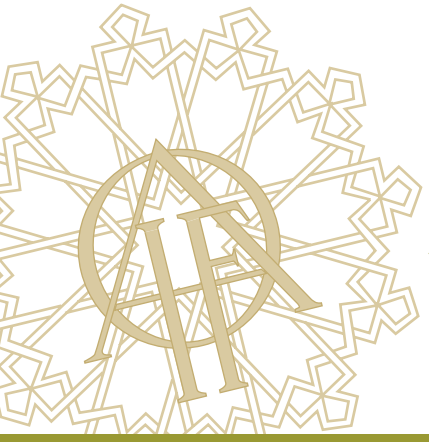
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Ḥamad Muḥammad Ḫayr

A Contribution to a Textual Problem: Ibn Sulaym al-Aswānī's Kitāb Aḫbār al-Nūba wa l-Maqurra wa l-Beğa wa l-Nīl.

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A CONTRIBUTION TO A TEXTUAL PROBLEM: IBN SULAYM AL-ASWĀNĪ'S *KITĀB AḪBĀR AL-NŪBA WA L-MAQURRA WA L-BEĞA WA L-NĪL*

Hamad Mohammad KHEIR

This paper is an attempt to throw light on the very illustrious Fatimid envoy, known as Ibn Sulaym al-Aswānī, and his lost work. The main task is to glean the text from the different sources that have quoted him, isolate it, and translate it.

Nothing is known of Ibn Sulaym apart from what he himself has mentioned somewhere in his lost work. This is quoted by Maqrīzī in his unpublished M.S., *al-Muqaffā* [1]. It tells that he was sent by the Fatimid general Ğawhar, to preach Islam and to demand the Baqṭ arrears. As regards the first task, he relates that he took part in a debate with the King and the intelligentsia of the court of Maqurra that ended with a message from the King to Ğawhar encouraging him to accept Christianity. As for the second aim nothing has reached us. He also tells that he presented his book, entitled *Kitāb Aḫbār al-Nūba wa l-Maqurra wa ʿAlwa wa l-Beğa wa l-Nīl wa man ʿAllayih wa Qaruba minhu min ġayrihim,* to the second Fatimid caliph, al-ʿAzīz.

In the light of this information one may give a general frame for the time of Ibn Sulaym's visit and the writing of his work. Ğawhar arrived in Egypt in 358/968 and continued as a representative of his master, al-Muʿizz, until 362/973 when the latter arrived. Between these dates Ibn Sulaym must, at least, have started his visit to Nubia. It is difficult to determine whether he came back during the reign of Ğawhar or after the arrival of al-Muʿizz in Egypt. The fact that Ibn Sulaym had raised a banner with the name of al-Muʿizz when he went out of Dongola to conduct the *ʿayd* prayers is taken by Troupeau [2] as evidence of his stay in Nubia after the arrival of al-Muʿizz in Egypt. The difficulty in believing this assumption is that banners usually bore the name of the Caliph and not the general, especially in matters of spiritual guidance. So it seems we have nothing that may help determine the date of the end of Ibn Sulaym's visit. However, without much speculation one may say that during the five year period between the arrival of Ğawhar

[1] Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Taʾrīḫ al-Kabīr al-Muqaffā,* 4 vols. Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, MS 5372 Taʾrīḫ, IV, fol. 227 B (Hereafter : *al-Muqaffā*).

[2] Troupeau, G., «La Description de la Nubie d'al-Uswānī », *Arabica,* I, (1954), pp. 276-88, esp. p. 277.

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and that of al-Muʿizz Ibn Sulaym began his tour. If Ibn Sulaym had started early in the reign of Ǧawhar he would have come back during the same reign; two years are more then enough for such a tour, to say the least.

Ibn Sulaym had presented his book to the second Fatimid Caliph in Egypt, al-ʿAzīz (365/975 - 386/996). Again there is nothing that may help in fixing a definite date for the presentation of this work or the date of its writing. Although the declared aim of Ibn Sulaym's visit were the two mentioned above, the fact that the mission resulted in a book gives the impression that the visit was a fact-finding one. This may have been the most important and undeclared aim of the Fatimids. Moreover, it was by no means possible that Fatimid policy — unlike those before and after it — would have been formulated without a thorough knowledge of their southern neighbours acquired from a reliable source like the work of Ibn Sulaym. It is only in this respect that the work of Ibn Sulaym attained its importance for its contemporaries. That is to say that his book was compiled mainly for policy makers. This may explain the puzzling disappearance of Ibn Sulaym's book until the time of al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1445). Being intended for policy makers, it was not much in circulation and so few copies of it were available. Even during its day no reference was made to it. If one is to draw a parallel we have the works of al-Muhalabī and al-Musabbiḥī, who both wrote, like Ibn Sulaym, in the Fatimid period, and whose works were lost. The difference is that both are quoted by authors earlier than the time of al-Maqrīzī [1].

Most of the extracts from Ibn Sulaym are scattered through Maqrīzī's well-known *Ḫiṭaṭ*. Three editions of this work have appeared. The first was in 1270/1835, known after its publishing press, Būlāq; the second is the Nile print of 1324/1906, and the third and most recent is the edition edited by M. G. Wiet, whose five parts appeared in 1910, 1911, 1922, 1924, 1927 consecutively. However, it is still incomplete. In his introduction to the first part, Wiet tells that although he is acquainted with 162-63 manuscripts, he has selected forty of them to be a base for his edition, including the Būlāq print (Vol. I, pp. III-IV). He also added many excellent notes. These, combined together, have made his text quite adequate for such an enterprise as the present one.

[1] The frequency with which works were lost during the Fatimid period may have two causes. The first is the Shiʿites' belief that their Imam encircles earthly as well as heavenly knowledge. It follows that books were written exclusively for him and those whom he authorized to read them. Thus the number of copies was limited. The second may be sought in their Sunni foes persistent policy of destroying the Shiʿites' works. See Marwa, H., *al-Nazʿāt al-Mādiyya fī al-falsafa al-Islāmiyya al-ʿArabiyya*, 2 vols. (Beirut, 1980), vol. I, p. 493. Thanks to Dr. Beshir who has drawn my attention to such an explanation.

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However, in the three editions the extracts from Ibn Sulaym form either all or part of the sections entitled by al-Maqrīzī as follows :

1. *Ḏikr ʿağā'ib al-Nīl.* 2. *Ḏikr al-Ǧanādil wa lamʿ min aḫbār arḍ al-Nūba.* 3. *Ḏikr Aswān.* 4. *Ḏikr taša'ub al-Nīl min bilād ʿAlwa wa man yaskun ʿalayhi min al-umam.* 5. *Ḏikr al-Beğa wa yuqāl innahum min al-Berber.* 6. *Ḏikr al-baqṭ.* 7. *Ḏikr Bilāq.*

The identification of these is based on al-Maqrīzī's own statements — which, as a rule, he puts either at the beginning or the end of a quotation — that the quotation is from Ibn Sulaym. These statements of al-Maqrīzī are a reference to Ibn Sulaym by name, or as *Ṣāḥib Kitāb Aḫbār al-Nūba* (the author of the book of *Aḫbār al-Nūba*) or *Mu'arriḫ al-Nūba* (the Historian of al-Nūba). Of these seven titles the two enumerated above as numbers 2 and 4, dealing with the topography, geography, branches and inhabitants of the Nile, have overshadowed the other parts to become, since the time of al-Maqrīzī, the central concern of medieval as well as modern scholars.

Ibn Iyās, (d.c., 930/1523), in his *Našq al-Azhār fī ʿAğā'ib al-Aqṭār,* is the second author to quote the sections about the Nile. According to Ḥasan and Troupeau his text appears to be an abridgement of Maqrīzī's excerpts [1]. Al-Manūfī, a contemporary of Ibn Iyās and like him an Egyptian, (d. 931/1524) also quoted the two sections about the Nile. However, there is ample evidence that al-Manūfī's selections from Ibn Sulaym are not from al-Maqrīzī. The evidence for this is not the variation in the title of the book, as Troupeau tends to believe, for this shorter version, *Kitāb Aḫbār al-Nūba* recurs quite frequently in Maqrīzī's extracts. Again, he misread al-Manūfī's text and it so appeared to him that he gives the title of the book as *Kitāb Aḫbār al-Nūba min Aḫbār al-Nīl* [2]; while in reality the sentence reads « that Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Sulaym al-Aswānī says in his book of *Aḫbār al-Nūba,* news about the Nile »; then he quotes his information. Two pieces of information that are not mentioned by al-Maqrīzī may be the true evidence. The first is his mention of Ibn Sulaym's *kunya,* that is to say the surname of a relationship, as Abū Muḥammad which does not exist either in the extracts in *al-Ḫiṭaṭ,* nor in that given as a biography for Ibn Sulaym in *al-Muqaffā.* The second and more significant is his giving of these lines :

> They have huge trees. The Lord of the Kingdom of ʿAlwa told me that he has measured the circumference and height of one of these trees and he found them to be

[1] Hasan, Y.F., S.V., Ibn Sulaym, *EI*², vol. III, p. 849 and Troupeau, *op. cit.,* p. 279.

[2] Troupeau, *op. cit.,* p. 280 : The passages extracted by al-Manūfī are five and not four as Troupeau counts.

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thirty *baʿ* together. They cut its branches and carve the trunk to make it a reservoir because their land is sands, so water quickly disappears in it and their wells are very deep [1].

The problem here is whether al-Manūfī was quoting from a manuscript of Ibn Sulaym's book or from an adulterated text from another work. It is important to note that al-Manūfī's work is an abridgement of the third part of *al-Rawḍ al-Naḍīr wa al-Zahr al-ʿAṭīr*, written by a certain Zayn al-Dīn al-Rašīdī [2]. This means that the quotations might have been in al-Rašīdī's work. Another point that may provide an answer is that the text quoted above is given with another text that describes the district of Baqūn, which is in the domain of Maqurra, while the one quoted above should be located within the section about ʿAlwa. These two facts encourage one to assume that al-Manūfī was not quoting from an adequate manuscript of Ibn Sulaym.

The third and latest author to quote Ibn Sulaym is al-Qāḍī Maʿrūf [3]. He is also, like Ibn Iyās, quoting from al-Maqrīzī's extracts and also quotes the sections concerning the Nile. However, he adds a passage which comprises part of the section entiled by Maqrīzī as « Ḏikr ʿağā'ib al-Nīl ». (No. 3 above).

Also, modern writers weigh the work of Ibn Sulaym by these two sections about the Nile. Brockelmann and Krackovsky, correctly, consider it as the only reasonable description of the Nile in its upper parts [4]. The latter expresses his astonishment about the inadequacy of al-Idrīsī's (d. 560/1165) description of the upper Nile, though it had come after Ibn Sulaym. However, as already stated herein, the work of Ibn Sulaym was not an ordinary book in the general sense of the word, but one which was exclusively meant for policy-makers. Thus, it is totally beside the point to consider it a work of geography. These two chapters about the Nile seem to have been popular among medieval as well as modern writers, for their precise and unique description of the Nile. It is interesting to note that al-Maqrīzī was so impressed with this description that when he reached the

[1] Al-Manūfī, *al-Fayīd al-Madīd fī Aḫbār al-Nīl al-Sa'īd*, MS. Dar al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya No. 429 Tariḫ, folio 13 B.

[2] Musʿad, M., *al-Maktaba al-Sūdāniyya al-ʿArabiyya*, (Cairo, 1972), p. 392 (Bio-data) (Hereafter *Maktaba*).

[3] Al-Qāḍī Maʿrūf, *Kitāb ʿağāib al-Aḫbār ʿan Miṣr al-Amṣar*, MS., Fols. 183 A-86 B. I found this MS in the library of the King ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz University of Jedda, under the No. 308. No information about the author is available, but he mentions that he was in Egypt in 943 / 1536.

[4] Brockelmann, C., *Geschichte Der Arabischen Literatur, Erster (Zweiter, Dritter) supplementband*, 3 vols. (Leiden, 1937-42), I, p. 410. (Hereafter SI, II, III) and Krackovsky, *Arabskaya geograficeskayg literature*, trans. (Arabic), Hashim, S., vol. 1 (Cairo, 1963), pp. 192-193.

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point where Ibn Sulaym describes Dongola, the capital of Maqurra, he suppressed this latter description. Al-Maqrīzī, being aware that many writers before him had given accounts of Dongola, thought it reasonable to give space only to this interesting description of the Nile area and not the city itself.

These sections about the Nile and those about the Beğa are the most complete extracts we have of Ibn Sulaym's work and a close study of them will give us a better understanding of his method. He starts with fixing the Nubian and the Beğa boundaries with Egypt. As the Nile is the dominant feature of Nubian ecology, so the desert is its counterpart in the Beğa land. Within this context he gives the climate, the fauna, the flora, the people and their means of subsistence and the most popular of their folktales and beliefs. When he comes to politics, his emphasis is on the relations between those people and Muslim Egypt, from the time of conquest to his time. In this respect the extract about the Beğa is more informative than that about Nubia. Again, the source of this may have been al-Maqrīzī's estimation of the volume of information about Nubia before him, and here he suffices himself with the unique information about the Baqṭ. So it appears quite clear, even from these short extracts, that the concern of Ibn Sulaym was not only the Nile, as a topographical phenomenon, but how the Nile in Nubia and the desert in the Beğa land have affected the lives of their inhabitants, that is to say, the interrelation between society and nature. It has already been claimed that the intended biography of Ibn Sulaym in Maqrīzī's *Muqaffā* is no more than a summary of some incidents from Ibn Sulaym's work. Here is another proposition, that the biography of the famous Arab treasure hunter al-ʿUmarī, also quoted in *al-Muqaffā,* seems to have been extracted from Ibn Sulaym. Unlike his model in *al-Ḫiṭaṭ,* al-Maqrīzī, as a rule, does not mention his source of information in *al-Muqaffā.* However, with this particular text, a close look at it in comparison with the extracts in *al-Ḫiṭaṭ* will give the evidence for the above assumption.

One may divide into three categories the information about al-ʿUmarī in *al-Muqaffā.* The first is of his early life and his arrival in Egypt. The second is his career in Nubia, the eastern desert and his death. The third is of his adventures in Egypt. In the chronicle about Aḥmad Ibn Ṭūlūn, compiled by al-Balawī, we have some information about al-ʿUmarī. He gives his name and relation to the second caliph Ibn al-Ḫaṭṭāb. He attributes al-ʿUmarī's fame to a successful retaliatory campaign against the Beğa. He goes on to claim that he defeated the Beğa and compelled them to pay him the *ğizya.* Then he tells about al-ʿUmarī's defeat of a Ṭūlūnid army under the generalship of Šuʿba b. al-Ḥarkam. His struggle against the Shiʿite rebel, Ibn al-Ṣūfī, is related by al-Balawī and al-Kindī. They also give the dialogue between Ibn Ṭūlūn and the two servants of

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al-ʿUmarī, who brought him his head and claimed to have killed him [1]. The anecdote given by Ibn al-Aṯīr is quoted, word by word, from al-Balawī [2]. All these details from al-Balawī, al-Kindī and Ibn al-Aṯīr who quotes al-Balawī, are incorporated in al-ʿUmarī's biography of *al-Muqaffā*. As both al-Balawī and al-Kindī wrote well before Ibn Sulaym, it is highly probable that he quoted them. However, there is the second category which is totally unknown and comprises the bulk of the biography of al-ʿUmarī in *al-Muqaffā*. This information is unattainable except for a resident of Aswān — from where the oral information, like the poetry in the text, may have been acquired, — who visited Nubia to get the details about al-ʿUmarī's adventures there. So it is in the nature of information that one may consider the third piece of evidence for the proposition put forward above.

In the chapter about the Nile, when al-Maqrīzī is describing the bend of the Nile he gives one sentence telling that al-ʿUmarī emerged from this area. Again when he reaches this point in the biography he quotes the description of the Nile bend. Another clue is that he quotes two sentences, in his section about Aswān, in *al-Ḫiṭaṭ*, that tell about the richness of the merchants of Aswān, which are also repeated in the biography. These are used in the *Ḫiṭaṭ* just as evidence, while in the biography they are part of the narrative. So it appears that Ibn Sulaym compiled this biography of al-ʿUmarī from al-Balawī and the traditions which he had collected in Aswān as well as from Nubia. Thus al-Maqrīzī has quoted it in his *Muqaffā* without making reference to his source material.

Now that all the text of Ibn Sulaym available in the literary sources has been established, it is important to look at the sources from which Ibn Sulaym compiled his work. The diversity of these stand as an eloquent testimony to the intellectual ability of Ibn Sulaym and how seriously he had undertaken his mission. It seems that he has read all the written material before him about the Beğa and Nubia. The text gives many examples, such as the passages quoted from al-Ğāḥiẓ and Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, and the treatise attributed to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib about the races, in the section about the Beğa. In the chapter about the Baqṭ he mentions al-Waqīdī and Ibn Wahb, and in the biography of al-ʿUmarī he quotes al-Balawī.

Another source of information on which he has heavily drawn is the state archives in Egypt, as well as in Nubia. From Egypt he produced two important treaties. The one about the *Baqṭ*, though adulterated by al-Maqrīzī, is basically his. The other, which is only to be found in his book, is that of the treaty between ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ğahm and Kanūn b. ʿAzīz, the chief of the Beğa. Also, in Nubia he seems to have had access to

[1] al-Balawī, *Sīrat Aḥmad Ibn Ṭūlūn*, ed. ʿAlī, M.K., (Damascus, 1358/1939). pp. 64-67. al-Kindi, M., *Kitāb al-Wulāt wa Kitab al-Qudāt*, ed. Guest, R. (Leiden, 1912), pp. 213-14 (hereafter *Wulāt*).

[2] Ibn al-Aṯīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rīḫ*, 12 vols., (Beirut, 1965-66), vol. VII, p. 264.

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official papers. He clearly states that al-Muʿtaṣim's amendment of the Baqṭ was put into a document « that had remained in their hands ». From this Nubian document he seems to have quoted his details about what the Muslims should pay to the Nubians.

Authentic informants, especially in Nubia, are quoted many times. At Maqurra he met the king many times, once in fulfilment of his instruction to preach Islam, other times at their leisure, walking in the district of Baqūn. The details about the struggle between al-ʿUmarī and the Nubian state on the one hand, and the competition between the King's son and his nephew, on the other, were definitely transmitted to him from the court traditions. This may point to the existence of an official orator or *griot,* if one is to borrow a Mandinga word, whose occupation was to preserve the royal history. This is the main source for modern writers about African tribes and traditional states. His information about the numerous hippos in the islands of the Nile bend, as well as his information about a species of fish in the Atbara river were communicated to him by a courtier, named Simon, who held the title of *Ṣāḥib ʿAhd Balad ʿAlwa* (the superintendent of the pact of the Land of ʿAlwa). In the few lines added by al-Manūfī, quoted above, Ibn Sulaym obtains his information from the king of ʿAlwa. Besides these high-echelon informants Ibn Sulaym also interviewed ordinary characters. The text gives two examples : the individual whose country is a three-month march from the Nile, and the individual who mixed the waters of the Blue and the White Niles.

What he has observed and experienced in his visit comprises the most significant of his sources. The fascination expressed by many writers, medieval as well as modern, about his minute and precise description of the Nile should be attributed to his faculties of observation. Moreover, to this sharp observation we owe our information about the state organization, the social consciousness, the means of subsistence and dietary and other social habits in Maqurra, ʿAlwa and the Beğa land.

Bearing in mind that what has reached us from this illustrious work of Ibn Sulaym is far from complete, every point made above shoud be considered tentative.

Translation of the text :

As we know that most of the extracts from Ibn Sulaym's work are in Maqrīzī's *Ḫiṭaṭ,* it follows that any translation of al-Maqrīzī's work should include these extracts. Of these we have two translations, one in Turkish [1], the other in

[1] There is reference to it in Wiet's introduction, but he says that he has not found it. However, there is one, in a very bad state of preservation, in Khartoum University Library. Although not in the catalogue, it is kept in the special room.

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French [1]. Apart from these there are other translations. Quatremère, has summarized the extracts about the Nile in his « Mémoire sur la Nubie », and that about the Beğa both in *al-Ḫiṭaṭ* and *al-Muqaffā,* in his « Mémoire sur les Blemmyes » [2]. These chapters are compiled from different Arabic sources.

The first English translation comes as an appendix (No. III) in Burckhardt's *Travels in Nubia.* He gives it the title « Translation of the Notices on Nubia contained in Maqrizi's history and description of Egypt, called El Khetat, with notes, written at Cairo, Dec. 1816 and Jan. 1817 ». His fair acquaintance with the Arabic language as well as his enthusiasm, has made his endeavour a sound one. The shortcomings mainly arise from his lack of adequate manuscripts of the *Ḫiṭaṭ.*

The second English translation is that of Father Vantini [3]. Like that of Burckhardt, it is a translation of every piece of information about Nubia in al-Maqrīzī's *al-Sulūk* and *al-Muqaffā.* This translation, as intended and stated by the translator, is no more than a « working draft ».

The only one to try to isolate and translate some excerpts from Ibn Sulaym is Troupeau, in his French translation of part of the sections about the Nile from *al-Ḫiṭaṭ.*

What follows is an attempt to isolate and translate the extracts from Ibn Sulaym as established above from *al-Ḫiṭaṭ* and *al-Muqaffā* and wherever there is a difference of reading between this translation and that of Burckhardt or Vantini, this is stated in the notes.

Parentheses are used to contain al-Maqrīzī's remarks, while square brackets contain additions by the translator. These are, basically, to help the reader in understanding the variations between English and Arabic expressions.

Abbreviations :

B = Bulaq edition
N = Nile edition
W = Wiet edition.

Arabic text :

The translation depends, for the reasons stated above, on W, unless otherwise stated.

[1] *Description Topographique et Historique de l'Egypte,* 6 vols., trans. Bouriant, C., and Casanova, P., (Paris, 1893-1903).

[2] Quatremère, *Mémoires Géographiques et Historiques sur L'Egypte,* 2 vols., (Paris, 1811).

[3] Vantini, G., *Oriental sources concerning Nubia,* (Warsaw, 1975), pp. 570-673.

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1. ACCOUNTS OF THE MARVELS OF THE NILE [1] :

One of the marvels of the Nile is the hippopotamus.

(ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Sulaym al-Aswānī has the following to say, in the book of *Aḫbār al-Nūba*). The distance between Dongola and the first of the land of ʿAlwa is greater than that between Dongola and Aswan. In the former there are more villages, estates, islands, herds, date-palms, doum trees, cultivation and vineyards, than in that adjacent to the land of Islam. Also there are greater islands that are as long as [many] days march, inhabited by many serpents, beasts of prey, lions and full of barren lands in which thirst is dreaded. The Nile, in this area, bends until going up river becomes like going down river. It is the area where the Nile bend reaches out to the mine, called al-Šanaka, in the district called al-Šunayr. From here come the turtle doves. Also there are numerous hippopotamuses. I am told by Simon, the superintendent of the pact of ʿAlwa, that he had counted as many as seventy of this species on an island. It is an aquatic species that looks like the horse and is as burly as the buffalo, with short, four-toed cloven-hoofs. It is similar in colour to a horse and its neck-hair is like that of the mane of a horse. Its tail is similar to the tail of a buffalo. It has a flat physiognomy which looks like a saddle-bag. It is herbivorous and it has a thick, hairless skin from which shields are made. (end).

2. ACCOUNTS OF THE CATARACTS AND GLIMPSES OF THE LAND OF AL-NUBA [2].

(ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Sulaym, says, in the book of *Aḫbār al-Nūba wa l-Maqurra wa ʿAlwa wa l-Beğa wa l-Nīl*). The first village in Nubia is the one known as al-Qaṣr, five miles from Aswān. * The last of the Muslim's forts is an island, known as Bilāq, which is one mile from the Nubian village. It is their harbour. From Aswān to this place [al-Qaṣr] rocks hinder the river passage. Thus navigation is only possible with the guidance of fishermen. The fall of the Nile makes a deep rumbling. In this village [al-Qaṣr] is stationed an inspection cavalry corps, that guards the entrance to Nubia [3]. * The distance from this village to the first cataract in Nubia [second cataract] is ten *marḥala* [about 240 miles]. It is the area where Muslims are able to trade and, in the part nearest [Aswān], are free to acquire property. Here dwell non-Arabic speaking Muslims. It is

[1] W. vol. I, chap. XX, pp. 278-88, section (13). B. vol. I, p. 65 and N. vol. I, pp. 104-105. This section is not translated by Burckhardt and Vantini.

[2] W. vol. IV, chap. XX, pp. 252-58, sections 1-2. B. vol. I, pp. 190-91. It is translated by Burckhardt, Troupeau (in French) and Vantini.

[3] The section enclosed between the two stars with the addition of one sentence is repeated in Maqrīzī's *Ḫiṭaṭ*, under the title « Ḏikr Bilāq ». W. vol. IV, chap. XXIV, p. 287. B. vol. I, p. 199.

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narrow, mountainous and its hamlets rest on the Nile banks. Its trees are date-palms and Doum-trees [1]. Its upper regions, where the vine is cultivated, are wider than its lower. Basin irrigation is not possible because of the elevation [of the land]. Its plots are between one and three feddans, irrigated by means of water-wheels. Wheat is scarce among them while barley and *sult* are more abundant. Because of scarcity of land they plant crops twice a year. In summer, after manuring it with a mixture of animal dung and rubble, they sow *duḫun* [2], *ḏurra* [3], *ğawars* [4], sesame and haricot. In this district are located Beğrāš, which is the seat of al-Marīsī [the governor of al-Marīs], the castle of Ibrīm and another castle below it, with a harbour called Adwa', which is said to be the place of origin of Loqmat and Jonas. It has a marvellous antiquity. It has a governor, nominated by the great [King] of Nubia. He is called the Lord of the Mountain and he ranks high among their officials because of his proximity to the land of Islam [5]. Any Muslim who comes to Nubia, for trade or by way of showing courtesy to him or to his master, deals with him. He receives all and answers all by giving slaves. He forbids anyone, Muslims or others, to ascend and present themselves to his master.

At the first cataract in Nubia is a village called Baqawī. It is the terminus for the Nubian boats that ascend from al-Qaṣr, which is the first [village] in their country. Neither boats, nor Muslims or others dare to ascend beyond it without permission from the Lord of their Mountain. From it [Baqawī] to Upper Maqs is six *marḥala* [about 144 miles], which is the rockiest and hardest area I have seen in their land, owing to the difficulty and narrowness of the passages. As for its river, it is interrupted by rapid falls and jutting mountains as a result of the fact that the Nile proceeds through very narrow passes, and in certain parts its width is no more than fifty cubits.

Its land [between the first cataract in Nubia and Upper Maqs] is narrow, with steep mountain and narrow passages, along which neither a rider nor a weak walker can pass. Sands cover both its east and west [banks]. It is in this mountainous area that the inhabitants of the district that precedes it and neighbours the land of Islam sought

[1] *Barassus Aethiopiuns.*

[2] According to Burckhardt it is a species of barley that requires a hard stony soil and less water. The bread made out of it is difficult to digest. Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 1401.

[3] It is still the Sudanese staple food.

[4] It is a species of millet, of which there are three species. The word is Arabicized, from the Persian *Kawirs*. Lane, E.W., *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 8 vols., (Beirut, 1968), II, p. 409.

[5] Vantini reads « This district is ruled by a governor called 'The lord of the mountain', representing the great lord of Nubia. He is among the highest ranking of their walis. This district borders on the land of Islam ». The source of his error is his breaking of the sentence in the original. *Op. cit.*, p. 602.

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refuge, for it is their stronghold. In its islands are a few date-palms and scanty crops. Most of their food consists of fish and they use fish fat to anoint themselves. It is part of al-Marīs and the Lord of the Mountain is their ruler [1].

The governor of the garrison at Upper Maqs is appointed by their king. [He] is so strict that he pretends to search the road for the king or his son or the vizier or any other person of a lower rank, if one of them happens to pass by [2]. No *dīnār* or *dirham* passes it [the garrison]; for these are kept for transactions with Muslims below the cataract, while above it they barter in slaves, cattle, camels, iron and grains. No one is allowed to pass onwards and whoever does so without obtaining permission from the king faces instant death. With such precautions intelligence is not possible since their army may raid urban or suburban populations without anyone knowing about it.

In these places they dive into the Nile to get *al-sunbāḏ* [corundum] which is used for cutting gems. It is distinguished from other stones by its cool surface. If it is hard to distinguish they blow upon it so as to form a « dew » on it.

The village which is known as Sāy [island], is a part of the garrison and is situated on the cataracts. It is one of their bishoprics and they have a bishop and an ancient place of worship [3].

Then [follows] the district of Salqūḏa, which means « the seven governors » and resembles the area adjacent to the land of Islam in its width and narrowness in certain parts, date-palms, vines, cultivation and doum trees. Some cotton plants are grown on it. From these [cotton plants] they make coarse, cheap clothes. And there are olive trees. Its governor is appointed by their great [King] and has some officials who carry out executive functions. Here is found the fort, known as Aṣṭinūn, which marks the beginning of the third cataract. It is the most difficult of all cataracts, because of a mountain that crosses the Nile from the east to the west. The water precipitates through three openings which may become two during the season of drought. It makes a deep rumbling with an impressive scene, for water falls from the top of the mountain. To the south of [Aṣṭinūn], and in the Nile, there is a layer of stones that extends to a distance of three *abrud* [4] [*barīd* = about 36 miles]. It [the layer] reaches the village, known as Bistu, which is the last of the al-Marīs villages and the first of the country of Maqurra. From it [Bistu] to

[1] Vantini's reading gives only the islands as being under the Lord of the Mountain while the text clearly states the whole area. *Op. cit.*, p. 603.

[2] Vantini adds «Is stopped by any man from the garrison ». This is not in the text. *Op. cit.*, p. 604.

[3] The word *kursī* (chair) is used metaphorically to denote a religious office. Vantini took it to mean a civil office. *Op. cit.*, p. 604.

[4] Vantini, ignorant of the *barīd* as an Arab measurement, translates it « Three days journey ». *Op. cit.*, p. 605.

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the boundary of the land of the Muslims, the Marīsī dialect is spoken; and this is the end of their chief's sphere of influence.

Then [follows] the district of Baqūn, which means « the marvel », and it deserves the name for its beauty. I have not seen a wider area in the Nile. I estimate the width of the Nile banks, from east to west, as five *marḥala* [about 120 miles]. Islands lie across the river and between these islands flow the streams of the river, in low land. There are many populous villages, with nice buildings, pigeon-roosts and many herds. Most of the provisions of their city [the capital] came from this area. Its birds are *al-taġṭīṭ, al-nūbī,* the parrots and many others of equal beauty. Their chief used to spend most of his leisure time in this area. (He says) when I was with him most of our walk was along narrow bays that are shaded with trees on both sides. It is said that crocodiles never hurt people here, so I have seen them swimming across these river streams.

Then [follows] Safaḏbaql, whose narrow stretch is similar to that of the lower part of their country. Yet it has beautiful islands and there are about thirty villages in a distance which is less than two *marḥala* [about 48 miles]. It is full of good buildings, churches, monasteries, numerous date-palms, vines, gardens, vast meadows and camels that are red in colour. The red colour is emblematic of the nobility of the race of those camels which are especially raised for breeding. Their great [King] frequently enters this region because its southern end borders on Dongola, their capital.

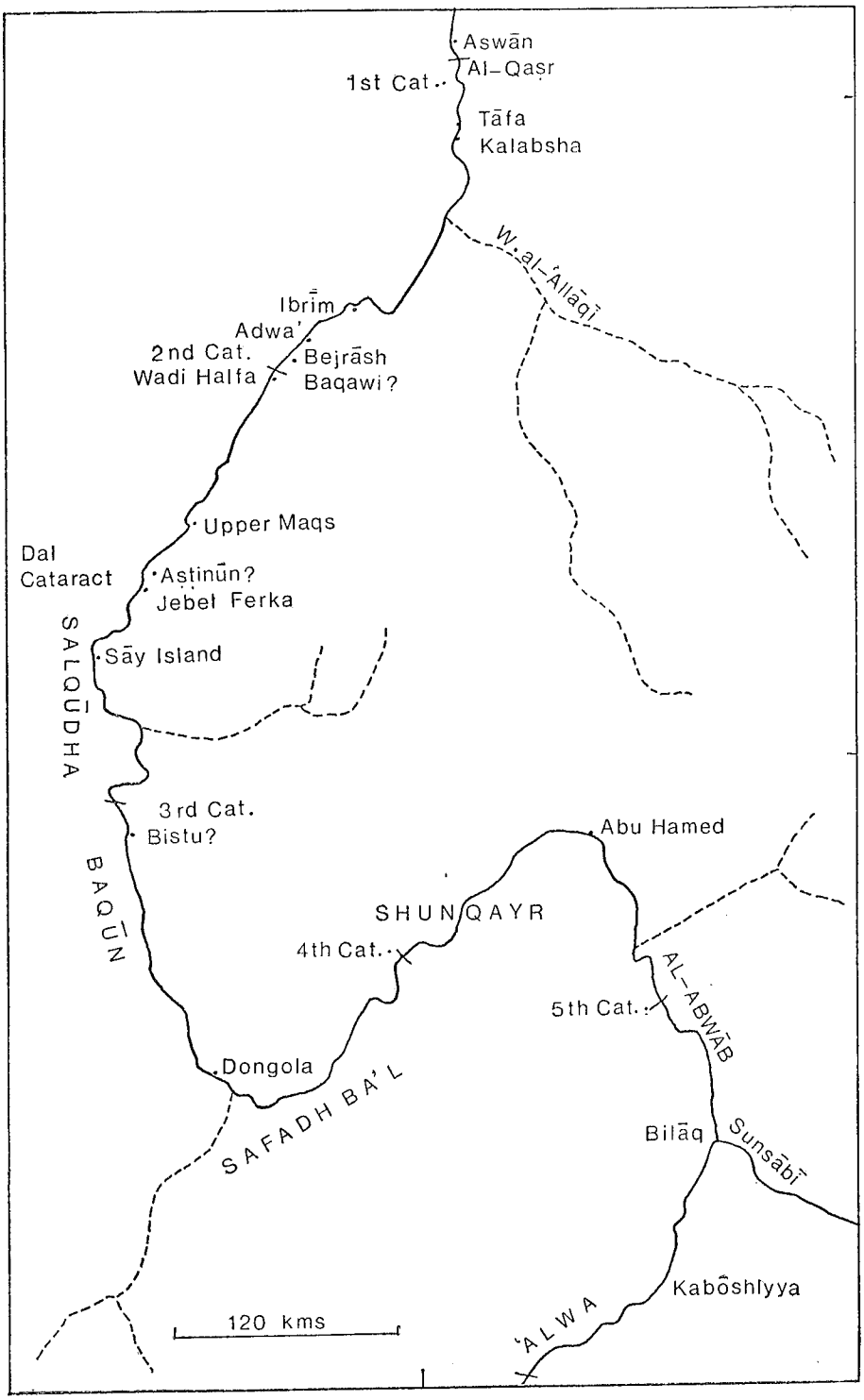
Dongola, the centre of their dominion, is fifty *marḥala* [about 1200 miles] from Aswān. (He describes it and continues) they [the people of Dongola] make the roofs of their buildings from the wood of *sanṭ* [Acacia] and *sāǧ*, the beams being brought along the Nile at the time of flood. Nobody knows from whence they come. I have seen on some of them a peculiar mark and nothing is known of its cause.

The distance between Dongola and the [northern] frontier of ʿAlwa is greater than that between Dongola and Aswān. In this [Dongola] there are more villages, estates [1], herds, date-palms, trees, doum trees, cultivation and vineyards, than in the area [neighbouring the land of Islam]. In these places there are greater islands that are as long as [many] days march, full of mountains, beasts of prey, lions and barren lands in which thirst is dreaded. The Nile bends towards sunset [west] for many days march until going up river becomes like going down river [2]. It is the area where the Nile bend reaches

[1] Vantini reads « big and small villages » which is wrong. *Op. cit.*, p. 607.

[2] To clarify this Burckhardt illustrates, correctly, that if « a » be ascending and « b » descending they will proceed in the same direction if the turn be as follows : . *Op. cit.*, p. 451.

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Maqurra in the 3rd/10th Century.

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out to the mine, called al-Šanaka, in the district called al-Šunqayr. From here emerged al-ʿUmarī who is Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar b. al-Ḫaṭṭāb. He fought many battles against the Nubians and the Beğa and he defeated an army of Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn. He laid waste to this area and plundered it and the kind of fate he met with is what had passed early on. Hippopotamuses are numerous in this area [1]. From here [the bend] are roads that lead to Sawākin, Bāḍiʿ, Dahlak and the islands of the [Red] sea. Through it the people of Banū Umayya, who fled to Nubia, made their crossing. [Some] people from among the Beğa came, during antiquity and dwell here. But like other Beğa, in rearing and dialect, they did not mix with the Nubians; nevertheless, their governor is appointed by the *Nūbī* [the king of Nubia].

3. Mentioning the branching-off of the Nile at ʿAlwa and the people who dwell on its banks :

[May] you know that al-Nūba and al-Maqurra are two races with different tongues, but both dwell along the Nile. As for al-Nūba they are al-Marīs who neighbour the land of Islam. Between the lower part of their country and Aswān is five miles. It is said that Salha, who was the grandfather of al-Nūba, and Maqurra who was the grandfather of al-Maqurra, were from Yemen. It is also said that al-Nūba and al-Maqurra were from Ḥimyir. However, most of the geneaologists believe them to be from [the descendants] of Ḥam, the son of Nouḥ. There were wars between al-Nūba and al-Maqurra before [their conversion to] Christianity. The beginning of the land of Maqurra is a village called Tāfa, which is a *marḥala* from Aswān. The city of their chief is Beğraš, which is less than ten *marḥala* from Aswān. It is said that Moses, may God's mercy be upon him, during the time of the Pharaoh and before he received God's call, had invaded them and destroyed Tāfa.

[1] With the exclusion of the anecdote about al-Qumrī, the section that begins with ' in these places .... ' is the same, with trivial variations, as that quoted by Maqrīzī in his section about the Nile marvels. The last sentence clearly shows that the former passage is extracted from here. The difference is that there we have from where comes out the turtle dove, (Arabic, *al-qumrī*) and here we have al-Qumrī. In this, the three editions W, B and N agree. In Arabic writing the difference between these two words is a matter of diacritical marks. If the (ع) in al-ʿumarī (العمرى) is dotted, it will give the Qaf (ق) in *al-Qumrī* (turtle dove) (القمرى). Given this, one may safely conclude that the diacritical marks that make the reading (al-Qumrī) in that section are no more than a copyist's error.

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They had been Sabians [1] who used to make statues for the stars. Then they all, al-Nūba and al-Maqurra, accepted Christianity. The city of Dongola is the capital of their kingdom. The first part of the country of ʿAlwa are villages, on the east bank of the Nile, called al-Abwāb. It has a governor, known as al-Waḥwāḥ, appointed by the overlord of ʿAlwa.

In this part the Nile branches are seven. Of these, one is the river that comes from the east. Its water is muddy. It dries in summer to the extent that its bed is inhabited. At the time of the Nile flood, water rises out of it, the pools of water in the river expand and then come rains and torrents in all the country; thus increases the Nile water. It is said that the source of this river is a large spring in a mountain. (The historian of al-Nūba says) Simon, the superintendant of the pact of the land of ʿAlwa, told me that there is a scale-less fish in this river, which species is non-existent in the Nile. They dig down a length of a man or more to find it. On it [its banks] dwell a race, called al-Diḥīyūn, who are a hybrid of ʿAlwa and the Beğa, and the race, called Baza, from whose land come the birds down as the pigeons of Bāzīn. After these [people] came the first of the land of al-Ḥabaša [Abyssinia].

Then the White Nile which is a river that comes from the west. It is as white as milk. (He says) I have asked some of the Maġāriba [people from North-West Africa], who had travelled in the country of the Sūdān, about their Nile [river] and its colour. They said that their [river] springs from the mountains of sand or the mountain of sand and then gathers in the land of the Sūdān in great pools and flows to the unknown; it is not white, so it gets this colour from either an area over which it passes or another river that debouches into it. Its two banks are inhabited.

Then the Green River, which comes from the south, due east. It is of a deep green colour and [its water] is so clear that fishes can be seen at its bottom. Its water tastes different from that of the Nile and the [one] who drinks it quickly feels thirst. Their fish [the two rivers, white and green] are the same but have different tastes. At the time of the flood it [the green] gets the wood of *sāğ, baqam* [2], *qinā* [3], a [species of] wood that smells like incense and another large wood which is used to make the helms of boats. Some people claimed that they got from it [the green] sandal-wood. I have seen (He says)

[1] In religious mythology it is said that Sābi, the grandson of Adam used to worship stars; thus comes the epithet. Lane, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 1640.

[2] Brazil-wood, a species of *Caesalpinia.* From it a well known dye is prepared. Its leaves are like that of the almond. Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 453 (n. 22) and Lane, *op. cit.*, VIII, p. 237.

[3] Burckhardt took it to mean the bamboo canes, but it ends with a *hamza,* thus from the verb *Qana'* which means extremely red. See Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 453 (n. 23), Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab,* 15 vols., (Beirut, 1956), vol. 15, pp. 276-77, and Lane, *op. cit.*, VII, p. 2565.

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peculiar signs on some of the *sāǧ* beams. These two rivers, the white and the green, join at the city of the sovereign of the land of ʿAlwa. They keep their colours for about a *marḥala* and then they mix. Their convergence gives rise to high, tumultuous waves. Someone who had poured the white Nile [water] in that of the Green told me that it [the former] remained in it, like milk, for about an hour before it finally mixed with [the latter].

Between the two rivers is an island whose upper end, like that of the two rivers, is unknown. The width of its beginning is known until it becomes as long as a month's march [1]; then it broadens until it becomes unknown; because those who dwell on it fear one another and also because different and numerous racial types live along it. (He says) I heard that some of the chiefs of ʿAlwa had marched intending to reach its upper regions but many years elapsed without their fulfilling that. On its southern side is a race who, together with their herds, live in underground houses, which look like tunnels during daytime, because of the excessive heat of the sun. By night they wander freely. There are naked races among them.

The other four rivers simultaneously come from the south and are eastbound; their extremities are unknown. They are lesser in breadth, and numbers of canals and islands than the white and green rivers. All [the four] are densely populated and [people] travel on them by means of boats. One of these four runs [2] from the country of al-Ḥabaša [Abyssinia]. (He says) I have inquired intensively and partaken in many discussions with people from all quarters, yet I could not find a person who had reached the source of all these rivers. The most knowledgeable of my informants tells me, in accordance with what he heard from others, that they come from waste lands, and that at the time of the flood these rivers carry parts of boats, doors and many other things, which testify that there are settlements. It is generally agreed that the floods of these rivers come from rains and some [water] springs from it['s bed]. The evidence for this is the river that dries until its bed is inhabited and then it['s water] springs forth at the time of the flood. One of its [the Nile's] marvels is that the rise is simultaneous; it takes place at one and the same time in all its branches and the regions of Egypt, and the country below it, the two upper regions [the Ṣaʿīd], Aswān, the two countries of al-Nūba [al-Marīs and al-Maqurra],

[1] The text here is rather vague because all the editions give the word as *awalahuma*, to refer to the rivers, while the reference should be to the island. This means that the (ـهما) of the dual is not correct. What follows assumes the non-existence of the dual ending. Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 453 and Vantini, *op. cit.*, p. 611.

[2] The rendering of the word as *marra* (once), in all editions, makes the sentence meaningless. Rather it seems the word is from the root *mara* (runs). Thus Burckhardt is mislead. *Op. cit.*, p. 454.

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ʿAlwa and what is beyond it. However, it is known that, as an example, if its rise is seen at Aswān it takes some time to appear in Qūṣ. If there are continuous rains and torrents in the uppers [of the Nile], it becomes known that it will be a fertile year; and if the rains are light there will be a season of drought.

(He says) those who entered the land of al-Zanǧ told me about their route in the sea of China to the land of al-Zanǧ, with the aid of the northernly wind, following the eastern coast of Egypt until they reached the place called Ras Ḥafūnī. This place is considered by them as the [southern coastal] end of the island of Egypt. There they looked for a star that determines the west; accordingly they continued in a northernly direction until they reached Qinballa [cf. W. IV, p. 261 n. 27] in the land of al-Zanǧ. It is the city of their [Zanǧ] lord. There they pray facing Jedda [north-east]. (He says) one of the four rivers comes from the land of al-Zanǧ because it bears with it the Zanǧī wood.

Sōba, the city [the capital] of the *ʿAlwī* [king of ʿAlwa], is to the east of the great island, which lies between the white and green rivers. It is on its northern side, towards their confluence. To the east of it [Sōba] is the river which dries and its bed is inhabited. It [Sōba] has many handsome buildings, spacious houses, churches full of gold, gardens and a quarter where Muslims reside. The king of ʿAlwa is richer than the king of al-Maqurra. He has more armies, horses and his country is more fertile and extensive than that [of Maqurra]. Date-palms and vine-yards are scanty. Most of their grain is the white *ḏurra* which is like rice. From it they make their bread and their beer. Meat is abundant, due to the abundance of cattle and wide meadows the extent of which is so great that in several days' march one may not reach a mountain. They have horses of noble race and red Arabian camels. Their religion is Christianity, of the Jacobites. Thus their bishops, like al-Nūba, are appointed by the patriarch of Alexandria. Their books were originally written in Greek; but they used to translate them into their vernacular languages. They are of lesser [social] consciousness, if compared with the people of al-Nūba. The king would enslave any one of his subjects arbitrarily — a practice which was usually unchallenged by the subjects. Rather, they would kneel to him and willingly submit to this oppressive practice and say « long live the king » irrespective of the severity of his orders. He is crowned with gold, which is abundant in his land [1].

One of the marvels of this land is that in the great island, the one between the two rivers, lives a race, known as al-Karasā, whose land is cultivated by means of the Nile and the rains. At the time of sowing, every one goes out to the field and prepares a plot, in

[1] Troupeau's French translation contains the preceding chapter and the passage up to this point in this chapter *op. cit.*, pp. 279-88.

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accordance with [the quantity] of his seed. Then he sows in the four corners of the plot and puts beer at the centre of the plot and retreats. When he comes on the next day, he finds the plot sown and the beer drunk. When harvest comes he cuts a few of the plants and puts them where he is likely to collect them, with some beer and goes away. He will find the harvest [the next day] completed and packed. If he likes to thresh and winnow the harvest the same may be done. Sometimes it happens that while one is cleaning one's plot of wild herbage one may accidentally pull out some of the plants in which case one will find that the whole planting is pulled out. In the area, where what I have just mentioned took place, are plantations, in a square whose side is as long as a two-month march, sowed all at the same time. The grain supply of the country of ʿAlwa, as well as its king, is from this area. They send their boats to be laden there and sometimes feuds may ensue, among them. (He says) this story [about the Karasā] is true, known and famous among all of al-Nūba, al-ʿAlwa and those who enter the country from among the Muslim merchants, and they never doubt its veracity. If it is famous or widely circulated, it becomes dishonesty not to mention it; I would never have mentioned it myself for it is abominable. The people of the area claim that it is done [for them] by demons which appear to some of them and throw stones at them as a signal of exorbitance; and make marvels for them, [even] clouds submit to their will.

(He says) one of the marvels, communicated to me by the king of al-Maqurra, is that when it rains on the mountains, they gather fishes from the surface of the earth. I have asked them what the species is and they informed me that it is of a small size with red tail.

(He says) I have seen many different races from the peoples mentioned above, mostly acknowledging the existence of God, the Almighty. But they adore him through the sun, the moon and the stars. Some of them do not acknowledge [the existence] of God and worship the sun, the day and whatever falls to their liking among trees and animals. (He says that he has seen a man in the court of the great [chief] of al-Maqurra and asked him about his country. He answered that it is as far as a three-crescent [month] march from the Nile. When he asked him about his religion, he answered « Mine, thine and the universe have one God ». He asked him about His place. His answer « in heaven only by His grace alone ». He added if the rain failed them, or epidemics had befallen either them or their herds they ascend a mountain and pray to God. They instantly receive His mercy and their need is fulfilled. He asked him whether He has sent them a prophet and the answer was in the negative. He [Ibn Sulaym] said that he told him about the mission of Moses, Jesus and Mohammad, may God's mercy and peace be upon him, and the miracles they had performed. He [the man] concurred, « if they truly did so »).

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4. CONCERNING THE BEĞA, WHO ARE SAID TO BE FROM THE BERBER [1] :

The [northern] beginning of the Beğa land is the village called al-Ḫaraba, amidst the emerald mines in the desert of Qūṣ. A distance of three *marḥala* [about 72 miles] separates it from Qūṣ. Al-Ğāḥiẓ believes that there are no other emerald mines in the world except in this area. It is found in deep, dark caverns that could only be entered with the help of lanterns and ropes that show the way. Otherwise one would lose one's way. Utilizing digging tools they find it [emerald] embedded in rocks that are less in colour and quality than it.

The end of the land of the Beğa marks the beginning of the land of al-Ḥabaš [Abyssinia]. They [the Beğa] are on the centre of this island, I mean the island of Egypt [peninsula], [which stretches to] the edge of the salty [Red] sea, beyond Sawākin, Bāḍiʿ and Dahlak.

They are Bedouin, who follow pasture wherever there is grazing land, in their leather pavilions. Their genealogies are through the female line. Each clan has a chief from amongst them; but they have neither a great chief nor religion. They leave inheritance to the daughter's son and the sister's son, excluding the son. They say that the progeny of the daughter and the sister are above suspicion. This is so because such progeny, whether begotten legitimately or out of wedlock, remain the sister's or the daughter's offspring. During antiquity they used to have a great chief whose dominance brought all other chiefs under his rule. He resided in a village called Hağar, at the extremity of the Beğa land. They breed and use dromedaries of a reddish colour. They also have many Arabian camels, as well as numerous herds of cattle, goats and sheep. Their cows are beautiful, having long polished horns. The colour of the hides of their sheep is like the colour of that of the tiger. Their staple food is meat and milk. They do not use bread, though some do. Their bodies are healthy, lank in the belly and their complexion is rather yellowish. They are such swift runners that they used to surpass all other people. Their camels are also swift and endure running as well as thirst. They race on them against horses. They fight, do tactical manœuvres, and travel long distances on the back of their camels. In war they chase each other on camel-back and are skillful to the extent that a rider may throw his lance, hit his mark and whizz to it and take it. If the lance misses its aim and falls on the ground the camel bends its forelegs [2], to permit the rider to take his lance. At some time there appeared, from among them, a courageous strong man named Kilāz. He had a dromedary the speed of which was not heard of. Both the dromedary and its rider were one-eyed. It happened that he promised his people to

[1] W. IV, XXXII, 1-6, pp. 267-77. B. I, pp. 194-96. — [2] Vantini renders it « neck ». *Op. cit.*, p. 620.

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reach the *muṣalla* of Miṣr on the day of *ʿayd* [1], which was so close that to claim that one could reach the *muṣalla* in that brief space of time was something beyond the scope of reality. He fulfilled his promise and appeared at the top of al-Muqaṭṭam. Cavalry was sent after him but failed to catch sight of him. This incident was the origin of the custom of depositing cavalry scouts in the anterior part of the mountain [al-Muqaṭṭam] on the day of *al-ʿayd*. The Ṭūlūnids and other princes of Egypt used to maintain a great army by the foot of al-Muqaṭṭam, towards the place called al-Ḥabaš [2], to look after the praying people until they finished prayers [3].

They [the Beğa] are a people of honesty. If any of them has committed an act of treachery against another, the injured will tie a piece of cloth to the head of a spear and call « This is the growth of him [the evil doer] ». It becomes an insult on the mischievious one until he appeases the injured. They are very hospitable. [The host] on the arrival of a guest will slaughter [a sheep] and if they are more than three he [the host] will stab the nearest camel. It may happen that it is the guest's camel, but he compensates him with something more precious.

Their weapons are the spetenarious spears. The length of the iron blade is three cubits and the wooden [shaft] is four cubits [4], so it is called the spetenarious [5]. Its blade is the width of a sword. It is never let out of their hands, though it sometimes is, because at the end of the shaft there is something like the whirl of a spindle [that] prevents its coming out of their hands. The makers of these spears are women, who live in seclusion where no men are allowed to mix with them, except the purchasers. If one of them gives birth to a female baby, by virtue of her relation with one of the purchasers, she tends her. But if she gives birth to a male she kills him. They say men are affliction and aggression.

Their shields are made of woolly ox-hide. [They also use] the inverted shields, called the Axumite, made of buffalo hide, the Dahlkites and another made of the skin of a marine species [6]. Their bows, like the Arabian ones are big and thick. They make them

(1) A place where the divinely-appointed prayers, on the occasions called *ʿayd* are performed, usually outside the town. Here the reference is to the place where the people of the capital of Egypt (Miṣr) used to conduct the *ʿayd* prayers. Vantini adds « to pray in » in the place of « to reach », thus misleading the reader. *Op. cit.*, p. 620.

(2) Called in other sources *Birkat al-Ḥabaš* (The lagoon of the Abyssinians). Al-Maqrizī says that it was a place of gardens where the well-to-do used to entertain themselves. B. II, pp. 152-55.

(3) This story of Kilāz and its consequences is not included in Burckhardt's translation.

(4) Vantini misses this sentence. *Op. cit.*, p. 621.

(5) According to Floyer the only source of iron in the eastern desert is the mountain called Sabāʿī. He claims that the spears got their name from the place of the ore. Floyer, E.A., *Etbai*, (Cairo, 1903), pp. 78-79.

(6) May be the shell of a turtle. However Burckhardt claims to have seen some Beğa shields made of the skin of a large fish. *Op. cit.*, p. 458.

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from *sidr* [1] and *šawḥat* [2] trees. They shoot with them poisonous arrows. They prepare this poisons from the roots of *al-ġalaqa* tree [3]. They cook it on fire until it becomes like *mullāğ* (gum). To try its efficacy one scratches his body until blood flows; then he gets the poison quite close to the blood, that it may « smell » the poison. If it is effective the blood will shrink; but it must quickly be wiped away, for if it goes back into the body it [means] death. It kills a man instantly even if he has a scratch as small as a cup's opening. Apart from wounds it is harmless, even if one drinks it.

All of their land is rich in minerals. The further [you] ascend it the better and more abundant is the gold. Also, there is silver, copper, iron, lead, marcasite, amethyst, emerald, asbestos, the latter of which a piece, if immersed in oil, burns like a wick, and many others that the demand for gold has made little known. The Beğa do not share in the extraction of these minerals.

In their valleys are Doum trees, *al-ihlīliğ* [4], *al-iḍḫir* [5], *al-šīḥ* [6], the common senna, *al-ḥanẓal* [7], *al-bān* [8] and many others. At the extremity of their land are date-palms, grapes and many other plants of sweet odour that no one has planted. On it are all sorts of wild animals like lions, elephants, tigers, lynxes, monkeys *ʿanq al-arḍ* [9], civet cats and an animal that resembles the gazelle except for one difference, namely, it has two golden horns and it dies quickly if taken captive [10]. Of the bird species there are the parrot, *al-taġṭīṭ* [11], *al-nūbī*, the pigeon of Bāzīn, the turtle dove, Abyssinian fowl, and many others.

[1] A species of lote-tree.

[2] A species of the trees of the mountains from the family of the pine-tree. Lane, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 1513.

[3] Vantini adds « peganum harmala, a poisonous tree of Arabia ». *Op. cit.*, p. 621. Its leaves are used by the Arabs for tanning. See Lane, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 2286.

[4] Myroblan-tree. Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 549 (no. 50), Lane, *op. cit.*, p. 2899 and Vantini, *op. cit.*, p. 622.

[5] A kind of sweet rush, *juncus odoratur* or *schoenathum*. Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 459 (no. 41) and Lane, *op. cit.*, III, p. 956. Vantini gives it as *shoemantun*. *Op. cit.*, p. 622.

[6] The *artemisia judaica;* and *absinthium ponticum*. A species of worm wood. Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 459 (no. 42) and Lane, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 1628. Vantini gives it as absynth. *Op. cit.*, p. 622.

[7] The colocynth; *cucumis colocynthis*. Lane, *op. cit.*, II, p. 657.

[8] The Ben-tree; a species of moringa. *Op. cit.*, I, p. 278. Vantini gives it as *fischs bengalensis*. *Op. cit.*, p. 622.

[9] *Ursus meles*. Described in Arabic lexicons as smaller than the lynx and long in the back. Burchkhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 459 (no. 46) and Lane, *op. cit.*, V, p. 2176.

[10] May be the Daman or Hyrax. See Klunzinger, C., *Upper Egypt : its people and its products*, (London, 1878), pp. 245-46.

[11] In one MS in W. we have *ġatāt*. This is quite near to the one called in Arabic *al-qaṭa*. It has a dusty colour. I saw a lot of them on my visit to the Upper Blue Nile area last summer. Also see Lane, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 2270.

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There is no man among them whose *bayḍa* [1] is not mutilated. As for women, they mutilate the lips of their vagina. After they heal and at the time of marriage an incision is necessary for the male penis to penetrate. But this practice is now diminishing among them. To rationalize this [practice], it is said that in the past a king had defeated them and made peace with them on condition that they mutilate the breasts of females and the penis of males born to them. He aims at the eradication of their race. Thus they fulfilled the conditions by reversing the deed, whereby males' breasts and women's vaginas are mutilated [2]. Among them is a race that pulls out the two central incisors, they say, not to look like asses. Another race, [dwells] in the extremity of the land of the Beğa, called al-Baza, using one name for their men and women. A Muslim merchant once entered their land, with many camels. They called out to each other exclaiming that God had descended thither from heaven. They watched him from afar, while he was sitting under a tree.

The serpents of this country are big and of different species [3]. [Once] one was seen in a lake unwinding its tail and entwining it round a woman, who came to get water, her intestines were seen coming out of her anus because of the great pressure. Thus she died. In it [their land] there is a serpent that has no head; in fact it is difficult to tell its head and tail apart. It is dotted and small. If one walks on its track one dies. If killed and the killer keeps whatever the thing he used, a shaft or a lance, in his hand and does not instantly get rid of it, he dies. I have killed [4] a serpent in it [the Beğa land] with a

[1] Quatremere, Burckhardt and Vantini render it as testicles. Wiet, does the same, but doubts it to be that. He quotes al-Yaʿqūbī, who relates this tradition and clearly refers to the mutilation of the nipple of the male breast. The source of this error is that the most popular meaning of the word *bayda* is testicle. However, among the many other meanings it has in Arabic lexicons is a pointing thing, e.g., like the ear of the bird, which is meant here. The story continues to clarify this as meaning nipple. W. IV, p. 270 (no. 12), Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, p. 125 (Leiden, 1891), Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 459, Lane, *op. cit.*, p. 282 and Vantini, *op. cit.*, p. 622. Burckhardt translates this part in Latin.

[2] This is the only historical reference to the so-called « pharaonic » circumcision, which is widely practised in the riverain Sudan up to the present.

[3] Vantini erroneously reads « They hold snakes in great esteem, of which there are many kinds ». He dismisses the following details as « fabulous stories ». Thus he refrains from translating them. *Op. cit.*, p. 623.

[4] The word in the text قتلت lacks the *taškīl*. So we have two readings. The first, if it is intended as a verb and a subject, becomes in the active mood, as above. The second is a verb and an object and becomes in the passive mood, which is used in the story about the serpent of the lake. If the original writing is in the active it becomes very significant for it gives the evidence that Ibn Sulaym had visited the land of the Beğa.

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piece of wood, the wood was broken; if one continues to gaze at this serpent, whether dead or alive, it hurts one's eyes.

The Beğa are turbulent [1]. They had done, before and after the coming of Islam, great damage to the eastern Ṣaʿīd of [upper] Egypt, where they had laid waste and plundered many villages. The pharaohs of Egypt used to invade them and, sometimes, made peace with them because of their need for minerals. Also, the Rūm [2], after they got hold of Egypt, had many famous antiquities in the mines. Their followers were there when Egypt was conquered [by the Muslims].

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam relates that when ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ was on his way back from Nubia [following] the east bank of the river, the Beğa gathered around him. He asked about them and when told that they had no king to go back to, he felt contempt for them and left them without a contract or pact. The first [Muslim] to make a truce with them was ʿUbayd Allāh b. al-Ḥabḥāb al-Salūlī [3]. He continues to say that he found in the book of Ibn al-Ḥabḥāb the following : — « To them [are given] three hundred she-camels and they enter the towns [of Egypt] as travelling merchants but not settlers on the condition that they should not kill a Muslim or a *ḏimmī*. If they did they would render the treaty void. They should not harbour a Muslim's slave and must return the fugitives, if they ever came across them. It is said that by this they were bound by [a fine of] four *dīnārs* for every goat and ten for every cow a Beğawi stole [4]. Their chief is to reside in town as a hostage in the hands of the Muslims ».

Then the Muslims increased in the mines and mixed and intermarried with them ([the Beğa]. The race, known as al-Ḥadārib, acquired a veneer of Islam; they are the most eminent of their people and are their dignitaries. They are below Upper Egypt, from the beginning of their land to the ʿAllāqi and ʿAyḏāb, from which the crossing is made to Jedda and whatever is beyond this; among them is another race called al-Zanāfi who outnumber al-Ḥadārib; but they [the Zanāfi] are their subordinates and guardians from whom they exact cattle [5]. They pass them on in inheritance, like slaves, though formerly al-Zanāfi were the pre-eminent people.

[1] Burckhardt adds « The Bejda country is always in commotion ». *Op. cit.*, p. 460.

[2] The word is generally used, in Arabic, to denote the Greeks, the Romans and Byzantines without differentiation.

[3] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam does not mention the surname (al-Salūlī). *Futūḥ Miṣr wa al-Maġrib*, ed. Torrey, C., (New Haven, N.D.), p. 189.

[4] Vantini, erroneously, reads « It is said that for any of these runaway slaves, as well as for any sheep, they (the Beğa) had to pay ». *Op. cit.*, p. 624.

[5] Vantini reads « entrust their cattle to them », which is wrong. *Op. cit.*, p. 624.

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Then the Muslims suffered much from the Beğa [inroads]. As the governors of Aswān were from the Iraqi, the matter was put before the Prince of the Faithful, al-Ma'mūn, who sent ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ǧahm [1] against them. After many military encounters he made peace with Kanūn b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, their chief, who resided in their village Haǧar which is mentioned above. Here is a copy [of their agreement] : —

« This book is written by ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ǧahm, the slave of the prince of the faithful, the master of the invading army and the *ʿāmil* [official] of the prince Abū Isḥāq, the son of the Prince of the Faithful al-Rašīd, may God preserve him. Written in the month of Rabīʿ al-Aḫir of the year two hundred and sixteen [May, 831] to Kanūn b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, the great [chief] of the Beğa at Aswān. You have asked me to make peace with you and your people, the Beğa, and to hold myself and the Muslims to it. I here answer you, abiding, both myself and the Muslims by this contract as long as you and your people shall keep what you have promised in this book of mine. That the plain and the mountain of your country, from the border of Aswān in Egypt to the land between Dahlak and Bāḍiʿ, shall be the property of al-Ma'mūn ʿAbdallāh b. Hārūn. You and all the people of your country shall be the slaves of the Prince of the Faithful; but he will leave you the mastery over your country. You should pay an annual *ḫarāǧ,* like the ancestors of the Beğa [chiefs], of one hundred camels or three hundred *dīnārs;* it is the Prince of the Faithful and his governor [in Egypt] who are to make the choice. You should not keep any thing from this *ḫarāǧ*. If any of you insults Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, may God have mercy on him, or the Book of God [The Koran], or His religion [Islam] or kills a Muslim, whether free or slave, the compact of God, His Apostle, the Prince of the Faithful exulted by God and the Muslims is quit of him and to take his blood becomes as legal as to take that of the people in war. If any of you gives financial support or information to a Muslim's enemy, he breaks his compact and to take his blood becomes legal. If any of you kills a Muslim, whether he happens to be a free man or a slave, or a *ḏimmī,* intentionally or inadvertently, or steals a Muslim's or a *ḏimmī*'s fortune in the land of the Beğa or of the Muslims or of the Nubians or in any part in the continent or the sea, he should pay for killing a free Muslim what is equal to ten of a [free Beğawi] blood fine [2]; for a Muslim slave ten times its [his] price; and for a *ḏimmī* ten times their blood fine. For any wealth a Beğāwī steals, a compensation ten times its value is to be paid. If any Muslim enters the land of the Beğa as a trader or resident or on sojourn

[1] Burckhardt gives the name as Ibn al-Djahan. *Op. cit.,* p. 460.

[2] Vantini reads « 10 times the blood price, equivalent to 500 camels ». This does not exist in all prints including W. upon which he depends. *Op. cit.,* p. 626.

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or on pilgrimage he shall be left safe, like one of you, until he leaves. You should not harbour any of the Muslim fugitives and if any one reaches you, you should send him back, without any charges on the Muslims. If you arrive in the country of Upper Egypt, by way of trade or on sojourn, you should not enter towns or villages and you should not carry weapons as well. You should not deter any Muslim from entering your land and trading there, be it on land or on sea. You should not endanger the passages or cut the route of a Muslim or a *ḏimmī*. You should not destroy any of the mosques which the Muslims have built at Ṣinğa [1], Hağar and other [places] in the whole range of your country; if you do so the pact shall be annulled. Kanūn b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz must station an agent [on his behalf] to ensure the fulfillment of conditions of the *ḫarāğ* and what the Muslims are eligible for in the way of blood and theft fines. No Beğa is permitted to enter [the area] between the boundary of al-Qaṣr to the village, known as Qubbān, in the land of al-Nūba. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ğahm, the guardian of the Prince of the Faithful, shall take it upon himself to guarantee the security of Kanūn b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, the great [chief] of the Beğa on the basis of the conditions promulgated in this our book. This is pending the approval of the Prince of the Faithful. If Kanūn is to flee or to go back on his word, he has no compact. Kanūn should permit the officials of the Prince of the Faithful to enter his land to collect the alms of those who adopt Islam among the Beğa. Kanūn should fulfill what he promised ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ğahm, who accepted his word of faith and honour. To Kanūn the compact of God and His allegiance, the [word of] honour of the Prince of the Faithful, the [word of] honour of Abū Isḥāq, the son of the Prince of the Faithful, [the word of] honour of ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ğahm and that of all Muslims, for the fulfillment of what ʿAbdallāh has given so long as Kanūn is fulfilling what he has bound himself with. If Kanūn is to go back on his word, or any of his people, God, purity is His name, the Prince of the Faithful, the prince Abū Isḥāq, the son of the Prince of the Faithful ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ğahm and all other Muslims are free of their promise [2].

Every thing in this book is translated, letter by letter, by Zakariyyā b. Ṣāliḥ al-Maḫzūmī from the people of Jedda and ʿAbdallāh b. Ismāʿīl al-Quraší. Then a group of witnesses from among the inhabitants of Aswān signed the compact.

The Beğa kept to the terms of this [agreement] for a while. Then they resumed their raids against the urban centres of Upper Egypt. Many a petition was raised against them to the Prince of the Faithful, Ğaʿfar al-Mutawakkil ʿalā Allāh [who depends on God]

[1] Burckhardt gives the name as Dhyher. *Op. cit.*, p. 462.

[2] This section of oaths and assertions, is missed in the translation of Burckhardt.

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who sent against them Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Qummī. He made a request to select his men because he did not want great numbers, because of the difficulty of the roads. He marched against them, from Egypt, with a selected, well-equipped army and [some] ships [followed him] by sea. The Beğa gathered in great numbers on camel back, so they terrified the Muslims. He [al-Qummī] distracted their attention with a long scroll, wrapped in a piece of cloth. When they gathered to read it, the Muslims attacked them on horses with ringing bells on their necks. Thus the Beğa camels were put to flight and the Muslims followed them and killed many of them. Their chief was among the dead, so they installed in his place his brother's son, who sued for peace. He agreed [al-Qummī] on condition that the new chief personally present himself to the Prince of the Faithful. He [the Beğa chief] went to Baghdad secretly and attended the court of al-Mutawakkil in 241 [A.H.] [855]. Thus peace was ratified on the condition of payment of the Baqṭ and the *itāwa* and not hindering the Muslim miners. Al-Qummī stayed for a period at Aswān, where he left all the weapons and equipment of the expedition in the treasury. The successive governors used to draw from it until they drained it.

When the Muslim numbers multiplied in the mines and they mixed with the Beğa, their [the Beğa's] mischievous deeds diminished. Bar-gold appeared then because of its many seekers. The news spread and [more] people came from different countries. There came Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-ʿUmarī in the year two hundred and fifty-five [868] after his fights with al-Nūba, together [1] with Rabīʿa, Ğuhayna and other Arabs. The Beğa land flourished to the extent that the camels involved in the transportation of the provisions were sixty thousands, not counting the sea journeys between al-Qulzum and ʿAyḍab [2]. The Beğa favoured Rabīʿa and [they] intermarried. It is said that the priests of the Beğa, before some of them were converted to Islam, received from what they adore [God] His order to adhere and to subordinate to Rabīʿa. So they did. When al-ʿUmarī was killed the Rabīʿa got hold of the island and with Beğa support got rid of all opposing Arab [tribes] and intermarried with the Beğa chiefs. This is how their [the Beğa's] mischievous deeds came to and end.

The Beğa of the interior [land], who inhabit the desert of the country of ʿAlwa from the coast of the salty [Red] sea to the beginning of the land of al-Ḥabaša [Abyssinia],

[1] Vantini erroneously reads « He had with him (an army of) Rabiʿa ... » . Reading the chronicle of al-ʿUmarī in *al-Muqaffā* will clearly show that the arch enemy of al-ʿUmarī was Rabīʿa. *Op. cit.*, p. 629.

[2] Burckhardt gives the figure as six thousand. He also renders the word al-Qulzum to denote the Red Sea, while the reference is clearly to the port with the same name. *Op. cit.*, p. 463.

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are, like the Ḥadārib, in rearing, following pasture, way of living, weaponry and means of riding. However, the Ḥadārib are more courageous and righteous. The interior [Beğa] worship demons and follow their priest who erects a leather dome and an oracle. Whenever they come to consult him on a matter he goes on his back naked into the dome. Then he comes out in a frenzy and says, « the devil salutes you and tells you to put off your journey for you will be attacked by some people. You are asking about plundering this or that land, you will win and you will take so and so as booty. The camels which you take from such a place will be mine, as well as the slave girl, or the like ». They claim he tells the truth at most times. Thus, when they succeed, they put away his share and deliver it to him. They do not even use the milk of a she-camel if it is his share. While travelling, the priest loads his dome alone onto a camel. This camel, although the dome is empty, they claim, walks very slowly and sweats in profusion. Among the Ḥadārib are some who still believe in this and some even believe in this after they become Muslims.

(The historian of al-Nūba, from whom I have taken the above information, tells) I have read in the « treaties on races » [written by] the Prince of the Faithful, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, may God be pleased with him, about al-Beğa and al-Kiğa, about whom he says « they are hard fighters and of meagre booty [1]. The Beğa are like them but I do not know about al-Kiğa ».

(Here ends what is mentioned by ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad, the historian of al-Nūba).

5. Concerning the Baqṭ [2] :

It is received from them in the village called al-Qaṣr, five miles from Aswān, between Bilāq and the country of al-Nūba. Al-Qaṣr is the entry customs post of Qūṣ. This *Baqṭ* was first demanded from the Nubians during the emirate of ʿAmr b. al-ʿAṣ, when he sent ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿd Abī Sarḥ, after the conquest of Egypt, to Nubia in the year twenty or twenty one [641-42], according to some other people. He was in twenty thousands. He stayed there for sometime until ʿAmr wrote to him ordering him to retreat. When ʿAmr died al-Nūba revoked the peace they had concluded with ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿd, and their raids against Upper Egypt became intensive. Then for a second time ʿAbdallāh

(1) Vantini, erroneously reads, « They are wild but little inclined to stealing ». *Op. cit.*, p. 631.

(2) This chapter begins with some remarks on the word *Baqṭ*. Al-Maqrīzī's pattern of giving such information in similar sections in *al-Ḫiṭaṭ* makes it quite clear that it is his. B. II, pp. 199-202 and W. IV, chap. XXXVI, section (2), pp. 289-96.

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b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ, as an *Amīr* of Egypt and during the caliphate of ʿUṯmān, may God exult him, invaded them in the year thirty one [651-52]. He laid siege to them in the city of Dongola. He shelled and destroyed their church with the catapult, which the Nubians did not know. Thus they were terrified and their king, named Qalaydurūṭ, sued for peace. He came out to meet ʿAbdallāh and showed him signs of weakness and humbleness. ʿAbdallāh met him with due respect, recommended his sitting near him and agreed to make peace with him. This on the condition that [they] pay three hundred and sixty heads [of slaves] annually. When he complained to ʿAbdallāh about the shortage of foodstuffs in his land, he promised him a gift of provisions. He wrote to them [al-Nūba] a book that says :

« After the invocation of God, [this is] a treaty granted by the Amīr ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ to the great [chief] of al-Nūba and all of his subjects. A treaty binding the old and the young among al-Nūba, from the boundary of Aswān to that of the land of ʿAlwa. That ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿd has granted a peace and a truce between them and their neighbours in Upper Egypt and other parts, Muslims and *ḏimmīs*. That you Nubians shall be safe under the safeguard of God and his Apostle, the Prophet Muḥammad; we shall neither raid you nor wage war on you, nor raid you, so long as you abide by the conditions made between us and you.

You may pass through our land as travellers, but not settlers, and we may pass through your land as travellers, but not settlers. You shall protect any Muslim or *ḏimmī* who passes through your land until he departs. You should return to the land of Islam any run-away slave of the Muslims and any rebellious Muslim; you should not support him nor prevent any Muslim from seeking him. You should maintain the mosque which the Muslims built at the side of your city and you should not hinder any one from praying or finding refuge in it. You should pay three hundred and sixty heads [of slaves] to the *Imam* [1] of the Muslims. It should be the average slave of your land, without defect, comprising males and females, who are neither very old nor children. They should be delivered to the governor of Aswān. Muslims are not to defend you from any enemies from the boundary of Aswān to that of ʿAlwa.

If you give refuge to a Muslim's slave or you kill a Muslim or a *ḏimmī* or you destroy the mosque which the Muslims have built at the side of your city, or you reduce the three hundred and sixty heads [of slaves], this truce and peace is annulled; and you and we

[1] The word is used to designate the spiritual as well as the civil leader of the muslims. That is to say, it is tantamount to the word Caliph.

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return to enmity until God passes his judgement on us, and He is the best of judges. Upon us is the compact of God and His promise and the compact of Muḥammad, may God bless him. Upon you the honour of what you believe in from the creed of Jesus, the best of his followers and the honour of all whom you exalt in your religion. God is our witness in this.

Ascribed by ʿAmr b. Šuraḥbīl in [the month of] Ramaḍan of the year thirty-one [April-May 652].

When the Nubians first delivered the Baqṭ to ʿAmr b. al-ʿAṣ and before they went back on their word, they had given him forty slaves as a gift. He refused the gift and gave it to the superintendent of the Baqṭ, named Samqūs, who bought with [its price] some provisions and wine and sent it to them. ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿd also fulfilled what he had promised them and sent them wheat, barley and lentils, as well as some cloth and horses. As time passed, it became habitual that they took these whenever they delivered the Baqṭ. The forty slaves who were given to ʿAmr as a gift were customarily taken by the governor of Egypt after that.

Abū Ḫalīfa Ḥamīd b. Hišām al-Buḥturī tells that the peace was agreed upon on [condition that] the payment of three hundred and sixty slaves to the Muslims' treasury and forty [slaves] to the lord of Egypt be made. They [the Nubian state] were to receive one thousand *irdab* of corn and three hundred were to go to his messengers; the same (quantity) of barley; one thousand jars of wine to the king and three hundred for his messengers; a couple of horses from the princely paddocks and one hundred pieces of different brands of cloth [also] four pieces of the *qabaṭi* to the king and three to his messengers [1], eight pieces of *buqṭuriyya,* five of *muʿallamma* [2], one *mağmal* [3] garment to the king, ten pieces from the shirts of the *abī buqṭur* [4] and ten from the *aḥasī,* which is a hard type of cloth.

Abū Ḫalīfa continues to say « No details are found in the book of ʿAbdallāh b. Wahb or the book of al-Wāqidī. I learned these [details] from Abū Zakariyyā. Abū Zakariyyā says « I have heard my father, ʿUṯmān b. Ṣāliḥ, relating this information and I memorized what had come to his knowledge ». He [the father] says « I have attented the court of the prince ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir when he was in Egypt. He said « Are you ʿUṯmān b. Ṣāliḥ to whom we have sent for about the book of the Baqṭ of al-Nūba? » « Yes » I answered.

[1] These are a kind of cloth inclining to fineness, thinness and whiteness, Lane, *op. cit.,* VII, p. 2484.

[2] An embroidered cloth.

[3] The vellous substance on the surface of a cloth. Thus the garment made out of such a cloth. Lane, *op. cit.,* VII, p. 813.

[4] The *buqṭuriyya* and the shirts of *abī buqṭur* are difficult to identify.

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Then he turned his face towards Maḥfūẓ b. Sulaymān [1] and said « How ridiculous are the scholars of this country! ... We have approached them about an art they should have mastered and none has satisfied us ». I said, « May God redeem the *Amīr*, the information you demand about al-Nūba is transmitted to me by wise old men who quoted from their contemporaries, who witnessed the truce and the peace, between ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ and the Nubians ». Then I related the information as I have heard it [2]. Then he [Ibn Ṭāhir] denied the delivery of wine and I informed him that ʿAmr b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz also had denied this (before you). This council was held at the Fusṭāṭ of Egypt in the year two hundred and eleven [826], after peace was restored between him [Ibn Ṭāhir] and the *Amīr* of Egypt before him, ʿUbayd Allāh b. al-Sura b. al-Ḥakam al-Tamīmī [3]. ʿUṯmān b. Ṣalḥ says « The Amīr ordered the record about Nubia to be looked for in the *dīwān* behind the great mosque of Miṣr. It was found there and the *Amīr* was very pleased to find that it was identical with what I had said ».

Mālik b. Uns is said to believe that the land of al-Nūba [from Aswān] to the boundary of ʿAlwa is a *ṣulḥ* [land]. So he did not permit the purchase of their slaves. However, his peers like ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, ʿAbdallāh b. Wahb, al-Layṯ b. Saʿd, Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb and other jurists of Egypt have different views. Al-Layṯ b. Saʿd says « we are more knowledgeable about Nubia than Mālik. The peace was made with them on the [condition] that we stop invading them and we do not protect them from any enemy. Thus it was legal to buy back those who were slaves of their king or those who were taken as slaves when they invaded each other. But those enslaved by mischievous Muslims and their thieves are forbidden [4]. Some of them [the jurists] have Nubian concubines.

[1] Not much is known about Maḥfūẓ b. Sulayman. Al-Kindī says that when al-Layṯ b. al-Faḍl, the governor of Egypt, complained to the caliph al-Ma'mūn, about his inability to collect the *ḫarāǧ* from the people of al-Ḥūf without a supporting army, Maḥfuẓ promised to make the collection « without raising a whip or a club ». So he was appointed as overseer of the *ḫarāǧ* in 187/802. He continued until 191/806, when a certain Muʿawiya b. Ṣurad took over. So with such a background in Egyptian politics, it seems he was sent with Ibn Ṭāhir to help him in his mission in 210/825. Al-Kindī, *Wulāt*, pp. 166-69.

[2] What Abū Ḫalīfa has heard are the figures cited early on. So it seems Ibn Sulaym stopped here for he has already given his information.

[3] ʿUbayd Allāh was inducted by the army as governor of Egypt in 206/821. The denial of this by the caliph al-Ma'mūn and his appointment of Ḫālid b. Yazīd were the reason for the commencement of civil war. This continued until the arrival of Ibn Ṭāhir in 210/825. ʿUbayd had ensured the support of the very formidable and influential Qaysite tribes of al-Hūf. Thus he was a difficult foe for Ibn Ṭāhir to defeat, so a compromise was reached after many military encounters. Al-Kindī, *Wulāt*, pp. 198-207.

[4] The part that starts with « Abu Khalifa says ... » and ends with the words of al-Layṯ is omitted in Burckhardt's translation.

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The Nubians continued to pay the Baqṭ annually and to receive what is mentioned above until the beginning of the reign of the Prince of the Faithful, al-Muʿtaṣim bi-allāh Abī Isḥāq b. al-Rašīd. Contemporaneously, the great chief of al-Nūba was Zakariyyā b. Yaḥnus. Sometimes it happens that al-Nūba may fail to pay the *Baqṭ*. In such cases the Muslim governors cause trouble in lands adjacent to their own and withhold the [agreed upon] provisions. Qīrqī, the son of their great [chief] Zakariyyā, eschewed his father's quiescent attitude and reduced the amount paid [of the Baqṭ]. His father asked him the reason, and he answered, « To rebel against them and to fight them ». The father said « This matter (the Baqṭ) was considered as righteous by our fore-fathers. I am afraid when your turn comes [1], you may dare to fight the Muslims. It is my intention now to send you to their king [caliph]. When you are in his court, you must decide whether or not we can fight them. If it so comes that we must fight we shall do so with knowledge [of their power], and if you feel we cannot afford to fight them you must appeal to him [the caliph] to pardon us ». So Qīrqī went to Baghdad. On his way every country and city was decorated for him. The chief of the Beğa also arrived, for different reasons. They met al-Muʿtaṣim. They saw, apart from what they had already seen on their way, the power and weight of the Iraqi armies and buildings.

Al-Muʿtaṣim received Qīrqī with due respect, complete generosity and seated him near to him. He accepted his gift and answered it with far more valuable ones and insisted on his expressing his wish. He [Qīrqī] wished the release of detainees. This was fulfilled and made him a man of rank in the eyes of al-Muʿtaṣim. Thus he granted him a house in which he [Qīrqī] resided in Iraq and ordered the purchase of a house at every station along his and his messenger's route home. This was because when he came to Iraq he refused to rest in any house. In Egypt he acquired two houses, one at al-Ğīza and the other at Bani Wā'il [2]. He [the caliph] also assigned to them, in the *Dīwān* of Egypt [3], seven hundred *dīnārs*, a saddled horse, a decorated sword, rich apparel, a silk turban, a dress for drinking [wine?], unlimited numbers of clothes to [Qīrqī's] messengers when they delivered the *Baqṭ* to Egypt, two loads [4] and robes or honour for the officials in

[1] It seems that Qīrqī had succeeded his father for he is mentioned in the annals of al-ʿUmarī as a king. See what follows there.

[2] This quarter is not mentioned in *al-Ḫiṭaṭ* of al-Maqrīzī. However, Burckhardt claims it to be a quarter in Cairo, near the canal, which was in ruins at the time of his visit. *Op. cit.*, p. 467.

[3] Vantini considers « Diwan of Egypt » as a third quarter where Qirqi was given a house. The word, *dīwān*, is used here to denote the treasury. *Op. cit.*, p. 645.

[4] Vantini, who depends on Quatremère's translation, gives the phrase as « two camels ». The word is *ḥiml* (load). It is a sum or quantity of things. *Op. cit.*, p. 646 (no. 52).

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charge of the delivery of the *Baqṭ*. They [the Nubians] should pay some dues to the recipient of the Baqṭ and to his assistants. Whatever they give after this, as a gift, may be rewarded [1].

Al-Muʿtaṣim reviewed what the Muslims were used to paying and he found it to be more than the Baqṭ. He retracted the payment of wine and confirmed that of the provisions and the clothes mentioned above. He also decreed the payment of the Baqṭ every three years. He wrote this in a book that remained in the hands of al-Nūba.

The king of al-Nūba charged that some people, from Aswān, had purchased land from his slaves. Al-Muʿtaṣim ordered the investigation of the matter, in the presence of the governor and the arbitrator to judge the case. Al-Nūba were asked about the claim of their lord. They denied it and said « We are his subjects », whereby the claim was found groundless. He [Qīrqī] also demanded other things, like his demand concerning the removal of the military post, at al-Qaṣr, to the frontier. For it is in their land. He [al-Muʿtaṣim] rejected this demand.

The payment of the Baqṭ continued to follow the pattern approved by al-Muʿtaṣim until the appearance of the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt. (This is mentioned by the historian of al-Nūba).

6. [The Biography of al-ʿUmarī] [2].

He is ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. ʿAbdallāh al-Nāsik (the pious) b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar b. al-Ḫaṭṭāb, may God bless him. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿUmarī al-ʿAdawī al-Qurašī. He was born and brought up in Medīna. He came to Egypt, where he was a companion of Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥakam, and people heard the *ḥadīṯ* from him. Then he went to Ibrāhīm b. al-Aġlab, in al-Qayrawān (Kairouan), and wrote for him a panegyric poem. He was rewarded for it with a sum of one thousand *dīnārs*. In the year two hundred and forty one (845) he came back to Egypt. He was knowledgeable in *Fiqh* [Islamic jurisprudence], Art, Poetry, Astronomy and Philosophy. He heard about the mines and the people's lust for bargold. He bought some slaves to work in the mines. He went to Aswān to trade where he enjoyed the company of shaykhs, with whom he competed in religious knowledge.

Then he entered the mining area, where he jointed a Muḍarite camp. A clash ensued because a man from Muḍar was killed by a Rabīʿite. The two factions met and [agreed]

[1] It is reversed in Burckhardt's translation. He considered this to be for the Muslims, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

[2] Al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*, IV, fols. 164 B. - 167 B. Vantini's translation is no more than a paraphrase, so it is ignored here.

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to hand over the killer to the relatives of the victim, who spared him. Al-ʿUmarī was so angry he decided to leave the camp because he had not been invited to attend [the meeting]. Some of the people tried to appease him but he insisted, saying « I am angry with you because you have not sought my advice in this matter ». They answered « We did not know that you were interested, but as it is now known, we shall never over-rule you and we shall neither decide on, nor execute any thing in your absence ». They followed this with a solemn oath to him. Al-ʿUmarī took this opportunity, came back with them, considering this as an oath of allegiance. He ordered them to take arms and fight them [Rabīʿa]. And this was what they did.

He had many conflicts with the Rabīʿa, but they out-numbered his forces. Thus he sought refuge in a southern mining site. Here water was scarce and they were threatened by drought. One day, on his seeing some birds, he said « I think these are of the species of birds of the banks, so the Nile may be within reach ». He ordered the watering-men to go in that direction [of the birds]. His assumption was correct. They (the watering-men] came back with [full] water-skins on the same day and informed him about what thay had seen of the land of Maqurra, and that they were behind them. He was pleased and ordered his people to get their water from there. But this was not to the liking of al-Nūba, so they captured a group of his people. He went to them [al-Nūba] and appealed for their release. During this time of correspondence and appeals, they suffered much from thirst, to the extent that the price of a *šanaka* of water was a *dirham* of bar-gold Since then this mine has been known as al-Šanaka.

Al-ʿUmarī asked the Nubians to give him a passage to the water to which he would stick, but they refused and killed those whom they had captured. He came to his followers and raised the morale of the people. They gathered around him and made an oath of allegiance. He ordered the mining tools to be changed into spears. He marched against the Nubians secretly. He reached a place called Šunqayr, about two months [march] south of Dongola [Qiblī].

In this area the Nile turns to where the sun rises, until it is only part of a day's [march] from al-Šanaka. Then the Nile goes west and again to the east. Because of these bends, the roads following the Nile are too long. The Nubians left these bends and made their roads in the deserts. Thus the distance of a month is marched in two days.

Al-ʿUmarī inflected heavy casualities on the Nubians. The captives in the hands of his followers were many, to the extent that one may pay the barber for dressing his hair, a head [of a slave]. The Nubians sought refuge, on boats with their possessions, to the west [bank]. Al-ʿUmarī selected a group of his followers and ordered them to cross by night on water-skins filled with air, and to attack the Nubians and take their boats.

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It happened that one of the group [crossing], after they had reached the west [bank], said « O my people, help me out for a crocodile has mutilated my leg ». This took place while they were crossing. But he tolerated the pain so as not to depress the morale of his comrades. The group succeeded in catching the Nubians on the islands and on the west [bank] and in taking the boats.

Al-ʿUmarī wrote to the merchants of Aswān urging them to provide him with what he needed by the road of the mines [1]. ʿUṯmān b. Ḥanǧala al-Tamīmī responded with a file of one thousand camels, laden with grains and other necessities [2]. Al-ʿUmarī was pleased and went out to meet him. They had become, both at the mines and at Aswān, rich in slaves. Most of their concubines were from among the Nubian captives, and they became known as *al-ʿakiyāt* for their cheapness.

At the time, the king of Nubia was Qīrqī b. Zakariyyā b. Yaḥnus. He gave the command of his armies to the courageous Niūty b. Qišmā and ordered him to fight al-ʿUmarī. The battles that took place between him and al-ʿUmarī had long and arduous phases. Then Niūty made peace with al-ʿUmarī, on the condition that he [al-ʿUmarī] should stick to a specific area of the country and he [Niūty] should not disturb him. [In so doing] he got into conflict with his maternal uncle [Qīrqī]. He sent his elder son against al-ʿUmarī; but he failed and was defeated several times. Thus he sought asylum with the king of the land of ʿAlwa, where he stayed for four years. Al-ʿUmarī stayed in their land seven years and then went away.

Qīrqī had another son, named Zakariyyā. He advised him [his father] to make peace with al-ʿUmarī and to fight Ibn Qišmā. He gave him his armies and sent him against Ibn Qišmā. He sent to al-ʿUmarī, asking him not to intervene between them. Al-ʿUmarī agreed and ordered his people to safeguard themselves by digging a ditch. Ibn Qišmā was victorious. Zakariyyā fled on horseback and crossed the Nile with two of his servants. He was in panic for fear of both al-ʿUmarī and Ibn Qišmā. So he went to him [to al-ʿUmarī] and asked permission to see him, claiming that he was a servant of Zakariyyā. He [al-ʿUmarī] permitted him and when they met he asked him about his affairs and the news of Zakariyyā. He [Zakariyyā] told him about his defeat and that he was one of his [Zakariyyā's] attendants and wished to be with him [al-ʿUmarī]. He requested a private meeting with him [al-ʿUmarī]. When they were alone he told him that he was

[1] This seems to be the road that follows the Nile to Qubbān, which is mentioned in the treaty of Ibn al-Ǧahm.

[2] Al-Maqrīzī quotes this line about Ibn Hanǧala in his chapter about Aswān in the *Ḫiṭaṭ*, as evidence of the richness of Aswān at that time. (Cf. p. 11). B. I, p. 199 and W. IV, chap. XXXIII, section (13), p. 285.

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one of the prominent attendants of Zakariyyā and a confident of his, and that he [Zakariyyā] sent him to make peace with him. If he agreed he [Zakariyyā] would come and join him. Al-ʿUmarī was pleased and gave him [the messenger] all assurances of safety. When he felt that he had secured his support he told him that he himself was Zakariyyā. He [al-ʿUmarī] became very delighted with his righteousness, though he was young.

Zakariyyā stayed some time with him and got acquainted with his [al-ʿUmarī's men]. He fetched some treasure that he had buried. He found it as he had left it, for the Muslims never noticed it. He showed it to al-ʿUmarī, and gave it to him. By so doing he found a way to his heart.

When he was sure that he had the confidence of al-ʿUmarī, he asked for his help against Ibn Qišmā. He said « He is your enemy and mine. And if God gives me victory over him, the Nūba will obey me and gather around me. Then I will bring them to you, and according to your will I shall rule the *Aʿāğim* (Nubians). And [by that] what is in your hand and what is far from you become yours. Then I shall marry you to my sister, who is the wife of Ibn Qišmā, after killing him, because my father is an old man who is advanced in age ».

He continued to deceive him like this until he [al-ʿUmarī] was taken in by him. He said « If what you have asked me about Ibn Qišmā is for your own sake, I would have done it, for your coming to me and confiding in me, let alone that in this is my own wish and interest. But how can I help you, since you know the valour and numbers of Ibn Qišmā? » Zakariyyā answered, « I deceive him and assassinate him ». Al-ʿUmarī concurred, « Do what you like ».

Zakariyyā selected four bold commanders from the army of al-ʿUmarī, whom he had sent many times to Ibn Qišmā. Thus he [Ibn Qišmā] had become acquainted with them. Al-ʿUmarī ordered them to help him [Zakariyyā]. Then Zakariyyā took them, in a light boat on the Nile after he had promised them that « if you succeed in killing Ibn Qišmā, I will give each of you his weight in gold ».

When they came near to him [Ibn Qišmā] he [Zakariyyā] ordered them to chain him and told them what to say [to Niūty]. When they anchored in an island, close to Ibn Qišmā's, they asked him to come within ear-shot. He did and they shouted « the pious Shaykh » — meaning al-ʿUmarī — « greets you and says to you ' God has given victory over thine and mine enemy '. In answer to your letter, in which you have asked me to deliver him [Zakariyyā] to you and you will give me so much of the wealth and so much of the slaves, I have sent him with [four of] my confidents, whom you know, to decide the matter with them. Take him and give my people what you will agree to ». He agreed

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and told them what he would pay. Zakariyyā told them to demand more. So Ibn Qišmā continued to increase [and they continued to demand] until they were instructed by Zakariyyā to accept his offer.

It happened that, a Maghribī fortune teller had prophecied to them [the Zakariyyā] that « if he [Niūty] comes walking, you will not get hold of him, but if carried you will succeed in killing him ». Ibn Qišmā said « I want to see him before I pay you ». They agreed and he descended into the boat, carried as the prophecy said. A group of his people were following him. They said [the four] « we are only four and you come to us with your people to overrun us and to take him without payment? » Thus he ordered his people to go back. Zakariyyā told them that « I will keep him busy until he feels secure and then you assassinate him ». He made his weeping a signal for action.

Ibn Qišmā started to gently rub Zakariyyā's head with a gold-bar and said « thanks to God that you are captured ». He pleaded saying « O uncle, now you are vindicated, be honourable to me, for those Muslims had abandoned me to have the ransom ». Ibn Qišmā cited for him his mischievous deeds and Zakariyyā affirmed his apology by weeping, thus his companions jumped on Ibn Qišmā and killed him on the spot. Then they released Zakariyyā from chains. He went to the army of Ibn Qišmā and assured them that God had forgiven them. He brought the army generals and [secretly] expressed his wish to get rid of al-ʿUmarī and the four accompanying him. Then he called the four and thanked them, in the presence of his people, and ordered their good treatment. All the [Nubian] dignitaries praised them [the four] and showed them gratitude. Then he took them to his sister, the wife of Ibn Qišmā, and told her, in their presence, his wish to marry her to al-ʿUmarī. She agreed and he gave her, on behalf of al-ʿUmarī, a dowry. He ordered them [the four] to write to al-ʿUmarī, about what had happened. He also wrote to him, informing him about his coming with the army and asking him to prepare for their lodging and the robes of honour for the generals. Al-ʿUmarī was so pleased that he prepared everything Zakariyyā had asked.

Then Zakariyyā killed the four and crossed to the east [bank] with the army, seeking al-ʿUmarī. When they were close to them a man warned al-ʿUmarī « now this *Kāfir* [non-believer] has become with us in the same land and you know we have no power to face him ». He answered him « On this we have agreed, that he will come to me with the army and become my subordinate ».

Zakariyyā attacked them on their way back from work and killed many of them. Al-ʿUmarī and his people retreated in defeat and left all they had as it was. Those who were on the islands descended in boats. Zakariyyā had [already] inserted among them a man knowledgeable about the cataracts' passes. Al-ʿUmarī gave him ([the man] money

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and showed him every kindness so that he would guide them [he and his people] through the cataracts. He took the first boat and led them through a little-used passage, where they perished. He swam out and they drowned. He went to Zakariyyā who gave him a fief that his sons were to inherit afterwards. Zakariyyā wrote to al-ʿUmarī apologizing on grounds that it was the ambition for power that had made him behave in such [a bad] way and that he would not fight him [any more] if he would retreat from his land. He [al-ʿUmarī] delayed his reply for a year, until a feud ensued between the Shamites, who were from the tribe of Saʿd al-ʿAšīra, and Qays ʿAylān. The Shamites complained vehemently that al-ʿUmarī was favouring Qays. When Zakariyyā, through his spies, heard about this he sent to the Shamites, invited them to defect to him and promised them what they wanted. So they went to him [Zakariyyā] and he fulfilled his promise and gave them fiefs below the first cataract in the land of al-Marīs, in Adindān and Adawī and what was beyond.

Al-ʿUmarī became fearful, so he marched to a mine three *marḥala* from the Nile. His followers worked these and with their night-raids struck against the land of al-Nūba. Al-ʿUmarī sent to the Shamites to come and to make peace with him. They agreed. On their way to him he rode and attacked them and killed one thousand and five hundred of them. He captured those who survived the battle and cut off their arms and legs and left them to die. He lived in the land of al-Marīs [for some time]. This was beyond the tolerance of Zakariyyā. So he marched against him in great numbers. Al-ʿUmarī was defeated and was compelled to retreat until he was near Aswān. He made his camp in a village called Arṭlmā, which was a *marḥala* from Aswān.

There came out against him Šuʿba b. Ḥarkam al-Bābakī. He was sent by Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn, for fear of al-ʿUmarī. When he [Šuʿba] was close to al-ʿUmarī, [the latter] told his men, of whom only one thousand and two hundred were left, « Don't be in a hurry, the man is an *aʿǧamī* [Turkish slave], so let me address him and see what [kind of a man] he is ». He stepped forward from his army and said to those who were nearer of the army of Šuʿba « I want to talk to the prince before war breaks out between us ». Šuʿba came out and al-ʿUmarī said, « It seems that the prince Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn is misinformed about me and my intentions. I am not out to spread evil and the evidence for this is my respect for every Muslim or ally [*ḏimmī*]. I am out for the enemies of Muslims until God judges their condition. So let us stop this fight until I write these facts about myself to the prince, may God help him, and you also write to him. Then if he accepted me and trusted my word, he would write to you to abstain and you would, most gracefully, do so if he ordered you, otherwise you would undertake that without any blame on you ». Šuʿba answered, « I am not one of your messengers. There is nothing between us but

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the sword [1] », al-ʿUmarī scoffed, saying, « You are not the pivot [2] of men but you are similar to a woman's toy for these bad deeds and manners merit that comparison ». He went to his followers and said, « This is an idiotic, rash person, go ahead and fight against him ». He attacked him after he had made a second communication with him. [In this] Šuʿba demanded the presence of al-ʿUmarī at his headquarters. Al-ʿUmarī asked him to postpone this until they reached Aswān and till then he offered him a hostage to ensure this. He rejected this [Šuʿba] and insisted on fighting. Al-ʿUmarī was granted [by God] victory over Šuʿba, who was ignominiously defeated and all he had was looted. His followers [al-ʿUmarī's] were nourished after hunger and dressed [after nudity].

Al-ʿUmarī, fearing *al-Nūbī* [the king of Nubia], had divided his army into two sections and made these march on parallel [lines] to *al-Nūbī*. *Al-Nūbī* did not intercede and said, « I have not seen one who stands against a thousand but two, namely, al-ʿUmarī and Ibn Qiṣmā. Now I have seen the third namely Šuʿba ».

Šuʿba went back to al-Fusṭāṭ, where Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn blamed him saying, « You are totally wrong. You should have made him wait until you had written to us about his situation and to see our view of him; but you are tyrannical; thus [by God's aid he] is given victory ». Then Aḥmad ignored him [al-ʿUmarī].

As for al-ʿUmarī, he marched to a village, north-west of Aswān, called Idfū from which he crossed [the Nile] to the east. He had a contest with its governor who came after Šuʿba.

Then he entered the mines' [area] where he made even more battles with the Rabīʿa than before. Again he came in the year two hundred and fifty-five [868] to the mines. At that time the chief of the Rabīʿa was the one called Ašhab [b.?] Rabīʿa, from Banū Ḥanīfa b. Luǧaym b. Ṣaʿb. He was a Shiʿite. Another one, called Iyās b. Rawāḥ and a third who was called Muḥammad b. Surayḥ who was chief of Banī Qayis b. Ṯaʿlaba b. ʿAkāba b. Ṣaʿb b. ʿAlī b. Bakr b. Wā'il, and their allies. The chief of Ǧuhayna was ʿUṯmān b. Saʿdān. The chief of the Shamites was one from Saʿd al-ʿAšīra and there were many other petty chiefs. The land of the mines flourished with them to the extent that sixty thousand camels were involved in the transport of provisions from Aswān [3], apart from what was in ʿAyḏāb, that came by boats from al-Qulzum. Aḥmad

[1] This dialogue, as mentioned above, is quoted from al-Balawī.

[2] The name in Arabic means the pillar that supports the ceiling of a room. Here al-ʿUmarī uses the word metaphorically.

[3] This is the second sentence quoted by Maqrīzī in his chapter about Aswan as an evidence for its richness. There he clearly states that it is from « the historian of al-Nūba ». B. I, p. 199 and W. IV, chap. XXXIII, section (14), p. 268.

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b. Ṭūlūn, because of al-ʿUmarī's activities threatened to blockage this traffic. But when al-ʿUmarī wrote to him that he had one hundred thousand [fighters] or more he changed his mind.

Competition, feuds and war had torn the Muslims. The Beğa adhered to and intermarried with the Rabīʿa. Then it happened that Ibrāhīm al-Maḫzūmī, a [half] brother of al-ʿUmarī, from the side of his mother, was killed, with a group of his men, on their way to market at ʿAyḍāb, by the Beğa. Al-ʿUmarī was furious and wrote to Rabīʿa, asking that they either do justice to him or let him avenge himself on the Beğa. They stood against both options. So he called Muḍar to fight with him, but they fled. [As for] Banū Hilāl, they crossed the Nile to the west. Banū Tamīm encamped to the east of the Nile. Thus the mines were vacated and few remained with al-ʿUmarī. For this [event] the poet of Banū Numayr [1] wrote in verse :

How sleep comes to your eyes after the generous
Abu Isḥāq was slain,
And after those Muḍarites were killed.
And their silk-dresses were immersed in their blood.
Unless you take arms instantly to avenge them,
Surely, your women will desert you.
May evil befall Muḍar.
For they had deserted their brother.
Against this stood the valour, [al-ʿUmarī]
To attain what Muḍar has ignored.
Tamīm used to be in Ḫindaf.
But now is in Qurayš.
Hilāl fled to safety,
And the core of the Qayis encamped away.

Then al-ʿUmarī met them while they were coming and killed many of them [Rabīʿa]. Thus war ensued and thousands were killed from the two factions. Two battle sites now commemorate this war. One is at the place called Miyzaḥ, the other is at Kiyā. About these sites al-ʿUmarī wrote long poems, like this saying :

As God is the judge on people's deeds,
May he not forgive Muḍar's evil.
Especially those who dwelt on the Nile banks,
between Qūṣ and the vicinity of Aswān,

[1] My translation of the verses is far from adequate as far as poetic expression is concerned; it is hoped only to convey the meaning.

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That sept of Tamīm called ʿAliyya,
who are not used to desert in affliction.

Then he refered to the defeat of the chief of Ǧuhayna :

All defeats are not ignominious,
like that of ʿUṯmān b. Saʿdān.
He fled at Miyzaḥ while warriors were there,
The fight was hot and death was hovering.

In another long poem he scoffed :

It becomes a reality after it was a gorgeous craving,
And yearning joyfully if happened at ʿAlba [1]
O ye travellers who have witnessed it.
Inform every man you come across.
Which of your two days you found agreeable.
That of Kiyā or that of Um Miyzaḥ.

There was so much more news and so many more poems that there is not space for it all here. Then dissension ensued in the ranks of the Rabīʿa. Al-ʿUmarī found his way to the chief of the Rabīʿa, called Ašhab and killed him for his Shiʿite [beliefs]. Then a chief of Muḍar was enraged and made an alliance to assassinate al-ʿUmarī. This was done. The followers of al-ʿUmarī dispersed and peace and order were restored. His head was taken to Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn by two slaves, who claimed that they were his [al-ʿUmarī's] attendants. Aḥmad asked some people from Upper Egypt, who had known al-ʿUmarī, to come and see the head. They confirmed that it was al-ʿUmarī's head. Then Ibn Ṭūlūn said to the two attendants « Did he ill-treat you? » They answered in the negative. He asked them « Did he stand against your life? » They answered in the negative. He asked them « Did he commit a sin in your presence that makes the taking of his blood legal? » They answered in the negative. Then he asked « Why did you kill him? » They answered « Because we want to get the favour of the prince ». He said, « This, in the name of God, is beyond your reach », and he ordered them to be crucified. Then he washed, perfumed and buried the head [2].

[1] It seems the reference is to Jebel Alba. — [2] This part is also from al-Balawī.

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ابن سليم الأســـوانى

(ت ٣٨٦ هـ / ٩٩٦ م)

كتاب أخبار النوبة والمقرة وعلوة والبجة والنيل

ذكر عجائب النيـــل

(٢٨٢) . . . قال عبد الله بن أحمد بن سليم الأسوانىّ فى كتاب أخبار النوبة ومسافة ما بين دنقلة إلى أوّل بلد علوة أكثر ممّا بين دنقلة وأسوان . وفى ذلك من القرى والضياع والجزائر والمواشى والنخل والشجر والمقل والزرع والكرم إضعاف ما فى الجانب الذى يلى أرض الإسلام . وفى هذه الاماكن جزائر عظام مسيرة أيّام فيها الجبال والوحش والسباع ومفاوز يُخاف فيها العطش . وماء النيل ينعطف من هذه النواحى إلى مطلع الشمس . وإلى مغربها مسافة أيّام حتّى يصير المصعد كالمنحدر وهى الناحية التى تبلغ العطوف من النيل إلى المعدن المعروف بالشنكة . وهو بلد يُعرَف بشنقير .
(٢٨٣) ومنه يخرج القمرى وفرس البحر يكثر فى هذا الموضع . وحدّثنى سيمون صاحب عهد علوة أنّه أحصى فى جزيرة سبعين دابّة منها . وهى ذوات الشطوط فى خلق الفرس فى غلظ الجاموس قصيرة القوائم لها خفّ وهى فى ألوان الخيل بأعراف وآذان صغار كآذان الخيل . وأعناقها كذلك وأذنابها مثل أذناب الجواميس . ولها خَطْم عريض يظنّ الناظر إليها أنّ عليها مخلاة لها صهيل وأنياب لا يقوم حذاءها تمساح وتعترض المراكب عند الغضب فتغرّقها . ورعيها فى البرّ العشب وجلدها فيه متانة عظيمة يتّخذ منه دبابيس . انتهى .

ذكر الجنادل ولمع من أخبار أرض النوبة

(٢٥١) . . . قال عبد الله بن أحمد بن سليم الأسوانى فى كتاب أخبار النوبة والمقرة وعلوة والبجة والنيل : وأول بلد النوبة قرية تعرف بالقصر ، من أسوان إليها خمسة أميال . وآخر حصن للمسلمين ، جزيرة تعرف ببلاق ، بينها وبين قرية النوبة ميل ، وهو ساحل بلد النوبة . ومن أسوان إلى هذا الموضع جنادل كثيرة فى البحر (٢٥٢) لا تسلكها المراكب الا بالحيلة ، ودلالة من يخبر ذلك من الصيادين الذين يصيدون هناك ، لأن هذه الجنادل متقطعة وشعاب معترضة فى النيل ، ولانصبابه فيها خرير عظيم ودوى يسمع من بعد . وبهذه القرية مسلحة وباب إلى بلد النوبة . ومنها

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إلى الجنادل الأولى من بلد النوبة عشر مراحل ، وهى الناحية التى (٢٥٣) يتصرف فيها المسلمون ، ولهم فيما قرب أملاك ، ويتجرون فى أعلاها وفيها جماعة من المسلمين قاطنون لا يفصح أحدهم بالعربية ، وهى ناحية ضيقة شظفة كثيرة الجبال ، وما تخرج عن النيل . وقراها متسطرة على شاطئه ، وشجرها النخل والمقل . وأعلاها أوسع من أدناها . وفى أعلاها الكروم . والنيل لا يروى مزارعها ، لارتفاع أرضها . وزرعها الفدان والفدانان والثلاثة على أعناق البقر بالدواليب ، والقمح عندهم قليل والشعير أكثر والسلت ، ويعتقبون الأرض لضيقها ، فيزرعونها — فى الصيف بعد تطريتها بالزبل والتراب — الدخن والذرة والجاروس والسمسم واللوبيا .

وفى هذه الناحية بجراش مدينة المريسى ، وقلعة ابريم ، وقلعة أخرى دونها . وبها ميناء تعرف بأدواء ، ينسب إليها لقمان الحكيم وذو النون .

ولهذه الناحية وال من قبل عظيم النوبة يعرف بصاحب الجبل وهو من أجّل ولاتهم لقربه من أرض الاسلام . ومن يخرج الى بلد النوبة من المسلمين ، فعاملته معه فى تجارة أو هدية اليه أو الى مولاه ، يقبل الجميع ، ويكافىء عليه بالرقيق . ولا يطلق لأحد الصعود الى مولاه لا مسلم ولا لغيره .

وأول الجنادل من بلد النوبة قرية تعرف بتقوى ، وهى ساحل ، وإليها تنتهى مراكب النوبة (٢٥٤) المصعدة من القصر أول بلدهم ، ولا تتجاوزها المراكب ولا يطلق لأحد من المسلمين ولا من غيرهم الصعود منها إلا باذن من صاحب جبلهم . ومنها الى المقس الأعلى ست مراحل ، وهى جنادل كلها ، وشر ناحية رأيتها لهم ، لصعوبتها وضيقها ومشقة مسالكها . أما بحرها فجنادل وجبال معترضة منه ، حتى أن النيل ينصب من شعاب ، ويضيق فى مواضع حتى يكون سعة ما بين الجانبين خمسين ذراعا . وبرها مجاوب ضيقة ، وجبال شاهقة ، وطرقات ضيقة ، حتى لا يمكن الراكب أن يصعد منها ، والراجل الضعيف يعجز عن سلوكها ، ورمال فى غربها وشرقها . وهذه الجبال حصنهم ، وإليها يفزع أهل الناحية التى قبلها المتصلة بأرض الاسلام . وفى جزائر نخل يسير وزرع حقير ، وأكثر أكلهم السمك ، ويدهنون بشحمه ، وهى من أرض مريس . وصاحب الجبل وإليهم ، والمسلحة بالمقس الأعلى صاحبها من قبل كبيرهم ، وهو شديد الضبط لها ، حتى أن عظيمهم اذا صار بها وقف به المسلحى ، وأوهم أنه يفتش عليه حتى يجد الطريق الى ولده ووزيره فمن دونهما .

ولا يجوزها دينار ولا درهم ، إذ كانوا لا يتبايعون بذلك إلا دون الجنادل مع المسلمين ، وما فوق ذلك لا بيع بينهم ولا شراء ، وإنما هى معاوضة بالرقيق والمواشى والجمال والحديد والحبوب .

ولا يطلق لأحد أن يجوزها إلا باذن الملك . ومن خالف كان جزاؤه القتل كائناً ما كان وبهذا الاحتياط تتكتم أخبارهم ، حتى أن العسكر يهجم على البلد الى البادية وغيرهم ، فلا يعلمون به .

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(٢٥٥) . . . والسنباذ الذى يخرط به الجوهر يخرج من النيل فى هذه المواضع يغطس عليه ، فيوجد جسمه باردا ، مخالفا للحجارة . فاذا أشكل عليه ، نفخ فيه بالفم ، فيغرق .

ومن هذه المسلحة قرية تعرف بساى ، جنادل أيضا . وهى أحد كراسيهم ولهم فيها أسقف وفيها بربا .

ثم من ناحية سقلوذا ، وتفسيرها السبع ولاة . وهى أشبه الأرض بالأرض المتاخمة لأرض الاسلام فى السعة والضيق فى مواضع ، والنخل والكرم والزرع وشجر المقل . وفيها شىء من شجر القطن ، ويعمل منه ثياب وخشة وبها شجر الزيتون . ووواليها من قبل كبيرهم ، وتحت يده ولاة يتصرفون . وفيها قلعة تعرف بأصطنون ، وهى أول الجنادل الثالثة ، وهى أشد الجنادل صعوبة ، لأن فيها جبلا معترضاً من الشرق إلى الغرب فى النيل . والماء ينصب من ثلاثة أبواب ، وربما رجع إلى بابين عند انحساره ، شديد الخرير عجيب المنظر ، لتحـّدر الماء عليه من علو الجبل . وقبليه فرش حجارة فى النيل نحو ثلاثة أبارد إلى قرية تعرف ببستو ، وهى آخر قرى مريس وأول بلد مقره . ومن هذا الموضع الى حد المسلمين لسانهم مريسى ، وهى آخر عمل متملكهم .

ثم من ناحية بقون ، وتفسيرها (٢٥٦) العجب ، وهى عند اسمها لحسنها . وما رأيت على النيل أوسع منها . وقدرت أن سعة النيل فيها من الشرق الى الغرب مسيرة خمس مراحل ، الجزائر تقطعه ، والأنهار منه تجرى بينها على أرض منخفضة ، وقرى متصلة ، وعمارة حسنة ، بأبرجة حمام ، ومواش وأنعام ، وأكثر ميرة مدينتهم منها . وطيورها التغطيط والنوبى والببغ وغير ذلك من الطيور الحسان . وأكثر نزهة كبيرهم فى هذه الناحية .

قال : وكنت معه فى بعض الأوقات فكان سيرها فى ظل شجر من الحافتين فى الخلجان الضيقة . وقيل : أن التمساح لا يضر هناك ، ورأيتهم يعبرون أكثر هذه الأنهار سباحة .

ثم سفد بقل ، وهى ناحية ضيقة شبيهة بأول بلادهم إلا أن فيها جزائر حسانا . وفيها دون المرحلتين نحو ثلاثين قرية بالأبنية الحسان والكنائس والديارات والنخل الكثير والكروم والبساتين والزرع ومروج كبار ، فيها إبل وجمال صهب مؤبلة للنتاج ، وكبيرهم يكثر الدخول إليها ، لأن طرفها القبلى يحاذى دنقلة مدينتهم .

ومن مدينة دنقلة دار المملكة الى أسوان خمسون مرحلة ، وذكر صفتها ثم قال : انهم يسقفون مجالسهم بخشب السنط وبخشب الساج الذى يأتى به النيل فى وقت الزيادة اسقالات منحوتة لا يدرى من أين تأتى . ولقد رأيت على بعضها علامة غريبة .

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ومسافة ما بين دنقلة إلى أول بلد علوة ، أكثر مما بينها وبين أسوان . وفى ذلك من القرى (٢٥٧) والضياع والجزائر والمواشى والنخل والشجر والمقل الزرع والكرم ، أضعاف ما فى الجانب الذى يلى أرض الاسلام . وفى هذه الأماكن جزائر عظام مسيرة أيام ، فيها الجبال والوحش والسباع ، ومفاوز يخاف فيها العطش . والنيل ينعطف من هذه النواحى الى مطلع الشمس والى مغربها مسيرة أيام ، حتى يصير المصعد كالمنحدر ، وهى الناحية التى تبلغ العطوف من النيل الى المعدن المعروف بالشنكة ، وهو بلد يعرف بشنقير . ومنه خرج العمرى ، وتغلب على هذه الناحية إلى أن كان من أمره ما كان .

وفرس البحر يكثر فى هذه المواضع . ومن هذا الموضع طرق الى سواكن وباضع ودهلك وجزائر البحر . ومنها عبر من نجا من بنى أمّية عند هربهم إلى النوبة .

وفيها خلق من البجة يعرفون بالزنافج ، انتقلوا الى النوبة قديما وقطنوا هناك ، وهم على جملتهم (٢٥٨) فى الرعى واللغة ، لا يخالطون النوبة ، ولا يسكنون معهم فى قراهم ، وعليهم وال من قبل النوبى .

ذكر تشعب النيل من بلد علوة ومن يسكن عليه من الأمم

أعلم أن النوبة والمقرة جنسان بلسانين كلاهما على النيل ، فالنوبة وهم المريس المجاورون لأرض الاسلام . وبين أول بلدهم وبين أسوان خمسة أميال ويقال أن سلها جد النوبة ، ومقرى جد المقرة من اليمن . وقيل : النوبة ومقرى من حمير . وأكثر أهل الأنساب على أنهم جميعا من ولد حام بن نوح . وكان بين النوبة والمقرة حروب قبل النصرانية .

وأول أرض المقرة قرية تعرف بتافة على مرحلة من أسوان . ومدينة ملكهم يقال لها نجراس على أقل من عشر مراحل من أسوان . ويقال : إن موسى صلوات الله عليه غزاهم قبل مبعثه فى أيام فرعون ، فأخرب تافة . وكانوا صابئة يعبدون الكواكب ، وينصبون التماثيل لها ، ثم تنصروا جميعا — النوبة والمقرة — ومدينة دنقلة هى دار مملكتهم .

وأول بلاد علوة قرى فى الشرق على شاطىء النيل تعرف بالأبواب . ولهذه الناحية وال (٢٥٩) من قبل صاحب علوة يعرف الواحواح .

والنيل يتشعب من هذه الناحية على سبعة أنهار ، فمنها : نهر يأتى من ناحية المشرق كدر الماء يجفّ فى الصيف حتى يسكن بطنه . فاذا كان وقت زيادة النيل ، نبع فيه الماء وزادت البرك التى فيه ، وأقبل المطر والسيول فى سائر البلد ، فوقعت الزيادة فى النيل . وقيل أن آخر هذا النهر عين عظيمة ، تأتى من جبل .

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قال مؤرخ النوبة : وحدثنى سيمون صاحب عهد بلد علوة أنه يوجد فى بطن هذا النهر فى الطين حوت لا قشر له ، ليس هو من جنس ما فى النيل ، يحفر عليه (قدر) قامة وأكثر حتى يخرج ، وهو كبير ، وعليه جنس مولد بين العلوة والبجة يقال لهم الديجيون وجنس يقال لهم بازة ، يأتى من عندهم طير يعرف بحمام بازين . وبعد هؤلاء أول بلاد الحبشة .

ثم النيل الأبيض وهو نهر يأتى من ناحية الغرب ، شديد البياض مثل اللبن .

قال : وقد سألت من طرق بلاد السودان من المغاربة عن النيل الذى عندهم وعن لونه ، فذكر أنه يخرج من جبال الرمل ، أو جبل الرمل ، وأنه يجتمع فى بلد السودان فى برك عظام ، ثم ينصب إلى ما لا يعرف ، وأنه ليس بأبيض ، فاما أن يكون يكتسب ذلك اللون مما يمر عليه أو من نهر آخر ينصب الى هذا ، وعليه أجناس من جانبيه .

ثم النيل الأخضر وهو نهر يأتى من القبلة مما يلى الشرق (٢٦٠) شديد الخضرة ، صافى اللون جدا يرى ما فى قعره من السمك ، وطعمه مخالف لطعم النيل ، يعطش الشارب منه بسرعة ، وحيتان الجميع واحدة غير أن الطعم مختلف . ويأتى فيه وقت الزيادة خشب الساج والبقم والقناء وخشب له رائحة كرائحة اللبان ، وخشب غلاظ ينحت ويعمل منه مقدام . وعلى شاطئه ينبت هذا الخشب أيضا . وقيل أنه وجد فيه عود البخور . قال : وقد رأيت على بعض السقالات المنحوتة الساج التى تأتى فيه وقت الزيادة ، علامة غريبة ، ويجتمع هذان النهران الأبيض والأخضر عند مدينة متملك بلد علوة ويبقيان على ألوانهما قريبا من مرحلة ، ثم يختلطان بعد ذلك ، وبينهما أمواج كبار عظيمة بتلاطمهما .

قال : وأخبرنى من نقل النيل الأبيض وصبه فى النيل الأخضر ، فبقى فيه مثل اللبن ساعة قبل أن يختلطا . وبين هذين النهرين جزيرة لا يعرف لها غاية وكذلك لا يعرف لهذين النهرين نهاية ، فأولهما يعرف عرضه ، ثم يتسع فيصير مسافة شهر ثم لا تدرك سعتهما لخوف من يسكنهما بعضهم من بعض ، لأن فيهما أجناساً كثيرة وخلقاً عظيما .

قال : وبلغنى أن بعض متملكى بلد علوة سار فيها يريد أقصاها ، فلم يأت عليه بعد سنين . وأن فى طرفها القبلى جنساً يسكنون ودوابهم فى بيوت تحت الأرض مثل السراديب بالنهار من شدة حر الشمس ، ويسرحون فى الليل ، وفيهم قوم عراة . (٢٦١) والأنهار الأربعة الباقية تأتى أيضا من القبلة مما يلى الشرق أيضا فى وقت واحد ، ولا يعرف لها نهاية أيضا ، وهى دون النهرين الأبيض والأخضر فى العرض وكثرة الخلجان والجزائر . وجميع الأربعة الأنهار ينصب فى الأخضر ، وكذلك الأول الذى قدمت ذكره ، ثم يجتمع مع الأبيض والجميع مسكونة عامرة ، مسلوك فيها بالسفن ، وأحد هذه الأربعة يأتى مرة من بلد الحبشة .

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قال : ولقد أكثرت السؤال عنها ، وكشفتها من قوم عن قوم ، فما وجدت مخبراً يقول أنه وقف على جميع نهاية هذه الأنهار . والذى انتهى إليه علم من عرفنى — عن آخرين — إلى خراب ، وأنه يأتى فى وقت الزيادة فى هذه الأنهار آلة مراكب وأبواب وغير ذلك فيدل على عمارة بعد الخراب .

فأما الزيادة ، فيجمعون أنها من الأمطار مع مادة تأتى من ذاتها والدليل على ذلك النهر الذى يجف ويسكن بطنه ، ثم ينبع وقت الزيادة . ومن عجائبه أن زيادته فى أنهار مجتمعة ، وسائر النواحى والبلدان فى مصر وما يليها والصعيدين وأسوان وبلدى النوبة وعلوة وما وراء ذلك فى زمان واحد ووقت واحد . وأكثر ما وقف عليه من هذه الزيادة أنه ربما وجدت مثلا بأسوان ولا توجد بقوص ، ثم تأتى بعد ، فاذا كثرت الأمطار عندهم واتصلت السيول علم أنها سنة رى ؛ وإذا قصرت الأمطار ، علم أنها سنة ظمأ .

قال : وأما (٢٦٢) من طرق بلاد الزنج فانهم أخبرونى عن مسيرهم فى بحر الصين الى بلد الزنج بالريح الشمالى مساحلين للجانب الشرقى من جزيرة مصر حتى ينتهوا الى موضع يعرف برأس حفونى ، وهو عندهم آخر جزيرة مصر ، فينظرون (٢٦٣) كوكبا يهتدون به فيقصدون الغرب ، ثم يعودون الى البحرى ، ويصير الشمال فى وجوههم حتى يأتوا الى قنبلة من بلاد الزنج وهى مدينة متملكهم ، وتصير قبلتهم للصلاة الى جدة . قال : وبعض الأنهار الأربعة يأتى من بلاد الزنج ، لأنه يأتى فيه الخشب الزنجى .

وسوبة مدينة العلوى شرقى الجزيرة الكبرى التى بين البحرين الأبيض والأخضر فى الطرف الشمالى منها عند مجتمعها ، وشرقيهما النهر الذى يجف ويسكن بطنه ، وفيها أبنية حسان ودور واسعة وكنائس كثيرة الذهب وبساتين ، ولها رباط فيه جماعة من المسلمين .

ومتملك علوة أكثر مالا من متملك المقرة وأعظم جيشا ، وعنده من الخيل ما ليس عند المقرى ، وبلده أخصب وأوسع ، والنخل والكرم عنده يسير ، وأكثر حبوبهم الذرة البيضاء التى مثل الأرز ، منها خبزهم ومزرهم . واللحم عندهم كثير لكثرة المواشى والمروج الواسعة العظيمة السعة ، حتى أنه لا يوصل الى الجبل إلا فى أيام . وعندهم خيل عتاق وجمال صهب عراب .

ودينهم النصرانية يعاقبه ، وأساقفتهم من قبل صاحب الاسكندرية كالنوبة ، وكتبهم بالرومية يفسرونها بلسانهم . وهم أقل فهماً من النوبة .

وملكهم يسترق من شاء من رعيته بجرم وبغير جرم (٢٦٤) ولا ينكرون ذلك عليه ، بل يسجدون له ، ولا يعصون أمره على المكروه الواقع بهم ، وينادون : الملك يعيش ، فليكن أمره ، وهو يتوج بالذهب ، والذهب كثير فى بلده .

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ومما فى بلده من العجائب ، أن فى الجزيرة الكبرى التى بين البحرين جنساً يعرف بالكرسا ، لهم أرض واسعة مزروعة من النيل والمطر . فاذا كان وقت الزرع . خرج كل واحد منهم بما عنده من البذر . واختط على مقدار ما معه وزرع فى أربعة أركان الخطة يسيرا . وجعل البذر فى وسط الخطة وشيئا من المزر وانصرف عنه . فاذا أصبح وجد ما اختط قد زرع وشرب المزر . فاذا كان وقت الحصاد قد حصد بأسره وجرن . فاذا أراد درسه وتذريته فعل به كذلك . وربما أراد أحدهم أن ينقى زرعه من الحشيش فيغلط بقلع شىء من الزرع ، فيصبح وقد قلع جميع الزرع . وهذه الناحية التى فيها ما ذكرته ، بلدان واسعة مسيرة شهرين فى شهرين يزرع جميعها فى وقت واحد . وميرة بلد علوة ومتملكهم من هذه الناحية ، يوجهون المراكب فتوسق ، وربما وقع بينهم حرب .

قال : وهذه الحكاية صحيحة معروفة مشهورة عند جميع النوبة والعلوة . وكل من يطرق ذلك البلد من تجار المسلمين لا يشكون فيه ولا يرتابون به . ولولا أن اشتهاره وانتشاره مما لا يجوز التواطؤ على مثله ، لما ذكرت شيئا منه لشناعته .

فأما أهل الناحية فيزعمون أن الجان تفعل ذلك ، وأنها تظهر لبعضهم وتحذفهم بحجارة ينطاعون لهم بها . وتعمل لهم عجائب وأن السحاب يطيعهم .

قال : ومن عجائب ما حدثنى به متملك المقرة للنوبة ، أنهم يمطرون فى الجبال ، ويلتقطون منه للوقت سمكا على وجه الأرض ، وسألتهم عن جنسه فذكروا أنه صغير القدر بأذناب حمر .

قال : وقد رأيت (٢٦٥) جماعة وأجناسا ممن تقدم ذكر أكثرهم ، يعترفون بالبارى سبحانه وتعالى ، ويتقربون إليه بالشمس والقمر والكواكب . ومنهم من لا يعرف البارى ، ويعبد الشمس والنار ، ومنهم من يعبد كل ما استحسنه من شجرة أو بهيمة . وذكر أنه رأى رجلا فى مجلس عظيم المقرة ، سأله عن بلده فقال : مسافته الى النيل ثلاثة أهلة . وسأله عن دينه فقال : ربى وربك ، ورب الملك ورب الناس كلهم واحد . وأنه قال له : فأين يكون ؟ قال : فى السماء وحده سبحانه . وقال : إله اذا أبطأ عنهم المطر أو أصابهم الوباء أو وقع بدوابهم آفة ، صعدوا الجبل ودعوا لله فيجابون للوقت وتقضى حاجتهم قبل أن ينزلوا . وسأله : هل أرسل فيهم رسول ؟ قال : لا . فذكر له بعثة موسى وعيسى ومحمد صلوات الله عليهم وسلامه ، وما أبدوا من المعجزات . فقال : إذا كانوا فعلوا هذا فقد صدقوا . ثم قال : قد صدقتهم إن كانوا فعلوا .

(٢٦٧) ذكر البجة ويقال أنهم من البربر

اعلم أن أول بلد البجة من قرية تعرف بالخربة معدن الزمرد فى صحراء قوص ، وبين هذا الموضع وبين قوص نحو من ثلاث مراحل . وذكر الجاحظ أنه ليس فى الدنيا معدن للزمرد غير هذا الموضع ،

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وهو يوجد فى مغاير بعيدة مظلمة ، يدخل إليها بالمصابيح وبحبال يستدل بها على الرجوع خوف الضلال ، ويحفر عليه بالمعاول فيوجد فى وسط الحجارة وحوله غشيم دونه فى الصبغ والجوهر .

وآخر بلاد البجة أول بلاد الحبشة ، وهم فى بطن هذه الجزيرة : أعنى جزيرة مصر إلى سيف البحر الملح مما يلى جزائر سواكن وباضع ودهلك .

وهم بادية يتبعون الكلأ حيثما كان الرعى ، بأخبية من جلود ، وأنسابهم من جهة النساء ، ولكل بطن منهم رئيس ، وليس عليهم متملك ، ولا لهم دين ، وهم يورثون ابن البنت وابن الأخت دون ولد الصلب ، ويقولون : إن ولادة ابن الأخت وابن (٢٦٨) البنت أصح ، وأن يكون من زوجها أو من غيره فهو ولدها على كل حال .

وكان لهم قديما رئيس ، يرجع جميع رؤسائهم إلى حكمه ، يسكن قرية تعرف بهجر ، هى أقصى جزيرة البجة . ويركبون النجب الصهب ، وتنتج عندهم ، وكذلك الجمال العراب كثيرة عندهم ، والمواشى من البقر والغنم والضأن غاية فى الكثرة عندهم . وبقرهم حسان ملمعة بقرون عظام ومنها جم ، وكباشهم كذلك منمرة ، ولها ألبان ، وغذائهم اللحم وشرب اللبن ، وأكلهم للخبز قليل ، وفيهم من يأكله . وأبدانهم صحاح وبطونهم خماص ، وألوانهم مشرقة الصفرة .

ولهم سرعة فى الجرى يباينون بها الناس ، وكذلك جمالهم شديدة العدو صبورة عليه وعلى العطش ، يسابقون عليها الخيل ويقاتلون عليها ، وتدور بهم كما يشتهون ، ويقطعون عليها من البعد ما يتفاوت ذكره ، ويتطاردون عليها فى الحرب ، فيرمى الواحد منهم الحربة ، فان وقعت فى الرمية طار إليها الجمل فأخذها صاحبها . وإن وقعت فى الأرض ضرب الجمل بجرانه الأرض ، فأخذها صاحبها .

ونبغ منهم فى بعض الأوقات رجل يعرف بكلاز شديد مقدام ، وله جمل ما سمع بمثله فى السرعة ، وكان أعور وصاحبه كذلك . التزم لقومه أنه يشرف على مصلى مصر يوم العيد ، وقد قرب العيد قربا لا يكون للبلوغ إليها فى مثله حقيقة ، فوفى بذلك ، وأشرف على المقطم ، وضربت الخيل خلفه فلم يلحق . وهذا هو الذى أوجب أن يكون فى الفج (٢٦٩) طليعة يوم العيد . وكان الطولونية وغيرهم من أمراء مصر يوقفون فى سفح الجبل المقطم مما يلى الموضع المعروف بالحبش جيشا كثيفا مراعيا للناس حتى ينصرفوا من عيدهم فى كل عيد .

وهم أصحاب ذمة ، فاذا غدر أحدهم رفع المغدور به ثوباً على حربته وقال : هذا غرس فلان . يعنى أنا الغادر . فتصير سيئة عليه الى أن يترضاه .

وهم يبالغون فى الضيافة ، فاذا طرق أحدهم الضيف ، ذبح له . فاذا تجاوز ثلاثة نفر نحر لهم من أقرب الأنعام إليه ، سواء كانت له أو لغيره وإن لم يكن عنده شىء ، نحر راحلة الضيف وعوضه ما هو خير منها .

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وسلاحهم الحراب السباعية ، مقدار طول الحديدة ، ثلاثة أذرع ، والعود أربعة أذرع ، وبذلك سميت سباعية . والحديدة فى عرض السيف ، لا يخرجونها من أيديهم إلا فى بعض الأوقات ، لأن فى آخر العود شبيها بالفلكة يمنع خروجها عن أيديهم . وصناع هذه الحراب ، نساء فى موضع لا يختلط بهن رجل إلا المشترى منهن . فاذا ولدت إحداهن من الطارقين لهن جارية استحيينها ، وإن ولدت غلاما قتلنه . ويقلن إن الرجال بلاء وحرب . ودرقهم من جلود البقرة مشعرة ، ودرق مقلوبة تعرف بالأكسومية من جلود الجواميس وكذلك الدهلكية ومن دابة فى البحر . وقسيمهم عربية كبار غلاظ من السدر والشوحط . يرمون عليها بنبل مسموم ، وهذا السم يعمل من عروق شجر الفلقة يطبخ على النار حتى يصير مثل الغرا . فاذا أرادوا تجربته ، شرط أحدهم جسده وسيل الدم ، ثم شممه هذا السم ، فاذا أصاب الانسان قتل لوقته ، ولو مثل شرطة الحجام . وليس له عمل فى غير الجرح والدم : وإن شرب منه لم يضر .

وبلدانهم كلها معادن ، وكلما تصاعدت كانت أجود الذهب وأكثر . وفيها معادن الفضة والنحاس والحديد والرصاص وحجر المغنطيس والمرقشيتا والجمشت والزمرد وحجارة بيشطا . فاذا بلت الشطبة منها بزيت وقدت مثل الفتيلة وغير ذلك مما شغلهم طلب معادن الذهب عما سواه . والبجة لا تتعرض لعمل شىء من هذه المعادن .

وفى أوديتهم شجر المقل والأهايلج والأذخر والشيح والسنا والحنظل وشجر البان وغير ذلك . وبأقصى بلدهم النخل وشجر الكرم والرياحين وغير ذلك مما لم يزرعه أحد .

وبها سائر الوحش من : السباع والفيلة والنمور والفهود والقردة وعناق الأرض والزباد ودابة تشبه الغزال حسنه المنظر ، لها قرنان على لون الذهب ، قليلة البقاء إذا صيدت .

ومن الطيور الببغ والتغطيط والنوبى والقمارى ودجاج الحبش وحمام بازين وغير ذلك .

وليس منهم رجل الا منزوع البيضة اليمنى . وأما النساء فمقطوع أشفار (٢٧١) فروجهن ، وأنه يلتحم حتى يشق عنه للمتزوج بمقدار ذكر الرجل ، ثم قل هذا الفعل عندهم ، وقيل إن السبب فى ذلك : أن ملكا من الملوك حاربهم قديما ثم صالحهم وشرط عليهم قطع ثدايا من يولد لهم من النساء ، وقطع ذكور من يولد من الرجال ، أراد بذلك قطع النسل منهم ، فوفوا بالشرط ، وقلبوا المعنى فى أن جعلوا قطع الثدايا للرجال والفروج للنساء . وفيهم جنس يقلعون ثناياهم ، ويقولون : لا نتشبه بالحمير . وفيهم جنس آخر فى آخر بلاد البجة يقال لهم البازة ، نساء جميعهم يتسمون باسم واحد وكذلك الرجال . فطرقهم فى وقت رجل مسلم له جمال فدعا بعضهم بعضا ، وقالوا : هذا والله قد نزل من السماء وهو جالس تحت الشجرة فجعلوا ينظرون إليه من بعد .

وتعظم الحيات ببلدهم وتكثر أصنافها . ورئيت حية فى غدير ماء قد أخرجت ذنبها ، والتفت على امرأة وردت الماء فقتلتها ، فرئى شحمها قد خرج من دبرها من شدة الضغطة . وبها حية ليس

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لها رأس وطرفاها سواء منقشة ليست بالكبيرة . إذا مشى الانسان على أثرها ، مات . واذا قتلت وأمسك القاتل ما قتلها به من عود أو حربة فى يده — ولم يلقها من ساعته — مات . وقتلت حية منها بخشبة ، فانشقت الخشبة . وإذا تأمل هذه الحية أحد وهى ميتة أو حية ، أصابه ضررها .

وفى البجة شر وتسرّع إليه . ولهم فى الاسلام وقبله أذية على شرق صعيد مصر . خربوا هناك قرى عديدة . وكانت فراعنة مصر تغزوهم ، وتوادعوهم أحيانا لحاجتهم الى المعادن ، وكذلك الروم لما ملكوا مصر ، ولهم فى المعادن آثار مشهورة ، وكان أصحابهم بها وقد فتحت مصر .

(٢٧٢) قال عبد الرحمن بن الحكم : وتجمع لعبد الله بن سعد بن أبى سرح فى انصرافه من النوبه ، على شاطىء النيل ، البجة ، فسأل عن شأنهم ، فأخبر أنه ليس لهم ملك يرجعون اليه ، فهان عليه أمرهم وتركهم ، فلم يكن لهم عقد ولا صلح .

وكان أول من هادنهم عبيد الله بن الحبحاب السلولى . ويذكر أنه وجد فى كتاب ابن الحبحاب لهم : ثلثمائة بكر فى كل عام حتى ينزلوا الريف مجتازين تجارا غير مقيمين ، على أن لا يقتلوا مسلما ولا ذميا ، فان قتلوه فلا عهد لهم ، ولا يؤوا عبيد المسلمين ، وأن يردوا أباقهم اذا وقعوا إليهم . ويقال ، انهم كانوا يؤخذون بهذا ، ولكل شاة أخذها بجاوى فعليه أربعة دنانير ، وللبقرة عشرة . وكان وكيلهم مقيما بالريف رهينة بيد المسلمين .

ثم كثر المسلمون فى المعدن فخالطوهم وتزوجوا فيهم ، وأسلم كثير من الجنس المعروف بالحدارب اسلاما ضعيفا . وهم شوكة القوم ووجوههم ، وهم مما يلى مصر من أول حدهم الى العلاقى وعيذاب المعبر منه الى جدة وما وراء ذلك . ومنهم جنس آخر يعرفون بالزنافج ، هم أكثر عددا من الحدارب ، غير أنهم تبع لهم وخفراؤهم يحمونهم ، ويحبونهم المواشى . ولكن رئيس من الحدارب قوم من الزنافج فى حملته . فهم كالعبيد يتوارثونهم ، بعد أن كانت الزنافج قديما أظهر (٢٧٣) عليهم .

ثم كثرت أذيتهم على المسلمين — وكانت ولاة أسوان من العراق — فرفع الى أمير المؤمنين المأمون خبرهم ، فأخرج اليهم عبد الله بن الجهم ، فكانت له معهم وقائع ، ثم وادعهم وكتب بينه وبين كنون رئيسهم الكبير الذى يكون بقريتهم هجر المقدم ذكرها ، كتابا نسخته :

— بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم — ، هذا كتاب كتبه عبد الله بن الجهم مولى أمير المؤمنين صاحب جيش الغزاة ، عامل الأمير أبى اسحق بن أمير المؤمنين الرشيد أبقاه الله ، فى شهر ربيع الأول سنة ست عشرة ومائتين ، لكنون بن عبد العزيز عظيم البجة ، بأسوان : أنك سألتنى وطلبت إلىّ أن أومنك وأهل بلدك من البجة ، وأعقد لك ولهم أمانا علىّ وعلى جميع المسلمين ، فأجبتك ، الى أن عقدت لك علىّ وعلى جميع المسلمين أمانا ، ما استقمت واستقاموا ، على ما أعطيتنى وشرطت لى فى كتابى هذا . وذلك أن يكون سهل بلدك وجبلها من منتهى حد أسوان من أرض

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مصر ، الى حد ما بين دهلك وباضع ملكا للمأمون عبد الله بن هرون أمير المؤمنين ، أعزه الله تعالى ، وأنت وجميع أهل بلدك عبيد لأمير المؤمنين ، إلا أنه يقرك فى بلدك ملكا على ما أنت عليه فى البجة ، وعلى أن تؤدى إليه الخراج فى كل عام على ما كان عليه سلف البجة : وذلك مائة من الإبل أو ثلثمائة دينار وازنة داخلة فى بيت المال ، الخيار فى ذلك لأمير المؤمنين ولولاته . وليس لك أن تخرم شيئا عليك من الخراج . وعلى أن كل أحد منكم ان ذكر محمدا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ، وكتاب الله أو دينه بما لا ينبغى أن يذكره به ، أو قتل أحدا من المسلمين حرا أو عبدا ، فقد برئت منه الذمة ، ذمة الله وذمة رسوله صلى الله عليه وسلم وذمة أمير المؤمنين ، أعزه الله ، وذمة (٢٧٤) جماعة المسلمين ، وحلّ دمه كما يحل دم أهل الحرب وذراريهم . وعلى أن أحدا منكم ان أعان المحاربين على أهل الاسلام بمال أو دله على عورة من عورات المسلمين أو أثر لعزتهم ، فقد نقض ذمة عهده وحل دمه . وعلى أن أحدا منكم إن قتل أحدا من المسلمين عمدا أو خطأ حراً أو عبداً من أهل ذمة المسلمين ، أو أصاب لأحد من المسلمين أو أهل ذمتهم مالا ببلاد البجة ، أو فى بلاد الاسلام ، أو ببلاد النوبة ، أو فى شىء من البلدان براً أو بحراً فعليه فى قتل المسلم عشر ديات ، وفى قتل العبد المسلم عشر قيم ، وفى قتل الذمى عشر ديات من دياتهم ، وفى كل مال أصبتموه للمسلمين وأهل الذمة عشرة أضعافه . وان دخل أحد من المسلمين ببلاد البجة تاجراً أو مقيما أو مجتازا أو حاجا فهو آمن فيكم كأحدكم حتى يخرج من بلادكم . ولا تؤوا أحدا من أباق المسلمين ، فان أتاكم آت فعليكم أن تردوه الى المسلمين ، وعلى أن تردوا أموال المسلمين اذا صارت فى بلادكم بلا مؤنة تلزمهم فى ذلك . وعلى أنكم إن نزلتم ريف صعيد مصر لتجارة أو مجتازين ، لا تظهرون سلاحا ولا تدخلون المدائن والقرى بحال ، ولا تمنعوا أحدا من المسلمين الدخول فى بلادكم والتجارة فيها برا ولا بحرا ، ولا تخيفوا السبيل ولا تقطعوا الطريق على أحد من المسلمين ولا أهل الذمة ، ولا تسرقوا لمسلم ولا ذمى مالا . وعلى أن لا تهدموا شيئا من المساجد التى ابتناها المسلمون بصيحة وهجر وبسائر بلادكم طولا وعرضا ، فإن فعلتم شيئا من ذلك فلا عهد لكم ولا ذمة . وعلى أن كنون بن عبد العزيز يقيم بريف صعيد مصر وكيلا يفى للمسلمين بما شرط لهم من دفع الخراج ورد ما أصابه البجة للمسلمين من دم ومال ، وعلى أن أحدا (٢٧٥) من البجة لا يعترض حد القصر الى قرية يقال لها قبان من بلد النوبة ، حدا لا عمدة .

عقد عبد الله بن الجهم مولى أمير المؤمنين لكنون بن عبد العزيز كبير البجة الأمان على ما سمينا وشرطنا فى كتابنا هذا ، وعلى أن يوافى به أمير المؤمنين . فان زاغ كنون أو عاث فلا عهد له ولا ذمة . وعلى كنون أن يدخل عمال أمير المؤمنين بلاد البجة لقبس صدقات من أسلم من البجة . وعلى كنون الوفاء بما شرط لعبد الله بن الجهم ، وأخذ بذلك عهد الله بأعظم ما أخذ على خلقه من الوفاء والميثاق . ولكنون بن عبد العزيز ولجميع البجة عهد الله وميثاقه ، وذمة أمير المؤمنين

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وذمة أبى اسحاق ابن أمير المؤمنين ، وذمة عبد الله بن الجهم وذمة المسلمين بالوفاء بما أعطاه عبد الله ابن الجهم ما وفى كنون بن عبد العزيز بجميع ما شرط عليه. فان غيّر كنون أو بدّل أحد من البجة ، فذمة الله جلّ اسمه ، وذمة أمير المؤمنين ، وذمة الأمير أبى اسحاق بن أمير المؤمنين الرشيد ، وذمة عبد الله بن الجهم ، وذمة المسلمين بريئة منهم .

وترجم جميع ما فى هذا الكتاب حرفا حرفا ، زكريا بن صالح المخزومى من سكان جدة ، وعبد الله بن اسماعيل القرشى . ثم نسق جماعة من شهود أسوان .

فأقام البجة على ذلك برهة ، ثم عادوا الى غزو الريف من صعيد مصر وكثر الضجيج منهم الى أمير المؤمنين جعفر المتوكل على الله ، فندب لحربهم محمد بن عبد الله القمى . فسأل أن يختار من الرجال من أحب ، ولم يرغب الى (٢٧٦) الكثرة لصعوبة المسالك . فخرج اليهم من مصر فى عدة قوية ورجال منتخبة ، وسارت المراكب فى البحر ، فاجتمع البجة لهم فى عدد كثير عظيم قدر كبو الإبل ، فهاب المسلمون ذلك ، فشغلهم بكتاب طويل كتبه فى طومار ولفه بثوب ، فاجتمعوا لقرءته ، فحمل عليهم وفى أعناق الخيل الأجراس ، فنفرت الجمال بالبجة ولم تثبت لصلصلة الأجراس ، فركب المسلمون أقفيتهم وقتلوا منهم مقتلة عظيمة ، وقتل كبيرهم . فقام من بعده ابن أخيه وبعث يطلب الهدنة . فصالحهم على أن يطأ بساط أمير المؤمنين . فسار الى بغداد ، وقدم على المتوكل بسر من رأى فى سنة احدى وأربعين ومائتين فصولح على أداء الأتاوة والبقط . واشترط عليهم أن لا يمنعوا المسلمين من العمل فى المعدن . وأقام القمى بأسوان مدة وترك فى خزائنها ما كان معه من السلاح وآلة الغزو . فلم تزل الولاة تأخذ منه حتى لم يبقوا منه شيئا .

فلما كثر المسلمون فى المعادن ، واختلطوا بالبجة ، قل شرهم . وظهر التبر لكثرة طلابه ، وتسامع الناس به فوفدوا من البلدان . وقدم عليهم أبو عبد الرحمن بن عبد الله بن عبد الحميد العمرى بعد محاربته النوبة ، سنة خمس وخمسين ومائتين ومعه ربيعة وجهينة وغيرهم من العرب ، فكثرت بهم العمارة فى البجة حتى صارت الرواحل التى تحمل الميرة إليهم من أسوان ستين ألف راحلة غير الجلاب التى تحمل من القلزم الى عيذاب .

ومالت البجة الى ربيعة وتزوجوا إليهم ، وقيل أن كهان البجة — قبل إسلام من أسلم منهم — ذكرت عن معبودهم الطاعة لربيعة ولكنون معها ، فهم على ذلك . فلما قتل العمرى واستولت ربيعة على الجزيرة ووالاهم على ذلك البجة فأخرجت من خالفها من العرب وتصاهروا الى رؤساء البجة . وبذلك كف ضررهم عن المسلمين .

والبجة الداخلة فى الصحراء بلد علوة مما يلى البحر الملح إلى أول الحبشة وحالهم فى الطعن والمواشى وأتباع الرعى والمعيشة والمراكب والسلاح كحال الحدارب ، إلا أن الحدارب أشجع وأهدى ،

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والداخلة على كفرهم من عبادة الشيطان والاقتداء بكهانهم . ولكل بطن كاهن يضرب له قبة من أدم يتعبدهم فيها . فاذا (٢٧٨) أرادوا استخباره عما يحتاجون إليه تعرى ودخل الى القبة مستدبرا ويخرج إليهم وبه أثر جنون وصداع يقول : الشيطان يقرئكم السلام ويقول لكم : ارحلوا عن هذه الرحلة ، فان الرهط الفلانى يقع بكم ، وسألتم عن الغزو الى بلد كذا ، فسيروا ، فانكم تظفرون وتغنمون كذا وكذا ، والجمال التى تأخذونها من موضع كذا هى لى ، والجارية الفلانية التى تجدونها فى الخباء الفلانى ، والغنم التى من صفتها كذا ونحو هذا القول . فيزعمون أنه يصدقهم فى أكثر ذلك . فاذا غنموا أخرجوا من الغنيمة ما ذكر ودفعوه الى الكاهن يتموله ، ويحرمون ألبان نوقها على من لم يقبل . فاذا أرادوا الرحيل حمل الكاهن هذه القبة على جمل منفرد ، فيزعمون أن ذلك الجمل لا يثور إلا بجهد ، وكذلك سيره ويتصبب عرقا والخيمة فارغة لا شىء فيها . وقد بقى فى الحدارب من هو على هذا المذهب ، ومنهم من يتمسك بذلك مع إسلامه .

قال مؤرخ النوبة ، ومنه لخصت ما تقدم ذكره . وقد قرأت فى خطبة الأجناس لأمير المؤمنين على بن أبى طالب رضى الله عنه ، ذكر البجة والكجة ويقول عنهم : شديد كلبهم ، قليل سلبهم . فالبجة كذلك ، وأما الكجة فلا أعرفهم ، انتهى ما ذكره عبد الله بن أحمد مؤرخ النوبة .

﴿ ذكر بلاق ﴾

بلاق أجل حصن للمسلمين وهى جزيرة تقرب من الجنادل محيط بها النيل فيها بلد كبير يسكنه خلق كثير من الناس وبها نخل عظيم ومنبر فى جامع واليها تنتهى سفن النوبة وسفن المسلمين من أسوان وبينها وبين القرية التى تعرف بالقصر وهى أول بلد النوبة ميل واحد وبينها وبين أسوان أربعة أميال ومن أسوان الى هذا الموضع جنادل فى البحر لا تسلكها المراكب إلا بالحيلة ودلالة من يخبر بذلك من الصيادين الذين يصيدون هناك وبالقصر مسلحة وباب الى بلد النوبة .

﴿ ذكر البقـــط ﴾

وكان يؤخذ منهم فى قرية يقال لها القصر مسافتها من أسوان خمسة أميال فيما بين بلد بلاق وبلد النوبة وكان القصر فرضة لقوص وأول ما تقرر هذا البقط على النوبة فى إمارة عمرو بن العاص لما بعث عبد الله بن سعد بن أبى سرح بعد فتح مصر الى النوبة سنة عشرين وقيل سنة احدى وعشرين فى عشرين ألفا فمكث بها زمانا فكتب إليه عمرو يأمره بالرجوع إليه فلما مات عمرو رضى الله عنه نقض النوبة الصلح الذى جرى بينهم وبين عبد الله بن سعد وكثرت سراياهم الى الصعيد فأخرجوا وأفسدوا فغزاهم مرة ثانية عبد الله بن أبى سرح وهو على إمارة مصر فى خلافة عثمان رضى الله عنه

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سنة احدى وثلاثين وحصرهم بمدينة دنقلة حصارا شديدا ورماهم بالمنجنيق ولم تكن النوبة تعرفه وخسف بهم كنيستهم بحجر فبهرهم ذلك وطلب ملكهم واسمه قليدوروث الصلح وخرج الى عبد الله وأبدى ضعفاً ومسكنة وتواضعا فتلقاه عبد الله ورفعه وقربه ثم قرر الصلح معه على ثلثمائة وستين رأسا فى كل سنة ووعده عبد الله بحبوب يهديها إليه لما شكا له قلة الطعام ببلده وكتب لهم كتابا نسخته بعد البسملة عهد من الأمير عبد الله بن سعد بن أبى سرح لعظيم النوبة ولجميع أهل مملكته عهد عقده على الكبير والصغير من النوبة من حد أرض أسوان الى حد أرض علوة أن عبد الله ابن سعد جعل لهم أمانا وهدنة جارية بينهم وبين المسلمين ممن جاورهم من أهل صعيد مصر وغيرهم من المسلمين وأهل الذمة انكم معاشر النوبة آمنون بأمان الله وأمان رسوله محمد النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم أن لا نحاربكم ولا ننصب لكم حربا ولا نغزوكم ما أقمتم على الشرائط التى بيننا وبينكم على أن تدخلوا بلدنا مجتازين غير مقيمين فيه وندخل بلدكم مجتازين غير مقيمين فيه وعليكم حفظ من نزل بلدكم أو يطرقه من مسلم أو معاهد حتى يخرج عنكم وان عليكم رد كل آبق خرج اليكم من عبيد المسلمين حتى تردوه الى أرض الاسلام ولا تستولوا عليه ولا تمنعوا منه ولا تتعرضوا لمسلم قصده وحاوره الى أن ينصرف عنه وعليكم حفظ المسجد الذى ابتناه المسلمون بفناء مدينتكم ولا تمنعوا منه مصليا وعليكم كنسه واسراجه وتكرمته وعليكم فى كل سنة ثلثمائة وستون رأسا تدفعونها الى إمام المسلمين من أوسط رقيق بلادكم غير المعيب يكون فيها ذكران واناث ليس فيها شيخ هرم ولا عجوز ولا طفل لم يبلغ الحلم تدفعون ذلك إلى والى أسوان وليس على مسلم دفع عدو عرض لكم ولا منعه عنكم من حد أرض علوة الى أرض أسوان فان أنتم آويتم عبداً لمسلم أو قتلتم مسلما أو معاهدا أو تعرضتم للمسجد الذى ابتناه المسلمون بفناء مدينتكم بهدم أو منعتم شيئا من الثلثمائة رأس والستين رأسا فقد بورئت منكم هذه الهدنة والأمان وعدنا نحن وأنتم على سواء حتى يحكم الله بيننا وهو خير الحاكمين علينا بذلك عهد الله وميثاقه وذمته وذمة رسوله محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم ولنا عليكم بذلك أعظم ما تدينون به من ذمة المسيح وذمة الحواريين وذمة من تعظمونه من أهل دينكم وملتكم الله الشاهد بيننا وبينكم على ذلك كتبه عمرو بن شرحبيل فى رمضان سنة احدى وثلاثين . وكانت النوبة دفعت الى عمرو بن العاص ما صولحوا عليه من البقط قبل نكثهم وأهدوا الى عمرو أربعين رأسا من الرقيق فلم يقبلها ورد الهدية الى كبير البقط ويقال له سمقوس فاشترى له بذلك جهازا وخمرا ووجهه إليه وبعث إليهم عبد الله بن سعد ما وعدهم به من الحبوب قمحا وشعيرا وعدسا وثيابا وخيلا ثم تطاول الرسم على ذلك فصار رسما يأخذونه عند دفع البقط فى كل سنة وصارت الأربعون رأسا التى أهديت الى عمرو يأخذها والى مصر وعن أبى خليفة حميد ابن هشام البحترى أن الذى صولح عليه النوبة ثلثمائة وستون رأسا لفىء المسلمين ولصاحب مصر أربعون رأسا ويدفع إليهم ألف أردب قمحا ولرسله ثلثمائة أردب ومن الشعير كذلك ومن الخمر

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ألف اقتيز للمتملك ولرسله ثلثمائة اقتيز وفرسين من نتاج خيل الامارة ومن أصناف الثياب مائة ثوب من القباطى أربعة أثواب للمتملك ولرسله ثلاثة ومن البقطرية ثمانية أثواب ومن المعملة خمسة أثواب وجبة مجملة للملك ومن قمص أبى بقطر عشرة أثواب ومن أخاص عشرة أثواب وهى ثياب غلاظ قال أبو خليفة ليس فى كتاب عبد الله بن وهب ولا فى كتاب الواقدى تسمية ينتهى إليها وإنما أخذت التسمية من أبى زكريا قال أبو زكريا سمعت والدى عثمان بن صالح يقول هذا الخبر فحفظت منه ما وقفت عليه وقال حضرت مجلس الأمير عبد الله بن طاهر وهو على مصر فقال أنت عثمان بن صالح الذى وجهنا اليك فى كتاب بقط النوبة قلت نعم فأقبل على محفوظ بن سليمان فقال ما أعجب أمر هذه البلد وجهنا إليهم نطلب علما من علومهم والى هذا الشيخ فما شفانا أحد منهم فقلت أصلح الله الأمير إن الذى طلبت من خبر النوبة عندى قد حفظه شيوخ عن الشيوخ الذين حضروا هناك الهدنة والصلح الذى جرى بين عبد الله بن سعد وبين النوبة ثم حدثته عن أخبارهم كما سمعت فأنكر عطية الخمر فقلت قد أنكرها عمر بن عبد العزيز بن مروان وكان هذا المجلس بفسطاط مصر سنة احدى عشرة ومائتين بعد أن تم الصلح بينه وبين عبد الله بن السرى بن الحكم التميمى الأمير كان قبله قال عثمان بن صالح فوجه الأمير الى الديوان بظهر المسجد الجامع بمصر فاستخرج منه خبر النوبة فوجده كما ذكرت فسره ذلك . وعن مالك بن أنس أنه كان يرى أن أرض النوبة إلى حد علوة صلح وكان لا يجيز شراء رقيقهم وكان أصحابه مثل عبد الله بن عبد الحكم وعبد الله ابن وهب والليث بن سعد ويزيد بن أبى حبيب وغيرهم من فقهاء مصر يرون خلاف ذلك قال الليث بن سعد نحن أعرف بأرض النوبة من الامام مالك بن أنس إنما صولحوا على أن لا نغزوهم ولا نمنع منهم عدوا فما استرقه متملكهم أو غزا بعضهم بعضا فشراؤه جائز وما استرقه بغاة المسلمين وسراقهم فغير جائز وكان عند جماعة منهم جوار نوبيات لفرشهم ولم يزل النوبة يؤدون البقط كل سنة ويدفع اليهم ما تقدم ذكره الى أيام أمير المؤمنين المعتصم بالله أبى اسحق بن الرشيد وكبير النوبة يومئذ زكريا بن بحنس وكانت النوبة ربما عجزت عن دفع البقط فشنت الغارة عليهم ولاة المسلمين القريبون من بلادهم ويمنع من اخراج الجهاز اليهم فأنكر قيرقى ولد كبيرهم زكرياء على أبيه بذلة الطاعة لغيره واستعجزه فيما يدفع فقال له أبوه فما تشاء قال عصيانهم ومحاربتهم قال أبوه هذا شىء رآه السلف من آبائنا صوابا وأخشى أن يفضى هذا الأمر إليك فتقدم على محاربة المسلمين غير أنى أوجهك الى ملكهم رسولا فأنت ترى حالنا وحالهم فان رأيت لنا بهم طاقة حاربناهم على خبرة وإلا سألته الاحسان إلينا فشخص فيرقى الى بغداد وكانت البلدان تزين له ويسير على المدن وانحدر بانحداره رئيس البجة بأسبابه ولقيا المعتصم فنظرا الى ما بهرهما من حال العراق فى كثرة الجيوش وعظم العمارة مع ما شاهداه فى طريقهما فقرب المعتصم قيرقى وأدناه وأحسن اليه احسانا تاما وقبل هديته وكافأه بأضعافها وقال له تمن ما شئت فسأله فى اطلاق المحبوسين فأجابه الى ذلك

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وكبر فى عين المعتصم ووهب له الدار التى نزلها بالعراق وأمر أن يشترى له فى كل منزل من طريقه دار تكون لرسلهم فانه امتنع من دخول دار لاحد فيها فى طريقه فأخذ له بمصر دار بالجيزة وأخرى ببنى وائل وأجرى لهم فى ديوان مصر سبعمائة دينار وفرسا وسرجا ولجاما وسيفا محلى وثوبا مثقلا وعمامة من الخز وقميص شرب ورداء شرب وثيابا لرسله غير محدودة عند وصول البقط الى مصر ولهم حملان وخلع على المتولى لقبس البقط وعليهم رسوم معلومة لقابس البقط والمتصرفين معه وما يهدى اليهم بعد ذلك فغير محدود وهو عندهم هدية يجازون عليها ونظر المعتصم الى ما كان يدفعه المسلمون فوجده أكثر من البقط وأنكر عطية الخمر وأجرى الحبوب والثياب التى تقدم ذكرها وقرر دفع البقط بعد انقضاء كل ثلاث سنين وكتب لهم كتابا بذلك بقى فى يد النوبة وادعى النوبى على القوم من أهل أسوان أنهم اشتروا أملاكا من عبيده فأمر المعتصم بالنظر فى ذلك فأحضر والى البلد والمختار للحكم فيه التابعين من النوبة وسألاهم عما ادعاه صاحبهم من بيعهم فأنكروا ذلك وقالوا نحن رعية فزال ما ادعاه وطلب أشياء غير ذلك من إزالة المسلحة المعروفة بالقصر عن موضعها الى الحد الذى بينهم وبين المسلمين لان المسلحة على أرضهم فلم يجبه الى ذلك ولم يزل الرسم جاريا يدفع البقط على هذا التقرير ويدفع إليهم ما أجراه المعتصم الى أن قدمت الدولة الفاطمية الى مصر ذكر ذلك مؤرخ النوبة .

كتـــاب المقـفى

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(١٦٤ ب) عبد الله بن عبد الحميد بن عبد الله الناسك بن عبد العزيز بن عبد الله بن عمر بن الخطاب رضى الله عنه ، أبو عبد الرحمن العمرى العدوى القرشى . ولد بالمدينة ، ونشأ بها ، وقدم مصر ، وجالس محمد بن عبد الله بن الحكم ، وسمع منه الناس الحديث .

ثم مضى الى ابراهيم بن الأغلب بالقيروان ومدحه ، فوصله بألف دينار .

وعاد فى سنة احدي وأربعين ومائتين الى مصر . وكانت فيه أدوات من فقه وأدب وشعر ومعرفة بالنجوم والفلسفة ، فبلغه خبر المعدن ، واثارة الناس للتبر ، فاشترى عبيداً لعمل المعدن ، وسار الى أسوان على سبيل التجارة ونزل بها ، وجالس شيوخها ، وجاراهم العلم .

ثم دخل — أرض — المعدن ، ونزل على حى من مضر فوقع بين المضرية والربعة اختلاف بسبب رجل قتل من مضر ، فاجتمع الفريقان ، وأقيد القاتل ووهب الى ولى الدم ، ولم يحضر العمرى ، فغضب من ذلك ورحل عنهم ، فلحقته جماعة من القوم ليرضوه ، فامتنع عليهم وقال : « نقمت عليكم أطراحى ، اذ لم تحضرونى هذا الأمر » . قالوا : « ما علمنا أنك تختار هذا ،

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أما وقد رغبت الى مثله فلا خلاف عليك منا ، ولا نورد ولا نصدر بعد هذا الا عن أمرك » . وأتبعوا القول ايمانا مؤكدة . فانتهز — العمرى — الفرصة بيمين القوم ، وجعلها عقد بيعة ، وعاد معهم الى بيوتهم ، وأمرهم بالرجوع عما وهبوا من الدم وحمل السلاح والمحاربة ففعلوا .

وكانت بينهم وقائع ، وكاثرته ربيعة ، فانحاز الى معدن مما يلى الجنوب وكانت المياه على بعد وربما عطشوا ، فنظر ذات يوم الى طير ، فقال : « هذا من طيور الشطوط ، وأحسب أن النيل قريب » . فوجه الوارد ، فكان كما قدر . وعاد اليه من يومه بقرب الماء ، وأخبره بما شاهد من بلد مقرة ، وأنهم فى ظهره . فسر بذلك ، وأمر الناس بالورود . فأنكرت النوبة شأنهم وقبضوا على جماعة منهم . فصار اليهم والتمس خلاصهم ، بعد أن راسل وتلطف ، وبعد عطش شديد نالهم بتأخر الزاد ، حتى بلغت الشنكة — من — الماء درهمين تبرا ، فعرف ذلك المعدن من حينئذ بالشنكة .

وسأل العمرى النوبة أن يجعلوا له — ولأصحابه — طريقا للورود الى الماء لا يتجاوزون حدها ، فامتنعوا من ذلك ، وقتلوا من أسروا من أصحابه ، فشق عليه فعلهم ، وعاد الى أصحابه ، واستنفر الناس ، فاجتمعوا اليه ، وحلفوا له ، فأمرهم باحضار آلة المعدن . فلما حضرت أمر بضربها حرابا ، وسار الى النوبة فى غفلة (١٦٥ أ) منهم ، فوقع بموضع يعرف بشنقير ، قبلى مدينة دمقلة بنحو من شهرين .

والنيل ينعطف فى هذا الموضع الى مطلع الشمس ، حتى يصير بينه وبين الشنكة بعض نهار يوم ، ثم يعود النيل الى الغرب ، ويرجع الى الشرق . فبهذا التعطف ، طالت المسافة على سالك النيل . وقد تركت النوبة هذه العطوف ، وجعلت طريقها المجاوب ، فصارت تقطع مسيرة شهر فى يومين .

فنكى العمرى فى النوبة ، وقتل منهم مقتلة عظيمة ، وكثر السبى عند أصحابه ، حتى أن أحدهم كان يحلق رأسه ، فيعطى المزين رأسا .

وانحازت النوبة الى الغرب بالمراكب بجميع ما لهم . فاختار العمرى جماعة من أصحابه ، وأمرهم بنفخ القرب والعبور عليها ليلا ، وكبس النوبة وأخذ المراكب منهم .

واتفق أن واحدا من أصحابه قال ، بعد ما وصل الى الغرب : « يا قوم أخرجونى من الماء فان التمساح قطع رجلى » . وكان قد أتى عليه وهو سائر ، فخشى أن يفسد أصحابه عن عزمهم ، فصبر حتى وصلوا الى حيث النوبة .

وأوقع القوم بالنوبة ، فظفروا — بهم — ووصلوا الى الجزائر والغرب بالمراكب التى أخذوها .

وكتب العمرى الى أسوان ، يسأل التجار — المساعدة — والخروج اليه بالجهاز من طريق المعدن . فخرج اليه رجل يعرف بعثمان بن حنجلة التميمى فى ألف راحلة فيها الجهاز والبر . فقام اليه العمرى

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وتلقاه ، وسر بذلك ، وكثر رقيقهم بأسوان والمعدن ، حتى صار أكثر سرارى أهل البلد من سبى النوبة وعرفوا بالعكيات لرخصهن .

وكان ملك النوبة حينئذ ، قيرقى بن زكريا بن يحنس ، فندب لقتال العمرى ، نيوتى بن قشما ، وكان شجاعا ، ودفع اليه أكثر رجاله ، فوقعت بينهما وقائع وحروب يطول شرحها .

ثم أن نيوتى صالح العمرى ، على أن يكون فى ناحية من البلد ولا يهيجه وخالف خاله قيرقى .

فبعث قيرقى بولده الأكبر لمحاربة العمرى ، فعجز عنه ، وهزمه مرارا . فانحاز الى بلد علوة ، واستجار بملك علوة أربع سنين — لأنه أقام ببلدهم الى أن خرج سبع سنين — فأنجده صاحب علوة .

وكان لقيرقى ابن آخر اسمه زكريا ، فأشار عليه بموادعة العمرى ومحاربة ابن قشما ، وأن يندبه لذلك . فسلم اليه جيشه وبعثه الى ابن قشما بعد أن أرسل الى العمرى ألا يدخل بينهما ، فأجابه الى ذلك . فتحاربت النوبة محاربات كثيرة وقد أمرهم العمرى أن يخندقوا على عسكره ، فانتصر ابن قشما (١٦٥ ب) على زكريا ، وهزم أصحابه وقتلهم ، وفر زكريا حتى رمى بنفسه فى النيل على فرس . وصار الى المشرق ومعه غلامان . فخاف من العمرى وابن قشما ، ورأى أن العمرى أخف عليه . فأتاه واستأذن — فى القدوم — عليه يقول : انه غلام لزكريا ، فأذن له . فلما دخل اليه ، سأله عن حاله ، وخبر زكريا . فعرفه هزيمته ، وما قتل من رجاله ، وأنه من غلمانه — ورغب فى الكون معه . فأنزله وأحسن اليه . فطلب منه خلوة ، فلما خلا به ، أعلمه أنه من وجوه غلمان زكريا وثقاته . وأنه أنفذه ليأخذ له أمانا ليصير اليه ، ويكون فى جملته ، فسر العمرى بذلك وأوثقه من نفسه ايمانا كما طلب . فلما توثق منه أعلمه أنه زكريا فازداد سرورا واعجابا به لما ظهر من عقله ، على صغر سنه .

وأقام زكريا على ذلك مدة حتى أنس اليه وعرف رجال العمرى واختلط بهم ، وافتقد دفائن كانت لهم ، فوجدها بحالها لم يعلم بها المسلمون ، فاطلع العمرى عليها وسلمها اليه . ومضى الى مواضع أخر ، فأخرج ما فيها ، ودفعه اليه أيضا ، فملك بذلك قلبه واستولى عليه .

فلما عرف زكريا أنس العمرى اليه وثقته به ، سأله معاونته على ابن قشما وقال له : — انه — عدوى وعدوك ، وان أظفرنى الله به ، رجعت النوبة الى طاعتى واجتمعت الىّ ، فصرت بهم اليك ، وتصرفت عن أمرك فى الأعاجم وما بعد منك وما بيدك يكون بحاله ، وأزوجك من أختى — زوجة ابن قشما — بعد قتله ، لأن أبى شيخ كبير وقد كبرت سنه . وما زال يخدعه حتى انقاد اليه . وقال له : « لو كان هذا الذى تطلبه من قبل ابن قشما لك خاصة ، لساعدتك عليه ،

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لقصدك لى وركونك الىّ ، وكونك فى جملتى . فكيف وهذه ارادتى ، وصلاح شأنى ، فانى لى بالذى تذكره — عن ابن قشما — مع شجاعته وكثرة من معه ؟ » قال له زكريا : « أحتال عليه وأغتاله » . قال له العمرى : « اعمل ما بدا لك » .

فاختار زكريا من أصحاب العمرى أربعة من شجعان العسكر ووجوهه ، كان بعث بهم العمرى الى ابن قشما مرارا . فصار يأنس بهم ، فأمرهم العمرى بمساعدته . ثم سار بهم زكريا فى زورق خفيف فى النيل ، بعد أن وعدهم ومناهم وقال : « إن قتلتم ابن قشما ، أعطيتكم وزنه ذهبا ، لكل رجل منكم » . فلما قرب منه ، أمرهم أن يقيدوه ولقنهم ما يقولونه فنزلوا جزيرة محاذية لابن قشما ، وراسلوه بأن يقرب منهم . بحيث يسمع كلامهم ، ففعل . ثم قالوا : « ان الشيخ الصالح — يعنون العمرى — يقرأ عليك السلام ، ويقول لك : ان الله قد أمكن من عدوى وعدوك ، وانى قد راسلتك فى أمره ، جوابا عن رسالتك ، تسأل أن أسلمه اليك ، وتعطينى من المال كذا ، ومن الرقيق كذا ، وقد وجهت بذلك مع فلان (١٦٦أ) وفلان ، اذ كانوا ثقاتى ، وأنت تأنس اليهم . فقرر الأمر معهم ، وخله اليك ، وادفع الى القوم ما توافقهم عليه ، وعلى أن يكون بيننا من الشرط كذا وكذا . فقال : « قد رضيت » . وذكر لهم ما يدفعه ، فقال لهم زكريا : « امتنعوا عليه » . فأخذ ابن قشما يزيدهم ، حتى تقرر الأمر بينهم . فأمرهم زكريا باجابته .

وكان قد نظر لهم فى الكف رجل مغربى ، فقال لهم : « ان جاءكم ماشيا لم تصلوا اليه ، وان جاءكم محمولا قتلتموه » . قال ابن قشما : « أريد أن أراه قبل الدفع » . قالوا له : « افعل » . فأنزل الى القارب محمولا ، ليصبح كما قال صاحب الكف ، وتبعه جماعة من أصحابه . قالوا : « نحن أربعة وتأتينا بجماعة ، كأنك تريد أن تقهرنا عليه وتأخذه بلا عوض » . فأمر أصحابه بالرجوع ، وخرج فى قلة الى الجزيرة ، وبسط له كرسى وأمر زكريا أصحابه بحمله ووضعه بين يدى ابن قشما ، وقال : « أشاغله بالكلام فاذا اطمأن فافتكوا به » . وجعل زكريا العلامة — بينه و— بينهم البكاء . فلما وضع زكريا بين يدى ابن قشما ، نقف رأسه بقضيب ذهب كان فى يده ، وقال : « الحمد لله الذى أمكن منك » قال له : « ياعم ، قد قدرت ، فاعف عنى ، وأحسن الظفر ، فان هؤلاء المسلمين غدروا بى ، ورغبوا الى العوض » . فجعل ابن قشما يعدد عليه قبائح أفعاله ، وزكريا يعتذر ، وهو لا يقبل منه . ثم انه بكى ، فوثب الجماعة على ابن قشما وقتلوه للوقت ، وأخرجوا زكريا من القيد . فصار الى عسكر ابن قشما ، ونادى فيه بأن الله قد غفر لكم ما قد سلف . وأحضر وجوه العسكر ، واستمالهم وأسر اليهم الغدر بالعمرى وبالأربعة الذين معه . ثم استدعى الأربعة ، وشكرهم بحضرة أصحابه ، وأمر بالاحسان اليهم . فلم يبق أحد من الوجوه حتى برهم ، وصار بهم الى أخته — زوجة ابن قشما — وأعلمها بحضرتهم أنه يريد تزويجها من العمرى ، فرضيت ودفع اليها معجلا عنه ، وأمرهم فكتبوا بما جرى الى العمرى . وكتب هو أيضا بذلك

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وأنه سائر نحوه بالعسكر ، وسأله أن يعد لهم القول ولوجوه العسكر الخلع والبر ، وبعث بالكتب مع الغلام لأحد الأربعة . فسر العمرى بذلك وتقدم باعداد ما طلب زكريا .

ثم أن زكريا بدأ بقتل الأربعة ، وعبر بالجيش الى الشرق ، يريد العمرى ، حتى قرب منه . فقال رجل للعمرى : « إن هذا الكافر قد صار معنا بأرض واحدة (١٦٦ ب) ، وهو مما لا طاقة لنا به » . فقال : « على هذا وافقنى أن تسير بالجيش الىّ ويكون فى طاعتى » .

ثم أن زكريا هجم على القوم وهم غادون ، فقتل منهم مقتلة عظيمة ، وانهزم العمرى وأصحابه ، وتركوا جميع ما معهم ، لا يلوون على شىء منه . وانحدر من كان فى الجزائر منهم فى مراكب ، وكانوا يتقوون بها ، ويحمل اليهم الطعام من الجزائر . فدس اليهم زكريا رجلا مشهورا بمعرفة طرق الجنادل ، فأخذه العمرى ، وأحسن اليه ، ودفع اليه مالا ، على أن يجوز بهم الجنادل ، فأمرهم بشد المراكب بعضها الى بعض . وركب فى أولاها وسار بهم ، فسلك طريقا غير مسلوكة ، حتى وقعوا فى الهلكة ، — ثم — تركهم ونجا بنفسه عوما فى البحر ، فغرق الجميع . وقدم على زكريا ، فأقطعه مواضع وقفت عليه وعلى عقبه ، وتلف جميع ما بقى لهم من السلاح والرجال ، وضعفوا ، فلم يتمكنوا من الاقامة .

وكان العمرى بعد الوقعة الأولى ، قد — جمع أصحابه و— نجا حتى هابته النوبة . وكتب اليه زكريا يعتذر ، بأن الشح على الملك دفعه على ما فعل ، وأنه لا يحاربه بعدها ، وسأله الخروج عن بلده ، فخاتله مدة سنة ، الى أن وقع بين الشاميين — وهم من سعد العشيرة من أصحاب العمرى — وبين قيس عيلان شر . فاتهم الشاميون العمرى أنه مايل قيسا فتجنوا عليه . وبلغ ذلك زكريا من جواسيس كانت له ، فراسل الشاميين يدعوهم اليه ، ويعدهم رد ما أخذ لهم ، واعطاءهم ما يريدون . فأجابوه ، وصاروا اليه ، فوفى لهم بما وعدهم وأقطعهم دون الجنادل الأولى من بلد مريس من ناحية يقال لها ديدان وأدوى وما يليها .

فخاف العمرى ، وسار الى معدن على ثلاث مراحل من النيل ، وعمل أصحابه المعدن ، وخرجت سراياهم فضربت بلد النوبة . وأرسل العمرى يدعو الشاميين للصلح ، فأقبلوا اليه . وركب اليهم العمرى فأوقع بهم ، وقتل منهم ألفا وخمسمائة ، وقبض على من بقى فقطع أيديهم وأرجلهم وتركهم حتى ماتوا . وأقام على النيل من بلد مريس ، فشق ذلك على زكريا ، وسار اليه فى عدد عظيم ، فانطرد العمرى بين يديه ، حتى قرب من أسوان .

فخرج اليه شعبة بن حركام البابكى ، وقد بعثه أحمد بن طولون على جيش الى أسوان خوفا من العمرى فلما قرب من العمرى ، قال العمرى لأصحابه ، وقد بقوا نحو ألف ومائتى رجل : « لا تعجلوا فان هذا رجل أعجمى ، وأنا أخاطبه بنفسى وأنظر ما عنده . ثم خرج من عسكره

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وقال لمن قرب من عسكر شعبة : « انى أريد أن أخاطب الأمير قبل وقوع الحرب بيننا » . فخرج اليه شعبة ، ووقفا (١٦٧ ب) بحيث يسمع بعضهم كلام بعض . فقال العمرى : « ان الأمير أحمد ابن طولون ، لم يبلغه خبرى على حقيقته ، وقدموه عليه فى أمرى . انى لم أخرج أبغى فسادا ، ويدلك على ذلك ، أنى لم أوذ مسلما ولا معاهدا ، وانما خرجت فى طلب أعداء المسلمين . حتى كفانا الله أمرهم فاكفف يدك عن القتال ، حتى أكتب الى الأمير أيده الله ، وأكشف له خبرى ، وتكتب أنت أيضا فان قبل عذرى ولم تثقل عليه وطأتى وأمن جانبى ، كتب اليك بالكف والانصراف عنى ، فانصرفت مشكورا وان أمرك غير ذلك امتثلت أمره غير ملوم . فقال له القائد شعبة : « لست أنا فيجا لك أحمل كتابك ، ما بينى وبينك إلا السيف » . فقال له العمرى : « ما أنت بحمد الله شعبة الرجال ، بل أنت بلعبة النساء أشبه ، وما هذا الفعل السىء والخلق القبيح إلا لمن هو كذلك » ورجع الى أصحابه فقال : « هذا رجل جاهل أحمق فدونكم وقتاله » . وحمل عليه بعد أن راسله ثانيا . فطلب منه شعبة أن يطأ بساطه . فسأله العمرى أن يؤخر ذلك الى أن يعود الى أسوان ، ويعطيه رهينة . فأبى عليه وحاربه ، فرزق العمرى على شعبة الظفر ، وهزمه أقبح هزيمة ، وغنم ما كان معه ، وشبع أصحابه بعد جوع واكتسوا .

وكان العمرى قد قسم رجاله — شطرين — خوفا من النوبى ، وجعل الشطرين بازاء النوبة ، فلم يدخل النوبى بينهم وقال : « إنى ما رأيت من يقف لألف إلا رجلين : العمرى وابن قشما ، وقد رأيت الثالث يعنى شعبة » .

ومضى شعبة على وجهه الى الفسطاط ، فأنبه أحمد بن طولون وقال : « أسأت وأخطأت ، كنت أمهلته وكتبت إلينا بخبره على صحة ، لنرى فيه رأينا ، لكنك بغيت عليه ، فنصر عليك » . وأهمل أحمد بن طولون أمره .

وأما العمرى فانه سار الى قرية بحرى أسوان يقال لها ادفو ، وعبر منها الى الشرق . وكانت له وقعة مع واليها بعد شعبة .

ثم دخل المعدن ، وجرت له حروب أعظم من الأولى مع ربيعة ، ثم عاود الى المعدن فى سنة خمس وخمسين ومائتين ، وعلى ربيعة رجل يعرف بأشهب بن ربيعة من بنى حنيفة ابن لجيم بن صعب شيعى ، وآخر يعرف بإياس بن روح ، وآخر يعرف بمحمد بن صريح على بنى قيس بن ثعلبة ابن عكابة بن صعب بن (١٦٧ ب) على بن بكر بن وائل وحلفائهم . و—كان— على الجهنيين رجل يعرف بعثمان بن سعدان ، وعلى الشاميين رجل من سعد العشيرة ، ورؤساء دون هؤلاء . فكثرت — بهم — العمارة — فى البجة — حتى صارت الرواحل التى تحمل الميرة إليهم من أسوان ،

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ستين ألف راحلة غير الجلاب التى تحمل من القلزم الى عيذاب . وعرض أحمد بن طولون لمنع ذلك بسبب العمرى ، فكتب إليه أنه فى مائه ألف أو يزيدون . فعدل — عن — الاعتراض .

ووقع بين المسلمين المنافسة والمنازعة والحروب . ومالت البجة الى ربيعة واتفقت معهم وتزوجوا إليهم . فخرج أخ للعمرى من أمه يعرف بابراهيم المخزومى الى عيذاب ليمتار ، فاعترضته البجة فقتلوه ومن معه . فغضب لذلك العمرى ، وكتب الى ربيعة يسألهم الانصاف من البجة أو التخلية بينه وبينهم ، فدافعوه عن الحالين ، فاستدعى مضر الى حربهم فشردوا عنه . وعبر بنو هلال النيل الى الغرب ، وأقام بنو تميم شرقى النيل واعتزلت المعادن ، فلم يبق مع العمرى إلا القليل . فقال فى ذلك بعض بنى نمير من أبيات :

أبعد أبى اسحق ذى الجود والندى تنامون والدنيا به قد تولت
وبعد رجال قتلت مضرية عليها جباب الخز بالدم بلت
فان لم تثوروا عاجلا بدمائهم فنسوانكم عنكم بحق تخلت
جزى مضرا شر الجزا عن أخيهم كما قلدته أمرها ثم ولت
فقام بها محس الضرائب ماجد كفى مضرا ما ضيعت وأضلت
وكانت تميم مرة خندفية فأضحت تميم من قريس تحلت
وولت هلال خيفة الحرب شردا وبؤبؤ قيس أبعدت حيث حلت

ثم أن العمرى واقعهم وهم غادون ، فقتل فيهم قتلا وذبحا ، وأنشبت الحرب بينهم ، وقتل من الفريقين ألوف . ولهم وقعتان مشهورتان فى موضعين ، يعرف أحدهما بميزح والآخر بكيا . وللعمرى فى ذلك قصائد وشعر طويل منه :

اذا جزى الله أقواما بعادية فلا جزى مضرا عنا باحسان
أعنى الذين بشط النيل مسكنهم ما بين قوص الى ساحات أسوان
عليا تميم وما كانت بخاذلة فى النائبات وما كانوا بدلان

ثم ذكر — العمرى — هزيمة رئيس جهينة فقال :

كل الهزائم كانت غير فاضحة إلا هزيمة عثمان بن سعدان
ولى بميزح والخيلان عاكفة والحرب مسعرة والموت يونان

وله قصيدة أخرى طويلة يقول فيها :

أصبح عان مستعان قد صحا
من بعد شوق شائق قد برحا

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بعلبـــة فسمـــه وأفـــرحـــا
واستبـــدل الحـــلم وكان أرجحـــا
من ســورة الجهـل الـذى قـد أترحـا
يأيهـــا السارى الـذى قـد روحـا
أبلـغ أبا الـورد معـا والأبطحـا
يا سـامقـا لا للعـــلى قـد أوضحـا
بأى يوميـــك وجـدت أصلحـا
يـوم كيـا وفى الوغى أم ميزحـا
لو تابـع الرشـد أطـاع النصحـا
أو زجـر الطـير لمـا تبرحـــا
واغـتر بالشـــرك ومـــا أن سنحـا
خـــوفا مـن الله ولا ممـــن لحـــا

ولهم أخبار وأشعار يطول شرحها .

ثم أن ربيعة تخاذلت ووقع بين القوم خلف فقصد العمرى — رئيس ربيعة — المعروف بأشهب ، لتشيعه وقتله . ثم تغضب رئيس من مضر يعرف بمحمد بن هرون ، فحالف على قتل العمرى ، فقتله غيلة . وتفرق الجمع الذى كان معه وأطفئت المناجزة ، وحملت رأسه الى أحمد بن طولون مع غلامين زعما أنهما من غلمانه وأنهما قتلاه ، فدعا أحمد بن طولون بجماعة من أهل الصعيد ممن يعرف العمرى — وأراهم الرأس فعرفوه — فشهدوا أنها رأس العمرى — لا يشكون فيه — . فقال — ابن طولون — للغلامين : « أكان صاحبكما مسيئا لكما ؟ » قالا : « لا » . — قال : « فكان يمنعكما رزقكما ؟ » قالا : « لا » . — قال : « فركب بحضرتكما اثما استحللتما به قتله ؟ » قالا : « لا » . قال : « فلم قتلتماه ؟ » قالا : « لأنا أردنا بذلك الحظوة عند الأمير والقرب منه » . فقال : « ذاك والله أبعد لكما منى ومن الله عز وجل » . وأمر بضرب أعناقهما فضربتا وصلبا . ثم غسل الرأس وطيبه وكفنه ودفنه .

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(٢٢٧ ب) عبد الله بن أحمد بن سليم الأسوانى ، بعثه القائد جوهر بكتابه الى قيروقى متملك النوبة يعرض عليه فيه الاسلام ويستأذن منه ما عليه من البقط . فدعاه الى الاسلام بحضرة شاهدين أخرجا معه . فكبر ذلك عليه وجمع علماءه وأساقفته وأحضر ابن سليم للمناظرة ، وقرأ عليه

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كتابا جوابا عن الكتاب الوارد معه يدعو جوهرا الى النصرانية ، ويحتج فيه كما احتج عليه بنسخ الشرائع ، فطالت بينهما المناظرة .

ثم عاد الى ذكر طاعته وموالاة أبيه وأخيه من قبل ، فأعلمه ابن سليم أن هذا الذى دعى اليه يوجب الشكر عليه لأنه اختار له ما اختار لنفسه ، ويجب أن يحمد الله على ما أولاه من ابقائه على ملكه ، لأن الاسلام لما ظهر أزال ملوكا كبارا من الأكاسرة وغيرهم ، وأقربها اليه أرض مصر : « فأيهما أكبر ملك مصرا أو ملكك ؟ » فقال له : « أما الحال والمال فمصر ، وأما الرجال ، فنحن أكثر عددا ومددا » . فقال — ابن سليم — : « إن احتججت عليك بأن رجال مصر أكثر من رجالك ظلمتك فى الاحتجاج ، لأنك تقول لى قد رأيت مصر ، وأما رجالى وغايتهم وما ورائى من البلد الفلانى والفلانى فلم ترهم . غير أنى أحتج عليك بما لا يمكنك دفعه ، — هل — تعلم أن فى الدنيا درجة فوق الملك ؟ » قال : « لا » . قال : « فان ملك مصر بعث الله اليه موسى وهرون أجل الرسل ، يقول لفرعون أنت ملك ، فيأبى عليه ويقول بل أنا إلاه » ، فما ظنك بملك يبلغ طغيانه الى الخروج الى هذا ، وقد أزاله المسلمون وملكوا أكثر كراسى النصرانية مثل الاسكندرية وبيت المقدس وأنطاكية وغير ذلك من البلدان والأمصار . فيجب أن تحمد الله على ما أعطاك وتشكره على ما خوّلك وبقاه عليك من نعمة عندك وورثك من تيجان أسلافك » . ففعل ذلك وأكثر التذلل لله عز وجل والثناء عليه .

وصنف — ابن سليم — كتاب أخبار النوبة والمقرة وعلوة والبجة والنيل ومن عليه وقرب منه من غيرهم للعزيز بالله أبى منصور نزار بن المعز لدين الله وقدمه إليه ، وفيه فوائد كثيرة . وذكر فيه أنه حصل عيد الأضحى وهو عند متملك النوبة ، فخرج الى ظاهر المدينة فى نحو ستين من المسلمين ونشر بندين عليهما اسم المعز لدين الله ، وضرب الطبل والبوق وصلى بالجماعة صلاة العيد ، فأحب أولياء الملك من صاحبهم الانكار عليه ، فأبى عليهم وقال : « هذا رجل فارق أهله ووطنه فى صلاح ، وهو يوم سرور ، ويريد أن يتحمل بفعله هذا فلا أبخل به » .

AnIsl 21 (1985), p. 9-72 Ḥamad Muḥammad Ḫayr
A Contribution to a Textual Problem: Ibn Sulaym al-Aswānī's Kitāb Aḫbār al-Nūba wa l-Maqurra wa l-Beğa wa l-Nīl.
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