

The Habashite Abraha Rules Yemen

The Himyarites tended to harass the Christians who lived in their midst. One of the most important Christian strongholds was the city of Najran. Thu Nawas stormed it, devastated its people and mutilated the bodies of the dead. According to one narrative, the number of the casualties reached twenty thousands, and according to another narrative, it reached two thousands. This motivated the king of Aksum, El Asbaha, to wage another war against Yemen to destroy this rebellious Jewish king. However, some historians deny that two wars took place and speak only of the one waged by, El Asbaha.

Dus Thu Tha'alaban (and in another narrative, Hayyan Ibn Fayd) went to the Roman king in Constantinople and invoked his help against Thu Nawas. Since the length of the distance prevented the Roman king from intervening directly, he sent with the Arab a request to the king of Aksum. The negus, responded by sending an army under the command of Aryat (a corruption of the Habashite name Hawaryat) and provided him with ships from Egypt and the gulf of Illat. Abraha Al Ashram was in the ranks of this army which numbered twenty thousand soldiers.

The battle ended with the defeat of the Himyarites and Thu Nawas rode his mare into the sea. Aryat ruled Yemen and was succeeded by Abraha. The latter became an independent ruler of Yemen in the reign of Beit Israel, the king of Aksum, and the reign of his son, Jabr Maskal in 540 A.D. Initially, Abraha wrote in his inscriptions that he was a vassal of the Aksumite king, Negus Zabyemen (the one in Yemen). It is related that he built a church in Yemen which was known by the name Elkli, which is derived from the Greek (Ekklesia) meaning general assembly or church. He wanted it to be the polestar of the Arabs instead of the 'Qa'aba' in Mecca.

It was a master-piece of architecture in its splendour and immensity. Arab historians relate that Abraha raided Mecca in the year known as 'the year of the elephant' to avenge the insult which was inflicted on his church in Sana'a by the pagan Nafeel Al Ja'athami, who smeared the front of the church with his excreta and threw rotten cadavers in it. Al-Tabari describes the diseases which routed Abraha's army at the gates of Mecca by saying: "The first time measles and small-pox were seen in Arabia was in that year". The Arabs date the invasion to the year 570 A.D. and call it the "year of the elephants". It is probably the year in which the Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, was born. But researchers fix the date at 540 A.D.

Some historians relate that Abraha was the last to restore the famous Ma'areb dam in Yemen, and that he recorded inscriptions on the stones which he began by saying: "With the authority, power and mercy of the compassionate, his Christ and the holy spirit set down this writing 'I, Abraha, viceroy of the Geezite Ramhaz Ziman, king of Saba, Thu Raidan, Hadramut and the Arabs in Najada and Tahama..... etc..". The text in Geez is "/ya vil warda warahmanan ramhaz zabimen warun quds sattiru than mazandan. an abrat azli malikan ajlaziyyinrambaz zabiman malik Sabal th radon wahadramut wayamnan walalrabuhum watudam watahmat.

The restoration ceremony was attended by Roman and Persian delegations. Also present was Al Munther, the king of Hira Al Hareth Ibn Jabla and Abu Karb Ibn Jabla. Dr.

Jawad Ali, in his book, "The Detailed history of the Arabs - Vol. III", points to the political importance of the attendance of these delegations and their strategic objectives in the Red Sea: "The coming of the delegate of negus Ramhiz Zebeimen, the delegate of the Roman King, the delegate of the Persian king, the emissaries of al Munther, the king of Hira, Al Hareth Ibn Jabla and Abi Karb Ibn Jabla made a great impression on the southern Arabs and on the chieftains and their tribes.

The coming of these to Yemen and their crossing vast distances is no easy thing and denotes great political significance. It reflects esteem for Abraha and his position in that vital area which controls the Red Sea, Bab el Mandeb and the Indian Ocean.

These delegates did not come merely for congratulations, amusement or out of courtesy, but for more important things; namely to draw Abraha into this camp or the other and thus make the one outweigh the other and suppress trade in the Red Sea or enhance it. This could either spell disaster for the institutions of the Romans and their trade or reap them vast, inestimable profits.

The world was then, as now, divided between two fronts, an eastern Persian front and a western Persian front. Each had its own propagandists among the small kingdoms and the tribal chiefs. These followers punished and forgave, were content or angry in their efforts to gratify and flatter the side they supported. The Romans devoted all their power to establish their hegemony over the Arabian Peninsula, to isolate it from the Persians or, at least, from their supporters.

The Persians, on their part, tried to destroy every party that took the side of the Romans or supported their point of view and to prevent their ships from entering the Indian Ocean and trading with Arabia and Africa. The two camps worked diligently on spreading propaganda and winning the battle of intellect. The Romans strove to spread Christianity in the Arabian Peninsula; they sent and aided missionaries and urged Habasha to support and spread Christianity.

The Persians endeavoured to spread Christian creeds opposed to the creed of Rome and Habasha (Abyssinia) and to support Judaism also, since it opposed the policy of the Romans. As we know, the religion of the Persians was neither Christian nor Jewish, but a religion contrary to both religions. Thus, the purpose of the Romans in spreading Christianity was not sincere or blemishless".

Abraha was succeeded by his son, Eksum, in 544 A.D. The latter ruled for nineteen years and was succeeded by his brother, Masruk, who ruled for twelve years. Finally, Hemyar could stand the Habshites no more, so the Persians found that the opportunity was ripe to invade Yemen in their struggle with the Romans for the control of the Red Sea and its lucrative trade.

Seif Ibn Thee Yazen played an important role in inviting the Persians who came on eight ships. They were met by king Masruk at the head of a hundred thousand soldiers, according to some narratives. The Persian commander, Wahzar, managed to kill Masruk on the back of his mute with an arrow. When he fell, the Aksumite army was defeated and they fled in every direction. After the battle of Yemen, the Persians continued invading the coasts of the Red Sea until they subjugated Adulis and the Dahlak Archipelago, where they built cisterns the remains of which still stand.

However, the Persian reign in Yemen and their control of the Red Sea did not last long. Hardly fifty years had passed when the Arab conquests, following the emergence of Islam in Mecca, swept over the Middle and Near East, putting an end to the Persian empire and wresting from the Romans the Middle and Near East, beginning with Palestine and Syria and passing through Egypt till North Africa. The entire Arabian Peninsula, including Yemen, came under the hegemony of the new Arab state.

It was now the turn of the Arabs to extend their influence over the Red Sea and its straits. Between the years 630 and 640 A.D., Adulis ended in ruins due to the raids of the Beja tribes, which the Arab conquests had pushed into migrating southward from their homeland in Asswan, Egypt.

Its commercial role as a broker in the Red Sea between the trade of Aksum, "Punt" land, the eastern coasts of Africa, Yemen, India and Persia, on the one hand and the kingdom of Meroe, Egypt, Syria and the Romans on the other hand, was over after it had thrived for about nine centuries.

The Struggle in the Red Sea in the Middle Ages **The Arabs control the Red Sea**

With the spread of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt and North Africa, the Arabs controlled the northern and southern entrances of the Red Sea and the most important trade centres in the old world. Of the Red Sea basin, only its African coasts remained outside the Arab control.

These were mostly small in resources and population, except for those racing the coasts of Yemen known today as the coasts of Eritrea, in which Adulis was famous as an entrance to Habasha (Abyssinia) and as a trade link between the east and the west. By then it had been destroyed as a result of the Persian-Roman struggle in addition to the Beja raids. The relation of the Arabs after Islam with this coast dates back to the early appearance of Islam when the prophet advised some of his comrades to emigrate to Habasha "because there is a king who does not oppress anyone, and it is a land of truth" (i) after they had been harassed by 'Qureish'.

In the fifth year of the prophetic mission, eleven men, and some say twelve, four of them married and accompanied by their wives, left Mecca. They found two trader ships that transported them for half a 'dinar' to the town of 'Ma'adar' on the Eritrean coast south of Adulis. Then they travelled to Aksum, where the negus offered them generous hospitality. These fifteen were only the beginning of the procession. The flow of Moslem-migrants, escaping with their religion to Habasha, continued until they numbered over one hundred.

Thus began the relation of the Arabs after Islam with the African coasts of the Red Sea. Soon, however, conditions changed; the adherents of the new religion were no longer exiles seeking refuge in a remote country, but rulers controlling the reins of state in vast regions in the world. The deterioration of the influence of the two states, the Roman and the Persian, in the Red Sea created a vacuum and gave thugs the opportunity to go unchecked and to practice piracy, especially since there were remains of ships and a sizable number of unemployed living in the ruins of Adulis in the absence of any government.

To punish these and prevent them from threatening the trade routes in the Red Sea, the Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab sent a small expedition consisting of three hundred men under the command of Alkama Ibn Mihrez Al-Alkami, according to Al Tabari and Ibn Al-Athir. The expedition was to punish these and spread Islam in the African land, but they were killed and the expedition failed. Omar took it upon himself never to send anyone by sea again.

The Caliph Omar, however, approved of Amr Ibn Al A'ss suggestion to dig a canal connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean via the Nile, though he had opposed it at first for fear that the Romans use it in their military operations against the Arabs. The reason for his approval was that he remembered the importance of reconnecting the Red Sea with the Nile, especially for sending wheat to Hijaz. So he ordered the re-opening of the old canal which was known as the canal of the Prince of the Faithful. The trade of the east started to move across the Red Sea and Egypt to Alexandria, and from there to the west and Syria.

The pirates carried on with their destructive activity, coming out of the ruins of Adulis and the Dahlak Archipelago, which they made a refuge for their ships. They even raided Jeddah in 702 A.D. and threatened to destroy Mecca. So the Omayyad Caliphs took a decisive step to put an end to this piracy.

They mobilized a naval campaign to establish a naval centre on the western coast of the Red Sea facing Yemen (the Eritrean Coast) and occupied the whole of the Dahlak Archipelago facing Massawa. The occupation of the Moslem Arabs of this excellent position was the beginning of their occupation of the rest of the naval centres on the African coast and of the gradual spread of Islam in east Africa.

In the first Islamic period, most of the western coasts of the Red Sea remained under the power of the pastoral Beja tribes after they had destroyed the port of Adulis and crushed the kingdom of Aksum with the migration of the Beja tribes from southern Egypt. One of the Fatimide Caliphs made a treaty with Maknun Ibn Abdul Aziz, the chief of the Beja, by which he recognized his authority over the Beja regions till the "Island of the Wind" or the present port of Massawa.

Spencer Trimingham says in "Islam in Ethiopia": "The Beja tribes founded five independent kingdoms west and north east of Eritrea. 'Badey' or 'Massawa' was a port which had commercial contacts with the Sultans of Egypt". Jasman Jeslow says in "The Wonders of Ethiopia": "Massawa and the few ports on the Red Sea became Islamic at an early time, and after the destruction of Adulis, an Islamic civilisation flourished on the Dahlak Island near Massawa at the beginning of the eighteenth century".

The western coasts of the Red Sea were known to Arab historians under different names such as "The Land of the Islamic Mode" (The African coast acquired an Islamic character while the interior kept a different character, says Al-Masou'di in "The lexicon of Countries"), "The Land of Zeila" and "The Land of Jabarta", to which is attributed the famous Egyptian historian, Abdul Rahman Al-Jabarti".

The Red Sea During the Crusades

With the coming of the crusaders and the settling of the crusaders in Damascus, Europe wanted to deprive Egypt of raw materials necessary for war. The Pope and some European governments issued laws and decrees for bidding the export of these categories to Egypt.

However, the two sides could not afford to sacrifice the sizable sums which they earned from trade. So many overlooked the application of the Papal decrees, and the trade across the Red Sea remained so active that the emissary of Frederick Barbarossa expressed surprise at seeing the commercial activity in Alexandria in 1175 A.D.

Dr. Jalal Yehya says in "The Red Sea and Colonialism" that the Indians, the Arabs and the Egyptians used to cooperate in transporting the accumulated trade in Aden to the port of 'Eithab', where it was transported on camel back to 'Qaws', where it was re-shipped on the Nile to 'Dumyat' and 'Rashid'. The Sultan of Egypt prohibited western merchants from entering the Red Sea for fear that they conspire with the Habashites against his country.

In the year 578 (Higri), Prince Ranuda, the ruler of Karak in Syria, wanted to seize the land of Hijaz. So he built ships and transported the wooden parts on camels to the coast, where he put them together, loaded them with men and war machines, and divided them into two parts: one part sailed to the Island of "Qala'a Ayla" (Sinai) and prevented its people from coming to the water, which caused them great duress, and put them under great strain.

The second part sailed towards 'Eithab', wreaked havoc on the coasts, took the Arab ships and the merchants on board, and took the people by surprise, as they had not known any European in that sea, whether merchant or soldier. In Egypt, king Al-Adel Abu Bakr Ibn Ayyoub, acting for his brother, Saladdin, built a fleet in the 'Kalzam Sea' (The Red Sea) under the command of his aide-de-camp, Hussamiddin LuLua, and loaded it with veteran sailors. They sailed to 'Ayla' and captured the enemy ships after burning them and took the soldiers prisoners. Those who escaped inward were pursued by the Arabs and brought back. Then they sailed towards 'Eithab' in pursuit of the remaining Crusader ships.

On arrival, they found the Crusaders had killed many of the people of 'Eithab', captured many others and robbed them. Ibn Jubier says that the Crusaders captured a Beja ship bringing pilgrims from Jeddah and also captured a big caravan which had come from Jeddah to 'Eithab' and killed everybody. They captured two ships bringing merchants from Yemen and burnt many foodstuffs on that coast, which had been destined for the granaries of Mecca and Medina. They burnt another sixteen ships, and their news and power spread on the coast of the Red Sea.

Then they sailed to the land of Hijaz and Lulua followed them there. He found that they had obstructed the route of the merchants and proceeded to kill and pillage. People were appalled by this and the people of Medina and Mecca were imperiled. LuLua caught up with them at the port of 'Rafink' (the coast of Al Hawra') and put them to the sword. When they were faced with annihilation, they came out on land and took refuge in some mountainous trails. Lulua disembarked and fought them ferociously. He took horses from the Arabs of that land, mounted his soldiers on them, and fought them on horse back and on foot until he defeated them and killed most of them.

The letter sent by the Habashite Queen Helen to the Portuguese King Immanuel in 1805 justified these fears. She wrote him offering her willingness to provide large land forces to destroy and seize the port of Eithab, but she says that she does not have a fleet and asks him to help her by providing her with a fleet to transport her armies to Jerusalem in Palestine to participate in 'liberating it from the heretics' and restoring it to the "dominion of the Holy

Cross". In spite of the religious guise applied to these arguments, the desire to control the Red Sea is obvious in the contents of this letter.

After the end of the Crusades, 'Eithab' lost its commercial importance, especially after the port of Al-Tour became a centre from which caravans travelled towards Egypt and Syria. Moreover, Aden also lost its former importance, because the Prince of Yemen tried to stop trade from passing to Egypt. The Indians, after appraising the situation, found that the Sultan of Egypt controlled the end of the route, and started using Jeddah to unload their goods, after it had been seized by the king Al-Ashraf 'Barsbari'. This trade was then transported by caravans by way of Mecca and Hijaz northland to Egypt or reshipped on warships to Al-Tour.

As we have already mentioned, Egypt and Venice reaped many profits by trading with the east across the Red Sea. This was one of the most important reasons which made the Portuguese attempt to find another route to the fortunes of the east. The movement of geographical explorations had already picked up momentum, and Barthelomio Diaz managed to reach the Cape of Good Hope. Then Vasco de Gama reached Calcutta, and eventually Capral reached India with his big fleet after thirteen years of the arrival at the Cape.

The Portuguese clashed with the Egyptians in the Indian waters, and tried to intercept Indian trade with Egypt. Both Egypt and Venice realized this new danger that threatened to wrest the eastern trade from them and divert it to the route of the Cape of Good Hope and the Atlantic Ocean. Venice proposed a reduction of duties on trans-Egyptian trade, the excavation of a canal connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, the persuasion of the princes of India not to deal with the Portuguese so that they would not be forced to submit to them someday, but Venice refused to play an active role in this new world economic struggle, because it did not want to make an enemy of Portugal. In 1508, the Egyptian fleet defeated the Portuguese fleet under the command of Almida near the Island of Dio in the Indian Ocean after crossing the Red Sea but was defeated at another battle in 1509.

The Portuguese managed to seize Jawa in India, but failed to conquer Aden because of the resistance of the Yemenites. Al-Ghourri, the Sultan of Egypt, sent a naval expedition to Yemen to reinforce Arab centres there. But this campaign endeavoured to seize the cities of Yemen itself. While thus occupied, it learnt of the defeat of Al-Ghourri and his death and the Ottoman occupation of Syria and Egypt. The activity of Egypt and its schemes in the Red Sea were over, and the Ottoman Empire, which occupied the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, replaced it.

The Portuguese had controlled the ports of the Red Sea situated on the western coast and the Gulf of Aden, Sawaken, Massawa, Zeila'a and Barbara, Alvarez, who headed the Portuguese mission to Habasha, converted the mosque of Massawa into a church in 1520. The Portuguese army, which came to aid the king of Habasha against the conquests of Imam Ahmad Ibn Ibraheem, the prince of Hara, landed at the Eritrean port of Zula. Then it penetrated into the Habasha plateau, where it contributed to the defeat of the Imam.

The Ottomans saw in the Portuguese control of the strategic centers on the trade routes in the Red Sea, which were close to the Islamic holy places in Hijaz a threat to their interests.

The Portuguese worked through their alliance with Habasha on reinforcing their military and commercial presence in the basin of the Red Sea and securing European trade with the east around the Cape of Good Hope and removing it from Egypt and Syria.

The Ottomans equipped a fleet under the command of Sinan Pasha, who battled the Portuguese fleet under the command of the Juan de Castro before the coasts of Massawa in 1554 and defeated it. Then they liquidated the Portuguese positions along the coasts of the Red Sea and built fortresses there. In 1557, the Ottoman Turks occupied the port of Massawa. The natives cooperated with the Turks and with the merchants of Katalan, the rivals of the Portuguese, who built trader ships in Zeila'a in Somaliland for the purpose of expelling the Portuguese whose rule was marked by savagery and fanaticism.

However, the control of the Portuguese and the other European nations of the trade of the east across the Cape of Good Hope deprived the Red Sea of its economic importance as an international waterway. Then the Ottoman control became nominal and the movement of trade and building on the barren coasts of the Red Sea was reduced to the lowest level during the next three centuries until it was revived with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.

The French campaign under Napoleon Bonaparte came to Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century, and thought of connecting the waters of the two seas, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean by means of a direct canal between them. France sought to undermine England in India and subsequently control the trade of the Far East with Europe. At this point, Britain strove to expel France from Egypt, and affirm its control over the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea in Aden and Broom, which are considered the southern keys of the Red Sea. This factor remained a vital factor in guiding British policy for a century and a half into monopolizing and controlling the routes of world trade and the people who live along these routes, if need be.

The Colonist Struggle in the Basin of the Red Sea after the Opening of the Suez Canal

The excavation of the Suez Canal was an important turning point in the history of the Red Sea, of world trade and of colonialism. All the colonialist states, France, Italy, Britain and others, tried to obtain naval posts for the storage of coal, provisions and supplies to cater to the needs of their ships on the new transport route between East and West. These stations developed into important bases. They were the English Aden, the French Obock and the Italian Asseb, and were the beginnings of European Colonialism and its centres in the Red Sea.

England occupied Aden in 1839 after an unequal battle of its inhabitants. For it, Aden was a citadel that controls the Indian Ocean and a focal point on the naval route to the Mediterranean in addition to its being an important centre for expansion in the southern Arabian Peninsula, in Somaliland and in east Africa, especially since England was able to use this base to deal with the leaders of Habasha as their high country afforded it a position from which it could supervise the Nile Valley in case of trouble.

This was what happened when it waged its famous campaign under Lord Napier, who made Aden his supply depot and marched through the Eritrean port of Zula to the Habasha

plateau where he rescued the imprisoned British consul after killing the king of Habasha, Theodore, and defeating his army in 1869 A.D., the year in which the Suez canal was opened.

England sent an emissary from Aden to the king of 'Shoa, one of the provinces of Habasha. He made a treaty with him stipulating that no duties would be imposed on English goods entering Habasha in excess of five percent of their value, and in which the king of Shoa undertook to keep the trade routes open and facilitate the travel of Englishmen in the region.

In 1882, England gained control of the Somali port of Berbera, in which there was an Egyptian garrison and which was nominally under the Ottoman state. This was accomplished after the British authorities in Aden sent Major Hunter with fifty soldiers as personal guards.

Turkey objected to the British occupation and the Egyptian Pasha refused to evacuate his garrison, but England turned down the Turkish demands, evacuated the Egyptian garrisons from Berbera and Zeila'a and saw to it that a British colony was established under the name of "The British Somaliland" in the part racing Aden.

The Somaliland people, led by the great fighter, Mohamad Abdullah Hassan, revolted. The struggle lasted for twenty years during which the British tasted the bitterness of defeat more than once. But the British Empire, in complicity with Habasha and Italy, managed to field large forces in this region, which caused the weakening of the civil resistance and then the destruction of its military forces.

Just as England expanded its territory using Aden as a base, so did France, on its part, expand by starting with Obok, on the coast racing Aden, as a base for its future operations in this region. So, it sent a warship with orders to stay in that port, and landed some troops as a garrison on the coast. Its commander enjoyed the same power as a political resident, that is, the same powers enjoyed by the British representative in Aden. The French government signed a deal with a company to build a coal depot in Obok. Moreover, it issued orders to French ships passing through the strait of Bab el Mendeb to obtain coal from this new base.

France's man in the region was Lagar who was chosen for the post of "commandant" and who was quite active. This official drew the attention of his government to the necessity of occupying that part of the coast which would allow for the establishing of a French colony, and to the necessity of contact with the interior and the attempt to benefit from the trade of Harar and Shoa.

It was only natural that he would first of all eye 'Tajura'; where the interior caravan trails begin. He began contacting chiefs all along the coast, but he was forced not to go to 'Tajura' before the Egyptians left it. So he sent a ship to 'Ras Ali', the summer port of Tajura on April 27, 1884. The French manipulated Ibrahim Muhammad; the Tajura minister who accompanied them on this trip, who did not want to let the English occupy his country after the departure of the Egyptians.

The French hovered around the area, approached the place on which the English flag was fluttering, and informed the local chief that the port of 'Ras Ali' had become theirs and they would be back in a few days to occupy it. Naturally, the Egyptian officials in the area quickly informed their government and asked for reinforcements.

The French manipulated the Sheikhs and the local chiefs. Lagar made a treaty with Sultan Ahmad, the Sultan of Tajura on 21/9/ 1884, which gave France the right to protect the lands stretching from 'Ras Ali' to 'Qubbat al Kharab'. The Sultan undertook not to make any treaty or agreement with a foreign government without the consent of the French commander of Obok, in return for which France was to pay a hundred Riyals a month to the Sultan and eighty Riyals to his minister.

British authorities in Cairo were apprehensive about an armed clash with the French in Tajura, so it counselled the withdrawal of the Egyptians from it; the governor was informed of this as an order issued by the Khedive's government. The Danakils succeeded in forcing the small garrison out of Tajura into Zeila'. The Sultan gained control of the city, the French came and officially announced its annexation and greeted it with a salvo of guns.

England did not mind the coming of Jibuti into the sphere of French influence, since it was more occupied with trading with inside the continent than with supplying Aden. England left that France needed Jibuti the way it needed Zeila and Berbera. The French ambassador in London exchanged two letters with the British foreign secretary on February 2nd and February 8th, 1888, concerning the agreement drawn between the two countries concerning their interests in Somaliland.

Thus, both France and England succeeded in using their naval bases for colonialist expansion on the navigational route across the Red Sea. Jibuti was declared capital of what was called French Somaliland. At a time when the age of colonialism has faded in the world, France still holds on to this colony to preserve its strategic and economic, interests and to tend Ethiopian interests, as Jibuti is connected to Addis Ababa by a railway which was built seventy years ago, and carries half the flow of Ethiopian trade, in spite of the rightful demand of the Somaliland for national independence, exploiting tribal dissension between the tribes of Afar and Issa to the point that it changed the name of the region into the province of "Afar and Issa".

The Egyptian Khedivate in Eritrea

When the Wahabite revolution arose and the rights of Ottoman sovereignty over Hijaz were imperilled, the Sublime Porte charged his 'Wali' in Egypt with quelling the revolution. When Ibrahim Ibn Mohammad Ali triumphed over the Wahabis, Sultan Mahmoud II appointed him Pasha of Jeddah in July 1820 in recompense for his services. It was thus that Egypt came to have a kind of sovereignty over the western coast of the Red Sea. But this sovereignty was indirect, in addition to being nominal.

When the Syrian wars and the intervention of the European states to settle the Egyptian-Ottoman problem forced the Pasha of Egypt to evacuate the Arabian Peninsula and recall his forces in 1840, the sublime Porte regained his direct influence on the provinces overlooking both: the African and Asian coasts of the Red Sea, which had been occupied by the Egyptian forces. So, the authority of the Sultan was consolidated anew in the province of Hijaz, and Turkey regained its direct sovereignty over Sawaken and Massawa on the western coast of the Red Sea through the Ottoman 'Wali' in Hijaz.

Soon, the Khedival government resumed its claim of the right of sovereignty over the western coast of the Red Sea. After many efforts with the Sublime Porte, the latter consented

on 3/5/1865 to remove the port of Massawa from the jurisdictions of the Jeddah government and place it directly under the reign of the 'Wali' of Egypt.

On 11/5/1865, Sawaken was conceded to Egypt too. On 11/5/1865, the Sublime Porte issued a decree (Firman) giving Egypt townships of Massawa, Sawaken and their dependencies. Ismail Sadek Pasha headed for Massawa to assume control of them, and Hassan Ra'fat Bey was appointed mayor. On 30/4/ 1866, Massawa was taken over in a ceremony in which the decree (Firman) of concession was read in the presence of town officials and notables.

In March, 1866, the Egyptian government purchased the ownership rights for the province of 'Ad' from the "Bashtri Bros. Co." for 5834 guineas so that Egypt would have a completely free hand on the western coast of the Red Sea.

The Egyptian fleet in the Red Sea under Jamali Bey consisted of eight ships. This fleet had stations equipped to receive it and supply its requirements along the African coast up to the furthest point east of the gulf of Aden.

The Italian Landing at Asseb and the Founding of the Colony of Eritrea

The Egyptians were controlling the western coast of the Red Sea when the Italians started to follow the example of the English and the French; they purchased Asseb at the end of 1869 from Sultan Ibrahim through the missionary, Father Sabito.

The activity of the Italians provoked protests from the Egyptian governments against them. The Italian government was entertaining the hope that, after the opening of the Suez Canal for world navigation, it would establish a commercial post on the coast of the bay of Asseb to help increase Italian trade between East and West across the Red Sea and the Suez Canal.

Sherif Pasha, the Egyptian foreign secretary, informed Di Martino, the Italian consul, on May 27th, 1870, that the Khedive was extremely hurt and surprised at the Italian occupation of Asseb, and had ordered him to lodge protests against that explicit aggression on the integrity of Egyptian territory.

Besides the positive desire of Italian capitalists to search for new regions in which to invest their money, security reasons were pushing the Italian government into searching for new overseas colonies. The southern provinces of Italy on account of the bad clerical rule and despotism of landowners had become a stamping ground for associations of bandits and criminals, which motivated Italian politicians in the sixties of the nineteenth century into trying to seek overseas colonies to utilize them as an exile for these criminals.

Italy negotiated with Portugal and then with Denmark and Belgium and others to purchase some islands in the Atlantic Ocean, the Indians Ocean and others, but if it did not achieve any noteworthy success. It also failed to obtain colonies in North Africa.

So Signior Manchini, the Italian foreign secretary, started to focus his attention on the western coast of the Red Sea; it was then that he made his famous statement: "The keys of the Mediterranean are found in the Red Sea".

Father Juseppi Sabito talked Signior Raphaeli Rubattino, the director of Rubattino Navigation Company, one of the biggest navigation companies in Italy at the time, into establishing a navigation route between Venice and the ports of India and China via the Suez Canal and the Red Sea and establishing a fuel supply station in the Red Sea. The Italian government approved of charging Father Sabito with this mission and sent Admiral Acton to accompany him in accomplishing his mission.

On November 15th, 1869, the missionary Sabito made an agreement with the two Sheikhs of the 'Ad Ali' tribe, Sultan Hassan Ibn Ahmad, and Sultan Ibrahim Ibn Ahmad, under the terms of which he bought an area on the western coast of the Red Sea between Mt. Janja and Mt. Luma for 15000 Riyals (Maria Theresa) so as to use it as a refuge for the ships of Rubatino company that would provide them with coal.

In March 1870, he made another agreement with Sultan Abdullah Sheheim, the viceroy of the Sultan of Rahita in Asseb, Sheikh Burhan Muhammad, Sultan Hassan Ibn Ahmad, and Sultan Ibrahim Ahmad by which he got Janja. On the third day following the signing of this agreement, that is, on March 13th, 1870, Sabito hoisted the Italian flag over this region of the coast of Asseb. Thus, the Italian flag fluttered for the first time on the western coast of the Red Sea. Sabito seized the opportunity of his presence in Asseb to build a small, simple, wooden house to use it as an office for the Rubatino Company.

When Sultan Abu Bakr Ibraheem, the ruler of Zeila', knew of these agreements made by the Italian 'Christians' with the Sultan of Asseb, he protested against this, and he said that this region was under the Islamic Ottoman government. The natives conceived of Turkey as a state representing all Moslems and did not feel hostile towards it.

The increase of European influence and its permeation of the affairs of the Egyptian administration entailed the setting up of a kind of "international guardianship" over Egypt. Italy maintained its occupation of the Egyptian centres in Beylul, Barassouli and Ad amid Egyptian protests and crowned it with the occupation of Massawa on February 5th 1885.

It was encouraged by Britain which was extremely apprehensive of the Mahdis capturing the ports of this coast. It saw in Italy's expanding its territories at the expense of Egyptian territories on the coast of the Red Sea a catalyst in the British attempt to crush the Mahdi revolution on one hand, and checking the desire of the French to extend their influence over East Africa, on the other hand. Contact between the two governments was established via their consuls in Cairo, Signior di Martino and Lord Cromer.

The landing of the Italian forces at Massawa lasted about four hours, from 3 P.m. to 7 p.m. The Italian forces immediately occupied the strategic positions on the island, and the Italian flag was hoisted. General Jini was determined to dispose of the Egyptian garrison at Massawa under the command of Izzat Bey so as to effect Italian military occupation of the region. So, in December 1885, the remains of the Egyptian garrison were forced to leave Massawa for Egypt.

On April 10th, 1885, the ship "Esploratori" landed at Arafli. There, Italian soldiers immediately disembarked into the port and hoisted the Italian flag over "Arafli" castle, inspite of the protests of the Egyptian Officer Bakhit Othman, the commander of the garrison, who was expelled along with his garrison on the following day. Land forces marched towards the

south of Massawa and occupied, in addition to Arafli, Harkiko, Zula, Madar, Ad, and the Hawakil islands.

On June 2nd, 1889, the Italian forces under Major de Mayo occupied the city of Keren and hosted the Italian flag over it. On August 3rd, 1889, Major de Mayo managed to occupy Asmara and later Kara on August 17th, 1889. He also occupied a large part of the provinces of Serae and Akkele Guazi.

On January 1st, 1890, king Humbert I, king of Italy, issued a royal Italian decree establishing the Italian colony of Eritrea after uniting the various provinces on the Red Sea and the highlands occupied by the Italian Army. The Italian government appointed general Oreiro as the first governor general of Eritrea.

The sporadic popular resistance, which lasted for fifteen years, was quelled with extreme ruthlessness under a martial law known as the law of "Pacification and Security". Italy filled the jails of Nakhra islands with the leaders of the national movement most of whom died of Malaria and malnutrition.

As for the Sudanese ports, Sawaken and Port Sudan, they fell under British occupation with the defeat of the Mahdi.

The attempts made by the fanatical Ethiopian emperor John IV to seize Massawa and Keren failed after Britain had abandoned its promise of these regions to him in return for his participation in its colonialist war against Mahdism in Sudan. John was killed at the hands of the Mahdis at the battle of Matma on the Sudanese borders in 1889 A.D.

Chapter VII

The Beja Kingdoms in the Middle Ages

Who are the Beja?

Historically, the Beja are a subdivision of the division of eastern Hamitic peoples who, more than 4000 years before the birth of Christ, settled in the region extending from Asswan in the south of Egypt up to outskirts of the Eritrean plateau and the plains of Massawa parallel to the coasts of the Red Sea and into the heart of the Sudan to Atbara parallel to the Nile. The name of Beja was mentioned in Homer's "Iliad" as they were also mentioned by the famous historian, Herodotus. The tablets of the ancient Egyptians, the books of the Romans, and the records of Ezana, the king of Aksum were not devoid of the mention of the name Beja. This is due to the wars and treaties that characterized their relations with their neighbours.

Cush, which the ancient Egyptians gave to the people that lived south of the Nile, included them. The Hebrews mentioned it in the Torah as Cush, one of the sons of Ham Ibn Noah. The Habashite inscriptions mentioned it in the form Cassu. The Cushites are among the elements which settled Habasha, and they speak special, non Semitic languages which researchers call Cushitic languages or Hamitic languages. They are one of the three main elements that make up the peoples of Habasha. Al Massoudi defines them in his book, as follows:

"The Beja are a people who settled between the Kalzam Sea (the Red Sea) and the Nile of Egypt and proliferated into divisions. They placed a king at their head, and there is gold metal and emerald in their land. Many Arabs from Rabeea' Ibn Nizar Ibn

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"The Beja are a people who settled between the Kalzam Sea (the Red Sea) and the Nile of Egypt and proliferated into divisions. They placed a king at their head, and there is gold metal and emerald in their land. Many Arabs from Rabea' Ibn Nizar Ibn Ma'ad Ibn Adnan settled in that land.

They intermarried with the Beja and the Beja were strengthened with this intermarrying with Rabea', and the latter were augmented with the Beja against enemies and neighbours from Khahtan and other from Muiz Ibn Nizar who inhabited those parts. Their leader in our time, 332 Higri, is Abu Marwan Bishr Ibn Ishaq, who is from Rabeia' and who rides at the head of three thousands from Rabeia' and its allies of Egypt and Yemen and thirty thousand mounted Beja lancers from the Hadariba, who, alone among the Beja, are Moslems, while the remaining Beja are pagans worshipping an idol of theirs".

Why did the Beja Waves surge towards the South?

It is a historical fact that the peoples of North East Africa, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somaliland and Kenya were formed by the continuous migrations of the Hamitic peoples or those Semitic peoples who followed them. Migration from north to south continued for thousands of years. This is basically due to the security factor and the economic factor.

Old ruins indicate that the Beja tribes used to raid the Nile Valley, pillage and loot and then return with their booty to their desert habitat. The Egyptians used to send detachments to that desert. Sinfiro was the first Egyptian king to subjugate the Beja tribes in 2720 B.C. He came back from his incursions with seven thousand captives of men and women and 200000 heads of livestock. For thousands of years the Pharohs ruthlessly exploited the Beja putting them to work gold mines each time they managed to subjugate them.

The Roman historian Viveskus describes how the Beja entered into an alliance with Queen Zennobia, the famous queen of Palmyra in Syria, against the Romans and invaded Egypt until they approached Suhaj, but the Roman commander, Bruce, defeated them and captured a great many of them. Wars went on indecisively between the Romans and the Beja until the Arabs conquered Egypt in the seventh century A.D.

The Beja entered into an alliance with the Romans against the Arabs. Their king, Masmah sent fifty thousand soldiers who fought the Arabs fiercely. But this southern Beja aid was not a vital factor in deciding the outcome of the battle; Amr Ibn Al-Ass managed to defeat the allied army on account of the reinforcements sent him by the Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, and with that he accomplished the occupation of Egypt.

The Nubian Christian kingdom had entered this alliance, which is why relations were not good between the Arab state of Egypt and the kingdoms of Nubia and Beja. These relations were characterized by wars and raids, which led to a surge of mass migrations of pastoral tribes southward. These tribes overran the cities of the Red Sea coasts, most important among which was Adulis, and finally settled on the Eritrean plateau and Habasha (Abyssinia) where they were assimilated into the Semitic cultural framework.

The Beja Kingdoms in Eritrea

In his discussions of the Beja invasion of Eritrea, British historian Ullendorff says in "The Ethiopians", P. 59: "In the eighth century A.D., the Beja tribes invaded Barakah Valley and the slopes of the Eritrean plateau. They subjugated parts of the province of Hamasein and the coastal plains at a time when the kingdom of Aksum had descended to its nadir. The graves of Beja tribes have been found in the heart of the Eritrean plateau, which shows deep penetration. The Beja managed to occupy the coasts of the Red Sea and settled in Massawa about 750 A.D. "

The Arab historian, Al Yaa'coubi, describes condition of the regions overrun by the Beja by saying: 'It seems that there were many kingdoms in the regions controlled by the Beja between the Nile and the Red Sea, each with its own king'.

Al Yaa'coubi mentions the names of places which were still standing, which proves the wideness of Beja influence. We learn from the Arab historian, Al Massoudi that the Beja used to mine gold from sites close to Massawa.

The Beja control over the Eritrean highlands only weakened after the migration of the Agau tribes from Lasta in the heart of the Ethiopian plateau, and after the rule of Habasha had passed from the Zague dynasty to the Solomonid dynasty in 1270 A.D., when the Belin tribes managed to impose their hegemony over the parts formerly controlled by the Beja tribes on the Eritrean plateau".

When Ibn Hawkal visited the lands of the Beja a thousand years ago, he found it divided into five kingdoms each with its own borders and authority. Three of these kingdoms lay within the present Eritrean borders, and two within the Sudanese borders. The three were:

- i) the kingdom of Baklein, which lay between the depression of Baraka and the coast of the Red Sea adjacent to the kingdom of Jarein;
- 2) the kingdom of Jarein on the southern coast up to Mt. Rora (Bakla) near Nakfa, the capital of the coast province, and
- 3) the kingdom of Kita which extends from Nakfa up to Samhar (Massawa).

As for the other two kingdoms, the kingdoms of Nakes and Bazein, they extended beyond Asswan southward to outskirts of the Eritrean boundaries, though the region did not know the partitions of the present borders which were erected at the end of the nineteenth century by the colonialist European powers.

Al Yaa'coubi mentioned around 891 A.D. that the biggest city in the Beja kingdoms was called Hagar. These kingdoms consisted of tribes and subdivisions of these tribes as it was

with the Arabs; of these are the Hadareb, the Hubab, Al-Amrar Mansa' etc.... In that land there was gold, jewels and emerald. They were Moslems who worked in prospecting.

Al Ya'acoubi proceeded to say, "The second kingdom in the land of the Beja is called Baklein, which includes many cities. Their religion is similar to that of the Magi. They call God almighty (The Highest Zabheer) and they call the devil (Hujaj Haraka). They pluck their beards and practice circumcision and their country is without rain.

The fourth kingdom is called Jarein and is ruled by a formidable king, whose kingdom extends between a place called Badei, which on the coast of the greater sea up to Baraka in the kingdom of Baklein and a place Al Dajaj. These people extract their incisors. The fifth kingdom is Kita'a or Kita extending from Badei to Feicon".

In the same book, Al Yaa'coubi says that Hager, which is a twenty five days' march away from the town of Alagi, is the Capital of the Beja Hadareb. Al Ya'acoubi adds that it was a post frequented by Moslem merchants. Al Makrizi stated that Hager is the residence of the Beja leader, and it is situated furthestmost in the island of the Beja.

The Italian historian, Count di Rossini, attempted to associate Hager with Abai Najran. The Swiss explorer, Munzinger, says that it lies on latitude 16, 37 North. If we compare what was said about this city in different sources, we will find that this is the city of Um Hager, which is situated on the river Sitit in Eritrea. It is also noted that on the far end of the Northern plateau of Rura Habab there is a place which is today called Hagar.

What Ibn Hawkal mentioned about the Beja province can be summed up in that cotton, wool and different kinds of livestock merchants used to come there on their way to the Nile or the Red Sea. He also described Kaa'lib and Baraka valley. He indicated the presence of animals such as elephants, giraffes, rhinoceros and other wild elephants.

He stated that the waters of the Nile flowed to the land of 'Dakkan' where corn and wheat were planted. The Baraka rift was inhabited by many tribes such as Bazein and Barey. He explained that Djin was a series of connected villages. In the middle of the valley there was Taflein, which also consisted of desert villages ruled over by a Moslem Arabic speaking king who was vassal of the ruler of the Christian 'Alwa'. (P. 94 first para)

This survey of the works of Al Yaa'coubi (end of the nineteenth century), Ibn Hawkal (end of the tenth century) and Al Dimashki (in the thirteenth century A.D.) reveals to us that though Ibn Hawkal presented detailed information of value and significance, all three concurred in that the word 'Medinah' (city actually means 'Mamlaka' (Kingdom).

The kingdom of Baklein, mentioned by Al Yaacoubi as the second kingdom, is actually the city of Taficin mentioned by the Damascene Ibn Hawkal. It is probable that this mistake which changed the /t/ into a /b/ and the /f/ into a /q/ is due to an error of transcription.

It is noteworthy that Ibn Hawkal explained that the land of Djin, which is presently known as the depression of Al Gash, consisted of a series of connected villages and was a land of agriculture and livestock. He stated that in the middle of the valley, that is, the side which lay between Djin river and the depression of Baraka, was the city of Taflein which also consisted of villages, only in these were desert villages. He added that they had a Moslem king and that there were many Moslems in region.

This means that the region also included the basin of Djin and its inhabitants who worked in agriculture, which shows that their life was settled and related to the land. As for the second part, it was inhabited by pastoral communities that lived in the desert; their animals were camels and cattle. The Djin basin communities raised thoroughbreds.

It is necessary that we mention that the region needs wide research, especially since this province was exposed to internal wars, tribal invasions of groups which came from Habasha, the north and the Arabian Peninsula across the Red Sea to the African coast, on which lies the region under study.

The Treaty of the Beja Leader with the Islamic State

The Beja kingdoms did not unite into a centralized kingdom due to the pastoral nature of the Beja, but the tribal bond was not completely severed. This is attested to by the pledge made by the Beja leader, Maknoun Ibn Abdul Aziz, in the name of all the Beja, defining their lands from Asswan to Massawa, the zone on which their kingdoms stood.

Arabic historical narratives relate that when the Beja attack intensified on the countryside of Egypt in the early third century (Higri), the 'Wali' of Asswan reported the matter to the prince of faithful, Al Mamun Ibn Haroun Al Rashid. The latter ordered Abdullah Ibn Al Jahm in 216 Higri' (831 A.D.) to fight them. The wars went on inconclusively until they made a truce and the second treaty with the Arab was drawn up. Here is its text:

"This is the address of Abdulla Ibn Al Jahm, the vassal of the prince of the Faithful, to Maknoun Ibn Abdul Aziz, the leader of the Beja in Asswan. We have agreed on what you offered me and the conditions in my address. That the plain of your land and its mountain from the border of Asswan in the land of Egypt, to the border between Dahlak and Bade (Massawa) be the property of Mamoun Abdullah ibn Haroun Al Rasheed, the Prince of the Faithful, may God give him greatness.

And that you and all the people of your land be his slaves, but you will remain as you are, king of the Beja, provided you pay him tribute every year, the same as your Beja forerunners did, which will be a hundred camels and three hundred dinars and this is up to the Prince of the Faithful

96-97 missing

to the Arkouit region in the east of Sudan.

The mountains of Hager are inhabited by Bert Awad Bani Amer, at it was there that the Bani Muala tribe sought refuge when it was discomfited by the attacks of the sons of Hasri, who overcame Bani Muala in these mountains and destroyed their power. The Beja, according to established norm, used to take half the produce from those Arabs who worked in metals. Of this they paid four hundred 'mithkals' of unprocessed gold dust.

Resumption of the War Between the Beja and the Abbasid State

In the history of Al Tabari, it is stated that the Beja left their country for the land of gold and jewels. There, they killed many Moslems who used to work in gold and gemmining and captured many of their women and children. They announced that the precious metals in their country were theirs and they would not allow Moslems into their country. This astonished all those Moslems who worked in the precious metal industry, so they left for fear of their lives.

Thus, the Sultan was deprived of his fifth of the gold and silver produce. The Abbasid Caliph, Al Mutawakkel, decided to fight the Beja, so he appointed one of his men, Mohammad Ibn Abdullah Al Kummi (from the Persian city of Al Khum) over the mining region in that land.

He wrote Anbasa Ibn Ishaq Alinbi, the commander of his forces in Egypt ordering him to give Al Kummi all the soldiers he needed. Anbasa marched to the land of the Beja and he was joined by all the people who worked in the precious metals industry and numerous volunteers. Altogether he had twenty thousand men of cavalry and infantry. Then he sent via the Kalzam Sea (The Red Sea) seven ships laden with flour, oil, dates, corn and barley and ordered the captains of the ships to meet him on the coast in the land of the Beja.

Al Kummi marched on till he passed the gold mine region. He was met by the king of the Beja, 'Ali Baba' or 'Albab' and his son. 'Feyas' at the head of a great army. The fighting went on for several days in the form of skirmishes. The Beja king kept the fighting on a small scale so that the war would linger and consume the enemy's provisions and fodder until they would starve enabling the Beja to capture them.

The provisions were exhausted, but the ships had arrived at a port called Sanja, probably between Sawaken and Massawa. The war went on inconclusively until the men under Al Kummi thought of attaching bells and chains to their horses' necks and attacked the camels which were terrified by the din. They fled with their riders into the mountain and the valleys until nightfall. This at the beginning of year 241 (Higri).

A few days later, the king's delegate came asking for a truce. Al Kummi, who had won the king's crown, vouched him safety and gave him back the land which he had occupied, provided he pay the tribute arrears. Al Kummi, accompanied by King Ali Baba, who appointed his son, Feyas, regent in his absence, returned to the Caliph Al Mutawakkel in the city of 'Sirra Man Ra'a' in Iraq.

Al Mutawakkel bestowed on him silken robes, recognized his complete control on the road between Egypt and Mecca and appointed Sa'ad Al Atiakhi as his representative in their land. He also put a black turban (the emblem of the Abbasids) on Ali Baba's head instead of the crown. Ali Baba was accompanied on his journey by seventy Beja youths armed with pikes and dressed in the costume which represented Beja chivalry. They became the center of general attention as they stood before the Caliph's palace. Ali Baba returned still adhering to his religion; he carried with him an idol in the likeness of a boy to which he prayed.

It is known that the Beja adhered to their paganism until later ages - they resisted Christianity while their neighbours in the kingdoms of Nubia, Meroe and Habasha embraced it. They resisted Islam until they embraced it through several centuries and in a slow process that lasted until the early fifteenth century A. D.

The Demoninance of the Balu Tribe Among the Beja

King Ali Baba belonged to the Bali tribe, which was called in Beja language (Baluib) and in Tigre (Balu). This tribe dominated the Beja for a long time. It was mentioned synonymously with the Beja in some old books and maps.

The Balu tribe claim an Abbasid origin, but Al Kalkashandi says in "Subh Al Aa'sha" that the Balia tribe were the descendants of Bali Ibn Al Hafi Ibn Quda 'Ibn Himyar. Quda' had been a king of Shahr land in Yemen and his people were called Baluie.

Georgy Zeidan says that Bali and Juheina were the western part of the Quda branches, and that they crossed the Red Sea and settled between the Egyptian countryside and Habasha where they propagated. When their reign was displaced by the Bishari, Amarar, Hudondoa, Abani Amer tribes, they established a kingdom in Massawa on the coast of Eritrea in 965 Higri (I 557 A.D.).

Ibn Khaldoun says: "They crossed to the western coast of the Red Sea, and spread between the Egyptian countryside and Habasha and dominated the other nations. They overwhelmed Nubia, undermined their unity and abolished their reign. They fought Habash (Abassinia) and defeated it and they also harassed the Egyptians". Actually, a great number of the inhabitants of the Eritrean highlands and the Habasha (Abyssinia) plateau claim kinship with the 'Balu Kalu-Talu" tribes.

Probably, the last two names are those of two small branches of the Balu tribes. According to local tradition, these were brother tribes. Local sources say that it was the Balu tribes which led the Beja advance on the Ethiopian plateau in the eighth century A.D.. Mr. Mouhammad Saleh Darar says in "The History of Sudan - The Red Sea - The Beja Province" that the Balu tribes were the first to bring Arabic into Africa.

When their linguistic Arabism was lost with the passage of time, they adopted Beja language. Shucair Beyk says in his history: "If you want to ask a Beja about his knowledge of Arabic, you should relate it to Bali and say: '/baluit tektin/' which means 'Do you know the language of Bali' meaning the Arabic language.

Bishr Ibn Marwan Ibn Ishaq of the Balu tribe, whose mother was from Rabeia, was one of a number of Beja princes and kings who were famous in the middle ages. The princes of this house extended their influence over the Beja tribes up to the boundaries of Egypt and Habasha (Abyssinia), though they were formally appointed by Egypt. The Prince of the Beja was surnamed the 'Hadaribite', which is the other name of the Balu. Letters sent him by the Sultanate Cabinets were addressed until the early nineteenth century as follows: "The Hadaribite Princely High Council".

Al Kalkashandi said in "Subh Al A'asha" that Prince Samra Ibn Malek was the ruler of the Beja in the reign of Al Nasser Kalawun in Egypt, and that he was a great prince ruling over numerous people, that he was of royal influence and used to invade Habasha and the peoples of the Sudan.

The origin of Djin Kingdom and its borders

The western coast of Eritrea was known as Djin provinces in the middle ages. This province included the Zhaheir region on the coast of the Red Sea and Al Gash basin. We do not know the origin of this name for certain. Some historians believe that it was the name of groups of people which inhabited the valley of this river, the proof of which is that the groups which migrated from it southward kept this name in its original form in Mali and Nigeria. Others say that it is the word used to designate the stone on which the vessel was placed to cook food. Still others say that it is derived from 'Daggan' which means 'hill' in the old Cushitic language.

The last probability should not be ruled out, since this word is still used to describe the village of 'Harkiko' near Massawa in a somewhat corrupted form, 'Daggan'. Local tradition attributes it to the Saho language, one of the languages belonging to the Cushitic (Hamitic) family, as the Addah tribe, a branch of the Hamitic tribes which controlled the Eritrean coastal area in the Middle Ages after the historical Beja sweep over the plains of Eritrea and the plateau of Habasha in 750 A.D.

This name is seen as /Dakkan/ in king Ezana's inscriptions with 'k' instead of a 'G'. These inscriptions, written by the king around the middle of the fourth century A.D. before embracing Christianity, say, according to Litman's translation, "King Ezana has sent three armies, one of which is the Daggan' army, to fight Saran, king of Afana, to punish him for attacking a trade caravan, killing its men and looting its goods". According to the Aksumite inscription, Daggan should be a kingdom neighbouring Aksum in one of the Eritrean provinces, which had entered into an alliance with the king of Aksum against a common enemy.

It established cities and promoted building in Al Gash basin. The upper part of the river was known as 'Ma'reb' at its source in the Tigre plateau and the southern Eritrean highlands, an indication of the historic relation between the region and its originally Semitic people, who had migrated from Yemen as the name goes back to the valley of Mareb and its famous dam. Its lower part was known as 'Djin' river. The later part is presently called Al Gash basin. The waters of the river are seasonal for three months annually when the waters reach the town of Kasla in the Sudan in July.

The region was dominated by the leadership of Al Kash, which started in the south at the entry of Setit river including a large part of eastern and western Eritrea. Because of the lack of original sources, it is not easy to form a clear picture of the eastern and western borders. The fact which we can deduce from the course of events in the region in the Islamic age is that it was exposed to continuous raids on account of the tribal advance which pushed the tribes from Habasha (Abyssinia) and Eritrea towards the basin of the middle Nile Valley as will be detailed later.

The province included two different zones; the first included Djin Valley, and the other included a semi-desert zone in the east extending from the river basin to the coast of the Red Sea, which was used for grazing during the rainy season, as is the case now.

It is clear that the human and natural environment of this basis has gone through consecutive developments, some of which are very remote in time such as the movements of the crust of the earth and the climatic changes that came upon the heels of these developments. It is believed that this river was in the relatively recent past one of the tributaries of the river of Atbara; the link between them was severed because the waters of

this river flow in a certain season each year, which exposed the course that connected them to the process of sedimentation caused by seasonal winds.

The human environment of this zone also suffered changes. The aboriginal inhabitants of AlGash basin were Nilotic races which had settled the region more than five thousand years before. With the coming of the nomadic Beja, the Nilotic inhabitants were pushed into the less fertile mountains, while the former controlled the plains and settled them. It is probable that the current Barya and Baza tribes are related by kinship to these ancient peoples. The tablet of Ezana, king of Aksum, in the fourth century A.D., which was found by the archeologist Anoltam, mentions the Barya, the Beja the Hasa and Makarto among the peoples who arose to defend the kingdom against the aggression of the Nubian kingdom.

Ezana also mentions that after his victory he made the seat of his kingdom opposite 'Alhager' city at the junction of the Tekzi and Sirra rivers. Historians are inclined to believe that it is the same Eritrean city of 'Um Hager' which lies on the river Sitit which shows that civilization was very old in the region.

By going back to what Ibn Hawkal wrote about Djin and comparing it with what was said in 'Al Ya'acoub's book, we find that Ibn Hawkal supported a lot of what was said by Al Ya'acoubi, As for differences, Ibn Hawkal mentioned 'Tafle'in' instead of 'Baklein', which has near the Barakah depression basin. It also seems that Djin basin described meticulously by Ibn Hawkal, was considered by Al Ya'acoubi to be part of 'Bakiein' or 'Taflein'. Ibn Hawkal did not refer to the kingdoms of Jarein, Kita' and Neteis. It seems that most or all of these kingdoms did not survive long, disappeared or were assimilated into more powerful tribal groups.

It is clear from what is mentioned by Ibn Hawkal that Djin or Dign and Taflein were actually two zones in one region under a Moslem king who was a vassal of the Christian king of Alwa in the Sudan. It is also clear that these zones, the zone of Djin, for agriculture and horse breeding, and Taflein, for grazing during the rainfall. This reveals the social divisions; the people of Djin were occupied with agriculture, and those who lived in Taflein were occupied with shepherding in the rainy season.

This shows that leadership was in the hands of the desert people in view of their military superiority and their use of horses while the people of Djin basin were on the level of vassals. These social divisions were later adopted by the Bani Amer tribe, but the vassal system was on **its** way to extinction. The people of the lower province of Djin basin were known as the Matateans, according to Plinny.

It is worth mention that the Djin basin region, currently Al Gash includes historical and linguistic features which have not been studied yet. Probably some of them indicate an extension of the Meroe civilisation, as Dr. Naom Shucair points out. As for the system of government, Ibn Hawkal shows that the ruling house in Djin basin developed into a hereditary sultanate, and this dynasty was able to adjust to the course of events. In one age we find it of vast influence and domain, and in another we find it has abandoned the field under pressure too strong to be coped with. (P. 105)

**What Was Stated in "The Picture of the Earth"
by Ibn Hawkal About the Kingdoms of the Djin Basin.**

After Al Kummi's invasion, ordered by the Caliph Al Mutwakkel, the power of the Al Alaki kingdom weakened and their migrations headed southward to the Baraka Valley. In his book, "The Picture of the Earth, Ibn Hwagal says: (starting P- 50): "After the year 245 (Higri), the borders of the Beja with Islam were clearly defined. Their land is between the Nile and the sea. Merchants trading in wool, cotton, slaves and camels reach them.

The furthest point they can reach in their land and within which they can conduct business is the vicinity of 'Ta'aleeb'. It is a place which has water in valleys near a mountain known as Malaheeb, and its biggest valley is 'Baraka valley'. Between 'Ta'aleeb' and Baraka there are woods in which the circumference of a tree possibly reaches 40 - 50 forty to fifty arm-lengths.

In the clearings between these trees live elephants, giraffes, lions, rhinoceros, tigers, leopards and other animals, moving about freely in the jungle and awaiting themselves of its water. Bordering on the eastern slopes of Malaheeb is a valley known as Siwat which abounds in water, trees and Zebras.

In the vicinity of Baraka are the Kedim tribal families, known to the Beja as Bajat. Beyond the sea coast there are many tribal families in the plain and the mountain. The Nubians and those of the Beja who are associated with them had occupied the valleys of this mountain which lay between the salty sea and Diggin (a corruption of Djin as we illustrated above). This is a land of agriculture to which flows the water of the Nile (I), and where corn and millet are planted.

(I) The Nile is used here to mean the river of Al Gash.

There are many tribes in the Baraka rift known as Bazein and Barya (I). They are many nations who fight hands, poisoned arrows and pikes. Among Barya customs are the extraction of incisors and the piercing of ears. They live in mountains and valleys and raise cattle and sheep and cultivate the land. The lands under the dominion of Islam between Baraka Valley and its mountain known as 'Malaheeb' are Qali'b, Anborit, the mountains of Drurit, with plentiful water and thriving towns.

Of the Beja tribes, Livanihah is outside the census and can not be counted because of their penetration into the heart of the desert. Barakah is close to Bade' (currently Massawa) and the name Bade' with a light /d/ is an old Beja name. Two thirds of Marahel are inhabited by the Qasa' tribal families, the greatest and the richest of the Beja tribal families. Beneath these are the Matites who are spread over Dahra, Sitrab, Gurkai Dehnet up to the mountain known as Mismar.

Next to Sawaken are tribal families known as Rakbat (2) and Hendiba, who are Hadaribites and their leader is Ishaq Ibn Bisher, the chief of Al Alaki, and some are under Kouk, the uncle of Abil Kassam Hussein Ibn Ali Ibn Bisher. Ishaq and Kouk are the leaders of all the Hadaribites.

(I) These tribes still exist in the same region and have the same names. Also the Barakah depression in western Eritrea still bears the same name .

(2) This tribe still exists and is spread in northern and western Eritrea.

The Hadaribite tribal families are Al Irika, Al Sutbarwa, Al Hutma, Al Ankira, Al Negrerwa, Al Gintika and Al Wakhika. Each family is divided into a hundred subdivisions

and each subdivision has one or two chiefs. All of these are nomads who do not have a city. In winter, they inhabit the coasts. In summer, they inhabit valleys with water and pastures.

In autumn, they live close to the Nile, leaving their land and heading westward to lands of few trees, plentiful water and plants. Their diet is meat and especially 'Laban'. The poor among them eat meat of animals such as deer, ostriches and zebras and they are nominally Moslems.

The rich among them abstain from eating game, from mingling with those who do, and from using the vessels of those who approve of it and practice it, so that they won't milk into them or drink out of them. Their language is common among the Beja and all of it is foreign. Some of them have a language of their own".

THE REVERSE MIGRATIONS FROM DJIN BASIN TO THE SUDAN

The Expansion of the Djin Kingdom into Walkite Province in Habasha

Alvarez in the sixteenth century A.D. and Paez in the seventeenth century A.D. relate almost identical narratives. Paez said that he had heard from an European monk that the Moslem inhabitants of Djin kingdom have a dark complexion, and mentioned that they were not vassals of Habasha, but have friendly relations with it. He added that the Djin people used to sell horses to Al Habasha. These horses, which were thoroughbreds, were raised in the Djin basin.

Geovani Ayapero wrote in his diary, as quoted by the Italian historian, Rossini, the following: "common narratives agree to that the Balu state ruled 'Mazja' and a part of Walkite province in Northern Habasha for a period of time that, after king Baeda Meryam, lasted for about a century. In the Waikite narratives we find a queen of beauty, charm and wealth. She was an invincible warrior and her name was 'Ja'wa'".

This is a historical character about whom we have a lot of information and documents relevant to her age. Some of these documents are written in Habashite, Arabic, and Portuguese. Suffices to say that she was the sister of Sultan Mukther and became regent on the throne after his death and the succession of his son Mukther junior.

Arab Fahih, in his book, "The conquest of Habasha", states that Imam Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim, surnamed the 'Gran' or the conqueror, pushed the negus who entered the province of Mazja and Walkite. Sultan Mukther sent a message to the Imam in which he said: "Help me before the infidels kill me". The Imam marched on the day he received the message to the land of Sultan Mukther, where the infidels had laid siege and had defeated the followers of Mukther.

Then he proceeded after the Negus accompanied by Hassan, Mukther's nephew, with twenty riders to show the Imam and his army the way. Three days later, Sultan Mukther died. His sister, Jawa, concealed his death from the soldiers for three days, and sent a message to the Imam informing him of what had happened. Her messenger reached the Imam while he was encamped beneath a mountain at a time of rest. The Imam beat the gongs, so the Moslems gathered and he informed them of the message. Sultan Mukther's son, Nafe, succeeded on the throne. As he was only a child, his aunt, Jawa, had been appointed regent in

her brother's lifetime. The Imam told Hassan Ibn Jawa to go back to Mazja to be with his mother and her nephews. So he bade him farewell and returned home.

These were the circumstances in which Iman Ahmad marched with his army in pursuit of the negus, and in which Sultan Mukther died in 1540 A.D.. This was also the year in which the Al Fung house transferred its seat of power from Lamul to its new capital, the city of Sehar, which had been chosen before that final move on account of its important strategic position on the caravan routes and river navigation.

It is noteworthy that Sultan Mukther had close relations with the middle Nile basin as he had many Nubians serving in his army.

Reverse Migrations

Migrations and reverse migrations of surging human waves coming from various directions have been a condition which has marked the land of Eritrea throughout the ages.

The dominant direction was the north from which waves of Beja surged whenever pressure was brought to bear on it by Egypt's rulers starting with the Pharohs, then the Greeks, the Romans and lastly the Arabs, or from the east from the Arabian Peninsula across the Red Sea.

But the migration which concerns us here is the migration from the Djin basin, i.e. the western zone of Eritrea, to the east of the Sudan or what we conventionally call reverse migration as the migration of the Beja usually took place from North to South and not the reverse.

This migration started at the time when the Zague dynasty in Habasha, which had kept on good terms with the Arab in general and the Moslems in particular, was displaced by the Solomonid dynasty, which was known for its hostility towards the Arabs and the Islamic kingdoms in Habasha since these were supporters of the Zague dynasty, about the middle of the thirteenth century.

The Djin basin, which was controlled by mixed Arab Beja tribes under the leadership of the Balu, was subjected by the new dynasty in Habasha, the Solomonid dynasty, to military pressures and raids that aimed at looting and pillaging. The result of this was the migration of sizable groups from the Djin basin in western Eritrea to the Blue Nile basin, then the spreading of these groups to other places in West Africa.

Some of these migrants from the Djin basin settled in the provinces of Mali in the region east of the Niger river-bend east of the town of Paria Ejara. This name was corrupted in Nigeria into Jicon; however these people transplanted many of their customs and traditions to the remote regions of West Africa.

Some historians are inclined to believe that the Djin migration to the east ante-ceded the thirteenth century. It is also believed that they had taken a migration route before that, and that advanced across the Savana to Chad and from there to Niger river province. Some of them had settled the basin of the Alikius River since the early eleventh century A.D.

It would not be peculiar to hear about migrations which came out of eastern Sudan and the Djin basin and headed westward during the turbulent period which the land of the kingdom of Meroe experienced in the third and fourth centuries A.D. this turbulence ended with the overthrow of the ruling dynasty in the third century and the ruin of the kingdom in the fourth century after the invasion led by Ezana, king of Aksum. (P. 110)

The Ethiopian Raids and the Incorporation of Djin into the Al Taka Province

However the Djin region, which comprises most of the present Eritrea, was in most periods of history exposed to invasions and conflicting migrations, especially from the rulers of Habasha, the kingdoms of Egypt or the Sudan. The looting and pillaging raids by the rulers of Ethiopia of the Djin basin continued for the last seven centuries.

Guzmatch Widbi, who was the ruler of the Tigrai province and maintained relations with France and Britain, was famous for launching large-scale raids on the Djin basin region. He made a large scale attack on the region of Bukus (Keren) and Al Habab in 1844, overran the regions of Barya and Baza in Al Kash basin, and returned with numerous spoils and hundreds of captives whom he enslaved.

The inhabitants of the Djin basin had no alternative but to appeal to the Khedieval government, which they had formerly resisted when it occupied Kassala in the Sudan, for aid. The government mobilized great forces to fight Widbi, defeated him and forced him back into his mountainous kingdom. Then it incorporated the Djin basin region into the Taka province in the Sudan.

Languages and Religions in the Djin Basin Region

During the Middle Ages (from the seventh century till the fifteenth century A.D.) Beja language was the dominant language in the Beja kingdoms in Eritrea and the Sudan. Naom Bashir, quoting from Lipsius, says that the Beja language is the language of the old Meroe kingdom. The German Dr. Hess, who resided in Egypt to study the Nubian language, confirms this statement. He says that the Beja language is the old Meroe language which is borne out by the fact that its words for such things as water, fire and earth are similar to such words in the history of Meroe.

The Balu tribes attempted to preserve their Arabic language among the Beja majority, but the features of their Arabic were suppressed and the only thing left of it was its attribution to them in 'Baluiba' which means Arabic.

The Beja is an unwritten language, but it is a language of oral poetry and it is interested in culture. Sometimes a poem reaches seventy verses. The most wonderful of all its poetry is the poetic competition which took place between two poets from the Al Ujeilat and the Beit Muala Hamasein tribes when they competed for the love of a beautiful girl. The first praised her left side beginning with the sole of her left foot and ending with the left tress of her hair. The Hamaseinean responded by beginning with her right foot and ending with the right tress of her hair. They were like two racehorses and matched each other in choosing beautiful descriptions.

The Arabic language remained the language of culture among these people till the present day, and they use it in correspondence and in recorded matter. The Beja language or the Hadaribite has shrunk within narrow limits and is only used by part of the Bani Amer tribe in the lower Baraka region close to the Sudan. It has been replaced by Tigre, which is also unwritten, of Semitic origin and similar to Tigrinya, which is dominant in the Eritrean highlands and written in old Habashite letters of Himyaritic origin.

Most of the inhabitants of the western, northern and eastern regions of Eritrea speak Tigre. This is due to the cultural superiority of Semitic languages to Cushitic (Hamitic) languages, including the Beja language.

The Barya and Baza tribes have preserved until the present their African dialects, which resemble the dialects of some of the tribes of southern Sudan, the original homeland of these tribes.

The Beja were pagans. The Romans recognized their priests and their temples in the treaty which the former made with the Roman vice-consul in Egypt in 284 A.D. The Beja tribes kept their paganism and did not give it up as the Egyptians and the Romans, who renounced idolatry in submission to the will of Emperor Justinian in 556 A.D., who resorted to repression and cruelty. The Egyptians were terrified by him into giving up their pagan religions.

While the Beja, toughened by their hard pastoral life, neither heeded his calls nor submitted to his threats, and adhered to their paganism. Christianity spread among them only within narrow limits, and Islam spread very slowly among them until it enveloped them. Many pagan practices survived among the Beja peoples such as abstention from fighting on Tuesdays, belief in priests and magic.

The Beja kingdoms in Eritrea were Islamic during the Middle Ages, though there were Christian and Pagan minorities. For instance, the Barya and Baza tribes were only converted to Islam after the middle of the nineteenth century at the hands of Sayyed Mohammad Othman Merghani the founder of the Khitmi rite, who had come from Higaz via Egypt. These tribes had been pagan before him.

He also spread Islam among the Belin, Al Maria, Albeit Juck on the Golan highlands. Merghani also converted the Add Sheikh tribe and Christian tribes in the north such as Al Miraym (the gift of Miryam), Ad Hibbits (the gift of Jesus) and Ad Tiklis (the plant of Jesus). Islam was also embraced by the great majority of the Mansa tribes in the early twentieth century. They had professed Christianity till about the middle of nineteenth century.

The traditional weapon of the Beja were seven lances, so called because the blade was three arm-lengths long and the shaft four arm-lengths. Their shields were made of buffalo hide and, in the case of Dahlaki spears (related to Dahlak island), of the skin of sea animals. Their bows were Arab bows made of Cedar wood. With these bows they shot poisoned arrows. As for swords, the use of which was widespread, especially among Bani Amer and Al Habab, they did not appear in the hands of the Beja until after the Crusades in 1182.

Arab Immigrations to the Land of the Beja: Reasons and Consequences:

The Arabs have tended since ancient times to immigrate to the coasts of Eastern Africa and to trade with them. We can divide this African coast from the point of view of local environment into four main zones which are:

First, the region situated between Eithab in the Sudan and the Bab el Mendeb strait, which includes all the Eritrean coast. Second, the Gulf of Aden zone, which was also known as Zeila Gulf. Third, the coast of Somaliland, which was known as the Banader coast or Al Ajam land. Fourth, the coast of Negro land or the coast of Azania which ends in the south in Souvala, in current Mozambique.

It is known that these regions, large as they were, were open to the passage of caravans and the migration from the south of Egypt to the borders of Kenya. Moreover, Arab ships linked them to the remote part of Africa. Al Shater Busayli Abdul Jalil in his work "The History and Civilization of Eastern and Central Sudan" excepts Habasha from this opening up and says; " All these regions (he means North East Africa) were open to the passage of traffic except Habasha whose 'negi' controlled a region stretching from south of lake Tana to the borders of Eritrea.

This kingdom the borders of which were not clear or defined then included the coastal region (Eritrea). Its counterpart in the areas linking it with the middle basin of the Nile Valley (northern and eastern Sudan) was a number of local leaderships and chiefdoms of inhabitants who differed from area to another. They were also different in their social and economic systems. The peculiar position of each group was influenced to a certain extent by the piece of land it inhabited".

If we go back to developments in the economic life in the Mediterranean basin and its western coasts, we find that these developments started in a very early age. This is borne out by the fact that Babylonian sources that date back to almost 2700 B.C. point to the trade of incense, spices and other raw materials with the land of 'Punt' which included, among others, the stretch between Eithab and the Banader land (the African horn).

These sources mentioned that it was a thriving trade which brought these goods to the land of the Arabian Gulf and the southern Peninsula. Moreover, the Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut (1503 - 1482 B.C.) built a commercial fleet and sailed with it to the land of 'Punt' to bring incense, spices and other goods. What intrigues one in the inscriptions left by Hatshepsut is that they indicate that the land of 'Punt' had not been known before.

Historians are inclined to believe that trade had been conducted before that time by means of middle men who were probably those Beja who used to cross the desert on their camels. Silver says that Queen Hatshepsut took this trade away from those middle men and put it in the hands of the state which could afford to send ships to the African horn.

Hiram, the king of Tyre, sent his ships to the land of 'Punt' to bring him gold and spices as Solomon the Wise did. If the remote maritime nations sought this land in search of fortunes, it was only befitting of the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula that they enter the melee of immigration and commerce, since it had been second nature to them to adventure since the time when the civilisation of Saba, Maean and Himyar was prosperous, a fact proven by history.

Arab migrations had followed one upon the other since antiquity towards the neighbouring African coasts. Mixed peoples were formed as a result of these migrations, as we will detail later.

The region we are discussing now stretches from the south of Asswan to the Mersa Bade, including the ports of Eithab, Sawaken, Mersa Arus and other such Red Sea inlets through which the Arab migrations entered.

As we pointed out elsewhere, groups of Arabs came to the land of Beja in the sixth century A.D., i.e. before the emergence of Islam. These groups included clans from Bani Himyar known as the Bali or Balu tribe. It is believed that these Beja tribes, amid which the Balu tribes settled were in a state of chaos because they had met with a crushing defeat inflicted upon them by Silco, the Nubian king who had driven them out of the Nile Valley basin south of the first cataract. Those Beja entered the desert and returned to a bedouin, pastoral way of life. Their military prowess had been crushed and they turned to tribal warfare.

The Balu came in this period of internal turmoil, so the Beja did not do them any harm. Rather, the newcomers were able to stay and coexist peacefully with the Beja. By this means, their offspring attained sovereignty as the accession to power was matrilineal. With time, a crossbred aristocratic class was formed whose fathers were Arabs and whose mothers were Beja.

Of the Arabs groups that came to the land of the Beja, Rabi'a was the most desirous of procuring precious metals. They were accompanied by groups of Kahtari and Guhaini tribes. The leader of Rabi'a in the tenth century A. D., Abu Marwan Bashir Ibn Ishaq, achieved considerable fame.

A group of Bani Younis had entered the Eithab region then the region of Djin in western Eritrea, where they had settled before the arrival of the Rabia groups. It seems that the Bani Younis group had come from the Arabian Peninsula to the Beja coast across the Red Sea.

After a short time, they were engaged in fighting on account of exploiting the land of the metals. The Bani Rabia group were forced to retrace their route to Hijaz. This was an event which was repeated throughout history. The Rashaida were, the last to migrate from the coast of Hijaz to eastern Sudan and eastern Eritrea.

The conspicuous phenomenon about Arab immigration is that it was oriented towards working the mines in the land of the Beja from south of Asswan to the northern Eritrean plateau. Few of them gave cultural and religious affairs any attention. They used to enter into conflicts and wars with the natives because of their tendency for forceful exploitation of labour. However, a number of scholars settled and established educational centres which played an important role in spreading Islamic religion and the Arabic language among the Beja.

The reasons for Arab migration were not only commercial or in quest of wealth; there were other reasons for migration which were due to political factors. The entry of the Arabs into the Beja province was accentuated in the ninth century A.D., especially after the Caliph Al Mutassem (833 - 842 A.D.) employed numerous mercenaries in his army, dispensed with

the services of the Arabs in his 'diwan' (abinet) and order the withholding of payment of bounty to them.

Things got worse for the Arabs of Egypt after the deposal of A'ubasa Ibn Ishaq, the last Arab viceroy of Egypt, in the reign of the Caliph Al Mutawakkel 847 – 861). The Arabs were forced to leave northern and central Egypt for the countryside, and some of them headed for the basin of the Middle Nile Valley and the provinces presently known as the Sudan, Eritrea, and Habasha.

After the struggle between the Omayyads and Alawides for the Caliphate and for power, the Arab tribes apposed to the Omayyads realized that they had no chance for a free, dignified life under the Omayyads. The Alawids also realized that any further attempt after the Battle of Karbala, at which the Imam Hussein Ibn Ali was martyred, would only bring more ruin up on them. So they started spreading in the land and resorting to concealment and escape.

Some of them went where the Omayyad Caliphs couldn't reach them, so they headed, individually and in groups for the eastern coasts of Africa followed by the soldiers of the Omayyad state whose sole concern was to watch them closely, the which to carry out effectively, they occupied the Dahlak archipelago, racing Adulis on the Eritrean coast.

Yazeed Ibn Muawiya had hardly been relieved of the Shi'ite revolution when Hijaz revolted. The violence with which he confronted the new revolution was in no way less than the violence with which he confronted the first one. He sent them Aqaba Ibn Nafe', who did to Medina what no Moslem would do he killed most of the remaining 'Muhajireen' (immigrants) and Al Ansar (the supporters). The holiness of Al Medina was violated; it was looted and, according to Al Tabari, a thousand virgins were raped in it. The enmity of Hijaz and Iraq was awash in blood.

Hijaz did not let oppression be; it revolted for a second time and pledged allegiance to Abdullah Ibn Al Zubare. His revolt in Higaz lasted for nine years, during which he fought the Omayyads and beat them, until he was besieged, and later killed in Mecca by Al Hajjag Ibn Yousef Al Thagafi. It is no wonder then that the people of Hijaz fled for life to remote countries. Higaz only got neglect from the Omayyads, who only sent it tyrants who humiliated the people and treated them brutally.

In the year I32 (Higri), it was the turn of the Omayyads to get a taste of their own medicine. Marwan II fled to Egypt, which he entered in disguise. He found that the people of the eastern basin had already joined the Abbasids. So he reverted to Geeza accompanied by an entourage of his princes and relatives. He was met by Saleh Ibn Ali, the Abbasid viceroy in Egypt who fought him and defeated him. He and those with him fled to the countryside and kept on fleeing southward until they reached Nubia in the Sudan, where some of them settled. Others proceeded to Bade, (Massawa) the Dahlak islands, Hawakel and Bahdur where the ruins of their palaces and cemeteries still stand.

The struggle went on between the Abbasids and the Alawids throughout the Abbasid age. Whenever an Abbasid acceded to power, an Alawid would rival him and claim it for himself; he would fight and be killed. These successive revolutions which occupied Islamic history until the fourth century (Higri) were an inexhaustible source of defeated groups and individuals who migrated to remote countries. North East Africa, i.e. the Sudan, Eritrea,

Habasha and Somaliland, was, in view of geographical position close to the Arabian Peninsula, a refuge for these.

The Eritrean Tribes' Claim of Arab Ancestry

The Arab element melted into the Beja inhabitants and others, but it left behind a phenomenon which still survives. In spite of the fact that the Eritrean tribes have kept their old Semitic, and Hamitic-Cushitic dialects, Tigre, Tigrinya, Hadaribi, Sihawi, Danakili, etc... etc... they have maintained their claim of belonging to those Arab immigrant origins.

The Bani Amer and Balu tribes claim Abbasid ancestry. The Al Habab tribes claim ancestry in the differences clans of Qureish. Also, the Saho in the east the Assawirta claim the ancestry of Ali Ibn Abi Taleb. The Menfri claim the ancestry of Omar Ibn Al Khattab. The Maria tribe, together with the Sna'd Kili in the Eritrean highlands, the Tarua, Hazu and Manza' tribes claim Omayyad ancestry.

Their local traditions relate that their immigrant ancestor married several girls from a number of tribes, and their aforementioned clans were born of these girls. The name is derived from his two sons, Mario and Maicho, who were born of a Christian mother on the plateau of Eritrea.

Whatever may be said of the authenticity of these claims, they confirm the wide Arab migrations, the reasons for which we have indicated, and the historical inter-marriages which occurred through successive generations.

Spencer Trimingham says in "Islam in Ethiopia" that the mere residence of an Arab merchant or religious scholar among a tribe and the spread of Islam among them through him was enough to make the tribe with the passage of time claim the ancestry of this Arab, out of their belief that this enhanced their position. This phenomenon is common in many Moslem countries. This is especially the case in East Africa, where historic intermarried between Arab immigrants and their Hamitic cousins are the dominant factor in the region. (P. 118)

Chapter VIII

The Relation of Al Fung House with Eritrea

The Original Homeland of Al Fung House

The subject of the origins of Al Fung House which assumed power in the Blue Nile Basin in the sixteenth century is still open to controversy and argument. Some say that the Sultanic house goes back in origin to Al Shalk tribe or that they came from the west, from western Sudan. But the Egyptian historian, Al Shater Bussayli Abdul Jalil favours the probability that the Al Fung came from Eritrea, and says that the ruling house exercised its authority for a while on the south western part of Eritrea, which was before it moved to the Blue Nile basin and made the town of Senar its capital. It is believed that the transfer of the Sultanate to the Blue Nile basin is due to the pressure of war and turbulence which were dominant in Habasha at the time and which began to spread to the northern region. Thus, these circumstances were threatening the region occupied by the Sultanate in south western Eritrea. We should not fail to mention also the Gala raids on the region between Ghojam and the province of Harar and the presence of the Ottomans on the coast which they occupied Massawa. They maintained relations with the Tigre ruler and provided him with aid in his revolt against the King of Habasha until 1580 A.D.

It seems that the sultanate established by Al Fung house arose in Eritrea at a time which was probably in the fourteenth century A.D. or a little before. They made an agreement with the leader of the Al Abidlab who controlled the commercial routes between the Nile valley and the adjacent provinces. He made the town of Qura between Al Khartum and Shindi, his capital. It seems

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It seems that according to this agreement the Sultan extended his influence over the region from the Blue Nile basin, which begins south of Suba, and it includes 'Al Bitana' land, the land around it, and the southern basin of the Blue Nile. It is assumed that this was accomplished with the westward migration of the king of Alwa after Al Fung overthrew his kingdom and devastated his capital, Suba, the destruction of which became proverbial.

The capital of this house in Eritrea was known as Lamul or, locally, as Lamlam. Some sources refer to it as Loul. If we take into consideration the contents of the inscriptions on the Sultan's gong, which was in his acquisition when he exercised his authority in Lamul, we find an indication that his great grandfather had come from 'Loul' to Lamul which lies in Eritrea about the fourteenth century A.D. These inscriptions affected a widening of the study and research of the province which comprises the Nile Valley basin.

Research stopped at the Lamu region, which lies on the Indian Ocean south of the Kenyan. Somaliland borders. Historians, of whom Sir Hery Welcome in one, supported by the contents of the 'Negroes' manuscript as explicated by Chiroli in 1957, that the contents of the inscription's on the Sultan Amara's gong about his grandfather, who came from Loul, applies to this site, and indicates the arrival of the Al Fung house in the region of the eastern African coast, having come from their first homeland in the Shamayel valley in Oman, in the south eastern Arabian Peninsula. This manuscript indicates that Al Fung house used to fight wars between Berbera and Sawaken (The Eritrean coast).

War, in this context, according to some historians, was piracy operations in this region. Some sources also indicate that a woman divorced by her husband can get married forthwith without going through the wait imposed by Islamic law. This was a controversial subject in Eritrea and the Sudan in the Middle Ages. It was discovered that custom and tradition permitted a divorced woman to marry another man right away. Dispensing with the wait is due to the fact that the Lamu people, who were seafaring people, couldn't afford to wait because of their travel.

Thus, customs, traditions and social systems indicate the presence of relations and links among the two societies on the Negro coast and Lamu and the society in which Al Fung Sultanate arose in Eritrea and the Sudan. Some sources point out that the relation between Al Fung Sultanic house and the Omayyads was through inter-marriage between Al Fung and the Omayyads who controlled the Lamu region and the eastern coast of Africa.

The Transfer of Al Fung House to Dankali and Barakah in Eritrea

We have discussed the first stage of Al Fung history, which lasted from their coming from the Arabian Peninsula and their settling the Lamu region in East Africa in the eighth century A.D. till the tenth century A.D. As for the second stage which starts about 951 A.D. and ends about 1250 A.D. it is wrapped in mystery. It is the stage in which the migration of Al Fung house from 'Lamu' to Eritrea was accomplished.

Researchers have not been able to define the form assumed by this migration, which was preceded by seasonal journeys towards the north for one purpose or another. This is confirmed by the 'Negroes' manuscript published by Chirolu, who says that the Arabs who inhabited the land of the 'negroes' coast used to come during war from Sawaken to Dahlak island by sea and by land.

If we tie these journeys undertaken by the Arabs, among whom were naturally groups of Al Fung, to the cubical graves of Al Fung kings in Danakil treated by Mary Edith Potoy, and copied from whom by Camarair in his book about the Red Sea and Habasha, we find that Al Fung had come to the northern Danakil region. We can assume that they had landed at one of the ports north of Assab.

Furthermore, it is probable that they had landed at one of two ports, Ad or Ma'dar. This assumption is based on the presence of numerous cubical graves in the depression of Baraka in Eritrea which resemble those found in the Dankalia region. It seems that Al Fung moved from their homeland in Lamua on commercial journeys or to escape local troubles caused by the incursions of African tribes from time to time. An alternative reason for this migration was the fall of the Omayyad house and the accession of the Abbasids, because Al Fung were kins of the Omayyads.

It is believed that the relations between Al Fung house and the Sultanic house of Djin which existed in the south and west of Eritrea and stretched to north of Kassala in the Republic of the Sudan started after the arrival of Al Fung on the coast of Northern Dankalia, in the south of Eritrea.

Conditions in Eritrea and northern Habasha were in a state of turmoil because of the tribal advance from various directions. Because of the scarcity of historical sources, researchers can not pin down the moves of Al Fung house from Dankalia to western Eritrea, and the relation of this house with the Djin Sultanate which the former represented in the sixteenth century. It is known that the expanse of the Djin Sultanate shrank under the pressure of the Hodondua, a branch of the Beja, and it was forced to recede in the Baraka basin in the west of Eritrea.

We should not fail to mention that during the second stage an important event took place in Habasha, namely the usurpation of power by the Zague dynasty. The Solomonid house did not manage to regain power until the beginning of the third stage of Al Fung history, which begins in 1251 A.D. and ends in 1550 A.D. It is the period in which Al Fung lived in Eritrea. This development increased commotion and turbulence. The Solomonid house claimed that the Arabs had supported the Zague dynasty in achieving power as we mentioned in our discussion of reverse migrations.

The Relation Between Al Fung and The Sultanate of A'nsaba

The relation of Al Fung house with the house of Djin or the A'nsaba's sultanate, (in relation to Wadi A'nsaba, which forms a tributary of Baraka river and passes through the region of Keren), which is corrupted by Arab historians into Ansab, was augmented with what local sources mention of the inevitability of the marriage of the Sultan of Al Fung into this house.

It is clear from this tie between the two houses that the Djin house was in power and exercising its authority when the house of Al Fung arrived in Eritrea.

There is a statement in "Historica Aethiopica" by H. Ludelf, Frankfurt 1681, that the house of Al Fung owed alliance to the negus. What we know is that the negus occasionally claimed the subordination of the Sultan of Al Fung. However, such a statement needs evidence from historical sources. It is known the source of Ludelf statement was Ethiopian.

The period of ambiguity which started from the last period of the first stage and lasted throughout the second period to the end of the first two hundred years of the third stage, that is, 1450 A.D., when we find a thread of light which reveals that there was a Sultan from the house of Al Fung, the father of Sultan Amara. This shows that sultan ruled in the region situated in south western Eritrea. His capital was 'Lamoul', to which an 'l' had been added at the end.

Sometimes, the initial 'l' and 'a' are dropped making it Moul. This view is supported by the inscription found on the gong of Sultan Amara, the son of Sultan Adlan. In the light of the information contained in the inscriptions on Sultan Amara's gong, which is considered the strongest material evidence for the fact that Sultan Adlan, and his son, Amara, after him were in power, since this gong is one of the emblems of authority, and in the light of the contents of the journal of David Rubini, who visited Sultan Amara at his capital, Lamoul, in 1521 A.D., in addition to what was recorded in the diary of Luigi Telimenti, published by the Italian historian, Count Rossini, together with a verification and a perusal of the contents of local manuscripts, we can build a structure of the history of this third stage period which began around the middle of the fifteenth century.

The first of these points is what is stated in local Eritrean manuscripts which mention that it was inevitable that the sultan of Al Fung marry into the house of Ansaba which ruled over the region of Ansaba and was also known as the house of 'Ain Shams'. In what was related by narrators we find that there was an Islamic kingdom at the time in western Eritrea. It is probable its origins go back to house which had been ruling the Djin province since the second century (Higri) or the ninth century A.D. approximately. The dominion of the house of Al Fung to Eithab in the north, which is situated north of the current Port Sudan.

As for the reference to the house of 'Ain Shams' or the Sultanate of Ansaba, it is clarified further by local tradition which says that when the Sultan was elected to the throne, he had to go into seclusion with his wife for seven days during which food was served them by an old man or a boy who was not of age. This is one of the inherited Pharonic traditions which sanctify kings and raise them to the level of the gods. This custom was widespread in the Nile basin in the Sudan. At the end of the seven days in which care was taken that the king be not

exposed to moonlight, the sultan went out to the river, immersed himself in its water and then left accompanied by a soldier to perform coronation rites.

What information is available to us is to the effect that the sultan of the house of Djin in the first half of the sixteenth century was Sultan Mukther, who died in the fifth decade of that century. The sister of Sultan Mukther, Jawa, became regent over his son. It is believed that Queen Jawa, who ruled in 1609 A. D., and queen Fatima, who assumed the reign in 1619 A.D., were from the region of the Djin basin (Al Gash). It is probable that these two queens were from the house of Sultan Mukther, after the expanse under Al Fung Dominion had shrunken.

Immanuel Di Almida, in his book on the history of Ethiopia, which he wrote in the sixteenth century, says that the River Takzi crosses the Walkite province and flows to Djin kingdom inhabited by Moslems known as the Balu.

The shrinking of this Sultanate was on account of troubles and local wars which plagued the province. They started with the ruin of Eithab before the end of the first half of the fifteenth century as a result of looting the caravans which bore gifts from the Sultan of Hijaz. The Balu Sultan of Djin in the west clashed with the Hodondua who out-powered him, so he withdrew to his base west of Eritrea. The Hodondua then became the most powerful Beja tribe.

The Transfer of the Sultanate to Senar

Later in the sixteenth century, the region of Eritrea and Habasha witnessed struggles and devastating wars. There was a huge tribal advance, competition and a struggle between the tribal groups, which ended in the early sixteenth century with the emergence of the Hodondua group and its expulsion of the Balu group which controlled a large region which extended North to Eithab and South to Walkite inside Habasha.

Then the northern and western regions of Habasha were affected with the wars of Imam Ahmad Ibn Ibraheem, surnamed the Gran, and the king of Habasha, which reached its climax in the fifth decade of the sixteenth century. The last stage was in the northern region of Habasha and the coast of the Red Sea with the entry of the influence of both Portugal and the Turks and their struggle for commerce and centers of influence. In that period the vanguard of European influence on the west coast of Africa started to advance towards the east.

It was necessary in view of the nature of these successive developments within a short period of time, that the ruling house seek a refuge in which to pursue its activity which basically depended on commerce across the basin of the Middle Nile. This trade was conducted at certain centers and transported by means of river navigation or caravans to the farthest north east and various destinations.

There are no texts or local historic origins which indicate clearly the date in which the ruling house was transferred from its capital, Lamoul, on the banks of river Setit near the current city of Um Hagar to 'Senar' on the banks of the Blue Nile in the Sudan, except for local narratives which have reached us by more than one means, including the one known as the 'Katib Al Shuna' manuscript, which indicates the founding of the sultanate after an alliance was formed between the Abidlab tribe and the house of al Fung which put an end to the kingdom of Alwa and destroyed its capital, Suba.

The well-known Jewish traveller, Rubin, who visited AlFung in 1522, says that he spent a period of time as a guest of Sultan Amara in his capital, Lamoul, situated on the Nile, (what is meant here is the river Sinit) and describes him as a black king ruling over blacks and whites. We gather from Rubin's journey that the sultanate covered the 'Bitana' land and the Blue Nile, as Rubin reached Senar, before its king's capital was moved there. Rubin reached Lamoul with a caravan of three thousand camels laden with goods, which moved from Massawa in the south, which shows the flourishing of trade in that period.

The Expansion of Al Fung Kingdom into Western Eritrea to Massawa

Once, Sultan Amrarah Dankas, the founder of Al Fung Kingdom, consolidated his kingdom in the Sudan, he turned to extending the influence of the kingdom on the leaderships of chiefdoms which existed in Northern Sudan up to the third cataract and also to eastern Sudan. Then the leader of Al Fung, who was from the Abidlab, proceeded towards western and northern Eritrea until he subjugated the Beja provinces and its kingdoms, the Djin kingdom and others, to the 'Blue Sultanate'. Al Fung conquests continued towards the south until it reached Massawa.

However, the sultan of al Fung did not interfere in the internal affairs of the Sheikhdoms which were subordinate to him, but he settled for his symbolic leadership which did not impel the allied leaderships to send their soldiers or put their resources under the disposal of the Sultan in case of war. The Sultan settled for a share of the duties which were levied on transit trade.

The Sheikhdoms of Bani Amer and Al Habab preserved autonomy besides nominal submission to Al Fung Sultanate. The Sheikh of the Bani Amer tribes, Sheikh Jama' Ibn Ujeil Ibn Ali Muhammad Darar, and the chief of the sheikhs of the Bani Amer tribes, Sheikh Hamad Idriss Al Hasiri, visited Senar to proffer obedience and to undertake collection of the charity taxes from the tribes which were under them. These taxes were annually delivered to the delegate of the king of Senar. The delegate also bore honorary gifts of robes and swords from the king to the Sheikhs, the headmen and the chiefs.

The Sultan of Senar used to inaugurate the tribal chiefs and the leaders of the Provinces into authority by placing on the chief's head a cap with two horns made of leather and stuffed with cotton called (Um Al Karina) and a piece of brass called 'Al Nakkara' (the gong).

These remained an emblem of the authority of 'Daklal', the Sultan of Bani Amer in Eritrea until the time of the British occupation when the British authorities abolished the Sultan of Daklal and the tribes were regrouped on the basis of their own guardianships directly connected to the authority of the state.

Al Nakkara is a brass drum which is beaten on the declaration of war or other official occasions. The old ruling families such as the Daklal family in Baraka, the Cantibay family in Al Habab and Al Naeb family in Massawa still preserve this historical gong.

The Sultan of Al Fung maintained close relations with the Turkish Pasha in the ports of the Red Sea (Sawaken and Massawa), who was considered the commercial representative of

the Sultanate. He also maintained foreign relations with Yemen, from which the sultanate imported swords and armour, and with India and other countries in the Far East.

The System of Government in Al Fung Sultanate

It is clear from the history of Al Fung Sultanate that absolute decentralisation was the characteristic of government in various lands, which was practiced according to local customs and traditions. The union of the provincial groups led by the Sultan of Senar was characterized by the traditions of "The Mercantile Republic" of the mode -that was conventional in the Arabian Peninsula with the adjustments that were made on it which were derived from the sources of the migrations, before the transfer of the sultanic house to the Blue Nile basin.

The traditions peculiar to the mercantile republic linked the economically oriented groups which devoted great attention to investing funds in certain regions. It was natural that their influence extend to the regions which comprised the trade routes between the stock piles of goods and the marketing centres to secure transport, and later to caravans or ships.

Thus, relations were developed along the length of the commercial route between Senar and Massawa, Cities such as Agordat, Barentu and Guluju had originally been caravan posts. Senar was known throughout most of Eritrea on account of what the commercial activity involved of imports and exports. Many names such as the 'Senar cap' have survived as a symbol of that relation between Eritrea and Senar.

In the Sheikdoms the leaders of which entered into an alliance with Senar, whether in Eritrea or Eastern and Northern Sudan, administrative bodies were confined within the scope of guaranteeing commercial interest only. Everything else was left on its own to adopt itself to external conditions. This is why we find that the authorities of Senar, the leader of the mercantile republic, did not attempt to organize a government apparatus to cover all aspects of activity. The Senar dynasty sufficed itself with the application of the regulations of the mercantile republic, which were so rigid as to stifle individual activity.

It is noteworthy that the Senar dynasty did not account for local considerations in applying its commercial regulations, nor did it take into consideration external competition which acquired a clearer form with the Portuguese and the European merchants before them, but kept a monotony of regulations. Moreover, it did not take into account the development of local economic potentialities, agricultural and otherwise, but left the country to its old way of life.

The authority neglected the establishment of a centralized body to coordinate the efforts of the different groups in the sheikdoms towards a common objective. Anything that did not have a bearing on economic interests was left in the domain of the old traditions which governed the distribution of land, making the leader owner of the land.

The relation between the beneficiary and the leader was not based on allegiance. The leader or the sultan relied on his army which was made up of slaves and mercenaries. The Sheikh had the right to declare war on neighbouring leaderships without consulting the sultan. This made the people of the region live in constant wars, especially between Bani Amer and the Hodondua over pasture and water.

Thus, the tool of government was subject to two conflicting systems vis a vis the society; the first was the system of mercantile republic aiming at exploiting commerce and caravan routes, and the second the eastern feudal system which allocated the land to the inhabitants to work it while the leader had a portion of the produce. So it was not easy to reconcile these two systems in an affective rule, unless the mercantile republic and eastern feudalism were reorganized in such a way as to guarantee the natural development of a nationalism in which the various tribal groups met.

But as the leaderships neglected the organisation of a government propitions to the creation of a new general way life, supported by free unhindered competition, the power of these leaderships and their weakness, their decline and fall were subject to external economic factors, insofar as these factors were strong or weak. This was one of the reasons of the decline and disarray of the sultanate, because it deprived society from exercising the least of its rights.

In the first two centuries, the sultanate was ruled by descendants of Sultan Amara, the founder of the Senar dynasty in its Blue Nile basin capital. After the end of King Awansa's reign about 1719 A.D., the house of 'Ain Shams', which ruled the region of Ansaba in Eritrea in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and which was related by kinship and marriage to the house of Al Fung, acceded to power. Then the Hameg, who were a negro element from the Al Ruseires region and who had assumed the ministry, wrested power from them and kept it until, in a condition of weakness and deterioration, they were destroyed by Muhammad Ah Pasha when he conquered the Sudan in 1820 A.D.

The War Between Al Fung House and the Djin House

It seems that Al Fung were only able to subjugate the Djin kingdom after long wars, Historians are inclined to believe that the submission of Bani Amer and Al Habab to the sultanate did not take place until a belated time; possible, in the end of the seventeenth century.

The proof of this is that Queen Eatimah, who was known as the Negus of the Romans, fought the Habasha army when it invaded her kingdom in 1619 A.D. and she was queen of the Djin kingdom. Habashite sources say that she was captured and lots of spoils were taken from her kingdom. However, this Habashite attack came at the same time as the attack on the Kingdom of Senar.

Local narratives point out a story to the effect that a knight of the house of Al Fung was killed at the hands of one of the Balu sultans in the land of Djin in the Baraka basin, but he left a son whose mother was a Balu. Children used to call him in ridicule "Wid Ras Madd". A reference to the fact that the Balu, after killing his father, made his skull into a 'Madda' i.e. bowl for food. Once he came of age, his mother told him the whole story of his father's death.

So he invoked the aid of his people, Al Fung, who sent an army with him that destroyed the Balu Sultanate, abolished. their reign and scattered their people. This youth was appointed ruler of the depression of Baraka regions by Al Fung. His progeny, known as Al

Nabitat and its leader Al Daklal has ruled the Bani Amer tribes and their neighbours for the last three centuries.

Regardless of whether this narrative is true or not, it indicates that the Balu and the Djin kingdom did not lose their influence until after an armed struggle with Al Fung Sultanate.

Another reference to the wars between Al Fung and the Djin is what is said by local narratives to the effect that the name Al Gaddein - an agricultural group settled in Al Ghash basin which originally belongs to Nubia in western Sudan and have wide intermarrying with the Beja and the Arabs – is derived from Gadd meaning shreading.

It is said that one of their leaders said to another, after a ferocious battle with Al Fung knights, “These people have inflicted on us Gadda”, meaning rending and shreading. The other replied by saying, “Rather, Gaddin”, stressing the greatness of their losses.

Thus, they were called Gaddein. We are not interested in the authenticity of the narrative as much as we are interested in proving the truth of the battles which were fought in the region before its inhabitants surrendered to the new invaders. The fortified castles which stand in the region of the Gaddein mountains indicate the correctness of this conclusion. The Gaddein inhabitants were known for chivalry and they reared Arabian thoroughbreds. The region was known for centers of religious teaching where the holy Quran was memorized. (P. 134)

E N D of Part two. (P. 67 to 134)