

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE *of* THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
STUDIES IN ANCIENT ORIENTAL CIVILIZATION, NO. 15

THE KURRAH PAPYRI
FROM APHRODITO IN THE
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

By
NABIA ABBOTT



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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CIVILIZATION

JOHN ALBERT WILSON
and
THOMAS GEORGE ALLEN
Editors

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AJSL</i>	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures (Chicago etc., 1884—).
<i>AMJRL</i>	John Rylands Library, <i>Manchester</i> . Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts . . . by A. Mingana (Manchester, 1934).
<i>APEL I</i>	Cairo. Egyptian Library. Arabic Papyri in the Egyptian Library, [ed.] by Adolf Grohmann (Cairo, 1934).
<i>APJRL</i>	John Rylands Library, <i>Manchester</i> . Catalogue of Arabic Papyri . . . by D. S. Margoliouth (Manchester, 1933).
<i>Ar. Kg.</i>	Wellhausen, Julius. The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall, tr. by Margaret Graham Weir ([Calcutta,] 1927).
<i>Ar. Pal.</i>	Moritz, B. Arabic Palaeography (Cairo, 1905).
<i>Ar. Papier</i>	Karabacek, Josef von. Das arabische Papier (Wien, 1887).
<i>Beiträge</i>	Becker, Carl H. Beiträge zur Geschichte Ägyptens unter dem Islam (Heft 1-2; Strassburg, 1902-3).
<i>BGA</i>	Bibliotheca geographorum Arabicorum, ed. M. J. de Goeje . . . (Lugduni Batavorum, 1879-1927).
<i>BIFAO</i>	Cairo. Institut français d'archéologie orientale. Bulletin (Le Caire, 1901—).
<i>CMH II</i>	The Cambridge Medieval History II (New York, 1913).
<i>CPR III</i>	Corpus papyrorum Raineri archiducis Austriae. III. Series Arabica, ed. Adolphus Grohmann, Bd. I, Teil 1. Allgemeine Einführung in die arabischen Papyri, von Dr. Adolf Grohmann (Wien, 1924). Bd. I, Teil 2-3. Protokolle, bearb. und hrsg. von Dr. Adolf Grohmann (Text und Tafeln; Wien, 1924, '23).
<i>EI</i>	Encyclopaedia of Islam (Leyden, 1913—).
<i>Encyc. Brit.</i>	Encyclopaedia Britannica (14th ed.; New York, 1929).
<i>Flor. de Vogüé</i>	Florilegium ou recueil de travaux d'érudition dédiés à M. ... de Vogüé (Paris, 1909).

<i>JEA</i>	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology (London, 1914—).
<i>JHS</i>	Journal of Hellenic Studies (London, 1880—).
JOHN OF NIKIŪ	John, <i>bishop of Nikiū</i> . The Chronicle (London, 1916).
<i>MIFAO</i>	Cairo. Institut français d'archéologie orientale. Mémoires (Le Caire, 1902—).
<i>MPER</i>	Vienna. Nationalbibliothek. Mittheilungen aus der Sammlung der Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer (Wien, 1887–97).
NPAF I, II, etc.	Papyri in Becker, Carl H. Neue arabische Papyri des Aphroditofundes (<i>Der Islam</i> II [1911] 245–68).
PAF I, II, etc.	Papyri in Becker, Carl H. Arabische Papyri des Aphroditofundes (<i>ZA</i> XX).
<i>PERF</i>	Vienna. Nationalbibliothek. Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer. Führer durch die Ausstellung (Wien, 1894).
<i>P. Lond.</i> IV	British Museum. Greek Papyri IV. The Aphrodito Papyri, ed. by H. I. Bell (London, 1910).
<i>PO</i>	Patrologia orientalis (Paris, 1907—).
<i>P. Ross.-Georg.</i> IV	Jernstedt, Peter. Die Kome-Aphrodito Papyri der Sammlung Lichačov ("Papyri russischer und georgischer Sammlungen [P. Ross.-Georg.]" [Tiflis, 1927]).
<i>PSR</i>	Becker, Carl H. Papyri Schott-Reinhardt I (Heidelberg, 1906).
<i>PSR</i> I, II, etc.	Individual papyri in the foregoing volume.
<i>Statthalter</i>	Wüstenfeld, H. F. Die Statthalter von Ägypten zur Zeit der Chalifen (Göttingen, 1875–76).
<i>ZA</i>	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete (Leipzig, 1886—).
<i>ZDMG</i>	Deutsche morgenländische Gesellschaft. Zeitschrift (Leipzig, 1847—).

A.H. and A.D. indicate years of the Muslim and the Christian era respectively. Within the text proper double datings are commonly expressed merely by use of / between the year numbers; e.g., 1274/1857 means A.H. 1274, i.e. A.D. 1857.

The system of transliteration used is that of A. Brux (see Bibliography).

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I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The foundations for the modern study of papyrology began to be laid about the middle of the 18th century. Before that time the only papyrus documents existing in the western world were some Latin manuscripts of the 6th and 7th centuries and a considerable number of Latin legal documents from the 5th to the 10th century, the latter chiefly in Italy.¹ In 1752 a library of charred papyrus rolls was discovered in Herculaneum; these were published four decades later in Naples. In the meantime a group of Egyptians had made a find of about fifty rolls in 1778, all but one of which were ignorantly burned, supposedly for their aromatic odor; the one remaining papyrus was published in 1788 and proved to be a list of laborers engaged in irrigation embankment work in a village of the Fayyūm in A.D. 191.²

Then came a lull which lasted till 1820, when the Memphis find was added, consisting of documents of the 2d century B.C. Parts of these were published at Turin in 1826, at London in 1839, and at Leyden in 1843. Interest in papyri seems to have been by then actively aroused. Other finds followed, England being most fortunate in these.

But it was not till 1877 that the "age of papyrus" really began with the magnificent Arsinoë find, more generally known as the first Fayyūm find, which was followed by several other Fayyūm discoveries. In 1896/97 the Egypt Exploration Society, under B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, discovered at Bahnasā (Oxyrhynchus)

¹ Cf. E. M. Thompson in Encyc. Brit. XVII 248.

² These and the following statements on papyrology in general are based on Arthur S. Hunt's article on "Papyrology" in Encyc. Brit. XVII 243 and on Kenyon, Ancient Books and Modern Discoveries, pp. 43-52.

the greatest site so far for papyri. The next significant discovery was that of the Aphrodito papyri in 1902, with which we shall deal more fully below. Small scattered finds have continued. The papyri of the older finds, in hiding with the natives or in waiting in some European and, more recently, in some American museums and libraries, are more and more becoming available for publication. The first professorship of papyrology was established in 1908 at Oxford. Surveys of the whole field of papyrology are to be found from time to time in Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete, Bulletin papyrologique, and Journal of Egyptian Archaeology.

The contribution which papyrology is making to our knowledge of the past is immense, though as yet its significance has dawned mainly on the few who have labored painstakingly in that field. According to Kenyon, the papyri have ushered in an age comparable to that of the Renaissance, and he declares: "Fortunate indeed are those who have been privileged to see and take part in it."

The term "papyrology" technically includes the study of papyri of all languages; but owing to the great number of Greek papyri from the Greco-Roman period of Egyptian history, when Greek was the official language of Egypt, this term has been used chiefly with reference to them. Though literary and religious documents have not been wanting, the nonliterary far exceed the former and contribute richly to our knowledge of history, society, law, philology, and paleography.

After this brief historical survey of papyrology in general we shall now turn our attention to that branch of it which interests us most in this thesis—Arabic papyrology.

It is natural to expect the main steps in the progress of Arabic papyrology to follow closely those of papyrology in general; and this they do, though they start somewhat later and attract less attention. C. H. Becker³ and A. Grohmann⁴ have given a complete and detailed historical survey of Arabic papyrology up to the years 1906 and 1924 respectively. It is our purpose not to repeat all of the details here, but to give only a sketch that will serve as background for the discussion of the greatest find of Arabic papyri—the Kūm Aphrodito papyri.

³ PSR, pp. 1-6.

⁴ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 1-17.

INTRODUCTION

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Silvestre de Sacy was the first to draw attention to Arabic papyri, publishing two in the August number, 1825, of the Journal des savans under the title of "Mémoire sur quelques papyrus écrits en arabe et récemment découverts en Égypte."⁵ These two papyri, which were supposed to have been found at Memphis, proved to be passport letters of A.H. 133 and were written in cursive. Two years later de Sacy published in the Journal asiatique X (1827) two other Arabic papyri, one a passport similar to the first two and the other a letter to Usāmah ibn Zaid, whom Becker would identify as the governor Usāmah ibn Zaid al-Tanūkhī.⁶

Then followed half a century of silence until the Arsinoë or first Fayyūm discovery was made in 1877. Three Arabic pieces were acquired by O. Loth in 1879, while many were destroyed by fire in Cairo. In the meantime Josef von Karabacek had got wind of the find and readily interested Theodor Graf, a great business man and collector of orientalia, in the acquisition of the find. By 1882 Graf had secured this magnificent treasure of about 10,000 pieces, written in six different languages and including over 3,000 Arabic pieces, for Vienna.⁷ The next decade was indeed an active and fruitful one in the history of Arabic papyrology. Through the magnificent generosity of Archduke Rainer, the patron of the Vienna academy of sciences, the bulk of this collection and of the second Fayyūm find of 1884, as well as pieces from the finds of 1886 and 1891 from Ashmūnain and Dīmah, were acquired for Vienna, where they formed the collection known as "Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer." Under the leadership of Karabacek work on their publication was immediately begun.

The variety, quantity, and speed of Karabacek's productions are amazing. In 1882 appeared Der Papyrusfund von El-Faijum, which may have hastened Archduke Rainer's gift in 1884, which in turn led to the six volumes of the Mittheilungen aus der Sammlung der Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer in the period from 1886 to 1897. Among the products of Karabacek's labor of a dozen years was also the Führer durch die Ausstellung, which appeared in 1894. Yet as Becker rightly remarks: "So nützlich dieser Führer, so wichtig

⁵ PSR, p. 2.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 3-5; in the Berlin collection 8 languages were represented (ibid. p. 7).

die in ihm niedergelegten Resultate sind, Ersatz für eine Publikation bietet er nicht."⁸

But Karabacek's labors did not cease with this. In 1899 we find him appointed director of the court library of Emperor Francis Joseph just two days before Archduke Rainer gave his papyrus collection as a birthday gift to the Emperor.⁹ Here we find him continuing his contributions till the time of his death in 1918.¹⁰

But Vienna was not alone and unchallenged in the field. The Berlin museum also acquired some of the Papyrūm papyri and made its contribution to Arabic papyrology through L. Abel's two instalments of Arabische Urkunden in 1896 and 1900, which presented twenty-two public and private pieces ranging from A.H. 143-458. During the next few years several Arabists, among whom were Margoliouth, Merx, Moritz, and Becker, gave us additional publications.¹¹ Among these were the Aphrodito papyri, which we shall consider in the next section of this chapter.

An idea of the rapidity with which Arabic papyri were accumulated in large collections and of the size of some of these collections is gained from Grohmann's data on the collections in Berlin and Vienna.¹² While in 1885 Vienna possessed but 4,000 pieces, in 1922 it could boast no less than 18,274. Unfortunately, publication has not kept pace with collection, and that for various general and a few particular reasons. Papyrologists are scarce, papyrology is a slow and exacting science, and it is an expensive science, demanding a large outlay and promising no financial returns. Arabic papyrology has shared and still shares these disadvantages, but they are not its worst enemies. It has suffered, and still suffers, from a lack of proper scholarly interest in Arabic texts. Loth, de Sacy, Wright, Merx, Moritz, and Caetani have primarily a paleographic objective for their Arabic publications; and Kenyon, Krall, Crum, and Bell touch on Arabic only in

⁸ PSR, pp. 3 f.

⁹ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 7.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 13; for a frank estimate of Karabacek as a scholar see C. H. Becker in Der Islam X 233-38.

¹¹ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 15.

¹² Ibid. p. 10.

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connection with their Greek and Coptic pieces.¹³ It is workers like Becker and Grohmann that Arabic papyri need, nay challenge.

THE APHRODITO PAPYRI

These papyri are named after the ancient town of Aphrodito, the modern Kūm Ishkāw, which is situated in Upper Egypt, between the left bank of the Nile and the desert, some seven kilometers southwest of Ṭimā.¹⁴ The town has seen many ups and downs in its recorded history—a romantic story of alternate achievements and failures. Settled first by the ancient Egyptians, under the patronage of the goddess Hathor, the place was renamed Aphrodito by the Greeks, who identified the Greek goddess Aphrodite with the Egyptian Hathor. Greek papyri of the Roman and Byzantine periods have yielded to patient scholars the broad outlines of its history. Its high rank as capital of the tenth nome of Upper Egypt in Roman times was lost when this nome was absorbed by the neighboring nome of Antaeopolis, which must have occurred between A.D. 307 and 310, at which time the term "nome" for an administrative district was abandoned.¹⁵

Just what official relations Aphrodito had with Antaeopolis at that time is difficult to decide; yet it is natural to expect that the former metropolis would seek and avail itself of any possible privilege. And it did just that; for we find it claiming to have enjoyed the right of autopraxia since the time of Emperor Leo I (A.D. 457-74).¹⁶ When Justinian in 538 officially recognized the institution of pagarchies, Aphrodito seems to have been left an autopract unit within the Antaeopolite pagarchy.¹⁷ It is in this period that we find it jealously guarding its

¹³ Ibid. p. 16.

¹⁴ Egypt. Service des antiquités, Annales III 85; cf. also ZA XX 68.

¹⁵ P. Lond. IV xii.

¹⁶ Hardy, The Large Estates of Byzantine Egypt, p. 55.

¹⁷ P. Lond. IV xiii. Gauthier, Les nomes d'Égypte, p. 195, points out that the term "nome," however, continued to be used, though it no longer corresponded to anything real. Cf. also Rouillard, L'administration civile de l'Égypte byzantine, pp. 49-60, and Gelzer, Studien zur byzantinischen Verwaltung Ägyptens, p. 62.

rights against the encroachments of Menas, the pagarch of Antaeopolis.¹⁸

Greek papyri of the Byzantine period add no further information respecting the status of Aphrodito, but Greek and Arabic papyri of the early Arab period make up for this silence. In these we find Aphrodito again playing an important role, that of capital of an Arab administrative unit; and since it is generally conceded that the Arabs took over almost entirely the Byzantine system, Aphrodito must in later Byzantine times have risen once again to the position of capital of an independent "nome" of the same name. In fact, Bell's exhaustive study of this problem leaves little room for doubt on this question.¹⁹

How long Aphrodito enjoyed this privilege in Arab times it is hard to tell. So far as we now know, it seems to have had another change of fortune, for we do not hear of it in the works of Arab geographers of the Middle Ages. In all probability it continued as a "nome" capital until these administrative units were abolished by the Arabs in A.D. 1058.²⁰ The eagerly awaited continuation of Toussoun's valuable work will doubtless throw further light on its history.

At the beginning of our century Kūm Ishkāw was an agricultural town of some 4,000 inhabitants, leading a peaceful and somewhat isolated existence, ignorant of and indifferent to its past history, to which it nevertheless held the key. In the spring of 1901 native villagers, digging on the edge of the Muslim cemetery, came upon a large papyrus heap. Ignorant of both the historical and the monetary value of papyri, they paid little heed at first to their precious find. But the brother of the village chief ('umdah) knew its worth and took the greater part of what was found for himself, whereupon others helped themselves to the rest. Dealers were informed and came to purchase some. Apprised of what was going on, the government stepped in and tried to seize the papyri. But the enterprising villagers hid their treasures while the timid ones, to avoid trouble with the government, burned theirs. Those which had been kept in

¹⁸ Hardy, p. 55; P. Lond. IV xii f., nn. 4 and 5.

¹⁹ JHS XXVIII 100-6 and P. Lond. IV xiii and xxi-xxiv.

²⁰ Toussoun, La géographie de l'Égypte I xiv.

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hiding later found their way into the hands of dealers in Cairo, through whom they eventually reached various European countries and the United States.²¹

Since then Aphrodito has had a double resurrection, a material and an intellectual one; the former in the condition of its inhabitants, the latter in the minds of scholars scattered the world over. But the latter was not conceded it without a contest; for in the extremely difficult problem of the identification of old place-names with modern sites Aphrodito has been at least twice misidentified, first with Idfā (Edfa),²² and then with Atfīh.²³ But thanks to the contents of the Aphrodito papyri and to the work of Bell and Crum on the Greek and Coptic ones respectively, Greek Aphrodito (Ἀφροδίτω) was paralleled with Coptic Jkow (ⲁⲕⲱⲟϣ), thus linking Greek Aphrodito to Arabic Ashḳauh or Ishḳauh (اشقوه), the modern Kūm Ishḳāw (كوم اشقاو).²⁴

The Aphrodito papyri consist of Greek, Arabic, and Coptic official correspondence and tax registers, almost all of them from the time of the governorship of Ḳurrah ibn Sharīk (A.H.90-96/A.D. 709-14). The letters are of two main categories: letters from the governor to the administrator of the district of Ashḳauh, written in separate Greek and Arabic parallels but not as literal translations or duplicates one of the other; and bilingual Arabic-Greek notifications of tax assessments to the inhabitants of the towns, villages, and religious settlements in the district.²⁵ Individual tax registers and security documents, mostly in Coptic, are also found in the group.²⁶ So far, the Greek letters are in the majority, though on account of their being, together with the Arabic, so widely scattered (some published, some yet unpublished), it is difficult to tell if we have as yet all the Greek-Arabic

²¹ Egypt. Service des antiquités, Annales III 85 f.; cf. also ZA XX 68 f.

²² P. Lond. IV x1.

²³ PSR, p. 24.

²⁴ P. Lond. IV x1; Der Islam II 245 f.

²⁵ JHS XXVIII 98 f. and P. Lond. IV xlii and n. 2. Several of the Arabic letters are in the Russian Lichačov collection; cf. P. Ross.-Georg. IV v. These, so far as we know, are still unpublished. A request for further information brought no results.

²⁶ P. Lond. IV xlv1 f. and 468 f.

parallels. Again, it is difficult to tell to what extent these papyri represent the actual volume of correspondence between the central government and the district of Ashkauh, since not only Arabic parallels are missing, but also Greek parallels to some of the Arabic ones. Interesting in this connection is the fact that so far less than half a dozen pairs have been identified and these not positively.

The largest part of the Aphrodito papyri found its way to the British Museum, a goodly part to Heidelberg and to Strassburg, some to Russia, while not a small portion of the Arabic papyri was retained in Cairo. Within a decade of the discovery several important publications appeared: in 1905 B. Moritz' Arabic Palaeography, which included three, possibly five, of the Kurrah papyri (Pls. 100-5);²⁷ in 1906 Becker's Papyri Schott-Reinhardt I, which included both the Heidelberg and the Strassburg Arabic and Arabic-Greek Kurrah documents; in 1907 Becker's "Arabische Papyri des Aphroditofundes," Zeitschrift für Assyriologie XX, which contributed mainly some Arabic pieces from the British Museum; in 1908 Bell's article "The Aphrodito Papyri," Journal of Hellenic Studies XXVIII, which was followed in 1910 by his publication of the Aphrodito Papyri, being volume IV of the "Greek Papyri in the British Museum"; and in 1911 Becker's "Neue arabische Papyri des Aphroditofundes," Der Islam II, which presented pieces from the Egyptian Library in Cairo and one from the Ottoman Museum in Constantinople. In the same volume of Der Islam appeared the first two instalments of Bell's translation of the British Museum Greek Aphrodito papyri.²⁸

Thus the first decade of our century saw the awakening of considerable interest in Arabic papyri, in the texts themselves and in their historical significance. For although Karabacek had sought from the start to interpret his documents from a historical point of view and in so doing rendered a great service in spite of his method, it was not till Becker and Bell worked in co-operation, the one on the Arabic, the other on the Greek texts of the Aphrodito papyri, that these documents were made to yield abundant

²⁷ ZA XX 94-102.

²⁸ Der Islam II 269-83 and 372-84; others appeared ibid. III 132-40 and 369-73 and IV 87-96.

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results for the history of Egypt under Arab rule.²⁹

Then came a pause for Arabic papyrology which lasted well-nigh through the World War; it was broken in 1918 when Karabacek published another papyrus shortly before his death.³⁰ Since then Grohmann has added numerous contributions, outstanding among them his extensive studies on Arabic papyrology and Arabic protocols contained in the "Corpus Papyrorum Raineri." III. Series Arabica, which was published at Vienna in 1924.³¹ Two years later Bell's "Two official letters of the Arab period" appeared,³² and his translation of the Aphrodito papyri was resumed.³³ In 1927 came the publication in Tiflis of Die Kome-Aphrodito Papyri der Sammlung Lichačov by Peter Jernstedt, this being volume IV of the "Papyri russischer und georgischer Sammlungen" by Gregor Zereteli. Bell's letters and Jernstedt's papyri are Greek, but being Aphrodito Ḳurrah papyri, they are of great interest to us. In 1929, owing to Dr. Breasted's and Dr. Sprengling's appreciation of the significance of Arabic papyri for both Arabist and general historian, the Oriental Institute acquired the B. Moritz collection, in which are the five Ḳurrah papyri here presented. In 1931 the Institute acquired some seventy Arabic papyri through Professor Bonner of the University of Michigan.³⁴ These papyri form at present the nucleus of a collection that promises to grow.

²⁹ In addition to the publications already referred to see also Bell's "Two official letters of the Arab period," JEA XII 265-81, and Becker, "Papyrusstudien," ZA XXII 137-54, also his "Historische Studien über das Londoner Aphroditowerk," Der Islam II 359-71.

³⁰ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 16.

³¹ Of more recent years Professor Grohmann's valuable contributions to Arabic papyrology have been too numerous to mention; one of these, his "Aperçu de papyrologie arabe" (1932) will be referred to later.

³² JEA XII 265-81.

³³ Der Islam XVII 4-8.

³⁴ On the University of Michigan collection of papyri see Aegyptus IV (1923) 38-40. Its present collection contains a fair number of Arabic papyri.

STATE BUREAUS

There is no question of the antiquity and prestige of writing among the Arabs. Their literature is full of the highest praise not only of writing, but of its chief tool—the pen.³⁵ As an example we may quote the words of Abū Ḥafṣ ibn Burd al-Andalusī: ما اعجب شأن القلم ! يشرب ظلمة ويلفظ نورا.³⁶ "How marvelous is the pen! It drinks darkness and utters light."

Balādhurī's account of the very limited spread of the art of writing among the Arabs of Muḥammad's time³⁷ has perhaps led to an unwarranted underestimation of the spread of writing among the Arabs in general. Moritz, among others, sees in the fact that Makkah was a commercial city and therefore needed writing and did use a variety of writing materials, and also in the fact that Muḥammad himself had from five to ten secretaries, room for assuming a wider spread of the art of writing than was formerly conceded.³⁸ In any case, Arabic schools of penmanship and large establishments with written records, commercial or political, are hardly to be expected before the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty; for though writing was known and may even be conceded to have been widely known, the uses to which it was put were limited. But the Arab proved an adept at learning new uses as soon as his enlarged influence and outlook demanded them. As teachers he deliberately took his experienced neighbors, the Persians, the Syrians, and the Egyptians.

The need for drawing on the larger experiences of the neighbors arose fast enough. We find 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, when he was disturbed about properly dividing and recording the spoils of war and the returns of state among the faithful, seeking advice of his fellow Muslims on the question of devising a means to solve his problem, whereupon it was suggested to him that they copy the Persian and Syrian method of keeping a register (dīwān) of the troops. The advice was accepted and a committee of three was

³⁵ Ṣūlī, pp. 66-86; Kaḷkashandī II 434-39.

³⁶ Kaḷkashandī II 436.

³⁷ Balādhurī, pp. 471-74.

³⁸ EI I 382 f.; cf. also Abbott, The Rise of the North Arabic Script, pp. 14 f. and 48.

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appointed to draw up a dīwān of state pensions, which was done in Muḥarram, A.H.20 (December 21, 640-January 19, 641).³⁹ A popular etymology makes the Persian word dīwān mean either "mad" or "devils." It is said that when Chosroes one day entered the bureau of his scribes and saw them count aloud to themselves he said they were dīwānah, "mad," "crazy," and that the name was thenceforward applied to the bureau, the last syllable being sloughed off through constant use. Again it is said these writers were called dīwān, "devils" or "satans," because of their expertness, intelligence, and knowledge.⁴⁰

Thus a beginning was made, and though we have not the details of the succeeding development, we assume that the development proceeded through various stages toward that bureau differentiation which we find as early as the reign of Mu'āwiyah, when there certainly was enough official correspondence to require a bureau of posts⁴¹ and a bureau of seals.⁴² A study of Mu'āwiyah's imperial abilities together with those of his great viceroy in 'Irāq, Ziyād ibn Abīhi, makes it rather probable that the establishment of various bureaus goes back to Mu'āwiyah's time; but even if one should hesitate to credit him with this, the reign of the next great Umayyad, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān (65-86/685-705), is certainly a landmark in this direction, although the full development of bureau differentiation had to await 'Abbāsīd times.⁴³

Each province of the Empire had its own dīwān. In the beginning each had been allowed to carry on its work in the language of the people or of the previous rulers. But 'Abd al-Malik and his great viceroy, Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, carried by the wave of Arabic nationalism, made Arabic the official imperial language. Thus in 'Irāq, Ḥajjāj accomplished the change from Persian to Arabic in

³⁹ Balādhurī, pp. 449 f.; Sūlī, pp. 187-91; Maqrīzī I 91 f.; Ibn Khaldūn I 202-5; according to Kalbī the year is A.H.15.

⁴⁰ Cf. Sūlī, p. 188, and Maqrīzī I 91. Actually the Persian dīwān has nothing to do with dev, "demon"; cf. Paul Horn, Grundriss der neupersischen Etymologie, p. 119 (No. 540), and H. Hübschmann, Persische Studien, p. 60 (No. 540).

⁴¹ Kaḵashandī XIV 367 f.

⁴² Jahshiyārī, p. 21; Kremer (tr. Bukhsh), pp. 193 f. and 236; Ibn Khaldūn I 221.

⁴³ Björkman, pp. 5 f.

A.H.78,⁴⁴ and at Damascus Greek yielded to Arabic in 81,⁴⁵ the faithful Christian secretary Sergius making way for Sulaimān ibn Sa'd. In Egypt the change from the Greek and Coptic did not take place till the year 87, under the governorship of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Malik.⁴⁶ It was impossible that such a change should be accomplished thoroughly in a short time, and in fact it was not, for throughout the Umayyad rule we find the non-Arabic languages persisting in all the three provinces mentioned, thus giving room for doubt as to the date of the intended change, some writers even placing the change of language in the dīwān of Damascus in the reign of Hishām (105-25/724-43).⁴⁷

Becker, in handling this question of the change of language, suggested that the variation in the order of Greek and Arabic in the bilingual texts might indicate the order of transition from one language to the other, that is, Greek, Greek-Arabic, Arabic-Greek, Arabic.⁴⁸ Karabacek's studies tended to fix the date A.H. 111-14 as the time of the use of Arabic alone.⁴⁹ However, more recent scholars, with more papyrus material at their disposal, accept no such order or such date limit, but point to haphazard and irregular use of these languages side by side far into the 2d century after the Hijrah.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the use of Arabic had started if not with, then soon after, the conquest, that is, about fifty years before the attempted general official change; for PERF, No. 558, the oldest Greek-Arabic papyrus yet known, is a receipt dated A.H.22.⁵¹

Whatever the official language of a province and the nationality of the writers, the dīwān and its officers played an important

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 33; Balādhurī, pp. 300 f.; Šūlī, pp. 192 f.

⁴⁵ Jahshiyārī, p. 35; Balādhurī, p. 193.

⁴⁶ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 122; Kindī, pp. 58 f.; Maḡrīzī I 98.

⁴⁷ Maḡrīzī I 98.

⁴⁸ PSR, pp. 28 f.

⁴⁹ PERF, Nos. 77-85; cf. PSR, p. 29.

⁵⁰ Cf. P. Lond. IV 417 and Grohmann in Études de papyrologie I 77-79.

⁵¹ Grohmann, op. cit. pp. 40-44; cf. Abbott, The Rise of the North Arabic Script, p. 15.

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role in the imperial and provincial spheres, and the Arab was not slow to recognize that the sword and the pen are together the instruments of empire, the sword to win, the pen to organize and administer in order to reap the fruits. Secretaries and scribes were therefore generally chosen from the best class of people, the learned, broadminded, and just.⁵² Yet there were writers and writers; the responsible heads received as much as 300 dirhams a month under Ḥajjāj, while a minor scribe received but 10 dirhams.⁵³ In fact, in the imperial chancellery the office of chief secretary (kātib) of the Umayyads became, under the 'Abbāsids, the office of the wazīr (cf. p. 58);⁵⁴ and in the provincial bureaus the chief secretaries must have held a similar position of responsibility and influence in their relationship to the governors.

The Egyptian central bureau, organized during the governorship of 'Abd Allāh ibn Sa'd (ca. 24-36/645-57),⁵⁵ was naturally and largely a take-over from the Byzantine administrative system.⁵⁶ The papyri so far discovered, especially the Aphrodito papyri, show many unmistakable marks of Byzantine practice. Not only were Greek and Coptic used, but even the method of dating by indictions of fifteen-year cycles was kept. Furthermore, the Copts were retained as secretaries and as such continued their method of book-keeping and recording of state correspondence, and, when required, they freely stamped the latter with their Byzantine seals.⁵⁷ With the reform of A.H.87 a change that had already begun was accelerated: Greek and Coptic, as mentioned above, made way for Arabic at Fustāṭ and Babylon, though they held on in the districts; the solar indiction year was adjusted to the Muslim lunar year;⁵⁸ Arab scribes replaced Copts, but not entirely, for the latter, both

⁵² Ibn Khaldūn I 214.

⁵³ Jahshiyārī, pp. 38 and 149; cf. Björkman, p. 4, n. 4.

⁵⁴ Cf. Björkman, p. 6, and Zambaur, p. 6.

⁵⁵ Severus, PO I 501. Kindī does not mention this fact. On the dates of 'Abd Allāh ibn Sa'd see EI I 30 and Butler, pp. 469 f., nn. 2 and 3.

⁵⁶ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 19 f.

⁵⁷ PERF, Nos. 556, 559, 566, 571, 586, and 587.

⁵⁸ Ibid. No. 593 and Karabacek's note on p. 150.

Christians and Muslim converts,⁵⁹ are still represented; and Arab seals are more in evidence,⁶⁰ while Byzantine protocols take on Arabic form, and Christian formulas yield to *ḡurʿān*ic verses.⁶¹

In the *diwān*'s then the documents were drawn. The original was checked, sealed, and sent on its way, while an exact copy of it was made for the office records. Details with respect to these matters as well as to the stylistic form of official documents of the 1st century have been fully described by Grohmann.⁶² Becker's briefer description⁶³ covers the *ḡurrah* papyri. It is remarkable to what extent these accounts, based on information yielded by the papyri, fit in with what is recorded on stylistic form by way of tradition in the works of Arab historians.⁶⁴

The legal drawing and authentication of the document over, the papyrus was folded in one of the following methods illustrated below:⁶⁵

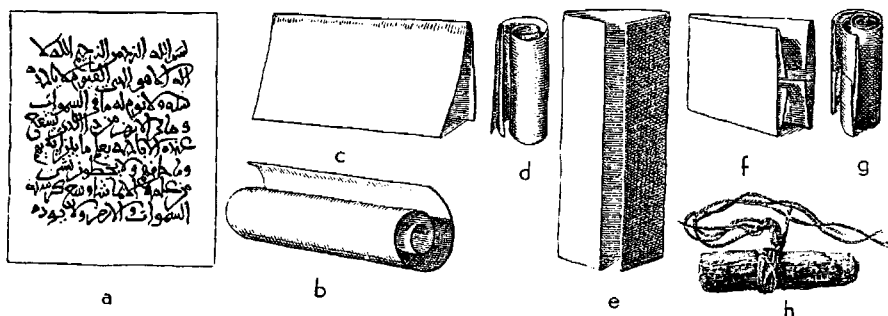


Fig. 1.—Methods of folding and tying papyri

⁵⁹ Our Nos. II and III; Tritton, chap. 11.

⁶⁰ *PERF*, Nos. 572, 589, and 601; cf. also our pp. 27-30.

⁶¹ *PERF*, pp. 17 f.; *CPR* III, Bd. I, Teil 2, pp. c-c1; *CPR* III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 87; *P. Lond.* IV xxxvii.

⁶² *CPR* III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 17-88.

⁶³ *PSR*, pp. 24-30.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Ṣulī*, pp. 36-40 and 225; Ibn Durustūyah, pp. 76 f.; *Ḳalkashandī* VI 327-33 and 383-91.

⁶⁵ Reproduced from *PERF*, pp. 4 and 145.

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According to Bell,⁶⁶ and also to judge by the condition of our Kurrah papyri, Figure 1 b illustrates the roll form of most, if not all, of the letters of our documents. Some of these rolls, in their long period of precarious hiding, must have come under some heavy pressure which flattened them out, giving us numerous narrow, breadthwise strips such as are seen in our Nos. IV and V. The roll was then tied with a papyrus cord and the knot sealed somewhat as in Figure 1 h. On the outside were written the names of addresser and addressee, one on each side of the binding cord, and sometimes a notation was made of the subject treated.⁶⁷ The roll was now ready for the "post."

The postal system (barīd) of the Umayyads, adopted and adapted from the Byzantines and the Persians,⁶⁸ was a combination of governmental postal system and secret service,⁶⁹ as is illustrated in Ar. Pal. Plate 104 in the case of the postmaster Walīd ibn 'Abbād;⁷⁰ that is, among the duties of the postmaster (sāhib al-barīd) was that of acting as the "eyes and ears of the king." Specially authorized carriers, on mules, on horses, or on boats, brought the official mail to its destination.⁷¹ Extensive postal

⁶⁶ P. Lond. IV xli.

⁶⁷ P. Lond. IV xlii; cf. our Nos. I and II; NPAF V; PSR II, XII, XIV, and XV.

⁶⁸ Kalkashandī XIV 367 f. Not only the system but also the name barīd appears to have been taken over; for barīd is obviously merely the Arabicized form of the Latin veredus, Greek βέρρε(ν)δος, meaning "post horse"; cf. EI I 658. The origin of the Latin veredus and the Greek βέρρεδος is, however, another matter. These are possibly connected with Assyrian purīdu, "courier"; cf. Paul Horn, *op. cit.* p. 29, note, and Gesenius, Handwörterbuch, p. 657. The attempts of Arab etymologists to derive barīd from either the Arabic root barada or the Persian ba(u)rīdah dum, "with cropped tail," therefore probably reflect mere folk etymologies.

⁶⁹ Kalkashandī XIV 371 f.; Kremer (tr. Bukhsh), pp. 194, 200, and 229-35.

⁷⁰ Der Islam II 258 f.; ZA XX 96.

⁷¹ If the derivation of barīd from the Persian barīdah dum may be taken as witness to a common fact, the mules and horses must have been distinguished by docked or cut tails; cf. Kalkashandī XIV 367. Probably the couriers too carried some identification mark, though what it may have been is as yet unknown. In Mameluke times they were provided with an inscribed silver plaque or tablet (laub) hung round the neck by means of two bands ending in a yellow silk tassel. The plate itself was worn on the chest

roads connected the different parts of the Empire, and in Egypt there were postal stations all along the Nile and across the Delta. Still there seems to have been no special haste in letter transportation. B. 1346 shows that over five weeks elapsed between date of issue and date of receipt; in the case of B. 1353, however, the time was but ten days.⁷² Since both came from Fustāt to Ashkauh, the delay in the first case could have been occasioned either in Fustāt or through a round-about postal trip.⁷³ It is interesting to note in this connection that Ashkauh does not seem to have had its own postal station, for in B. 1347 it is called on to defray part of the cost of post horses stationed in a neighboring pagarchy.⁷⁴ When the mail reached its destination, each roll was marked with date of receipt, name of courier, and purpose of communication. Thus labeled, it was pigeonholed to be preserved in good condition for reference.⁷⁵

WRITING MATERIALS

Most of the writing materials known to the ancient and medi-
eval world were known also to the Arabs. Among those chiefly used
by them may be mentioned stones, wood, metals, bones, ostraca,
linen, silk, leather, parchment, papyrus, and paper. Grohmann has

under the clothes, but the tassel was worn on the back and was visible for ready identification of the courier; cf. Kalkashandī XIV 371. The use of a metal plate for couriers was current among the Mongol ilkhan's of Persia; cf. Howorth, History of the Mongols III 509. Their custom is believed to have been borrowed from the Chinese (ibid. I 271 f.). Professor Herrlee G. Creel has kindly supplied the following note on the use of identifying credentials in early China: "The use of identifying credentials of various sorts, sometimes made of metal, in very early China is well attested. The Ti Kuan section of the Chou Li (Shih San Ching Chu Su, Kianghsi ed. of 1815, Chou Li 15.13 b) says: 'All who travel through the empire must have credentials to secure free passage and assistance. Those who lack credentials, once they have been questioned, are not able to pass.' The Chou Li was edited not later than the Former Han Dynasty (221 B.C.-A.D.25); this passage may be much older."

⁷² P. Lond. IV 11 f.

⁷³ P. Lond. IV xxiv f.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 20.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. xlii. How paper documents of a later period were preserved and filed is described by Kalkashandī VI 363 f.

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dealt fully with these writing materials among the Arabs,⁷⁶ citing numerous Arabic sources which prove that Arabic literature abounds in references to the papyrus plant, its different parts, and its rich and varied uses.⁷⁷ Grohmann points out that while it is in itself not impossible that the papyrus plant grew or still grows in parts of Arabia, its presence there has to date not been proved.⁷⁸ The Egyptians had early found some uses for every part of the plant: the bloom was used for garlands and shrine offerings; the root for utensils and fuel; the pith for food, both cooked and raw; the stem for boats, sails, cloth, cord, sandals, and for writing materials.⁷⁹ The manufacture of papyrus for writing material was a slow but interesting process. This as well as the question of size, form, and quality of the finished product has engaged the minds of many scholars, among them Thompson,⁸⁰ Kenyon,⁸¹ Lucas,⁸² Ibscher,⁸³ and Grohmann.⁸⁴ The first two draw chiefly on the natural histories of Theophrastus (4th-3d century B.C.) and Pliny (1st century B.C.); Lucas adds the results of experiments by himself and others; Ibscher states his observations made during many years of work on the papyri in Berlin; and Grohmann adds the results of microscopic investigations as well as the account of Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Nabātī (13th century after Christ). Thompson, following Theophrastus, describes the papyrus plant as a reed growing in shallows of about three feet or less, its main horizontal root being as thick as a man's wrist and about fifteen feet in length. From this root smaller ones extended into the mud, while the stem of the plant rose to a height of about six

⁷⁶ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 21-64.

⁷⁷ Ibid. pp. 22-32.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 25.

⁷⁹ Herodotus ii. 37 f., 92, and 96; Encyc. Brit. XVII 246 f.

⁸⁰ Encyc. Brit. XVII 247.

⁸¹ Ancient Books and Modern Discoveries, pp. 28-32.

⁸² Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries, pp. 136-38.

⁸³ "Beobachtungen bei der Papyrusaufrollung," Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete V (1913) 191-94.

⁸⁴ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 35-51; Études de papyrologie I 30-32.

feet.⁸⁵ Lucas measured specimens of papyrus from the Sudan and found the stems varying from seven to ten feet in length.⁸⁶ The stem, which is triangular in shape and tapers toward the flowering top, consists of a thin tough outer rind and an inner cellular pith. According to Pliny the stem was sliced into thin strips of the greatest possible width. These strips were laid side by side upon a table, and across them at right angles another series of similar strips was placed. After having been moistened with Nile water (which, when in a muddy state, was supposed to have the peculiar qualities of glue) they were pressed down and dried in the sun.⁸⁷ Modern research, including microscopic examination of different samples of Arabic papyri, has shown that the method of cutting the strips for these papyri was not, as hitherto generally believed, by longitudinal section through the center of the stem peeled of its rind, but rather by tangential section, the stem of pith being apparently pressed against a long blade and rotated while the strip was being cut.⁸⁸ Grohmann has pointed out that Pliny's account should probably be understood in this way.⁸⁹ Microscopic examination has further revealed that no glue or paste was employed to cause the strips of papyrus pith to adhere one to another to form a sheet, but that this was effected by the inherent qualities of fresh pith under pressure.⁹⁰ Paste was, however, used for sizing the sheets and also for pasting sheets end to end to form a roll.⁹¹ Modern experiments in the making of papyrus have shown that good papyrus sheets can be made also by slicing the pith longitudinally through the center, as Abū al-Abbās al-Nabātī says it was done.⁹²

⁸⁵ Encyc. Brit. XVII 246.

⁸⁶ Lucas, p. 136.

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 137; cf. CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 35.

⁸⁸ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 36-39; Études de papyrologie I 30-32.

⁸⁹ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 38.

⁹⁰ Ibid. pp. 38 f.

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 39.

⁹² Lucas, pp. 137 f.; cf. CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 35 f.

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Drawing on the classical and Arab sources as well as on modern research and experimentation, one may conceive the process of the manufacture of papyrus to have been somewhat as follows: The fresh stem was first cut into sections of a desired length—usually the desired height of a sheet. The rind was then peeled off and thin strips were cut either by rotating the entire length of each piece of stem against a sharp knife, or by slicing it longitudinally through the center. The thin strips were then laid vertically over a moist piece of cloth on a table and arranged so as to be parallel and slightly overlapping. Across these strips and at right angles to them were laid similar strips, again parallel and slightly overlapping. The two layers thus "woven" together were now covered with a thin absorbent cloth, hammered down, and pressed together. The fresh papyrus contained some natural adhesive matter sufficient to cause the strips to become welded together and form a homogeneous sheet. The sheet was finally dried in the sun, smoothed with pumice stone, and polished with ivory or a smooth shell.⁹³ Defects sometimes occurred in the making through retention of moisture between the layers or through use of spongy strips which would cause ink to run; such flaws necessitated the remaking of a sheet.⁹⁴

In the under layer of a sheet of papyrus the fibers lay vertically, and this was the side of the sheet meant for writing. The top layer, in which the fibers lay horizontally, was used for writing only occasionally. These two sides of a papyrus sheet are called "recto" and "verso" respectively.⁹⁵ It is well to note here that the rule of writing on recto in preference to verso held for the Arabs as well as for the Byzantines. Though the Arabs quite frequently wrote on both sides of the sheet, this was not considered proper.⁹⁶ A new sheet was light-colored, almost white, being a pale yellow or a straw tint, which darkened with age to various shades of brown.

The size of sheets varied from 5 to 15 inches in width and from 9 to 19 inches in length, the larger sizes being the rarer

⁹³ Kenyon, p. 29, n. 1, and Thompson in Encyc. Brit. XVII 247.

⁹⁴ Encyc. Brit. XVII 247.

⁹⁵ Cf. Grohmann in Études de papyrologie I 31.

⁹⁶ Cf. CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 33 f.; Sūlī, p. 149.

and of better quality. These sheets were glued together, with the best sheets on the outer part of the roll. Usually twenty sheets formed a roll.⁹⁷ Under the Byzantines the first or outer sheet (*πρωτόκολλον*) bore the name of the official under whose jurisdiction the factory was as well as the date and place of manufacture. Usually this marked portion of the sheet was cut away, but Justinian forbade this in case of legal documents. The Arabs continued the use of protocols. Grohmann believes that the protocol texts indicate a state control of the manufacture of papyrus rather than a state monopoly.⁹⁸

Among the Romans and Greeks there were several standard varieties of papyrus manufactured. The best qualities were dignified with the names of the emperor Augustus and his wife Livia and called "Augusta" and "Livia" respectively. The finest qualities ran usually in the larger sizes and sold by measure or sheet, whereas coarser qualities were small and sometimes sold by weight.⁹⁹ The various qualities of papyri were well recognized by the Arabs, to judge both by references to them and by the different grades of papyri found in any fair-sized collection.¹⁰⁰

It is generally conceded that Egypt was the home not only of the papyrus plant but also of the manufactured product, both in ancient and in medieval times.¹⁰¹ The manufacture was a state monopoly till the time of Alexander,¹⁰² but after that private manufacture with some state control seems to have been the practice, which continued to about the middle of the 10th century, when use and manufacture began to cease.¹⁰³

Though known to the Arabs of the *Jāhiliyyah*, papyrus did not become the main carrier of Arab thought and history till the rise of Islām, and until it was replaced by paper in the 9th-10th century

⁹⁷ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 40-46; Kenyon, pp. 29 f.; *Encyc. Brit.* XVII 247.

⁹⁸ *Études de papyrologie* I 32-35.

⁹⁹ *Encyc. Brit.* XVII 247.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 46.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* pp. 22-32.

¹⁰² *Encyc. Brit.* XVII 248.

¹⁰³ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 32; *Études de papyrologie* I 29 f.

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it continued its important function of preserving records of world civilization by taking those of the youngest—Islām—under its frail but effective protection.

Always expensive, papyrus could have been used but rarely in Muḥammad's time, notwithstanding the fact that Muslim tradition alleges that the angel Gabriel brought down portions of the Qurʾān written on papyrus.¹⁰⁴ With the conquest of Egypt papyrus became more available and was eventually adopted by the caliphs for official use, and this for more than one good reason; for aside from its ready availability and convenient form it had the added advantage of betraying any tampering with the text once written, since an attempt to remove or change the writing results only in destroying, or at least marring, the writing material.¹⁰⁵

The dīwān of ʿUmar I in Madīnah very likely used leather and parchment, at least predominantly so, and perhaps some papyrus; the Egyptian dīwān took over from the Byzantines the use of papyrus, and the Syrian used it freely if not exclusively.¹⁰⁶ The Colt Expedition of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem recently found at ʿAujāʾ al-Ḥafīr a large number of papyri, among them five Arabic-Greek tax documents from the province of Gaza in southern Palestine dated 54 and 55/673-74 and 674-75.¹⁰⁷ They thus fall within the last decade of Muʿāwiyah's reign. In all probability, then, this first organizer of the Arab kingdom used papyrus for (all?) official purposes. Arabic sources state that his immediate successor, ʿAbd al-Malik (65-86/685-705), was the first caliph to use papyrus with Islāmic formulae or phrases at the head of the first sheet or protocol, while hitherto papyrus with Christian formulae had been in use.¹⁰⁸ The papyrus supply in the time of Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (86-96/705-15), who is erroneously credited

¹⁰⁴ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 27; Šūlī, p. 105; Abbott, The Rise of the North Arabic Script, p. 52.

¹⁰⁵ Kaḷkashandī II 476; cf. CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 27, and, for the practice of washing off writing in order to re-use the papyrus, Kenyon, p. 37.

¹⁰⁶ Balādhurī, p. 465.

¹⁰⁷ See Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement, 1936, pp. 216-20; American Journal of Archaeology XLI 149; JEA XXII 214.

¹⁰⁸ Balādhurī, p. 240; Études de papyrologie I 32.

with the first official use of papyrus,¹⁰⁹ seems to have been of the finest quality and plentiful, as the documents of his reign—among which are the Ḳurrah papyri—show no stint of material either in size of writing or in line-spacing and allowance for margins. But we find his second successor, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (91-101/717-20), urging his scribes to economy in this respect.¹¹⁰

The 'Abbāsīd Maṣṣūr (136-58/754-75) seriously considered disposing of his excessive papyrus stock at a nominal price. On second thought he changed his mind, not knowing but that Egyptian disturbances might any day cut off the court supply and force the scribes to use something to which they were not accustomed.¹¹¹ And so papyrus continued to hold the first place in the 'Abbāsīd dīwān's of 'Irāḳ until its first serious rival—paper—appeared some time after A.D.751.¹¹² The first paper factory was established at Baghdad between the years 793 and 795.¹¹³ But the appearance of paper did not at once put a stop to the use of papyrus, for in 'Irāḳ we find the two used side by side up to the end of the 10th century, the papyri however growing by that time fewer in number and coarser in quality.¹¹⁴ In Egypt papyrus naturally held its own better, and an Arabic writer of the 9th century could state that the papyrus of Egypt was at that time for the West what the paper of Samarkand was for the East.¹¹⁵ But eventually even here—in the very home of papyrus—the overwhelming advantages of paper won out in the 10th century, though sporadic use

¹⁰⁹ Jahshiyārī, p. 43; cf. also CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 28.

¹¹⁰ Jahshiyārī, pp. 48 f.; CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 28. However, this caliph was thrifty on general principles!

¹¹¹ Jahshiyārī, p. 158; Grohmann, CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 29, has misread the last two sentences in the original, which are: فدع القراطيس استظهارا على حالها. لهذه العلة كانت القرس. "Let the papyri be while seeking to overcome their situation. And for this reason the Persians used to write on leather and parchment and to say: 'One does not write on anything that is not of our country.'"

¹¹² Ar. Papier, pp. 22-28.

¹¹³ Ibid. pp. 33-35; cf. also Carter, p. 98; CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 30; McMurtrie, p. 27.

¹¹⁴ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 29-32; Ar. Papier, p. 14.

¹¹⁵ Ar. Papier, p. 13; Suyūṭī II 238 uses kirtās for both papyrus and paper.

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of papyrus continued for some time.¹¹⁶ The latest definitely dated Arabic papyrus has the date of Dhū al-Ḳa'dah 370/May-June 981;¹¹⁷ another papyrus, the date of which is partly lost, can be reasonably assigned to 480/1087.¹¹⁸

Papyrus was always a comparatively expensive material;¹¹⁹ yet its use was not limited to governmental circles, unless perhaps in its finer qualities, which could not be afforded by many outside that circle. Papyrus collections usually contain commercial, literary, and private pieces, some of which are double and triple palimpsests, no doubt for reasons of economy. For the common man the price of papyrus must have been well-nigh prohibitive. This may explain in part the great value placed on stray pieces of papyrus, especially when they contained one of the names of Allāh or a Ḳur'ān verse, for this made them almost objects of veneration. Grohmann draws attention to the story of Abū Naṣr Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith, who, having found in Baghdad a piece of papyrus on the ground with the word "Allāh" on it, picked it up and spent his last penny in buying rose water and musk, with which he perfumed his find.¹²⁰ This man's sacrifice can be better understood when one reads in Ḳalkāshandī that "he who picks up from the ground a papyrus on which is written: 'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate,' by way of honoring it so that it be not trodden under foot, God will cause him to enter paradise and will accept his intercession for twenty of his household, though all of them be worthy of hell-fire."¹²¹ Arabic literary sources are thus very complimentary to this useful article. It is interesting to note, however, by way of contrast, that with the victory of paper the once so highly praised material lost caste to such an extent that one had to apologize for its use, not

¹¹⁶ Ar. Papier, pp. 10-15; cf. also Carter, p. 98; Maḳrīzī I 91.

¹¹⁷ Margoliouth, APJRL, p. 181 (No. 63).

¹¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 115 f. (No. 10). Margoliouth dates No. 12 on p. 117 in the year 402; cf. his p. 229. This date is questionable, forاثنين can be read also as "two and forty," a date hardly likely here, or as "two and forty and ? hundred."

¹¹⁹ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 33 and 51.

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 31.

¹²¹ Ḳalkāshandī VI 363.

only because it had been previously used, but simply because it was papyrus.¹²²

THE PEN

The Arab scribes used then, as they did in the Middle Ages and in a measure still do today, a reed pen. The swamps of Lower Egypt and sections of 'Irāk and Persia produced a variety of reeds suitable for this purpose. Reeds of different lengths and thicknesses are used for different styles of writing, though it was, of course, not so much the thickness of the reed as the width and form of the pen point that was of prime importance.

It is sometimes difficult to tell from the early papyri themselves what type of pen point was used. The old Egyptians cut the end of a thin rush slantingly and frayed its fibres by bruising the cut end between the teeth, thus giving to the pen a brushlike appearance.¹²³ The remarkably even strokes of the early Arabic papyri and the writing of all vertical strokes downward may point to the use of such a brushlike pen. But the use of such a pen is not conceded by all scholars.¹²⁴ Schubart holds that a thin rush pen, shaped more like a modern nib but without a slit, was employed.¹²⁵ It is possible by using such a tool to produce even strokes, though one would need to be frequently turning the pen, thus making pen-holding and pen-directing a very complicated matter. Official scribes could hardly be expected to continue the use of such a tool when a better one was at hand, namely the split reed pen, which had come into use in the 4th century when the Greek alphabet was adopted for writing the Egyptian language and which continued in use thereafter.¹²⁶

Though the Arabs were familiar with the use of the reed pen and their early writers associated good quality in reeds and reed

¹²² CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 33 f.; cf. also Carter, p. 99; McMurtrie, p. 29.

¹²³ Lucas, p. 133.

¹²⁴ Cf. CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 64, and Études de papyrologie I 32 and 39 f.

¹²⁵ Einführung in die Papyruskunde, p. 43.

¹²⁶ Lucas, p. 134; cf. Mittels and Wilcken I 1, pp. xxxii f.

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pens with Egypt,¹²⁷ yet the date of their adoption of the split reed pen is not clear. They certainly became acquainted with it at the time of the conquest of Egypt, and there is every chance that they knew it and used it even before the rise of Islām, since it had been introduced in Egypt in the 4th century, was used in the Christian monasteries of Egypt,¹²⁸ and through monks undoubtedly soon became known in the monasteries and Christian communities of Palestine, Syria, and 'Irāk, perhaps even in Najrān. But as yet definite data are not available. It seems safe, however, to assume that our Qurrah papyri were written with a split reed pen. Grohmann favors the view that most of the protocol texts also were written with split reed pens.¹²⁹ Muslim ibn al-Walīd al-Anṣārī, a scribe and poet of Rashīd's and Ma'mūn's reigns,¹³⁰ gives directions for making the split in the head of the pen.¹³¹ Ibrāhīm ibn al-'Abbās, another scribe of Ma'mūn's reign,¹³² likewise refers to this split.¹³³

Pen-sharpening is an art, and instruction in it from acknowledged masters was eagerly sought. In the time of Rashīd we find the Barmecide Ja'far ibn Yaḥyā writing to Muḥammad ibn al-Laith for instruction in penmanship and receiving the following reply: "Let your pen (kalam) be from Lower Egypt (bahrī), neither thick nor thin, somewhere between thinness and thickness, with a narrow bore; then sharpen it to an even point like the bill of a dove, slant its cavity (batn), and thin its two lips"¹³⁴ Arab

¹²⁷ Muḥaddasī, p. 203.

¹²⁸ Lucas, p. 134.

¹²⁹ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 64, and Études de papyrologie I 32 and 40.

¹³⁰ Ibn Khallikān I 23 and 25, n. 3; Ḳalkashandī II 446 and 448.

¹³¹ Ṣūlī, p. 86. Other comparatively early references to either the split or the "teeth" of the pen are to be found in Ṣūlī, pp. 72 and 88, and in Ibn Durustūyah, p. 93; cf. also Ḳalkashandī II 450 f.

¹³² Ṭabarī III 1038 and 1066.

¹³³ Ḳalkashandī II 440.

¹³⁴ Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi II 221. For Muḥammad ibn Laith see Ṭabarī III 668 f.

authors¹³⁵ tell us that the art of penmanship is all in the pen and that the art of cutting the point is the secret of the pen. The slit, the slant, and the width of the pen point are the three factors to be considered which together make pen-sharpening an intricate and a delicate art, prized and guarded by those who have mastered it. It is reported of several scribes and master-penmen that they cut off their pen points whenever they left the dīwān, so that none could see and copy them.¹³⁶ It is evident that the slit in the reed pen serves the same purpose as the slit in our steel nibs does, namely that of flexibility and ready guidance by the hand. However, the slant of the writing point itself appears to be a later development.

THE INK

The ink of our Ḳurrah papyri is mostly a deep black showing little signs of fading. Grohmann mentions a variety of colors found in his Arabic documents, deep black and reddish brown being the ones most frequently used in earlier times, whereas with the introduction of diacritical points and vowel signs and illuminations red, green, and blue also were employed, both usefully and aesthetically.¹³⁷

The main ingredient for the dark inks was lampblack. Ḳalkāshandī gives an account of the ingredients and the manufacture of inks, both in powder and in solution, and indicates that there were several different processes and that some of these were kept secret.¹³⁸ The following is one of his recipes, attributed by him to Ibn Muḳlah:¹³⁹ "The best ink is that which is made from lampblack of asphalt, and in this wise that there is taken of it 3 artāl, well sifted and strained, and placed in a saucepan; to this there is added 3 times as much water, 1 raṭl honey, 15

¹³⁵ Ṣūlī, pp. 86-89; Ibn Durustūyah, p. 93; Ḳalkāshandī II 440-55.

¹³⁶ Ḳalkāshandī II 446 and 448.

¹³⁷ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 65; Teil 2, p. xvi; cf. Teil 3, Pls. 27-28, 31-33, and 36 for reproductions in color.

¹³⁸ Ḳalkāshandī II 461-66.

¹³⁹ Ibid. p. 465.

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darāhim salt, 15 darāhim powdered gum, and 10 darāhim gallnuts. This should be stirred constantly over a slow fire till its body thickens and its consistency becomes like clay. Then it should be left in a vessel and taken when needed..... There should be added to it some camphor for pleasant odor and some aloes to prevent flies from settling on it." In this form inks seem to have had good keeping qualities until needed, when small quantities were dissolved in water that was frequently perfumed.

Other kinds of lampblack were also used,¹⁴⁰ and Karabacek mentions the use of ashes of slowly burnt papyrus.¹⁴¹ The ink on written documents was either allowed to dry by evaporation or else sprinkled with red sand which acted as a blotter.¹⁴²

THE SEAL

The time when seals were introduced among the Arabs is unknown. With ancient nations known to have used the seal centuries before the birth of Islām surrounding them, it is difficult to determine whence the borrowing came. It is not impossible that the loan was made several times in different localities, each independently of the other. Grohmann points out that the Arabic words tab^c and khatm may both have been borrowed from the ancient Egyptians.¹⁴³ This may have occurred in the better days of the kingdoms of south Arabia. Arab accounts acknowledge Persian influence here in pre-Islāmic days.¹⁴⁴

Closer to our period we find simultaneous Byzantine and Persian influences. The story that Muḥammad decided to adopt the practice of sealing so that the Byzantine officials would honor his letter is repeated by a number of authors.¹⁴⁵ His seal was alike treasured and used by his successors till it was accidentally

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 465 f.

¹⁴¹ MPER IV 79; cf. CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 65, n. 1.

¹⁴² Ḳalkāshandī II 468 f.

¹⁴³ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 78.

¹⁴⁴ Ḳalkāshandī VI 353.

¹⁴⁵ Balādhurī, p. 461; Ṣūlī, pp. 139 f.; Ibn Khaldūn I 220; Ḳalkāshandī VI 353; cf. also CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 82 f.

dropped into a well by 'Uthmān.¹⁴⁶ But the use of the seal does not seem to have been regular and obligatory until more persons had begun to copy the Persian custom,¹⁴⁷ and until falsification of documents and figures had led that constructive Umayyad, Mu'āwiyah, to take over the system completely, to organize a bureau of seals, and to put a special officer in charge of it.¹⁴⁸

The seal was adopted for more than one reason and put to more than one use. In the first place it was equivalent to the signature of the writer and, in some cases, of the witnesses.¹⁴⁹ In official documents it served for authentication and legalization; for without it a document was incomplete and invalid.¹⁵⁰ The seal of the caliph, the state seal, was used to protect state interests, including the treasury, as the case of the counterfeiter Ma'an ibn Zā'idah clearly reveals.¹⁵¹ A saying is reported that to seal is to be safe (akhtim taslam).¹⁵² Use of a seal lent prestige to its owner and honored the recipient.¹⁵³ Sealing was not limited to correspondence and documents, but was used with any precious or valuable object for protection in keeping and in transit.¹⁵⁴

Seals were mainly of two kinds, stamps and rings; the former were strung and hung around the neck or carried in a purse, the latter were worn on the finger.¹⁵⁵ Various metals and precious stones were favored for this purpose,¹⁵⁶ but there seems to have

¹⁴⁶ Ṣūlī, p. 139; Ibn Khaldūn I 220; Ḳalkāshandī VI 353 f.

¹⁴⁷ Balādhurī, p. 464.

¹⁴⁸ Tabarī II 205 f.; Ṣūlī, p. 143; Ibn Khaldūn I 221; Ḳalkāshandī VI 355 reports an account which credits 'Umar with the organization of the bureau, but his editor doubts this (cf. p. 357, n. 2).

¹⁴⁹ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 83 f.

¹⁵⁰ Ibn Khaldūn I 221; CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 83, n. 9.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Balādhurī, pp. 462 f., and CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 85.

¹⁵² Ḳalkāshandī VI 353.

¹⁵³ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 84; Ḳalkāshandī VI 353.

¹⁵⁴ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 85.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 78 and 82.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 78.

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been a prejudice against gold because, so we are told, of its free use by women, boys, and slaves. In fact, Muḥammad is said to have forbidden gold seals, exchanging his own for one of silver.¹⁵⁷

In form seals seem to have had as much variety as in material, the circular, oval, and square being however the most frequent shapes.¹⁵⁸ In size they varied little, the majority averaging one centimeter square or in diameter.

Clay and wax were used for sealing, the former much more commonly, in both the eastern and the western provinces.¹⁵⁹ The clay used was of the finest texture and varied in shade from reddish to dull brown.¹⁶⁰ Frequently it was perfumed. The figures and legends on these seals are in some cases in intaglio, in others they are in relief.¹⁶¹

When we come to consider the clay seals found on Arabic papyri, we are faced with a variety of seal figures and legends. The former were in use both among the North and South Arab groups, while Muḥammad himself is said to have had a seal with either the figure of a lion or that of a human being.¹⁶² Nevertheless we find that when Muḥammad was important enough to use seals for diplomatic correspondence he preferred a legend,¹⁶³ thereby setting the fashion for Muslim seals. The legends found on these seals fall into four main types.¹⁶⁴ First there is the pious phrase or Ḳur'ān verse, for example bism Allāh, amnī bi-Allāh, or the longer lā ilāh illā Allāh al-ḥakk al-mubīn, which is reported to have been the legend on Ḥasan's seal.¹⁶⁵ Oriental Institute papyrus No.

¹⁵⁷ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 78; cf. also Balādhurī, pp. 461 f.; Šūfī, p. 139; Ḳalkashandī VI 353.

¹⁵⁸ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 79; cf. PERF, Nos. 556, 589, 668, and 670, also Pl. XIV.

¹⁵⁹ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 79.

¹⁶⁰ PERF, Nos. 668, 670, and Plate XIV; our Nos. II and III; P. Lond. IV 432.

¹⁶¹ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 79 f.

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 80.

¹⁶³ Balādhurī, pp. 461 f.; CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 82 f.

¹⁶⁴ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 80-82.

¹⁶⁵ Hammer-Purgstall, p. 8.

13983, an Egyptian receipt dated 241/855, has this same legend stamped in small but clear Kūfic on a well preserved clay seal. The second type of legend consists of a moral motto or maxim, examples of which have not yet been found on papyri, but Ḳalkashandī supplies many an example from the seals of the caliphs.¹⁶⁶ The legend on Mu'āwiyah's seal is given by this author as li-kull 'amal thawāb, "to each deed a reward"; that on 'Uthmān's as la-taṣbīran-na au la-tandamanna, "be patient or suffer regret." The third type presented the name of the owner, as, for example, PERF, Nos. 699 and 757; and the fourth was a combination of name of owner and pious formula, illustrated in PERF, No. 577, "Rashīd trusts in God," and PERF, No. 595, "Abd al-Wāḥid believes in God and trusts in Him."

We have already seen that Greek and Coptic secretaries continued to use their Byzantine seals, one of these appearing on paper as late as 329/941.¹⁶⁷ In these one would expect the predominance of human and animal figures. But it is a little surprising that their use was adopted by Muslims also. Whereas in the East pious and moral maxims were used more and more, in Egypt, as late as Ḳurrah's governorship, figures—though mostly of animals—still predominated.

Of the approximately fifty seals found on the Ḳurrah papyri, one belongs to PERF, No. 593; three to PSR III, IV, and XI; several to PSR a-1;¹⁶⁸ three to P. Ross.-Georg. IV, Nos. 2, 4, and 11; two to our Nos. II and III; four to NPAF I, XII, XIII, and XIV; and at least twenty-eight to the British Museum Aphrodito papyri.¹⁶⁹ Only two of these show human figures; one has two women(?) facing each other with arms uplifted, the other bears a figure that looks like a helmeted negro(?).¹⁷⁰ A third has an Arabic legend which has not as yet been deciphered.¹⁷¹ The rest have an animal figure,

¹⁶⁶ VI 354 f.; cf. also Hammer-Purgstall, pp. 8-12.

¹⁶⁷ CPR III, Bd. I; Teil 1, p. 80 (PERF, No. 959).

¹⁶⁸ PSR, pp. 24, 79, and 105 f.

¹⁶⁹ B. 1346, 1374, 1385, 1363, and 1492, the last consisting of twenty-four detached seals.

¹⁷⁰ P. Lond. IV 432.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

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in some cases alone, in others with a star either in front¹⁷² or above¹⁷³ the creature.

There are very few definite and unchallenged suggestions as to what this animal figure really represents. Karabacek was the first to associate it with a wolf.¹⁷⁴ Becker describes it as "eine aufrecht schreitende Gestalt mit Vogelfüßen und Sternen vor sich" and as "tierköpfig."¹⁷⁵ Bell seems to accept tentatively the wolf idea.¹⁷⁶ Jernstedt, however, asserts that the figure is not that of a wolf at all.¹⁷⁷ On the basis of the specimen on our No. III (Fig. 2), which is almost identical with Jernstedt's,¹⁷⁸ we are led to agree with him. But there our agreement ends. Jernstedt goes on to say that according to Professor Maximova it is an Asiatic composite animal, a panther with a griffin head.¹⁷⁹ That it is a



Fig. 2.—Seals of Kurrah papyri: a, seal of P. Ross.-Georg. IV, No. 2; b, seal of our No. III. Scale, 6:1.

¹⁷² B. 1346; P. Ross.-Georg. IV, No. 11 and pp. vii f. and 44.

¹⁷³ B. 1363; P. Ross.-Georg. IV, Nos. 2 and 4 and pp. vii f., 9, and 17; our No. III.

¹⁷⁴ PERF, No. 593.

¹⁷⁵ PSR, pp. 24 f. and 106.

¹⁷⁶ P. Lond. IV 19, 38, 47, 59, and 432.

¹⁷⁷ P. Ross.-Georg. IV vii f.

¹⁷⁸ The claws in P. Ross.-Georg. IV, Nos. 2 and 4, are clear; those in our No. III are visible in the forefeet only.

¹⁷⁹ Op. cit. p. viii.

composite creature we concede, but hardly that it is a panther. It certainly has no griffin head, for there are no signs of an eagle beak; neither has it wings. The clawed feet and the tail make it possible that the body is meant to be that of a lion, but the height of the legs and the size and shape of the body, neck, and head remind one rather of a horse.

At first glance the representation of the seal of our No. III also suggests a horse, so far as the general body proportions and the pose of the animal are concerned. But the trace of the claws of the left front foot ends that idea. Of course, with its resemblance to the horse it may be that other fabled animal—the unicorn—but just where one would look for the characteristic horn projecting from the forehead the clay is broken off; and, besides, there are still the claws. A comparison with some South Arabic and ancient oriental seals led to no identification, though the possibilities for further comparisons with similar materials have by no means been exhausted. Were it possible to get all the Aphrodito papyri seals together, or at least good photographic reproductions of them, then some more definite and satisfactory results in this connection might be hoped for.

We come now to a more detailed treatment of the use of the seal on government documents. The seal affixed at the foot or end of a written document seems to have served the same purpose as a signature, that is, the user acknowledged the text as his and therefore genuine and legally binding. But a seal-signed document was also "sealed up," and this was done to guard the secret of its contents. *Ḳalkāshandī* describes three ways in which this was done.¹⁸⁰ One was to apply an adhesive, usually starch paste, to the head of the letter before rolling or folding it—a practice current in Egypt from antiquity to this day—and then to add the customary clay seal. This apparently left, through the open sides, the contents of the document open to the inquisitive eye, and even when the seal had been added it was easy enough to tamper with the contents. Such tampering with official correspondence is reported to have taken place in Mu'āwiyah's time,¹⁸¹ which led that practical ruler to the adoption of the second and more efficient method

¹⁸⁰ VI 356-58; cf. *CPR* III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 77 and 84.

¹⁸¹ *Ṭabarī* II 205 f.; *Ṣūlī*, p. 143; *Ibn Khaldūn* I 221; *Ḳalkāshandī* VI 355 f.

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of protection mentioned by Ẓalkāshandī, that of khazm, which consisted in threading a cord through the folded or rolled letter, tying the cord, and then usually sealing the knot.¹⁸² Sometimes these outer clay seals were without any impressions.¹⁸³ The third method was merely to tie a cord of papyrus round the roll and, in addition, usually to paste the ends down.¹⁸⁴ When the outer seal was the only one applied, it performed the double function of authenticating and protecting the document. Documents were valid only when this seal was unbroken, hence the importance of the office of opener of seals.¹⁸⁵ The fact that most of the Aphrodito papyri seals are alike—the few exceptions may belong to other than Ẓurrah's official letters—may point to the conclusion that the seal on the Ẓurrah papyri was Ẓurrah's own seal. But how then account for the different positions of the star? Could this have anything to do with whether the seal was an inner or an outer seal? Here again only further careful study of all the seals available can give the answer.

THE SCRIPT

Although the problem of the origin of the Arabic alphabet and of Arabic writing as well as that of the development and interrelation of the more important early scripts are not themes within the scope of this thesis, it is necessary that mention be made here of some of the results of a study undertaken recently which deals particularly with these problems.¹⁸⁶ These, in so far as they have a significant bearing on the script of the Ẓurrah papyri, may be briefly summarized as follows: The North Arabic alphabet developed directly from the Nabataean. By the end of the 7th century after Christ two major varieties of Arabic script had evolved and become established in the Ḥijāz and in Mesopotamia respectively. The course of development can be best and most easily seen from the accompanying diagram.

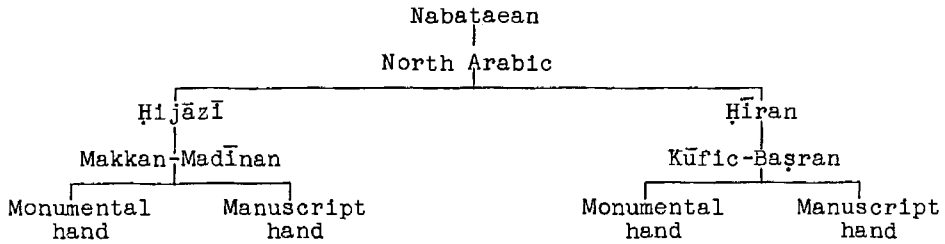
¹⁸² CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 77.

¹⁸³ Ibid. p. 84.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 77; cf. Ẓalkāshandī VI 357.

¹⁸⁵ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 83.

¹⁸⁶ Abbott, The Rise of the North Arabic Script.



The essential difference between these two major types lies not so much in the actual shapes and forms of the individual letters as in the general appearance of the script as a whole. The Makkan-Madīnan is a lighter and more graceful script, with the "vertical" strokes long and slanting downward slightly to the left, while Kūfic-Baṣran is a heavier, straight, and comparatively stumpy script. The difference in the letter forms is that in the early Makkan-Madīnan the lower end of the alif turns to the right, while in the Kūfic-Baṣran the alif tends to be a plain and comparatively vertical stroke; and even this slight difference is not always consistently maintained. Usually the length of the vertical stroke of the lām and of the ṭā' is, like that of the alif, shorter in the Kūfic-Baṣran than in the Makkan-Madīnan. Further, the direction of the vertical stroke of lām is in each type similar to that of alif in that type, that is, it slants downward slightly to the left in the Makkan-Madīnan and is straight in the Kūfic-Baṣran. Again, the difference between the monumental hand (used chiefly for inscriptions, coins, and Ẓur'āns) and that of the manuscript hand (used for state, literary, and private purposes) is likewise at this period one of general appearance. Thus the former is clear-cut, stiff, and, by comparison, decidedly angular, while the latter is frequently smaller, not so clear-cut, and tends to be cursive and so to round out.

The script of the Ẓurrah papyri is both a proof and an illustration of these conclusions. Karabacek early recognized the Makkan features here referred to and accordingly named the script "Makkan."¹⁸⁷ Becker accepted the name, though he pointed also to the fact that the script both resembled and differed from

¹⁸⁷ WZKM V 322-25; cf. also PERF, No. 592.

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the supposedly later script, the so-called naskhī.¹⁸⁸ Grohmann, leaving names apart, drew attention to the unmistakable unity of the script, particular characteristics due to the individuality of the writers notwithstanding.¹⁸⁹ All three then recognized an essential underlying unity. But this unity must be limited in the sense that it is a unity of a comparatively cursive manuscript hand as against a generally angular, monumental script. This unity granted, the Ḳurrah papyri present us with two varieties of the manuscript hand. The Makkan variety is for example clearly seen in our No. II, in PSR III, and in Ar. Pal. Plate 104; the Kūfic in PSR V-VI and VIII. The majority of the remaining numbers can be best described as having a composite script, combining in its vertical strokes the perpendicularity of the Kūfic with the long, graceful strokes of the Makkan.

Both the Makkan and the Kūfic samples cited above are not as true to type as their corresponding monumental varieties used in kur'ānic manuscripts. This is not surprising since, as secular documents, they could not be expected to receive the painstaking attention of the Ḳur'ān copyist, who, among other things, considered it a pious virtue to keep his script true to type and up to the best standards. With the Kūfic and Makkan manuscript varieties in use and no special reason or care to keep them apart, it is but natural to expect a merging of the two, especially since the character forms are essentially the same. Hence the composite script was developed by the same scribes who wrote in one or the other or perhaps even in both types, as for instance the scribe Muslim, who used the Makkan in Ar. Pal. Plate 104 and the composite in our No. III and in PSR X. Under such conditions it is not surprising to find that the composite script was the one most widely used in these papyri and that, in the course of the next century, it gave up some of its features and acquired others, thus losing its original identity in the period which saw the appearance of some two dozen different "pens," with specific ones assigned to specific purposes.¹⁹⁰

Minor differences in the scripts found in the Ḳurrah papyri can be accounted for when one takes into consideration the many

¹⁸⁸ PSR, pp. 25 f.

¹⁸⁹ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 66.

¹⁹⁰ Nadīm, Fihrist, pp. 6 f.

factors which influence the general appearance of handwriting. As Grohmann has pointed out,¹⁹¹ the width of the pen point, the thickness of the ink, and the kinds of material written on all play a part. Again, the nature of the manuscripts, whether they are official, commercial, or private documents, must be allowed for. Even the personality of the writer cannot be ignored. His previous training or lack of it, his age, the time at his disposal, and his psychological moods are all reflected in the script he produces.

Although Becker¹⁹² and Grohmann,¹⁹³ especially the latter, have given us fairly detailed accounts of the Arabic scripts of their papyri, it will not be out of place to give similar details here of the script of the Oriental Institute Kurrah papyri.

The Kurrah papyri of the Oriental Institute are all written in a large, beautiful, and well executed hand. The strokes are firm and usually evenly inked; the heaviest writing is seen in No. II, the lightest in No. IV. Nos. I-III are very similar, being in a heavy hand, whereas Nos. IV and V are lighter, more rounded, and more fully pointed. Ar. Pal. Plate 106, which is dated A.H.112, that is, less than a decade later than our Kurrah papyri, shows certain resemblances to each of these two groups, but more so to the second group. Letter extension and spacing between letters, words, and lines are, as is usual in early papyri, very generous. The division of words at the ends of lines is haphazard, and frequently the spacing between separate letters or groups of letters takes little account of word unity. Pointing is used but sparingly in Nos. IV and V; I and II are entirely undotted. That is as we should expect; for though some dots were used even in pre-Islāmic days, the present system of pointing was not as yet fully evolved.¹⁹⁴ None of the Kurrah Aphrodito papyri have any vowel signs; for though such signs were used in some early Kurʾāns,¹⁹⁵ they do not appear in secular documents before

¹⁹¹ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 66 f.

¹⁹² PSR, pp. 25-27.

¹⁹³ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 65-75, and, for the script of the protocols, Teil 2, pp. xx-xxvii.

¹⁹⁴ EI I 383 f.

¹⁹⁵ Abbott, The Rise of the North Arabic Script, pp. 39-41.

the latter part of the 2d century after the Hijrah.¹⁹⁶

Alif. The alif in the Makkan and composite pieces measures from 1.4 cm. (in No. I 1) to 2.7 cm. (in I 8 and III 11). But in PSR V 6, a Kūfic (?) type, it measures only 0.8 cm. Its perpendicular form, both with and without the turn to the right, is found in our No. I, while its slanting form, both with and without this bend, appears in No. III. In some instances the slanting stroke and the bend to the right have merged to form a small arc, as in No. IV. In all five documents joined alif, regardless of where it occurs in a word, is written from top downward, frequently making a clumsy connection with the preceding letter. The vertical strokes of tā', kāf, lām, and lām-alif also share this peculiarity.

Bā', tā', thā'. These three letters are formed alike in each of the three positions. In some cases they show a tendency to curve up in the final position. Dotted bā' is seen in V 9 and 17; dotted tā' in IV 4 and 17, and dotted tā' or thā' in V 21 (see pp. 55 f.)

Jīm, hā', khā'. The heads of these letters are formed alike in each of the three positions. Sometimes they start with a slight upper curve to the left and thus are liable to be confused with ain or ghain. In our pieces they show a tendency to lose the upper curve, appearing more like a wedge. Hā' sometimes has a form peculiar to itself, "the hā' with a beam," which is illustrated in II 18 in the word al-muharram. Jīm is dotted in V 9.

Dāl, dhāl, rā', zāy. Becker's distinction of the first two as being above and the second two below the line holds only when these letters are connected with preceding ones; otherwise they are very much alike and easily confused, as in II 10 and 14. Dāl has a variety of sizes and in its final connected form is sometimes preceded by a long extended stroke, as in PSR II 28. At times its two parts are almost at a horizontal-vertical right angle, in which case it might be confused with kāf. More frequently it is an inclined right angle or an acute angle. Not only in the Aphrodito papyri, but in documents of different styles and dates dāl has numerous variations.¹⁹⁷ In V 21 we may have a dotted zāy.

¹⁹⁶ EI I 384.

¹⁹⁷ CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 2, p. xxvii.

Šīn, shīn. The three "teeth" of these letters are frequently shown, in some cases not as marked as in others. Our pieces show no dots for the shīn. Other Aphrodito papyri, however, show three dots in a line, for example Ar. Pal. Plate 105, line 13. In still others shīn has a line over it, and this mark is sometimes used also for sīn, as in I 11.¹⁹⁸

Ṣād, dād. In the final form the first and second parts of these letters are closely joined together; depth and extension of the final curve vary, but the curve shows no tendency to turn upward to form a semicircle.

Tā', zā'. These letters are always distinguished from the preceding two by the stroke above, which is never omitted. The direction of this stroke varies from a left incline, as in Nos. I 4 and III 13, to a perpendicular, as in PSR III 78 and 82. While in our papyri the stroke appears to have been added to the loop, PSR II 33 clearly shows that some writers made the stroke first and joined the loop directly.

ʿAīn, ghain. In the initial and final unconnected positions these letters have the upper left curve; in some cases this is not so marked, as in No. II, in others it is decided and unmistakable, as in No. IV. In the medial and final connected forms they have the triangular head seen in all our pieces.

Fā' and kāf. In initial and medial forms these two are alike, but they have distinct forms when alone or final, fā' being on the line while kāf falls below it, grading off like nūn. Kāf usually has one dot above, as in IV 4, and fā' one below. In V 17, however, we seem to have an exception in the word kablaka, where kāf appears with one dot below, the other dot visible apparently belonging to bā'.

Kāf. Our pieces show a considerable variety for this letter. Alone or final, the upper stroke varies from near vertical, as in III 10 and 13, to an almost horizontal position, as in II 2; it is frequently apt to be mistaken for a dāl. Initial forms vary from hairpin form, as in I 14 and II 2, to an acute angle of about 45°, as in Nos. III-V.

Lām. This is the tallest letter. In III 7 it measures 3.3 cm. Final lām always extends below the line, with its foot curved to the left.

Mīm. The loop of initial and medial mīm is generally half

¹⁹⁸ Cf. CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 71 f.

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above, half below the line, meeting above, though sometimes the ends barely touch, as in IV 17. Initial mīm is occasionally found entirely below the line, as in IV 32. In final or separate mīm the loop is closed, with a tail stroke downward. The latter varies in length from a bare hint of a stroke, as in II 18, to the fair length frequently found in all the papyri, and in direction from a slight incline to the right, as in I 14, to a slight one to the left, as in II 7.

Nūn. This is a somewhat difficult letter, especially in its small final form where it is likely to be confused with rāʾ. Many times the only difference between these two is that of size, nūn being the larger. It is occasionally dotted in Nos. III-V, the dot being placed sometimes above the initial stroke and sometimes within the curve. In V 17 and 27 this letter is large and looks like an inclined semicircle.

Hāʾ. Little difficulty is experienced with this letter in any of its forms. Its final form was used then as now to represent feminine tāʾ (hāʾ al-taʾnīth).

Wāw. This letter is usually small, with a marked head or loop.

Lām-alif. The form of this combination is almost uniformly Y, not only when it stands alone, but also when it is attached to another letter, as in I 13. It was always made in two downward strokes, the one for slanting alif with lower bend to the right, the other for oppositely slanting lām.

Yāʾ. Separate and final yāʾ frequently turn to the right, but final yāʾ is also seen in its modern form, as in IV 18, where at first glance it looks like nūn. When initial or medial, yāʾ is either not dotted at all, as in Nos. I-III, or it has two dots below, as in IV 28 and V 6 and 21. Becker has drawn attention to the loss this letter suffers in combination with lām, bāʾ, tāʾ, thāʾ, and shīn, so that الي appears as ال.¹⁹⁹ Our pieces show the same peculiarity, for example in علي in I 14, II 17, and elsewhere, and in الي in III 2, IV 17, and elsewhere.

FORM, STYLE, AND DICTION

The official documents are remarkable for their adherence to a definite form and usually also for their directness in style.

¹⁹⁹ PSR, p. 27.

The religious formula over, the main subject of the document is usually introduced with a simple ammā baʿd "and now further."²⁰⁰ Having stated the object, frequently briefly and to the point,²⁰¹ the document concludes, when addressed to a non-Muslim, with "peace be on those who follow the guidance,"²⁰² followed by the name of the writer, that of the copyist, and by the date. Some documents, however, are neither brief nor direct. It seems that when a letter dealt with a routine matter, brevity and directness were employed; but in documents referring to gross neglect of duty or to its dire results on entire districts or perhaps the whole country, threats and repetitions and detailed instructions lengthened and complicated the letter.²⁰³ The diction is good classical Arabic, as Becker has already pointed out.²⁰⁴

Two dissimilar attitudes and corresponding phraseologies meet us throughout these documents. The one is a strict and severe attitude expressed in the language of threats, censure, and well-nigh abuse;²⁰⁵ the other is a moral-religious attitude expressed in frank admonition and the use of pious phrases. A few examples of each will suffice here. For the first see IV 11 and 27-31 and compare also PSR I 5 f., NPAF III, and PSR III 48-62; for the second see II 15 and compare also PSR I 18-20, III 16-18, IV 2, and NPAF I 28-30. The phrase in shāʾa Allāh occurs eight times in the Kurrah papyri, and in PSR I 25 we have an example of how mechanically it was used. The first attitude reflects the Arab, especially the "classical" Arab, not long and not far removed from the desert. He is quick to call a spade a spade, unrestrained in his superlatives, both good and bad. The second reflects the same Arab, clothed with the cloak of Islām. As such he is not so essentially different from his non-Arab neighbors wearing the cloak

²⁰⁰ For the grammar and usage of this phrase see Šulī, pp. 37 f., and Ibn Durustūyah, pp. 76 f.

²⁰¹ Cf. PSR X and XI; PAF IX.

²⁰² Cf. Šulī, p. 225, and Kaḷkashandī VI 366.

²⁰³ Cf. PSR III and NPAF II.

²⁰⁴ PSR, p. 30.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Šulī, p. 227, for a few such phrases generally current in correspondence.

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of Christianity, orthodox or otherwise. For both he and his neighbor, motivated by practical economic reasons, surrounded their deeds, consciously or unconsciously, with a moral and religious halo.

II

THE KURRAH PAPYRI IN THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

SYMBOLS

- [الفصول] Words within square brackets are restorations.
 [....] Dots within square brackets indicate traces of writing that are insufficient for restoration.
 [] Vacant space within square brackets indicates that the writing is completely lost.
 Arabic letters and words supplied or identified by B. Moritz are underlined.

I

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE NO. 13757

Date: Rabī^c I, A.H.90/January 18 - February 16, A.D.709.

Description: Medium brown, very fine papyrus, the finest in the group, 35 by 20 cm. Slightly worm-eaten; right half much broken, but fortunately mostly between the lines. The entire document is preserved and consists of three pieces put together between lines 2-3 and 15-16. The small writing on verso has suffered more damage than the writing on recto.

TEXT

Recto

- ١ بسم الله الرحمن ال[رجيم]
- ٢ [من قره بن شريك]
- ٣ [الى صاح]ب اشقوه فاني
- ٤ احمد الله الذي لا اله
- ٥ [الا هو]
- ٦ اما بعد ف[ا] نظر الذي كا

THE KURRAH PAPYRI IN THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

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٧ [ن] بقى [ع] لى اسقف كور
 ٨ تك مما فرض عليه
 ٩ عبد ا[لله] بن عبد الملك
 ١٠ [و] لم الاول فعجل به
 ١١ مع رسولى و[ر] سول الا
 ١٢ سقف ولا توخرن
 ١٣ من تلك البقية قليلا ولا
 ١٤ كثيرا والسلم على
 ١٥ م[ن] اتب[ع] الهدى و
 ١٦ كتب في شهر ر[بيع]
 ١٧ الاو[ل] من سنة تسعين
 (Seal)

Verso

١ [.....] اهل الاسقف [official mark?] اشتوه بحسابه ؟
 ٢
 ١ ١ ١

TRANSLATION

Recto

- 1 In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
- 2 From Ḳurrah ibn Sharīk to
- 3 the sēhib of Ashkāuh. I
- 4 praise God, than whom there is
- 5 no other God.
- 6 Now to proceed: Look up the balance due
- 7 from the bishop of your district
- 8 of the amount imposed on him by
- 9 ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Malik
- 10 and collect the first (amount) and rush it to me
- 11 by my messenger and the messenger of the
- 12 bishop; and do not delay
- 13 any of that balance, be it little or
- 14 much. Peace be with
- 15 those who follow the guidance.
- 16 Written in the month of Rabī^c
- 17 I of the year ninety.

(Seal)

Verso

1 the bishop's people Ashkauh regarding
his account (?)

2

|||

NOTES

Recto

2. The restoration of this line is given on the grounds that the piece, externally and internally, belongs to the Kurrah group. Since Kurrah is said to have entered Fustāṭ on the 13th of Rabī^c I of A.H.90 (cf. Kindī, pp. 63 f., and Statthalter, 1. Abt., p. 39), this document must be among the very first of his orders.

3. Moritz has supplied سف. It is evident, however, that the extended stroke is that of the final bā² of صاحب; for from what follows it is clear that the bishop is not the person addressed and that the addressee can be none other than the local governor or gāhib of Ashkauh. The governor at the time was in all probability Basil, who is mentioned as such in our No. III verso and in PSR I-III, XII, XIV-XV; PAF I-II; NPAF V.

7. For treatment of balances and arrears see below, pages 95 f.; for taxation of the clergy see page 98.

9. 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Malik is mentioned, aside from the protocols (cf. CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, pp. 24-36), in two other Arabic papyri, our No. V 2-3, 18-19, 27-28, and NPAF XII 3. In all three cases the reference is to the payment of taxes and to arrears dating back to the time of his governorship over Egypt.

11. وسول is evidently an error for رسول. The sīn in this word is the only letter in the piece to have a diacritical mark—a stroke over it. On the use of this stroke cf. page 38 and n. 198, likewise PSR, p. 27.

13. For similar phraseology cf. PAF III 13-14.

14-15. On the use of this formula for non-Muslims cf. page 40.

16. The use of the word "month" (shahr) in the date is in keeping with the rules of dating, which require its use with the months Ramaḍān and Rabī^c I and II only; cf. Ṣūlī, pp. 181 and 183.

Verso

1. The "official mark" may be an ornament like those discussed by Grohmann in CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 1, p. 77.

2. These may be official marks, as Margoliouth suggests in Flor. de Vogüé, p. 409.

II

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE NO. 13755

Date: Muḥarram, A.H.91/November 9 - December 8, A.D.709.

Description: Medium brown, fine papyrus, 46 by 21.6 cm. The beginning is broken off and missing; part of the upper left section is also lost; the right margin is clipped at the "fold," but the writing is not much affected. Otherwise the papyrus is in good condition though it consists of some seventeen strips readily put together.

Seal: Dark clay, partly broken off, with no writing, but with evidences of an animal figure. For a discussion of seals see pages 27-33.

TEXT

[١]

١ لحمد قد سقى من هـ [لذا]

٢ النيل العام كاحسن

٣ ما سقى منه قط فارجو [ان]

٤ يكون هذا العام ان شـ [لا]

٥ الله عاما مباركا. فمر اـ [هل]

٦ ارضك بالزراع وحثم [حنا؟]

٧ عليه وتعهده ذلك منهم وابعث

٨ عليه من يتبع فيه امرك ولا تكن

٩ ذلك الى من يعرك منه فان الا

١٠ [ر]ض اذا زرعت عمرت

١١ واخرج الله الذي عليها من

١٢ الحق. فاكفني ذلك ولا

١٣ الومك فيه فان زراع

١٤ اهل الارض راس امرهم

١٥ بعد امر الله وعمرانهم و

١٦ صلاحهم.

١٧ والسلم على من اتبع الهدى

١٨ وكتب بسيل في المحرم

١٩ من سنة احدى وتسعين

(Seal)

TRANSLATION

1 Praise (be)! The irrigation by the
 2 Nile this year has been even with the best
 3 irrigation ever. Therefore I hope that
 4 this year will be, God
 5 willing, a blessed year. Hence order the people of
 6 your land to undertake cultivation and urge them zealously
 7 and secure a contract from them to that effect. Then send out
 8 for this purpose one who will carry out your or-
 der concerning it, and do not entrust
 9 this to such as will hinder you from (carrying) it (out). For
 10 when the land is cultivated, it prospers,
 11 God causing it to bring forth its due
 12 yield. Satisfy me in this, and I will not
 13 blame you in the matter. For cultivation
 14 by the people of the land is their chief duty,
 15 after their duty to God, and (constitutes) their prosperity and
 16 their welfare.
 17 Peace be with those who follow the guidance.
 18 Written by Basil in Muḥarram
 19 of the year one and ninety.

(Seal)

NOTES

2-3. The Nile rose to 16 cubits and 17 fingerbreadths, a record which was exceeded both in the preceding and in the following year; cf. Taghrībirdī I 246-51 and PSR, p. 16.

4-5. For the religious expressions and general pious tone of the Kurrāh papyri see pages 40 f.

6. It is interesting to note that here and in line 13, as also in PSR I 17, the word زراع, formed in the measure of one of the two verbal nouns of the third form of the regular trilateral verb, is not used, as one would expect, in the sense of مزارعة, but of زراعة. The Arabic dictionaries throw no light on the word. However, the phrase قد فرغوا من زراعتهم in PSR I 17 seems to be used in the same sense as the phrase قد فرغوا من الحرثه in NPAF II 15.

15. Bell's translation of the equivalent phrase in B. 1356 (Der Islam II 281) is "next after the service of God."

18. Here the Arabs have added a final hā² to the name Basil, in which form it occurs also in B. 1375 (P. Lond. IV 48) and PSR XIV.

III

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE NO. 13756

Date: Šafar, A.H.91/December 9, A.D.709 - January 6, 710.

Description: Medium fine papyrus, light brown, the lightest in the group, 53.7 by 20 cm. The entire length of the piece is preserved, but it is considerably damaged by worms, especially line 14. Much of the right half is broken off and lost; the left side is likewise broken, but to a lesser degree.

Seal: Dark clay, in perfect condition, showing the figure of a four-footed animal with a star above its back. For a discussion of seals see pages 27-33.

TEXT

Recto

- ١ [بِسْمِ اللَّهِ] الرحمن الرحيم
- ٢ [قِرْه] بن شريك الى
- ٣ [صاحب] اشقوه فاني احـ [مد]
- ٤ [اللّٰه] لذي لا اله الا
- ٥ [هو] فان ابشاده بن ا [بنيله]
- ٦ [قد ا] خبرني ان له على
- ٧ [انباط] من اهل كورتك
- ٨ [] عشر دينرا فنزعم
- ٩ [انهم] غلبوه على حقه
- ١٠ [واذا] جاك كتبي هذا
- ١١ [واقام] البيئه على ما
- ١٢ [اخبرني] فاستخرج له
- ١٣ [ولا] تظلمن عبيدك
- ١٤ [الا] ان بيناته غير
- ١٥ [ذلك] فاكتب [الى]
- ١٦ [والا] سلم [ء] لى من اتبع [ا]
- ١٧ [لهدى] وكتب مسلم [بن]
- ١٨ [لبنن] ونسخ الصلت

١٩ في [ص] فر سه احدى

٢٠ [وتـ] مين.

(Seal)

Verso

١ من قره بن شريك الى به [يل]

٢ [في] ابشاده بن ابني [ل] في بظ [ه .]

[Greek, illegible] ٣

TRANSLATION

Recto

- 1 In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
 2 Ḳurrah ibn Sharīk to
 3 the sāhib of Ashḳauh. I praise
 4 God, than whom there is no other
 5 God. Now, Ibshādah ibn Abnīlah
 6 has informed me that there are owed to him
 7 by farmers of the people of your district
 8 and ten dinars, and he claims
 9 that they have denied him his right.
 10 When this my letter has reached you
 11 and he has established the proof of what
 12 he has told me, then secure (it) for him,
 13 and do not oppress your slave.
 14 But should his case prove other than
 15 that, then write me.
 16 Peace be with those who follow
 17 the guidance. Written by Muslim ibn
 18 Labnan and copied by al-Ṣalt
 19 in Ṣafar of the year one
 20 and ninety.

(Seal)

Verso

- 1 From Ḳurrah ibn Sharīk to Basil
 2 regarding Ibshādah ibn Abnīlah about his farmers(?)
 3

NOTES

Recto

The theme and the style of this papyrus are very similar to those of PAF I and PSR X and XI, with which it bears interesting comparison.

5. The names here and in verso 2 are Coptic. For Ibshādah as a personal name see APJRL, p. 96 (No. 9); for the same as a place-name cf. Amélineau, p. 376. For Abnīlah see APEL I, Nos. 54, 61, and 67.

7. Moritz had supplied the singular نبط, but it is clear from the context that the plural is needed. This word, both in the singular and in the plural form, occurs frequently in the papyri; cf. PAF I 6; II 13; VIII 3 and 6; NPAF VIII 5, 8, and 9; IX 5; X 4. In PAF I 6 Becker translates it as "die Eingeborenen," and in ZA XX 74 he warns against reading kibṭī for it. Yāḳūt III 634 states that every land-dweller who is neither a shepherd nor a soldier is a nabatī. According to Lane, s.v. nabat, the term was used in Irāk also.

14. An alternative reading for شانه is ميناه; this latter, however, is not found in any of the other Kurrah papyri.

18. Becker in Der Islam II 262 has, on the authority of Moritz, given the last name as "Lebnan" and holds that he was a Coptic convert to Islām. Labnan seems to have been a busy scribe, for he appears frequently in the documents as the original writer, usually with al-Ṣalt as copyist; cf. PSR X; PAF I; NPAF VIII and IX.

Verso

3. The Greek line is much broken; its contents are doubtless similar to those of lines 1-2. All three lines are faded.

IV

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE NO. 13758

Date: Missing, except for "Monday." In tone and, in part at least, in contents this papyrus is similar to B. 1338 and B. 1339 (P. Lond. IV 8-11), which are dated Thoth and Phaophi of the 8th indiction respectively, but there is not enough to consider it the parallel of either, unless we assume that the lost part completed the parallelism. If the word in line 1 is حساب,

"accounts," then this assumption may be justified and the piece dated within September or October 709, that is, Dhū al-Ḳa'dah or Dhū al-Ḥijjah of A.H.90.

Description: Medium brown papyrus, 74.7 by 21.5 cm. The first part is lost; the rest is in very good condition, though consisting of at least six strips put together, namely at lines 2, 8, 22, 23, 27, and at the end. In several other places the piece seems to have been ready to fall apart before Moritz took good care of it. The writing throughout is clear and has suffered hardly any loss at all.

TEXT

- ١ [] و[.....]
- ٢ [م] ن ارضك فوجدته
- ٣ بقي عليك مال عظيم
- ٤ وقد علمت الذي حضر
- ٥ من الزمان وانما تقدم
- ٦ على الان. ولعمري ان
- ٧ عاملا من عمال تاخر
- ٨ بعد الانجل الذي اجلته
- ٩ او تقدم على وقد ترك
- ١٠ خلفه من المال شيا
- ١١ لاحق مفتر هينه عليه
- ١٢ نفسه. فاذا جاك
- ١٣ كتبي هذا فاجمع ما على
- ١٤ ارضك من الجزية والا
- ١٥ بواب والفضول ثم اقدم
- ١٦ علي بمال ارضك وبالذين
- ١٧ امرتك ان تقدم الي بهم
- ١٨ من اهل ارضك. فلعمرى
- ١٩ لقد كنت اظن ان عمك
- ٢٠ هو انجح وخيرا مما ر
- ٢١ ايت وقد فعلت ما لم
- ٢٢ يفعل احد من العمال
- ٢٣ في تاخير الذي عليك [و] في
- ٢٤ عجزك في عمك وانه
- ٢٥ والله ما لاحد عندي

٢٦ اخر هذا المال الا
 ٢٧ ما قبج وجهه ولا يكون
 ٢٨ لما قبلك حبس واياك
 ٢٩ والعلل فاني لست
 ٣٠ ممن يصدق بالعلل و
 ٣١ لا يعذر بها. والسلام
 ٣٢ على من اتبع الهدى
 ٣٣ وكتب خليفه يوم الاثنين

TRANSLATION

1 and
 2 from your land, and I have found it.
 3 You still owe a large amount of revenue.
 4 You well know what time it has come to be;
 5 so appear
 6 before me now. By my life, if
 7 any finance officer delays
 8 beyond the term which I appointed,
 9 or appears before me having left
 10 behind him aught of the revenue,
 11 truly, he is but a self-deceiving fool who has light regard for
 12 his life. So when there has come to you
 13 this my letter, collect what is due from
 14 your land of gold tax and
 15 imposts and extraordinary taxes. Then come
 16 to me with the revenue of your land, together with those
 17 whom I had ordered you to bring with you
 18 of the people of your land. Now, by my life,
 19 I really used to think your administration
 20 more successful and better than what
 21 I have seen. For you have indeed done what not
 22 one of the finance officers has done
 23 in the delaying of what is due from you and in
 24 the incompetence of your administration. For indeed,
 25 by God, there is in my service not one
 26 who has delayed this revenue
 27 without being disgraced. Let there be no
 28 withholding of what is with you. And beware

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29 of excuses, for I am not
 30 of those who believe in excuses
 31 or accept them. Peace
 32 be with those who follow the guidance.
 33 Written by Khalīfah on Monday.

NOTES

4-5. PSR I 5-6 has قد ذهب من الزمن ما قد علمت . . Other possible readings are حصر and خسر.

11-12. A similar threat appears also in the Greek papyrus B. 1334, translated by Bell in *Der Islam* II 270 f., where Basil is cautioned against giving, through neglect of duty, "ground for proceeding against your life." On the tone of language used in addressing officials see pages 40 f.

14-15. The translation given here is confirmed by Greek parallels, where χρυσικά δημόσια, εἰσέχοι, and ἐκτεράορδισα are evidently used for *jizyah*, *abwāb*, and *fuḡūl* respectively; cf. B. 1338 in *P. Lond.* IV 8-10 and Bell's remarks *ibid.* p. 168. Bell's translation of these terms in *Der Islam* II 272 is "gold public taxes," "imposts," and "extraordinary taxes." Becker (*ibid.* p. 250) accepts *abwāb* in the same sense in NPAF I 2.

25-27. That local governors were to be no less severe to their subordinates is seen in PSR III 52-56.

28-29. واباك والعلل. On the cardboard mounting of the original (though not visible on the photograph) Moritz has drawn attention to a use of the same phrase in Ṭabarī II 1004, lines 12 f.

33. This document and NPAF II, which has "Friday" and which Becker includes in the group of Ḳurrah papyri, are the only two pieces, to my knowledge, that are so indefinitely dated. The reason that in these documents the day only is mentioned may be that they are urgent admonitions meant to be dispatched at once by special messenger and delivered within a week so that results might be obtained with the least possible delay.

V

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE NO. 13759

Date: Lost, probably was A.H.90 or 91/A.D.709 or 710.

Description: Medium brown, fine papyrus, 87.5 by 20.5 cm.

Very poor, the worst of the group. The beginning and the left half along almost the entire length are broken off and missing. Lines 1-25 are made up of seven pieces carefully held together, whereas lines 26-33 consist of four separate strips, the text of which is so broken as to make it difficult to tell how many lines are lost between them.

TEXT

- ١ ما قبض ر]
- ٢ منذ كان بها [عبد الله]
- ٣ بن عبد الملك [من الجزية و ؟]
- ٤ ابواب المال و [الفضول]
- ٥ في ذلك اذا الذي]
- ٦ من الجزية و]
- ٧ ثابت في الـ]
- ٨ لا خطا به]
- ٩ جبي من الـ]
- ١٠ الجزية فا [لذي ؟]
- ١١ من سماك اخو فر]
- ١٢ ومن صالح]
- ١٣ كتاب ذلك]
- ١٤ فاذا جاك كتبي هذا [ا]
- ١٥ فارسل الى]
- ١٦ كل دينار دفعته]
- ١٧ او من كان قبلك ع [لمى]
- ١٨ كورتك الى [عبد الله بن]
- ١٩ عبد الملك من [الجزية و]
- ٢٠ الفضول والغرامات]
- ٢١ والمواريث]
- ٢٢ ذلك مما كتبه [ر بن]
- ٢٣ الـ [٠٠] منذ كان بمصر
- ٢٤ الى بو [م] ي هذا [ا و] ذلك
- ٢٥ كتابا بينا م [ثبتا] ايا
- ٢٦ [الفضول] الذي دفعت
- ٢٧ الى خزان عبد [د الله] بن
- ٢٨ عبد الملك ا]

]
 ٢٩ العمال ثم لا]
 ٣٠ ا]
]
 ٣١ واحدا الا]
 ٣٢ كتابه و]
 ٣٣ [والسلم على من اتبع]
 ٣٤ الهدى وكتب فلان بن فلان]
 ٣٥ [في]
]

TRANSLATION

- 1 What he received
- 2 since 'Abd Allāh
- 3 ibn 'Abd al-Malik was in it, of the gold tax and
- 4 the imposts and the extraordinary taxes
- 5 in that. If what
- 6 of the gold tax and
- 7 established in the
- 8 no secret in it
- 9 collected from the
- 10 the gold tax, for what
- 11 from Samāk, the brother of F r . .
- 12 and from Ṣāliḥ
- 13 letter for that
- 14 Therefore, when this present letter reaches you,
- 15 then send me
- 16 every dinar which you have paid
- 17 or he who was before you over
- 18 your district, to 'Abd Allāh ibn
- 19 'Abd al-Malik, of the gold tax and
- 20 the extraordinary taxes and the fines
- 21 and the mawārīth(?) (or mawāzīt?)
- 22 That is what has written r ibn
- 23 al- since he was in Egypt
- 24 to this my day. And that
- 25 is a clear document affirming

26 the extraordinary taxes which you paid
 27 into the treasuries of 'Abd Allāh ibn
 28 'Abd al-Malik

 29 the finance officers. Then do not
 30

 31 one except
 32 his letter and
 33 Peace be to those who follow
 34 the guidance. Written by
 35 in

NOTES

Although the papyrus is in poor condition, still enough of the writing is preserved to give us a fair idea of the general purport of the letter. This seems to be an order to pay up tax arrears carried over from the time of 'Abd Allāh's administration and a demand for proof of the claim that the payments in question had been, in part or in whole, paid in 'Abd Allāh's time.

2. The name 'Abd Allāh here and in line 18 was supplied not only on the strength of the content and historical sequence, but also on the evidence in line 27, where the first two letters of عبد are unmistakable. The reference of biḥā is probably to Egypt.

11-12. The names سماك and صالح need no comment. That of the "brother" beginning with either a fā or a kāf has many possibilities, as a glance at any full list of Arabic names will show. Arabic names occurring in these papyri give no help, unless we wish to read قمر. It is not clear why these three men are mentioned here; from their names it is evident that they are Arabs and therefore Muslims. They may have been Muslim taxpayers (see below, pp. 90-93) whose accounts are to be investigated. I think, however, that they are more likely to have been commissioners or inspectors of some kind who had either given information regarding the case or were being sent to do so (cf. P. Lond. IV xx).

21. Paleographically, the word in this line appears to be mawārīth, there being two dots for yā and three dots over the thā. Read thus, its obvious translation is "inheritances."

However, the context is too broken to allow this as a positive translation exclusive of any other; furthermore, the Ḳurrah papyri give no other reference to inheritances. We read in Kindī, p. 69, with reference to the replacement of Coptic local officials by Muslims in the reign of 'Umar II, *ونزعت موارد القبط واستعمل المسلمون*. Becker has emended mawārīth to mawāzīt (*Der Islam* II 363). It is possible that the word in this line may have been meant for mawāzīt, one of the three dots appearing over the head of thā' serving originally as dot for zāy. The scribe of the document was not very careful in the placement of the dots in general; for example, those for yā' in the word under consideration and in jizyah in line 6 are too low and too far to the right, while the dot for bā' in bi-miṣr in line 23 is too far to the left, being in fact placed under mīm. The reading mawāzīt (sing. māzūt, Arabicized from *μειζότερος*, *Der Islam* II 363), "local village officials," could fit well into the context of the document. Furthermore, according to Becker's readings it occurs in this same form in NPAF III 28, while the singular māzūt appears in PAF IX 3.

30 ff. There is no way of telling how many lines are really missing here. The final formula and the date alone usually occupy four to five lines. Since the document deals with arrears from 'Abd Allāh's time, it was probably among the first of Ḳurrah's documents and so may be dated A.H.90 or, at the latest, 91.

III

BIOGRAPHY OF ẸURRAH IBN SHARĪK,
GOVERNOR OF EGYPT

Most of the sources of information for the Umayyads and their regime are from camps hostile to them. By far the greater number is from the hands of the orthodox traditionalists who flourished in the days of the 'Abbāsids and who were hostile either because they honestly differed from the principles espoused by the fallen regime or because, as was most frequently the case, they catered to the court opinion of the 'Abbāsids and to the prejudices of religious sects.¹ Others are from Christians, such as Eutychius and Severus, in whose works we get to see the Umayyads through the eyes of some of their Christian subjects, both Melkite and Coptic; and hostile and resentful as these conquered non-Muslim subjects might be expected to be, yet they are hardly any more severe, if as severe, on the Umayyads as their fellow Muslims—the 'Abbāsids. But now we are fortunate enough, through the Ẹurrah Aphrodito papyri at our disposal, to hear a typical governor—Ẹurrah ibn SharĪk—speak for himself and, indirectly, also for his Umayyad masters.

Ẹurrah ibn SharĪk ibn Murthid ibn Ḥāzīm ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥabsh al-'Absī, a North Arab from the Syrian city of Ẹinnasrīn, was a practical man, active in the service of the Caliph Walīd (86-96/705-15).² Until very recently it was unknown in what capacity he had served before his significant appointment to the difficult office of governor of Egypt. Becker rightly surmised: "Er muss sich jedenfalls schon vorher in verantwortungsreicher

¹ Cf. Goldziher II, chaps. ii and iii.

² Kindī, pp. 63-66; cf. also Ibn Taghrībirdī I 241 f.; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, pp. 238 f.; Maḡrīzī I 302; MIFAO LIII (1927) 85; Statthalter, I. Abt., pp. 39 f.; PSR, pp. 15-19. For protocols from his period cf. CPR III, Bd. I, Teil 2, pp. 45-55 (Nos. 52-64), and Études de papyrologie I 33.

Stellung bewährt haben, sonst hätte ihm nicht der Chalife el-Walīd unter so schwierigen Verhältnissen nach Ägypten gesetzt."³ And indeed he had held a responsible position in the imperial administration, for Björkman's researches have shown ẖurrah to have been one of Walīd's kātib's or state secretaries.⁴ Suyūṭī lists him as one of three kātib's.⁵ The significance of the office of kātib in Umayyad times is well brought out by a passage from al-Fakhrī, where Ibn al-Ṭīkṭakā describes the pre-ʿAbbāsīd caliphs as consulting with the most sagacious and wise of their courtiers and retainers, each of whom performed, in effect, the functions of a wazīr. He adds further that when the ʿAbbāsīds came to the throne the laws of the wazīrate were fixed, and the officer in question was then called wazīr, having hitherto been designated kātib, "secretary," or mushīr, "counselor."⁶

Such a secretary or counselor was ẖurrah ibn Sharīk. One may well imagine the conquest-minded Walīd as anxious to have Egypt both quiet and regular in her tribute, so that her weight of grain and gold might tell, and tell well, in the success of his imperial policy. But the internal conditions of the Egypt of his day promised the opposite results. ẖurrah, the tried secretary-counselor, must rise to the occasion and save the situation. And the situation was serious. The 1st century of the Hijrah was a century of stress and strain; a century of painful adjustments on the part of the non-Muslim subject majority to the will of the Muslim Arab minority; a century of transition, of rising arrogant race consciousness, and of political and economic evolution that taxed the ingenuity of the successive pilots that charted the course of the Muslim ship of state.

The eschatological views of Muḥammad, which had colored in a measure the outlook of his first successors, had had their short day, and Islām was now busier trying to conquer this world than

³ PSR, p. 15.

⁴ Beiträge zur Geschichte der Staatskanzlei im islamischen Ägypten, p. 57.

⁵ Ḥusn al-muḥāḍarah II 172.

⁶ Fakhrī, p. 206. Nicholson, Literary History of the Arabs, pp. 256 f., especially in n. 2, points out that Arabic sources refer to Ziyād ibn Abīhi as the wazīr of Muʿāwīyah, and Abū Bakr as the wazīr of Muḥammad, and that the word wazīr was used also in pre-Islāmic poetry.

she was preparing to meet the day of judgment in the world to come. Would-be-dynasts made a bid for power, and the century saw the first two civil wars of Islām. With the final Marwānid-Umayyad victory the die was cast for continued imperialism; and imperial finance at first stood aghast, and then laughed, at the naïve "communism" of early Islām. The non-Muslims, the imperial camel, had to yield more milk, and the Muslim had to learn to give as well as to receive. So on the back of the former was laid a heavier tax burden, and from the land of the latter was required a kharāj. Furthermore, Umayyad imperialism had become race conscious to a high degree. To be an Arab was the height of distinction, comparable only to that of being a Roman in the days of St. Paul. And so the second half of this century saw the minting of Arab currency, the adoption of Arabic as the official language, and the appearance of Arab civil officials, especially in the higher positions. Again, at the imperial court differences of policies were sharpened by interdynastic rivalries and colored by religious opinions. ‘Abd al-Malik and his brother ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, both men of ability and both ambitious for their children, never lost sight of the question of succession. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, the acknowledged heir, refused, on his brother's request, to set aside his claim in favor of his nephew Walīd, replying to his brother, "If you have a son, we have sons." According to him, his son al-Aṣḡagh was worthy to be caliph. But death took both father and son within about six weeks of each other, thus enabling ‘Abd al-Malik to have his heart's desire to see not one but two of his sons, Walīd and Sulaimān, in line for the succession.⁷ But there was yet another son of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz to reckon with—‘Umar. In spite of the high esteem that ‘Abd al-Malik had for this young man whom he made his son-in-law and appointed governor of the Ḥijāz, it is evident that, personal affection aside, uncle and nephew did not exactly see alike, for ‘Umar frowned on the deeds of Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf and inclined to the theological opposition at Madīnah.⁸ Walīd upheld the policies of Ḥajjāj against both brother

⁷ For details of this rivalry see Kindī, pp. 54 f.; Maqrīzī I 210; Ibn Taghrībirdī I 193; Ya‘qūbī II 334 f.; Ibn al-Athīr IV 409 f.; Tabarī II 1164-71; on the death of al-Aṣḡagh and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz see also Severus, PO V 52-54.

⁸ Cf. Ar. Kg., pp. 267 f.

Sulaimān and cousin ʿUmar,⁹ thus driving these two into the same camp. Sulaimān set aside his own sons and his brother and gave the throne to his cousin ʿUmar, who is known in history as pious ʿUmar II.¹⁰

Such were the times in which the lot of Ḳurrah ibn Sharīk was cast, first as Walīd's kātib, then as his governor of Egypt. As already intimated, the situation in Egypt at that time was extremely grave. For after the death of the governor ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, ʿAbd al-Malik had appointed his son ʿAbd Allāh as governor, and the latter's rule was the severest and hardest that Egypt had yet experienced under the Arabs.¹¹ The master hand of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz had, indeed, likewise lain heavily and firmly on the land of Egypt, but that of young ʿAbd Allāh promised to prove the necessary straw to break the camel's back. His personal greediness for graft proved to be his own undoing. Furthermore, the maladministration of ʿAbd Allāh was cruelly intensified by the failure of nature. In A.H.86 the Nile failed to rise to its customary level, stopping at the low maximum of 13 cubits and 18 finger-breadths.¹² This meant failure of crops, which in turn meant heavy speculation in the grain markets. Prices soared,¹³ famine and plague were doing their worst,¹⁴ but taxes were mercilessly demanded and even increased.¹⁵ Not even death released a man from them, for he remained unburied until his people or village paid the taxes for him.¹⁶ Desperate, the peasants deserted their holdings. But ʿAbd Allāh took severe measures against them. All fugitives and strangers who had settled in a locality within the past twenty years "were driven together, branded on hands and forehead and sent to places they knew not. Thus there was trouble

⁹ Ibid. p. 257; Ibn Taghrībirdī I 243.

¹⁰ Ṭabarī II 1340-44; Yaʿkūbī II 358-60; Ibn al-Athīr V 27-30; cf. also Ar. Kg., pp. 264-66.

¹¹ Ibn Taghrībirdī I 233.

¹² Ibid. p. 237.

¹³ Ibid. p. 233; cf. also Kindī, p. 59, and PSR, p. 16.

¹⁴ Ibn Taghrībirdī I 235.

¹⁵ Severus, PO V 55.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 56.

and confusion in the land."¹⁷ Neither did the Coptic church escape his avarice. Throughout his administration his object seems to have been to humiliate its officials and to acquire their actual or supposed wealth, "so that many churches were ruined for that cause."¹⁸

But news of ʔabd Allāh's corruption and misappropriation of the state revenue reached his brother Walīd, who summoned him to Damascus in A.H.88. But admonition was of no avail. Having returned to Egypt, he persisted in his dissipation till he was suddenly deposed and called home.¹⁹

It was at such a crucial moment that ʔurrah was appointed to the governorship of Egypt. Riding to office on an imperial tidal wave, he had to swim with the current, conscious at the same time of undercurrents which might at any moment draw him under; for his young royal master might at any time be induced to change his mind. To hold his own, ʔurrah, like Ḥajjāj, had to show himself a positive imperial asset. He did this by supplying the sinews of empire—money—money for use in Islām's second wave of conquest and expansion induced by Walīd's imperial ambition and pride.

ʔurrah was appointed governor of Egypt in Rabīʔ I, A.H.90/January, A.D.709. He traveled with two companions by post and arrived at Fustāṭ unpretentiously and unexpectedly on the third or thirteenth of that month. His first action was to go to the governor's mosque and to offer prayer in the mibrāb. Guards would have him move to some other spot, but he ordered them to summon their chief instead. Quickly one of the guards left and informed the chief of police, ʔabd al-Aʕlā, who, sensing that there was something in the wind, had a horse saddled and rode to the mosque, where he met ʔurrah with a courteous greeting, only to be commanded to go and seal the government offices and the treasury. No longer in doubt that this is some high official, ʔabd al-Aʕlā sent out a feeler: "If you are in charge of the kharāj, this order is out of your sphere." Thereupon ʔurrah asked him:

"To what tribe do you belong?"

"To Fahm," said ʔabd al-Aʕlā.

¹⁷ Ibid.; for a critical interpretation of this passage see Bell in P. Lond. IV xl and Becker in Der Islam II 368 f.

¹⁸ Severus, PQ V 55.

¹⁹ Ibn Taghrībirdī I 233.

"You will never," replied Ḳurrah, "find a Fahmī [which word may also mean 'a person endowed with intelligence or understanding'] but that he guards his highest temper and recognizes the truth." Shrewd 'Abd al-A'ālā understood and saluted Ḳurrah as governor.²⁰

We have reported this incident in detail because it reveals Ḳurrah's personality and character. It shows him endowed with presence of mind, and to be shrewd, self-possessed, dignified, and able to command.

In his brief six years of office (13th Rabī' I, 90 - 24th Rabī' I, 96/January 30, 709 - December 7, 714),²¹ Ḳurrah accomplished the restoration of normal order in Egypt, a tax census,²² an increase of tax returns,²³ the reclamation of waste lands for sugar plantation,²⁴ and a building program (including the rebuilding of the mosque of 'Amr).²⁵ But beside his master Walīd few seem to have appreciated his accomplishments, for the simple reason that Walīd was the one to profit largely by them.

A Khārijite plot was soon afoot against Ḳurrah's life. Taghrībirdī,²⁶ followed by Becker,²⁷ gives the Azraqiyyah group²⁸ as the plotters; but Guest²⁹ draws our attention to a marginal note to Kindī's account, attributed to Ibn Yūnus, an early Egyptian historian (d. 347/958),³⁰ naming the Ibāḍiyyah as the real plotters.

²⁰ Kindī, pp. 62 f.; cf. also the variants in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, pp. 238 f.

²¹ Kindī, pp. 65 f.; for a discussion of Ḳurrah's dates see PSR, pp. 17 f.

²² Kindī, p. 65.

²³ Severus, PO V 64.

²⁴ Kindī, p. 65; Ibn Taghrībirdī I 244; PSR, p. 18.

²⁵ Kindī, p. 65; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 131; Ibn Taghrībirdī I 242 and 244; PSR, pp. 18 f.

²⁶ I 242.

²⁷ PSR, p. 19.

²⁸ Wellhausen, Die religiös-politischen Oppositionsparteien, pp. 28-30.

²⁹ Kindī, p. 64, n. 1.

³⁰ Ibn Khallikān II 94.

Known facts of the history of these two groups confirm neither account. The Azraqiyyah operated chiefly in ʿIrāq and farther east and after the death of their latest acknowledged leader in 77/696 seem to have disappeared from history,³¹ while the Ibāḍiyyah first appeared in Arabia in the reign of Marwān II (127-32/744-50), whence they spread to all Muslim lands, forming a specially strong party in North Africa and there playing a disturbing part in the period of dynastic transition in the 8th century.³² Thus it was too late for the Azraqiyyah and too early for the Ibāḍiyyah to have instigated the plot. Kindī's text designates the plotters, who were of Alexandria, as the shurāt, a term meaning "the heretics or schismatics, commonly known by the name of khawārij."³³ The plotters—about a hundred of them—were soon discovered, and all were put to death. Thus Ẹurrah early taught his enemies a lasting lesson.

The opposition party, if but for policy's sake, condemned him severely. In the oft reported statement of their leader ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz all of Walīd's governors came in for their share of censure: "Al-Ḥajjāj in ʿIrāq, al-Walīd in Syria, Ẹurrah ibn Sharīk in Egypt, ʿUthmān in Madīnah, and Khālīd in Makkah—oh God, the world is full of oppression and violence; give deliverance to the people!"³⁴ Though the authenticity of this statement may be doubted—something similar having been related with regard to Ziyād ibn Abīhi under Muʿāwiyah,³⁵ thus pointing to the fabrication in both cases by later anti-Umayyad traditionists and historians—it nevertheless serves as an index to the unpopularity of Ẹurrah. We read further in these same and in other sources that Ẹurrah was irreligious; that he defiled the mosque of ʿAmr with drunken revelry and shamelessly alleged, "For them the day, for us the night";³⁶ that he was, in fact, evil through and through, "the

³¹ EI I 542; Shahrastānī, pp. 89-91.

³² EI I 3 f. and II 350 f.; Wellhausen, op. cit. pp. 52-55; Shahrastānī, pp. 100 f.

³³ Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon IV 1546.

³⁴ PSR, p. 17, and references given there.

³⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī I 243; Ibn al-Athīr IV 461.

³⁶ Kindī, p. 65, n. 2; Ibn Taghrībirdī I 242; PSR, p. 19; Statthalter, 1. Abt., p. 40.

most wicked of God's creatures,"³⁷ "a bad administrator, wicked and unjust, tyrannical, immoral, and profligate."³⁸

So much for the Muslim verdict on Kurrah. Let us now see what the Coptic Christians have to say of him, taking Severus as our main informant. This writer, in the translation by B. Evetts, relates:

And Kurrah brought down great trials upon the friends of Abd Allah, both Christians and Muslims, and cast them into prisons where they remained for a year. And there was in his days a man of the orthodox faith, named John, a native of Damīrah, who had authority to command or forbid. But Kurrah caused trials among the churches and the monks, as shall be described.³⁹

Then follows the story of the visit of Patriarch Alexander II to Kurrah to congratulate him on his appointment as governor; how the Patriarch was arrested and, in the course of the conversation with Kurrah, was told, "If thou must sell thine own flesh, thou must pay me three thousand dinars"; how five pots of gold were conveniently discovered by some hermit's sons; how four were handed to Alexander's steward and scribe, who hid them dishonestly; how news of the find reached Kurrah; and how Kurrah had the house and the church searched and the pots, the vessels of the church, and the gold and silver and cattle found in the patriarchal residence carried away.⁴⁰ When, somewhat later, the rumor came out that the Patriarch was minting dinars in his house, a second search took place.

The people of the city of Alexandria with the town-clerk, by the command of Kurrah,.... seized the patriarch and his companions; and they threw him to the ground, and beat his companions, who were tortured till their blood flowed on the ground, and they almost died by the torture

And the Amir Kurrah was a great lover of money; and whenever an official died, he seized all his goods; and he even took away the endowments of the bishops. By these means he added a hundred thousand dinars to the established revenue of the country. And men began to flee from place to place with their wives and children, but no place would harbour them because of the troubles and the exaction of taxes; and his tyranny was greater than that of any of his predecessors.

³⁷ Kindī, p. 64, n. 1.

³⁸ Ibn Taghrībirdī I 242.

³⁹ PO V 57.

⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 58-60.

Then Kurrah appointed a man named Abd al- Azîz, of the city of Sakhâ, who collected the fugitives from every place, and brought them back and bound them and punished them, and sent every one to his own place; and the people endured heavy trials.⁴¹

Quite in contrast to the foregoing picture drawn by the Muslim and Christian writers referred to are the character traits of Kurrah revealed in the papyri. PSR III and NPAF I together give us a fine insight into Kurrah's own attitude toward his office, his subordinate officials, and the people at large. Using these documents as a basis, and supplementing the information derived from them by details gleaned from other letters written by him, we see that Kurrah has throughout the attitude of a shepherd who feels responsible for his sheep (though not too much must be read into this, for after all sheep must give wool). It is this attitude that he is constantly seeking to develop in his officials. "If the people of the land suffer oppression and loss at the hands of those who are appointed to rule over them, then that is their ruin."⁴² Again, office is a "trust and a religious duty,"⁴³ and hence the officials are to see to the execution of orders in person and are not to delegate the responsibility to another.⁴⁴ The officials who will achieve improvement and show faithfulness will be rewarded not only by God,⁴⁵ but by Kurrah also, who will do good to them, extend his favors to them, and strengthen their position in office.⁴⁶ Those, however, who are found wanting will be rewarded accordingly⁴⁷—disgraced,⁴⁸ fined,⁴⁹ or even be in danger of their lives.⁵⁰ The higher officials are held responsible

⁴¹ Ibid. pp. 61 and 64.

⁴² PSR III 68-72.

⁴³ Ibid. lines 63 f.

⁴⁴ Ibid. ll. 72-74; cf. NPAF I 19-27 and our No. II 8-10.

⁴⁵ NPAF I 28-30.

⁴⁶ Ibid. ll. 4-6.

⁴⁷ Ibid. ll. 8 f.

⁴⁸ Ibid. ll. 14-16; cf. our No. IV 25-27.

⁴⁹ NPAF III 1-3; cf. also PSR III 54-56.

⁵⁰ Our No. IV 11 f.; cf. also our note to this passage on p. 52.

for the just conduct of their subordinates,⁵¹ and the subordinates, if caught oppressing the people, are to be punished severely.⁵²

These are not mere generalities; they are statements made in connection with specific facts. Thus briefly the burden of PSR III is to hasten the shipment of grain to the central treasury, where it is needed for the army rations. Basil is to see that in the collection of the grain the "people of the land" are not coerced into paying more than their assessment and that not a single extra ardabb is taken from them; that trustworthy and acceptable local kabbāl's are employed, and that the standard and just measure is used. On the other hand, the people should not think that they can pay their taxes with poor grain; for the treasury officials are commanded to accept nothing but good grain. Furthermore, the collector-shipper must be held responsible for delivering the full amount to the treasury. PSR III and NPAF IV show the same concern and care for the people, though in these cases they are the "people of the city." Anticipating a grain famine in Fustāt and therefore a "corner" by speculators, Qurrah takes double measures to head it off, first by ordering the local officials to regulate the trade in grain, and then by temporarily suspending the custom duties at Fustāt.

Furthermore, Qurrah is interested not only in the general economic welfare and prosperity of the country; he is concerned with the administration of justice as well, and any individual may receive justice at his hand. This is amply illustrated in the many appeals that the documents refer to. For example, in PAF II Dāwud ibn Badā' has complained of the local official's (mazūt) conduct in forcing his way into his house and taking possession of it; Basil is ordered to settle these matters justly and to keep these officials from the people's houses. In PAF I and NPAF VIII Marḳus ibn Jarīj (George?) is appealing two cases of debt; in our No. III Ibshādah ibn Abnīlah, and in NPAF IX Baḳṭar (Victor) ibn Jamūl, are doing the same. In PSR X, which is addressed to Zakariyyā', ṣāhib of Upper Ashmūn, Yuḥannas Shanūdah has a similar case. In each of these cases the local official is ordered to investigate the claim and, if it is substantiated, to secure just payment. On the other hand, Qurrah is to be informed if the claim

⁵¹ PSR III 57-62.

⁵² Ibid. 11. 48-56.

is false. In NPAF V Hishām ibn 'Umar is complaining that his fugitives are harbored in Basil's district; Basil is ordered to return them to Hishām and admonished not to expose himself to a similar charge in the future. In B. 1356 Basil himself is taken to task for not being more readily accessible to the representatives of the people with regard to tax affairs.⁵³

In these documents, then, Ẹurrah speaks long enough and forcefully enough to cause us to question seriously the verdict of the Muslim and the Coptic sources regarding him. But this leaves us with the problem of explaining the divergence of judgment in our sources.

We have already noted (cf. pp. 62-65) some of the motives for Ẹurrah's unpopularity with the imperial opposition party at home and have also pointed out that he punished the Khārījite plotters with death. Severus tells us that Ẹurrah deposed many officials who were friends of his predecessor in office and confiscated the property of officials who died.⁵⁴ The plotters and many of the deposed officials were Muslims, all with an ax to grind and all without question to be severely handled by a positive character like Ẹurrah. But how are we to account for the discontent of the general Muslim population? The answer is probably to be found in the imposition of the land tax (kharāj).⁵⁵ It is supposed that Ẹurrah exacted this tax from the believers, degrading them, in their eyes, to the level of the unbelievers. That Ẹurrah introduced this tax on the Muslims is not sure; that he exacted it seems more certain.⁵⁶ And in this one fact we see sufficient cause for Ẹurrah's unpopularity with the average Muslim.

As for the unfavorable verdict on the part of Christian authors, the following passage from Severus indicates likely reasons in addition to those mentioned above.

There was a man named John, an official, to whom God gave favour with the governors. So he went to Kurrah and said to him: "It is right that thou shouldst know that the taxes weigh heavily

⁵³ P. Lond. IV 31 f. and Der Islam II 281 f.

⁵⁴ PO V 57 and 64.

⁵⁵ The word kharāj does not occur in the documents. On the reasons for this and for introducing the land tax see our pages 90-94.

⁵⁶ Beiträge, p. 100.

upon the monks and bishops in every place. Here then is an easy matter, for some of them are rich; while others have not the means of nourishment; if therefore thou thinkest fit to set me over their affairs, I will collect the taxes." So he set him over the bishops and monks. And when Kurrah gave him authority, he said to him: "There are among them some who do not believe in the faith of the Coptic Christians, and yet will not pray with the Muslims. What then thinkest thou that I should do to them?" The governor answered: "Do to them according to the law of the Christians, and take a double poll-tax from them."⁵⁷

Undoubtedly the repression and suppression of "heretical" Christian minorities by the Coptic majority under the aegis of the Muslim governor earned for the latter the hatred of all members of the minority groups. Furthermore, the attempt to distinguish between the rich and the poor among the clerics was bound to lead to cases of extortion; for with pots of gold conveniently discovered by monks and hermits, how was Kurrah to know the poor from the rich among them?

The common peasants, too, might well feel that they had a grievance against Kurrah because of measures he had to adopt in order to remedy conditions that resulted from the mismanagement of his predecessor and from the failure of the Nile during the latter's tenure of office. Severus reports the condition of those who fled from their land to evade the high taxes.⁵⁸ The Arabic documents known to us refer to one fugitive case only, though the Greek Aphrodito papyri have several references to fugitives and fugitive commissioners who were to put a stop to the flight of the peasants from the land.⁵⁹ The commissioners were instructed to do a thorough piece of work and to bring fugitives of long standing back to their lands, or assign them to new lands. According to B. 1384, after issuance of the new regulations those who sheltered fugitives were to be fined ten solidi; the fugitives themselves were to be given forty lashes, fined five solidi, and turned over to the governor; the local administrators and headmen and the police of the place where a fugitive had found shelter were also fined five solidi; anyone giving information regarding a fugitive was to be paid a reward of two solidi, this amount to

⁵⁷ PQ V 62.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 64.

⁵⁹ Cf. B. 1332, 1333, 1343, and 1384 (P. Lond. IV 1-3, 14-16, and 57-59), also P. Ross.-Georg. IV, Nos. 1 and 2.

be exacted from him who sheltered the fugitive.⁶⁰ Considering the time and the country, such treatment of the fugitives and others concerned is, after all, not so severe. If P. Ross.-Georg. IV, No. 16, belongs in this context, torture with lime and vinegar was expressly forbidden because it left the tortured impaired in health and incapable of work. This prohibition of a specific and severe form of torture may imply connivance at, or even sanction of, other but milder forms. It may imply, in addition, an occasional occurrence of the prohibited form itself, but it cannot be made to imply a general policy of torture.⁶¹

Thus at last ʔurrah appears, as it were, in person. We see in him an efficient statesman of the practical Umayyad regime. He had an essential and definite object before him—satisfactory finance based on good government. He set out to accomplish it thoroughly and with a minimum of injustice to the taxpayer. His increased returns were rather the result of good administration than of heavier taxation. In the words of Bell, who, through his great work on the Greek Aphrodito papyri, is in a position to judge, "his (ʔurrah's) cruelty and impiety may well be an entire fiction..... It is possible that he came to be regarded by the Copts themselves as an oppressor, not because he was guilty of misgovernment, but because he so efficiently discharged the duties entrusted to him."⁶²

⁶⁰ P. Lond. IV 57-59 and Der Islam II 379 f.

⁶¹ For the significance of the fugitive question on the state economics see pages 97 f. ʔurrah's humane attitude is reflected also in the one tradition that is reported of him (Ibn Taghrībirdī I 244), according to which he is said to have held that it is not permissible to separate a married slave couple.

⁶² P. Lond. IV xxxvi.

IV

HISTORICAL STUDY AND
INTERPRETATION

BYZANTINE EGYPT

That the Arabs took over the Byzantine system of local government and taxation is the general verdict of historians and scholars dealing with Egypt under Arab rule. Like most generalized assertions, however, this statement needs to be modified in several important items. It is the purpose of this study to point out these particulars, namely those Byzantine factors which the Arabs discarded and those peculiarly Arab ones which they introduced; for it is in this double set of factors that Egypt under early Arab rule is to be distinguished from the periods before and after.

It is obvious that our first task is to know what the Byzantine system was. We are fortunate in the possession of a wealth of Greek papyri of the Byzantine period. These together with the works of Greek historians form the basis of all modern studies of that period. However, these source materials are by no means so complete and self-explanatory as to eliminate all uncertainties, and hence we find differences in the conclusions of such modern writers as Milne, Maspero, Gelzer, Rouillard, Bell, Hardy, and others.

For the period of Justinian's outstanding reign (527-65) Edict XIII is our most valuable single document reflecting the then existing administrative and economic conditions of Egypt. Setting aside the moot question of the date of this edict, whether it was 538/39 or a whole indiction later (553/54),¹ it is evident that economic decay and economic reform were the cause and the

¹ Rouillard, pp. 15-24; Gelzer, pp. 21-28; cf. Hardy, pp. 17 f. and 31, who favors the date 538.

object of the edict respectively.² Whereas in the history of any country economics play an important part, in the history of Egypt they have played the major role, and that especially during periods of foreign domination and occupation when the masters of the land left nothing undone to make themselves the ultimate recipients of the bountiful gifts of the Nile. The Roman-Byzantine period was no exception to this rule. Milne remarks that "for the most part, events in Egypt were too monotonously uninteresting for historians of the Roman Empire to pay any attention to them. Egypt supplied corn, not men, to Rome."³ And so long as this corn came, the welfare of Egypt and the Egyptians troubled their Roman masters but little. But should the corn fail to come, then interest was immediately roused and action quickly taken. At the time of Justinian's accession the "corn" of Egypt (using the term here to include all of Egypt's taxes and revenues) was declining woe-fully. Justinian, partial to ideas of absolutism, could have attempted a colossal armed robbery, taking a chance on getting or losing all. If successful, he would enjoy his corn cakes; but, once eaten, that would be the end of them. Being also a statesman and a good administrator, Justinian thought of a better plan by which he hoped to be able both to eat and still to have his cake. Egyptian civil and military administration must be reformed and made to serve the economic end in view, and the Egyptians must receive a degree of paternal care that would insure the continuance of their immense contributions. The goose that was laying the golden egg must be both guarded and cared for, if she was to continue her profitable activity. Her cackling, though annoying, must not be taken too seriously. If Justinian's plans did not endure, it is because he himself expected too much of this goose at the same time that his keepers half starved her, stole her eggs, and left the gates wide open for highway robbers.

According to Edict XIII, Justinian's reforms for Egypt embraced the following: (1) great decentralization in provincial government by division of the diocese into five independent territories; (2) union of military and civil powers; (3) maintenance of a balance of power between local and provincial authorities through a certain measure of control of both from Constantinople.

² Rouillard, p. 163; cf. also Diehl in CMH II 37 f.

³ History of Egypt (1898), p. v.

For details of the Byzantine civil administration of Egypt during this period Rouillard's thesis has not been surpassed. He presents the whole of Egypt as divided into five provinces, at the head of each of which was a governor with civil and military powers. Three of these provinces ("Egypt" in the narrower sense, covering the western Delta and the city of Alexandria;⁴ Libya; and the Thebaid) were definitely duchies; the remaining two (Arcadia and Augustamnica) were in all probability likewise headed by dukes.⁵ With the exception of Arcadia and Libya, the duchies were in turn divided into two eparchies, each under a praeses, and these again divided into pagarchies, cities, villages, and large private estates.⁶ The administration of each of the five divisions was independent of the others and subject to the direction of the Prefect of the Praetorium of the Orient.⁷ The duke, whose military and civil powers in his province were very extensive, including control of finance, justice, and public works, was appointed by the emperor from among the nobility and received high titles and a handsome salary.⁸ In every sense he acted in a vice-regal capacity; yet counterchecks to his great power were not lacking, since both details of administration and the appointment of the subordinate officers of the duke were to be controlled by Constantinople.⁹ The subordinate officers appear in a civil capacity only. Thus the praeses is primarily a collector of taxes and a local judge for the eparchy,¹⁰ while the pagarch's functions are of a similar nature within his administrative unit.¹¹

The office of the pagarch interests us especially since most of our Arabic papyri are addressed to pagarchs. Though pagarchies are known to have existed prior to Justinian's edict, it is hard to fix the date of their origin, though the last part of the 5th

⁴ Rouillard, p. 27.

⁵ Ibid. p. 33; cf. also Gelzer, p. 29.

⁶ Rouillard, p. 33.

⁷ Ibid. p. 40; Gelzer, p. 29.

⁸ Rouillard, pp. 34-39.

⁹ Ibid. p. 40.

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 45 f.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 52.

century is generally accepted as such, that being the time when increase of landlordism on the one hand and of autopragia on the other pointed to the glaring need of a representative of the central government.¹² The pagarchs, appointed directly by the emperor and subject to punishment and removal by him only,¹³ evidently answered the need of the hour.

It is not easy to decide what actually constituted the pagarchy as an administrative unit. Two much contested theories have been advanced. According to the one, sponsored by Bell and Maspero, the pagarchy corresponded to the ancient nome and comprised both the city and the villages in the district, thus giving the pagarch authority in both places;¹⁴ according to the other, accepted by Gelzer, the pagarchy corresponded to the earlier pagus, thus leaving the pagarch without powers in the city and restricting his authority to the surrounding villages only.¹⁵ Rouillard throws his weight on the side of the former, presenting, with reserve, the hypothesis that there is nothing inherently impossible in the existence of a municipal curia alongside a pagarch's authority, the one being a popular body, the other an imperial representative.¹⁶ And he adds that although the cities appear in Edict XIII to be directly subject to the duke, this need not imply, as Gelzer seems to conclude, the exclusion of all the phases of the pagarch's authority from the city.¹⁷

When we turn to the judicial functions of the pagarch, we face a similar indefiniteness with regard to the extent of his jurisdiction; for though he possesses his own tribunal in the pagarchy, there appears also a "civic defensor," and the relationship between the two is obscure, giving room for the question: Is it that the pagarch's tribunal handled cases arising in the villages only, while the defensor administered justice in the city?¹⁸

¹² Ibid. pp. 50 f.

¹³ Ibid. p. 51.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 54.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 55-60.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 57.

¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 149-51.

In both these important functions, the financial and the judicial, the pagarch's powers were merely administrative, never legislative. He collected but did not assess the taxes; he administered the law in minor cases, subject to appeal to the duke's tribunal, and then he executed the sentences of that body when called upon to do so.¹⁹

The judicial system illustrates Justinian's ideal of a strong provincial government, checked and controlled by Constantinople, the provincials having the right of appeal to the imperial court.²⁰ To prevent too much litigation from reaching Constantinople, an intermediary tribunal between that of the duke and the imperial court was established and authorized to try cases involving values less than 500 solidi.²¹ Within the province the governor or duke had full charge of both civil and penal cases, especially when they involved the civil service and military personnel. His court was the court of appeal for all of the provincial subdivisions, and it is interesting to note the variety of cases that came to it, especially those of complaints against the pagarch and other civil officials.²²

Special military and ecclesiastic tribunals also existed, the latter exerting a great influence both because of their powers in their own clerical courts and through their acting in conjunction with the civil judges in some cases.²³ Not only the patriarchal court but also the bishops' court was one of appeal.²⁴

In the financial administration Justinian's object was two-fold. The taxes must be secured, but no extortion or undue oppression was to be imposed on the people.²⁵ His officers were to govern "paternally" and keep their "hands clean."²⁶ To secure the first object a host of imperial, provincial, and local officers

¹⁹ Ibid. pp. 52 f. and 155.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 153.

²¹ Ibid. p. 156; cf. Diehl in CMH II 39.

²² Rouillard, pp. 145 f. and 155.

²³ Ibid. p. 154.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 157.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 69.

²⁶ Diehl in CMH II 38.

were set on the job with instructions to tolerate no tax evasion of any kind, even to the extent of using police and military force to aid in the collection.²⁷ To insure the second, the assessment of taxes was highly centralized. The assessment itself was to be made in careful consideration of the ability of the taxpayer and of his land to pay it, and the quotas varied in different districts according to the nature of the soil and the product yielded,²⁸ and also from year to year according to the rise of the Nile and irrigation facilities.²⁹ Taking these factors into consideration, the imperial government, acting through the praetorian prefect and the annual imperial delegations, indicated not only the quota for each province and its subdivisions, but also stated the amount to be paid in kind and in specie. These assessments were made public in the autumn, each unit being informed of its quota in a series of notices from governor to praeses, to pagarch, to local officers.³⁰ The final assessment on the individual taxpayer appears to have been left to the various city and village authorities, who must therefore have been held responsible for delivering the whole quota assigned to their unit.³¹

There is considerable dispute over the question whether the assessments in specie comprised also a capitation or poll tax. That a poll tax existed in the early Arab period is clear³² (see pp. 94 f.). Since the Arabs had taken over the Byzantine system of taxation, the existence of a corresponding tax in the late Byzantine period is very likely. Besides, as Bell has shown,³³ the term diagraphē, found in the tax receipts of the late Byzantine period, probably corresponds to the term diagraphon mentioned in papyri of the Arab period. This makes the existence of a capita-

²⁷ Rouillard, pp. 86-100.

²⁸ Ibid. pp. 82 f. and P. Lond. IV 170 f.

²⁹ Milne, p. 152.

³⁰ Rouillard, pp. 80-82.

³¹ Ibid. pp. 83-85; Milne, p. 149; cf. Gelzer, pp. 61 f., for similar practices in the 4th century.

³² P. Lond. IV 168.

³³ Ibid. pp. 168 f.

tion tax in the late Byzantine period at least highly probable³⁴ if not quite certain.³⁵

Though anxious not to introduce any new taxes, Justinian was nevertheless determined to secure all of the existing ones.³⁶ The number and the variety of these³⁷ bewilder the reader, who can thus well imagine the burden of their weight on the unfortunate taxpayer. Directly and indirectly the inhabitants were made to give, give, give to the state; give in gold, in produce, in service; give for existing (the poll tax), for possessing (land tax), for working (trade and professional taxes), for traveling, transporting, and importing (tolls and duty). Extraordinary taxes, including requisitions for public works, for the navy, and for the army were also levied, and personal service was required for dykes, canals, etc., and, on the part of the more well-to-do, for liturgies, which, at times, demanded also one's private means, since frequently the expenses of the offices exceeded the salary paid, if paid at all. It is not surprising that the burden of taxation and of liturgies frequently drove men to the desperate measure of deserting their property to escape taxation.³⁸

All of Justinian's good intentions could not put the fallen financial Humpty-Dumpty back on the wall. And the fault was not entirely with the King's horses and the King's men, but largely with the King himself. Justinian's ambitious aims for both halves of his empire were incompatible with speedy, sound, and lasting financial reorganization, and his system woefully miscarried even in his own time. He needed more and more money for his conquests in the West and ruinous treaties in the East; more and more money for his orientally dazzling and sumptuous court; more and more money for his pretentious buildings; until, in his last years, instead of being paternal, he turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to the cries and misery of the people, introduced new dues,

³⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 169 f. and Rouillard, p. 77.

³⁵ Mitteis and Wilcken I 1, p. 221.

³⁶ Rouillard, p. 69.

³⁷ Gelzer, pp. 37-39; Rouillard, pp. 69-80 and 117-43; cf. Milne, pp. 151-70, for the late Roman practices which largely carried over to the Byzantine period.

³⁸ In Roman times a charitable trust had been founded for the relief of victims of liturgies; cf. Milne, pp. 165 f;

tolerated exactions and extortions in high places, asking no questions so long as the money came into the treasury, until such a pitch of financial tyranny was reached that a contemporary wrote that "a foreign invasion seemed less formidable to the taxpayers than the arrival of the officials of the fisc."³⁹

So far the political and economic situations have engaged our attention. We will turn now to the social and religious conditions which likewise played an important role in the decline of Byzantium in general and in the loss of Egypt to the Arabs in particular. The degeneration and decline of the old Roman nobility, the depression of the serf, and the rise of a powerful class of native owners of large landholdings—the new nobility—are the outstanding factors in the society of the late Byzantine empire. In Egypt these factors are readily seen at work. Hardy's monograph, The Large Estates of Byzantine Egypt, gives a vivid picture of these social conditions. The history of the Apion family,⁴⁰ running unbroken from A.D. 497-625, illustrates the establishment of large hereditary estates, the proprietors of which, in this case at least, took a hand in both the political and the religious questions of the day. It was owing to the zeal of a member of this family, Strategius III, that a sort of union was brought about between the Syrian and the Coptic Monophysite churches in A.D. 616.⁴¹ Evidence of other large proprietors is not wanting.⁴²

In addition to these large private land owners there were the large "public proprietors"—the state and the church. The public lands of the state consisted of the imperial family's private estates and of such autopract communities as the village of Aphrodito, which, by placing themselves under the imperial patronage, became, technically at least, part of the imperial domain.⁴³ The public lands of the church, acquired by pious donations, both private and imperial, were even more extensive and very wealthy.⁴⁴

³⁹ Diehl in CMH II 42.

⁴⁰ Hardy, pp. 25-38; Gelzer, pp. 83-99.

⁴¹ Hardy, pp. 35 f.; Severus, PQ I 480-83.

⁴² Hardy, pp. 39-43.

⁴³ Ibid. pp. 43 f.

⁴⁴ Ibid. pp. 44-47.

Large tracts of church lands were frequently rented on hereditary leases.⁴⁵ Monasteries take a high rank among ecclesiastical proprietors, and of these the Monastery of Metanoia at Canopus near Alexandria was the richest, reaping from imperial grants assigned to it in near and distant parts of Egypt a rich harvest of taxes; for example, the village of Aphrodito alone sent in 5759 ardabb's of grain.⁴⁶

Toward the end of the 4th century, as governmental inefficiency and laxity prevailed, the large landowners or patrons gradually began to assume governmental functions by collecting the taxes of their coloni, and by A.D.366 they were by law made responsible for this task.⁴⁷ Their next step was to obtain the privilege of autopragia, the right to make payments directly to the central government.⁴⁸ A futile attempt was made to limit and then to abolish the right of autopragia; by 429 it received partial recognition, and in the 6th century we find it as a thoroughly recognized institution.⁴⁹ The privilege of autopragia was granted to large landowners, sometimes for the whole of their estates, sometimes for part of them only. It was but natural for all landowners to seek the privilege, and Gelzer makes all landowners autopragists, but Hardy thinks he goes too far in this.⁵⁰

Next, the privilege of autopragia was granted to certain villages. The basis on which these grants were made is not clear, unless one is to conjecture that for some reason or other the central government expected better results in each case than through the regular channels of tax collection.⁵¹ The most famous and illustrative case of autopragist villages is our village of Aphrodito (see pp. 5-7).⁵²

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 45.

⁴⁶ Ibid. pp. 46 f.

⁴⁷ Ibid. pp. 50 f.; cf. also his pp. 22-24 and Rouillard, pp. 10-13, for the institution of patronage.

⁴⁸ Gelzer, p. 89.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Hardy, p. 58.

⁵¹ Cf. for instance Hardy, pp. 22 f., for such reasons in connection with patronage.

⁵² Rouillard, pp. 13 f.

That the growth of a large land-owning class encouraged feudalistic tendencies is not surprising. The creation of the office of pagarch, who was frequently a local landowner, meant the partial abandonment of local self-government in favor of feudalism.⁵³ Though individual ownership and free tenancy existed side by side in the 4th century,⁵⁴ by the 5th century the entire peasant population (*coloni*) was bound to the land.⁵⁵ The *coloni* fell into two distinct legal categories: the free *coloni*, who might settle where they wished but had to remain farmers, and the *adscripticii* (*enapographoi*), who were serfs or slaves of their masters.⁵⁶ Like serfs in any period of history, these were eager for freedom and took their chances at desertion and flight, while landowners used both persuasion and force to bring them back and usually required surety for their stay and good conduct.⁵⁷ When one considers the wide range of activities—political, economic, and social⁵⁸—engaged in by the landed nobility, one is indeed tempted to accept the existence of a feudalistic regime where each estate was practically a self-sufficient, self-directed feudal tributary state of the empire; but when one remembers the ever present officials of the imperial fisc and imperial army, both in and about such estates, one will readily agree to Hardy's conclusions that many features of the feudal and manorial system were present in Byzantine Egypt, but not in their full development.⁵⁹

Coming finally to the religious situation in Byzantine Egypt, we find that there too the situation was far from being peaceful. Although Justinian himself, thanks to the advice of Empress Theodora, abandoned his missionary aim and in a manner calmed the troubled religious waters, it turned out to be a surface calm only, while the undercurrents were gaining momentum. It would be a mistake to consider the religious question as purely a religious one

⁵³ Milne, p. 149.

⁵⁴ Gelzer, pp. 64-69.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 70-72; Rouillard, pp. 10-12.

⁵⁶ Gelzer, pp. 70 f.

⁵⁷ Hardy, pp. 76 f.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 113-44.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 79.

or even as primarily religious. Like all major questions, it had many sides. The Byzantine imperial Orthodox Church hurled its forces against the Egyptian Monophysite Church and vice versa, that is, three powerful human factors were at work simultaneously—the force of racial prejudice, the lure of liberty and self-government, and the existence of differences in religious dogma—each one of which was enough to cause serious trouble by itself under favorable conditions. Neither should we forget the economic factor which entered from time to time, for intolerance was accompanied by fines and confiscation of property, whereas favor brought with it fat appointments and generous grants.

Thus in every phase of the administration the road, even in Justinian's time, was leading to ruin.⁶⁰ Under his successors conditions grew worse. Local officials did as they pleased while Constantinople vacillated. Anarchy and revolt broke out in different parts of Egypt under Tiberius II (A.D. 578-82) and Phocas (602-10),⁶¹ the latter continuing to amass personal treasure while the empire was collapsing over his head and the heads of his self-seeking army and corrupt nobility. The energetic but spasmodic and short-lived efforts of Heraclius (609-42) gave only relative relief, for no sooner had the Phocas cloud been removed than a more ominous one appeared from the east, whence Persia's great king reached out powerful hands to grasp the Empire's choicest provinces—Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Slowly but surely this cloud too rolled away, but not before it had done its share to flood the country with want and misery, with political anarchy and spiritual demoralization, making way for a greater deluge—the Arab conquest—in whose wake came at last a cloud with some silver lining.

THE ARAB CONQUEST OF EGYPT AND THE SETTLEMENT OF ʿAMR IBN AL-ʿAṢĪ

ʿAmr ibn al-ʿAṣĪ was an alert and shrewd man of action. It was he who not only conceived the idea of the Arab conquest of Egypt, but actually accomplished it. His political and military

⁶⁰ Diehl in CMH II 42 f.

⁶¹ Milne, pp. 112-14.

qualities were early recognized by Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, and ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.⁶² Butler, who has presented so far the best English account of the Arab conquest of Egypt,⁶³ sees in the conqueror a man who combined great power of brain and body with great enthusiasm and an iron will; who was devout and high principled, clever and accomplished, at once soldier, saint, adventurer, and poet; frank, heroic, and charming.⁶⁴

In pre-Islāmic days ʿAmr had made a visit across the Delta to Alexandria.⁶⁵ He was then but a small trader, and the wealth and luxury he saw in Alexandria caused him to marvel and wonder. The impression made on him proved lasting and alluring; for years afterward, as an experienced commander of Muslim troops eager for adventure, his mind turned to Egypt.

In a conference with ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb at Jābīah in Syria, ʿAmr requested permission to advance on Egypt, because Egypt was a country at once rich and defenseless and hence its conquest would be of tremendous advantage to the Muslims.⁶⁶ The reluctance of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb to give his permission, his half-hearted support at first of the entire enterprise, and his belated attempt to call it off before the expeditionary force reached al-ʿArīsh are reported by most Arabic sources.⁶⁷ However, modern historians do not see alike with regard to the respective parts played by ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣī and the Caliph in initiating and following up the policy of the conquest of Egypt. Wellhausen⁶⁸ and Becker⁶⁹ are of the opinion that ʿAmr did not act contrary to ʿUmar's wishes,

⁶² Balādhurī, pp. 76, 107 f., 116 f., and 140; cf. Butler, pp. 202 f.

⁶³ Butler's account has been fully supplemented by Caetani in his critical and detailed treatment of the conquest in Annali IV.

⁶⁴ Butler, pp. 205 f.

⁶⁵ Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, pp. 53-55; Kindī, pp. 6-8. The details of this story may be questioned, but not so the fact of ʿAmr's visit.

⁶⁶ Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, p. 56; Maḥrīzī I 288; Butler, pp. 194 f.

⁶⁷ Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, pp. 56-58; Balādhurī, p. 212.

⁶⁸ Skizzen und Vorarbeiten VI 93.

⁶⁹ EI II 5.

and Butler⁷⁰ believes 'Umar to have been anxious for the eventual conquest, but hesitant as to the opportune moment for undertaking it. Caetani, however, considers it highly probable that 'Amr acted on his own initiative in disregard of the Caliph's wishes.⁷¹

The conquest began in Dhū al-Ḥijjah, A.H.18/December, A.D.639, with an army of some 3,500 strong.⁷² The march to al-Faramā (Pelusium) was unopposed; the city itself was besieged, and after about one month it was captured and the fortress razed.⁷³ Bilbais seems to have been 'Amr's next objective, and in a month's time it too succumbed.⁷⁴ Thence he marched to Umm Dunain,⁷⁵ north of Babylon. Meanwhile Cyrus, the imperial patriarch and viceroy, and Theodore, the commander-in-chief of all the Byzantine forces in Egypt, were collecting their forces at Babylon. 'Amr spied out the situation. With his diminished band of warriors he could not hope to storm the fortress of Babylon. At the same time the fighting at Umm Dunain was dragging on indecisively. So 'Amr decided to make a dash for the Fayyūm with a part of his forces while awaiting the expected reinforcements. Having done all the damage he could in the Fayyūm during the limited time at his disposal, he recrossed the Nile and joined the new Arab forces at 'Ain Shams (Heliopolis).⁷⁶ At last Theodore decided to take the offensive, but 'Amr's strategy of disposing two detachments in the rear of the enemy told, and the battle (Rajab, 19/July, 640) was his. Some of the Byzantines retreated to Babylon, others lost heart completely and fled down the river to Nikiū, an important fortified town which seems to have been situated on the Rosetta branch of the Nile northwest of Minūf. Their example was followed by the

⁷⁰ Op. cit. pp. 194-97.

⁷¹ Annali IV 319-23.

⁷² Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 56; Kindī, p. 8; Balādhurī, p. 212; Butler, p. 195. Cf. Caetani, Annali IV xxxiv, for a brief chronology of the conquest.

⁷³ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 58; Kindī, p. 8; Balādhurī, p. 212; Butler, pp. 210-12.

⁷⁴ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 59; Kindī, p. 8.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Butler, 216-27; cf. John of Nikiū, pp. 179-81, and Caetani, Annali IV 170 f.

forces in surrounding territories, and Nikiū became the objective of all. It was then no task to capture the undefended cities.⁷⁷

ʿAmr now had to choose between following the road to Nikiū and thence to Alexandria or staying south and reducing the fortress of Babylon, and he wisely chose the latter. The siege of Babylon began in September, 640. The situation looked ominous for the Byzantines; yet there were some among them who wished to fight it out. But Cyrus held a secret council to consider negotiations with the Arabs, and ʿAmr was asked for his terms. These are said to have been given as follows: (1) Islām with brotherhood and equality; or (2) payment of tribute and protection with inferior status; or (3) war till death would decide between them. These terms are evidently too typical of a later period to be taken at face value here. Cyrus' counterterms were: (1) payment of two dinars per man in ʿAmr's army, 100 dinars for ʿAmr, and 1000 dinars for the Caliph; (2) evacuation of the country by the Arab army. In the three days' truce for negotiations the Byzantine fight-to-death party took matters into its own hands and surprised the Arab army, but only to be defeated. Cyrus then accepted ʿAmr's second alternative, that of tribute and protection with inferior status, subject to the Emperor's ratification. But Heraclius refused to ratify the treaty and recalled Cyrus to Constantinople, where he was disgraced and sent into exile. At the same time Heraclius failed to send reinforcements to Egypt. His failure to ratify the treaty resulted in continuance of the siege and in resumption of hostilities. Then came the news of Heraclius' death, which paralyzed the besieged and heartened the besiegers. The fortress however still held out, though only to surrender eventually on terms of safety of life. On Easter Monday, April 9, 641, the unfortunate army evacuated. Thus did Babylon pass into the hands of the Arabs.⁷⁸

ʿAmr next marched on Nikiū, whose commander cowardly deserted and took flight to Alexandria. The garrison was thrown into a

⁷⁷ Butler, pp. 230-37; cf. John of Nikiū, p. 181. On the location of Nikiū see Butler's n. 1 on pp. 16 f.

⁷⁸ On the siege and capture of Babylon see Butler, pp. 249-74 and 300; cf. also John of Nikiū, pp. 186 f.; Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, pp. 64-76; Maḳrīzī I 163 f. and 290-93; Balādhurī, pp. 214 f.; Severus, PO I 494.

panic, and the town fell without opposition on May 13, 641.⁷⁹ The road to Alexandria was now clear. Theodore decided to make a last stand at Karyūn. Being at last awake to their danger, the Byzantine forces resisted the enemy for ten days, and though the battle appears to have been a draw, Karyūn was taken, and Theodore retreated to Alexandria, where he was followed by 'Amr.⁸⁰ The latter soon realized that with his inferior numbers, with no fleet and no artillery, he was not yet ready for Alexandria. So he turned his attention to weakening other points and beating down resistance in the Delta. This did not prove so easy; he suffered many reverses and finally returned to Babylon. These events disprove the common beliefs that Egypt fell without striking a blow and that the Egyptians hailed the invaders as deliverers.⁸¹

It is time to seek a satisfactory explanation of 'Amr's easy victories. This is to be found in the following factors, all at work simultaneously: (1) the weakness of the Byzantine Empire and the inaction of the despondent Heraclius; (2) the long-standing religious animosity between the Melkite and the Coptic churches and the great persecution of the Copts by Cyrus; (3) the lack of real patriotism on the part of the Byzantine forces,⁸² above all the cowardice and treachery of their leaders; (4) the incapacity of the Copts to offer any organized and effective resistance; (5) the moral strength of young and vigorous Islām in general and the leadership of 'Amr in particular.

Throughout his masterly work Butler strikes repeatedly, in different keys and with different accents, a triple motif: The Muḳawkas of the Arab authorities is none other than the Cyrus of the Byzantines;⁸³ this Cyrus was interested in the victory of the Chalcedonian Melkite church more than in the political fortunes of the Byzantine Empire, had a personal ax to grind, was a fence-

⁷⁹ Butler, pp. 281-85; John of Nikiū, p. 188.

⁸⁰ Butler, pp. 287-91; cf. John of Nikiū, p. 189; Balādhurī, p. 220.

⁸¹ Butler, pp. 290-98.

⁸² Cf. for instance the case of Kalājī reported by John of Nikiū, p. 183.

⁸³ Butler, pp. 174-76, esp. 508-26; cf. Severus, PO I 491, note; also EI III 712-15, article "al-Muḳawkas."

sitter and in the end a traitor;⁸⁴ the mass of the Copts had neither the desire nor the ability to be "uncovenanted allies" of the invaders, first of the Persians⁸⁵ and then of the Arabs.⁸⁶ Butler's conclusions as to the identity, motives, and character of Cyrus are not shared by Caetani, who believes the title "al-Muḳauḳas" was borne by at least two other distinct persons, one the Greek military commander of Babylon and the other the Coptic bishop Menas of that same city.⁸⁷ Again, Caetani does not see the patriarch Cyrus in the black colors in which Butler has painted him. In Caetani's opinion Cyrus was a practical man who, convinced of the futility of prolonging the struggle against the Arabs, concluded the Treaty of Alexandria which surrendered Egypt to the Arabs.⁸⁸ Becker, like Butler, allows for the probability that Cyrus wished to establish an Egyptian primacy under Arab suzerainty.⁸⁹ Furthermore, Caetani, though he considers the military incapacity of the Byzantines to have been the major cause of their defeat,⁹⁰ nevertheless stresses the co-operation of the Copts⁹¹ and points specifically to the action of Menas, the Coptic bishop of Babylon already referred to, who, he claims, obtained an accord with the Arabs for the protection of the Copts.⁹²

Apart from Caetani, the identification of al-Muḳauḳas with Cyrus now seems to be accepted generally. Cyrus, already a key figure without this identification, with it becomes the central figure in the Byzantine camp. He was appointed in 631 by Heraclius to the supreme religious and civil power in Egypt, with orders to

⁸⁴ Butler, pp. 213 and 305-7.

⁸⁵ Ibid. pp. 76 and 81-85.

⁸⁶ Ibid. pp. 298, 357, and 472.

⁸⁷ Annali IV 342 and 180 f.; cf. EI III 714.

⁸⁸ Annali IV 347.

⁸⁹ EI II 6.

⁹⁰ Annali IV 169 f.

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 341.

⁹² Ibid. p. 342; cf. pp. 180 f.

bring about the union of the church in that country.⁹³ He took up his task with a relish that must have exceeded his master's anticipation and desire. To him the union of the church could mean nothing but extermination, if necessary, of the Coptic "heresy," and that could be done, if at all, only through severe persecution.⁹⁴ The objective once fixed, Cyrus had really no choice of method; his method was the one used before and after him, and used by both church parties whenever either had the upper hand.⁹⁵ It was not for the method but for the rigor and the time of its exercise that Cyrus is answerable. In the face of foreign invasion, when internal union should have been a main objective, disunion was increased. It is for this that history has condemned the religious policy of Cyrus and of his master Heraclius.

With the flight of Benjamin, the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria, on the arrival of Cyrus,⁹⁶ most of the Copts were left practically like sheep without a shepherd. Their very pitiful condition, the repeated statements of the confused Arab records that the Copts aided the Muslims,⁹⁷ and the record of instances of the conversion of Copts to Islām, instances loudly bewailed and largely magnified by church historians,⁹⁸ make it easy for one to slip into thinking that the Copts hailed the invaders as deliverers and aided them to achieve victory. However, their past experience and present misfortunes at the hands of Cyrus and 'Amr alike point in the opposite direction. The horrors of the Persian conquest were hardly forgotten. What the Copts wanted was not a change of masters, but deliverance from them. But being unable to deliver themselves because they were barred from military service, they had no choice at first but to be unwilling neutrals. As such they were suspected by, and at the mercy of, the Arabs as well as the Byzantines. In the "massacres" by the Arab army no distinction seems to have been drawn between "Roman" and Copt; in the negotia-

⁹³ Butler, p. 137; Severus, PO I 489.

⁹⁴ Butler, pp. 168-93; cf. John of Nikiū, pp. 184 and 186.

⁹⁵ Cf. Severus, PO V 62 f.; Eutychius II 386.

⁹⁶ Severus, PO I 490 f.; John of Nikiū, pp. 14 and 200.

⁹⁷ E.g. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, pp. 71 and 73 f.

⁹⁸ E.g. John of Nikiū, pp. 181 f. and 201.

tions between Cyrus and 'Amr their fate received no special attention, and in the hour of defeat no less than in the hour of victory the "Romans" gave vent to their wrath on the unfortunate Copts, for instance, when at the evacuation of Babylon the Byzantine commander had the hands of the Coptic prisoners cut off⁹⁹ despite its being the Easter season when clemency might have been expected. We have already seen that the Copts, despairing of Byzantine protection, resisted, with whatever arms they could secure, the Arab troops in the Delta before 'Amr returned to Babylon.

In the meanwhile Empress Martina's peace party had come into power at Constantinople.¹⁰⁰ Cyrus was reinstated and sent back to Alexandria,¹⁰¹ where by now a state of civil war existed between the Greens and the Blues.¹⁰² Cyrus was received with great joy¹⁰³ and hastened on to Babylon to treat with 'Amr. Here, on November 8, 641, the second Treaty of Babylon, or, as it is also called, the Treaty of Alexandria, was signed.¹⁰⁴ The question raised by Arab authorities as to whether Miṣr (i.e. Babylon), Alexandria, or even all of Egypt was taken by force or by capitulation on treaty terms, and what these terms were if by treaty,¹⁰⁵ has arisen out of the confusion of events connected with both the capitulation of Babylon and the second Treaty of Babylon which involved the surrender of Alexandria, as well as with the second conquest of Alexandria by force of arms after its revolt under Manuel in 645, when, of course, no treaty was given.¹⁰⁶ For an understanding of the settlement which 'Amr gave Egypt a study must

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 187.

¹⁰⁰ Butler, pp. 302-6; John of Nikiū, p. 191.

¹⁰¹ Butler, p. 305; John of Nikiū, p. 191.

¹⁰² Butler, pp. 307-13; cf. John of Nikiū, pp. 189 f.

¹⁰³ Butler, pp. 313 f.; cf. John of Nikiū, pp. 192 f.

¹⁰⁴ Butler, pp. 318-22; cf. John of Nikiū, pp. 193 f.

¹⁰⁵ Butler, pp. 322-27; cf. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, pp. 82-90; Balādhurī, pp. 214-16; Maḡrīzī I 294 f.

¹⁰⁶ Butler, pp. 464-83; cf. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, pp. 80 and 175-77; Balādhurī, pp. 221 f. On the first surrender of Alexandria see Kindī, p. 9.

be made of the two treaties of Babylon. The terms of the first we have already given. Those of the second have been listed by Butler,¹⁰⁷ whom we follow, though never losing sight of the sources themselves. They were: (1) payment of a fixed tribute by all who came under the treaty; (2) an armistice of eleven months to end in September, 642; (3) maintenance by the Arabs of their position and cessation of all acts of hostility by the Byzantines; (4) departure by sea of the garrison of Alexandria and of all troops, with their possessions and treasures, but payment of a monthly tribute by Byzantine soldiers leaving by land as long as they were in Muslim territory; (5) no return of a Byzantine army to Alexandria and no attempt to recover Egypt; (6) desistance by the Muslims from seizing churches and from interfering with Christians; (7) concession to Jews to remain at Alexandria; (8) giving of hostages by the Byzantines, namely 150 military men and 50 civilians, pending the execution of the treaty. The Arabic authorities supplement the terms with some details. Thus the fixed tribute was to be an average of two dinars per head, excluding women and children and the poor.¹⁰⁸ In addition to this there was to be a tribute in kind, to be collected from landowners and stored for the use of Muslims.¹⁰⁹ There was also the obligation to give free food and lodging for three days to Muslim contingents on the march,¹¹⁰ as well as to provide each Muslim annually with a set of clothing.¹¹¹ The treaty terms show that the Copts were assured of life, property, protection, and freedom of religion.

We have gone into the details of this treaty because, though at the time it was negotiated it did not cover all of Egypt, it eventually served as the model for future terms of capitulation, for many of the coast towns were yet to submit or be taken by force.¹¹² Outside of the three basic principles of the treaty—

¹⁰⁷ *Op. cit.* pp. 320-22; cf. also John of Nikiū, pp. 193 f., and Caetani, *Annali* IV 345.

¹⁰⁸ Balādhurī, pp. 214 f. and 218; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 84. On the data given in later papyri cf. our pp. 94 f.

¹⁰⁹ Balādhurī, p. 215.

¹¹⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 152; cf. *Beiträge*, pp. 83-85.

¹¹¹ Balādhurī, p. 215.

¹¹² Butler, pp. 348-57.

safety of life, possession of land, and payment of tribute—the "protected peoples" were subjected to various burdens, varying in different provinces and localities.

The year 642 saw the last of Byzantine rule in Egypt. The coast towns had been reduced, and the pathetic but dramatic evacuation of the Delta had been accomplished. The Arabs entered Alexandria in September 642.¹¹³ Cyrus, who had plotted and schemed, fought and persuaded, did not live to see this event, having died, we are told, of "excessive grief" on March 21, 642.¹¹⁴

EARLY ARAB ADMINISTRATION

Arab administration of Egypt began with 'Amr ibn al-ʿAṣī in supreme military and civil command. His rule, judged by the standards of his time, proves him to have been a good statesman. For war, pillage, and plunder he substituted as soon as possible order and safety and attended to the restoration of the land,¹¹⁵ using the existing government machinery he found at hand.¹¹⁶ His former distrust and harsh treatment of the Copts yielded to a more lenient policy in supposed remembrance of Muḥammad's commands.¹¹⁷ He recalled their patriarch, Benjamin, and set him in authority over them.¹¹⁸ In one thing only did he disappoint Egypt: there was no definite limit to the total tribute demands;¹¹⁹ and apparently this was the case in sections that had a treaty as well as in those that had none. It is probable, as Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam reports,¹²⁰ that this had something to do with the revolt of Alexandria, though it could not have been its only reason. At any rate, we see that from the start finances began to play their

¹¹³ *Ibid.* pp. 365-67.

¹¹⁴ John of Nikiū, pp. 195 f. and 199; cf. Butler, pp. 359-62.

¹¹⁵ Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, pp. 151-56.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 152 f.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 153; Balādhurī, pp. 218 f.; Suyūṭī I 5-9; Makrīzī I 24 f.; cf. John of Nikiū, p. 200.

¹¹⁸ John of Nikiū, p. 200; Severus, *PO* I 495-97.

¹¹⁹ Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, pp. 176 f.; John of Nikiū, pp. 200 f.

¹²⁰ *Op. cit.* pp. 176 f.

part under the Arabs as they had done under their predecessors. 'Amr wanted good returns both for himself and to satisfy the demands of his master.¹²¹ The situation could hardly have been expected to change in favor of the Copts during the administration of his successors, for the latter were becoming more acquainted with the tax possibilities of Egypt at the same time that their needs were becoming greater and their tastes more expensive. Add to this the fact that the Muslim population was constantly increasing both by new Arab settlements¹²² and by the conversion of some Copts, and it becomes clear that there was no way out of the difficulty except by increased taxation or, worse still, by exactions and confiscations. When these failed to supply all that was needed, a new source of revenue became necessary to balance the state budget. This was found in the Muslim landowners, who were thenceforward made to pay, as it were, the deficit by a land tax.

At this point it is proper to survey the system of Muslim state finances, especially as it applies to Egypt. So much has been written on this subject in general and with reference to Egypt in particular¹²³ that a lengthy account here is not necessary. Our object is only to sum up the main steps in the development of the system during the 1st century of Islām.

The simple practice of early Islām of giving one-fifth of all booty of war to the state and dividing the rest among the troops¹²⁴ worked just as long as booty was the main object sought. With permanent conquest the problem became more complicated. The general policy was to allow conquered land to remain with its former owners on fixed conditions of tribute and taxation,¹²⁵ such land being considered state land (*fai'*) and, according to later theory, leased to non-Muslims, since Muslims were supposed to form a military and not a land-owning class. However, such

¹²¹ *Ibid.* pp. 158-61 and Balādhurī, p. 219.

¹²² Maḡrīzī I 80 and 82; *Beiträge*, pp. 121-35.

¹²³ Cf. Becker, *Beiträge*, pp. 81-112, and in *Der Islam* II 361-71; Bell, *P. Lond.* IV xvii-xli, 81-87, and 166-77, and in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* XXVIII 278-86; Tritton, pp. 197-228; Grohmann in *Études de papyrologie* I 57-90.

¹²⁴ *EI* II 140 f.

¹²⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 82; Balādhurī, pp. 214 and 447; Māwardī, pp. 121 f.; *Ar. Kg.* pp. 273 f.

regulations as may have existed to this effect were largely ignored,¹²⁶ in spite of the few recorded cases of early enforcement.¹²⁷ Since at first no Muslim was expected or required to pay more than the pious poor tax (zakāt or sadaqah),¹²⁸ all land acquired by the Muslims spelled a considerable loss of revenue to the state, that is, the collective Muslim community. As long as there were more countries to conquer and more tribute to demand, the evils of the early financial system did not make themselves felt; but as settlement and administration followed upon conquests and as conquests gradually decreased, the system of 'Umar I—if one may call it a system—failed to meet the situation, since in all provinces of the Empire more and more land passed into the hands of Muslims and was thus withdrawn from taxation except for payment of the zakāt. It was then that Ḥajjāj, realizing the inevitable results of tax-exempt landlordism among the Muslims, extended the land tax to their holdings.¹²⁹ This raised a storm of opposition against him, but, supported by Caliph 'Abd al-Malik, he held his ground on the question in his own province of 'Irāq and thus opened the way for its adoption later in other parts of the Empire. In Egypt the introduction of this system was considered during the governorship of 'Abd al-'Azīz but was abandoned.¹³⁰ We do not know definitely whether his successor 'Abd Allāh introduced it, but it must have been in force in Ḳurrah's time, since 'Umar II is said to have condemned it.¹³¹ At the same time 'Umar II worked for a solution of the Muslim land-tax problem. Since the Muslims based their opposition to the new measure on religious-political grounds, claiming that taxing them for land like the unbelievers degraded them to the level of non-Muslim subject peoples, 'Umar II soothed their politico-religious pride by agreeing that a Muslim

¹²⁶ Ar. Kg. pp. 275 f.; Kremer (tr. Bukhsh) p. 125; Maḳrīzī I 96.

¹²⁷ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 162; Kremer (tr. Bukhsh) pp. 85-88.

¹²⁸ Māwardī, pp. 108; Kremer (tr. Bukhsh) pp. 56-58.

¹²⁹ Balādhurī, p. 368; Ar. Kg., pp. 279 f.; Maḳrīzī I 77 f.

¹³⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 156; it is interesting to note here that in the correspondence between 'Abd al-Malik and 'Abd al-'Azīz the word used is jizyah and not kharāj.

¹³¹ Maḳrīzī I 77 f.; cf. Beiträge, p. 100.

should pay neither the poll tax nor the land tax. But in order to prevent a decrease in revenue, he argued that all of the kharāj land, that is, conquered land left in the hands of its owners on condition of tribute, belonged to the believers as a community, and that the kharāj or revenue derived from this land, though going to the state treasury, was eventually divided among the members of the community through the system of state pensions. Therefore, if individual Muslims acquire sections of this land without at the same time assuming the responsibility of its normal revenue yield, those particular individuals in reality rob the Muslim community of that revenue, for they gain a personal privilege at the expense of their fellow Muslims. Moreover, the non-Muslim holders of the land need the land in order to meet their tribute payments; to take it away from them without assuming the revenue responsibility is therefore an injustice to them also. He therefore decreed the following: (1) the sale of kharāj lands to Muslims (Arabs or mawālī) is to be prohibited from A.H.100 (A.D. 718) forward, but this prohibition is not to be retroactive; (2) on conversion to Islām a mawlā must yield up his land to the tributary community, but if he wishes he might lease it back for an amount presumably equivalent to the kharāj; (3) new converts may settle in the towns.¹³² Thus did pious 'Umar II, with aims identical with those of Ḥajjāj, seek to guard the state revenue from land against ruinous diminution.

'Umar's plan failed. As Wellhausen has put it: "The principle of the inalienability of the tribute land could not be carried through, and the change of property was no more put a stop to than the change of faith."¹³³ So under his later successors the method of Ḥajjāj, namely that of imposing a land tax on all landowners alike, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, was reverted to, though with this difference, that a distinction was now drawn between jizyah and kharāj. Jizyah, it was said, rests on the persons and is a sign of their subjection; kharāj, however, rests on the land and does not degrade the person. Since the land tax was by far the more important, its payment by all Muslim landowners more than offset the loss of poll tax from converts to Islām. Thus a clever bit of legal finesse saved the exchequer from

¹³² Ar. Kg., pp. 280 f.; cf. also P. Lond. IV 167 f.

¹³³ Ar. Kg., p. 282.

inevitable ruin.¹³⁴ But even these measures failed ultimately to solve the problems of Muslim state finances, and under the 'Abbāsids it became necessary to abolish even the state pensions, the pride and joy of early Islām.

The history of the words jizyah and kharāj is difficult but interesting. The traditional Muslim view traces the later distinction between jizyah and kharāj back to the time of 'Umar I. Wellhausen and Becker have, however, shown conclusively that at that early time the terms jizyah and kharāj were used synonymously in the sense of "tribute paid to the Muslims."¹³⁵ The term jizyah is used in Sūrah 9:29 to mean the tribute of the subject people, paid as a sign of their subjugation and inferior status. In the Qurrah papyri it is used for the entire gold tax, which included both a land and a capitation tax. The term kharāj was obviously borrowed by the Arabs from the administrative language of their predecessors. Juynboll associates it with the Byzantines and derives it from the Greek $\chi ο ρ η γ ί α$.¹³⁶ More recently Henning has traced its origin to the Aramaic word hālāk, which in Old Persian became harāk and appears as harāg in a Manichean text of the 3d century of our era. According to him hālāk = Akkadian ilku and Neo-Babylonian ilki, which latter in Achaemenid times was equivalent to land tax ("Lehen, Lehensleistung > Lehensabgabe > Grundsteuer").¹³⁷ It appears, therefore, that the distinction between these two terms was in the early Arab period a geographic one. Both terms are used for the entire tribute of the subject people, jizyah gaining currency in the western and kharāj in the eastern provinces.¹³⁸ This would account for the absence of the word kharāj in the Qurrah and other early Arabic papyri from Egypt.¹³⁹ Early Arabic documents dealing with the eastern

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ar. Kg., pp. 276 f.; Beiträge, pp. 83-87; PSR, pp. 37-40.

¹³⁶ EI II 902 f.; cf. Der Islam VI 97-99.

¹³⁷ Orientalia IV 291-93.

¹³⁸ Tritton, p. 197. Cf. Grohmann in Études de papyrologie I 71, n. 1, for various instances of the interchangeability of these two terms.

¹³⁹ A request for information with regard to the terms used in the Colt papyri has hitherto brought no reply. Since these came from southern Palestine, the probability is that they follow Egyptian usage and employ the word jizyah for gold tax or tribute.

provinces may some day confirm the use of kharāj in the general sense of tribute.

The regular money taxes (χρυσικὰ δημόσια) consisted of a land tax, a poll tax, and a trade tax, all payable in gold, the first being the most important. These taxes were very dependable; they were followed in importance by the regular corn tax, which varied with the crops. In addition to the regular gold and grain taxes there were several extraordinary taxes, raised regularly as needed, both in money and in kind. These were usually requisitions for provisions, for allowances to officials and Arab settlers, for provisions for workmen and sailors, for naval constructions, for public buildings, for transportation, in fact, for anything the administration needed. There was furthermore the tax to be paid in personal service, which service varied from minor temporary demands to important and responsible liturgies. It is very evident that these four main divisions of taxes—the regular gold taxes, the corn tax, the extraordinary requisitions, and the personal service tax—were indeed a hang-over from the Byzantine system, though they do not exhaust the taxes of either period.¹⁴⁰

When we come to consider the assessment and collection of taxes, the process seems identical with that of the late Byzantine times. The amount of the tax was fixed at headquarters, and the notification of the assessment was addressed to the people of the villages in the districts, a total sum in gold (the jizyah) and in kind (darībat al-ṭaʿām) being mentioned.¹⁴¹ The collection was left to the local officers, as is seen in PSR III with respect to the grain tax. Thus the principles of collective assessment and local collection were in force. With regard to the poll tax—the jizyah in its later and narrower sense—there seems to be some doubt as to what extent the individual poll-tax payer was personally responsible for payment to the district treasury such as that of Aphrodito, where the tax registers show amounts against the name of each taxpayer. These same registers raise the question of rate and uniformity of the poll tax.¹⁴² They bear out neither

¹⁴⁰ On these various taxes cf. P. Lond. IV xxv f. and 167-74; Byzantinische Zeitschrift XXVIII 282-84; Tritton, pp. 197-211.

¹⁴¹ See PSR a-1.

¹⁴² P. Lond. IV 169 f. and 171 f.; Tritton, p. 198.

the general rate of two dinars per head,¹⁴³ nor the rates of four, two, and one dinar supposed to have been taken from the rich, the middle class, and the poor respectively.¹⁴⁴ Again, the registers list fractions of a man, and the rates vary from two to eight solidi.¹⁴⁵ The totals also give an average of varying rates.¹⁴⁶ From such data Bell is led to conclude that the poll tax was not an individual tax as presented by Becker,¹⁴⁷ but a collective tax levied in a lump sum on the community, being a poll tax only in the sense that it was based on the number of taxable men in each community.¹⁴⁸

The yearly tax assessments were not made till the high level of the Nile had been ascertained. Tax notifications stating the full amount for the year followed soon after, but actual payments had to await the results of the harvest and were generally made in two instalments.¹⁴⁹ The question is: Were they paid when due? B. 1420 records one instance of prompt payment, but even here it is only the grain tax that was paid, whereas the gold taxes were not paid till the second year after the indiction to which they belonged.¹⁵⁰ The tax registers show frequent payments of various sizes credited to the same account, though they were made by different individuals whose relationship to the actual landowner is not always clear.¹⁵¹ Unfortunately, though the date of payment is stated, the part payment (καταβολή) on which they were to be applied is not indicated.¹⁵² Hence it is difficult to tell definitely to what extent local taxpayers' accounts were allowed to

¹⁴³ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, p. 82; Balādhurī, p. 215.

¹⁴⁴ Māwardī, pp. 137 f.; Butler, pp. 454 f.; cf. Tritton, pp. 207-11.

¹⁴⁵ P. Lond. IV 172.

¹⁴⁶ Tritton, p. 198.

¹⁴⁷ Beiträge, p. 88.

¹⁴⁸ P. Lond. IV 169 f.; cf. also Grohmann in Études de papyrologie I 69.

¹⁴⁹ P. Lond. IV xxvii and n. 4.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 232, n. 5.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 174 f.

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 87.

fall into arrears. However, we have indirect factors which should throw some light on the question. On the one hand, the entire machinery of the government was directed toward an efficient system of taxation, a system in which punctuality of payment was of prime importance.¹⁵³ Instances are on record which show that in case of partial failure of crops or other natural calamities grain taxes were in part computed in money at a reduced rate rather than allowed to accumulate in large arrears.¹⁵⁴ Only when even this computation worked an evident hardship were the taxes temporarily remitted.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, Qurrah's letters to the ṣāhib of Ashkauh abound in references to delays in making payments and to balances,¹⁵⁶ but just at what point in the long road of tax collection this delay first began is again hard to tell, for it may have been the fault of the district officer himself or of any of his agents for the smaller administrative units within his kūrah or district. In a centralized system this officer would be held responsible for all delays, which again would make him frown on arrears under all circumstances even though he himself, to a certain extent, indulged in the forbidden practice.¹⁵⁷ Under weak and corrupt governors this indulgence would assume larger proportions, allowing tax arrears to accumulate in large sums. Such seems to have been the case under Qurrah's predecessor, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Malik (see pp. 60 f.).¹⁵⁸

Taking all these facts into consideration, we may safely conclude that taxes in kind were paid promptly, whereas money taxes came more slowly but were hardly allowed to be more than a year overdue.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵³ Cf. e.g. our No. I; PSR I and III; PAF III; NPAF III.

¹⁵⁴ P. Lond. IV xxvi, n. 2, and 173 f.; Der Islam II 271.

¹⁵⁵ P. Lond. IV xxxvi and 29.

¹⁵⁶ Our Nos. I and IV; PSR I and III; PAF III; NPAF I and III.

¹⁵⁷ NPAF III 6 f., where payment is more than two months overdue.

¹⁵⁸ Our Nos. I and V; NPAF XII.

¹⁵⁹ The seeming discrepancy of three years in PSR a-1, which are dated A.H.91 but are notifications of assessment for the year 88, is explained by the fact that the year of dating is the regular Muslim lunar year, while the fiscal year is a solar year; cf. PERF, No. 593, and Tritton, p. 200.

The total revenue, after deducting local expenditures, found its way either to the treasury in Alexandria or to that in Fustāṭ. The Alexandrian portion seems to have been used chiefly for naval enterprises, which were conducted annually, at least during Ḳurrah's time.¹⁶⁰ The portion sent to Fustāṭ found its way eventually to Damascus, to Makkah, and to Madīnah. What proportion of the total was spent on local, provincial, and imperial purposes there is no way of telling. It must have varied according to the honesty of the local officers, the avarice of the governor, and the insistent demands of the caliph.

Here we must stop to consider the question of the fugitives¹⁶¹ (see also pp. 60 f., 64 f., and 68 f.) and that of the monks, for both are vitally connected with taxation and revenue. We have already stated that the land tax was the most important of the gold taxes, and the great bearing of land cultivation on the grain tax is self-evident. Therefore land economics and agricultural activities received by far the closest attention of the provincial government. The flight of the farmer to town is not a "modern" evil; it is as old as the oldest cities. There are times and conditions, however, which make this flight assume large proportions. Such was the case in Egypt in the 1st century of Islām. The civil war of Heraclius, the Persian conquest, and the religious persecutions of Cyrus had started a movement of the population within the land. Some people left the country, a goodly number going to Nubia,¹⁶² a coreligionist land; others found new settlements, and a few must have become habitual wanderers. At first the movement went unnoticed by the authorities, but in the course of the decades, with their famines and plagues, the population needed to be watched more carefully. In the meanwhile conversions to Islām increased, and Coptic mawālī were eager for the cities. Diminished in numbers, the remaining Christian Copts had to meet the heavy land tax, while their Muslim fellow landowners as yet went untaxed except for the tithe (zakāt or sadakah). This led many to desert their holdings. In the governorship of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Malik and of Ḳurrah ibn Sharīk these tendencies

¹⁶⁰ ZA XXII 150 f.; PAF IX; PSR XXII; P. Lond. IV 174.

¹⁶¹ P. Lond. IV xl f.; ZA XXII 139-46.

¹⁶² ZA XXII 141-44; cf. also Lane-Poole, pp. 21-23.

coincided with years of dearth, famine, and plague,¹⁶³ which resulted in flight from the land on a larger scale than hitherto. The fugitives naturally hoped to escape taxation; but the administration would not be so easily defeated, in fact, it could not afford a defeat here, for that would have crippled the finances seriously. Hence the fugitive commission and the definite orders to trace every serf's movements and to get him back to the land, preferably to his former land, but if that could not be done, to assign him land elsewhere. Some of the fugitives were allowed to stay where they themselves had settled, but were made to bear their share of the taxes in the community they had adopted.¹⁶⁴

The question of the persecution of the monks and the limiting of their numbers is linked with that of the fugitives;¹⁶⁵ for frequently the desperate fugitives sought protection under a monk's gown, since monks were not subject to the jizyah before the time of 'Abd al-'Azīz, when his son al-Aṣḡagh laid a heavy hand on the churches and monasteries, causing the monks to pay a jizyah of one dinar per head, though it is not clear if this was specifically a poll tax or a general tribute.¹⁶⁶

Religious persecution pure and simple is seldom met with in the 1st century of Islām. What the Arab wanted was "Geld, nochmals Geld und immer wieder Geld."¹⁶⁷ This naturally tempted some Christians to adopt the new faith, since at first its adoption released them from the taxes and gave them also other social and economic privileges as mawālī. Later, when Arabization as distinct from Islamization gained sway, so that Arab Christians were privileged above their fellow-Christians¹⁶⁸ and Arabic was forbidden to non-Muslims while the Arabs themselves were not to learn another language,¹⁶⁹ when furthermore the honored and influential civil

¹⁶³ Ibn Taghrībirdī I 233 and 235.

¹⁶⁴ P. Lond. IV 2, n. 10; PSR, p. 40.

¹⁶⁵ Severus, PO V 68.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 51; Tritton, pp. 209 f. and 217 f.

¹⁶⁷ Der Islam II 364 and 367. Tritton, pp. 127-35, shows that the persecution of Christians was mostly for financial reasons.

¹⁶⁸ Balādhurī, pp. 181-83; Tritton, p. 89.

¹⁶⁹ Kremer (tr. Bukhsh) p. 118; fortunately this could not be strictly enforced and was abandoned.

service was gradually being closed to the Copts,¹⁷⁰ these were additional factors to hasten the spread of the Muslim faith.

To control effectively these movements of the fugitives a rigid and expensive system of passports was introduced. Passports were hard to secure and cost five dinars. If lost or damaged, the passport could be replaced with another only by payment of another fee of five dinars. The country and the seaports were well policed. If a person was caught moving without a passport, imprisonment frequently resulted, heavy fines were inflicted, and harsh and cruel treatment was at times meted out.¹⁷¹ This rigid system naturally interfered with the business life also, for products rotted since they could not be moved to market, and merchants frequently suffered confiscation of their wares.¹⁷²

So far as the judicial organization is concerned, our papyri have as yet thrown little light on the system as a whole and on its relationship to the imperial government. The office of judge (kādī), according to the historian Kindī and the jurist Māwardī, is partly religious, partly civic, the latter including not only law but maintenance of order as well. Still, our papyri give us a glimpse into some civil cases of appeals where Muslims and Christians alike appealed to the governor (see pp. 66 f.).

The papyri abundantly confirm the inference that the Arabs took over the Byzantine administrative units. Frequently the Greek terminology was used for units and for officers. Bell has given a full picture of the organization of Egypt as a province.¹⁷³ The capital was changed from Alexandria to Fustāṭ (Babylon). From here the governor (Greek, sympoulos, Arabic, amīr) directed the whole administration when he had charge also of the finances, otherwise his co-officer, the financial director, had most of the burden, since Arab administration concerned itself chiefly with finances. For financial and secretarial purposes the province was divided

¹⁷⁰ Kindī, p. 69; cf. Der Islam II 363 f.

¹⁷¹ Ar. Pal. Pl. 106; PERF, Nos. 601-2; PSR, pp. 1 f. and 40; Der Islam II 369 f.; Severus, PO V 68-70, mentions as punishment a fine of 10 dinars, imprisonment, mutilation, and even death; cf. however our pages 68 f.

¹⁷² Severus, PO V 69.

¹⁷³ P. Lond. IV xvii-xxv; cf. also Byzantinische Zeitschrift XXVIII 278-86.

into Upper and Lower Egypt. From Severus we get the additional information that each of these two subdivisions was under a separate governor (wālī).¹⁷⁴ At headquarters there were two separate registers kept for the two divisions, though the secretaries in charge of them, bearing the familiar Greek title of chartularios and the Arabic title kātib, collaborated on both of them.¹⁷⁵

Upper and Lower Egypt were again divided into eparchies, each under a "duke," whose functions, though not entirely clear, seem to have been predominantly financial.¹⁷⁶ The eparchies were subdivided into pagarchies, which may have been coextensive in territory with the former nomes. Aphrodito itself was such a pagarchy, with the city of Aphrodito as the capital. The Greek papyri refer to Aphrodito as a village (kōmē), but the Arabic papyri use the term madīnah and not karyah,¹⁷⁷ showing that it was a good-sized city worthy to be the capital of a pagarchy or kūrah.

The pagarchies were in turn subdivided for tax collection into the city, the villages, and the monastic settlements, the city of Aphrodito forming a unit with no less than seven subdivisions.¹⁷⁸ So far the similarity of the administrative units with those of the Byzantines is striking; but here we meet a significant difference, for we find that the "city" has no special privileges, but is as fully under the pagarch's control as any other unit in the pagarchy. We also find no traces of the institution of autopragia. The landlord class is still there and the pagarchs are usually of that class, but they are shorn of their powers and independence and appear to be closely supervised from headquarters.¹⁷⁹

To sum up: Arab Egypt of the 1st century retained Byzantine administrative units, Byzantine civil service, Byzantine taxes, and Byzantine motives and methods of taxation. It reintroduced

¹⁷⁴ Severus, PO V 52; Der Islam II 361; P. Lond. IV xxi and 365.

¹⁷⁵ Der Islam II 361; P. Lond. IV xxi; for the chartularioi in Byzantine times see Hardy, pp. 94 f.

¹⁷⁶ P. Lond. IV xix f.

¹⁷⁷ ZA XX 70; PSR, p. 22, n. 6.

¹⁷⁸ P. Lond. IV xiv-xvii.

¹⁷⁹ P. Lond. IV xxiii; Hardy, pp. 146 f.

the practice of strong centralization and carried it to its logical limits by abolishing the municipal curiales and the autopract communities, and by limiting the power of the large landowners. It introduced a new element into the religious situation by granting religious tolerance with one hand and handicapping the non-Muslims with economic and social drawbacks with the other, thus reducing them to the status of an inferior though specially "protected people" (ahl al-dhimma). For the once privileged Greeks in Egypt it substituted the privileged Arabs. In the cultural and religious realms it made a good start toward replacing the Greek language and the Christian religion by the Arabic tongue and the faith of Islām.

Early Arab Egypt is both familiar and strange. The Coptic and the Arab historians have sketched for us the broad outlines of the government of this province of the Umayyad caliphs, and the Aphrodito Ḳurrah papyri have filled in the details. The picture is at once old and new. It is the old Byzantine painting, retouched here and there by the Arab painter. The new colors are discernible, but they blend into the picture; for Byzantines and Arabs alike had the same ready and pliable materials to work with—the comparatively refined and submissive Egyptians¹⁸⁰—and the same prize to obtain—fertile and wealthy Egypt. Fair and bounteous, tempting and unprotected, Egypt fell an easy prey to her conquerors, who husbanded her resources when they could only to revel in her forthcoming harvests.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. for instance Suyūṭī II 236 f.

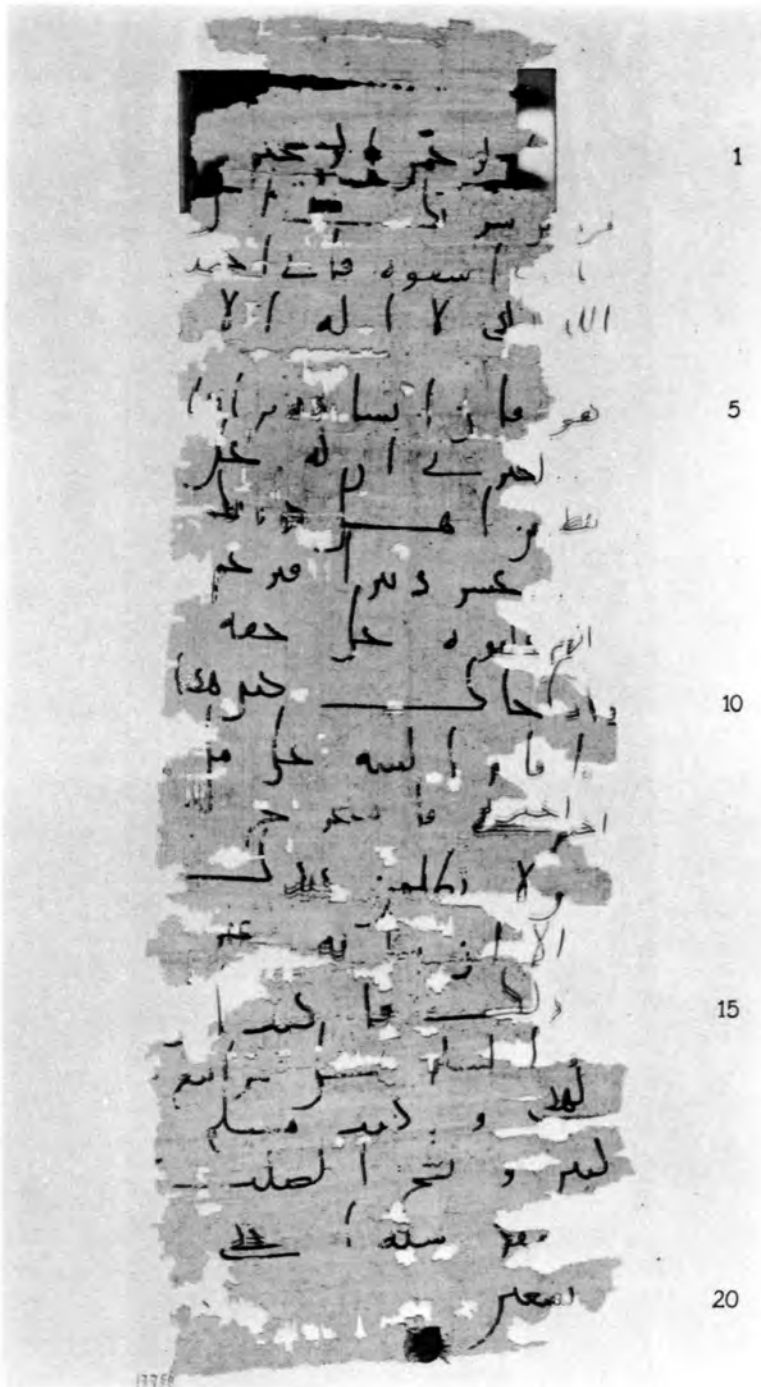


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