THE COASTAL CITIES OF PALESTINE DURING THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

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*I*t has long been claimed that with the rise of the Arab empire the focus of events in the Middle East shifted from the Mediterranean Sea to the desert, from seacoast towns to caravan cities. With this change came the breakdown of trade and the decline of cities which, for a millennium, had served as cultural and economic centers. The following article examines many aspects of life in Palestine's coastal towns during the early Middle Ages, and lends additional weight to the assumption of their waning importance.

From the beginning of the Arab conquest, the coastal area of Syria-Palestine (*al-Shām*) was considered part of a strategically important border area. The coastal cities were divided into two districts: Tyre and Acre belonged to the northern district of al-Urdunn; the most important coastal cities of the southern district, al-Filastīn, were Caesarea, Arsūf, Jaffa, Ascalon, and Gaza. The inhabitants of many of these cities fled during the Arab conquest and the cities, it seems, were destroyed.[2] The early caliphs made major efforts to rebuild the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine immediately after they fell to the Arabs in the early forties of the seventh century. These efforts began during the reign of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (634-644) and continued through that of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān (644-656). They were initiated, supervised, and encouraged by Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, governor of Syria-Palestine from 640, who became the first Umayyad caliph in 660.

The Coastal Cities Under the Early Caliphs

The importance of the coastal area of Syria-Palestine for the Arab conquerors is attested to by 'Umar's appointment of a special governor for the region.[3]

Al-Balādhurī, the most important source for the history of the Arab conquest, records that during 'Umar's reign, the coastal cities lay in ruins and abandoned, and that at the beginning of the 640s, 'Umar ordered the governor

of Syria and Palestine, Mu'āwiya, to repair fortifications. The latter was to garrison them, see that guards were posted on the watch towers, and establish procedures for communications and alarm systems by means of flaming torches (*mawāqīd*).[4] Mu'āwiya wished to attack the Byzantines at sea, but 'Umar forbade such retaliatory action. He preferred a policy of passive defense of the coastal cities.[5]

In some respects, 'Umar's successor, 'Uthmān, pursued similar policies. Upon becoming Caliph, he too ordered Mu'āwiya to fortify and garrison the coastal cities, and to grant land to those who would live in them. In addition, Mu'āwiya gave the members of the permanent garrisons in the coastal cities the houses belonging to inhabitants who had fled. He also built mosques in those cities and enlarged the buildings erected during the reign of 'Umar. Al-Balādhurī writes: "Afterwards [i.e., after Mu'āwiya had done these things and during the time that followed], people from all areas came to the coastal cities."[6]

On the other hand, 'Uthmān reversed 'Umar's policy regarding the use of naval forces. At the beginning of his reign, retaliatory naval raids were initiated against the Byzantine attacks. As governor of Syria-Palestine, Mu'āwiya created a new office, Governor over the Sea, whose function is not entirely clear. We know that in 638 'Abdallāh b. Qays, the previous governor of the coastal area, was appointed "Governor over the Sea".[7] The same expression again appears in 656 towards the end of 'Uthmān's reign, when al-Ṭabarī lists his governors: "'Uthmān, peace be upon him, died when [the governor] of Syria and Palestine was Mu'āwiya, and [the] governor [by appointment] of Mu'āwiya over Homs ... and over Qinnasrīn ... and over al-Urdunn ... and over the sea is 'Abdallāh b. Qays al-Fazārī, and over the judiciary, Abū al-Dardā' is appointed."[8]

The inclusion of 'Abdallāh b. Qays in the list of governors of the district of Syria-Palestine may, perhaps, indicate that the expression "over the sea" referred to his also having been the governor of the region of the coastal area, as was recorded several years earlier. It is also possible that beginning in 'Uthmān's reign, the same governor was in charge of the naval raids against the Byzantines, and that all of these functions were included in the office of Governor over the Sea. In any case, this was an important office, as can be seen from the fact that several years later Busr b. Abī al-Arṭāt, one of the most important Arab commanders of the period, was appointed "over the sea" by Mu'āwiya.[9] Nevertheless, the interpretation of "over the sea" is not clear, and perhaps a distinction should be made between the office of governor, and the fifty naval actions for which 'Abdallāh b. Qays was responsible.[10]

One of the most important naval operations during Mu'āwiya's governorship was the conquest of Cyprus (647-649). In preparation for it, the Muslim fleet assembled in Acre, and before embarking, Mu'āwiya repaired the city's fortifications. Acre then served as one of the main harbors from which naval operations were launched.[11] The policy of naval raids and battles required an

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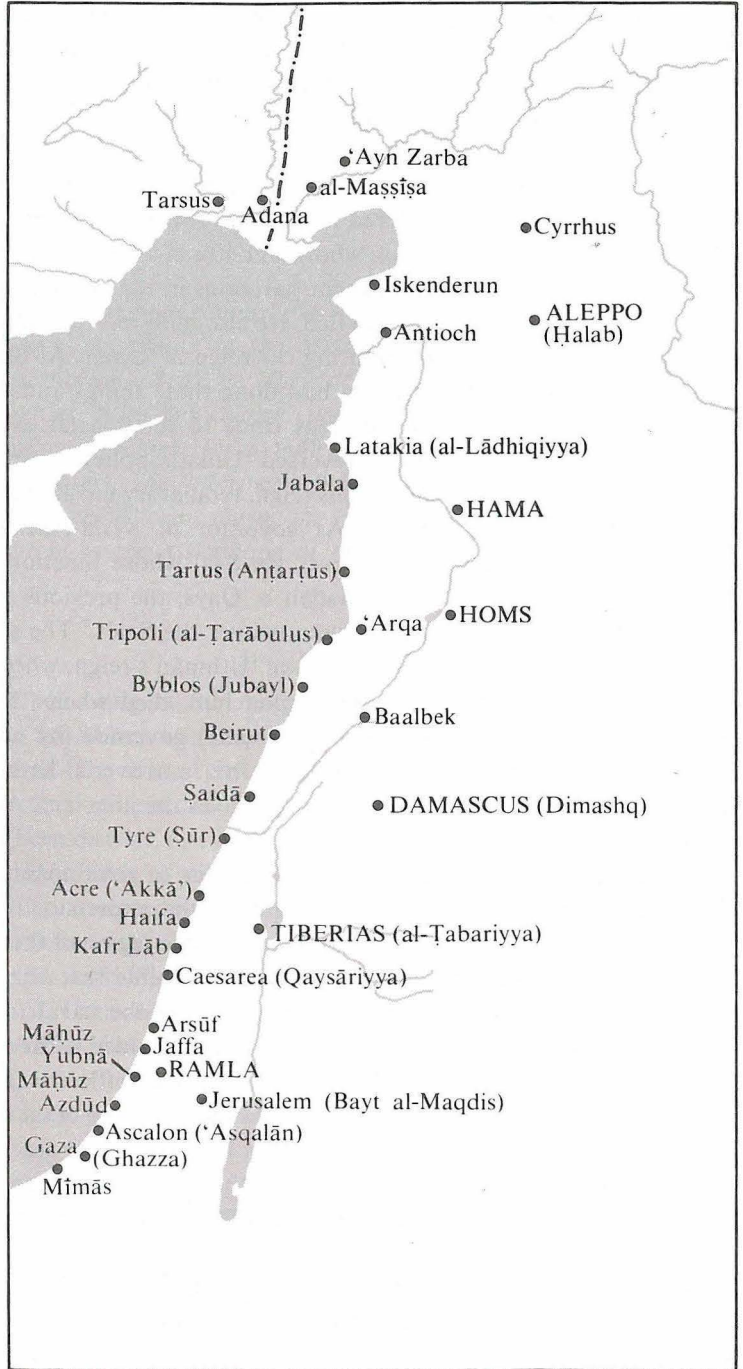
Al-Sham (Syria and Palestine) in the early Arab period

uninterrupted supply of ships, but during this period, al-Balādhurī relates, there was no shipyard on the coast of Palestine; the only one was in Egypt. After Muʻāwiya became Caliph, and sometime after 670, he established a shipyard in Acre in which he settled artisans, shipbuilders, and carpenters.[12] The city was destroyed by the Byzantines during the revolt of ʻAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr (683-693), and was rebuilt by the Umayyad Caliph ʻAbd al-Malik (685-705), who stationed a garrison in it.[13] We have no further information about the city from c. 693 until the reign of Hishām b. ʻAbd al-Malik (724-744).

Hishām transferred the shipyard from Acre to Tyre. According to al-Balādhurī,[14] the reason seems to have been a dispute with a member of the family of Ibn Abī Muʻayṭ who owned mills (for flour?) and buildings(?) from which he received an income in Acre.[15] Hishām asked the Muʻaytī to sell him the mills and the buildings, but the latter refused. For this reason, continues al-Balādhurī, Hishām moved the shipyard to Tyre where he had a building which served as a *khān,* and other buildings from which he received revenue.[16] Hishām had estates in al-Urdunn district which included Acre and its surroundings. The supervisor of these royal estates was Isḥāq b. Qubayṣa b. Dhu'ayb. At some stage he was appointed governor of this district. By his order a palace, or fortress, was built in Acre.[17]

Yāqūt adds a number of details regarding Hishām's activities in Acre. According to Yāqūt, Hishām rebuilt the city after it had been destroyed. At that time, the shipyard of the district of al-Urdunn was located there. When Hishām transferred it to Tyre

> it [Acre] remained like this [i.e., without a shipyard] almost until the days [reign] of al-Muqtadir [the ʻAbbāsid Caliph, ruled 908-932]. Then, there was a change of rulers in it, and the population of Acre flourished and expanded, and the shipyard was returned to Acre and remains there until today. And it [Acre] is in the hands of the Franks.[18]

It would seem from what Yāqūt writes that the city was again destroyed after it had been rebuilt by ʻAbd al-Malik, and was then rebuilt a second time by Hishām. The information provided by Yāqūt does not enable us to date when Acre was resettled and expanded, but it would appear that he was referring to the Crusaders.[19]

Hishām b. ʻAbd al-Malik also established Kafr Lāb near the Mediterranean Sea. it is located about eight kilometers south of Athlit and 15 kilometers north of Caesarea. Kafr Lāb is also known as Kafr Lām.[20]

During the reign of Marwān b. Muḥammad, the last Umayyad caliph (744-750), the harbors of Acre and Tyre were repaired by Ziyād b. Abī al-Ward al-Ashjaʻī, whose name has been preserved in the inscriptions of both sites.[21]

Settlement Policies

The policy followed by the early caliphs and Mu'āwiya, of encouraging soldiers to settle in the coastal cities by granting them land and free houses, was also adopted with respect to the inland border cities which had been abandoned by their inhabitants. As with the coastal cities, the Muslim rulers were anxious to resettle and fortify them. Soldiers who settled in the border cities were granted increases in pay.[22] Apparently, however, despite this official policy, there was no great flow of settlers and Mu'āwiya brought in non-Arab, mostly Persian, elements to the border cities. Thus, in 662-663 he brought in Persians from Homs, Baalbek and Antioch to Tyre and Acre. Some of the superb auxiliary forces (*al-asāwira*) which had served the Persian kings and had then joined the Muslims at the beginning of the conquest were transferred to Antioch. Mu'āwiya also transferred Persians from Baalbek and Homs to Antioch and settled Jews in Tripoli.[23]

In 669 or 671, Mu'āwiya transferred a military (?) element of Indian origin from al-Baṣra (*al-zuṭṭ*) to the coastal cities, settling some of them in Antioch and its environs. Al-Balādhurī adds that there is a special quarter named for them in Antioch. In addition, Mu'āwiya transferred another foreign (Persian?) element called *al-sayābija*. Al-Walīd b. 'Abd al Malik (705-715) transferred a group of *al-zuṭṭ* from Sind in India to Antioch.[24] Caliph Marwān b. Muḥammad settled "Slavs" in the coastal cities and Persians, as well as Christian Nabataeans, in al-Maṣīṣa. The 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Mu'taṣim (833-842) transferred *al-zuṭṭ* from Iraq to 'Ayn Zarba and its surrounding area.[25]

Thus, it is clear that soon after the beginning of the Arab conquest, the coastal cities were settled by an array of people and races, of which the Persians constituted the main element. As early as the end of the ninth century, al-Ya'qūbī, in his description of the coastal cities of 'Arqa, Tripoli, Jubayl (Byblos), Saida, and Beirut, writes that "the inhabitants of these areas are all Persian people whom Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān brought to them." He also says that the population of Tyre was a mixture of many peoples.[26]

The death of Mu'āwiya (680) initiated a period of anarchy and instability in the region. For about ten years (683-693), 'Abd al-Malik fought a rival caliph who had arisen in al-Madīna and to whom large sections of the caliphate had sworn allegiance. The Byzantines exploited this period of civil wars and the absence of a stable and orderly government in Syria-Palestine to renew, and perhaps increase, their attacks along their coast, destroying Ascalon, Caesarea, Acre, and Tyre. In the case of Ascalon, the population was exiled. 'Abd al-Malik rebuilt these cities and their mosques, settling them with people who served in their garrisons. Like his predecesor Mu'āwiya, 'Abd al-Malik granted land to cavalry who settled in the city.[27]

We do not know when 'Abd al-Malik rebuilt these cities, one tradition saying

that it was when he became caliph (685), another that he did so only upon the stabilization of his rule.[28] It seems that this refers to the period coinciding with the end of 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr's revolt, for in another place, we find that in 690, 'Abd al-Malik conquered (!) Caesarea. Perhaps this should be interpreted as evidence that the city had been in Byzantine hands.[29] Could this, perhaps, have applied to the other coastal cities as well? Because of the prevailing adverse military, social, and economic conditions, the Umayyad caliphs encouraged their development, especially by granting lands to those who settled in them.

It was during this period that the traditions of praise (*faḍā'il*) for Syria and Palestine developed; some of these praises specifically mention the coastal cities. These traditions encouraged resettlement of the coastal cities by emphasizing their virtues and sanctity, and by promising Paradise and many advantages to Muslims who settled in them.[30] Acre and Caesarea were among the coastal cities cited in the literature of praise, but it was Ascalon which received the most attention.[31]

Apparently, the area around Ascalon was especially fertile, for Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān wrote to Sulaymān al-Mashja'ī, of the Quḍā'a tribe, his secretary in the district of Filasṭīn, commanding him to purchase agricultural estates there. Mu'āwiya's instructions were: "They [the agricultural estates that you purchase] should not be in arid al-Dārūm and not in swamply [!] Caesarea; purchase estates in a place over which the clouds are wont to pass [=a fertile place] and [then] the secretary purchased the low flat lands in the vicinity of Ascalon."[32]

The Coastal Cities Under the 'Abbāsid and Fāṭimid Caliphs

With the rise of the 'Abbāsid dynasty (750), the center of political power shifted to Iraq and, consequently, the importance of Syria declined. Evidence of 'Abbāsid concern for the interior provinces bordering on the Byzantine Empire is plentiful, e.g. the construction of fortifications and the stationing of garrisons. In contrast to the earlier period, there is less information on the more southern coastal cities of Syria-Palestine during the 'Abbāsid period. This lack of information dictates extreme caution in drawing conclusions about the status of these cities during this period.

An apparently authentic letter written by the famous *faqīh* (a specialist in the science of the Islamic law), al-Awzā'ī, to the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Manṣūr provides important and interesting information on the status and condition of the coastal cities during the latter's reign. The letter is entitled "The Letter of al-Awzā'ī, to *Amīr al-Mu'minīm* (the Commander of the Faithful) who wishes to intercede for the raising of the salaries (*arzāq*) of the people of the coastal region (*ahl al-sāḥil*)."[33] Al-Awzā'ī wrote that every year the caliph used to give

ten *dīnār,* a small sum, not enough to live on, to [each of] the residents of the coastal region as payment, in advance, of their annual allowance. This, al-Awzā'ī says, is a very small sum and is not sufficient to support a family. Even if the caliph were to give them fifteen *dīnār* in advance, this would only be sufficient for their minimal needs. Al-Awzā'ī then discusses the importance of the residents of the coastal region. It is they who defend the borders of the land of Islam against the enemies, and constitute the strategic hinterland of the forces attacking the Byzantine Empire. He asks the caliph to increase the allowances from the government to meet the needs of the defenders. Again, he describes the generally difficult economic situation of the residents of the coastal area, explaining that the year during which they received the ten *dīnār* having ended, the caliph also donated money and clothing. The residents of the coastal region divided the money among themselves, receiving but one or two *dīnār* per person; there wasn't even enough money for the orphans and the widows. [34]

Al-Manṣūr's attitude to the coastal cities is even more important when viewed against the background of the policies of the early 'Abbāsid caliphs towards Syria and Palestine. We have already mentioned that with their ascent to the Caliphate (750) the 'Abbāsids transferred their center to Iraq, where they founded their new capital, Baghdad, in 763. The rise of the 'Abbāsids symbolized a decline in the status of Syria and Palestine in the Arab-Muslim world, and created permanent tension between Syria and Iraq. On many occasions, the 'Abbāsids demonstrated their preference for the Iraqis at the expense of the Syrians, and for the army with whose assistance they had come to the throne, to the detriment of the Syrian Umayyads. [35]

Tyre remained the most important of the coastal cities during the tenth century, and the royal ships, embarking on raids against the Byzantines, continued to anchor in its harbor. [36] The war with the Byzantine Empire was renewed during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (786-809), who appointed a member of his family as the governor of the border cities. It is possible that the area under his jurisdiction also included the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine, for we know that this governor was also responsible for Cyprus. [37] This appointment seems to have reflected al-Rashīd's desire to strengthen and reorganize the inland and coastal border cities. In 806, during a summer raid against the Byzantines, he appointed Ḥumayd b. al-Ma-'yūf over [all] of the coastal cities of Syria and Palestine, as far as [the coastal cities of] Egypt. It was this same Ḥumayd who led the naval attack on Cyprus. [38]

There is some evidence indicating that, until 861, the coastal cities were without warships to defend them against Byzantine raids. [39] Al-Balādhurī says that in that year, Caliph al-Mutawakkil (847-861) ordered ships and soldiers to be stationed in Acre and all the coastal cities. [40]

There are references to raids by the Byzantine fleet on the coast of Egypt during al-Mutawakkil's reign. In 853, the Byzantines invaded Egypt and captured Damietta (Dimyāṭ). Al-Maqrīzī relates that after this invasion, and addi-

tional raids on Tennis, al-Mutawakkil built fortresses in Tennis, Damietta, and al-Farmā (Pelusium). In 854, he built an Egyptian fleet of warships — for the first time in the history of Muslim Egypt.[41] We do not know the fate of his plan to fortify the coast of Palestine and to station warships there. Perhaps we may conclude, on the basis of activities in the Egyptian coastal cities, that he tried to implement this policy in Palestine as well.

We have only vague information of the rule of the Ṭūlūnids (878-905) and the Ikhshīdids (935-969) in Syria and Palestine. Perhaps the building of the port of Acre by Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn may be interpreted as an indication of a trend to develop Palestine and its coast.[42] At the beginning of the tenth century, the Muslims made naval raids against the Byzantines. For this purpose, ships were brought from the coast of Syria-Palestine and Egypt to Cyprus, the port of embarkation for these operations. During this period, the governor of the border area of Syria was responsible for the Syrian and Egyptian ships and the preparations for naval-warfare.[43]

Al-Maqrīzī relates that after the first warships were built in Egypt (853-854) during the reign of al-Mutawakkil, the upkeep and expansion of the fleet became one of the most important concerns of the rulers of Egypt. Those who fought at sea received the same salaries as those who fought on land. They were carefully selected and were all first-class fighters. The fleet was so famous that people taught their sons to fight at sea. Al-Maqrīzī's account is supposed to refer to the period following the reign of al-Mutawakkil, viz. from 861 onwards.

When the Fāṭimids conquered Egypt, al-Maqrīzī continues, there was an even greater emphasis on the development of the war-fleet. The first to act in this spirit was al-Muʿizz (reigned 953-975); his sons followed in his footsteps, building various kinds of ships in Cairo, Alexandria, and Damietta. These ships, says al-Maqrīzī, were sent by the Fāṭimids to coastal cities such as Tyre, Acre, and Ascalon.[44]

The chaotic conditions in the interior of Palestine from the tenth to the mid-eleventh century, increased the importance of the coastal cities. Their large, powerful fleet enabled the Fāṭimids to hold the fortified coastal cities and to supply them with food and military equipment. Attempts by the Bedouin (who expanded and strengthened their hold on Palestine towards the first quarter of the eleventh century), Qarmaṭian, and Turkish forces to capture the coastal cities failed.[45] Similar attempts by the Seljūqs during the 1070s were also unsuccessful.[46]

Towards the end of the tenth century, the coastal cities assumed economic and military importance to the Fāṭimids. Contacts between the Fāṭimid Caliphate and the cities of Amalfi and Venice expanded, and there are indications of a revival of economic-trade in the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine towards the middle of the eleventh century. It was during this period that Acre and its harbor assumed particular commercial importance.[47]
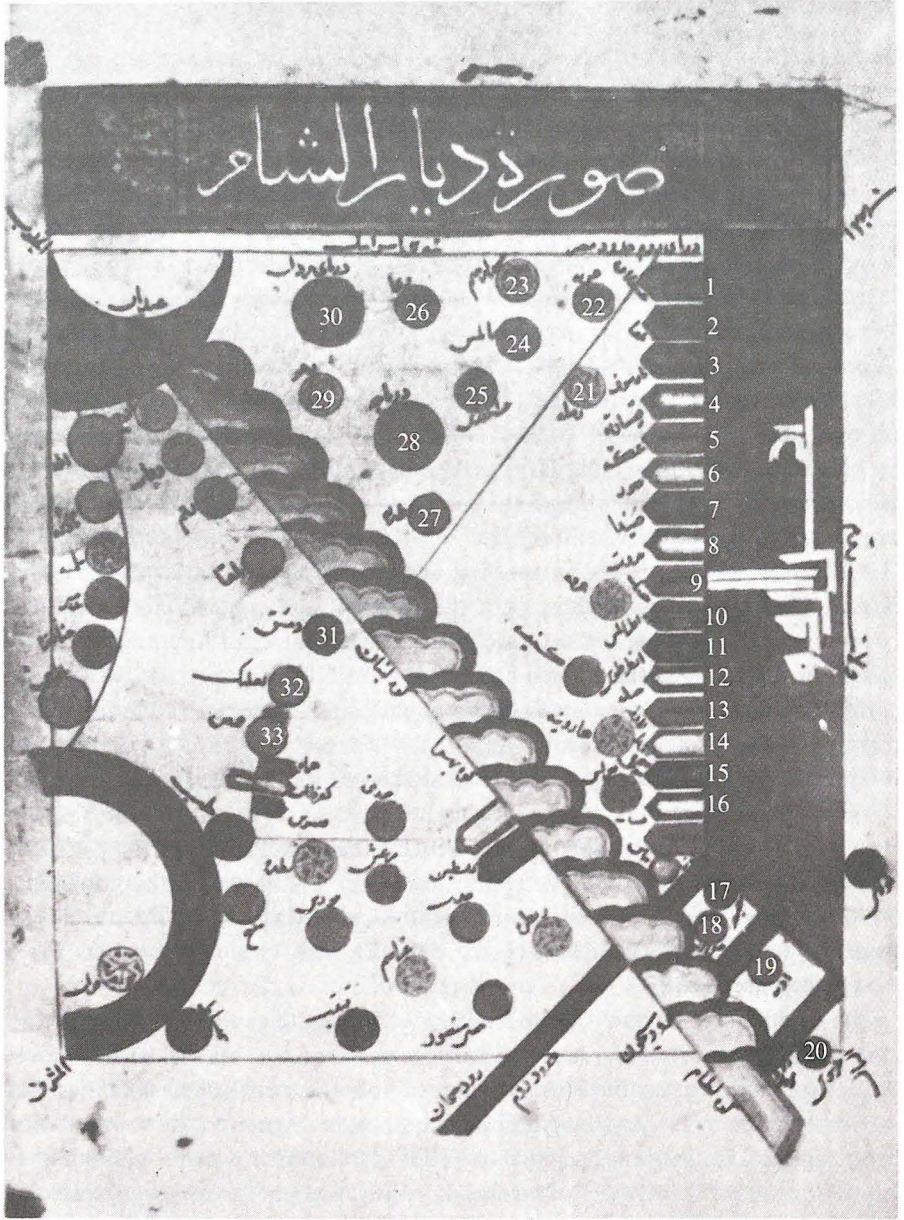
Al-Sham, from al Iṣṭakhrī's *Kitab Masālik al-Mamālik*

1 Ascalon	10 Tripoli	19 Adana	26 Jericho
2 Jaffa	11 Tartus	20 Tarsus	27 Tiberias
3 Arsūf	12 Jabala	21 Ramla	28 Daryācha (Persian = lake;
4 Caesarea	13 Latakia	22 Gaza	probably Lake Tiberias)
5 Acre	14 Suwaydā	23 Hebron	29 Zughar
6 Tyre	15 Ṣakhrat Mūsā	(Masjid Ibrāhīm)	30 Daryā i Murdābl (Persian
7 Sidon	16 Abyās	24 Nablus	= sea of dead water)
8 Beirut	17 al-Maṣṣīṣa	25 Jerusalem	31 Damascus
9 Jubayl	18 ʿAyn Zarba	(Bayt al-Maqdis)	32 Baalbek 33 Homs

We still do not have any evidence from Muslim sources regarding the fortifications of the coastal cities of Palestine during the Fāṭimid period, and must rely on the information provided by William of Tyre, the twelfth century Crusader chronicler. At this time, he says, al-Mustanṣir (reigned 1035-1094) "appointed governors over all the cities, both maritime and inland; he established taxes and made the whole region tributary to him. Moreover, he ordered each to rebuild its walls and raise strong towers round about.[48]

For this part of William of Tyre's description, we have a parallel Muslim chronicle. Ibn Shaddād, the geographer and historian (1217-1285), says that during the Umayyad period and at the beginning of the 'Abbāsid rule, the border cities of Syria and Palestine were under the indirect rule of the district governors of al-Shām; when "the Fāṭimids dominated al-Shām, they showed great concern for the border cities and separated them [from the rule of the governor of al-Shām] and appointed in every border city in this area a [special] governor from Egypt and attached a military unit to him in order to guard the city against the enemy facing it." These garrisons fought at sea and on land. Ibn Shaddād includes the names of the coastal cities for which special governors were appointed under the Fāṭimids: Jubayl, Saida, perhaps Beirut, Tripoli, Tyre, Acre, and Ascalon.[49]

Ibn al-Jawzī provided further confirmation of this Fāṭimid policy during the reign of al-Mustanṣir; in 1069/70, governors were appointed for Tripoli, Tyre, Ramle, and the coastal cities.[50]

Defense Systems in the Coastal Cities;
The Problem of the *Ribāṭāt*

We have already seen that, in 641, 'Umar wrote to Mu'āwiya, his governor in Syria and Palestine, ordering that in addition to the repair of the fortifications of the coastal cities, he was also to station guards on their towers and establish facilities for transmitting warning signals by fire in the event of the approach of the Byzantine enemy.

Al-Maqrīzī relates that in 874/75, when Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Aghlab was appointed governor of Ifrīqiya (modern Tunisia), he built fortifications and watch towers along the sea coast. These fortifications were linked by fire signals. Al-Maqrīzī says that a message sent in this manner from Ceuta (Sabta) reached Alexandria within one night, though the distance between the two cities was that of a journey of several months duration.[51] Al-Idrīsī, describing the Maghreb in 1154, mentions a place called Bajānis that had a stone tower in which a fire was kindled when the enemy was seen approaching by sea.[52]

Al-Muqaddasī provides an interesting description of a warning and signal system in Palestine, used for the ransoming of captives.

And near this capital [Ramle] are *Ribāṭāt* on the sea [coast] [according
to another ms.: on the sea coast of this district (=District of Filasṭīn)
are *Ribāṭāt*] in which there are people prepared to fight the enemy.
Byzantine [ships] *shalandiyāt* and *shawānī* sail to them [=the *Ribāṭāt*]
with the Muslim captives for sale, every three [captives] for one
hundred *dīnār*. And in every *Ribāṭ* there are people who know their
language and go to them on missions. And various kinds of food are
brought to them. And whenever their ships are sighted, those prepared
to fight the enemy are alerted. If it is night, fire is kindled in the
minaret of the *Ribāṭ*, and if by day, [they make] smoke. And from each
Ribāṭ [there are] a number of high towers [in the direction of] the
capital, in which people are stationed. Fire is kindled in the tower of
the *Ribāṭ*, then in the tower that follows, and then in the other, and
hardly does an hour pass until there is an alert [calling people] to
assemble against the enemy in the capital. Drums are beaten on the
tower [=the minaret of the Great Mosque?] and [people] are sum-
moned to the *Ribāṭ*. [Then] the people go out with arms and force [?]
and the young men [?] of the villages assemble. Then the ransoming
begins. [Sometimes] one person [can] buy one person while another
throws [down] a *dirham* or a ring until all [the captives held by the
Byzantines] are purchased. And the *Ribāṭāt* of this district where the
ransoming takes place are: Gaza, Mīmās [Maiuma of Gaza], Ascalon,
Māḥūz [=port] Azdūd, Māḥūz Yubnā, Jaffa, and Arsūf [Appollonia
Sozuso].[53]

The first, and perhaps the most important, term whose meaning is not clear is
"*Ribāṭ*" (pl. *Ribāṭāt*).[54]

No comprehensive and thorough study of the "*Ribāṭ*" has yet been made.
The only article on the subject is that of G. Marçais. However, he discusses only
the *Ribāṭāt* of North Africa, and not even all of North Africa, but mainly
Ifrīqiya.[55] *Ribāṭāt*, strongholds that offered shelter to local residents in time of
danger, like the castles of medieval western Europe, were built along the North
African coast. Some of them were genuine fortresses, including watch towers
from which signals could be sent to the endangered population, or to garrisons
on the border and in the interior of the country. A stronghold, *Ribāṭ*, of this
kind was surrounded by a wall and included living quarters, storage facilities
for arms and food, and a signal tower. Usually, however, the *Ribāṭ* was only a
fortified watch tower.[56]

The term *Ribāṭ* was understood by the translators of Al-Muqaddasī's text
(see note 53) as a watchstation (Gildemeister, LeStrange, Fahmi, Gichon), or
shelter (Assaf). On the basis of al-Muqaddasī's text, with its list of *Ribāṭāt*, I do
not think that *Ribāṭ* should be translated as watch station or observation post.
No distinction should be made between the city and the *Ribāṭ*. The fortified
coastal city was a *Ribāṭ*. As indicated above, during the Umayyad period in

prticular, though also under the 'Abbāsids, the authorities made special efforts to fortify and resettle the coastal cities by means of the murābiṭa (those who dwell in the border cities facing the enemy in a constant state of alert). The cities themselves, of course, were garrisoned and well fortified. Thus, we may say that, of the cities mentioned by al-Muqaddasī, Jaffa, Arsūf, Ascalon, Gaza, and Mīmās were fortified. Two of them, Ascalon and, even more so, Jaffa boasted fine defense systems. Though the latter was a relatively small city, al-Muqaddasī took the trouble to describe the fortress with its iron gate and the minaret of the mosque overlooking the sea.[57]

Garrisons and Religious Figures

There was, however, a great similarity between the Ribāṭāṭ of North Africa and those of the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine with respect to the garrisons and the religious scholars who lived in them. Together with the soldiers and garrisons that were changed periodically, the Ribāṭāṭ of North Africa were also inhabited by pious and religious Muslims who came there for the salvation of their souls and because they were border cities on the frontiers of Islam, to be defended by the servants of Allāh.

I have found no specific references to any organized or instititionalized settlement in the coastal cities of Palestine by pious and religious Muslims. Nevertheless, it is clear that there was a special significance attached to establishing residence there. Their exposure to enemy attack and the adverse socioeconomic conditions so often prevailing in these cities transformed residence there into what was considered as murābaṭa, presence opposite the enemy, a condition that was invested with religious meaning.

The religious significance of residence in the coastal cities is specifically related in the many Islamic traditions of praise, which encourage and laud residence in the coastal cities. The many privileges promised to those who settle in them, include the status granted to one who wages Holy War and is thus entitled to Paradise during his lifetime. It is in this light that we should interpret Yāqūt's text in which he mentions Ṭarsūs: "Ṭarsūs never ceases to be a dwelling place for the righteous and the ascetics who came to it because it belongs to the border cities of the Muslims."[58] Al-Maṣṣīṣa is similarly described,[59] and when Yāqūt speaks of Arsūf, he says, "and within it there was a group of murābiṭūn (they who are present opposite the enemy)."[60]

We know that Muslim religious scholars (among them, Zuhhād, i.e. ascetics) lived in the coastal cities of Syria and Palestine early in the Muslim period, during the reigns of al-Khulafā', al-Rāshidūn (632-660), and the Umayyads.[61] While, at present, we cannot trace this settlement and date it exactly, nor ascertain its exact numbers and the relationships between this group and the other residents of the city and the coastal garrison, it would seem that it was
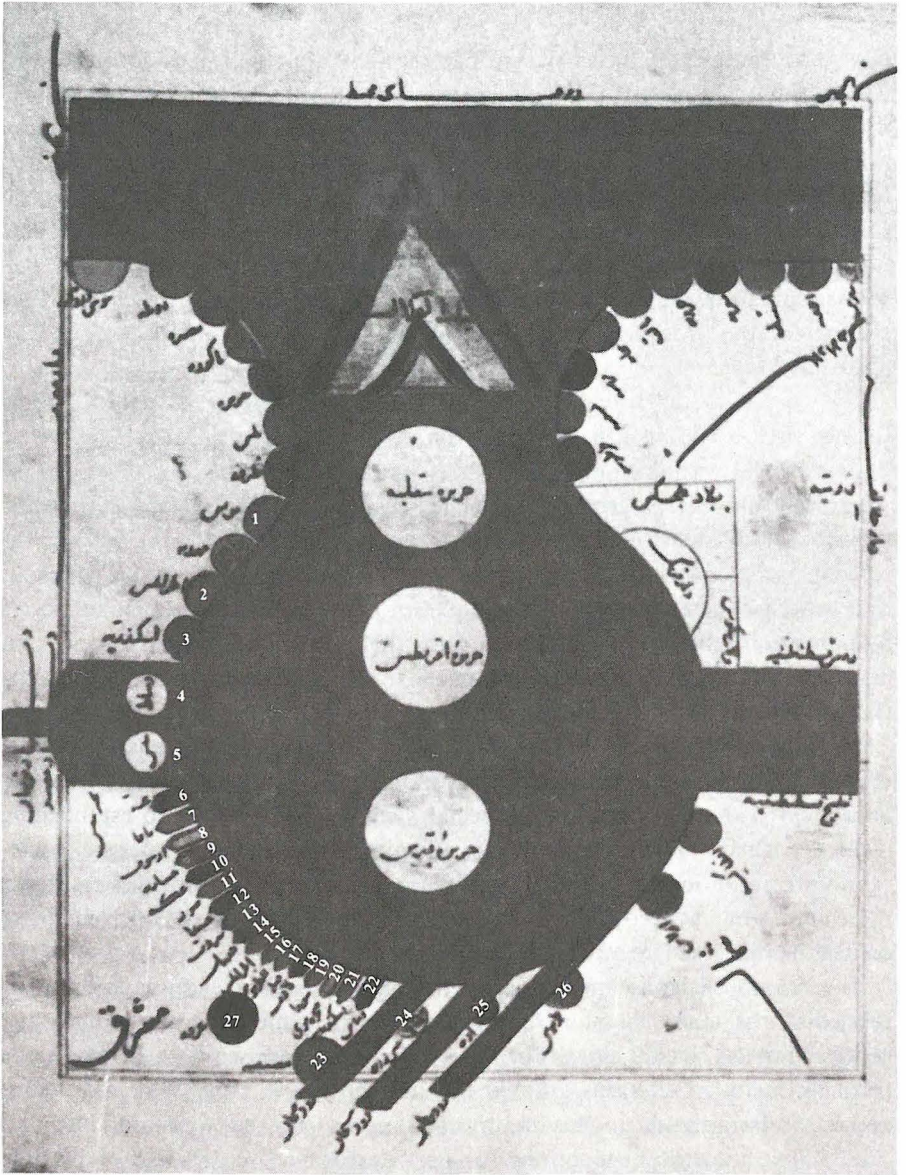
The Mediterranean Sea, From al-Iṣṭakrī's *Kitab Masālik al-Mamālik*

1 Tunis	10 Acre	19 Suwaydā
2 Tripoli	11 Tyre	20 Ṣakhrat Mūsā
3 Alexandria (Iskandariyya)	12 Ṣaidā	21 Iskenderun
4 Damietta	13 Beirut	22 Abyās
5 Tennis	14 Jubayl (Byblos)	23 al-Maṣṣīṣa
6 Ascalon	15 Tripoli	24 'Ayn Zarba
7 Jaffa	16 Tartus (Anṭarṭūs)	25 Adana
8 Arsūf	17 Jabala	26 Tarsus
9 Caesarea	18 Latakia	27 'Arqa

customary for pious and religious scholars to reside in these cities for a fixed period of time. It was said that 'Atā' al-Khurāsānī[62] used to stay in Ascalon for forty days every year.[63] Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Abdallah b. al-'Abbās, the head of the 'Abbāsid family, would sometimes stay in the coastal cities with his brothers and children as *murābiṭūn*.[64] There are also several references to Muslim scholars who lived in the coastal cities of northern Syria and its interior border cities during the ninth century. It is specifically stated that they withdrew to them intentionally.[65]

We have considerable information about Muslim scholars and specialists in the *ḥadīth* literature, who lived in the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine, especially in Ascalon. About 800 C.E., historical traditions relating to the conquest of Palestine were studied and transmitted there;[66] 23 scholars of *ḥadīth* lived in Ascalon toward the end of the ninth century.[67] At the beginning of the tenth century, a number of scholars who studied and transmitted *ḥadīth* lived in that city[68] and in the villages nearby.[69] *Ḥadīth* was also studied and transmitted in Jaffa about 900 C.E., Caesarea, Arsūf, Gaza, Acre, and Tyre.[70]

There are also many references to Muslim scholars who lived in the coastal and inland border cities of Syria: Saida, Beirut, Jubayl (Byblos), Tripoli, Jabala, al-Lādhaqiyya, Antioch, al-Maṣṣīṣa, Adana, and Tarsūs. Many of these scholars and *ḥadīth* transmitters lived during the later periods, i.e.. from the ninth century onwards.[71]

We know very little regarding the garrisons stationed in the coastal cities and about the organization of their defenses. With respect to Syria, al-Balādhurī relates that when Abū 'Ubayda conquered al-Lādhaqiyya, Jabala, and Anṭarṭūs, it was his custom to station a garrison in each until the arrival of the season during which sea travel was impossible. The coastal cities were defended in this way until the early 640s when Mu'āwiya stationed permanent garrisons in them and built and fortified them.[72]

Al-Balādhurī relates that every year, Mu'āwiya would send a large group of soldiers to garrison Tripoli, and he appointed a governor over it. When the sea closed, the army retreated, but the governor remained with a small group of soldiers. This continued until the reign of 'Abd al-Malik (685-705).[73]

It appears that it also was customary to reinforce these garrison soldiers from the inland cities. During the ninth century, the people of Damascus and its army were called to reinforce Beirut in an emergency.[74] Al-Awzā'ī describes the defense forces of the coastal cities. During the summer, a guard of foot soldiers and cavalry was stationed on the sea coast; in winter, small groups guarded the watch towers, while the main military force remained within the houses and warm shelters, to be called upon for aid.[75]

Ransoming Captives, and Coastal Warning Systems

Al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956) offers a detailed description of the ransoming of captives by the Muslims and the Byzantines. Beginning in the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, at the turn of the ninth century, this practice was planned and implemented by the government. Al-Mas'ūdī reports twelve such instances, all of which occurred in al-Lāmis, a city on the Mediterranean coast 35 miles east of Ṭarsūs.[76] The governor of the coastal cities of Syria was usually responsible for these exchanges.[77] Al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442) copies Al-Mas'ūdī's account of the ransoming of captives and adds that no known case of this kind occurred during the Umayyad period. At the beginning of the 'Abbāsid period, captives were ransomed without government organization or intervention, on the coast of Syria-Palestine, in Fusṭāṭ and Alexandria, in the Malaṭiya area, and in the other border cities on the frontier. This continued until the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd.[78] In addition to the above-mentioned twelve instances, Al-Mas'ūdī mentions several other less famous ones.[79]

Al-Muqaddasī discusses the ransoming of captives in the coastal cities of Palestine and the warning system which signalled their arrival. He includes an interesting, and perhaps exceptional, occurrence in Syria during the Ikhshīdid or Fāṭimid period.

We have already mentioned the fire-based warning system on the North African coast during the reigns of the Aghlabids. In the light of what we know, there is no doubt that the fortified places upon which the torches were lit were *Ribāṭāt*.[80]

Additional evidence of warning systems of this kind is available only for later periods. The use of torches for this purpose was not highly developed by the Crusaders in Palestine. We have only one piece of evidence from 1183 which relates that torches kindled on the towers of Karak in Transjordan were seen in David's Tower in Jerusalem. The purpose of the signal was to announce an attack on the city by the Muslim forces.[81]

Al-Qalqashandī devotes a short chapter in volume 14 of his Encyclopaedia to the fire signal and warning system that existed at the beginning of the Mamlūk period.[82] He quotes a book by Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī (d. 1349) stating that during the wars between Persia and the Mongols led by Hulago (1256-1265), a warning system extended from the most distant border cities on the Euphrates River to Cairo. The various signal points were sometimes erected on mountain tops and sometimes on tall buildings. At night, signals were transmitted by fire, and during the day by smoke. The purpose of the system was to track the movements of the Mongols and to provide warning of their military intentions. There was an agreed system of signals (fire and smoke) which could provide information on the enemy's position, numbers, intentions, etc. Watchmen were equipped with optical devices [83] and received a fixed allowance from the government; they were stationed in all of these high places.

1   Pirenne holds that the Muslim conquest of the Mediterranean basin led to the collapse of the traditional order in western Europe and marked the beginning of the Middle Ages. As a result of Arab expansion (mid-seventh to mid-tenth century), the Mediterranean was transformed into a Muslim sea, and the flourishing trade between its eastern and western shores, conducted mainly by Syrian merchants and based in the large coastal cities, disappeared almost completely. For a summary of several opinions on the validity of H. Pirenne's thesis, see A.S. Ehrenkreutz, "Another Orientalist's Remarks Concerning the Pirenne Thesis," *JESHO* 15(1972):94, nn. 1-2; 95, nn. 1-4; see also: E. Ashtor "Che cosa sapevano i geografi arabi de'll Europa occidentale," *Revista Storica Italiana* 81(1969):453-479; idem, "Un Mouvement Migratoire au Haut Moyen Age, Migrations de l'Irak vers les Pays Mediterranées," *Annales E.S.C.* 27 (1972):185-214, especially 187-200; and see also E. Sivan, "Islam and the Mediterranean, New Aspects in the Discussion on Pirenne's Thesis," in *The Mediterranean, its Place in the History and Culture of the Jews and other Nations,* lectures delivered at the fourteenth convention of the Historical Society of Israel, December 1968 (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1970), pp. 68-85.

2   Al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān* ed. De Goeje (Leiden, 1866), pp. 126, 127, 128. The same occurred in coastal cities outside of Palestine, see for instance *ibid.,* pp. 133-134; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rīkh,* 2, ed. Tornberg (Leiden, 1866), p. 383; see also, E. Ashtor, "Quelques observations d'un Orientalist sur la thèse du Pirenne," *JESHO* 13 (1970):168.

3   Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-Rusul wa-l'Mulūk,* 1 (Leiden, 1885-1886; new printing 1964-1965), p. 2526 ll. 5-6: *Wa-'alā l-sawāḥili 'Abdallāh b. Qaysin* (in 638-639); and p. 2523, l. 9: "'Umar appointed 'Abdallāh b. Qays as governor of the coastal cities of each district." This appointment was made in 638/639 before all of the coastal cities of Palestine had been conquered; see also *ibid.,* p. 2646; Ibn 'Asākir, *Tahdhīb Ta'rīkh Madīnat Dimashq,* 6 (Damascus 1349H), p. 300 ll. 26-27.

4   Al-Balādhurī (above, n. 2), pp. 128, 133-134.

5   See, for instance, *ibid.,* p. 152; on the Muslim attitude to the sea see: A.M. Fahmi, *Muslim Sea Power in the Eastern Mediterranean From the Seventh to the Tenth Century A.D.* (Studies in Naval Organization) (Alexandria [?], 1950); E. Eickhoff, *Seekrieg und Seepolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland, bis zum Aufstiege Pisas und Genaus (650-1040),* (Brauschweig, 1954); and see also D. Ayalon, "The Mamluks and Naval Power: A Phase of the Struggle between Islam and Christian Europe." *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities,* 1:8 (1967):1-2. See also bibliography in the note to p. 82 of Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf,* 4a, eds. Schloessinger and Kister (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 40, notes.

6   Al-Balādhurī (above, n. 2), p. 128. See also p. 117 for additional evidence.

7   Al-Ṭabarī (above, n. 3), p. 2824, ll. 4-6; *Wa-(i)sta'mala 'alā l'baḥri 'Abdallāh b. Qaysin ... fa-ghaza khamsīna ghazātin min bayni shātiyatin wa-ṣā'ifatin fī-l'baḥri.* ("'Uthmān appointed 'Abdallāh b. Qays as Governor over the Sea and [he] carried out fifty naval raids in winter and in summer.")

8   *ibid.,* pp. 3057, l. 19—3058, l.2.

9   See *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition), (hereafter cited as EI²), *Busr b. Abī Arṭāt* (H. Lamens); Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh Madīnat Dimashq,* 10, ed. Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1963), pp. 2-15.

10 See above, n. 7.

11 See for example Mu'āwiya's departure from Acre (28 or 29 H.) to conquer Cyprus with many ships, Al-Balādhurī, (above, n. 2) p. 153; on his naval raids from Acre, see also Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* 2, (Haydarabād, 1969), pp. 118-128; and see al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* (above, n. 5), p. 82, ll.15-16, p. 83, ll.3-5.

12 Al-Balādhurī (above, n. 2), p. 117; he says that Mu'āwiya also settled craftsmen and carpenters in other coastal cities; and see E. Ashtor, "Quelques observations..." (above, n. 2), p. 171. See also idem. "Il Regime Portuario nel Califfato," an extract from *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo XXV, La navigazione mediterranea nell'Alto Medioevo, Spoleto, 14-20 aprile, 1977* (Spoleto, 1978), pp. 656-657.

13 Al-Balādhurī (above, n. 2), pp. 143, 144.

14 *Ibid.,* pp. 117-118; this text may serve as further evidence for the thesis proposed by E. Ashtor in his article on the organization of the ports during the Arab Caliphate. Ashtor contends that

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the ports were not considered by Muslims as public property; it was possible for private citizens to own plots of lands and buildings in the ports, and to collect taxes. See Ashtor (above, n. 12), p. 654. It is significant that the person who purchased buildings in Acre port belonged to the tribe of Quraysh. This also supports Ashtor's hypothesis regarding the important role of the merchants of Quraysh in the shaping of the economy of the Muslim world during the early Islamic periods.

15   The terms are *arḥā'* and *mustaghallāt*. The term *mustaghallāt* may be used to denote anything that brings in income. The expression often refers to agricultural estates. On this expression see Lane, *Arabic English Lexicon*, s.v. *Gh-L-L;* and in the *Glossarium* of Al-Balādhurī, s.v. *Gh-L-L;* during the reign of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik (705-715), there was a special government department *(dīwān)* responsible for the *mustaghallāt*. See al-Ṭabarī (above, n. 3), 2, p. 838. l. 1; al-Jahshiyārī, *al-Wuzarā' wa-l'Kuttāb* (Cairo, 1938), p. 47: "Al-Walīd b. 'Abd al Malik's secretary in charge of the *mustaghallāt* in Damascus was his *mawlā*, Nufay' b. Dhu'ayb, and his name is inscribed on a plaque in the saddle-makers' market in Damascus" (my translation).

16   Al-Balādhurī (above, n. 2), pp. 117-118; the terms are *funduq* and *mustaghallāt*. The family of Ibn Abī Mu'ayt belongs to the family of the Banū Umayya of the tribe of Quraysh. It would be interesting to follow the fortunes of the family in Acre since we may assume that they were among the first settlers in the city to whom grants of land or concessions were given, some within the city itself. The reference may be to mills *(arḥā')*. For milling flour on the Na'mān River, of which we have evidence from the Crusader period, see J. Prawer, *Histoire du Royaume Latin de Jerusalem,* 2 (Paris, 1970), p. 349. On the flour mills of the Hospitallers and the Templars, the dams for diverting the waters of the Na'mān, and the watchtower that guarded them, see *ibid.,* pp. 454, 462. However, the reference may be to non-hydro-powered mills located within the city itself. See, for example, mention of mills of this kind within a large house comprising many dwellings and a courtyard *(dār)* in Egypt, in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr* (Leiden, 1920), p. 122, ll. 16-17. (I wish to thank Professor M.J. Kister for having brought this source to my attention.)

17   Al-Jahshiyārī, (above, n. 15), p. 60.

18   Yāqūt, *Kitāb Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 3, ed. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig, 1868), p. 708; and see also Ashtor, "Quelques observations..." (above, n. 2), p. 171.

19   Note that Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn, the first ruler of the Ṭūlūnid dynasty which ruled Palestine from Egypt (878-905), also rebuilt the harbor of Acre.

20   See M. Benvenisti, *The Crusaders in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1970), pp. 329-331; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam* (above, n. 18), 4 (1869), pp. 290, l.23—291, l.l. Yāqūt includes an additional piece of important information about a scholar who was born there, probably towards the end of the tenth century. He was one of the teachers of al-Musharraf b. al-Murajjā, a resident of Jerusalem, who wrote the most importnt work in praise of the city at the beginning of the eleventh century. On Ibn al-Murajjā, see E. Sivan, "The Beginnings of the Faḍā'il al-Quds Literature," *IOS* 1 (1971): 264, n.5.

21   Al-Jahshiyārī (above, n. 15), p. 80.

22   Al-Balādhurī (above, n. 2), pp. 166, 168, 171, 187, 194 (evidence also from the 'Abbāsid period).

23   *Ibid.,* p. 117, and on settlement of Jews, p. 127. On the *Asāwira*, see *Lisān al-'Arab, s.w.r.,* s.v.; I. al-Kaylānī, *al-Jāḥiz fil'Baṣra wa-Baghdād wa-Sāmarrā'* (Damascus, 1961), pp. 67-69 (being a translation of Ch. Pellat's *Le Milieu Basrien et la Formation de Jāhiz);* and also, M. Sharon, *The Advent of the 'Abbāsids (The 'Abbāsid Da'wa),* (Hebrew; doctoral dissertation, Jerusalem, 1970), pp. 266-267; Fahmi, *Muslim Sea Power* (above, n. 5), pp. 51-53; Ashtor (above, n. 2), p. 170.

24   Al-Balādhurī (above, n. 2), p. 162; see, on the *Zuṭṭ,* Y. Friedmann, "A Contribution to the Early History of Islam in India," *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet,* ed. by M.R. Ayalon (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 316-317; see also al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa-l'Ishrāf, Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* (hereafter cited as *BGA*), 8, ed. De Geoje (1893), pp. 335, ll.6-12.

25   Al-Balādhurī (above, n. 2), pp. 150, 166, 171; G. LeStrange, *Palestine Under the Moslems,* (London, 1890), pp. 387-388, 505-506. The term "Nabataeans" was frequently applied to the inhabitants of Iraq and especially of the *Baṭā'iḥ,* i.e. the extensive swampy area on the lower

course of the Euphrates and Tigris between Kūfa and Wāsiṭ in the north and Baṣra in the sourth. See *EI²* "Nabataeans" (E. Honigmann).

26 Al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān, BGA* 7, p. 327, ll.4-5, 18-20.

27 Al-Balādhurī (above, n. 2), pp. 143, 144; see also Ashtor (above, n. 2), p. 170.

28 Al-Balādhurī *ibid.*.

29 Al-Ṭabarī (above, n. 3), 2, p. 821 (from al-Wāqidī).

30 On praise of the coastal cities, see Abū Bakr, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Wāsiṭī, *Faḍā'il al-Bayt al-Muqaddas,* edited and annotated by I. Hasson (Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 12-13, n. 12; al-Musharraf b. al-Murajjā, *Faḍā'il al-Bayt al Muqaddas wa-l'Shām wa-l'Khalīl,* Ms. Tübingen No 27 Vi (a photocopy of this ms. is in the National Library in Jerusalem, No. Fi. 1964), fols. 84b-85a; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh* (above, n. 9), 1 (1951), p. 271; 2 (1953), pp. 107, 125, 188-199; Ibn 'Asākir, *Tahdhīb* (above, n. 3), 1 (1329H.), p. 58, l.14.

31 Acre: Ibn 'Asākir, *Tahdhib,* pp. 47, 234; Caesarea; Ibn al-Murajjā, fol. 113b. On praises of Ascalon see 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣas'ānī, *al-Muṣannaf,* 5(Beirut, 1972), p. 287, no. 9635, 9636; Ibn al-Murajjā, fols. 59a, 109a; Ibn al-Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar Kitāb al-Buldān, BGA* 5, p. 103, ll.8-10, 12-17; Ibn 'Asākir, *Tahdhīb* (above, n. 3), 1, p. 47, l.10; 234, l.19; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh* (above, n. 9), 1, pp.86-87; 2, p. 107; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam* (above, n. 18), 3 (1868), p. 674, ll. 15-19; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Lā'ālī al-Maṣnū'a fī l'Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'a* (Cairo, 1352 H.), 1, pp. 460-463. A portion of the traditions of al-Suyūṭī are cited in U. Rubin, *Muḥammad the Prophet in the Early Literature of Ḥadīth* (Hebrew, Ph. D. dissertation, Tel-Aviv University, 1976), 2, p. 251, n. 111, 112, 113; p. 255, n. 137; and see also *Muntakhab Kanz al-'Ummāl* of al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, on the margin of volume 5 of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's *Musnad* (Cairo ed.), pp. 371-372. See also E.A. Gruber, *Verdienst und Rang, Die Faḍā'il als literarisches und gesellschaftlisches problem in Islam* (Frankfurt, 1975), pp. 60-61; al-Wāsiṭī, *Faḍā'il* (above, n. 30), p. 3, n. 2 (no. 1), p. 4, n. 1 (no. 2); p. 15, n. 1 (no. 16); p. 21 (introduction).

32 Al-Jahshiyārī (above, n. 15), p. 26, ll.6-11. Kister has already mentioned this information; see his "The Battle of the Ḥarra, Some Socio-Economic Aspects," in *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet,* ed. M.R. Ayalon (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 43-44. On the villages in the vicinity of Ascalon, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam* (above, n. 18), 2, pp. 56, 198-199, 202, 347, 712; 3, pp. 154, 618, 867; 4, pp. 392, 531; al-Sam'ānī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb,* 3 (Haydrābād, 1383/1963), pp. 243-244, 282; 5, (1385/1966), pp. 450-451; idem. in the Ms. of *Kitāb al-Ansāb,* in Gibb Memorial Series, vol. 15 (Leiden, 1912), fols. 311b. l.25—312a. l.6; 384b, ll.28-30.

33 Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Taqdimat al-Ma'rifa li-Kitāb al-Jarh wa-l'Ta'dīl* (Haydarābād, 1371/1952), pp. 193-195. I wish to thank M.J. Kister who called my attention to this source.

34 On the authenticity of this letter, see Schacht, *"Al-Awzā'ī"* in *EI².*

35 See M. Sharon, *The Advent of the 'Abbāsids* (above, n. 23), pp. 272-275. Al-Manṣūr's prefer-ence for the coastal cities is clearly illustrated by the following contrasting episode. In 747, the walls of al-Aqṣā Mosque in Jerusalem collapsed and remained in ruins until al-Manṣūr's reign. When he was told of the need to repair the mosque, he replied that the treasury was empty and ordered that the gold plate on the doors of the mosque be melted down and minted into *dīnārs.* See al-Wāsiṭī (above, n. 30), p. 84, no. 137 and notes.

36 Al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān* (above, n. 26), p. 237, ll. 18-20; see also Ashtor (above, n. 2), p. 171.

37 Al-Balādhurī (above, n. 2), p. 155.

38 Al-Ṭabarī (above, n. 3), 3, p. 709; al-Rashīd embarked on this raid on the 20th of Rajab 190/June 806; see also al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh* 2 (Beirut, 1960), p. 431.

39 On the Byzantine attacks on Egypt in years 708-709, 720, 738-739, 849, 852-853, 954-955, 967-968, see *ibid.,* p. 488; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa-l'I'tibār fī Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-l'Āthār* 1, (Cairo, 1967), pp. 331, 396, 401 (Būlāq ed., 1, pp. 176, 211, 213). It is possible that during these years they also raided the coast of Palestine, even though there are no references to such attacks in the written sources. We have one piece of evidence that, in 720, during the reign of the Umayyad caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, the Byzantines attacked and destroyed al-Lādhaqiyya (Latakia) and captured its inhabitants. During the same year, the Byzantines also attacked Egypt. This attack may thus have included the coast of Palestine. Additional evi-dence in this regard is that during the 880s, the Byzantines attacked Ascalon and transported captives to Constantinople. One of the captives, Hārūn b. Yaḥyā, described Constantinople

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between 880 and 890. However, some claim that this description dates from 900 or 912-913; see A. Miquel, *La Geographie Humaine du Monde Musulman Jusqu'au Milieu du 11 Siècle,* 2 (Paris, La Hayte, 1975), Index; Ashtor (above, n. 2), p. 168; see also *EI²*, "Hārūn b. Yahyā."

40   Al-Balādhurī, p. 118, and Ashtor, p. 171 (both, above, n. 2). The only evidence of an 'Abbāsid project in a coastal city is a stone inscription found in Ascalon from the reign of al-Mansūr; see G. Wiet, *Repertoire Chronologique d'Epigraphie Arabe* 1(1931), pp. 32-33, no. 42. The inscription bears the date Muharram 155 H. (Dec. 771-Jan. 772). In the text, al-Mahdī is referred to as Amīr al-Mu'minīn, i.e. as caliph, although he became caliph in 775. On this, see the note by Van Berchem, *Journal Asiatique* 1 (1891), p. 479. An additional single piece of evidence of 'Abbāsid building in Palestine is the great reservoir in Ramle, built in 789 during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (sometimes attributed to St. Helene). The Arab sources contain no reference to its existence or construction. The date of its construction is known from the building inscription in the reservoir itself. See K.A.S. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture,* 2 (Early 'Abbāsids) (Oxford, 1950), pp. 161-164.

41   Al-Maqrīzī (above, n. 39), 1, p. 336 (Būlāq ed., 1, p. 179); see also p. 401 where he says that the building of the fortress of Damietta began on the 3rd of Ramadān (5 November 854).

42   Al-Muqqaddasī, *Ahsan al-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm, BGA* 3, p. 162-163.

43   Qudāma b. Ja'far, *Kitāb al-Kahrāj, BGA* 6, p. 255. (I wish to thank Y. Drory who called my attention to this information.)

44   Al-Maqrīzī (above, n. 39), 3, p. 6, (Bulāq ed. vol. 2, p. 190), and p. 10; and see in the following pages the description of the organization of the fleet. However, see Ayalon (above, n. 5), p. 3, where he mentions the stromg Fātimid fleet, but argues that the descriptions by al-Maqrīzī and his predecessor, Ibn Khaldūn, are exaggerated idealizations. On the Fātimid fleet, see also M. Lombard, "Arsenaux et Bois de Marine dans le Mediterranée Musulman (VII-XI siècle)," *La Navir et l'Economie Maritime du Moyen Âge au XVIII Siècle, Travaux du Deuxieme Colloque International d'Histoire Maritime tenu les 17 et 18 Mai, 1957, a l'Academie de Marine présentés par Michel Mollat* (Paris, 1958), pp. 58, 86.

45   In 970, the Qarmatians captured Ramle, and the Maghribī Fātimid garrison retreated to Jaffa. See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* (above, n. 2), 7, p. 453. In 976, a Fātimid expeditionary force was entrenched in Ascalon. The forces of the Turkish general, Alptakīn, besieged them for a year but were unable to capture the city; see Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Antākī, *Ta'rīkh* (being the second volume of Sa'īd b. al-Bitrīq, *Ta'rīkh*), (Beirut, 1909), 2, p. 145. In 1010, Bedouin belonging to the southern tribe, Banū al-Jarrāh, entered Ramle, plundered it, and appointed a caliph of their own. "Banū al-Jarrāh conquered al-Shām from al-Farramā[!] to Tiberias. They besieged the fortresses of the coastal cities during a long period, but were unable to capture even one of them." *Ibid.,* p. 201.

46   In 1072, the Seljūqs besieged Acre in which its governor Badr al-Jamālī, had taken refuge. The Seljūq commader "totally destroyed its fertile and sown area *(al-Sawād)* and the fertile and sown areas around Tyre and other coastal cities. [However], grain used to reach Badr al-Jamālī in Acre by ships by sea and he did not take the siege seriously, and when the Seljūqs lifted the siege, they turned towards Egypt." The quote is from Sibt b. al-Jawzī's book, *Mir'āt al-Zamān fī Ta'rīkh al-A'yān* (the volume dealing specifically with events in the history of the Seljūqs during the years 1056-1068, *Matba'at al-Jam'iyya al-Ta'rīkhiyya al-Turkiyya* (Ankara, 1968), pp. 158, ll. 1-4.

47   On the commercial relations between Amalfi and the East see U. Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen Age²,* 1 (Leipzig, 1936), pp. 98-108; on their building in Jerusalem, see pp. 104-106; and see E. Ashtor, "Information About the Jews in the North of Palestine in the Eleventh and the First Half of the Twelfth Centuries" (Hebrew), in *Zer Li-Gevurot, The Zalman Shazar Jubilee Volume,* ed. B.Z. Lurie (Kiryat Sefer, Jerusalem, 1973), pp. 489-509. On the revival of trade with the cities of Italy, and the part played by the coastal cities of Syria-Palestine, see *ibid.,* pp. 490-491; on Acre, *ibid.,* pp. 490-494. On the revival of international trade with the coastal cities of Syria and Palestine, especially Tyre, Tripoli, and Acre, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, see E. Ashtor, "Républiques urbaines dans le Proche-Orient à l'époque des croisades," *Cahiers de Civilization Médiévale,* 18(1975); reprinted: idem, *The Medieval Near East: Social and Economic History, Variorum Reprints* (London, 1978), pp. 117-131; on this matter see pp. 118-120. In this article Ashtor deals with the rebellion against

Fāṭimid rule over the coastal cities, particularly Tyre, Tripoli, and other Syrian towns, with the aim of establishing independent republics. These events occurred against the background of renewed international commerce via the Mediterranean. A similar uprising may have occurred in Acre as well, for it was conquered by the Fāṭimids after 1089. *Ibid.,* p. 125.

48   *A History of Deeds Beyond the Sea* by William, Archibishop of Tyre, translated and annotated by Emily Atwater Babcock and A.C. Krey (New York, 1943), 1, 17, p. 405.

49   Ibn Shaddād, *Al-A'lāq al-Khaṭīra fī Dhikr Umarā al-Shām wa-al-Jazīra* (the part on Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine), ed. S. Dahān (Damascus, Catholic Press in Beirut, 1963), pp. 93, 96, 98, 102, 106, 164, 173, 258. On p. 93, Ibn Shaddād describes the changes in the Fāṭimid policy towards the border cities *(al-thughūr),* as noted above. The cities that he mentions are all located along the coast.

50   Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dyayl Ta'rīkh Dimashq,* ed. Amedroz (Leiden: Brill—Beirut: the Catholic Press, 1908), p. 97, n. 1, where the editor quotes from Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-Zamān.* During approximately the same period, Haifa was probably built and well fortified by the Fāṭimids. See A. Elad, "Some Notes on Haifa Under Medieval Arab Rule," *Studies in the History of the Jewish People and the Land of Israel,* 5(Hebrew) (University of Haifa, 1980) pp. 191-207.

51   Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ* (above, n. 39), 1, p. 324 (Bulāq ed., 1, p. 172).

52   Al-Idrīsī, *Al-Maghrib wa-Sūdān wa-Miṣr wa-Andalus* (a part of *Kitāb Nuzhat al-Mushtāq fī (i) 'Khtīrāq al-Āfāq),* ed. Dozy-De Goeje (Leiden, 1866), p. 198; quoted by Gaudefroy de Mombynes, *Syrie à l'Epoque Mamelouks de Après des Auteurs Arabes...* (Paris, 1923), p. 258, n. 1 (where it should be p. 198 and not p. 188). De Mombynes includes references testifying to the use of fire signalling during the ancient period, and by the Arabs during the Jāhiliyya.

53   Al-Maqaddasī (above, n. 42), p. 177; on the *shalandiyāt* and *shawānī,* see Fahmi, *Muslim Sea Power* (above, n. 5), pp. 129-132. I am grateful to A. Arazi for having helped me in the interpretation of al-Muqaddasī's text and for his suggestions. For other translations and interpretations of this text, see, for example, 1)J. Gildemeister, "Beiträge zur Palästinakunde aus arabischen Quellen" (4. Muḳaddasī), *Zeitschrift Des Deutschen Palestina Vereins,* 7(1884), pp. 170-171; 2)*Description of Syria including Palestine by Muqaddasī,* translated and annotated by G. LeStrange (London, 1886), pp. 61-62; idem, *Palestine Under the Moslems* (London, 1890), pp. 23-24; 3)M. Assaf, *History of the Arabs in Palestine* (Hebrew), 1, *The History of the Arab Rule in Palestine* (Tel Aviv, 1935), pp. 163-164; 4)Fahmi, *Muslim Sea Power* (above, n. 5), pp. 55-56; 5) al-Muqaddasī, *Ahsan at-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm (Le Meilleure Repartition pour la Connaissance des Provinces),* traduction partielle annotée par André Miquel (Damas, 1963), pp. 209-210; 6); 6) M. Gichon, "The Influence of the Mediterranean Coasts on the Security of the Land of Israel as Reflected in History," in *The Mediterranean, its Place in the History and Culture...* (above, n.1); idem, "The History of the Gaza Strip — A Geo-Political and Geo-Strategic Analysis," in this volume.

54   According to lexicographic definitions, the basic meaning of *Ribāṭ* is presence in a border city while in a continual state of alert in preparation for a Holy War against the enemy. Another interpretation, perhaps an explanation based on it, is the stay itself, the state of living in a border city. See *Lisān al-'Arab,* 7 (Beirut, 1956), p. 302. Thus, the original meaning of the word does not refer to a fortified place, guard-station, etc. However, it is possible that the term *Ribāṭ* gradually acquired the meaning of a (fortified) place at a strategic point on the frontier of the Muslim world, in danger of enemy attack. This is Sauvaire's opinion, based on that of the Shāfi'ite theologian and mystic, Abū Ḥafṣ al-Suhrawardī (1145-1234) in his work *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif.* Sauvaire quotes al-Suhrawardī without edition or page, see H. Sauvaire, "Description de Damas" (9), *Journal Asiatique* (9th ser.), 5(1895):381-383; al-Suhrawardī *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* [on the margin of the 2nd volume of *Kitāb Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn Lil' Ghazālī*] (Cairo, 1316 H.), p. 14, ll. 2-9:"The origin of [the word] *Ribāṭ* is the place where horses were tied. Later, every border city whose population was struggling to repel the enemy facing them was called by the name *Ribāṭ.* And he who wages Holy War, who is stationed in a border city, defends against the enemy opposite him. And he who lives in the *Ribāṭ* in obedience to the command of Allāh, defends by himself [?] and by means of his prayers the Muslims and the lands against misfortune" (my translation).

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55   G. Marçais, "Note sur les Ribāṭs en Berberie," *Melanges Rene Bosset* 3 (Paris, 1925), pp.

395-430. Marçais gives a summary of this article in *EI* [1], "Ribāṭ." As far as I know, the other studies of the *Ribāṭ* are limited to North Africa or Ifrīqiya; see for example A. Lezine, *Deux Villes d'Ifriqiya...Sousse, Tunis* (Paris, 1957), pp. 82-88 and bibliography therein.

56 Marçais, *EI* [1], p. 1050.

57 See al-Muqaddasī (above, n. 42), p. 174, who describes it as being fortified (having many *maḥāris*). The meaning of the word here is certainly not "garrison" as it was translated by LeStrange and Gichon. The meaning of the word *maḥras* is "fortifications," such as a watch-tower, fortified buildings in the city wall, a tower, etc. On the *maḥāris,* see Marçais (above, n. 55), p. 400, n. 1, which refers to the Glossary of al-Idrīsī's book (above, n. 52), pp. 283-284.

58 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam,* (above, n. 18), 3, p. 526, l. 15.

59 *Ibid.,* 4, p. 558: *"Wa-kānat min mashhūri thughūri l'islāmi qad rābaṭa bihā l'ṣāliḥūna qadīman."* "[al-Maṣṣīṣa] was one of the most famous border cities of Islam. In an early period, the righteous used to encamp there, opposite the enemy."

60 *Ibid.,* 1, p. 207; al-Sam'ānī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb* (above, n. 32), 1, p. 166.

61 Yāqūt relates that a group of the Friends *(al-ṣaḥāba)* of the Prophet and Friends of his Friends lived in Ascalon; *Mu'jam,* 3 (Beirut, 1957), p. 122. See Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt,* 6, ed. E. Sachau (Leiden, Brill, 1909), pp. 234, l.18—235, l.2; Yāqūt (above, n. 18), 3, p. 154; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-Ghāba fī Ma'rifat al-Ṣaḥāba,* 1, p. 307; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb,* 2, (Haydarābād, 1325H), p. 119.

62 He is 'Aṭā' b. 'Abdallāh (Abū Muslim) al-Balkhī al-Khurāsānī, a *mawlā* of al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufra, who died 753-54; see Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rīkh al-Kabīr,* 6 (Beirut, 1378 H.), pp. 474-475, No. 3027; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb,* 7 (Haydarābād, 1326 H.), pp. 212-215. Al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-I'tidāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl,* 2 (Cairo, 1325 H.), pp. 198-199, No. 1069, reports that 'Atād died in Jericho and was buried in Jerusalem [!]

63 Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-La'ālī al-Maṣnū'a* (above, n. 31), p. 461.

64 *Akhbār al-'Abbās wa-Waladihi* (written by an unknown writer of the third century Hijra), ed. A.A. al-Dūrī (Beirut, 1971), p. 174. The family of Muḥammad b. 'Alī lived in al-Ḥumayma, a village south of the Dead Sea.

65 See al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh al-Mawṣil* (Cairo, 1967), pp. 82,423; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh* (above, n. 9), 1, pp. 144, 264, on *'ulamā'* (religious scholars) in al-Maṣṣīṣa; Azdī, p. 363, a religious scholar *('ālim)* in Malaṭiyya; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansāb al-'Arab,* 1382/1962, p. 34, on a religious scholar in Ṭarsūs.

66 *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-al-Iskandariyya* (attributed to Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. Wāqid al-Wāqidī) ed. H.A. Hamaker (Leiden, 1241/1825), p. 3.

67 Al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Ṣaghīr,* 1 (Cairo, 1968), pp. 38, 42, 67, 97, 100, 114, 163, 177, 214, 215, 222, 241, 244, 249; 2, pp. 6, 24, 44, 68, 83, 115, 126, 249; al-Suyūṭī, *al-La'ālī al-Maṣnū'a* (above, n. 31), p. 461.

68 Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh* (above, n. 9), 1, p. 97, on *Muḥaddith* who lived in Ascalon and transmitted *Ḥadīth* in the year 308/920-921; idem, *Tahdhīb Ta'rīkh Dimashq,* (above, n. 3), 2, p. 161, on a *Muḥaddith* who died in Mosul in 968, and who transmitted *Ḥadīth* in Ascalon and Jerusalem; see also, Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt,* (above, n. 61), 7(2), (1918), p. 186, ll. 11-15; 6, pp. 234, ll. 18—235, l. 2; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam* (above, n. 18), 2, p. 56; al-Sam'ānī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb* (Leiden, 1912, above, n. 32), fols. 390a-390b; Ashtor "Un Mouvement Migratoire" (above, n. 1), p. 198, n. 103.

69 See above, n. 32.

70 Al-Sam'ānī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb* (Leiden, 1912, above, n. 32), fol. 596b, ll.4-8; Yāqūt,, *Mu'jam* (above, n. 18), 1, p. 207; 3, pp. 433-434; 4, pp. 18, 215, 1003; al-Ṭabarānī, *Al-Mu'jam al-Ṣaghīr,* 1, pp. 38, 77, 90, 100, 104, 108, 123, 148, 151, 168, 177, 215; 2, pp. 8, 41, 44, 68, 79, 121.

71 Al-Lādhaqiyya: al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Ṣaghīr* (above, n. 67), 1, p. 241, 263; Sayda and Jabala: *ibid.,* p. 76; Jubayl: *ibid.,* 2, p. 141; Beirut: Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt* (above, n. 61), 7(2), p. 85; al-Ṭabarānī, 1, p. 216; vol. 2, pp. 36, 42, 70, 104; Ṣāliḥ b. Yaḥyā, *Kitāb Ta'rīkh Bayrūt* ... (Beirut, 1927²), pp. 15-16; Antioch: Ibn Sa'd *op. cit.* p. 186; al-Ṭabarānī, 1, pp. 109, 117, 133, 138, 191, 253; 2, pp. 7, 41, 42, 87, 113, 125; Ashtor, "Un Mouvement Migratoire ..." (above, n. 1), p. 198, n. 104; al-Maṣṣīṣa: Ibn Sa'd *op. cit.,* pp.185-187; al-Ṭabarānī, 1, pp. 82, 121, 138, 146, 214; 2, pp. 5, 8, 42-45, 57, 59, 72, 119, 129; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam,* 4, p. 558; Ashtor, *op. cit.,* p. 198, n. 100; Ṭarsūs: Ibn Sa'd *op. cit.,* p. 93; al-Ṭabarānī, 1, pp. 105, 134, 217; 2, pp. 5, 77, 78; Yāqūt, *op. cit.,* 3, p. 526; Ashtor, *op. cit.,* p. 198, n. 99.

72 Al-Balādhurī (above, n. 2), p. 134.

73 *Ibid.,* p. 127.

74 Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l'Mamālik, BGA* 2, p. 175. It may be a very early custom indeed, for we are told that Abū l-Dardā' (d. 652!), while in Damascus serving as *qāḍī,* went to Beirut as a *murābiṭ;* see Ibn 'Asākir 6, (above, n. 3), p. 188.

75 Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Taqdimat* (above, n. 33), p. 194. We have important information about the organization of the garrisons in Alexandria and along the Egyptian coast immediately following their conquest by the Muslims in the 640s. One quarter of the army was stationed as a garrison in Alexandria. This garrison was changed every six months. An additional quarter of the army was distributed among the coastal cities of Egypt. The remaining half stayed in the capital (al-Fusṭāṭ). Every year the Caliph 'Umar (634-644) used to send soldiers from al-Madīna to serve as the garrison in Alexandria. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr* (Leiden, 1920), pp. 191-192.

76 See on Lāmis, al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik al-Mamālik²,* *BGA* 1(1927), p. 69; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam* (above, n. 18), 4, pp.342, l. 21—343, l.2.

77 Al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa-l'Ishrāf, BGA* 8 (1893), pp. 189-196.

78 Al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ,* (above, n. 39), 3, pp. 6-7 (Būlāq, ed., 2, pp. 190-191).

79 Al-Mas'ūdī, *op. cit.* p. 195. Muslim chronicles contain evidence confirming al-Mas'ūdī's testimony about the ransoming of captives. See, for example, al-Ṭabarī (above, n. 3), pp. 1351, l.14—1357, l.5; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh* (above, n. 38), 2, p. 482 (845 C.E.); pp. 490-491 (856 C.E.); al-Ṭabarī, 3, pp. 1449, l.9—1451, l.16 (860 C.E.). See also, Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ, *Ta'rīkh* (Damascus, 1968), 2, pp. 709, 731, 734. On the ransoming of captives during the erly 'Abbāsid period not mentioned by al-Mas'ūdī; see also, Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-Awilyā',* 6, (Cairo, 1936), p. 136; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Taqdimat* (above, n. 33), pp. 196-199.

80 See also Marçais, "Note" (above, n. 55), p. 416.

81 See De Mombynes, *Syrie* (above, n. 52), p. 129, n. 1; Prawer (above, n. 16), 1, p. 624, n.*51.

82 Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā fī Ma'rifat al-Inshā',* 14 (Cairo, 1919), pp. 398-400; see De Mombynes's translation (above, n. 52), pp. 258-261 and note.

83 This is De Mombynes's translation (above, n. 52), p. 258. Perhaps the passage should be translated: And in every high, lighted place, a garrison and watchman [and not optical instruments] were stationed.