Manṣūr. According to the list of governors of al-Ṣaʿīd (J.C. Garcin, « Émirs Hawwāras et Beys de Ǧirǧa aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles », in *Annales islamologiques*, 12 (1974), p. 245-255), he ruled for seven years before and seven years after the Ottoman conquest; in fact

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net



AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

al-Ṣaʿīd was given back to him and he was made governor (*ḥākim*) and commander (*serdār*) as before, and his brother ʿUmar Beg was imprisoned [scil. as a hostage] in the Citadel ». A month later, on 11 Rabīʿ I / 3 April — just after Ṭūmān Bāy had been captured — « ʿAlī Beg was granted permission to depart, and seven *qāḍī*s were appointed to his *vilāyet;* he went off to his sanjak » (and his hostage brother was released on 14 June, after Selīm's return from Alexandria) [9].

The terms used in this contemporary record require some comment : *vilāyet,* later often synonymous with *eyālet* (a province comprising several sanjaks under the jurisdiction of a beylerbey), is here still non-specific — « region » or « territory »; the amīr, re-installed after his formal submission, was regarded as a sanjakbey in the same sense that the tribal shaykhs of Kurdistan, on accepting Ottoman suzerainty a couple of years earlier, had been conceded the status of hereditary sanjakbeys [10], and it is in this aberrant sense that the tribal territory of the Banī ʿUmar, with its centre at Ǧirǧā, is termed a « sanjak ». The *qāḍī*s were, we may presume, « safe » men, Ottoman appointees who could be trusted to report any seditious tendencies in the area.

In the *qānūnnāme* for Egypt promulgated in 1525 after the suppression of the rebellion of « Ḫā'in » Aḥmad Pasha, there are only three passing references to al-Ṣaʿīd [11]; and of the fourteen provincial districts (*vilāyet*) listed as being administered by *kāšif*s only five are south of Cairo : Aṭfīḥ, Fayyūm with Bahnasā, Ašmūnayn, Manfalūṭ and

he was executed for malpractice in 931/1525 by Ibrāhīm Pasha in the course of the latter's visitation to regularise the affairs of Egypt (Celālzāde Muṣṭafā, *Ṭabaqāt al-mamālik,* ed. P. Kappert, Wiesbaden 1981, fol. 125b-126a; Solakzāde, p. 449). He was succeeded, reportedly also for fourteen years, by Dāwud, who is mentioned in a context (see below, n. 11) which indicates that he was newly-appointed in that year.

9. Ferīdūn, p. 487, 489, 490.

10. For this system of « indirect rule » see, e.g., H.A.R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic society and the West,* i/l, 1950, p. 161ff., and for its application elsewhere in Egypt, Orhonlu (*op. cit.* in n. 14), p. 111, n. 107.

11. Ö.L. Barkan, *XV ve XVIıncı asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda ziraî ekonominin hukukî ve malî esasları,* i : *Kanunlar,* Istanbul 1943, p. 355-387. « Gunpowder is no longer to be manufactured in al-Ṣaʿīd as it was in the time of the Banī ʿUmar » (p. 356); « Under the former régime it was customary that the Banī ʿUmar and their predecessors as shaykhs in the region of al-Ṣaʿīd should offer a present (*pīşkeş*) when first invested in office (*taqlīd*); the matter is to be investigated, and the Amīr Dāwud, now appointed shaykh over the region, and his successors are to pay whatever was customary under [the Mamluk sultan] Qā'it Bāy [1468-1496] » (p. 365); « Of the cereal levy due from al-Ṣaʿīd to the state granaries, 5000 *irdabb* is to be sent first to Jedda [scil. for the supply of the Holy Cities] » (p. 369). The list of the *kušūfiyya*s (each a « *vilāyet* ») is at p. 360.

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

« Elwāḥ », i.e. the oases of Ḫārja and Dāḫla : the *kāšif* administration evidently did not reach beyond Asyūṭ. As to « fortresses », a statement of account for the Central Treasury for the financial year 1527-1528 lists for Egypt only four : Cairo, Alexandria, Damietta and Rosetta [12]. A register of provincial governors for the whole Empire drawn up at this same time shows for Egypt itself only one sanjak (*liwā'*) south of Cairo : Asyūṭ, held by a certain ʿĪsā Beg « Köstendilī » (i.e. from Kyustendil in modern Bulgaria) [13].

In what follows, we are relying in the main on data from unpublished Ottoman chronicles and from Ottoman archival documents presented by the late Professor Cengiz Orhonlu in his book on the Ottoman province of Ḥabeş (Ḥabaš, « Abyssinia ») [14]. The archival material is from two main series : (1) the Mühimme Defterleri, the « Registers of Public Affairs », which is a series of volumes containing copies of decrees addressed to officials in all parts of the Empire, the earliest volume cited being for the years 961-962 / 1553-1554 [15]; and (2) the Ru'us Defterleri, a series of registers (the oldest being for 953-954 / 1547) which record principally appointments and promotions in the military administration and the bureaucracy [16]. Orhonlu was, of course, primarily concerned with Ottoman activities along the Red Sea coast and in the highlands of Eritrea, mentioning Nubian affairs only when they impinged on his main subject. There are certainly

12. Ö.L. Barkan, « H. 933-934 (M. 1527-1528) malî yılına ait bir bütçe örneği », in *İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 15 (1953), p. 251-329, at p. 292. It should be noted that an Ottoman fortress with its Janissary garrison might be outside the jurisdiction of the sanjakbey within whose territory it was situated. This is reflected in Burckhardt's comments, relating to his visit to our area in 1813 (*Travels in Nubia*, London 1819, p. 134-135) : « The descendants of such of the Bosnian soldiers as intermarried ... still occupy the territories assigned to their ancestors, at Assouan, Ibrim, and Say... They call themselves Kaladshy [*ḳalʿacı*], or the people of the castles... They are independent of the governors of Nubia... They are governed by their own Agas, who still boast of the Firmauns that render them accountable only to the Sultan. »

13. İ. Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's servants : the transformation of Ottoman provincial government, 1550-1650*, New York 1983, p. 107 and fig. 5.

14. Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun güney siyaseti : Habeş eyaleti*, Istanbul 1974.

15. For the description of this material see U. Heyd, *Ottoman documents on Palestine, 1552-1615*, Oxford 1960. In a discussion such as this, on the administration of remote areas, it must be remembered that although the Ottoman courier-service was efficient there might be a long delay before a provincial governor received a reply from Istanbul to a submission — five or six months in the case of Ḥabeş (Orhonlu, Doc. 31); it would be surprising if two beylerbeys or a beylerbey and the Dīvān were never at cross-purposes.

16. This series is described by Nejat Göyünç, « XVI. yüzyılda Ruûs ve önemi », in *Tarih Dergisi*, XVII/22 (1967), p. 17-34.

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

further data to be gleaned from the Ottoman archives, and probably also from the registers of the *qāḍī*s of Cairo; nevertheless we present our tentative conclusions, in the hope that they will serve as a basis for future research.

To come now to Özdemir. The tradition for his activities in Upper Egypt and beyond is set in two distinct historical contexts.

The first depends solely upon remarks made in his tenth book by the indefatigable Ottoman traveller Evliyā Çelebi, who claims that in 1082/1671, towards the end of his career, he set off up the Nile. He purportedly reached Sennar in Ša'bān 1083 / December 1672, where he was received by the King of the Funj, and from there went with a caravan into Abyssinia [17]. On his return journey, he approached Ibrīm from the east, having crossed the desert from the Red Sea coast.

Important as his work is, Evliyā cannot be accepted as a trustworthy authority — indeed it is doubtful how much of his account records personal experience and how much is hearsay. His statements on Özdemir are : (1) « in the year [blank] Ḫādim Süleymān Pasha, on his way back from his expedition to Diu, ordered Özdemir to conquer Ḥabeş; he sent him up the Nile from Cairo with a great army, and Özdemir took Dirr and Ibrīm from the King of the Funj »; (2) Sāy too was taken from the Funj by Özdemir « in the year 435 [sic] » and (3) on leaving Sāy, Evliyā reached in two stages « Maġraq », a fortress in the hands of the Funj, which Özdemir had taken but had held for only forty days [18].

Evliyā is weak on chronology. Süleymān Pasha was beylerbey of Egypt twice, from 1525 to 1535, and then again from October 1536 [19]. His fleet left Suez for Gujarat in

17. Evliyā's itinerary from Wadi Halfa is studied by M.T. Petti Suma, « Il viaggio in Sudan di Evliyā Čelebī (1671-1672) », in *Annali dell' Istituto Orientale di Napoli*, n.s. 14 (1964), p. 433-452, and, beyond Sennar, by A. Bombaci, « Il viaggio in Abissinia di Evliyā Čelebī (1673) », *ibid.*, n.s. 2 (1943), p. 259-275.

18. Evliyā Çelebi, *Seyāḥatnāme*, X, Istanbul 1938, p. 840-841, 845, 849 respectively. For the identification of Maġraq, see Petti Suma, p. 439, n. 41. Evliyā has been ill-served by his editors. It has now been demonstrated that one set of surviving manuscripts represents either E.'s autograph (so R.F. Kreutel, in *Der Islam*, 48 (1972), p. 269-279) or a text prepared under his supervision (so P.A. Mackay, *ibid.*, 52 (1975), p. 278-298), but this set does not embrace volume ten. The patently impossible date 435 (= 1043-1044 A.D.) — reasonably clear at fol. 156v. of the mediocre MS Beşir Ağa 452 — has caused unnecessary confusion in that S.J. Shaw tacitly « corrected » it (*op. cit.* in n. 3, p. 198) to 935 / 1528-1529. Later writers have reproduced this date as that of the occupation of Sāy, whereas in fact it is completely unwarranted.

19. For his career see now the article « Khādim Süleymān Pasha », in *Enc. Islam*^{2}, by C. Orhonlu.

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

June 1538. He returned to the Red Sea at the end of that year, where, having restored order in the Yemen, he stayed behind to perform the Pilgrimage (scil. of 945 / April 1539) [20]. Very shortly after his return to Cairo with the pilgrim caravan, he was summoned to Istanbul and he did not return to Egypt again. Özdemir was certainly on the Gujarat expedition, and he did indeed attract Süleymān Pasha's notice by his valour; but when the expedition returned he remained in the Yemen as a sanjakbey [21]. It is impossible to accept that, as Evliyā implies, he was active in Upper Egypt or Nubia as early as 1539 or 1540.

Özdemir did however set off up the Nile in 1555. By now a Pasha, he had distinguished himself by long service in the Yemen : in 1547 he had taken Ṣan'ā' from the Zaydī imām Muṭahhar; in 1549 he was promoted to beylerbey; and in December 1554 he asked permission to resign [22]. He was then invited to the Porte and had several audiences with Sultan Süleymān, informing him of the situation in the Red Sea area. In consequence, it was decided to send an expedition into « Ḥabeş », and Özdemir was appointed beylerbey of the as yet unconquered province on 5 July 1555. Troops and supplies being provided from Cairo, Özdemir proceeded up the Nile, but when, after great difficulties, Šallāl was reached, the troops refused to go further and he was obliged to return to Cairo [23]. The expedition then set off again, this time by sea from Suez to Suakin. From there, by sea and overland, Özdemir's force advanced on Massawa, which was taken in April 1557 [24].

20. According to Peçevī (i, 224), after settling the affairs of Yemen he reached Jedda on 22 Šawwāl (945) / 13 March 1539.

21. A detailed account of Özdemir's career in Yemen is given by J.R. Blackburn, « The Ottoman penetration of Yemen », in *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 6 (1980), p. 55-100.

22. Blackburn, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

23. Orhonlu, p. 33-37, citing Loqmān, *Zubdat al-tawārīḫ* (in MS); al-Nahrawālī, *al-Barq al-Yamānī* (ed. by Ḥamad al-Ğāsir, as *Ġazawāt al-Ğarākisaw a-l-Atrāk fī ğanūb al-Ğazīra*, Riyadh 1387/1967), p. 119-120; and the chronicle attributed to Rüstem Pasha. For this last, Orhonlu cites a MS in Istanbul; the Vienna MS is summarized by L. Forrer, *Die osmanische Chronik des Rustem Pascha*, Leipzig 1923 (p. 187-188 : Özdemir's reception by the Sultan, before Süleymān's return to Istanbul (scil. at the end of July 1555, after the two-year campaign against Persia); p. 189 : Özdemir obliged to turn back). Orhonlu has slipped in having Özdemir invited « to Istanbul » : al-Nahrawālī writes *ilā 'l-abwāb al-'āliya* (p. 119), which means only « the Porte », the Sultan's presence, and says that they conversed as they « rode » together. Süleymān wintered at Amasya from October 1554 to June 1555, and the audiences most probably began there; Özdemir's appointment, enregistered on 5 July 1555 (Orhonlu, p. 37, n. 33), was made when the army was on the road to Istanbul.

24. Orhonlu, p. 43.

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

The objective of the expedition up the Nile is not clear. With the easier sea-route available, Özdemir can hardly have planned to march overland to Suakin. Orhonlu suggested, very plausibly, that the campaign was directed against the Funj sultanate (a point considered below), and in that case, had it been successful, Ibrīm and Sāy might well have been fortified and garrisoned. However, if the Ottoman chronicles are to be trusted, Özdemir got no further than the First Cataract — no doubt because the troops refused to undertake the laborious porterage which an advance beyond the rapids entailed [25].

Özdemir left a great name behind him, particularly in Egypt, as being the first Circassian to make a brilliant career, after the extinction of the Mamluk sultanate, in the service of the Ottomans. It would seem that the same myth-making which projected back to the reign of Selīm features of the Egyptian administration which were introduced only later [26] had, for Evliyā's contemporaries, anachronisticly linked the Ottoman occupation of Nubia with the heroic name of Özdemir.

From the documents published by Orhonlu it is clear that in these years one major concern for the Ottoman authorities was the threat posed by the Funj, most immediately to Suakin but also to Nubia and Upper Egypt.

The Funj sultanate had made its appearance at the beginning of the sixteenth century, its capital, Sennar on the Blue Nile, having been founded, according to tradition, in 910 / 1504-1505. The first ruler, ʿAmāra Dūnqas, is a reasonably clear historical figure whose authority, already by 1522, was respected as far north as Dongola, on the Nile bend between the Third and the Fourth Cataracts; and the new power soon extorted from the Ḥaḍāriba shaykhs, who controlled the Beja country between the Nile and Red Sea, a share in the customs revenue of Suakin [27].

There seems to have been an Ottoman presence at Suakin as early as 1520 [28] : certainly an entry for the customs revenue of Suakin and Jedda together appears in the Treasury accounts, already cited, for 1527-1528; at this time Suakin was administered

25. Al-Nahrawāli's account is vague : he refers in general terms to the building of fortresses and makes Özdemir travel overland from Cairo through al-Ṣaʿīd and across to Suakin, and thence to Massawa, having telescoped the two expeditions. This has misled von Hammer (*Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, III, Pest 1828, p. 547-548).

26. P.M. Holt, *Studies* (cited in n. 6), p. 83, 171-172.

27. R.S. O'Fahey and J.L. Spaulding, *Kingdoms of the Sudan*, London 1974, p. 26.

28. Orhonlu, p. 2, n. 9, and cf. R.B. Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian coast*, Oxford 1963, p. 18.

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

by a « superintendent of finances » (*nāẓir-i emvāl*) [29]. In April 1554 Suakin was constituted a sanjak of Egypt [30], presumably in order to ensure a firmer control of this profitable port and to protect it both against the Portuguese by sea and the Beja and the Funj by land. Very soon afterwards, however, when in July 1555 Özdemir was appointed to Ḥabeş, Suakin was transferred to his jurisdiction. In the succeeding years Suakin was of crucial strategic importance as the base for military and naval operations to the south.

This base was located on the island in the harbour and so was dependent, particularly for its water-supply, on the tranquillity of the hinterland. In May 1564, the Beylerbey of Ḥabeş (now ʿUṯmān Pasha, the son of Özdemir) having reported that « the rebellious Bedouin the Funj » (*ʿuṣāt-i ʿurbāndan Func aʿrābı*) were allowing water in only at an excessive price and had killed many people, once again a sanjakbey was appointed to Suakin with the explicit duty of guarding the fortress there and reducing the Funj to submission [31]. In 1571 the Beylerbey of Ḥabeş was congratulated that an attack on Suakin had been beaten off [32], and the Beylerbey of Egypt was ordered to send guns and ammunition for the fortresses of Suakin and Massawa [33].

As for Lower Nubia, the first unambiguous reference to an Ottoman military occupation belongs to the year 978/1570. By a document dated 25 August 1570 a certain Muṣṭafā, « sanjakbey of Ibrīm », was authorized to receive from Cairo a ration-allowance and troops, « as has been the practice for those appointed *beg* and *kāšif* to protect (*muḥāfaẓa*) the *vilāyet* of Ibrīm » [34]. These last words demonstrate that Muṣṭafā was

29. *Op. cit.* in n. 12, p. 291.

30. Orhonlu, p. 37 and n. 31, quoting Ruus under date 7 Ğumādā I 961 / 10 April 1554.

31. Orhonlu, p. 52 (cf. also p. 77 and 108), referring to Doc. 4, Ruus, and Doc. 5, *berāt* for the sanjakbey, under dates 9 and 17 Šawwāl 971 / 21 and 29 May 1564 respectively.

32. Orhonlu, p. 77 and n. 31, referring to Doc. 13, Mühimme, under date 1 Ğumādā II 979 / 21 October 1571.

33. Orhonlu, p. 122, referring to Doc. 11 and 12, Mühimme, both under date 20 Ğumādā II 979 / 9 November 1571.

34. Orhonlu, p. 113 and n. 117, referring to Ruus under date 23 Rabīʿ I 978 / 25 August 1570. Dr Caroline Finkel very kindly sent a transcription of the text : *İbrīm sancaġı begi Muṣṭafā Beg ʿarż-i ḥāl vérüb vilāyet-i İbrīm muḥāfaẓası içün taʿyīn olınan beg ve kāşif olanlara maḥrūse-i Miṣr'dan emr-i şerīf mücebince muḥāfaẓa ve istiḥdām içün vérilügelen kuldan ve sā'ir levāzimātdan kendüye daḥi vérilüb mīrlivāya ve kāşife cerāye ve ʿaliḳdan vérilügeldügi üzre ṭālib olub ʿināyet ricā eylemegin ḳadīmden vérilügeldügi üzre buyuruldı.* The words *beg ve kāṣif olanlar* are ambiguous. They might be taken to imply two officers, the one a military governor, the other a revenue-collector. More probably, however, the officials in Istanbul felt the terms to be quasi-synonymous and meant « those who are (in Ottoman terminology) sanjakbey and (in traditional Egyptian terminology) *kāšif* ».

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

not the first appointee (and we have no indication how many predecessors he may have had) [35]. However, the use of the term sanjakbey and the mention of a garrison drawn from Cairo indicate that the Ottoman presence was not solely a revenue-raising enterprise but a military initiative; and in view of the traditions reported by Evliyā a century later and the clashes attested by 1580 or so (see below) it seems safe to conclude that it was the threat from the Funj which had prompted precautionary action in defence of Upper Egypt, some time between Özdemir's abortive expedition of 1555 and 1570. The re-fortifying and garrisoning of Qaṣr Ibrīm and the establishment of the provincial headquarters at al-Dīwān [36], adjacent to al-Dirr (as described by the Venetian traveller), would not only block any offensive northwards along the Nile but would also cover the northern stretches of the important direct route across the desert which, cutting off the great bend in the river, led from Abū Ḥamad to Korosko [37]. At the same time, as the immediate future history of the sanjak shows, Ibrīm could also, distant though it was, support the operations in Ḥabeş.

The Ḥabeş enterprise, whatever its strategic advantage in protecting the Red Sea route against the Portuguese, was costly and difficult to support, particularly in the years 1567-1570 when there was upheaval in the Yemen. The stipends of the troops, from the beylerbey downwards, could be paid from the treasury of Egypt; from Egypt too could be supplied ships, materials of war, and replacements for men who had been lost in battle or had succumbed to the appalling climate of the coastlands. But a further principal concern was the supply of provisions. For a possible solution the authorities

35. According to a record of the court of a qāḍī of Cairo, in 971/1563 a certain al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, « former *kāšif* of Ibrīm », contracted to buy slaves from Šayḫ Mubārak Yūsuf Mubārak, « Šayḫ of Ibrīm » (T. Walz, « Trading into the Sudan in the sixteenth century », in *Annales islamologiques* 15 (1979), at p. 213 n.). These names and the title « Šayḫ » do not suggest Ottoman officials : the area was perhaps still under the jurisdiction of the Banī ʿUmar.

36. The toponym al-Dīwān is unlikely to be pre-Ottoman; like the word *sarāy* (cf. Sarajevo in Bosnia) or the modern term *konak* (« residence »), it probably stands for « government house », a site recently occupied as the sanjakbey's headquarters. According to the Venetian traveller, the sanjakbey lived here in a « *castello* », outside which were quartered some 200 troops : this, unlike Ibrīm (and Sāy), was not strictly a « *qalʿa* » (see above, n. 12). Evliyā (X, p. 840) does not mention al-Dīwān : he calls al-Dirr the chef-lieu of the « sanjak » of Ibrīm, where is the residence of the « *kāšif* » of Ibrīm.

37. The Venetian traveller recorded (ed. Carla Burri, p. 140-141) that the journey from Korosko to Abū Ḥamad took seven days; after three days, water was to be found, and the route up to this point (?Bi'r Murrāt, cf. Burckhardt, p. 183-184) was under Ottoman control, the remaining four-day journey being through Funj territory.

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

turned their eyes to Lower Nubia and al-Ṣaʿīd, where major administrative changes were made at the instigation of Riḍvān Pasha, appointed beylerbey of Ḥabeş early in 1573 [38].

Riḍvān stayed on for some months in his old post of Gaza, no doubt waiting to ensure that the dispositions which he envisaged were agreed by the Porte. That some transfer of revenue or of grain from Ibrīm to Ḥabeş had been agreed earlier is shown by a firman addressed to the Beylerbey of Egypt under the date 8 March 1573 stating that Riḍvān had requested that « the places (*yerler*) formerly [i.e. under his predecessor in Ḥabeş, Aḥmed] attached (*ilḥāq*) to Ḥabeş from the territory (*vilāyet*) of Ibrīm should continue to be so attached », and instructing the Beylerbey of Egypt to arrange this [39]. But a document from an appointments register, dated 26 July 1573, shows that Riḍvān managed to carry the arrangement much further. Headed « *Vilāyet* of Ibrīm in Egypt attached to the *vilāyet* of Ḥabeş », it reads [40] : « The Beylerbey of Ḥabeş, Riḍvān Pasha, has written as follows : ' The *vilāyet* of Ibrīm is distant from Cairo (*Miṣr*) and near to the *vilāyet* of Ḥabeş. The revenue raised there, four or five thousand gold pieces (*altun*), is insufficient for the pay (*mevācib*) of the troops (*kul ṭā'ifesi*) and of the fortress-garrison (*ḥiṣār erenleri*), and the annual stipend (*sālyāne*) of the sanjakbey guarding it (*muḥāfaẓasında*) is paid from the treasury of Egypt. If it is attached to the *beglerbegilik* of Ḥabeş, it will be of great assistance, both in provisions (*zaḫīre*) and in troops (*ʿasker*); and if it is granted, as a sanjak (*sancak ṭarīḳiyle*), to Ḥüseyn Kāšif, a *müteferriqa* of Egypt on 100 *akçe*s a day, sufficient revenue will be raised to cover the pay of the troops and his own stipend of 200 000 *akçe*s : he undertakes [41] to increase the state revenue and is in every way suitable '. Riḍvān having requested the granting of this sanjak

38. Orhonlu, p. 54 and n. 60, quotes the Ruus entry under date 28 Šawwāl 980 / 3 March 1573 as referring to his appointment, but in that case a firman replying to a request he had made as beylerbey (see n. 39) could not have been enregistered less than a week later; the Ruus entry perhaps refers only to the amount of his stipend. For this Riḍvān as sanjakbey of Gaza, see U. Heyd (*op. cit.* in n. 15), index; for his activities in Yemen, J.R. Blackburn, « The collapse of Ottoman authority in Yemen », in *Die Welt des Islams*, 19 (1979), p. 119-176, at p. 131-150; and as Beylerbey of Ḥabeş, Orhonlu, p. 54-55.

39. Orhonlu, p. 112 and n. 115, referring to Doc. 15, Mühimme, under date 4 Ḏu'l-Qaʿḍa 980 / 8 March 1573.

40. Orhonlu, p. 112 and n. 112, referring to Doc. 18 (reproduced p. 195), Ruus, under date 26 Rabīʿ I 981 / 26 July 1573 (sic : the « 1574 » in the text is a miscalculation). Orhonlu's description at p. 112 is confused, probably because (to judge from his map) he mistook the location of Ibrīm.

41. I read, for Orhonlu's *uhdesine ilhâk*, *ʿuhdesine alub* (and at the end ... *üzre vérilmek*).

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

(*livā'*), it is so granted. » This was not all. Two days later a firman was addressed to the Beylerbey of Egypt [42] instructing him to implement Riḍvān's « schedule of items » (*qażāyā defteri*) requesting cannon, muskets and gunpowder; men; an increase in his stipend by the grant (which his predecessor Aḥmed had enjoyed) of the village (*qarye*) of Manṣūriyya [43]; an undertaking that there would be no tampering with the pay of Egyptian troops ordered to Ḥabeş; an efficient courier-service; and a sufficiency of grain [44] from the *vilāyet* of ʿÖmer-oġlı [i.e. of Ibn ʿUmar, al-Ṣaʿīd].

One year later Riḍvān had increased his demands. In June 1574 a firman was sent to him and to the Beylerbey of Egypt to the effect that [45] : Riḍvān had reported a serious shortage of grain, his only source being the rebels (*ʿāṣī*) of the land of the Funj, who had to be paid in 200 rolls of cloth per year. If various « villages » [46] in the *vilāyet* of al-Ṣaʿīd were attached to Ḥabeş, grain-supplies would be assured, no cloth [47] need be paid to the Funj, and the burden on the treasury for meeting the troops' pay would be eased [48]; it was agreed that these villages should be so transferred.

In November 1574 Riḍvān's successor Muṣṭafā was permitted to continue this arrangement [49], but two years later it was cancelled : in September 1576 his request to have these three villages and a fourth [50] transferred to him was refused (but he was sent a firman for presentation to the Beylerbey of Egypt ordering the latter to provide him with the grain he needed) [51].

42. Orhonlu, Doc. 16, Mühimme.

43. Manṣūriyya, opposite Kom Ombo, is described by the Venetian traveller as a « *picola vila* » (p. 110), the southern limit of the territories of the Banī ʿUmar (p. 54).

44. Orhonlu reads *zahîre ve hak ve icâre;* I do not understand the second and third words.

45. Orhonlu, p. 112 and n. 113, referring to Doc. 25 (reproduced p. 201), Mühimme, under date 20 Ṣafar 982 / 11 June 1574.

46. Orhonlu reads *Mansura ve Atike ve Iska nâm karyeler*. The first presumably stands for Manṣūriyya (n. 43). For the second, the plate (line 2) certainly suggests ATYQH (but in Doc. 19 Orhonlu reads ATDFA); given that the clerks were often baffled by unfamiliar names, perhaps Adfū (Edfu) was intended. For the third, in Doc. 19 Orhonlu reads *İsna,* there no doubt correct. All three districts are contiguous, on the left bank of the Nile.

47. Reading *bez* (as in Doc. 26) for Orhonlu's *yer*.

48. Presumably because the cash revenues, as well as the grain, of these districts would be made over to pay the troops of Ḥabeş.

49. Orhonlu, p. 112 and n. 113, referring to Doc. 26, Mühimme, under date 15 Šaʿbān 982 / 30 November 1574.

50. Orhonlu transcribes *Vası'a,* for which I cannot suggest an identification.

51. Orhonlu, p. 112 and n. 114, referring to Doc. 28, Mühimme, under date 6 Rağab 984 / 29 September 1576. The firman to Egypt, however, dated ten days later (Doc. 27), says only that since Muṣṭafā has difficulty in obtaining cloth for bartering with the Funj he is to be supplied with *cloth* when he needs it.

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

This revocation, there can be little doubt, was one consequence of a radical change in the administration of Upper Egypt which had been introduced earlier that year. In March 1576 a firman in Arabic was addressed to the *qāḍī*s of Ǧirǧā, Asyūṭ and Qinā and to all local officials, to this effect : whereas the governance of al-Ṣaʿīd al-Aʿlā and responsibility for its revenues had for long been hereditary with the Arabs [i.e. the Banī ʿUmar], there had been delay in the production of the revenue and of the corn-supplies, and unchecked oppression of the peasantry; hence the Sultan, disturbed at the ruination of the countryside and at the neglect of waqfs and mosques, was obliged to remove them from power. To remedy the situation, he now appointed the Amīr Sulaymān, who was to enjoy whatever had been enjoyed in the past by the Banī ʿUmar [52].

In spite of the document's forthright wording, Süleymān's appointment did not represent a definitive expulsion of the Banī ʿUmār; rather, Süleymān's function was to secure the revenue, to compose quarrels in the ruling family, and perhaps also to suppress discontent provoked by the recent measures of hiving off parts of their patrimony. For the next forty years or so, an Ottoman « resident », with a garrison, was stationed in the region to keep the ruling house in line [53]; this certainly is what the Venetian traveller observed in 1589 : « From Manfalūṭ as far as Manṣūriyya is the province of al-Ṣaʿīd, which is governed by a *šayḫ al-ʿArab* ... but the Grand Turk keeps a sanjakbey there as his representative » [54]. This extension of Ottoman control falls within the period of Ḫādim Mesīḥ Pasha's governorship of Egypt : having been Treasurer (*ḫazīnedārbaşı*) in the Palace, he was appointed to Egypt in September 1574 [55], where

52. ʿAlī Mubārak, *al-Ḫiṭaṭ al-Ǧadīda*, X, Cairo 1305 / 1887-1888, p. 54-55. The date is III Ḏū'l-Ḥiǧǧa 983 / late March 1576.

53. In the list of governors published by J.C. Garcin (n. 8), Süleymān appears as « Salmān Bāšā', under the year 981 / 1573-1574; the last ruler of the Banī ʿUmar is said to have taken office (for two years) in 1015/1607. As Garcin points out (p. 253), this chronology accords well with Vansleb's statement (he was in Egypt in 1672-1673) that the Ottomans expelled the Banī ʿUmar « about fifty years ago ».

54. Ed. Carla Burri, p. 54, 64.

55. So İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı tarihi*, III/2, Ankara 1954, p. 346, citing a Mühimme text. The *ḫazīnedārbaşı* (« Head of the Treasurers », scil. of the sultan's personal treasuries), the second in rank of the White Eunuchs, was one of the highest officers of the Palace. The finances of Egypt were a close concern of the sultan, since the surplus of its revenues, fixed at twenty million paras, was his personal perquisite. The remittance (*irsāliyye*) for 980 / 1572-1573 had fallen to sixteen million. It was no doubt in order to increase the revenue that under Murād III (1574-1595) the governorship of Egypt was given successively to financial experts rather than military administrators. Mesīḥ was succeeded by Ḥasan, also *ḫazīnedārbaşı;* Ibrāhīm, a favourite (see below); Sinān, defterdār of Anatolia and then of Egypt; and Üveys, Chief Defterdār : he managed to raise the *irsāliyye* to twenty-four

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

he remained for nearly six years, the longest tenure since that of Ḫādim Süleymān. He is reported to have been an upright and very strict governor, active in repressing the « *meşāyiḫ-i ʿurbān* » [56]. It is very probably on his initiative that the intervention in al-Ṣaʿīd was put through.

The Ottoman sources, by referring to this Süleymān as « Qubād-oġlı », enable us to identify him. He came of a distinguished family, the Turcoman dynasty of the Ramażān-oġulları, which had ruled in Cilicia with its seat at Adana [57]. In the fifteenth century its rulers were generally obliged to acknowledge Mamluk suzerainty, but from 1517 onwards, while one member of the family usually exercised shadow-rule at Adana, others held prominent posts in the Ottoman provincial administration. Thus while Süleymān's uncle Pīrī (d. 976/1568) ruled (with intermissions) over the family territory in Cilicia [58], his father Qubād, Pīrī's brother, governed successively the provinces of Trebizond, Erzerum, Basra and Aleppo, where he died in 966 / 1558-1559. As for Süleymān, in the decade before his appointment to Ğirğā he had been sanjakbey successively of Jerusalem, Ḥilla, Irbil and again (from May 1571) Jerusalem [59]. Very shortly after his move to Ğirğā he was appointed beylerbey of Ḥabeş (with his brother Aḥmed due to replace him at Ğirğā) [60]; but since by April 1577 he had still not gone to his new post [61], he was re-appointed to Ğirğā and Aḥmed was sent to Ḥabeş in his stead [62]. Aḥmed's tenure there passed in strenuous military activity against the

million, but provoked a mutiny in consequence and had to flee for his life (Shaw, *op. cit.* in n. 3, p. 283-284).

56. ʿOṭmānzāde Tāʾib, *Ḥadīqat al-wuzarāʾ*, Istanbul 1271, p. 41.

57. For the dynasty, see Faruk Sümer, « Çukurova tarihine dâir araştırmalar », in *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, I/1 (1963), p. 1-111, esp. 35-62; *idem*, « Ramazan-oğulları », in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, fasc. 97 (1963).

58. The register of governors cited above (n. 13) lists him (p. 107) with the (remarkably high) annual revenue of 1 870 000 *akçe*s.

59. Here (and elsewhere) I am indebted to Dr Metin Kunt for communicating data culled from the appointment registers MAD 563 and KK 262. He has also sent me a photocopy of a loose sheet inserted in KK 262 (see his *The Sultan's servants* ..., p. 128), a list of the 26 *mīrlivā*s of Egypt, which is to be dated to the winter of 1578-1579. First on the list is Süleymān, « *vilāyet-i Ṣaʿīd muḥāfaẓasında* », with the high stipend of 500 000 *akçe*s.

60. Orhonlu, p. 56 and n. 73, citing, without a date, a Mühimme document for the appointment of Aḥmed to Ğirğā (and arrangements for building a fortress there). Süleymān's appointment to Ḥabeş was before 13 Šaʿbān 984 / 5 November 1576, the date of an order to his locum tenens in Ḥabeş to return to Egypt when Süleymān arrived (p. 94, n. 8).

61. Orhonlu, p. 56, writes « 17 February 1577 », but the document to which he seems to refer (n° 32, see n. 65 below) is dated 12 April.

62. Orhonlu, p. 56 and n. 74. These indecisions are perhaps reflected in the detailed but

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

Abyssinian king Malak Sagad, whose troops defeated the Ottoman forces at Addi Quarro and killed Aḥmed, probably early in 1579. Süleymān was then appointed in his place, in March 1579, but once more did not go [63].

This insubordination does not seem to have affected Süleymān's later career; he went on to hold a series of appointments as beylerbey — of Diyārbekr, Karaman, Baghdad, Shahrizūr, and finally Damascus, where, in May 1589, he was murdered by his slaves [64]. There is one indication, however, that it was not indolence that detained him at Ğirğā, for a terse firman, dated 12 April 1577 and addressed to the Beylerbey of Egypt, reads [65] : « You have reported that the Beylerbey of Ḥabeş, Süleymān, has not yet gone to his post but has various plans for the conquest of the territory of the Funj. He has been sent a command to give up this project and to go to Ḥabeş. Do not let him delay : give him men and lend him money if necessary, and send him off speedily to Ḥabeş. »

Whether or not Süleymān put his plans into effect at this stage, he, or a successor, had certainly been active by 1584, for on 15 January of that year a certain Meḥmed, a former sanjakbey of Ibrīm, was re-appointed there with the substantial increase of 60 000 *akçe*s in his annual stipend in return for his services against the Funj : he had subdued various places, taken the fortress of « Sīse » — i.e. Sesebi, 90 kms up-river from Sāy [66] — and cut off the head of a certain Malik Sa'īd [67]. It must be to these

confused entry in the list of governors, ed. J.C. Garcin, p. 252, and discussed in his *Un centre musulman de la Haute Égypte médiévale : Qūṣ*, Cairo 1976, p. 515-517.

63. Orhonlu, p. 61 and n. 101, p. 95 and n. 12. Ḫiżr Pasha was appointed in December (Orhonlu, p. 61 and n. 102) and restored the critical situation. This Ḫiżr was later (see below) Beylerbey of Ibrīm, for the brief period that it was raised to the status of *eyālet*.

64. The historian ʿĀlī's career as a provincial *defterdār* brought him in close contact with Süleymān. In his *istidʿānāme* (ed. J.R. Walsh, in *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, 13 (1958), p. 131-140) he commends him (p. 139) as energetic and competent at controlling Arab regions; but in two passages added to his *Nuṣḥat al-salāṭīn* (ed. and tr. A. Tietze, *Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī's Counsel for sultans of 1581*, I, Vienna 1979, p. 80-81, and II, Vienna 1982, p. 34) he denounces him as a corrupt villain, an example of the *levend-meşreb* (? = ruffianly) governors of outlying provinces whose overbearing methods make them unfit to administer the central regions of the Empire. Then in his *Kunh al-aḫbār* (III/3, p. 62) he describes him as notorious for his cruelty; it was cowardice that restrained him from going to Ḥabeş; and at Damascus a couple of his black eunuchs killed him as he was lying in a drugged stupor. The date of his death, 10 Rağab 997, is given in al-Ġazzī's *al-Kawākib al-sā'ira*, III, p. 157-158 (this reference kindly communicated by Professor Holt).

65. Orhonlu, p. 77-78 and Doc. 32, Mühimme, under date 23 Muḥarram 985 / 12 April 1577.

66. In Evliyā (X, p. 851) « Sese », identified as Sesebi by Petti Suma (*op. cit.* in n. 17), p. 440, n. 45.

67. Orhonlu, p. 113 and n. 121, citing Mühimme under date 2 Muḥarram 992 / 15 January 1584. A firman to the Beylerbey of

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

operations that the traveller of 1589 was referring when he recorded [68] that « some years ago » (*questi anni passati*) the Turks mounted an expedition to attack Dongola by sending boats up-river, but all but one of them were wrecked : only the rocks, by God's providence, prevented the Turks from conquering the whole kingdom of the Funj, so that their dominion extends only to Sukkūt (i.e. to the tract of the Nile lying around 21° N., just north of Sāy).

Less than a month after the valorous Meḥmed was re-appointed to Ibrīm, his sanjak was raised to the status of *eyālet*, Ḫiżr Pasha, a former beylerbey of Ḥabeş, being appointed beylerbey on 13 February 1584. The new *eyālet* was quite extensive, embracing all al-Ṣaʿīd al-Aʿlā (from Qinā southwards), Quṣayr, and the *kušūfiyya* of al-Wāḥāt [69]. The region in the far south, occupied in the operations in which Meḥmed had distinguished himself, was constituted the « sanjak of Maḥās » [70], also belonging to the new *eyālet* of Ibrīm, and was assigned in November 1584 to a certain Riḍvān Beg, formerly a sanjakbey in the Yemen [71].

Egypt under date 2 Ḏū'l-Ḥiğğa 988 / 8 January 1581 (Orhonlu, Doc. 47) may be of significance : Bayram, a « *beg* of Ḥabeş », had been appointed sanjakbey of Ibrīm, but the Porte had ordered that he should remain in Ḥabeş, sending his officers to administer Ibrīm; the beylerbey protested that Bayram must serve in person, because Ibrīm was « the lock of Ṣaʿīd » (and he was permitted to use his discretion). The phrase suggests that there was some threat from the south.

68. Ed. Carla Burri, p. 148-149.

69. Orhonlu, p. 113-114 and notes 122 and 125, citing Ruus dated 1 Ṣafar 992 / 13 February 1584. Orhonlu gives as the northern boundary the village of « Taht (Tahta) » on the east bank of the Nile and a name he cannot decipher on the west bank. A photocopy of the entry at KK 262, p. 85 (kindly provided by Dr Kunt) shows the reading « ... *Circeden öte Nīl-i mübārekün şarḳ ṭarafında ḳarye-i Ḳınā ve ġarb ṭarafında ḳarye-i Dendere nām maḥaller ḥudūd olub...* ». Dandara is practically opposite Qinā.

70. « Maḥas » is primarily a linguistic term, referring to the speakers of the central speech group of the Nubians, who in modern times occupied the region from Kerma (just above the Third Cataract) in the south as far north as Maharraqa, 110 km down-river from Ibrīm (Adams, *op. cit.* in n. 1, p. 48, 559-562). Its geographical connotation is, however, much more restricted, referring — at least in the early nineteenth century — only to the southern stretch of this region, upstream from Sāy (Adams, citing Burckhardt, p. 586, 614; cf. also Rüppell's map of 1825).

71. Orhonlu, p. 114 and n. 126, citing Mühimme under date 27 Šawwāl 992 / 1 November 1584. In his summary of the text Orhonlu refers to « a fortress of Maḥas after which the sanjak was named » — but no such fortress is known. Once more we are indebted to Dr Caroline Finkel for the transcription of the text :

Livā-yi Maḥāṣ der İbrīm :

İbrīm beglerbegisi mektūb gönderüb muḳaddemā vilāyet-i Yemen'de iki yüz biñ akçe ile mīrlivā olan Riḍvān Beg içün her vech-ile yarardur déyü

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net

The up-grading of Ibrīm had been proposed by the then Beylerbey of Egypt, Ibrāhīm Pasha [72]. This Ibrāhīm was still at the beginning of his career, which was to culminate in the tenure of the Grand Vizierate three times between 1596 and his death in 1601. At this period, still only about thirty and in high favour with Murād III, he was betrothed to a daughter of the sultan, promoted to vizier, and sent off, in April 1583 [73], to regulate the affairs of Egypt, where there was great discontent because of the draconian régime of Ḫādim Mesīḥ Pasha and the rapacity of his successor Ḫādim Ḥasan. After eighteen energetic months in Egypt, he was ordered to deal with a Druze revolt in Lebanon, and returned to Istanbul, loaded with presents (or loot) for the sultan, in the autumn of 1585. Ibrāhīm's drastic readjustment of boundaries was soon rescinded : in December 1585 Ibrīm reverted to being a sanjak, of Egypt [74], and probably at the same time the « sanjak of Maḥās » ceased its very transitory existence as an administrative unit.

The campaign reported by the Venetian traveller had indeed been a failure if, as he had been told, its object had been to capture Dongola, but it cannot have been so complete a disaster as he suggests. It is highly probable that the Funj tradition of a « great battle ... near to Ḥannak » (between Sesebi and Kerma, just above the Third Cataract), in which an Ottoman governor decisively defeated a Funj army and after which a boundary between the Ottomans and the Funj was established at the site, is to be referred to this Dongola enterprise [75], and may now, in the light of the Ottoman evidence, be dated fairly closely to 1582 or 1583. But this much is clear, that the permanent result of the campaign was the extension of Ottoman control beyond Ibrīm at least as far as Sāy, whose strong garrison, evidently installed at this time, prevented any further serious threat from the Funj.

İbrīm'e tābiʿ müceddeden feṯḥ olınan Maḥāṣ vilāyeti teraḳḳīyle müşārileyhe vérilmek ricāsına ʿarż étmegin eṭrāf ve cevānibi daḫi ḥüsn-i tedārükle feṯḥ étmek üzre yigirmi biñ akçe teraḳḳīyle vérilmek buyuruldı.

Thus there is no reference to a « fortress » : Riḍvān's orders were to extend the conquered region.

72. For the career of this Dāmād Ibrāhīm Pasha, see *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, fasc. 50, p. 915 (İ. Parmaksızoğlu), and *Enc. İslam*^{2}, III, p. 1000 (V.J. Parry).

73. The date is given by Uzunçarşılı (*Osmanlı tarihi*, III/2, p. 351), probably on the basis of an archival document.

74. Orhonlu, p. 114 and n. 127, quoting Ruus under date 4 Muḥarram 994 / 26 December 1585. The creation of new *eyālet*s, not all as a result of ephemeral conquests in the Caucasus region, is a feature of this period : see *Enc. Islam*^{2}, s.v. eyālet (H. İnalcık) and, for dates and details, Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı tarihi*, III/2, p. 289-290.

75. A connexion between the appointment of Süleymān to Ǧirǧā and the Funj reminiscence of the « battle of Ḥannak » was suggested by P.M. Holt (*op. cit.* in n. 6); Spaulding (*op. cit.* in n. 27, p. 35) buttressed Holt's argument by adducing the report of the Venetian traveller.

AnIsl 24 (1989), p. 137-153 V. L. Ménage
The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century .
© IFAO 2026 AnIsl en ligne https://www.ifao.egnet.net