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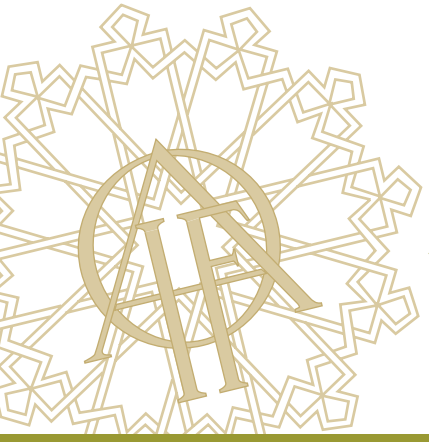

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Terence Walz

Notes on the Organization of the African Trade in Cairo, 1800-1850.

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NOTES ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE AFRICAN TRADE IN CAIRO, 1800-1850*

Terence WALZ

CARAVANS AND ROUTES

Before the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were three major trade routes connecting Egypt with black Africa and the size of the trade coming along these routes fluctuated sharply according to the political conditions prevailing both in Egypt and in the interior of the continent. Thus the trade route connecting Cairo with the states of the central Sudan, via the Libyan oases and Fazzān, which was strong until the eighteenth century, appears to have fallen off, a victim of unstable political alliances in Libya and the Sudan and the reorientation of the gold trade from north to south of the Sahara [1]. The Darb al-Arbaʿīn, a second route, leading from the middle Egyptian Nile valley to the states in the west of present-day Sudan, may have begun to flourish towards the end of the seventeenth century with the rise of the new and powerful state of Darfur which depended on external trade [2], although it must be admitted that our knowledge of the route before this time is as yet extremely meager. A third route, leading into the kingdoms of the Funj at Sinnār from trade centers in Upper Egypt also existed although it appears to have suffered from unstable conditions in Nubia in the eighteenth century and the decline in the power of the Funj sultans. A great deal of the trade between Egypt and Sinnar seems to have passed through Asyūt in the decades immediately

* The research for this article was made possible through the generous assistance of the Foreign Area Fellowship Program, New York City.

[1] Abbé le Mascrier, *Description de l'Egypte composée sur les mémoires de M. de Maillet, ancien consul de France au Caire,* (Paris, 1735), 2 vols., II, 196; Vitorino Magalhaes-Godinho, *L'Economie de l'Empire portugais aux XV^e^ et XVI^e^ siècles,* (Paris, 1969), 122-124. E.W. Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors,* (London, 1958).

[2] Rex O'Fahey, *States and States Formation in the Eastern Sudan,* Sudan Research Unit, Seminar Paper n° 9, Khartoum, 1970, 5-6.

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prior to our period, a fact suggesting that the Darb al-Arbaʿīn was considerably more stable than the more direct routes from Upper Egypt. All these routes were in operation at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as testified to by French expeditionary accounts, the most important being the Dārfūr route and the least important being the western route leading out from Cairo.

Of the cities of Egypt, Asyūṭ, then was the chief entrepot for merchants coming from and going to the interior of Africa at the end of the eighteenth century. The chief market, however, remained Cairo which not only offered merchants a large population with a considerable taste for African products but was the central distribution point for imported cloths, scents, beads, razors, swords and other items which were readily exchanged for local products in the interior states. Despite the prevalence of unstable political conditions in areas covered by these routes, it is remarkable that the caravans continued to appear in Egypt almost continuously throughout the last centuries. This is undoubtedly due to a characteristic of the trade between the two areas of Africa which linked trading opportunities with the *hajj* to the holy places in the Hijāz. Cairo offered a luxurious market for the pilgrims who could exchange their own products for Egyptian or western-imported goods which they could then exchange for handsome prices upon their return and recoup the expenses of the trip. Moreover, Cairo also offered the possibility of studies at al-Azhar which remained a popular intellectual beacon to visitors from the interior of Africa [1].

For these reasons, the caravans from Africa appeared in Egypt on the average of every year or every other year. In the years prior to the French invasion, it is

[1] The hajj-trade pattern can be seen in the example of the Dārfūr caravan. Dārfūr, in close imitation of the Egyptians, was accustomed to sending a *maḥmal* to the Ḥijaz which, like the Egyptian *maḥmal*, was loaded with costly gifts for the holy shrines. Unfortunately no description of this maḥmal exists for the nineteenth century period, but several appeared in Khartoum in the early years of the twentieth century after the direction of trade had been changed. The pattern of these late *maḥmals* shows that large amounts of goods were brought to Khartoum to be exchanged for ready cash which was then sent on to Mecca and Medina. This was undoubtedly the mechanism followed by the maḥmals of the earlier period, the exchange being effected at Cairo. On the tradition of the Dārfūr maḥmal, see Naʿūm Shuqair, *Jughrafīya wa tā'rikh as-Sūdān*, (Beirut, 1967), 477. On the maḥmal appearing in Khartoum in 1913, see *Sudan Intelligence Reports*, n° 231 (October 1913), 5.

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believed that the African trade had slackened off as a result of Mamluk depredations. In this vein the sultan of Dārfūr replied to a letter from Bonaparte, expressing the hope for closer trade contacts. He was undoubtedly dismayed at the results of the Dārfūr caravan which appeared in Egypt in 1799 which was plundered by French troops at the village of Banī ʿAdī[1], and it is no wonder that Bonaparte failed to enlarge this trade, although it was his wish. With the coming of Muḥammad ʿAlī to power, the Sudan trade was to be considerably increased carrying with it a considerable impact on the structure of the organization of the trade as it then existed in Cairo.

THE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

The distribution point for the African goods in Cairo was a great *wakāla* called the Wakālat al-Jallāba. The building still exists on Sharia Ṣanādiqīya, a street now running from Sharia Muʿezziddīn l'llah to Midan Sayyidna Ḥusain and is classified as a historical Muslim monument and numbered 425 in the survey of Moḥammedan Monuments in Cairo. The street, Sharia Ṣanādiqīya, has been badly truncated by the modernization of Cairo. In earlier periods, when it had been known by the name al-Kharāṭīn as well, it had been one of the great commercial thoroughfares of the city and had hosted nine wakālas, according to Mubārak[2]. In those days, the street led up to the mosque of al-Azhar and the descriptions of the wakāla in eighteenth and nineteenth century *maḥkama* documents always place it « qarīb min al-Jāmaʿ al-Azhar ». Today only the ground floor is still remaining, the upper stories having been reduced to rubble. The street façade stretches to perhaps thirty meters and is cut in the middle by a strikingly handsome carved doorway whose keystone is decorated in red and white interlacing zig-zag patterns. In the middle of this decoration is embossed the word « Allah ». There is another great door at the other end of the wakāla, facing a tiny alley which now leads directly into Muski street. It is an unusual feature of the building.

The dating of the wakāla is as yet unsolved. Mubārak states that it was built by Sulṭān al-Ghūrī who died 1517, probably basing his claim on the fact that

[1] C. de la Jonquière, *L'Expédition d'Egypte*, Paris, III, 643-644.

[2] ʿAlī Mubārak, *al-Khiṭaṭ al-Tawfiqīya*, new edition, (Cairo, 1969) II, 246.

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the building of the wakāla in his day was governed by the waqf of al-Ghūrī. Al-Ghūrī's waqf has been studied and edited by Dr. ʿAbd al-Latīf Ibrāhīm of Cairo University and his copy of the text contains no reference to the Wakālat al-Jallāba. However, many of the property titles to storerooms and other quarters in the wakāla registered in nineteenth century court documents stipulate that the new owner pay a monthly or yearly *hikr* to the waqf al-Ghūrī, and it seems likely that some portion of the wakāla, as yet undefined, does date back to Ghūrī's time. It is also clear that the wakāla carried several names over time, known variously as Wakālat an-Nūbī and Wakālat al-ʿAbīd, but that the name Wakālat al-Jallāba was adopted sometime towards the middle of the eighteenth century. The study of earlier court documents will doubtless clear up some of these problems.

We have, unfortunately, no good description of the Wakālat al-Jallāba as it looked in its hey-day. Dr. Frank, a member of the French expedition, has left us a small description in his notable article on the African trade in Cairo [1], but his analogy in comparing the wakāla to contemporary French prisons is of little use. We can gather from *maḥkama* texts that it was a typical wakāla structure of the period, possessing a series of storerooms (their number as yet unknown) or *ḥāṣil* grouped around a large central courtyard on the groundfloor and a *rabaʿ* or series of duplex apartment units on the second and third floors. Resident merchants dealing in African products lived in these apartments while they may also have rented *ḥāṣils* on the ground floor to store their goods. Itinerant merchants may have temporarily hired the use of the *ḥāṣils* to live in and to store their goods for a short period of time, but the Wakālat al-Jallāba was not large enough to accommodate all of them, and intinerant merchants either took apartments in nearby wakālas on the same street [2] or found lodgings in the homes of some of the more important resident merchants.

As the African trade expanded in the nineteenth century, there was a demand for more storage space. Some of this was found on Sharia Ṣanādiqīya where the wakāla variously known as the Wakālat Muḥammad Abū Dhahab or Wakālat

[1] « Mémoire sur le commerce des Nègres au Caire », appendix in V. Denon, *Voyages dans la Basse et la Haute Egypte*, (London, 1807), 2 vols., II, 239.

[2] Mubārak, New Edition, II, 246.

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al-Zarāksha was resorted to as well as the wakāla Sultān Ināl and the Wakālat al-Jallāba al-Ṣughra. In the second half of the century, important Egyptian entrepreneurs in the African trade, such as Mūsā Ḥassan al-ʿAqqād constructed their own wakālas while merchants resorted to a variety of wakālas spread in various sections of the old city. But the area around al-Azhar and al-Ḥusain mosques remained a popular location for the African merchants [1].

So important was the Wakālat al-Jallāba to the African trade that the chief of the guild of merchants dealing with African products was for many years before and after the turn of the nineteenth century identified simply as « shaykh wakālat al-Jallāba ». So thus was usually described Ḥājj Sultān b. Ismāʿīl, the head of the guild until 1819, in most of the legal documents concerning his business and estate. Other titles were also employed, but the frequent use of the simple one suggests a close traditional relationship between the wakāla and the trade with Africa.

YĀSIRJĪ VS. JALLĀB

It may be fruitful to discuss briefly some of the terms used in describing the merchants in the African trade since even Gabriel Baer's recent article [2] leads to some misunderstandings. In the nineteenth century, European observers conveniently lumped all dealers in African products under the term « jellabs », with the particular reference being to dealers in black slaves. In this they may have been following Lane's understanding of the word which he defined as « one who brings slaves from foreign countries, particularly African countries, for sale » [3]. The word, stemming from the verb *jalaba* has a general meaning and could be used to describe anybody bringing or driving goods from one country to another or

[1] Reade to Sherif Pacha, Alexandria, August 18, 1867, Public Records Office (London), FO 84/1277; letter to the editor of the *Egyptian Gazette*, 10 November 1886 : « It is not very long since the neighborhood of the Round Point in the Muski at Cairo... was the meeting place — the Bourse of the Soudan traders ».

[2] « Slavery and its abolition » in *Studies in the Social History of Modern Egypt*, (Chicago, 1969), 161-189.

[3] Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon.

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from one village to another for the purposes of business, such as horses, camels, sheep, goats, captives or slaves [1]. Strictly speaking, the general sense must be given when describing the merchants bringing goods from Africa because in addition to slaves, they frequently brought a wide variety of other products, including feathers, ivory, and natron, and returned from Cairo with an assortment of Egyptian and westernmade products. The *jallābs,* then, were itinerant merchants.

However, the group of merchants who resided in Cairo more or less permanently and who conducted daily business at the Wakālat al-Jallāba are not described as *jallābs* in contemporary court documents [2]. In the period 1800-1850, they are most often described as *yāsirjī* or *yāsirjī fir raqīq al-iswid,* and less often as *tājir fir raqīq,* if they were dealing in slaves. Merchants in ivory, feathers or natron or other goods are often described as *mutasabbib fis sin, mutasabbib fir-rish an-naʿām,* etc. Occasionally a merchant in slaves is referred to as *mutasabbib fir raqīq.* In contemporary records, at least, there is no distinction between *yāsirjī* (one who trades in white slaves) and a *jallāb* (one who trades in black slaves) such as Aḥmad Amīn makes in his *Qāmūs al-ʿAdāt* [3]. All that needs to be stressed is that *yāsirjī* was given a very loose interpretation and could be applied to any merchant selling slaves, irregardless of the color. So loose was the interpretation that in 1843 the recently deceased head of the guild of merchants dealing in African products was described in one court document as « shaykh al-Yāsirjīya fir raqīq al-iswid » and in others as « shaykh ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba at the wakālat al-Jallāba » [4].

[1] M. Jean-Claude Garcin has kindly brought to my attention a medieval usage of the term which refers to « merchants in wheat ».

[2] The documents utilized in this paper are to be found in the archive of the old *maḥkama sharaʿīya* which used to be housed in Shubra and is now located in the building of the Maṣlaḥa shahr al-ʿAqārī on Sharia Ramsis, Cairo. For a description of these holdings, see D. Crecelius, « The organization of *Waqf* documents in Cairo », *Int. J. Mid. East Stud.*, 2 (1971), 266-277. Of the bound series of registers I have used most often are *Qism al-ʿaskarīya, Bāb al-ʿĀlī, Iʿlāmāt, Tarikāt.*, and *Taqārīr an-Naẓir.*

[3] (Cairo, 1953), 214.

[4] Compare Māmīsh Agha vs. estate ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 83, n° 207, and Sākina bint Aḥmad vs. the estate of Hajj ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 69, n° 181.

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THE GUILD AND ITS OFFICERS

The guild of merchants dealing in African goods is always referred to in nineteenth century court documents as the ṭā'ifat al-Jallāba[1]. Like all other guilds, it had a shaykh and a naqīb but its membership was undoubtedly more fluid than the average guild because of the nature of its business. It was not a guild which demanded of its members any particular skill other than a certain business acumen, and in this, personal contacts with visiting jallāba and with merchants in caravan entrepots were doubtless an important factor. It was not one of the guilds recorded by al-Jabartī as participating in the dual marriages of Muḥammad ʿAlī's son and daughter in 1813 when so many other guilds in Cairo did so[2]. Nor is it registered in the list of guilds and their shaykhs noted by the French in 1801[3] — an obvious oversight. In the absence of even this barest secondary information, the maḥkama records shed a small but interesting light on the guild's officers and their functions.

For the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, the ṭā'ifat al-Jallāba had four shaykhs. The first, Ḥājj Sulṭān b. Ismāʿīl b. Abū ʿĀbida, who came from the village of Banī ʿAdī in Upper Egypt, held the office for the longest period of time, altogether twenty years or so. He had been the shaykh during the time of the French expedition[4] and died a year before Muḥammad ʿAlī's renovations in the African trade structure in 1820. A short biographical sketch will be attempted below.

Some after his death, the office was passed to one of the hardies in the business, Ḥājj ʿAlī b. ʿAbdallah al-Jindī whose home village was Ashmunain. His career as a merchant in the African trade in Cairo spanned at least 30 years before he died in 1833. He employed two factotums in his business and managed to accumulate over the years a number of properties, including a house which he renovated

(1) Ṭā'ifa is the commonly used word for guild in the maḥkama documents .

(2) ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Jabartī, *ʿAjā'ib al-'athār*, French trans., IX, 67-69.

(3) André Raymond, « Une liste des corporations de métiers au Caire en 1801 », *Arabica*, 4, 2 (1957). The guild of brokers in slaves, however, is mentioned (n° 94).

(4) He was one of Girard's informants in the pertinent sections of his « Memoire sur l'agriculture, l'industrie, etc. », *Description de l'Egypte, Etat moderne*, II, 633.

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and which was located close to the Wakālat al-Jallāba. He had two wives, a daughter who predeceased him, but no sons [1].

In 1826, Ḥājj ʿAlī was ousted from the office as shaykh ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba — although there is no way of knowing how or why the removal was effected — and was succeeded by another perennial, Ḥājj Ismāʿīl b. Rāḍī who had an equally long career as a merchant lasting until his death in 1858. His death certification identifies his home as the village of al-Balīda in Giza province [2] where his uncle was farming land. His family appears to have been recently settled bedouin stock. He is the only shaykh of the tāʾifa in the nineteenth century who did not come from Upper Egypt.

For the next seven years, we find no mention of shaykhs of the Jallāba guild in the *maḥkama* documents surveyed. During this time five merchants attached to the wakāla died and their property was assembled, evaluated and sold in accordance with traditional practice. It was customary, in the writing up of these transactions, to have the testimonial presence of the shaykh of the guild — a practice, incidentally, which allows us to keep track of the office holder. It is, therefore, unusual for the shaykh to be absent from these accountings. He was, after all, the most knowledgeable authority on the personnel of the wakāla and the extent of its business activities. On the other hand, it is recorded that shaykhs of the guild did absent themselves from Cairo periodically, during the annual fair in Tanta, for instance [3], and this may explain why they failed to turn up as witnesses for these accountings. Still, this poses a problem as to the existence of a guild head during these years, a problem further compounded by the existence of an office called *maṣlaḥat ar-raqīq bi-wakālat al-Jallāba* whose *nāẓir* died in 1831 leaving us a record of his personal belongings and a list of the books in his personal library [4]. It cannot yet be said with certainty whether this office had any disruptive

[1] Principal sources : *Daftar mukhallafāt*, ʿAlī al-Jindī, *Qism al-ʿaskarīya* 301, 110-111, 15 Jum. II, 1249; *Ḥujja daʿwa* over his estate, *Qism al-ʿaskarīya* 300, 459-460, Shawwal 1249.

[2] *Thibūt wafāʾ*, *Iʿlāmāt* 35, 69, n° 170, 23 Rabiʿ I 1275. On the identification of al-Balida, see A Ramzi, *Al-Qāmūs al-jughrāfi*, part 2, III, 50.

[3] See *Ḥujja daʿwa* Ḥassan Kashif vs. estate of Ḥājj ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 14, 264, n° 999.

[4] *Daftar mukhallafāt* Aḥmad effendi b. Ḥājj ʿAlī, *Qism al-ʿaskarīya* 296, 344-345, 14 Jum. II 1247.

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influence on the structure of the ṭā'ifat al-Jallāba; if it did, it was certainly temporary for in 1833-1834, Ismā'īl b. Rāḍī is again noted in the documents as being head of the guild.

In 1835, at the beginning of the year, a new shaykh is noted. He is Ḥājj 'Abd al-Karīm al-Baghl, also from the village of Banī 'Adī in Upper Egypt, who remained head of the guild until his death in 1843. A good number of documents are available concerning his business affairs and a biographical sketch will be attempted later in this paper. He in turn was succeeded by his predecessors, Ismā'īl b. Rāḍī, who continued in the office from 1843 until 1852 or thereabouts. He was known in the later years simply as « ra'īs al-Yasirjiya in Cairo », a title which was also given to the head of the guild of merchants dealing in white slaves, but the use of « ra'īs » to denote « shaykh » is an innovation. Still later, the register of his belongings at the time of his death in 1858 (1) describes him as a simple *Yāsirjī* and the implication is that he had not recently been head of the guild.

Some idea of the functions of the guild's officers emerges from the *maḥkama* documents. As has already been made clear, the shaykh was generally present in the accounting and evaluation of a deceased guild member's property. Elsewhere he could on occasion be appointed by the *qāḍī* to assemble the goods of an absent merchant who had requested that the sum total be given over to his wakīl in Cairo (2). He would occasionally act as the legal representative of a wife of a deceased guild member (3). If a slave of one of the wakāla's merchants died, he would see that the death was reported to the proper authorities and would, if necessary, pay the expenses of the slave's funeral (4). He might be entrusted with sums of money for safekeeping by merchants taking African products outside Egypt (5). But most of his duties were concerned with the running of the wakāla itself where he seems to have been responsible for the purchasing of firewood, the hiring of watercarriers

(1) *Daftar mukhallafāt* Ismā'īl b. Rāḍī, *Tarikāt* 16, 38-39, 2 Rabi' II 1275.

(2) *Daftar mukhallafāt* 'Abbās b. 'Abdallah al-Dunqalāwī, *Tarikāt* 1, 108-109, 5 Jum. II, 1254.

(3) For instance, *Daftar mukhallafāt* 'Alī al-Jindī, noted above, p. 270, footnote 1.

(4) *Ḥujja da'wa* 'Abd al-Karīm al-Baghl vs. Mahmūd effendi, *Bāb al-'Alī* 401, 278, n° 1438, 18 Rajab 1251.

(5) *Ḥujja da'wa* 'Abdallah Abū Bulbul vs. estate of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *I'lāmāt* 13, 69, n° 180, 3 Sha'ban 1259.

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and doorkeepers[1]. When the government decided it no longer wished slaves to be sold on the premises of the Wakālat al-Jallāba, the shaykh was obliged to rent other locations outside the city[2]. The office made the shaykh the premier merchant of the wakāla and widely known outside Sharia Ṣanādiqīya.

The *naqīb* of the guild is mentioned but rarely in the court documents. He appears to have been something of a personal assistant to the shaykh rather than an officer performing more specialized duties. Aḥmad b. Mūsā, the *naqīb* of the guild under shaykh ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, for instance, paid out small sums of money for the shaykh in connection with the running of his personal household as well as the wakāla, and also 40 piastres for the tax imposed on a slavegirl which had been purchased by the shaykh[3]. Information about the activities of the *naqīb* is so scarce that one is led to conclude the office was of little importance in the structure of the Jallāba guild.

In addition to these two officials, the Wakālat al-Jallāba also employed a *kātib* who maintained a register of the names of all the slaves sold, the date of the sale and the sames of the seller and buyer. In the 1840's, this employment was filled by Ḥusain al-Hamsharī b. Ibrāhīm whose family had long connections with the African trade in Cairo[4]. Browne states that during his passage through Cairo he saw and copied a registerbook of the wakāla's clerk which indicated the dates and sizes of the caravans arriving there from the interior of Africa since 1735[5]. Baer, on the authority of Dr. Frank, says that the registers of the sale of slaves were burned « every year by the Coptic scribes or the proprietors of the wakāla »[6], but this may be criticized on two grounds, that at least for the nineteenth century period, there is no evidence that Coptic scribes were employed at the wakāla, and second, it is certain that the registers were kept longer than a year's time because merchants were frequently involved in court cases concerning slaves they had

[1] *Ḥujja daʿwa* Muḥammad al-Ḥaṭṭāb vs. estate of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 130, nº 333, 17 Ramadan 1259; also *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 134, nº 328, and *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 199, nº 478.

[2] See below.

[3] *Ḥujja daʿwa* Aḥmad b. Mūsa vs. estate of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 198, nº 476, beginning of Dhu'l-Qaʿda 1259.

[4] A relative, possibly nephew, Muḥammad b. Ḥusain al-Hamsharī, was a *yāsirjī* at the Wakālat al-Jallāba at this time.

[5] W. G. Browne, *Travels in Africa, Egypt and Syria from the Year 1792 to 1798*, (London, 1799), xix.

[6] Baer, *op. cit.*, 171, note 60.

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sold, sometimes several years after the purchase was effected[1], and it seems unlikely that their memories for facts, figures and faces were so long. Unfortunately such registerbooks have not been found and Browne's copy was lost.

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the identification (*taʿrīf*) and registering (*kitāba*) of African slaves for the *Diwān* at Old Cairo, the registering of *mustakhraj* slaves at the wakālas Ḥenna, Jallāba and Khan al-Khalili was incorporated into an office (*waẓīfa*) in the possession of the family of ʿAlī b. Muṣṭafā Luṭfī. In addition to these offices, the family also held portions of brokerage commissions (*dilāla*) arising from the sale of ivory, gum and ostrich feathers coming from the Sudan[2]. ʿAlī Luṭfī, like his father, was shaykh ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba in the latter part of the eighteenth century and he seems to have divided up these offices between his two daughters, Nafīsa and Amna, whose husbands were appointed to supervise them during the early decades of the nineteenth century. These offices had not been originated by the Luṭfīs, but it is impossible to tell from the *maḥkama* records how far back they date. Further study, moreover, may reveal how lucrative they were.

It is interesting to note, however, that Muḥammad ʿAlī pasha was appointed *nāẓir* of all these *waẓīfas*, the full shares of them, on 28 Jum. I 1236 (1820)[3]. Baer, following Sāmī Amīn[4], states that in 1235 Muḥammad ʿAlī « established his monopoly of the Sudanese trade and took possession of the Wakālat al-Jallāba ». How this seizure affected the structure of the guild and its operations is not yet clear. Merchants continued to be attached to the wakāla and important traders, such as Ḥājj ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, continued to purchase storerooms in the wakāla in the usual fashion from ordinary individuals. In subsequent years, merchants in the Sudan continued to dispatch caravans of Sudanese goods to be sold at the wakāla[5], but certain of these goods were earmarked « for the

(1) There were five claims against ʿAbd al-Karīm's estate concerning the sale of slaves more than a year after his death. See *Iʿlāmāt* 14, nº 499, nº 999, nº 1104; *Iʿlāmāt* 15, nº 333, nº 828.

(2) *Taqārīr an-Nāẓir* 9, 46, nº 341, 6 Rabiʿ I 1176; and 17, 17, nº 99, 20 Rajab 1192.

(3) *Taqārīr an-Nāẓir* 31, 15, nº 59.

(4) Baer, *op. cit.*, 175; Sāmī Amīn, *Taqwīm an-Nīl*, (Cairo, 1916-1936), II, 286. Amīn : « wa minha... istilāʾ ʿalā wakālat al-Jallāba allatī yubāʿ fīha ar-raqīq... ». The words are taken from Jabarti's text, IV, 314.

(5) See, for instance, the *daftar mukhallafāt* of Ḥājj Aḥmad al-Kharūbī al-Maghribī, *Qism al-ʿaskarīya* 308, 532-533, 5 Ṣafar 1253.

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Diwan »[1]. In brief, it would appear that the application of Muhammad ʿAlī's Sudan monopoly in Cairo was effected through his taking control of the traditional *waẓīfas* of the Sudan trade, and the inauguration of new but apparently short-lived offices such as the *maṣlaḥat ar-raqīq* mentioned above.

Still, two further departures from earlier patterns can be distinguished. For several decades after 1820, hardly any quantities of ivory, feathers and gum are recorded in the *daftars* of deceased merchants attached to the wakāla which suggests that indeed the wakāla became the wakālat al-ʿabīd as far as the products of Africa were concerned. And second, Muḥammad ʿAlī created an office of weighing of goods coming from the Sudan, such as ivory, feathers, gum, shishm and tamrahindi, that were sold in any place in Cairo, old Cairo and Būlāq. This office was entrusted to the *qabbānī* of the Wakālat al-Jallāba in 1822[2] and seems to represent a further measure to tighten his hold over the profits arising from the Sudan trade in Cairo.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ṬĀ'IFAT AL-JALLĀBA

One of the characteristics of the group of resident merchants dealing in African products in Cairo was that by and large they came from towns and villages of Upper Egypt. This is borne out in a statistical manner in the registers of the *maḥkamas* which generally attempted to attach a provincial *laqab* to each individual as well as a professional one. We have surveyed 54 *daftar mukhallafāt* (or register of belongings) of this body of merchants from the year 1795 to 1875, the latter date being the last date for the systematic recording of deceased individuals' belongings. This may not appear at first glance to be a large number to have died in an eighty year period, but it should be remembered that quite a large number of merchants left their business in Cairo to return to their hometowns in retirement — in which case they would fail to appear in the Cairo court registers.

[1] A certain amount of tamrahindi, for instance, was sold from the estate of Hijāzī al-Jallāb b. ʿAlī to the *Diwan al-Jihādiya : Qism al-ʿaskarīya* 305, 294-295, 28 Jum. II 1251. Unfortunately, the daftars do not always list the purchasers of individual items.

[2] *Taqārīr an-Naẓir* 32, 24, n° 98, 11 Jum. II 1238.

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Certain noteworthy merchants who apparently died outside Cairo appear so often in court records as witnesses or as participants in court cases as to have traceable careers, but scores of others, mentioned but briefly in these records, have not been accounted.

Of 57 merchants in all, ten were *Jallābs* and therefore were not resident merchants. Another eight have not been given provincial *laqabs*. Of the remaining 39, 26 are given provincial *laqabs* of towns and villages in Upper Egypt. Four were North African in origin, two were Albanian, two were freed black slaves, one was from Ethiopia, one was a Copt probably from Cairo, and two were from Lower Egypt and Giza province. Thus the overwhelming ethnic identity of the resident merchants in Cairo was Ṣaʿīdī.

Of the villages of the Ṣaʿīd, the most important in terms of its contribution to the membership of the tāʾifat al-Jallāba was Banī ʿAdī. The long-time shaykh of the guild, Ḥājj Sulṭān b. Ismāʿīl, was from Banī ʿAdī, as was Ḥājj ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl. The prominent role played by the people of Banī ʿAdī, whose *laqab* is ʿAdawī, is doubtless due to the fact that the village served as a terminus for the Darb al-Arbaʿīn as it descended the mountains on the western bank of the Nile, coming from Kharja Oasis, en route to Asyūṭ [1]. Arabs in the area of Banī ʿAdī had for hundreds of years been involved in bringing natron from the oasis of Bir an-Naṭrūn on the Arbaʿīn road to the middle Nile valley of Egypt [2]. These two aspects of their traditional livelihood help to explain their natural affiliation with the African trade in Egypt. Banī ʿAdī also had a large reputation in Egypt for producing scholars, as evidenced in Mubarak's geographical-biographical dictionary. This being so, the fact that the court records list « ʿAdawī » so often as a provincial *laqab* might suggest that it was taken indiscriminately by a large number of non-Banī ʿAdī Ṣaʿīdīs settled in Cairo who wished to share in its reputation. Our texts often refer to members of the family as being « absent from Cairo and its environs in Banī ʿAdī in the Wajh al-Qiblī » so there can be little doubt that the ʿAdawīs in the ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba did come from Banī ʿAdī.

[1] On Banī ʿAdī, see S. Sauneron, « Beni ʿAdy : l'arrivée des caravanes du Soudan », in « Villes et légendes d'Egypte », *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Archéologie orientale*, LXVI (1968), 30-35.

[2] Charles Cuny, « Notice sur le Darfour », *Bull. de la Société de Géographie de Paris*, 4e série, VIII (1854), 84-86.

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Other Upper Egyptian members of the guild came from Asyūṭ, Ashmunain, Dairūṭ, Manfalūṭ, Sanhūd, Malawī, and the village of Banī Ghālib, near Asyūṭ. Asyūṭ was the home town of the largest number of Saʿīdīs in the African trade next to Banī ʿAdī, a result of its predominant position as a caravan entrepot. In the later decades of the nineteenth century, increasing numbers of the merchants were Nubian or Danaqlā in origin and their entrance into the business represents a new development, outside the scope of this paper, in the organization of the African trade in Cairo.

The composition of the itinerant merchants or *Jallābs* shows an overwhelming proportion of them coming from Upper Egypt and Nubia. This includes the ʿAbābda, centered at Daraw, a number of ʿAlaiqāt, Aswānlis, and « Barbaris ». This latter term is applied very generally in nineteenth century records and appears to embrace not only Nubians from « Egyptian » Nubia, but other people coming from Dunqala, Shandi, and Kordofan. In addition, the texts mention *Jallābs* coming from undefined places in Upper Egypt, from Isna, and from Dārfūr. This information somewhat conforms with Evliya Celebi's seventeenth century description of Jallāba as « dark skinned people from the districts of the oases, Aswan and Ibrim »[1]. Once again, the itinerant merchants should not be confused with the resident merchants.

The religious affiliation of the ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba seems to have been almost entirely Muslim. There is, however, a reference to a Copt, Muʿallim Manqariyūs ibn Shanūda as a *Yāsirjī fir raqīq* at the Wakālat al-Jallāba, dated 1837. His brother was a khurdajī, or smallwares merchant in Cairo[2]. While it seems unusual to find a Copt in the ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba, it is worthwhile noting that in Asyūṭ, during the same time, some of the wealthiest merchants dealing directly with the Dārfūr caravans were Copts.

Given the fact that many of the resident merchants in Cairo originated from the same part of the country or even the same village, one would expect a great deal of intermarrying between the families. Generally speaking, however, this seems not to have occurred. Merchants who settled in Cairo to do business more often than not had been previously married or arranged to be married to women from their home towns. If they took a second or third wife, which happened occasionally,

[1] Quoted in Baer, *op. cit.*, 173. [2] *Iʿlāmāt* 1, 121-122, 16 Dhu'l Hijja 1253.

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it was often a slave girl. Sometimes marriages were made between people living in the same quarter of the city. The son of the historian, al-Jabartī, was married to the daughter of a member of the ṭā'ifat al-Jallāba [1]. Jabarti's house was located on Sharia Ṣanādiqīya.

Resident merchants usually purchased *ḥāṣils* in the Wakālat al-Jallāba to display and store their goods. Usually complete *ḥāṣils* could not be purchased, a result of the laws of inheritance or multiple ownership, but halves, thirds, quarters, sixths and eighths in various combinations were available from time to time. Naṣr al-Shuqairi, one of the long-time members of the guild, purchased a series of such properties in 1838, comprising 14 *qirāṭs* (out of 24) in one *ḥāṣil*, 2 *qirāṭs* in two other *ḥāṣils*, and 2½ *qirāṭs* in four other *ḥāṣils* from the widow of Ḥājj Sulṭān b. Ismā'īl. The price was 1051 piastres which was paid in two instalments. In addition he was obliged to pay a *hikr* (the rent owed to the waqf covering the properties) of 8 *nuṣf faḍḍa* each month which on a yearly basis amounted to less than 2½ piastres [2]. Obviously, merchants had to pay rent for the use of the remaining portions of the *ḥāṣils* they did not own.

Naṣr al-Shuqairi lived in the *raba'* attached to the upper levels of the Wakālat al-Jallāba, as well as his relative Sulaimān Abū 'Ābida, another long-time merchant in the wakāla. Generally speaking, however, resident merchants had their private residences in other quarters of the city. A number of them lived in the 'aṭfas and darbs of the Azhar quarter ('Aṭfa al-'Ainī, Ḥārat al-Baṭinīya, Darb al-Ḥalāwā), while others had quarters in Jamālīya (Darbs Ṭablāwī, Ḥāra Mubayyaḍa), Qanāṭir as-Sibbā' (Darb al-Būshī), Ghūrīya (Ka'akiyīn, Ḥawsh Qadam), Bāb al-Futūḥ (Darb Suwaiqit al-Laban), Ḥaṭṭāba, Ashrafīya, Ṣaliḥīya, Bain al-Qaṣrain, and the quarter of the Ḥusain mosque (Kafr al-Zughārī, 'Aṭfa Shaykh Sharawānī). Closer to the wakāla, Aḥmad b. Mūsā Abun-Naṣr, one of the leading members of the guild, purchased al-Jabartī's house in 1841 [3]. The North African merchants

[1] *Daftar mukhallafāt* Khalīl b. 'Abd ar-Raḥman al-Jabartī, *Qism al-'askarīya* 280, 32-33, 11 Jum. II 1239. His wife was Fātima bint Ḥājj 'Alī al-Yāsirjī fir-raqīq al-iswid.

[2] *Bāb al-'Alī*, 409, 234, n° 577, 26 Ṣafar 1254.

[3] See Muḥammad Anis, « Ḥaqā'iq 'an 'Abd ar-Raḥman al-Jabartī », *al-Majalla al-tā'rikhīya al-miṣrīya*, IX-X (1960-1962), document 4, 105-110 for an edited version of this property transaction.

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dealing in slaves and other products from the interior generally remained closely associated with the North African business community in Cairo and kept their public and private residences in the Faḥamain quarter.

TWO BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES : ḤĀJJ SULṬĀN AND ḤĀJJ ʿABD AL-KARĪM

Much can be learned about the lives of Egyptian merchants in the African trade by following the legal documents relating to the public and private affairs of two of the shaykhs of the ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba. The dossiers so far compiled are not complete and therefore full portraits cannot as yet be given.

Ḥājj Sulṭān b. Ismāʿīl, as stated above on several occasions, was the shaykh of the ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba or Wakālat al-Jallāba during the opening decades of the nineteenth century. His full name, Sulṭān b. Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbdallah al-ʿAdawī, shows that he originated in the village of Banī ʿAdī. He was married to Zainab Khatūn bint Ḥājj Aḥmad al-Hawārī, probably a relative, whose father was an early business partner of Ḥājj Sulṭān[1]. They had no children, and his closest relatives were two grand-nephews, one a merchant in the Wakālat al-Jallāba, and the other a snuff-maker in Būlāq who was blind (baṣīr bi'l-qalbu). Neither did Ḥājj Sulṭān have any children by other women.

We cannot tell when Sulṭān came to Cairo nor how old he was, but he must have arrived sometime before the year 1190 (1776) because in 1778 he purchased the first of his properties, several *qirāṭs* in a *ḥāṣil* in the Wakālat al-Jallāba. More segments of this same *ḥāṣil* were acquired eight years later. Unfortunately, the list of his properties notarized in the *maḥkama* Qism al-ʿaskarīya some months after his death, in 1236/1820[2], does not give the dates of all his purchases and it is impossible to chart a curve of his acquisitions during the rest of his life. Most of the purchases were on Sharia Ṣanādiqīya, in or near the Wakālat al-Jallāba. These included three large rooms in the Wakālat al-Nashārīn (lying next door

[1] Acting as Sulṭān's agent, he purchased a *ḥāṣil* in the Wakālat al-Jallāba in 1192. (Maḥkama) *Ṭūlūn* 235, 2, n° 2, 7 Shawwal 1192.

[2] *I'lām wafā'* Sultān b. Ismāʿīl, *Qism al-ʿaskarīya* 272, 143-144, 17 Jum. II 1236.

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to al-Jabartī's house), portions of several porticos and two *ḥānūt* in the nearby Sūq al-Qashāshīn, and five portions of various *ḥāṣils* in the Wakālat al-Jallāba. Outside this area, he bought two portions of properties in what was then called the Sūq ar-Rashīdī, in the Azhar area. By the time of his death, he was the owner of 13 locations in all.

The text listing these properties does not give the amounts paid to purchase them. Most of them were covered by waqfs, but the yearly *hikr* appears to be nominal. For instance, for 16 *qirāṭs* (out of 24) of a *ḥāṣil* in the Wakālat al-Jallāba, the yearly *hikr* amounted to 32 nuṣf faḍḍa. In 1205/1790-1791, about the same time as this *hikr* would have been paid, a length of cotton and wool cloth was selling for 60 nuṣf faḍḍa while a large used shawl sold for 700 [1]. It also appears that Ḥājj Sulṭān rented other *ḥāṣils* for his use, for at the time of his death, one of his debts included the rent (*ujra*) for two *ḥāṣils* (at the Wakālat al-Jallāba) for eight months at 100 nuṣf faḍḍa a month [2].

In 1216/1801-1802, Ḥājj Sultān bought several buildings and rooms in the ʿAṭfa al-ʿAinī, near the mosque of Shaykh Muḥammad al-Duwīdārī in the quarter lying behind the Azhar. These he turned into a single residence for himself and his family, and made a waqf covering the structure in 1224/1809. The *ḥujja waqfīya* [3] gives us an exact description of the house. The doorway, facing the street, was constructed of red brick and was arched. It led into a vestibule, elegantly roofed, and then into a central courtyard which was surrounded by four doors. These led into storerooms, to a water trough and drain and to the women's quarters. On the left was a small reception room whose floor was covered in stone and tile. The walls possessed recessed cabinets, carved in the Arabic style, and the windows were covered with mushrabiya. Upstairs there was a large reception room for the men, quarters for the women, a kitchen and a bath whose ceiling was perforated by small glass bowls to let in the light. The house also had a mill and numerous toilet facilities.

Ḥājj Sulṭān stipulated that the house be left to his children and his children's children, and in the event there were none, to his and his wife's freed slaves

[1] Taken from the *Daftar mukhallafāt* of Muḥammad al-Baghdādlī al-Yāsirjī, b. Ḥamza, *Qism al-ʿaskarīya* 217, 183, 27 Shaʿban 1205.

[2] *Daftar mukhallafāt* Sultān b. Ismāʿīl, *Qism al-ʿaskarīya* 273, 245-246, 14 Dhu'l Hijja 1235.

[3] *Bāb al-ʿĀlī* 341, 139-140.

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during their lifetime. After that it was to be enjoyed by any of his of his wife's relatives living in Cairo.

When he died in 1235/1819-1820, certainly an old man, having worked in Cairo at least 45 years, he left a reasonably large estate worth 347,813 nuṣf faḍḍa[1]. About a third of this amount accrued from five slaves still in his hands, each worth about 25,000 nuṣf faḍḍa. Other important components of his estate were the collection of brass utensils (215 rotls) worth 32,250 nuṣf faḍḍa, and a large collection of kashmir shawls, binishes and jibbas. He also owned a camel, a cow and a donkey. Of Sudanese products other than slaves, there is only a certain amount of tamrahindi. He possessed a dagger and a sword used by the Jallābs, called *saif jallābi*. One also finds a *ṭabla*, but no books, not even a copy of the Quran.

We are also given a list of the claims against his estate. His funeral expenses were large, amounting to 58,175 nuṣf faḍḍa. Of those debts which can be recognized he owed money to the seller of fodder, to the vender of firewood, a large sum to his father-in-law, a sum to Murjān, one of his freed slaves, a sum comprising the last instalment of his wife's brideprice (*mu'ākhar al-ṣadāq*), to the shaykh of the Ḥāra and to a lady broker. Altogether the claims and final expenses amounted to 260,989 nuṣf faḍḍa, or close to three-quarters of his entire estate. Such an extent of indebtness is not unusual among important merchants.

Ḥājj Sulṭān, as was common practice in these days, had at least two factotums, or tāba', who worked for him. One of them, Shīmī b. Aḥmad Shaltūt, also from Banī 'Adī, lived in Ḥājj Sulṭān's house until he died in 1224/1809. His *daftar mukhallafāt*[2] comprises mostly personal items, and his debts completely exhausted the value of his personal estate. They were completely settled by Ḥājj Sulṭān and it seems likely most of them were incurred upon his authority.

Ḥājj Sulṭān's presence continued to be felt long after he died through various marriages which his relatives contracted. Having no successors himself, he passed his estate on to his wife and two grand-nephews. Muḥammad Abū 'Ābida, one of them, a merchant in the Wakālat al-Jallāba, married the daughter of Sāliḥ « Abū'l-'Iz », another merchant in the wakāla whose sister was married to one of Ḥājj Sulṭān's associates. Muḥammad Abū 'Ābida had two sons, Muḥammad and Sulaimān, both of whom continued to work in the wakāla as merchants, and

[1] See footnote 2, p. 279. [2] *Qism al-'askarīya* 246, 327-328, ? Rabī' I 1224.

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at least one daughter, ʿAzīza, who was married to Naṣr al-Shuqairī, the important merchant of the wakāla mentioned above. Thus this small hard-core of the ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba was inter-related.

Ḥājj ʿAbd al-Karīm, nicknamed « al-Baghl » (the Mule) was shaykh of the ṭāʾifa from 1835 to 1843. His home village was Banī ʿAdī. His father, ʿAbdallah, was a merchant at the Wakālat al-Jallāba and one of four, including Ḥājj Sulṭān, who purchased a *ḥānūt* in Midaq Alley in 1218/1803 (1). ʿAbd al-Karīm does not appear in any legal documents as a witness until 1825 (2), and even then we have little information about him until the year of his appointment as shaykh of the guild. From that time until his death seven years later, there is an abundance of documentation on his activities.

ʿAbd al-Karīm had several wives, but he divorced all of them except Nafīsa Khatūn bint Aḥmad al-Shāmī. He had been married to Jura bint ʿAbdallah al-Samra, whom he freed and who apparently predeceased him. He had a son, ʿAlī, born from Taranja bint ʿAbdallah al-Ḥabishīya, previously married but divorced, and a daughter ʿAʾisha, born from Suʿāda bint ʿAbdallah al-Sūda, also previously married and divorced. He lived with his family in a house in Hawsh Qadam, off the Ghūrīya quarter of Cairo.

A complete list of his properties has not been located. It is possible that he never drew up a waqf; not every merchant did. He appears to have begun his purchases only in 1254/1838-1839 when he bought an entire *ḥāṣil* in the Wakālat al-Jallāba from Sitt Ḥafīza Khatūn al-Baiḍa, a freed slave of Sitt Amna al-Baiḍa for 800 piastres (3). In 1257/1841-1842 he bought a series of properties from the widow of Ḥājj Sulṭān, including eight *qirāṭs* of *ḥāṣil* known as the « *ḥāṣil* al-kabīr » as well as portions of five other properties, all of them located in the Wakālat al-Jallāba (4). The price he paid was 350 piastres. Matching portions in the same series of *ḥāṣils* and *ḥānūts* were concommittantly secured by Naṣr al-Shuqairī who for

(1) *Ḥujja daʿwa* Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥamīda, Ḥājj ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *et al*, *Qism al-ʿaskarīya* 312, 89, 22 Muḥarram 1256.

(2) Witness in the *daftar mukhallafāt* of Zainab bint Sāliḥ « Abū'l-ʿIz ». *Qism al-ʿaskarīya* 282, 280, 14 Muḥarram 1241.

(3) *Ḥujja ibtiyāʿ*, ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Bāb al ʿĀlī* 411, 3, nº 9.

(4) *Ḥujja ibtiyāʿ*, ʿAbd al-Karīm al Baghl, *Bāb al-ʿĀlī* 415, 220, nº 496.

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reasons unknown paid an additional 100 piastres for the same properties [1]. A year later, Naṣr sold these holdings to ʿAbd al-Karīm for 500 piastres, so that in 1258/1842-1843 he was in possession of the same locations in the Wakālat al-Jallāba that Ḥājj Sulṭān had twenty years earlier.

In outward aspects he appears to have been ready to assume the position once held by Ḥājj Sulṭān. Times, however, had changed somewhat, and one of the newer problems facing the merchants at the wakāla was the steady stream of European tourists who came to gape at the scene and then return to Europe to urge their governments to put pressure on the government of Muḥammad ʿAlī to end the trade in slaves. In order to avoid further unpleasantness, the government ordered ʿAbd al-Karīm in 1258/1842-1843 to rent rooms for the selling of slaves in the buildings attached to the mosque of Qaitbey in the Qarāfa al-Kabīra outside the city. This he did at his own expenses, for upon his death, the waqf of Sulṭān Qaitbey laid a claim against his estate for 165 piastres, the balance accruing from a monthly rent of 50 piastres for the buildings taken. ʿAbd al-Karīm had previously paid three months' rent [2].

The suddenness of his death in 1259/1843 is clear from the numerous claims against his estate which show that in the two-month period before his demise, he was in the midsts of heavy buying. Nine of the plaintiffs made their claims on the basis that ʿAbd al-Karīm had accepted to sell slaves for them but had either not been able to sell them or had not yet found time to forward them the money from the sale [3]. This buying activity on his part is equally obvious from an examination of his *daftar mukhallafāt* [4] and subsequent *ḥisba* in which close to fifty slaves, male, female, black, Ethiopian, white and five eunuchs are listed. This is an extraordinary number for a merchant to have, tying up, as it were, so much capital at one particular time, and either indicates ʿAbd al-Karīm's preeminent position as a merchant of great wealth at the wakāla or a considerable

[1] *Ḥujja ibtiyā,* Nasr al-Shuqairī, *Bāb al-ʿĀlī* 415, 221, n° 497.

[2] *Ḥujja daʿwa* Waqf Sulṭān Qaitbey vs. estate of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 104, n° 259, 22 Shaʿbān 1259. For Muḥammad ʿAlī's directive, Sāmī Amīn, *Taqwīm an-Nil,* II, 518, order dated 28 Rajab 1258.

[3] *Ḥujja daʿwas, Iʿlāmāt* 13, n° 175, 181, 460, 493, 779; *Iʿlāmāt* 14, n° 60, 327, 999; *Iʿlāmāt* 15, n° 828.

[4] *Tarikāt* 5, 185, 229-230.

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degree of debit purchasing. The claims against his estate clearly show that the latter was the case. Indeed, of a total estate originally valued at 63,797 piastres at the time of his death, total claims against this amount reduced it, four years later, to 4455 piastres [1].

From the nearly three dozen claims against his estate, certain business patterns emerge. One of these patterns involved the use of the downpayment, the payment of a specified sum of money and an agreement to delay (*taʾākhar*) the balance until a later date. This form of transaction was commonly employed at the wakāla. The percentage of the downpayment whith regard to the total price agreed upon varied considerably from as low as 18,5 % to as high as 55 % [2]. In one case, ʿAbd al-Karīm agreed to pay off the agreed price of a slave he had purchased by sending monthly instalments which were fixed at 50 piastres but clearly included an initial lump sum as well [3].

It would be interresting to know at what price he sold the slaves compared to what price he paid for them, but since the price of slaves varied tremendously, it is impossible to draw any conclusions from the available data. No commissions seem to have been involved in these transactions.

In a number of business deals, the seller seems to have demanded a written note from ʿAbd al-Karīm, dated and marked with his name and seal. These are referred to under several names — *waraqa, wathīqa,* or *ḥawāla* being the usual. *Tamassuk,* or a written IOU, was also given and it included his name, seal and the date of the transaction. Professional traders in slaves appear to have preferred using written documents [4]. Actually, in court, a plaintiff need only produce two witnesses to testify that during his lifetime the defendent acknowledged a debt to the plaintiff and this coupled with the taking of the oath (*ḥalf al-yamīn*) was as binding as any piece of written evidence.

The documents show that private inviduals had various options at hand in dealing with merchants like ʿAbd al-Karīm. One claimant testified that he had given an

[1] *Thibūt wafāʾ, Iʿlāmāt* 17, 79, nº 342, 4 Jum. II 1263.

[2] Contrast Sākina bint Aḥmad vs. estate of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 69, nº 181 with Sulaiman al-Maghribī vs. estate of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 134, nº 329.

[3] *Ḥujja daʿwa* Muḥammad Ṭāhir vs. estate of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 126, nº 309.

[4] See *Ḥujja daʿwas, Iʿlāmāt* 13, nº 474, 207, and 476.

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advance sum of money to ʿAbd al-Karīm in order to « reserve » a particular slave in the merchant's stores. When the slave died before the purchase could be effected, ʿAbd al-Karīm had failed to return the advance[1]. A buyer could also attempt to stipulate the condition of refusal (*khiyār*) on purchasing a slave in the event that it proved to have a defect (in which case it could be returned without a loss). This happened when Muḥammad Agha took a 24 hour option on a slavegirl he purchased from ʿAbd al-Karīm which proved to have a defect in the left leg. He attempted to return the slave to ʿAbd al-Karīm, but the shaykh produced witnesses to support his case that the defect was obvious to the purchaser on the day of the sale. He was upheld by the court[2]. By and large, the court tended to favor the merchants in the sale of slaves against the whimsy of the individual buyer, and those wishing to return recently purchased slaves on the grounds of a variety of defects found it difficult to do so. The usual defense put up by ʿAbd al-Karīm and his associates was that the defect had been acquired at the house of the purchaser or that the purchaser was aware of it at the time of the sale.

ʿAbd al-Karīm like all the merchants at the wakāla was required to effect his sales through the wakāla's brokers[3]. The percentage taken by the broker on each sale is not yet clear, nor is the amount turned over to the government.

Outside of the large number of slaves in his possession, ʿAbd al-Karīm also had a camel, a cow, a bull, and a donkey, but his wardrobe is meagre compared to his predecessor, Ḥājj Sulṭān. His collection of brass, often an indicator of a well-established household, was valued at a minimal 42 piastres. He possessed two watches, one of them a French pocket watch with a silver key, and two books, one unidentified and the other, an incomplete copy of the Quran (*muṣḥaf dasht*)[4].

Of the Sudanese goods in his storerooms we find mention of a certain quantity of rhinoceros hide whips (*kurbāj*) and some tamrahindi[5]. Someone had given

[1] *Ḥujja daʿwa* Aḥmad Agha Mulāzim vs. estate of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 184, n° 437.

[2] *Ḥujja daʿwa* Muḥammad Agha Qusṭanbūlī vs. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 7, 238-239, n° 870, 2 Rabīʿ I 1257.

[3] *Ḥujja daʿwa* Muḥammad al-ʿAdawī vs. estate of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 204, n° 496.

[4] Taken from the items listed in his *daftar mukhallafāt*.

[5] *Ibid.;* see also *Ḥujja daʿwa* Sulaimān al-Shāyib vs. estate of ʿAbd al-Karīm al- Baghl, *Iʿlāmāt* 13, 330, n° 770 over 150 piastres due to him for the price of some tamrahindi and kurbājs.

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him a spearhead with a wooden handle. There is also a small amount of beads, often used to make exchanges with merchants coming from the interior, but the amount is nominal. There are no ivory, feathers, shishm and other hard goods from the Sudan.

CONCLUSIONS

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Karīm's passing away occurred at a time when the tāʾifat al-Jallāba was in a very ambiguous position. It depended upon a steady flow of goods from the Sudan which in the 1830's had been surprisingly rich. The gradual slow-down of the Egyptian economy in the 1840's was also felt in the Sudan. When an upswing occurred in the following decade, the flow of Sudanese goods did not pass through the hands of the traditional merchants in Cairo, except for slaves, but rather through the hands of energetic Egyptian and Greek entrepreneurs who in most cases secured the bulk of the goods arriving from the Sudan at the caravan entrepots in Upper Egypt — Asyut and Aswan. These were fed to agents in Cairo and Alexandria and then passed on to Europe where the market for ivory, feathers and gum, the chief staples, was steadily rising. Cairo itself began to acquire a multinational group of traders interested in the Sudan trade. The role of the Greeks, for instance, was very great[1].

As to the sale of slaves, on which the members of the ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba were increasingly dependent, the market continued strong until well into the 1870's. We cannot tell from the available sources what particular stresses and strains were placed upon this guild, but it is a curious fact that sometime in the mid-1850's, the court documents cease to speak of the « ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba ». As Baer has pointed out, the « ṭāʾifat al-Yāsirjīya » continued to function until the government abolished it in 1878[2], and references can be found in scattered court documents relating to its members until that time. This guild, it may be conjectured, represented a grouping of all the dealers in slaves operating in Cairo, black and white, and members of the old ṭāʾifat al-Jallāba may have drifted into its membership. Its leadership did not come from the old guard of the wakālat al-Jallāba.

[1] See A.G. Politis, *l'Hellénisme et l'Egypte moderne*, (Paris, 1930), 2 vols., II, 198-207.

[2] Baer, *op. cit.*, 174.

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During the later years, the wakāla remained a center for the selling of Sudanese goods. Its merchants were no longer called *yāsirjī* in court documents but are given the general professional *laqab* of *mutasabbib*. They dealt in the usual products — feathers, ivory, tamrahindi, leather, beads and cloth [1]. There is no mention of the wakāla having a shaykh as it traditionally had. The Sudan trade had become too diverse.

[1] See the *daftars mukhallafāt* of Nasr al-Shuqairī, *Tarikāt* 23, 147-149, Rajab 1281; Sulaimān Abū ʿĀbida, *Tarikāt* 24, 43-45, 24 Jum. I 1283; Ḥusain Ḥamīda, *Tarikāt* 26, 61-62, 28 Jum. I 1285.

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