



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XIII

**The Conquest of Iraq,
Southwestern Persia, and Egypt**

translated and annotated
by

Gautier H. A. Juynboll

State University of New York Press



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Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash

(—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as dirham and imām, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Ehsan Yar-Shater

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(DECEMBER 21, 640—DECEMBER 9, 641)

The Campaigns of the Muslims and Other Matters

[2580] Ṭabarī said: According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq: Egypt⁵⁴⁷ was conquered in this year. It was conquered in the year 20 (641). Abū Ma'shar has the same (date); according to Aḥmad b. Thābit—his authority—Ishāq b. 'Īsā—himself: Egypt was conquered in the year 20 (641), the Muslim commander was 'Amr b. al-'Āṣī.

According to Aḥmad b. Thābit—his authority—Ishāq b. 'Īsā—Abū Ma'shar: Alexandria⁵⁴⁸ was conquered in the year 25 (646),

547. In Arabic, the name of Egypt is Miṣr. This name has given rise to some confusion, since an ancient city, situated south of the fortress of Bāb al-Yūn (in Greek Babylon), but on the opposite bank of the Nile, was also called Miṣr (see Butler, 221 f.). Bāb al-Yūn eventually became the name the whole settlement on the Nile was known by, including the city of Miṣr, which also comprised a part called al-Fustāt, or Fustāt Miṣr. It was here that the Arabs allegedly first set up camp, see Butler, *Babylon*, ch. 3. In the following I shall render the name Miṣr by Egypt when I think the country is meant (in which the city of Alexandria does not seem to have been included), and I shall leave it untranslated when I think this ancient city is meant. However, one cannot always be sure which interpretation is correct.

548. In the following I have preferred this name to the Arabic Iskandariyyah.

and al-Wāqidī says, as transmitted from him to me by Ibn Sa'd, that Miṣr and Alexandria were conquered in the year 20 (641). Sayf says, according to al-Sarī—Shu'ayb—himself: Alexandria was conquered in the year 16 (637).

*The Conquest of Miṣr and Alexandria*⁵⁴⁹

Ṭabarī said: We have mentioned the different opinions of the historians concerning the year in which the conquest of Miṣr and Alexandria took place. Now we will mention the events leading to their conquest and at whose hands this occurred, including the historians' differences concerning this issue too.

As for Ibn Ishāq, according to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—himself: When 'Umar had finished taking measures pertaining to all of Syria, he wrote to 'Amr b. al-'Āṣī that he was to march upon Egypt with his army. So 'Amr departed and finally conquered Bāb al-Yūn⁵⁵⁰ in the year 20 (641).

Ṭabarī said: There is a difference of opinion about the date of the conquest of Alexandria. Some say that it was conquered in the year 25 (646), two years after the beginning of the caliphate of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān under the supervision of 'Amr b. al-'Āṣī.

[2581]

According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Muḥammad b. Ishāq⁵⁵¹—al-Qāsim b. Quzmān, a man of Egyptian origin—Ziyād b. Jaz' al-Zubaydī, who reported that he was a fighter in the army of 'Amr b. al-'Āṣī when Miṣr and Alexandria were conquered: We conquered Alexandria during the caliphate of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in the year 21 (642) or 22 (643). He went on: When we had conquered Bāb al-Yūn, we advanced on all the villages in the countryside lying between Bāb al-Yūn and Alexandria, one after the other, until we ended up in Balhīb, one of those rural villages,

549. The conquest of Egypt has never been analyzed better, it seems to me, than by Alfred J. Butler in his *The Arab conquest of Egypt and the last years of the Roman dominion*. Here the second edition, printed together with two brief treatises that have also been drawn upon, is used. See the Bibliography.

550. Also called Bābilyūn, that is in Greek Babylon; see n. 547 above.

551. The text reads as if the *isnād* ends in Ibn Ishāq and as if Ṭabarī mentions a new strand, but I think it more feasible to consider this as one *isnād* running from Ṭabarī via Ibn Ishāq to the eyewitness, Ziyād b. Jaz'. I therefore propose to delete *wa-* preceding *haddathanī* in l. 2. When verbs like *haddathanī* are preceded by *wa-* in the middle of an *isnād* the compiler of the tradition collection introduces a new *isnād* (strand), which is obviously *not* the case in the present context.

called the Village of Prosperity. In the meantime, the people we had taken prisoner had arrived in Medina, Mecca, and Yemen.

He went on: When we arrived in Balhīb, the ruler of Alexandria⁵⁵² sent a message to 'Amr b. al-Āṣī that ran, "(Listen,) you Arabs, in the past, I used to pay the *jizyah* to people who were more hateful to me than you, Persians and Byzantines.⁵⁵³ If you want me to pay you the *jizyah*, I am agreeable, on the condition that you will return to me all those people from our region whom you have captured.

[2582]

The eyewitness went on: Then 'Amr b. al-Āṣī sent that ruler a message that said, "Above me there is a commander without whose consent I cannot do anything. If you want me to suspend hostilities, while you do the same, so that I can write to him about the proposal you have made to me, (I shall certainly do that). If he accepts that condition from you, I will too, and if he orders me to do something else, I will carry out his order." The man agreed. He went on: So 'Amr b. al-Āṣī wrote to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Our leaders never kept secret for us the letters they wrote. So in this letter he mentioned to him what the ruler of Alexandria had proposed. All the time, the remainder of the Egyptian prisoners had been in our care. Then we stopped at Balhīb and stayed there waiting for 'Umar's letter, which finally arrived. 'Amr read it out to us. In it were the words,

"Listen, I have received your letter, in which you mention that the ruler of Alexandria has proposed to give you the *jizyah* on the condition that you return to him all those prisoners of his region who have been captured. Upon my life, a fixed *jizyah* that comes to us, and will be coming to those Muslims who live after us, is in my view preferable to booty, which seems never to have been there once it is divided up. So you must propose to the ruler of Alexandria that he give you the *jizyah* in the understanding that those of their people who were taken prisoner and who are still in your care, be offered the choice between Islam and the religion of their own people. Should anyone of them opt for Islam, then he belongs to the Muslims, with the same privileges and obligations

552. For more on this ruler, see n. 564 below.

553. That is, of course, very unlikely, since the ruler himself was a Byzantine. This is the sort of inconsistency that Butler analyzed so fully, see n. 549 above.

as they. And he who opts for the religion of his own people has to pay the same *jizyah* as will be imposed upon his coreligionists. As for those captives who have been scattered over Arabia and have arrived in Mecca, Medina, or Yemen, those we cannot return and we would not like to enter into a peace treaty with anyone on the condition of a pledge which we cannot fulfill for him."

'Amr sent a message to the ruler of Alexandria informing him of what the Commander of the Faithful had written, whereupon this ruler sent a message back that said, "I agree."

[2583]

He went on: Then we assembled all those captives who were still in our care, and the Christians among them were grouped together. Then we began to bring forward every single man from among them and we gave him the choice between Islam and Christianity. When he chose Islam, we all shouted, "God is great," even louder than we had done when that village was conquered, and we gathered him within our ranks. When he opted for Christianity, the Christians would snort and pull him back into their midst, while we imposed the *jizyah* on him. All the time we were subject to great uncertainty as if one of us was about to cross over to the other camp. The eyewitness went on: This is how we went about it, until we had dealt with all of them. Among those who were thus brought forward was Abū Maryam 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Rahmān.⁵⁵⁴ (The transmitter of this eyewitness), al-Qāsim (b. Quzmān) added at this point: I have set eyes on this Abū Maryam; he was the 'arīf⁵⁵⁵ of the Banū Zubayd. The eyewitness went on: We positioned him (i.e., in front of the people) and offered him the choice between Islam and Christianity. Meanwhile, his father, mother and brothers had already opted for Christianity. But Abū Maryam chose Islam, so we made him step into our ranks. However, his father, mother and brothers pounced on him, struggling with us for control of him, until they tore his clothes from his body. Today he is our 'arīf, as you see. Then God conquered Alexandria for us and we could enter the city. This rubbish heap, which you see,⁵⁵⁶ Qāsim, is in the vicinity of Alex-

554. For more on him, see further down.

555. For this function, see n. 233 above.

556. It is indeed rare when the words via which an eyewitness directly addresses someone who listens to his story are preserved. We find it here twice. It seems as if Ziyād b. Jaz' pointed out the rubbish heap to al-Qāsim. It is also conceivable that,

andria. It is meant for garbage.⁵⁵⁷ It is enclosed within (a girdle of) stones, (so that) it has not grown or shrunk (in size). He who says something else, for instance that Alexandria and the surrounding villages had no *jizyah* imposed upon them, or that its inhabitants had no pact with us, that man is a liar, by God!"

[2584] Al-Qāsim went on: This account did not fail to give rise to the story that the kings of the Banū Umayyah used to write to their governors of Egypt: "Egypt could only be conquered after we used force.⁵⁵⁸ Therefore, the inhabitants are no more than our slaves, whose taxes we can increase if we so desire and with whom we can deal as we want."

Ṭabarī said: As for Sayf, according to al-Sarī—Shu'ayb—himself—al-Rabī' Abū Sa'id, Abū 'Uthmān and Abū Ḥārithah: 'Umar stayed at Īliyā⁵⁵⁹ after its inhabitants had been granted a peace treaty. He entered the city and stayed there a few days. He sent 'Amr b. al-Āsī to Egypt and appointed him governor over it, were God to conquer it for him. Then he dispatched al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām after him as reinforcement and he directed Abū 'Ubaydah to al-Ramādah,⁵⁶⁰ ordering him, in case God conquered it for him, to return to his province.

According to al-Sarī—Shu'ayb—Sayf—Abū 'Uthmān—Khālid and 'Ubadah: 'Amr b. al-Āsī left for Egypt after 'Umar had returned to Medina. 'Amr journeyed until he arrived at Bāb al-Yūn. Al-Zubayr followed him in his tracks and joined up with him right at the spot where Abū Maryam,⁵⁶¹ the metropolitan of

at this point, Ziyād showed al-Qāsim a sketch he had made of the situation, if he and his audience were not standing in front of it.

557. In Arabic, *li-kunāsatin*. The Cairo edition of Ṭabarī, IV, 106, has *la-kunāsatur* "... this rubbish heap is a pile of garbage in the vicinity of Alexandria."

558. This is a reference to the military customs of those days: enemies who surrendered and asked for peace had to pay the *jizyah* and were entitled to Muslim "protection" (*dhimmah*), but those who had been subdued by force had all their belongings confiscated, which were distributed as war booty. For a detailed account of this, see D. R. Hill, *The termination of hostilities in the early Arab conquest*, London-New York, n.d.

559. Another name for Jerusalem.

560. There are various places that bear this name; here the one near al-Ramlah seems to be meant, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, II, 813.

561. Butler (513 f.) thinks this is a distortion of Benjamin. He abandons this surmise in *Treaty*, 60 f.

Miṣr,⁵⁶² met them, in the company of the bishop and some people of purpose.⁵⁶³ The Muqawqis⁵⁶⁴ had sent the metropolitan so that they might defend their land. When 'Amr reached them, they prepared to fight him. Then 'Amr sent them a message that read, [2585] "Do not prompt us to come down heavily upon you,⁵⁶⁵ in a moment you will realize what you can do best." Thereupon they held their fighters back. 'Amr sent them another message that said, "I shall come forward, let Abū Maryam and Abū Miryām⁵⁶⁶ approach me." They consented to this and they granted one another safe-conduct. Then 'Amr said to the two Christian prelates, "You two are the ecclesiastics⁵⁶⁷ of this region. Listen. God sent Muḥammad with the truth and He ordered him to hold to it. Muḥammad transferred to us every command he was given, then he passed away—May God have mercy upon him—having accomplished everything he had been told to do. The instructions that he left us are crystal clear: among the things he enjoined upon us is that we should do our utmost in admonishing the people with whom we come into contact.⁵⁶⁸ Therefore, we call upon you to embrace Islam. He who is willing to do so will be like one of us. To him who refuses, we suggest that he pay the *jizyah* and we will give him ample protection. Our Prophet informed us that we would conquer your lands and he has determined that we

562. The Arabic term *jāthaliq* is arabicized from the Greek *katholikos*. According to Lane, 369, right column, he is the highest ranking in the Christian hierarchy. However, this title was given to the head of the Christian church under the Sasanids (see Vasiliev, I, 121) and should, strictly speaking, not have been given to an Egyptian Christian. See also Butler, *Treaty*, 58 f.

563. The Arabic reads *ahl al-niyyāt*, literally "the people of the intentions." It is not clear who are meant here, but the "intentions" are probably military rather than religious. At any rate, the reading *niyyāt* is dubious.

564. He is a controversial figure. It seems to me that the most authoritative information on him is given by Butler, 508–26, esp. 521. He identifies him as the viceroy and (Melkite) archbishop of Alexandria, appointed by Heraklius. See also his *Treaty*, 54–83.

565. I base this rendering on Lane's interpretation of *i'dhār* "taking extraordinary pains in exhortation" (1984, left column, below).

566. Presumably that is the name of the bishop present; this is suggested in note n of the previous page, 2584, of the edition. The vocalization is that of Ibn Ḥubaysh.

567. Literally, "the two monks"; perhaps the term is used here to humiliate those addressed.

568. See n. 565 above.

keep you from harm because of our family ties among you. If you accept our proposition, we will give you constant protection. Among the orders we received from our Commander (i.e., in Medina) was the order, "Take the interest of the Copts to heart, for the Messenger of God enjoined their best interests upon us, because they have ties of kinship⁵⁶⁹ with us and are therefore entitled to our protection."

[2586] "It is truly a distant relationship," the prelates answered, "one that only prophets can establish. (Hagar⁵⁷⁰) was a well-known and noble woman who was the daughter of our king. She belonged to the people of Manf⁵⁷¹ where the monarchy was established. Then the people of 'Ayn Shams⁵⁷² were granted victory over them; they killed them and wrested their kingdom from them, whereupon the people of Manf embarked on a vagrant life. As a result of that she became Abraham's property. He⁵⁷³ is heartily welcome! Grant us immunity, until we return to you."

'Amr answered, "A man like me cannot be deceived, but I will grant you a delay of three days so that you see how things stand with you and can discuss the matter with your people. If you do not promise to return in time, I shall fight you." "Give us more time," they pleaded, so he gave them one day longer. "Give us

569. Muslim tradition has it that Hagar, the maidservant of Sarah, by whom Abraham fathered Ishmael (that is, Ismā'īl, the ancestor of the Arabs), was of Egyptian origin. It is reported that, for this reason, the Prophet had enjoined upon his followers to treat the Egyptians well after they had been subjugated, in particular because of this "kinship." The tradition collector Muslim b. Ḥajjāj (d. 261/875) has preserved a Prophetic *ḥadīth* to this effect in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, IV, 1970, see also Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, 2 f. A variant of this report (see the same sources) has *ṣihr* "relationship by marriage" instead of "kinship," taken to be a reference to Māriyah, the Coptic wife of the Prophet and the mother of his son Ibrāhīm; see also Balādhurī, 219, and Maqrīzī, I, 24 f.

570. Although the context refers unmistakably to Hagar, the name itself is lacking in Ṭabarī, and was supplied from parallel versions of this story, for instance Ibn al-Athīr, II, 440.

571. The arabicized name of the ancient city of Memphis, see *EP*², s.v. Manf (U. Haarmann).

572. This is a place at three parasangs (18 kilometers) north of al-Fustāt, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, III, 762 f; it is probably identical with Heliopolis, which seems to have been bigger than the present-day suburb of Cairo bearing that name (see Butler, 231).

573. It is not clear who is meant. If we read *bi-hi* with the edition, the reference may be taken to point to Abraham, the Prophet or 'Amr. If we read *bi-kum* with Ibn Ḥubaysh (see apparatus, n. f), "welcome to you" gives an understandable text.

more time," they asked again, so 'Amr gave them one more day. Then they returned to the Muqawqis, who took 'Amr's proposition into consideration. But Arṭabūn⁵⁷⁴ refused to accept it and ordered an attack on the Muslims.

The two prelates addressed the people of Miṣr, "As for us, we shall do our best to defend you and we would not return to the Muslims—after all, four days have passed by now during which you came to no harm—were it not for the fact that we hope that therein might lie immunity for you."

Nothing surprised 'Amr and al-Zubayr more than the sudden attack of Farqab⁵⁷⁵ one night, but 'Amr was prepared. They confronted the Muqawqis, who was killed with his men. Then the Muslims pursued those who had fled. Thereupon 'Amr and al-Zubayr headed for 'Ayn Shams, where they had their assembly point, and he sent Abrahah b. al-Ṣabbāḥ to al-Faramā,⁵⁷⁶ where he duly arrived, and to Alexandria he sent 'Awf b. Mālik, who (also) [2587] duly arrived there. Each one of them said to the inhabitants of the city on which he was ordered to march, "If you surrender, you will be granted immunity." They agreed. Then the Muslims exchanged messages with them and waited there for the Muslim army, (which was at 'Ayn Shams at the time,) to arrive. In the meantime,⁵⁷⁷ they took prisoners.

'Awf b. Mālik said, "People of Alexandria, how beautiful is your city." They replied, "Alexander the Great once said, 'I shall build a city that is in need of God and can do without people.' Or he said, I shall certainly build a city that is in need of God and can do without people." That is why its splendor has lasted."

Likewise, Abrahah said to the inhabitants of al-Faramā, "What a ramshackle town this is, people of al-Faramā." "Yes," they answered, "al-Faramā once said, 'I shall build a city that can do

574. He is the general of the Byzantines. He is described with a few qualities in vol. XII, 2398, of this series. Butler, 215, maintains that his name should read Aretion.

575. This is the name of the Muqawqis according to Sayf. Butler, 516 f. consistently calls him Cyrus, basing himself on Severus of Ushmūnayn; see also his *Treaty*, 54–83. See also the literature cited in Prym's apparatus.

576. Al-Faramā is ancient Pelusium, a town on the Mediterranean shore near the outlet of the eastern branch of the Nile. Butler, 212, doubts the historicity of this mission.

577. Or possibly, "On their way (from 'Ayn Shams to these coastal cities)."

without God but not without people.' Thus its splendor has faded." Alexander and al-Faramā were brothers.

Ṭabarī said: Al-Kalbī said: Alexander and al-Faramā were brothers. Then he related a similar story in which both cities were associated with the two brothers. In al-Faramā, something collapsed every day and its outward appearance deteriorated, whereas Alexandria kept its gloss.

According to al-Sarī—Shu'ayb—Sayf—Abū Ḥārithah and Abū 'Uthmān: When 'Amr descended upon the Egyptians at 'Ayn Shams, a place governed jointly⁵⁷⁸ by Copts and Nubians, and al-Zubayr had joined 'Amr there, the people of Miṣr said to their king, "What do you want to accomplish against warriors who defeated the armies of the Persian king and the Byzantine emperor and overpowered them in their own countries? Conclude a peace treaty with these warriors and enter into a pact with them. Do not resist them and do not order us to resist them." That occurred on the fourth day (since the Muslims' arrival). But (the king) refused.

[2588]

So the Muslims attacked them and fought them. Al-Zubayr scaled the wall of the city. When those inside spotted him there, they opened the gate for 'Amr and rushed out, begging for a peace treaty, to which he agreed. But (inside the wall) al-Zubayr fell upon them with force. In the end he passed through the gate, making his way to 'Amr together with the Egyptians. After they had taken care⁵⁷⁹ of the casualties, they concluded a treaty. The Muslims took the same measures against those who were overpowered by force as they had taken in the case of those who had surrendered on the condition of a treaty. They were all placed under "protection."

The text of their peace treaty reads as follows:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

This is the text of the covenant that Amr b. al-'Aṣī has granted the people of Miṣr concerning immunity for themselves, their religion, their possessions, churches, crucifixes, as well as their land and their waterways. Nothing of these will be interfered with or decreased.

578. Or "alternatively?"

579. Or "taken stock of."

Nubians⁵⁸⁰ are not allowed to share their homesteads. It is incumbent upon the people of Miṣr, if they agree on the terms of this covenant and when the rise of the Nile water comes to a halt, to afford the *jizyah*, to wit fifty million (dirhams).⁵⁸¹

They will have to account for the crimes committed by robbers from among them.

If anyone refuses to comply with the terms of this treaty, *jizā* obligations will be lifted from them commensurate with their numbers, and we will be exempt from awarding protection to those who do so. If their river fails to reach the highest point when the rise of the water has come to a halt, then, commensurate with the losses suffered, their *jizā* payments will be reduced.

Those Byzantines and Nubians who are willing to accept the same terms as in the covenant with the people of Miṣr will have the same privileges and duties as the latter.

He who refuses to accept these terms and chooses to depart will enjoy immunity, until he has reached his destination where he can be safe, or has moved out of the territory where our authority prevails.

It is incumbent upon them to comply with the following terms: in three instalments, every third part of the year, they will have to afford one third of what they have to pay.

For the terms of this document the covenant of God and His protection, as well as that of His Messenger, that of the Caliph, the Commander of the Faithful, as well as the protection awarded by all the Muslims, are guarantees.

[2589]

It is incumbent upon the Nubians who have accepted the terms of this treaty that they help (sc. the local government) with so many men⁵⁸² and so many horses, in

580. On the Nubians, see Butler, index s.v., especially 432; see also his *Treaty*, 37–46.

581. Butler surmises on reasonable grounds that this amount is a later gloss not to be relied upon, see his *Treaty*, 46–8.

582. Presumably slaves are meant. Butler, *Treaty*, 35, interprets *ra's* as heads (of cattle), but he does mention "contingents of horse and foot" as a possibility

the understanding that no raids will be mounted against them and that they will not be prevented from trade, export or import.

Al-Zubayr, his sons 'Abdallāh and Muḥammad, have witnessed the concluding of this covenant, Wardān⁵⁸³ has put it down in writing and was present.⁵⁸⁴

All the people of Miṣr entered into this covenant and accepted the peace treaty. Then the horses were rounded up.⁵⁸⁵

'Amr organized al-Fuṣṭāṭ as a garrison city, whereupon the Muslims took up residence there. Abū Maryam and Abū Miryām presented themselves and spoke to 'Amr about the prisoners captured after the battle. 'Amr said, "Have these prisoners a pact and a covenant with us? Did we not come to an agreement with you two, and were we not attacked the very same day?" Then he kicked them out, whereupon they returned saying, "Everyone you have captured up to the time of our return to you will be placed under your protection!" 'Amr replied, "Would you launch an attack against us while they are under 'protection'?" "Yes," they answered, "we would." Then 'Amr divided those prisoners among his men, who distributed them, whereupon they ended up in the lands of the Arabs.

[2590] After that, a messenger approached 'Umar with some fifth parts of the war booty.⁵⁸⁶ 'Amr sent emissaries (sc. to Medina). 'Umar questioned them and they gave him a complete account, until they touched on the story of the metropolitan⁵⁸⁷ and his companion. 'Umar said, "Surely, I think that they showed sense, whereas you acted foolishly, without any sense at all. He who fights you has no immunity, but he who does not fight you, and is subsequently dealt with by you in the same way the villagers⁵⁸⁸ were

elsewhere. He quotes Caetani, who doubts the authenticity of the inclusion of terms concerning Nubians and labels them as anachronisms, *Treaty*, 51. On the whole, Butler, *Treaty*, 53, thinks that the treaty is possibly authentic in its main outline.

583. He was a client of 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣī, see Ibn Sa'd, VII 2, 201.

584. Presumably when it was signed. Butler, *Treaty*, 35, thinks that the subject of *ḥaḍara* was left unmentioned and translates "and there were present. . ."

585. The context does not seem to make clear why.

586. Presumably the fifths of more than one battle or conquest.

587. See n. 562 above.

588. A reference to the prisoners taken in the villages mentioned above on p. 2587.

treated, does have immunity during those five days until they have lapsed." Then he sent messengers in all directions, until all those prisoners who had been captured from among those who had not taken up arms during the five days were returned, except those who had engaged in fighting afterwards. Thus the Muslims sent those captives back to Egypt, one after the other, except those who belonged to that last category.⁵⁸⁹

Meanwhile, some Copts had come to 'Amr's living quarters. He was informed that they had been saying, "How worn out these Arabs look, how little care they take of themselves; we are of the opinion that people like us should not be obedient to people like them." So 'Amr feared that this appearance of the Arab warriors would prompt the Copts to rebellion. Therefore, he ordered that several camels be slaughtered and cooked in water and salt. Then he ordered the army commanders to assemble, after they had notified their troops to do likewise. 'Amr sat down and beckoned to the people of Miṣr to join him. Then the meat and the broth were served. (Servants⁵⁹⁰) handed it out to the Muslims, who began to eat in typically Arab fashion, tearing at the meat with their teeth and slurping the broth, dressed in their woolen cloaks and unarmed. After a while, the people of Miṣr dispersed with [2591] their ambitions and courage boosted.

The next day, 'Amr sent word to the army commanders to come (i.e. to his tent again) with their troops. He ordered them to come dressed in Egyptian clothes and footwear, bidding them that they order their troops to do likewise. They complied. Then 'Amr invited the people of Miṣr again who saw something completely different from what they had seen the previous day: erect figures⁵⁹¹ dressed in Egyptian colors standing by, the Arabs eating Egyptian food, behaving in an Egyptian manner. The Copts dispersed, perturbed this time, muttering, "We have been made fools of!"

'Amr sent word to his army that they had to arm themselves for the roll call to be held the next day. Then he went to the parade

589. Sc. those who had joined in the battle after the five days of truce.

590. The subject is not expressed. Grammatically, the Copts could be the subject, but I do not think that that is meant.

591. Presumably of servants. The dictionaries do not seem to list a connotation for *quwwām* that fits the present context. Conceivably, it could also be "banners" or "standards."

[2592]

and permitted the Copts to be present. He showed his troops to them and said, "I am aware that you considered yourselves to have panache when you saw the frugality of the Arabs and their simple life style. But I fear lest you perish. Therefore, I wanted to show you what sort of people they really are, under what circumstances they lived in their own country, then what they have come to in yours, and how ready they are for war. They have defeated you, warfare is their life. They were anxious to take possession of your country even before they appropriated its customs as you saw on the second day. And I also wanted you to realize that those you saw on the third day will not abandon the life you saw depicted on the second day, nor will they resume the lifestyle you saw depicted on the first day." Thereupon the people of Miṣr dispersed saying to one another,⁵⁹² "The Arabs have smitten you with this one hero of theirs."

News of these events reached 'Umar, who said to his companions, "By God, 'Amr's military campaign has become truly easy, no more attacks or assaults like the ones in battles against others. 'Amr is indeed a crafty fellow!" Then he installed 'Amr as governor of Miṣr, where he stayed.

According to al-Sarī—Shu'ayb—Sayf—Abū Sa'īd al-Rabī' b. al-Nu'mān—'Amr b. Shu'ayb: When 'Amr and the Muqawqis came face to face at 'Ayn Shams and their respective cavalries began to do battle with one another, the Muslims started to swerve some way toward the far end (i.e. of the battlefield), but 'Amr urged them to attack. Then a certain man from Yemen said, "We are not made of stone or iron!" "Shut up, you dog!" 'Amr shouted, but the man retorted, "In that case you are the upper dog."⁵⁹³

The transmitter went on: When that contingent began to draw more closely together, 'Amr shouted, "Where are the Companions of the Messenger of God?" Then those Companions who had participated in the evasive action⁵⁹⁴ came along and 'Amr roared, "Advance, through you God will grant victory to the Muslims." So they went forward. Among them that day were Abū Burdah and Abū Barzah.⁵⁹⁵ The other warriors attacked the enemy, close-

592. Or, conceivably, "to their countrymen upon their return."

593. Literally, "the commander of the dogs."

594. Admittedly, a wordy rendering of *man shahidāhā*.

595. They could not be identified with certainty.

ly following the Companions. Then God granted victory to the Muslims who vanquished the enemy in a glorious manner. Miṣr was conquered in the month Rabī' I of the year 16 (April 637); there the authority of Islam stood firm.

[2593]

On the whole, Islam began to spread over peoples and kings. Thus the people of Egypt started to engulf (Ifriqiyah⁵⁹⁶ and its ruler) al-Ajall,⁵⁹⁷ likewise the people in Mukrān overran Rāsil and Dāhir,⁵⁹⁸ the people in Sijistān overpowered the Shāh and his nobles, and the people in Khurāsān and Bāb (al-Abwāb)⁵⁹⁹ their respective Khāqāns,⁶⁰⁰ as well as less powerful nations. 'Umar held the conquering armies back out of concern for the lives of the Muslims. Had he allowed them to go where they liked, they would have gone anywhere where water was available.⁶⁰¹

According to 'Alī b. Sahl—al-Walīd b. Muslim—('Abdallāh) b. Lahī'ah—Yazīd b. Ḥabīb:⁶⁰² When they had conquered Miṣr, the Muslims launched an attack on (northern)⁶⁰³ Nubia. But they returned having sustained injuries and with many people having been blinded because of the Nubians' superior bowmanship. That is why the Nubians were nicknamed "the eye shooters." When 'Abdallāh b. Sa'd b. Abī Sarḥ governed Egypt, over which 'Uthmān b. 'Affān had appointed him, he concluded a peace treaty with the Nubians on the condition that they offer a gift, namely a number of people from among them (i.e., to be used as a labor force), whom they were to deliver into the hands of the Muslims. In exchange, every year the Muslims would present them with certain specific foodstuffs and equally well-specified garments.

According to 'Alī—al-Walīd—Ibn Lahī'ah: 'Uthmān and those governors and commanders who lived after him stuck to this

596. In this particular context, it is the name of the North African coastal regions west of Egypt; but see *El*², s.v. *Ifrikiya* (Talbi), for the many different definitions of this name.

597. According to a gloss in Ibn Ḥubaysh (Berlin), this is the title of the ruler of Ifriqiyah; it means something like "the most noble." He is mentioned once more in a subsequent volume of this series.

598. These are the names of local rulers.

599. This is a city on the western shore of the Caspian Sea, north of Baku. Nowadays it is called Derbent. See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, I, 437–42.

600. This is the (Persian) title of local rulers.

601. Literally, "they would have reached every watering place."

602. On this important Egyptian historian, see *GAS*, I, 341 f.

603. In Arabic, Nūbat Miṣr, probably that part of Nubia bordering on Egypt.

peace treaty and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz confirmed it out of consideration and concern for the well-being of the Muslims.

[2594] Sayf said: When the month Dhū al-Qa'dah of the year 16 (November–December 637) had begun, 'Umar stationed the armed forces of Egypt along all the coastal regions, the reason for this being that Heraklius was launching attacks on Egypt and Syria from the sea while he assaulted the people of Ḥimṣ in person. That occurred after three and a half years of 'Umar's reign had elapsed.

Ṭabarī said: In this year, I mean 20 (641), Abū Baḥriyyah al-Kindī 'Abdallāh b. Qays made a raid into Byzantine territory. It is alleged that he was the first to invade it, but another opinion has it that Maysarah b. Masrūq al-'Absī was the first to do so and to return safely, laden with booty.

(Ṭabarī) said: Al-Wāqidī said: In this year, 'Umar dismissed Qudāmah b. Maz'ūn as governor from al-Baḥrayn and had him flogged for wine drinking. In the same year, 'Umar installed Abū Hurayrah⁶⁰⁴ as governor of al-Baḥrayn and al-Yamāmah.

Ṭabarī said: In the same year, 'Umar married Fātimah bt. al-Walid, the mother of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥārith b. Hishām.

He continued: Also in the same year Bilāl b. Rabāh⁶⁰⁵ passed away. He was buried in the cemetery of Damascus.

In the same year, 'Umar relieved Sa'd from the governorship of al-Kūfah on the strength of complaints filed against him. People said that he could not perform the *ṣalāt* properly.

In the same year, 'Umar divided Khaybar⁶⁰⁶ among the Mus-

604. He was reputedly a major Companion of the Prophet, whose role in the dissemination of prophetic *ḥadīth* has occupied scholars in East and West until the present day. For his biography, see the somewhat uncritical study of him by Helga Hemgesberg, *Abū Huraira, der Gefährte des Propheten*, Frankfurt/Main, 1965, and for his alleged role in *ḥadīth* transmission, see Juynboll, *Authenticity*, ch. VII, idem, *Muslim tradition*, 190–206.

605. He is described as a black Ethiopian slave who had embraced Islam very early. After Abū Bakr had bought him from his cruel Meccan master, he manumitted him. Bilāl later became Muḥammad's official *mu'adhdhin*, the man who called the faithful to prayer. See Ibn Hajar, *Iṣābah*, I, 326 f.

606. Khaybar is an oasis comprising settlements, cultivated soil and palm-groves, ninety-six miles/154 kilometers north of Medina, captured by Muḥammad in 7 (628); it used to be occupied by Jews. See EI², s.v. *Khaybar* (Veccia Vaglieri).

lims and expelled the Jews from it. He sent Abū Ḥabībah⁶⁰⁷ to Fadak;⁶⁰⁸ he granted them half⁶⁰⁹ the fruit produce and the value of the land in gold and silver and let them keep that. (The other half he confiscated), then he went to the Jews of Wādī al-Qurā⁶¹⁰ and (confiscated their property) to divide it. Also in this year, 'Umar drove the Jews out of Najrān to al-Kūfah, as al-Wāqidī has it.

Al-Wāqidī said: In this year, I mean the year 20 (641), 'Umar organized the *dīwāns*.⁶¹¹ Ṭabarī said: We have already mentioned the accounts of those who disagree on this chronology.⁶¹²

In the same year, 'Umar sent 'Alqamah b. Mujazziz al-Mudliji overseas to Ethiopia, and this because it was rumored that Ethiopia had made a sudden attack on some border regions of the Islamic domain, but the Muslim forces were annihilated. Then 'Umar imposed upon himself that he would never send anyone again on a mission overseas. As for Abū Ma'shar, according to Aḥmad b. Thābit—his authority—Ishāq b. 'Isā—himself: The campaign against the land of the blacks was one overseas, in the year 31 (651–2).⁶¹³

Al-Wāqidī said: In the same year, Usayd b. al-Ḥudayr⁶¹⁴ passed away in the month Sha'bān (July–August).

Also in this year, Zaynab bt. al-Jaḥsh⁶¹⁵ died.

607. Who this man was could not be established with certainty.

608. A village not far from Khaybar, see *op. cit.*, which surrendered to Muḥammad when he marched on Khaybar, as it says in the sources.

609. Ṭabarī's text appears to have a lacuna; my translation is based upon Prym's emendation, which is derived from Balādhuri, 29, 32. See also Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, III, 855, and Wāqidī, II, 721, which has *nakhl* "palms."

610. Wādī al-Qurā is a *wādī* running from Medina to Syria in which there were several villages. The Jews who lived there were said not to have been expelled, since Wādī al-Qurā is not part of the Ḥijāz but of Syria.

611. The registers in which stipends, etc. were entered; see the monograph of G. R. Puin.

612. In vol. XII of this series.

613. That is, during 'Uthmān's reign.

614. Usayd was a nobleman from the Jāhiliyyah, who could write Arabic and was an excellent swimmer and archer. He who possessed these qualities was called *al-Kāmil* "the perfect one." He embraced Islam early, see Ibn Sa'd, III/2, 135–7.

615. This Zaynab was the wife of the Prophet's adopted son Zayd b. Ḥārithah. When the Prophet married her, after Zayd had repudiated her, it is reported that

In this year, 'Umar led the pilgrimage. His governors in the garrison cities were the same in this year as in the previous year with the exception of those whom I have mentioned as dismissed or replaced by others. The same applies to his judges, who were the same persons as in the previous year.

the Qur'ān abolished adoption. Thus Muhammad could not be accused of incest by marrying his "son's" wife. This episode has been analyzed by western as well as oriental scholars, but with quite different results. For an interesting account of both treatments, see Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, *Ḥayāt Muḥammad* (first published Cairo 1935, now also in English translation) ch. XVII, latter half.

❦

The Events of the Year

[2596]

21

(DECEMBER 10, 641—NOVEMBER 29, 642)

❦

Ṭabarī said: In this year the battle of Nihāwand occurred as related in the account of Ibn Ishāq according to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—himself. Abū Ma'shar has the same according to Aḥmad b. Thābit—his authority—Ishāq b. 'Isā—Abū Ma'shar. Al-Wāqidī says likewise. As for Sayf b. 'Umar, he has it that the battle of Nihāwand took place in the year 18 (639), in the sixth year of 'Umar's reign, according to al-Sarī—Shu'ayb—Sayf.

*The Battle of the Muslims and the Persians at Nihāwand*⁶¹⁶

The beginning of this episode was as follows according to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq: (A basic element) of the story of Nihāwand was that al-Nu'mān b. Muqarrin was governor of Kas-

⁶¹⁶ For a detailed source analysis of this battle and a comparison with the accounts concerning the conquest of Isfahān, see the fundamental study of Noth, "Isfahān-Nihāwand," in *ZDMG*, CXVIII (1968):274–96.

