

## AFRICANOBYZANTINA

### BYZANTINE INFLUENCES ON NEGRO-SUDANESE CIVILIZATIONS

The southernmost limits of the Byzantine Empire under Justinian afford an obscure field of research. Although the geographical delimitation of the African provinces is broadly made possible by the contiguous vast desert zones of Nubia and Sahara, the significance of such delimitation should be assessed in other than strictly politico-geographical terms. By its southern extensions the Byzantine Empire fringed upon an ethnologically and culturally heterogeneous world, and this entailed a contact of civilizations the intensity of which could only be weakened by the rigour of natural conditions and the degree of cultural heterogeneity. Yet cultural influences might overlap geographical boundaries and their importance could be more abiding than the floating and vanishing political frontier. How far can such cultural influences be historically ascertained in the absence of sufficient documentary evidence on the Byzantine side? For the investigation of such a problem we must resort, in addition to the available written testimonies, to the data of the Negro-Sudanese ethnology itself, which can be properly treated as inner sources of cultural history.

In the following pages an attempt is made on these lines, which does not purport to be either exhaustive or definitive. It is rather attempted to bring together and correlate such disparate items, as supplied by Negro-Sudanese and Saharan ethnology and ethnography, Nubian archaeology, Byzantine (Greek and non-Greek) authorities and Arab geographers. It is really a preliminary attempt at obtaining a glimpse into the historical past of peoples who underwent successive ethnic and cultural assimilations and came to be known to us under a cultural status which completely obscures that past. At the same time an investigation of this sort may bring to light far-reaching cultural influences directly or indirectly exerted by Byzantium upon a great mass of culturally heterogeneous peoples, which, with the exception of Nubia and Ethiopia, have been hitherto ignored and unsuspected.



## I

INTRODUCTORY: THE BYZANTINE NOTITIAE OF THE  
EGYPTIAN DIOCESE

The so-called diocese of Egypt in the geographical terminology of the Byzantine Empire has a very fluid connotation. In the Notitia contained in Novel VIII of Justinian, which is of the year 535, the North Africa administrative division includes four *ἀρχαὶ ἡγεμονικαί*, those of Upper Libya, Egypt First, Egypt Second and Augustamnica Second, and one *ἀρχὴ ὑπατική*, that of Augustamnica First<sup>(1)</sup>. The Synecdemos of Hierocles gives more detailed information on the Byzantine provinces of Africa by listing under each province its cities, but this list already differs from the one of Justinian's Novel. Now we obtain from this source, (i) an *Ἐπαρχία Αἰγυπτιακὴ* under the authority of an *ἀγουστάλιος*; (ii) an *Ἐπαρχία Ἀγούστα α'* (or *Ἀγουσταμικὴ*) under a *κορρήτωρ*; (iii) an *Ἐπαρχία Ἀγούστα β'* (or *Ἀγουσταμικὴ*) under an *ἡγεμὼν* (=administratio praesidales); (iv) an *Ἐπαρχία Ἀρκαδίας*, under *ἡγεμόνα*; (v) an *Ἐπαρχία Θηβαΐδος ἔγγιστα*, under *ἡγεμόνα*; (vi) an *Ἐπαρχία Θηβαΐδος τῆς ἄνω*, under *δοῦκα*; (vii) an *Ἐπαρχία Λιβύης τῆς ἄνω*, under *ἡγεμόνα*; (viii) an *Ἐπαρχία Λιβύης τῆς κάτω*, under *ἡγεμόνα*<sup>(2)</sup>.

In the very beginning of the 7th century George of Cyprus gives in the *Descriptio Orbis Romani* a list of provinces almost identical to that of Hierocles with the addition of an *Ἐπαρχία Αἰγύπτου β'*, an *Ἐπαρχία Θηβαΐδος ἄνω* (other than that recorded by Hierocles), and an *Ἐπαρχία Τριπόλεως*<sup>(3)</sup>. In the *Descriptio* Egypt second occupies a secondary place and the administrative authority is recorded under Egypt first, with Alexandria as capital, as a Dux and Augustalius.

(1) *Corpus Juris Civilis*, ed. MOMMSEN, KRUEGER, SCHOELL, KROLL, vol. III, *Novellae*, VIII p. 86.

(2) *Hieroclis Synecdemos*, ed. A. BURCKHARDT, pp. 43 - 47. Cf. E. HONIGMAN, *Le Synecdèmos d'Hieroclès et l'opuscule géographique de Georges de Chypre (Forma Imperii Byzantini, I, 1939)* pp. 45 - 48.

(3) Georgius Cyprius, *Descriptio Orbis Romani*, ed. H. GOELZER, pp. 35 - 41.

Compared to the Laterculi (Veronensis and Polemii Silvii) appended to the Notitia Dignitatum<sup>(4)</sup> the Byzantine lists are as follows:

<i>Notitia Dignitatum</i>	<i>Novel VIII</i>	<i>Hierocles Synekdemos</i>	<i>Georgius Cyprius Descriptio</i>
Aegyptus Jovia	Egypt, First	Egyptian	Egypt, First
Aegyptus Herculea	Egypt, Second		Egypt, Second
	Augustamnica, First	Augustamnica, First	Augustamnica, First
Augustamnias			
	Augustamnica, Second	Augustamnica, Second	Augustamnica, Second
Archadia		Arcadia	Arcadia
		Thebaïis, Near	Thebaïis, First (Antino, seat)
Thebaïis		Thebaïis, Upper	Thebaïis, Second (Ptolemaïis, seat)
			Thebaïis, Upper
Libia Superior (Pentapolis)		Libya, Upper	Libya Pentapolis
Libia Inferior (Sicca)		Libya, Lower	Libya (Darnieon, seat) Tripolis

As seen from the above table, in the posterior notitiae of Hierocles and of George of Cyprus we have a more elaborate division of the Egyptian diocese and moreover some accretions due to the inclusion of Libya and Tripolis in the west and of Thebaïis in the south, although the latter is also included in the Notitia Dignitatum. On the other hand Hierocles mentions but one Egyptian province against two in Novel VIII and in the *Descriptio*. These differences must be ascribed to the fact that the geographical extension of each of these divisions, much more their respective territorial jurisdictions were not and could not always be objectively determined. We must assume that Novel VIII's two Egyptian provinces included part of Libya and Thebaïis respectively, while Hierocles' Egyptian province includes also at least part of Egypt Second. What in the Notitia Dignitatum appears as two distinct provinces, Aegyptus Herculea and Augustamnias, seems to be one and the

<sup>(4)</sup> *Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. O. SEECK, pp. 247, 259 - 260.

same territory<sup>(5)</sup>. The non concurring data in our sources only point to the fluidity of the territorial status of the Empire in Northern Africa, which exists also as regards local jurisdiction; such jurisdiction is administrative and military, and although jurisdictional powers are usually precisely defined in imperial legislation<sup>(6)</sup>, it is known that the military encroached frequently on civil jurisdiction<sup>(7)</sup>. It is probable that this confusion in matters of jurisdiction may have motivated Justinian's edict of the year 534 whereby arrangements are made with regard to the Prefecture of Africa<sup>(8)</sup>.

The progressive organization of the Egyptian province resulted in further administrative subdivisions, so that from Egypt Second derived Augustamnias in A.D. 341 and, after Egypt's promotion to the rank of diocese in A.D. 382, Arcadia, the old Fayum, was promoted to a province. Thebaïs and Augustamnias were each subdivided in two provinces, in the same way Egypt became Egypt First and Second<sup>(9)</sup>.

The outer limits of these administrative divisions, their outermost stretches into the African hinterland, are of especial interest to us because they serve to indicate the possibilities of cultural contacts, beside the political ones, with the autochthonous populations occupying the adjacent territories. If we limit ourselves to the above notitiae, we obtain as the easternmost outpost to which Byzantine political authority extended the city of Rhinocorura (*Ῥινόκορυρά*) which is located by both Hierocles<sup>(10)</sup> and George of Cyprus<sup>(11)</sup> in the province of Augustamnica First.

(5) T. MOMMSEN, *Verzeichniss der römischen Provinzen* (Abh. der Preuss. Akad. der Wiss., Phil. - Hist. Abt., 1862), pp. 499 - 500.

(6) For instance, *Codex Theodosianus*, II, 12 and XII, 1, 128. *Codex Justinianus*, III, 13, 16 and I, 46, 2.

(7) G. ROUILLARD, *L'administration civile de l'Égypte byzantine*, 1925, p. 3.

(8) *Codex Justinianus*, I, 27.

(9) Concerning this evolution see M. GELZER, *Studien zur byzantinischen Verwaltung Aegyptens* (Leipziger historische Abhandlungen, Heft XIII, 1909) pp. 509 *sqq.*, and *cf.* G. ROUILLARD, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2. Gelzer concludes to a chronological anteriority of the Synekdemus with regard to Novel VIII, just because of its omitting to report Egypt Second which is recorded in the Novel. But the argument may be reversed, if we take into consideration the more elaborate divisions given by Hierocles and not found in the Novel. The anteriority of the Synekdemus is, however, established on other grounds and is now based on its chronology which is believed to be in the years 527-528. See E. HONIGMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 1 - 2.

(10) *Synekdemus*, 726, 4.

(11) *Descriptio*, 691.

No mention is made of any coastal cities on the Red Sea although some important ports, such as Berenike, whence the commerce with Asia was conducted, were exploited in Hellenistic and Roman times, and the route from Koptos to Berenike was well known<sup>(12)</sup>. This leads us either to accept with Maspero that the Byzantines had lost authority over and contact with the older coastal ports of the Red Sea<sup>(13)</sup> having substituted for these the city of Klysmā, situated at the northern end of the Red Sea, which served as a terminal port to the Asian and Ethiopian trade routes<sup>(14)</sup>, or that they still could indirectly command and use these ports without maintaining direct political control. The latter hypothesis finds some corroboration in the testimony of the Jacobite Synaxarium, in the Life of Barnabas, bishop of Aidāb, a post which Maspero thinks might be identical with Berenike<sup>(15)</sup>. The city is described as an episcopal see «situated on the coast of the sea of Al-Qolzom in the territory of the Barbarians known under the name of Al-Bedja. Our fathers have acquired this (episcopal) diocese since the beginning because of the merchants and mariners who travelled in the Red Sea so as to be able to have access to the (holy) sacraments»<sup>(16)</sup>. Now the bishop was residing at Keft, «thirteen stages» from Aidāb, and «when he was under obligation to go there, these Bedjas carried him on their camels with the objects of worship and received the price of the hiring of their camels»<sup>(17)</sup>. The only inference we can make from this passage is that, although the Byzantines had lost political control over the Red Sea coastline, they nevertheless continued all through the 6th century to be acquainted with the older commercial routes of which they eventually made use, and over which they maintained some moral authority through the ecclesiastical establishments which preexisted and continued to flourish down to the Arab conquest.

(12) F. HOMMEL, *Ethnologie und Geographie des alten Orients* (MÜLLER'S *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*) 1926, p. 760, n. 2. Cf. G. MASPERO, 'Les stations anciennes entre Coptos et Berenice d'après les relevés faits en 1873 par l'Etat-Major égyptien', in *Annales du Service*, III, 1902, pp. 193 - 197.

(13) J. MASPERO, *Organisation militaire de l'Égypte byzantine* (Bibl. de l'École des Hautes Etudes, Sciences hist. et philol., fasc. 201, 1912), pp. 10 - 12.

(14) Klysmā is described as a terminal port of the sea road to India by the Anonymus *apud Petrus Diaconus*, *Liber de locis sanctis*, in *Itinera Hierosolymitana saeculi III - VIII* (*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. XXXIX), p. 116.

(15) *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

(16) *Le Synaxaire arabe jacobite (rédaction copte)*. Arabic text and translation by R. BASSET (*Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. I, iii, and III, iii). See vol. III, pp. 500 - 501.

(17) *Ibid.*, p. 501.

If we turn to the western limits of the Egyptian diocese, we find at the westernmost part of the northern coast, Tripolis, which had been detached from the Prefecture of Africa after Justinian's reign and brought under the Egyptian diocese. We are more interested in the western continental frontier along Thebaïs. Here the Imperial frontier was absolutely undetermined, disappearing into the immense stretches of the Nubian desert where the Imperial authority affirmed itself loosely by certain holds in the great oases such as Hibis and many secondary posts all within the provincial jurisdiction of Thebaïs. The political penetration in this area had for the most part only nominal value, as these desert outposts, surrounded by nomadic populations, were constantly subject to their attacks against which they were hardly protected. Hibis in the Great Oasis, listed by Hierocles under Thebaïs inferior and by George of Cyprus under Thebaïs superior, and the city of Augila<sup>(18)</sup> in the Libyan Sahara are the most significant political outposts of the Empire in the great desert region<sup>(19)</sup>. In the latter city Justinian had built a church after forcing the inhabitants into conversion<sup>(20)</sup>. Augila is in other respects significant, since a tradition locates here the origin of the Tuareg migration westwards into Sahara<sup>(21)</sup>. The Byzantines seem to have been more or less acquainted with the adjacent regions of the Libyan and Nubian deserts. Olympiodorus, writing in the 5th century, gives a very exact description of the Saharan desert despite and against Photius' criticism of it as queer and improbable<sup>(22)</sup>. The intense diplomatic activity of Justinian with regard to the Berber tribes after the Vandal expedition and the numerous agreements concluded with them testify to a close acquaintance with the native populations<sup>(23)</sup>. The Byzantine-Berber relations are historically ascertainable from other than Greek sources, such as the Latin poet Corippus, an eye-witness of the Byzantine wars in North Africa, who consigned in his *Jo-*

(18) Procopius records two cities under the name Augila, *De Aedificiis*, VI, 2.

(19) MASPERO, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

(20) Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, VI, 2.

(21) See *infra*, III, § 8.

(22) The description, as well as the historical work of Olympiodorus are resumed by Photius in his *Bibliotheca*, cod. LXXX (MIGNE, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 403, col. 272. New edition by R. HENRY in *Collection byzantine Budé*, vol. I, pp. 166 - 187).

(23) CH. DIEHL, *L'Afrique byzantine. Histoire de la domination byzantine en Afrique*, 1888, pp. 299 - 330. Idem, *Justinien et la civilisation byzantine au VIe siècle*, 1901, pp. 400 - 404. J. B. BURY, *History of the Later Roman Empire (395 - 565)*, vol. II, 1923, p. 328.

*hannis*, beside a detailed account of events, interesting descriptions of the native tribes encountered<sup>(24)</sup> in the course of the war.

The southernmost post in the Nile valley is more accurately known owing to Diocletian's evacuation of the stations of lower Nubia and the retreat of the Roman garrison to the first cataract. Procopius refers to the treaties concluded between Diocletian and the native tribes of Blemmyes and Novadae, restoring to the latter the right of worship in the sanctuaries of Philae<sup>(25)</sup>. The southern frontiers and outposts of the Egyptian diocese are inextricably connected with the political and cultural contacts of the Byzantine Empire with the native peoples of lower and upper Nubia, among whom emerge as foremost ethnic groups the Blemmyes and the Novadae.

<sup>(24)</sup> Ed. by J. PARTSCH, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*, vol. III, part ii.

<sup>(25)</sup> *De Bello Persico*, I, 19, 28 - 37.

## II

### BLEMMYES, NOVADAE AND THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF NUBIA

References to Blemmyes, a designation of the native populations of lower Nubia, are found in ancient authorities, classical and Christian<sup>(26)</sup>. As might be expected in such a matter as the identification of an ethnic group of an inferior cultural status having only incidental contacts with the politically organized world, the references are vague, confused and contradictory. We are here concerned with the Blemmyes as they appear in history in Justinian's time. A basic testimony concerning them as well as the Novadae is that of Procopius who characterizes them as *πολυανθρωπότατα γένη*<sup>(27)</sup>. He states also that the Blemmyes inhabit the hinterland (*ἐς τὰ μέσα ὄκηγται*), whereas the Novadae occupy both the banks of the Nile (*τὰ ἀμφὶ Νεῖλον ποταμὸν ἔχουσι*)<sup>(28)</sup>. It is possible that both Blemmyes and Novadae were formerly inhabitants of a region still further south or more remote from the Nile region whence they gradually moved to the territory ascribed to them by Procopius in the vicinity of Elephantine. In Justinian's time these peoples had not as yet undergone any Christian influences, which is confirmed by Procopius' testimony that they were worshipping Isis and Osiris and offering human sacrifices to the sun. In his own time they still occupied the sanctuaries at Philae, but were dispossessed by Justinian who transferred the idols to Constantinople and ordered the imprisonment of the priests<sup>(29)</sup>. These negative contacts were soon followed by a positive interest in these peoples, effectively manifested in intense missionary activity resulting in the conversion of important tribal groups among the native populations of Nubia. The christianization of Nubia, as distinct from the christianization of Egypt and Ethiopia, is a work achieved under Justinian's reign. We possess a number of testimonies about this important historical event, outstanding among which is that of the Syrian John, bishop of Ephesus, contained in the third part of his Ecclesiastical history<sup>(30)</sup> and supplemented by other information contained in a posterior work of

(26) For references in classical authors see SETHE, in PAULY-WISSOWA'S *Real-Encyclopädie*, sub *Blemmyes* (5. Halbband, col. 566 - 568).

(27) *De Bello Persico*, I, 19, 27 sqq.

(28) *Ibidem*, I, 19, 28.

(29) *Ibidem*, I, 19, 35 - 37.

(30) W. CURETON, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John Bishop of Ephesus*, 1853. English translation by R. PAYNE SMITH, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John Bi-*

his entitled 'The Lives of the Eastern Saints'<sup>(31)</sup>. The information supplied by John of Ephesus is fairly detailed. According to him the first to preach Christianity to the Novadae was the Monophysite priest Julian who was sent by the Monophysite Patriarch of Alexandria Theodosius, the whole mission being backed by Empress Theodora whose feelings were definitely turned in favour of the Monophysite party<sup>(32)</sup>. Julian stayed two years with the Novadae and converted their king (not named by our source) and a great number of people, and he left the country after appointing in his place the old bishop of Philae, Theodore. Sometime after his return to Constantinople he died, Patriarch Theodosius also died, but before his death (A.D. 566) he appointed Longinus to succeed to the mission of Julian and Theodore<sup>(33)</sup>. Longinus, who is a Monophysite, is retained by the Orthodox party at Constantinople for three years before succeeding in escaping, in A.D. 569 and joining the Novadae in lower Nubia<sup>(34)</sup>. He resumes the work of Julian and carries out his mission in a more systematic way by building churches, instituting a clergy, and laying the foundations of a local Church. Despite the fact that the envoys sent by the king of the Novadae to Justinian speak of Longinus in excellent terms, he is held in suspicion by the Emperor whose Orthodox feelings he shocked by his Monophysite ideas<sup>(35)</sup>. Six years after his arrival in Nubia, Longinus is recalled to Alexandria to help in the struggle for the defence of the Monophysite party of the Archpresbyter Theodore, and in the campaign for the election to the Patriarchal see of Alexandria of the Monophysite candidate, the Archimandrite Theodore, as against the Orthodox party candidate, Peter; he likewise left in his place Theodore, the old bishop of Philae<sup>(36)</sup>.

*shop of Ephesus*, 1860. German translation by J.M. SCHOENFELDER, *Die Kirchen-Geschichte des Johannes von Ephesus. Aus dem Syrischen übersetzt*, 1862. A first notice of the Ecclesiastical History had been given by ASSEMANUS in his *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, vol. II, 1721, pp. 83 - 90. New edition by E.W. BROOKS, *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae Ecclesiasticae Pars tertia (Corpus Scriptorum Orientalium*, vol. 106/Syri ss), 1952.

<sup>(31)</sup> Critical edition by E.W. BROOKS in *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. XVII, Part I. (In the Introduction, pp. III - XV, full bibliographical material concerning John of Ephesus and his work.) Vol. XVIII, Part IV. Vol. XIX, Part II.

<sup>(32)</sup> *Historia ecclesiastica*, IV, 6.

<sup>(33)</sup> *Ibidem*, IV, 8. On the life and ecclesiastical career of Theodosius see J. MASPERO, *Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie*, 1923, pp. 102 sqq.

<sup>(34)</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV, 8.

<sup>(35)</sup> *Ibidem*, IV, 8.

<sup>(36)</sup> *Ibidem*, IV, 55, 49. Cf. J. MASPERO, *op. cit.*, pp. 233 - 238. Of Theodore, Bishop of Philae, see idem, 'Théodore de Philae', in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, vol. LIX, 1909, pp. 299 - 317. On the ecclesiastical career of Longinus in this connection see E. HONIGMANN, *Evêques et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VIe siècle*, 1951, pp. 224 - 230.

In the meantime another native tribe, the Alodae, asked Longinus to evangelize them. Longinus, after taking part for three years in the internal strife of the Alexandrian Churches, resumes in A.D. 579 his mission among the Novadae and decides to respond to the appeal of the Alodae. He reaches their territory, lying south of Novadia, only by crossing the territory of another tribe, the Makuritae (*Μακουριται*)<sup>(37)</sup>. So two other tribal groups intervene in the account of the penetration of Nubia, the Alodae and the Makuritae, of which the ethnic status is not clearly defined, although the former are geographically related to Ethiopia but not necessarily an Ethiopian tribe. Their name is not without relation to Aloa, the destroyed capital city of a Christian kingdom, upstream of Khartoum on the right bank of the Nile, in which some ruins of the Christian past are still preserved<sup>(38)</sup>. According to the text of a 6th century papyrus<sup>(39)</sup> Aloa or Awa was a slave trade market, and this implies ethnic contacts with the southern Sudanese tribes. Such ethnic contacts are further corroborated from El-Masudi's statement that south of Aloa lives a negro people

<sup>(37)</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV, 51.

<sup>(38)</sup> L. DUCHESNE, 'Les missions chrétiennes au sud de l'empire romain', in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, *XVIIe année*, 1896, p. 88. The same authority thinks that the Alodae may have been the people who were defeated by the Axumites in the 5th century, and whose territory was subsequently invaded by the latter, who at the same time occupied Aloa (*ibid.*, p. 88). This hypothesis is based on a Geez inscription of Eizana, edited by D. H. MÜLLER, *Epigraphische Denkmäler aus Abessinien nach Abklatschen von J. Bent* (Denkschriften der Oesterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, vol. XLIII, Part III, 1894) pp. 44 - 55. It is not absolutely certain that Aloa was occupied. The city mentioned in the inscription is Alva, and Duchesne identifies it with Aloa on the authority of A. DILLMANN, *Ueber die Anfänge des Axumitischen Reiches* (Abh. der Kön. Akad. der Wiss. zu Berlin, 1878). The people stated in the inscription as having been defeated are referred to as Novadae, and the coincidence of their territory with that of the Alodae only pleads for the close ethnic relationship of these groups.

<sup>(39)</sup> F. PREISIGKE, 'Ein Sklavenkauf des 6. Jahrhundert', in *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, vol. III, 1906, pp. 415 - 424. Pathermouthis and Anatolios sell to the lady Isidora a young black girl named Atalou:

τὴν διαφέρουσαν ἡμῖν καὶ περιελθοῦσαν εἰς ἡμᾶς  
ἀπὸ δικαίου [...] παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων σωματεμπόρων  
τῶν Αἰθιοπίων δούλην Μαύραν Ἀταλοῦν τῷ ὀνόματι  
μετακληθεῖσαν νυνὶ παρὰ σοῦ Ἐδτυχίαν ὡς ἐτῶν  
δώδεκα πλέω ἔλαττον Ἀλώαν τῷ γένει...

(lines 23 - 27).

The slave-trade between Nubia and Egypt continued to be regularly carried down to modern times. It was based on Dongola, while Cairo provided the great slave-market. See JOHN CARNE, *Letters from the East*, 1826, pp. 228 - 229.

called Bekneh, allied to the Alodae<sup>(40)</sup>. But I cannot infer with L.P. Kirwan<sup>(41)</sup> the cultural independence of Alodia from the rest of Nubia, since the christianization of the former is intimately connected with that of the latter and the Novadae. Even the political fortunes of this area seem to have been closely associated with those of the kingdom of Nubia, inasmuch as we find Aloa in the first half of the 9th century to be under the suzerainty of the King of Dongola<sup>(42)</sup>. A further corroboration of the close relation of Novadae and Alodae is offered by El-Masudi's statement that the *Alawah* constitute the second branch of the Nubians<sup>(43)</sup>. Finally, the Alodae apply for evangelization through the medium of the Novadae by whose example they had probably been influenced<sup>(44)</sup>.

The Makuritae are reported as an inimical tribe inhabiting an intermediate territory between the Novadae and the Alodae, which seems to extend from Dongola to the north as far as Meroe to the south<sup>(45)</sup>. Makurian territory is otherwise confounded with Novadian territory<sup>(46)</sup>. It is with great difficulty that Longinus succeeds in crossing their territory and reaching that of the Alodae<sup>(47)</sup>. The Makuritae are a tribe of the desert who raid and obstruct their neighbours and the communications, and, therefore, they bear a closer resemblance to the Blemmyes to whom they might be related<sup>(48)</sup>. The short chronicle of John of Biclar (570 - 636) speaks of the Makuritae as having sent an embassy to the Emperor Justin the second on the seventh year of his reign (A.D. 573), bringing ivory and a giraffe as gifts and requesting the Emperor's friendship<sup>(49)</sup>.

<sup>(40)</sup> AL-MASUDI, *Les Prairies d'or*, transl. by C. B. DE MEYNARD and P. DE COURTEILLE, vol. II, p. 383.

<sup>(41)</sup> 'Topography of the Christian Nubian Kingdoms', in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. XXI, 1935, p. 62.

<sup>(42)</sup> *Les Prairies d'or*, vol. III, pp. 31 - 34, 39 - 43.

<sup>(43)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 32.

<sup>(44)</sup> See the letter sent by Awarfiula, king of the Alodae, to the king of the Novadae, in John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 53: «But because of the wicked devices of him who dwells between us, I mean the King of the Makoritae, I sent my saintly father to the King of the Blemmyes, that he might conduct him thither by routes farther inland». (PAYNE SMITH'S translation).

<sup>(45)</sup> L. P. KIRWAN, *loc. cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>(46)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 61, n. 6.

<sup>(47)</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV, 51.

<sup>(48)</sup> Of the Makuritae treats extensively U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Storia della Nubia Cristiana* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta, no. 118), 1938, pp. 92 *sqq.*, who assumes a (much contestable) North African origin.

<sup>(49)</sup> *Ioannis Abbatis Biclarenensis Chronica*, ed. TH. MOMMSEN in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*, vol. XI, p. 213.

Turning to the evidence relating to the christianization of Nubia we have to refer to the Coptic inscription found in Dendur near Kababshé, the old Talmis, made available in the first place by Lepsius<sup>(50)</sup>, subsequently edited with corrections and with a detailed commentary by Revillout<sup>(51)</sup>, and later by Blackman<sup>(52)</sup>. The text of the inscription reads:

«By the will of God and by the order of King Eirpanome<sup>(53)</sup> and of Joseph the zealous man in the things of God, Exarch of Talmis; after having received the cross from the hand of Theodore, Bishop of Philae, I, Abraham, this humble priest, have planted the cross on the day at which the foundations of this church have been laid, which is the 27 of Tobe, seventh of the indiction. In this solemn ceremony there was conspicuous.... with Pahpnuti the Stephorus, Epiphanius the keeper of the seals, Mark the Veredarius. Let all those who will read these lines have the kindness to pray for me»<sup>(54)</sup>.

The inscription corroborates the data of John of Ephesus in many respects; (i) Eirpanome is a king of Novadae, one of those with whom the Byzantine missionaries negotiated; (ii) he is vassal to the Byzantine Emperor, a βασιλίσκος, as the presence of the Byzantine Exarch Joseph denotes; (iii) Abraham is a native priest, one of those probably instituted by Julian or Theodore, according to the testimony of John of Ephesus above referred to; (iv) he receives the cross from Theodore, Bishop of Philae, whose person and rôle are well defined in the Ecclesiastical history of John of Ephesus; (v) the suzerainty of the Byzantine Emperor over the Novadae is established by virtue of the Exarch's presence and that of three Byzantine officials. The Exarch has his seat at Talmis.

The date of the event recorded by this inscription is given as A.D. 559<sup>(55)</sup>. Owing to some corruption of the inscribed text some doubts might arise as to the exactness of the chronology which, however, can be circumscribed if the data of the inscription be correlated to those supplied by John of Ephesus. So much Revillout as Letronne,

<sup>(50)</sup> C. R. LEPSIUS, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien*, vol. XII, 1858, Plate 103, No. 39 of Coptic inscriptions (and not 38 as quoted by REVILLOUT).

<sup>(51)</sup> E. REVILLOUT, *Mémoire sur les Blemmyes* (Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, tome VIII, 2ème partie, 1ère série, 1874).

<sup>(52)</sup> A. M. BLACKMAN, *The Temple of Dendur*, 1911, pp. 36 - 37.

<sup>(53)</sup> REVILLOUT: Eirgamenes. This reading is supported by Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, III, 6, 3: ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Αἰθιοπίων Ἐργαμένης.

<sup>(54)</sup> REVILLOUT, *op. cit.*, pp. 4 - 5.

<sup>(55)</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 10 - 11.

to whom I shall soon refer, are ignorant of the important source which is the Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus, so they attribute to Theodore, Bishop of Philae, the evangelization of the Novadae. We know, however, that Theodore was only a successor to Julian, the first missionary to the Novadae, and was left] in Thebaïs on the latter's departure for Constantinople. Julian never came back, and it was Longinus who resumed the missionary task. We also know that Longinus came to Nubia in the year 559 and set himself to the task of organizing methodically the Church by instituting a local clergy. Now we see that in the foundation of the church commemorated by the Coptic inscription Longinus is not present, as might be expected, and the Church is represented by Theodore, which means that the date is perfectly correct assuming that the event took place before the arrival of Longinus. The difficulty subsists, however, in the fact that John of Ephesus does not hint at the existence of a local clergy before the arrival of Longinus; as the inscription implies the existence of such a clergy, the foundation of the church should normally be reported at least one year after the departure of Longinus, six years after his arrival in Nubia, i.e. in 565 - 566, when he again left Theodore, Bishop of Philae, in charge of the Nubian Church. Both dates, anterior or posterior to Longinus, are plausible, given that a local clergy might have been instituted by Julian or Theodore of Philae before Longinus' arrival, the silence of John not being a testimony to the contrary. Moreover the clergy referred to in the inscription is not necessarily of local origin, but one instituted by the Patriarch of Alexandria Theodosios in Thebaïs before his revocation to Constantinople<sup>(56)</sup>.

The next basic evidence in relation to the Christian penetration in Nubia is provided by the Greek inscription of the Nubian king Silko, found in the Egyptian temple of Kalabsché at Talmis, by which he commemorated his victories over the local tribes. This inscription was recorded for the first time by Gau and annotated in the same work by Niebuhr<sup>(57)</sup>. It has been repeatedly studied and many times reedited, the most important editions being those by Lepsius<sup>(58)</sup>, Letronne<sup>(59)</sup>, Lefe-

<sup>(56)</sup> John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ch. LI (= *Patrologia Orientalis*, vol. XIX, p. 157). MONNERET DE VILLARD, *op. cit.*, p. 69, dates the inscription in either 559 or 574.

<sup>(57)</sup> F. C. GAU, *Antiquités de la Nubie ou monuments inédits des bords du Nil situés entre la première et la seconde cataracte*, 1822. See plate I at the end of the work and commentary by NIEBUHR in Appendix, pp. 6 - 7.

<sup>(58)</sup> in *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien*, vol. XII, plate 95, No. 377 of Greek inscriptions. Cf. by the same, 'Die griechische Inschrift des nubischen Königs Silko', in *Hermes*, vol. X, 1876, pp. 129 - 144, where grammatical reasons are given in favour of a Coptic influence in the

bvre<sup>(60)</sup> and Gauthier<sup>(61)</sup>. A few points regarding restitution and interpretation seem still to invite investigation. The main points relevant to the question under consideration are the following:

(i) Silko, a ruler among the Novadae who engaged in war against the Blemmyes, asserts himself as a kinglet, βασιλίσκος<sup>(62)</sup>.

(ii) It is implied that the Novadae are constituted in a kingdom under a regulus, Silko.

(iii) The Blemmyes are a distinct people bordering on the Novadae.

(iv) The Blemmyes are still idolatrous; they seal the treaty of peace by swearing on their idols<sup>(63)</sup>.

(v) The reference to one God (verse 3) implies the Christian religion instituted among the Novadae.

(vi) The territory of the Blemmyes affected by Silko's raid extends from Primis to Talmis.

(vii) The Novadae are not a unified people; they are constituted by a number of tribes, and Silko is at the head of one of them imposing his rule on related tribes<sup>(64)</sup>.

(viii) Silko qualifies himself moreover as king of the Ethiopians. If his pretension

composition of the text. Cf. further U. WILCKEN, in *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, vol. I, 1901, pp. 419, 436.

<sup>(59)</sup> A. J. LETRONNE, *Matériaux pour l'histoire du Christianisme en Egypte, en Nubie et en Abyssinie*, 1832. Contains three mémoires: (i) *Nouvel examen de l'inscription grecque déposée dans le temple de Talmis en Nubie par le roi nubien Silko* (=Mémoires de l'Acad. des Inscr. et B. L., vol. IX, 1832, pp. 128 - 186); (ii) *Observations sur l'époque où le paganisme a été définitivement aboli à Philae dans la Haute-Egypte* (=ibid., vol. X, 1833, pp. 168 - 217); (iii) *Mémoire où l'on discute la réalité d'une mission arienne exécutée dans l'Inde sous l'empereur Constance* (=ibid., vol. X, 1833, pp. 111 - 136). We cite according to the definitive edition of these monographs, in *Oeuvres choisies de A.J. Letronne*, ed. by E. FAGNAN, vol. I, 1881. See pp. 4 sqq.

<sup>(60)</sup> C. LEFEBVRE, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Egypte*, 1907, No. 628, with bibliography relating to the inscription. See also, *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, vol. III, No. 5072.

<sup>(61)</sup> F. GAUTHIER, *Le Temple de Kalabchah* (Les Temples immergés de la Nubie), vol. I, 1911, pp. 203 - 205 and vol. II, plate LXXII.

<sup>(62)</sup> O. G. S. CRAWFORD, 'Christian Nubia: a review', in *Antiquity*, vol. XXI, 1947, p. 11, tends to identify Silko with Salha, whom El Aswani calls the «forefather of Nubians»; he does so on the authority of J. L. BURCKHARDT, *Travels in Nubia*, 1822, p. 497. See also J. MARQUART, *Die Benin-Sammlung des Reichsmuseums für Völkerkunde in Leiden*, 1913, p. ccxlix.

<sup>(63)</sup> καὶ ἄμοσαν μοι τὰ εἰδωλα αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπίστευσα τὸν ὄρκον αὐτῶν (verses 8 - 9).

<sup>(64)</sup> καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι νοβιάδων ἀνωτέρω ἐπόρησα τὰς χώρας αὐτῶν (verses 16 - 17).

is right, the kingdom of Novadia must have extended south so as to include Meroe and thence eastwards as far as Ethiopian territory proper. Two particulars in the text can be invoked in support of this, (i) in verses 9 - 10 we read: ἀναχωρήθην εἰς τὰ ἄνω μέρη μου, which I would interpret, '(after concluding peace) I departed to my upper country', i.e. to the upper regions of my kingdom; (ii) in verse 14 another reference to upper and lower parts of the country is found, 'in lower parts I am a lion and in upper parts I am a bear'. Of course we obtain no accurate indication of geographical delimitation from this, but the reference to the upper country taken in connection with the alleged subjection of the Ethiopians is sufficient evidence to at least a temporary extension of Silko's authority over a large area of upper Nubia.

Since Silko is a christianized local king, the date of the inscription, with regard to the data exposed above, cannot be anterior to Julian's first Nubian mission patronized by the Patriarch Theodosios during his exile in Constantinople (540-548), or to Longinus' mission in 559, so that these events provide two *termini post quem* for the chronological determination of Silko's expedition. Another point of importance is the chronological sequence of the two Nubian kings, Eirpanome, above referred to, and Silko. The fact that Silko's inscription implies that the Blemmyes were still in full possession of their worshipping rights, of which they were dispossessed by Narses during his expedition to Philae<sup>(65)</sup> between 540 and 543, pleads for the chronological precedence of Silko, and, therefore, the expedition against the Blemmyes must also have been carried out during the same years, practically coinciding with that of Narses<sup>(66)</sup>. But this need not be so, since the dispossession of Blemmyes of their Talmis sanctuaries does not entail the abandonment of their national worship and of their making use of idols in sealing a peace treaty. On the other hand only the subjection, not the destruction, of the Blemmyes is implied by the inscription. So these persist as a population of the Nubian desert involved in the subsequent history of the country. I would rather infer the

<sup>(65)</sup> Procopius, *De Bello Persico*, II, 29.

<sup>(66)</sup> This is REVILLELLOUT's conclusion, *op. cit.*, pp. 73 - 75. This authority further refers to a Syriac excerpt of Bar Hebraeus (*apud* ASSEMANI, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, vol. II, p. 330) concerning the christianization of Nubia, which, however, is directly derived from John of Ephesus (references above cited). The same is true with Michael the Syrian (A.D. 1126 - 1199), whose Syriac chronicle draws its data for the period 431 to 565 chiefly from John of Ephesus. More especially with regard to the introduction of Christianity in Nubia, he simply copies the latter. See *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ed. by J. B. CHABOT, IX, 31 (= vol. II, 1902, p. 266) and X, 18 (*ibid.*, p. 348), and *cf.* Introduction, vol. I, 1924, p. xxv, for the conversion of the Alodae. Of course, if Silko is not a christianized ruler, i.e. if verse 3 of the inscription is not taken to imply a single God, but one of many, the date of the events therein recorded may be anterior to the conversion

chronological precedence of Silko from the fact that in Eirpanome's inscription the Christian Church appears as already well established and possessing an ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is not apparent in Silko's inscription. Both inscriptions belong, however, to the Justinian or immediately post-Justinian era, and both confirm the christianization of Nubia as an established fact<sup>(67)</sup>.

So far the sources relating to the introduction of Christianity in Nubia confirm the conversion of the Novadae, but not that of the Blemmyes. Hints to the conversion of the latter are nowhere to be found, nor is such conversion implied. Rather this ethnic group offers resistance to Christianity and obstinately sticks to its worshipping habits. Only the penetration of Christianity among the Novadae may be positively asserted; notwithstanding this, many authorities speak of the conversion of the Blemmyes<sup>(68)</sup>.

Exactly who the Blemmyes are, is not precisely known. Silko's inscription geographically situates their territory in the inferior valley of Nubia bordering Egypt and this is in agreement with Olympiodorus' statement that he crossed the territory of the Blemmyes from Philae to Talmis and from this city to Primis<sup>(69)</sup>. Olympiodorus speaks of four other cities in their country thereby implying the existence of an organized territory, a fact also implied by Priscus' account of a peace treaty concluded in A.D. 453 between the Roman Emperor Maximinus and the Novadae and Blemmyes<sup>(70)</sup>. In concluding this treaty the latter appear as more or less organized political groups. But Priscus refers to them as to two distinct groups. In fact the mass of evidence about the Blemmyes favours the view that they are not a politically and ethnically defined group, but tribal units inhabiting the desert and frequently raiding the neighbouring territories. We possess positive testimonies as

of Nubia. This is in fact what Krall admits (*apud* ROLF HERZOG, *Die Nubier*, 1957, p. 67), but this is only a mere hypothesis which the intimate cultural relation of Silko with Byzantium, otherwise accepted by Krall, contradicts. Such cultural features as presented by Silko's political status would be hard to explain if acquired before the penetration of Christian influences in Nubia.

<sup>(67)</sup> It is only on account of inaccurate use of the data and confusion of the several ethnic names that Gregory Abûl Faraj (Bar Hebraeus), writing in the 13th century, includes the Nubians among the peoples having received Christianity during Constantine's reign (*Historia Compendiosa dynastiarum*, vol. VII, p. 85 of E. Pocock's Latin translation, 1663). REVILLOUT, in *op. cit.*, pp. 37 - 38, easily disposes of this source.

<sup>(68)</sup> So DUCHESNE, *loc. cit.*, p. 84, and C. DIEHL, *Justinien et la civilisation byzantine au VIe siècle*, 1901, p. 400.

<sup>(69)</sup> *Apud* Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. LXXX.

<sup>(70)</sup> Priscus, *Excerpta de legationibus gentium ad Romanos*, XI (ed. BEKKER and NIEBUHR, pp. 153 - 154; ed. DINDORF, pp. 332 - 333).

to the nomadic, dispersed, and politically undetermined status of the Blemmyes. Generally the ethnic designation 'Blemmyes' acquires among ancient authorities a very generic connotation and is used to cover a great number of desert tribes east and west of the Nile, and such generic use is a source of confusion<sup>(71)</sup>. Theocritus situates them among Ethiopians and, what is more important, pushes back their frontier away from the Nile<sup>(72)</sup>, a fact strangely confirmed by Procopius who assigns to the Novadae the territory along the Nile banks and to the Blemmyes the hinterland<sup>(73)</sup>. The southern location of the Blemmyes is also asserted by Strabo, whose account derives from that of Eratosthenes; he defines their territory as extending east of Meroe and assigns to the Troglodytes the Red Sea coast<sup>(74)</sup>; although the Blemmyes and the Megabaroï are to be found *ἐκατέρωθεν Μεροῆς*, they are, on the north, neighbours to the Egyptians<sup>(75)</sup>. In the same passage the *Νοῦ-βαί*, who undoubtedly are our Novadae<sup>(76)</sup>, are defined as a *μέγα ἔθνος* settled on the left side of the Nile from Meroe onwards and possessing an independent status, whereas the Blemmyes and Megabaroï are subjected to the Ethiopians. In another chapter Strabo refers again to the same peoples and makes the important remark that they are nomads, not populous, and that they lead a foraging life<sup>(77)</sup>. So the unsettled condition of these populations is asserted by an ancient and reliable authority. Ptolemaeus also seems to associate the Blemmyes with the Ethiopians geographically<sup>(78)</sup>, so does Dionysius the Periegetes<sup>(79)</sup>. Further connection with Ethiopia is also asserted by other ancient authorities<sup>(80)</sup> of which we must note Cosmas Indi-

(71) Thus Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini*, I, 8, speaks of the introduction of Christianity among Ethiopians and Blemmyes during Constantine's reign.

(72) *Idyll.*, VII, vv. 113 - 114:

*ἐν δὲ θέρει πνύματοισι παρ' Αἰθίοπεσσι νομεύουσιν  
πέτρα ὑπο Βλεμύων, ὅθεν οὐκέτι Νεῖλος ὄρατός.*

(73) *De Bello Persico*, I, 19, 28.

(74) *Geographica*, XVII, 2.

(75) *Ibidem*: *Αἰγυπτίους ὁμοιοί.*

(76) Stephanus Byzantius, *Ethnica*, s. v.: *Νοῦβαι... καὶ Νουβαῖοι καὶ Νουβάδες οἱ αὐτοί.*

(77) *Geographica*, XVII, 53: *λοιπὰ δὲ τὰ πρὸς νότον (Αἰγύπτου) Τρωγλοδόται καὶ Βλέμμυες καὶ Νοῦβαι καὶ Μεγάβαροι οἱ ὑπὲρ Σνήνης Αἰθίοπες, εἰσὶ δ' οὗτοι νομάδες καὶ οὐ πολλοὶ οὐδὲ μάχιμοι, δοκοῦντες δὲ τοῖς πάλαι διὰ τὸ ληστρικῶς ἀφυλάκτους ἐπιτίθεσθαι πολλὰς.*

(78) *Geographia*, IV, 7, 31 (NOBBE edition, 1843).

(79) *Orbis descriptio*, v. 218 - 220 (in C. MUELLER, *Geographi Graeci Minores*, vol. II). Cf. Priscianus, *Periegesis*, vv. 207 - 209, and Anonymus, *Geographiae Expositio*, V, 18 (in C. MUELLER, edition cited).

(80) Vopiscus, *Divus Aurelianus* (in *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*), 33, 41, 10. The citation from Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, LVIII (=61), invoked by LETRONNE (*op. cit.*, p. 58, n. 8) in support of this neighbourhood cannot be retained, because Epiphanius merely lists Blemynia beside Ethiopia, Anubiticum (Nubia) and Axumitis without reference to their geographical delimitations. Le-

coelestes, who associates the Blemmyes with the Ethiopians in the trade of precious stones<sup>(81)</sup>. Despite this association with Ethiopia and the traditional location of the Blemmyes in lower Nubia, other testimonies seem to locate them in the western Nubian desert, east of the Garamantes<sup>(82)</sup> in regions roughly between south-east Libya and Nubia<sup>(83)</sup>. For instance Nestorius, according to Evagrius, was taken captive by the Blemmyes while in exile in the Great Oasis<sup>(84)</sup>. Even if Nestorius' place of exile was not the Great Oasis, but any other of the Egyptian oases, the presence of the Blemmyes west of the Nile in the Libyan desert is implied. This is quite plausible given the geographical mobility of a nomadic population. It is this nomadic condition which allows the presence of the Blemmyes in various localities remote from each other, at different times; thus they occasionally raid the region of Syene, near modern Aswan, a great transit station between Egypt and Nubia, for which we have the testimony of the Arab geographer Idrisi, who calls them Al-Belioun<sup>(85)</sup>. On the other hand, it is curious to find that Al-Masudi, writing in the 10th century, does not mention the Blemmyes in his description of the Negro populations of Nubia and Ethiopia, although he speaks of the Bedjas who might be identified with the Blemmyes<sup>(86)</sup>.

The wide geographical dispersion of the Blemmyes only confirms the hypothesis that 'Blemmyes' is a generic name applying to the native tribes of the Nubian desert east and west of the Nile, bordering on the limits of the civilized world and inevitably having contacts with the Egyptian provinces in the north and the Ethiopian ethnic groups in the south. Their Nubian domain comprised the desert regions from the upper Nile to the Red Sea and west as far as the eastern borderline of the

tronne observes that the Armenian fragment on the four rivers of Paradise quoted by the author of *Mémoires sur l'Arménie*, vol. II, pp. 298 - 299, is but a translation of the above passage of Epiphanius. In another reference to Blemmyes in his tract *De XII gemmis rationalis*, 18 - 19 (= *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. XLIII, c. 331), Epiphanius assigns to Blemmyes the territory from Talmis to Berenice and refers to these cities as being in their possession.

<sup>(81)</sup> *Topographia Christiana*, XI (= *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. LXXXVIII, c. 449B). A reference to Novadae is found in Book III (*Ibid.*, c. 169C).

<sup>(82)</sup> Plinius, *Naturalis Historiae*, V, 8. Pomponius Mela, *De Chorographia*, I, 23.

<sup>(83)</sup> Stephanus Byzantius, *Ethnica*, s.v. *Βλέμυες*. *Etymologicum Magnum*, s.v. *Βλέμυες*. Cf. E. REVILLOUT, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>(84)</sup> Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 7 (ed. J. BIDEZ and L. PARMENTIER, p. 13).

<sup>(85)</sup> *Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne*, ed. and transl. by R. DOZY and M. J. DE GOEJE, 1866, p. 26.

<sup>(86)</sup> *Les Prairies d'or*, vol. III, ch. 33, pp. 1 - 61.

Saharan desert, which justifies the contacts with the 'Garamantes' (another generic name bequeathed by classical times). We must suppose that the Blemmyes had never constituted a compact political entity, but only tribes or tribal groups of greater or lesser importance, which frequently attacked and raided the organized territories of the Roman and Byzantine provinces, as well as those of the Ethiopian kingdoms in the south. This view admits, however, of some qualification. Temporary Blemmyan political entities pretending to the status of 'kingdom' are occasionally met in the course of time. Thus in a Greek text on parchment of gazelle leather edited by Krall we read:

Ἐγὼ Χαραχὴν βασιλείσκος τῶν Βλεμμύων<sup>(87)</sup>,

which affords the elements of information relating to the existence of βασιλίσκοι, reguli, among the Blemmyes, and, therefore, of political units. The above text comes from a letter sent by the above named kinglet to two of his subalterns or parents ordering them to take over the administration of the island named *Τανάρε*. The passage in question reads as follows: καὶ οὐδεὶς κελεύεται κωλύσαι ἡμᾶς, ἐὰν δὲ ἀγνομοῦσιν οἱ Ρωμεῖς μὴ παρέχουσιν συνήθειαν ὁ φύλαρχος οὐ κωλύσεται οὐδὲ ὁ ὑποτύραννος κρατῆσαι Ρωμεῖς ἕως πληρόνεται τὰς συνηθείας τῆς νήσου μου<sup>(88)</sup>. We can gather some other elements of information from this text, which are the φύλαρχος = tribal chief and the ὑποτύραννος = deputy chief, and which point to a hierarchical articulation of the political organization of this Blemmyan 'kingdom'. We cannot of course determine precisely the import of these terms until we are better acquainted with the Blemmyan 'kingdom' in question. We must observe, however, that φύλαρχος, tribal chief, is a term absolutely congruous with the Negro-African political organization based on the tribe as social unit, whereas ὑποτύραννος is an imported political term probably borrowed from Hellenistic or Roman Egypt. Both terms are very characteristic in letting us understand the nature of the kingdom of the Blemmyes, so styled. The preservation of the first term, φύλαρχος, means that the 'kingdom' in question has not as yet overcome the tribal status, whereas the presence of an ὑποτύραννος denotes the hybrid status of the kingdom over which the authority of the regulus Charachin extends. The other elements of information in the letter are also important as they refer to Blemmyan-

(<sup>87</sup>) J. KRALL, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Blemmyer und Nubien* (Denkschriften der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien, Phil. - Hist. Klasse, vol. XLVI, 1900, No. IV). Translation of the Greek documents formerly given by BAILLET in *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1888, pp. 324 - 336.

(<sup>88</sup>) J. KRALL, *op. cit.*, p. 4, and commentary, pp. 6 *sqq.*

Byzantine relations. The *Ρωμεῖς* (=Romans) are threatened with imprisonment if they do not respect the obligations entered into; it is clear that the matter is about a tribute paid to king Charachin by the Roman authorities probably in order to secure Blemmyan neutrality along the frontier, as this was the case under Diocletian; or, which is as probable, the tribute was paid by traders, subjects of the Empire, established on the island in question, who became *φόρον ὑποτελεῖς* to the Blemmyan chief as a matter of buying out their trading privilege.

A second document is a letter addressed to Ροαε, *τῷ εὐγενεστάτῳ ἱερεῖ*, conferring on him the perpetual administration of the same island of Tanare. The letter is sent by either a *βασιλίσκος* named *Πακντίμνε*, or this personage is a high official acting on behalf of the king. The text reads:

*Ἐγὼ Πακντίμνε ἐπιφ . . . . . βασιλίσκου γράφω Ρωάε τῷ εὐγενεστάτῳ ἱερεῖ*

The first editor, Baillet, interprets: *Ἐγὼ Πακντίμνε ἐπιφ[ύλαρχος] βασιλίσκου*. But Krall reads: *Ἐγὼ Πακντίμνε ἐπιφ[ἀνέστατος] βασιλίσκος*<sup>(89)</sup>. In each case there is a reference to a *βασιλίσκος* who is probably a successor or predecessor to the kinglet of the first document. Fresh information derived from this document concerns the priest who benefits from the concession of the administration of the island. It should be noted, however, that no mention of Blemmyes is found in the text of this document, although we are inclined to identify the kingdom implied by it with the one of the first document by reason of the island conceded in both documents. If, moreover, we accept Baillet's version *ἐπιφύλαρχος*, which is supported by the genitive *βασιλίσκου*, our observation concerning the tribal features of this political organization is further confirmed.

The third document<sup>(90)</sup> makes no reference whatever to the Blemmyes and the names *Ἀργών*, *Λάιζε*, *Διόσκορος* point to Egyptian local personages. It is a receipt for money borrowed and a promise of reimbursement, but the name *Σάνσωνος* (*Σανσωνωτος*), which is that of the scribe, occurs in this and the first document, and probably on the second, which means that they are chronologically related. The Coptic document further edited by Krall<sup>(91)</sup> is a notarial act of the 8th century, and the data contained therein are of value for the internal history of Christian Nubia during that period.

The emergence of more or less politically organized units among Blemmyan tribes is otherwise of rare occurrence. Assuredly the indigenous tribes possess their

<sup>(89)</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 4 - 5.

<sup>(90)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

<sup>(91)</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 16 - 17 and commentary.

traditional social organization, but their contact with the Roman-Byzantine world is a cause of friction and affords the opportunity of developing raiding habits at the expense of the settled populations. These habits are an almost permanent feature of Blemmyan relations with the surrounding world in historical times. They can be confirmed by a series of testimonies from contemporary sources. Already in Roman times they take part in an invasion of Egypt during which they occupy Coptos at Ptolemaïs<sup>(92)</sup>. Zosimus offers a better interpretation of this event by stating that the Blemmyes were called by the people of Ptolemaïs to help them carry out their revolt against Probus (276 - 280 A.D.)<sup>(93)</sup>, which is more in agreement with the tribal character of Blemmyan organization. The Christian sources are explicit as regards the inimical attitude of the populations of the desert borderland. Palladius refers to the Blemmyes as to a people inhabiting the neighbourhood of Panopolis<sup>(94)</sup> and on another occasion he speaks of himself as having been exiled to Syene in the neighbourhood of the «Blemmyes or Ethiopians»<sup>(95)</sup>. In the chronicle contained in the Coptic MS 66 in the Vatican Library there is found an account of an invasion of Egyptian towns by Blemmyes and of an incident between them and Senutius the Superior of the monastery of Panopolis<sup>(96)</sup>. In the Life of Saint Pachomius a hermit is captured by the Blemmyes and forced to sacrifice to the idols<sup>(97)</sup>. Nestorius, who was exiled in Thebaïs, suffered a captivity in the hands of the Blemmyes, of which an account is given by Evagrius<sup>(98)</sup>. The same, in a letter to the Prefect of Thebaïs, speaks of the devastation of the Oasis of Ibis after an incursion of a great number of Novadae<sup>(99)</sup>. Senuti, the above mentioned Superior of the monastery of Panopolis, makes a great case of that invasion of which Nestorius had been a victim<sup>(100)</sup>, and which is confirmed by supplementary evidence<sup>(101)</sup>. It is appropriate to refer here

<sup>(92)</sup> Vopiscus, *Probus* (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*), 17.

<sup>(93)</sup> Zosimus, *Historiae*, I, 71 (ed. I. BEKKER, p. 61).

<sup>(94)</sup> *Historia Lausiaca*, XXXII (ed. C. BUTLER, in ROBINSON'S *Texts and Studies*, vol. VI).

<sup>(95)</sup> *Dialogus de vita S. Joannis Chrysostomi*, XX (ed. P. R. COLEMAN-NORTON, p. 126): Παλάδιος δὲ Βλεμμύων ἢ Αἰθιόπων ἐκ γειτόνων φρουρεῖσθαι εἰς Σνήνην καλούμενον τὸ χωρίον.

<sup>(96)</sup> Translation given by E. QUATREMÈRE, in *Mémoires géographiques et historiques sur l'Égypte*, vol. II, 1811, pp. 127 - 128. A corrected text with translation in E. REVILLOUT, *op. cit.*, pp. 23 - 26. Cf. the reference to the incursions of the Blemmyes in the nome of Psoi, in the Life of Schnoudi edited by E. AMÉLINEAU, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> siècles*, 1888, p. 49.

<sup>(97)</sup> *Acta Sanctorum, Maii XIV*, p. 336, A, B, C.

<sup>(98)</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, I, 7 (ed. J. BIDEZ and L. PARMENTIER, pp. 13 - 14).

<sup>(99)</sup> *Ibidem*, I, 7 (p. 15).

<sup>(100)</sup> Coptic text and translation *apud* REVILLOUT, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 - 32.

<sup>(101)</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 32 - 34, and pp. 35 - 39 concerning the expedition of Maximian against the Blemmyes.

to the incursion in the Sināi peninsula and the attack upon the monastery of Raïtha in the region of Pharan<sup>(102)</sup>. The Christian testimonies are corroborated by lay documents from which it can be inferred that the Blemmyan tribes were never wholly assimilated to the settled inhabitants of the Egyptian provinces. Thus in papyrus 67004 of the Cairo collection there is preserved a petition of the authorities of the town of Omboi, addressed to the Duke of Thebaïs, requesting the punishment of a certain Kollouthos who instigated the Blemmyes against them and caused the plundering of the city<sup>(103)</sup>. The same accuse Kollouthos of paganism<sup>(104)</sup>. In another document a reference is made to the devastation of their city by the barbarians<sup>(105)</sup>. The Blemmyes as an unassimilated people irregularly distributed along the southern fringes of the Egyptian diocese constitute a permanent threat to the organized areas of the upper Nile valley under political control, and the repeated frictions between them and the Empire almost assume a legendary character appropriated by poetry, as happened with the wars against the Saracens<sup>(106)</sup>.

Apart from the warlike and raiding habits of the Blemmyes for which the evidence is only too abundant, we obtain almost no information concerning their customs and social organization<sup>(107)</sup>. The few hints as to these we obtain again from Chris-

<sup>(102)</sup> F. COMBEFIS, *Illustrium Christi martyrum lecti triumpho*, 1660, pp. 88 - 132.

<sup>(103)</sup> J. MASPERO, *Papyrus grecs d'époque byzantine* (Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée de Caire), vol. I, 1911, pp. 16 - 18.

<sup>(104)</sup> *Ibidem*, papyrus 67004, vv. 9 - 10, p. 17: ἐν τῷ αὐτὸν τὰ ἱερὰ τοῖς βαρβάροις Βλεμύσι διακαίνισσασθαι.

<sup>(105)</sup> *Ibidem*, papyrus 67009, vv. 17 - 19, pp. 36 - 38: ὡς τῶν ἀλιτηρίων Βλεμύων βαρβάρων ἐπὶ τῶν πάλαι ἡμῶν γονέων τὴν ἡμετέραν πόλιν καὶ πορθησάντων δευνῶς.

<sup>(106)</sup> Cf. the poet of Aphrodito in the verso of papyrus 67097, *ibid.*, pp. 140 - 155: Οὐ γὰρ ἔτι Βλεμύων γένος ὄφραι, οὐ Σαρακηνῶ, οὐ τρόμον ἀνδροφόνον ληίστορος ὄμμασι λεύσεις.

<sup>(107)</sup> U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, *op. cit.*, pp. 84 - 95, tries to sketch the organization and origin of the Novadae and Makuritai. The author makes full use of the archaeological and historical evidence, but these help only to elucidate the political relations, not the tribal origins and social organization. The author's attempt at tracing the relations of the Nubian populations with the Saharan and Libyan stocks is an important step in the elucidation of East Sudanic ethnology; but his theory about a Libyan descent of the Novadae and Makuritai is supported by very thin evidence, viz. the supposed linguistic relation between the terms Novadae and Nababae or Nabadae, inhabitants of the country between Algiers and Biskra, who were driven out of their country by the Romans and are supposed by the author to have reached Nubia by way of the oases and to have affirmed their authority over the native stocks. Apart from this apparently linguistic relation no serious evidence justifying the ethnological connections assumed by the author is adduced. Cf. O. G. S. CRAWFORD, 'Christian Nubia, a review', in *Antiquity*, vol. XXI, 1947, p. 12.

tian authorities, of which the short description contained in the chronography of Gregory Bar Hebraeus is worth noticing<sup>(108)</sup>. The references in this text are really to the Nubians, but by this term can be understood as a matter of course the several tribes of the Nubian desert, and although the description is a late report deriving from Arab sources and refers to 12th century conditions, it is of practically equal value as collateral evidence, because of the stationary social status of the native tribes of the interior of Africa. The Nubians having invaded Upper Egypt, Saïeddin sends an army which defeats them and takes possession of their stronghold Abrîm, which is no other than Primis, the old stronghold of the Blemmyes. The Nubians solicit peace and an Arab envoy is sent to the capital of the Nubian chief, Dûnûkla, i.e. Dongola. This envoy reported certain memorable facts about what he saw in this city:

«and he saw a miserable country, and with the exception of millet the inhabitants thereof had no other grain. And they had a few palms, and they ate bread made of their millet with their dates having nothing else. And there was in it one large building only, which was the palace of the king, and the remainder of the natives of the town dwelt in huts (or, booths) and caves. Now that envoy said, 'one day I saw that the king of the Nubians went forth naked, and he rode upon a horse which was similarly barebacked. And the king went about in a vestment of atlâs cloth which was without seams, his head, which was without hair, being uncovered'»<sup>(109)</sup>.

The few hints about these Dongolese Nubians leave no doubt as to the striking similarities they exhibit with the modern tribes of the Nilotic Sudan. The people live in huts and caves and feed on a diet of extreme frugality. The king goes about naked, at times vested in a seamless pagne, riding on a barebacked horse. Still the people are agglomerated in a town, the low standard of which implies a still inferior status for the sister tribes of the interior. The absence of material wealth, as would have been naturally possessed if these tribes had been integrated in the Roman-Byzantine world, points to their primitive social economy and explains their foraging habits. Now the social status of a primitive community is liable to remain stationary through the ages, and, therefore, we are not surprised to find that ancient writers, as far back as the 3th century, ascribe the same facts to the Nubian tribes regarding their material condition. Thus Heliodorus, in describing the several embassies to king Hydaspis, speaks of that of the Blemmyes as presenting the king with only bows and arrow heads made of wild animals' bones: «these are our

<sup>(108)</sup> *The Chronography of Gregory Abûl Faraj, Bar Hebraeus*, transl. by E. W. BUDGE, vol. I, 1932, pp. 301 - 302.

<sup>(109)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 302.

presents to you, oh king, being inferior to those of the others, but having been successful against the Persians (in the battle) near the river, as you have witnessed»<sup>(110)</sup>. The frugality and the nature of the gifts offered by the Blemmyes leaves no doubt that they belong to a Negro-African ethnic group of the North Ethiopian and Nubian sector. It would be rather vain to try to establish specific identifications regarding the successive tribal groups met throughout Roman, Byzantine, and Arab times in one or another part of Nubia, east as well as west of the Nile, north as far as Egypt, and south on the Ethiopian-Sudanese borderland. The name Blemmyes is a generic designation of the native tribes surrounding in its southern parts the Egyptian diocese in Justinian's time, which had never come under the complete and permanent control of the Roman world, and whose proximity to the Empire was a constant source of friction. Attempts to identify these tribes with any of the modern populations of Upper Egypt, Sudan, and Eritrea are bound to stumble against the generic use of this ethnic term constantly recurring among ancient authorities. This would be the case for instance with the theory identifying the Blemmyes with the ancestors of the modern Beja tribes of Sudan and Eritrea<sup>(111)</sup>. Now it is not meant that the actual Beja tribes are unrelated to the Blemmyes; it is rather asserted that the various tribes designated in several occasions under the name Blemmyes cannot be exclusively Bejas. It would be easy to draw arguments against the exclusive identification of the Blemmyes with the actual Bejas; firstly, there survives a tradition among some Beja tribes according to which they descend from the Troglodytes, another undeterminate ethnic name, applied by ancient authorities to different peoples<sup>(112)</sup>; secondly, in ancient epigraphic monuments of Abyssinia commemorating the intervention of Ethiopian kings in Nubia no mention is found of Blemmyes, whereas Nubians and many other ethnic groups are mentioned<sup>(113)</sup>; thirdly, we have to take into account the testimony of the Arab Geographer Idrisi (A.D. 1100 - 1166) who distinguishes the Al-Belioun (Blemmyes) from the Bodja

<sup>(110)</sup> *Aethiopica*, X, 26.

<sup>(111)</sup> A. PAUL, *A History of the Beja Tribes of the Sudan*, 1954, pp. 1, 24 and Index sub *Blemmyes*. Cf., among others, E. A. W. BUDGE, *The Egyptian Sudan*, vol. II, 1907, pp. 179 - 183.

<sup>(112)</sup> A. PAUL, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>(113)</sup> D. H. MÜLLER, *Epigraphische Denkmäler aus Abessinien*, above cited, pp. 4 - 5 and 16 - 17. However, U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, on the authority of a scholium to Cosmas Indicopleustes, which he does not cite, believes that the *Tayyāṭai* referred to in the first inscription are the Blemmyes (*op. cit.*, p. 26). This could be supported only by the generic connotation of the name Blemmyes. But in that case other ethnic names specified in the inscription might be covered by the same designation as well.

(Beja) when he states that (the Al-Belioun) «errent dans le pays qui se trouve entre les Bodja et les Abyssins, et viennent jusqu' en Nubie; ce sont des nomades sans résidence fixe»<sup>(114)</sup>; finally we may as well trace the ethnic origins of the actual Bejas to one of the peoples mentioned in the inscriptions of Adulis as *Βεγαί*<sup>(115)</sup>, and in the bilingual one of Axum as *Βουγαεῖται*<sup>(116)</sup>.

It is probable that «Blemmyes» is by no means the name by which the various indigenous tribes generally designated themselves, despite the self-styling, referred to above, as 'kinglet of the Blemmyes', by one of their rulers. The name was bequeathed to posterity by classical times and further transmitted by Byzantine writers. The generic use of the name is cause of many a confusion further complicating the ethnological investigation of Nubia. Thus the Blemmyes came to be confused with 'Indians', another undeterminate ethnic name of wide use in classical and Byzantine geography<sup>(117)</sup>. An account of this confusion was given by Letronne over hundred years ago, and I think the arguments offered by this authority in this connection still hold good<sup>(118)</sup>. It is in consequence of this confusion that Philostorgius, writing in the first half of the 5th century, gives us to understand that the Nile has its source in India<sup>(119)</sup>, while Procopius makes the same hypothesis<sup>(120)</sup>. What is worse, in reporting the event of the mission sent by Emperor Constance to the Sabaeans and Himyarites, headed by Theophilus, Philostorgius goes on stating that the latter visited India, and after preaching the gospel in this country he returned to Ethiopia<sup>(121)</sup>. Now Letronne consistently proves that neither is Theophilus Indian, as Philostorgius would have him, nor did he ever pay a visit to India. He was born on an island in the vicinity of the Red Sea and visited Ethiopia, a country named India by Philostorgius<sup>(122)</sup>. The confusion of the ethnic names 'Indians' and 'Ethiopians' as

<sup>(114)</sup> *Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne*, edited and translated by R. Dozy and M. J. DE GOEJE, p. 26.

<sup>(115)</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, vol. III, No. 5127B. D. H. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, p. 5, verse 8.

<sup>(116)</sup> *Ibidem*, No. 5128, and MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, p. 16, verses 4 and 7 - 8. The theories concerning the origin and ethnological status of the populations of Nubia are resumed and confronted with each other in the comprehensive work of ROLF HERZOG, *Die Nubier*, 1957, which provides an extensive bibliography.

<sup>(117)</sup> Cf. Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. L. DINDORF, p. 457, where the Axumite Ethiopians are designated as Indians, and so are the Himyarites of Arabia. The country of Ethiopia is called τὰ Ἰνδικὰ μέγη.

<sup>(118)</sup> *Oeuvres choisies*, vol. I, pp. 28 - 33.

<sup>(119)</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 10.

<sup>(120)</sup> *De Bello Persico*, I, 19. *De Aedificiis*, VI, 1, 6.

<sup>(121)</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 4 - 6.

<sup>(122)</sup> *Oeuvres choisies*, vol. I, pp. 100 - 125.

well as of India and Ethiopia is very common among ancient geographers and is conclusively disposed of by Letronne. To his arguments it is apt to adduce the testimony, ignored by him, of John, Bishop of Nikiou, one of the chief dignitaries of the Jacobite Church in Egypt in the second half of the 7th century. From his Chronicle, preserved in an Ethiopian version, we learn that under Justinian a war broke out «between Indians and Ethiopians». «The King of the Indians», proceeds the chronicle, «was named Endas; he worshipped the star called Saturn. The country of the Ethiopians was not far from Egypt; it comprised three States of Indians and four States of Abyssinians, situated along the Ocean, towards the East»<sup>(123)</sup>. How is it that the Axumite kingdom has command over three Indian provinces? And what does the war between Ethiopians and Indians mean? The statement that both, the three Indian and the four Ethiopian provinces are bordering the ocean towards the East has also to be reckoned with. In fact the 'Indian States' conceal Nubian tribal kingdoms over the territory of which the Axumite kings extended their authority in the 4th and 5th centuries; and the territory in question is only Nubian territory contained between the Nile and the Red Sea. As to the war referred to in the chronicle, it is easy to identify it with the expedition of the Ethiopian king Elesboas (514-542) against the Himyarite Jewish king Dhu-Nuwas of Yemen<sup>(124)</sup>. Nikiou proceeds to explain the cause of the war: «Christian merchants crossing through the country of the star-worshippers and that of the Jews were victims of much trouble. Damnus, the king of the Jews, as soon as the merchants got into his country, killed them and seized their goods»<sup>(125)</sup>. A few lines above this text the chronographer states that the «king of the Indians was named Endâs», but we must suppose that the latter and Damnus are the same person, and both correspond to the Jewish ruler of Yemen Dhu-Nuwas. The two campaigns of Elesboas in South Arabia, which

<sup>(123)</sup> *Chronique de Jean, Evêque de Nikiou*, ed. and transl. by M. H. ZOTTENBERG (*Notices et Extraits des Manuscrits*, vol. XXIV, 1883, pp. 125 - 608). See p. 511.

<sup>(124)</sup> Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographia Christiana*, II, 72 (= *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 88, c. 101). Cf. E. A. W. BUDGE, *A History of Ethiopia, Nubia and Abyssinia*, vol. I, 1928, pp. 261 - 262.

<sup>(125)</sup> *Chronique*, *loc. cit.*, p. 511. The chronographer refers to the massacre, ordered by Dhu Nuwas, which occurred in October 523 in the city of Nagram. Among the slain Christians was the emir Harith-Ibn-Kitab, canonized by the Greek Church as Martyr Arethas and commemorated in the Menologia on October 24. See *Martyrium Arethae*, in *Acta Sanctorum (Octobris 24)*, pp. 721 - 762. Cf. also the version offered by *The Syrian Chronicle of Zachariah of Mytilene* (Byzantine Texts, edited by J. B. BURY), transl. by F. J. HAMILTON and E. W. BROOKS, 1899, Book VIII, ch. iii, pp. 192 - 203.

resulted in the defeat of the last Himyarite king, are well known through Greek, Syriac, and Arab sources, but here should be pointed out the interest and part taken in this war by Justin the First who urged Elesboas to undertake the expedition offering at the same time practical aid in ships for the transportation of Ethiopian troops to Arabia<sup>(126)</sup>; as a consequence of this war Byzantine-Ethiopian relations were greatly strengthened<sup>(127)</sup>.

Assuming the generic use of the ethnic names 'Novadae' and 'Blemmyes' by ancient and mediaeval authorities it would be uncritical to attempt a scientific classification of the variety of the native populations of Nubia based on these terms. We are nevertheless entitled to make use, on the same generic level, of the distinction between Novadae and Blemmyes, and this despite the identity of their broader territorial domain. Such identity might induce us to assume a racial identity too; however, it is clear that the Novadae differentiate in certain respects from the Blemmyes, and this differentiation becomes specific in the case of Procopius who states that the former inhabit the territory adjacent to the Nile and the latter the interior<sup>(128)</sup>, in which he is corroborated by the Arab geographer Masudi<sup>(129)</sup>. This geographical differentiation, observable in Justinian's time, becomes more prominent when viewed on the cultural level; for we see in the course of history the Novadae converted to Christianity and undergoing in a definite way the Byzantine-Christian culture, we find on the contrary the Blemmyes to be repellent to Christian or other cultural influences. The best expression of the cultural conversion of the Novadae is the establishment of the Nubian Church which will prosper and withstand the shock of the Arab conquest for many centuries. But nowhere in our sources are we to meet any references to Christian churches among the Blemmyes. A fact which does not exclude a partial assimilation of Blemmyan elements in the process of the cultural penetration of Nubia. This is only too natural in consideration of the common ethnological background of the two groups and their constant geographical contiguity. The testimony of the Arab geographer Idrisi to the existence of Christian Blemmyes in the region of Syene (Aswan) as late as the 12th century confirms this assumption. In describing the city of Syene as a transit port between Egypt and Nubia this authority says that «les environs de ce pays sont quelquefois sujets

<sup>(126)</sup> See A. A. VASILIEV, *Justin the First*, 1950, pp. 291 - 299, where the sources are cited and the Byzantine-Ethiopian relations during this period are analyzed.

<sup>(127)</sup> *Idem*, 'Justin I and Abyssinia', in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, vol. XXXIII, 1933, p. 73.

<sup>(128)</sup> *De Bello Persico*, I, 19, 28.

<sup>(129)</sup> *Les Prairies d'or*, vol. III, p. 31.

aux incursions des cavaliers noirs connus sous le nom d'al-Belioun. On dit que ce sont des Grecs (Roum) qui professent la religion chrétienne depuis les temps des Coptes, antérieurement à l'apparition de l'islamisme, à cela près qu'ils sont hétérodoxes et jacobites»<sup>(130)</sup>. We might with equal plausibility assume that the people referred to in this text are historical remnants of christianized Novadae whose raiding habits account for their being described as Blemmyes.

Are we then to conclude, from an assumed cultural differentiation, a radical ethnic distinction between Novadae and Blemmyes? This would constitute a rather harsh assumption. It would be much more appropriate, viewing the matter from the standpoint of African ethnology, to propose that the differentiation between Novadae and Blemmyes, besides being cultural, was tribal; that is one presupposing a common ethnic background and expressed in the course of time in the rise of distinct tribal groups. From the strict point of view of African ethnology the designations 'Novadae' and 'Blemmyes' may be deprived of objective ethnic meaning, that is of a meaning corresponding to the African ethnological reality, inasmuch as both names pertain to the ethnic nomenclature of the outside civilized world and there is no evidence of their being original self-designations. Although the people covered by these names may have been in Justinian's time linguistically and tribally differentiated, their racial connection with a major Sudanic group has to be assumed. It would be difficult for example to disconnect them ethnically from the indigenous stocks of southern Nubia and Kordofan. In that case we must admit an outgrowth of these stocks in the direction of the upper Nile valley, naturally attracted by the neighbourhood of the civilized world. This contact of the indigenous Sudanese culture with the civilized world is brilliantly illustrated by the curious but significant juxtaposition of the «cities with masonry (houses) and straw (houses)» referred to in one of the Geez inscriptions of the Ethiopian king Aizana<sup>(131)</sup>. Nowhere amongst historical testimonies has the contact of two extremely differing civilizations been so plainly depicted. Should we explain the emergence of the Novadae out of these Negro-African movements to the north and the prolonged contact with the Roman-Byzantine civilization? Are we to consider the Novadae

<sup>(130)</sup> *Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne*, p. 26. I quote from the above cited translation of Dozy and DE GOEJE.

<sup>(131)</sup> D. H. MÜLLER, *Epigraphische Denkmäler aus Abyssinien*, above cited, pp. 44 - 47: vv. 18 - 19, «ich verbrannte ihre Städte von Mauerwerk und von Stroh»; v. 31, «aufwärts die Städte von Mauerwerk und von Stroh»; vv. 35 - 36, «die Nôbâ-Städte von Stroh (hausern)...; Städte von Mauerwerk der Kasu und Nôbâ!».

as the culturally influenced and assimilated elements among the unstable and nomadic substratum of populations, socially stabilized by the organization of the Christian kingdom of Nubia? In that case the Blemmyes represent the culturally backward and unassimilated element of that same substratum of populations. Linguistic evidence<sup>(132)</sup> and local traditions of origin<sup>(133)</sup> can support the ethnic connections with the southern groups as well as their northward expansion. By assigning to the Novadae and Blemmyes an ethnic relation with the indigenous Negro-African stock we are far from excluding the presence of the Hamitic element which readily intermingled with the Negro stocks of Nubia, or superimposed itself on them in so many sectors of the continent, and this, whatever the meaning we attach to the name 'Hamitic'. The case of the Zaghawa, an important ethnic group of Northern Darfur and Kordofan, whose ethnic status is generally considered Negro-Hamitic, is a case in point<sup>(134)</sup>. The ethnology of Darfur and Kordofan bears out the existence of a Negro substratum of a great variety of races including even pre-Islamic Semitic elements<sup>(135)</sup>. In consideration of this melting-pot of racial and ethnic elements we cannot be correct in speaking of the 'nations' of Novadae and Blemmyes. But we are entitled to make use of these terms to denote the historical and cultural status of the peoples of Nubia during the times under consideration. In the Novadae, for instance, we witness *a culturally differentiated group emerging out of the native tribal complex of Nubia under the impact of the Byzantine-Christian civilization*; whereas in the Blemmyes we have a culturally backward group of tribes pertaining to the same ethnic substratum of the upper Nile valley, *unaffected or least affected by such cultural influences* and making themselves known to history chiefly by their raiding enterprises<sup>(136)</sup>.

<sup>(132)</sup> S. HILLELSON, 'Nubian Origins', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. XIII, 1930, pp. 137 - 148, supplemented by a Note from K. HENDERSON, *ibid.*, vol. XIV, 1931, pp. 90 - 93. Hillelson chiefly relies on E. ZYHLARZ, 'Zur Stellung des Darfur-Nubischen', in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vol. XXXV, 1928, pp. 84 - 123, 188 - 212.

<sup>(133)</sup> See for instance D. S. OYLER, 'Nikawng and the Shilluk migration', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. I, 1918, p. 107.

<sup>(134)</sup> H. A. MACMICHAEL, *The Tribes of Northern and Central Kordofan*, 1912, p. 104.

<sup>(135)</sup> H. A. MACMICHAEL, *History of the Arabs in the Sudan*, vol. I, 1922, ch. 1 - 4.

<sup>(136)</sup> An important attempt at tracing the historical evolution of the Novadae is that by MONNERET DE VILLARD whose *Storia della Nubia Cristiana* covers the Roman, Byzantine, and Arab periods. The author's outlook is exclusively historical and suffers, in my opinion, from the lack of an ethnological conception of the evolution of tribal societies, on account of which he treats the Novadae as determinate historical entities behaving throughout as historical nation; the

The cultural differentiation of the Novadae finds expression in the *elaboration* of the Nubian language. The degree of such elaboration is so much above that attained by the more archaic languages of Africa, that it yields a literary form<sup>(137)</sup>. Nubian has not as yet been assigned to a definite linguistic family of Africa, but the balance of opinion favours its classification as a Negro-African language strongly influenced by Hamitic<sup>(138)</sup>. Before such differentiation took place Nubian was by no means a prominent linguistic medium among the numerous idioms spoken by the various tribes of Darfur and Kordofan. It is thought that Nubian differentiated from its sister idioms of Darfur and Kordofan as a consequence of migratory movements from these regions<sup>(139)</sup>, although it is actually believed that it antedates the more modern migrations<sup>(140)</sup>; as a matter of evolution it has itself ramified into three dialectal forms<sup>(141)</sup>. The very high degree of linguistic differentiation observed in Negro-African languages, although not always due to migratory causes, nevertheless reflects the age long ethnological fermentations to which the African peoples were subject, and which for the most part are beyond the reach of the anthropological and historical investigation.

We have expressed the opinion that the geographical distinction between Novadae and Blemmyes established by Procopius is not without meaning. It argues for the fact that the populations established on the Nile banks were in a better position to undergo cultural influences from the Roman and Byzantine world. Now the most significant achievement of the Byzantine Empire in this respect was the conversion of Nubia into Christianity and the consequent cultural assimilation of a number of tribal groups of the upper Nile valley. This cultural penetration did

same remark applies to his treatment of the Zaghawa, hence he speaks of an «Imperio Zaghawa». Although he admits Kordofan as the country of origin of the Novadae (see p. 39), this view has to be qualified by the fact that not all of the people referred to as Novadae are necessarily to be classed under this heading on account of the generic connotation of the name.

<sup>(137)</sup> See the important treatise by C. H. ARMBRUSTER, *Dongolese Nubian. A Grammar*, 1960, and *idem*, *Dongolese Nubian. A Lexicon*, 1965.

<sup>(138)</sup> «The preponderance of learned opinion to-day seems to be that Nubian is a Sudanic or Negro-African language that has been submitted to Hamitic influences». *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>(139)</sup> H. A. MACMICHAEL, 'Nubian elements in Darfur', in *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. I, 1918, pp. 30 - 48.

<sup>(140)</sup> A. N. TUCKER and M. A. BRYAN, *The Non-Bantu Languages of North-Eastern Africa*, 1956, pp. 75 - 77.

<sup>(141)</sup> 'Nile Nubian' (Dongola and North), Hill Nubian (Kordofan), Midob and Birked (Darfur), *Ibidem*.

not and could not embrace the whole of the tribal and nomadic populations of the desert west and east of the Nile. However, wherever Byzantine-Christian culture penetrated, its influence was strongly felt and its consequences materialized in long term institutions. Within the geographical limits affected the transition from the pagan to the Christian religion was immediate and at places thorough. This is attested by the abrupt change observed in the chronological sequence of the inscriptions of Nubia. As from the reign of Justinian the votive and other inscriptions in the surviving Egyptian temples of Nubia cease, only to be succeeded by Christian inscriptions engraved in the same sanctuaries transformed into Christian churches. Four Christian inscriptions commemorating such transformations stand as landmarks of the history of civilization in Nubia<sup>(142)</sup>. All of them bear the stamp of the Byzantine tradition as regards conception and formulation<sup>(143)</sup>. They crystallize, so to speak, Byzantine-Christian culture and perpetuate the memory of Byzantine influence beyond the political limits of the Empire and far into the African world. Let it be noted that the significance of this influence is not exclusively religious; it equally affects the social sector as it gave rise to social institutions modelled on those of the Roman-Byzantine civilization. The notarial act of the middle of the 8th century edited by Krall<sup>(144)</sup> testifies to an advanced assimilation and competent practice of the Roman-Byzantine law, and presupposes economic relations and institutions having attained a certain degree of development. Such economic documents were also drafted in Nubian<sup>(145)</sup>.

<sup>(142)</sup> Three of these inscriptions were first edited in the *Description de l'Égypte. Antiquités* plate 54, Nos 11, 12, 13, and also by GAU, *Antiquités de la Nubie*, plate XII, Nos 47, 48, 49. The fourth inscription was edited for the first time by LETRONNE, *op. cit.*, p. 79. See the latter's commentary on all four inscriptions, *ibid.*, pp. 77 - 89.

<sup>(143)</sup> We give the text of the first three inscriptions according to Letronne:

1. Τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀπᾶ Θεοδώρου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου.
2. Καὶ τοῦτο ἀγαθὸν ἔργον ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀσιωτάτου πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐπισκ[όπου] Ἀπᾶ Θεοδώρου ὁ Θ(ε)ὸς(ς) αὐτὸν διαφυλάξῃ ἐπὶ μῆκιστον χρόνον.
3. τ(ῆ) τοῦ δεσπότην ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ φιλαν[θρω]πιᾶ μετάρχη [κ]τισάμενος ὁ θεο[φιλ]έστατος Ἀπᾶ Θεόδωρος ἐπίσκοπος [τὸ] ἱερὸν τοῦτο εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἁγίου Στεφάνου ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ ἐν δυνάμει Χριστοῦ. Ἐπὶ τοῦ εὐλαβεστάτου Ποσίου διακόνου καὶ προεστῶτος.

A. J. LETRONNE, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>(144)</sup> J. KRALL, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Blemmyer und Nubien*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 16 sqq.

<sup>(145)</sup> F. L. GRIFFITH, *The Nubian texts of the Christian period* (Abh. der Kön. Preuss. Akad. der Wiss., 1913, No. 8) pp. 54 - 59.

The Christian civilization of Nubia has actually survived chiefly in archaeological material, monumental and epigraphic, and is moreover externally witnessed by Greek, Coptic, Syriac, and Arabic sources. Although the monuments of the material culture abound throughout the country<sup>(146)</sup>, those of the intellectual culture are scanty despite the fact that a literary tradition in Nubia is known to have existed<sup>(147)</sup>. This tradition affirmed itself through the Coptic, but also through the Greek, Syriac, and Nubian languages. Since the discovery of the Nubian writing in 1906 and the identification of the language in 1907 by Schäfer<sup>(148)</sup>, Nubian literary material has accumulated on a relatively significant scale<sup>(149)</sup>. A first collection and edition of Nubian texts was realized by Griffith who also gave a translation of them<sup>(150)</sup>. This material comprises, (i) the narrative of a miracle by Saint Menas, which, according to the editor, derives directly, not through a Coptic version, from a Greek source. The author cites the Egyptian cities of Alexandria and Mareotis by their Greek names, not by their Coptic equivalents, Racoti and Panephaiat; moreover the name "Ελλην=pagan found in the text is not made use of in Coptic<sup>(151)</sup>; (ii) a translation from supposedly Nicene canons, which, however, seems to derive from a pseudo-Nicene text<sup>(152)</sup>. The editor identifies an Arab word which may indicate an Arab influence of undetermined period; (iii) fragments of a lectionary; the translation of the gospel fragments being directly from the Greek text; (iv) a Homily attributed to Christ about the Cross, followed by a hymn to the Cross. This hymn is practically a rendering of a Greek text attributed to Saint Chrysostom<sup>(153)</sup>. It would appear that the veneration of the Cross as developed in the Greek Church and as

<sup>(146)</sup> See the comprehensive survey by U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, *La Nubia Medioevale*, vol. I - II, 1935, and cf. S. CLARKE, *Christian Antiquities in the Nile Valley*, 1912, and G. S. MILHAM, *Churches in Lower Nubia*, 1910.

<sup>(147)</sup> See E. QUATREMÈRE, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 37. E. ZYHLARZ, 'Neue Sprachdenkmäler des Altnubischen', in *Studies presented to F. L. Griffith*, 1932, pp. 187 - 195. *Idem*, *Grundzüge der Nubischen Grammatik im christlichen Frühmittelalter (Altnubisch)*, 1928 (with Bibliography). For Zyhlarz's linguistic contributions to Nubian ethnology and his theory of Nubian origins see ROLF HERZOG, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-37.

<sup>(148)</sup> H. SCHÄFER, in *Sitzungsberichte der Berl. Akad. der Wiss.*, Nov. 8, 1906 and June 20, 1907.

<sup>(149)</sup> Of course, modern linguistic material is made more extensively available. This would provide the background for a historical consideration of the language. We point here to the dialect texts edited by H. JUNKER and H. SCHÄFER, *Nubische Texte im Kemzi-Dialekt* (Akad. der Wiss. in Wien, Schritten der Sprachenkommission, vol. VIII), 1921.

<sup>(150)</sup> F. L. GRIFFITH, *The Nubian texts* etc. above cited. Most of these texts have been reproduced in E. ZYHLARZ' *Grundzüge der nubischen Grammatik* above cited.

<sup>(151)</sup> F. L. GRIFFITH, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>(152)</sup> MANSI, *Conciliorum Collectio*, vol. II, pp. 947, 982.

<sup>(153)</sup> *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. L, col. 819.

crystallized in the twenty-four «*Οἴκοι* of the Holy Cross» incorporated in the «*ᾠρολόγιον*»<sup>(154)</sup>, had been adopted in the Nubian liturgy. Other documents include an act of sale, already referred to, small unidentified fragments, the text of a mutilated graffito almost entirely in Greek and a translation from Psalm XXXIII in which the Greek text is closely followed<sup>(155)</sup>.

Nowhere does the direct influence of the Byzantine liturgical tradition make itself more evident than in the funerary inscriptions which abound on Nubian funeral monuments, and of which a great number have been edited by Lefebvre<sup>(156)</sup>. These funerary inscriptions are generally in Greek and reproduce the text of prayers from the Acolouthy of the deceased in its standard form found in the Greek Euchologion<sup>(157)</sup>. Many other elements in the Nubian inscriptions testify to a direct derivation of liturgical data from the Byzantine prototypes and not from the Coptic equivalents<sup>(158)</sup>. Such inscriptions are also found in Coptic. Junker's close analysis of the latter and his comparing the Nubian Coptic with the Egyptian Coptic inscriptions reveals that the former stand in complete independence in regard to the latter<sup>(159)</sup>. Such independence of the Nubian Christian from the Coptic tradition is more striking in religious architecture. This latter fact may be due to the original church edifices having been built and decorated by Byzantine architects and artists from Egypt. This tradition persisted inasmuch as later churches continued to be modelled on those Byzantine prototypes. In pointing out this fact Griffith says that «all the known churches of Nubia, both early and late, simple as they are, are recognisably Byzantine rather than Coptic, both in plan and in painted decoration»<sup>(160)</sup>.

<sup>(154)</sup> See «*ᾠρολόγιον τὸ Μέγα*, Venice, 1895, pp. 503 - 516.

<sup>(155)</sup> E. L. GRIFFITH, *op. cit.*, pp. 57 - 60.

<sup>(156)</sup> *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Égypte*, above cited, see nos 564 (Syene), 636 (Colasucia), 641 (Dongola), 645, 646, 647, 656, 659, 664, 667 (Nubia). Other inscriptions in the above cited work of MONNERET DE VILLARD, *La Nubia Cristiana*, vol. I.

<sup>(157)</sup> The most commonly occurring text is:

Ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ πάσης σαρκός, ὁ τὸν θάνατον καταργήσας καὶ τὸν ἄδην καταπατήσας καὶ ζωὴν τῷ κόσμῳ σου χαρισάμενος, ἀνάπαυσον τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ δούλου σου...

Cf. *Ἐυχολόγιον τὸ Μέγα*, Venice, 1898, p. 394.

<sup>(158)</sup> Cf. H. JUNKER, 'Die christlichen Grabsteine Nubiens', in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, vol. LX, 1925, pp. 111 - 148.

<sup>(159)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 143. An important inscribed funerary stela was found in Armenna during the 1962 Pennsylvania - Yale expedition. The text of the inscription confirms the adoption of the Byzantine style in Nubian ritual. See JOHN F. OATES, 'A Christian Inscription in Greek from Armenna in Nubia', in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. XLIX, 1963, pp. 161 - 171.

<sup>(160)</sup> F. L. GRIFFITH, 'Oxford excavations in Nubia', Part XLIV, in *Annals of Archae-*

The question naturally arises — how the Nubian religious culture preserved so intact the Byzantine tradition in spite of its original Monophysite character and the constant impact of the Jacobite and Melkite Christianity? This phenomenon must probably be accounted for by the fact that the first missionaries to preach Christianity in Nubia, Julian and Longinus, came from Constantinopolitan ecclesiastical circles<sup>(161)</sup>, and their mission was carried out before the consolidation of a Monophysite liturgical tradition; there subsists also the possibility that the Alexandrian Liturgy had been rendered into a Coptic version posteriorly to the conversion of Nubia. On the other hand it should be borne in mind that the Melkite, i.e. the Imperial Church of Egypt, which adhered to the dogma of Chalcedon, maintained for a long time direct connections with at least certain parts of Nubia. The presence of Melkite clergy in Nubia is attested by Michael the Syrian who says that «des Grecs chalcedoniens troublaient autant qu'ils pouvaient ces trois nations et même, quand l'occasion s'en présentait, les *Nubiens et les Abyssins*» (my italics)<sup>(162)</sup>. We have reasons to believe that the official Orthodox Church extended its missionary activity in other parts of Nubia and amongst other pagan peoples of the desert, but such activity has been deliberately ignored by the Monophysite writers who consigned the facts about the conversion of Nubia. The testimony of John of Biclar relating to the conversion of the Makuritae, a people already referred to, and the Garamantes, with whom the actual Kura'an may be identified, can be considered as decisive in this respect<sup>(163)</sup>. However, the Monophysite origins of the Nubian Church could not but finally be a cause in bringing over this Church into the tradition of the Coptic Church under the doctrinal domination of which it remained subjected. The Coptic spiritual authority over the Nubian Church was fully asserted in the 7th century, when the Jacobite Church assumed practical control of that Church by handling the election of bishops, availing itself of a long vacancy in the Melkite Patriarchal See of Alexandria<sup>(164)</sup>.

*ology and Anthropology*, vol. XIII, 1926, p. 52, n. 2. The same authority reports on the Christian antiquities of Faras and especially on the Citadel and Rivergate churches of Faras where iconographic material has been preserved. *Ibid.*, pp. 50 - 93 and plate.

<sup>(161)</sup> H. JUNKER, *loc. cit.*, p. 148.

<sup>(162)</sup> *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, transl. by J. CHABOT, vol. III, p. 226.

<sup>(163)</sup> *Ioannis Abbatis Biclarenensis Chronica*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 207 - 220. Cf. L. P. KIRWAN, 'Christianity and the Kura'an', in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. XX, 1934, pp. 201 - 203.

<sup>(164)</sup> Eutychius, *Annales*, 385 - 388 (= *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. CXI, col. 1122 - 1123). The antagonism between the two Churches and the alternation of the assertion of their respective

The Nubian Church was quick to extend its jurisdiction over the whole Nubian territory. The geographical aspect of the Christian influence can be measured by the number and the locations of the episcopal sees which were progressively established throughout upper and lower Thebaïs. Gelzer composed out of various sources a Notitia of Metropolitan sees and Bishoprics under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, which is indicative of the penetration of the Byzantine Church into the Nubian geographical sector<sup>(165)</sup>, but this catalogue must be interpreted with two qualifications, firstly, as incorporating different stages of Byzantine jurisdiction, being derived from data chronologically varying from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon; secondly, as representing the spiritual and, in a measure, the administrative jurisdiction of the Byzantine Church in Nubia, but not necessarily the effective jurisdictional situation in the Nubian Church as it subsequently evolved on independent lines; it represents namely the geographical extension of the Byzantine Church at the time of the Nubian Church's direct dependency on the Alexandrian Patriarchate in so far as the latter authority continued to be under the control of the Constantinopolitan Church. After the Arab conquest the evolution of the Nubian Church proceeded on independent lines along with a doctrinal allegiance to the Monophysite rite. The original administrative structure conferred upon it by the Byzantine Church naturally underwent several modifications according to historical requirements. As from the 7th century onwards the Notitia episcopatum of the Nubian Church must differ appreciably from the early Byzantine list, especially as regards the creation of new sees and the abandonment of old ones. The geographical and historical identification of the Nubian ecclesiastical sees, however, is far from having been achieved and requires intensive investigation based on the archaeological material and the information supplied by the topographical descriptions of ancient and modern travellers<sup>(166)</sup>.

The decline and effacement of the Christian civilization of Nubia was not an immediate fact, but a matter of protracted resistance and struggle against the ma-

authorities over the Nubian Church is best depicted by Maqrizi in his History of the Copts. See *Maqrizi's Geschichte der Copten*, ed. and transl. by F. WÜSTENFELD, 1845, pp. 47, 57.

<sup>(165)</sup> H. GELZER, 'Ungedruckte und wenig bekannte Bistümerverzeichnisse der orientalischen Kirche' (II), in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, vol. II, 1893, pp. 22 - 72 (see pp. 24 - 29). I have not had access to the work of J. KRAUS, *Die Anfänge des Christentums in Nubien*, 1930, which contains a geographical map of the episcopal sees and churches of Nubia. See regarding this work, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. XVII, 1931, p. 250. See generally for the episcopal sees Appendix II.

<sup>(166)</sup> Cf. R. P. VANSLEB, *Nouvelle relation d'un voyage fait en Egypte*, 1677, pp. 384 - 413, for lower Thebaïs.

terial and cultural forces released by the affirmation of Islam as a pretender to universal authority. Many centuries after the Arab conquest of Egypt Byzantine ecclesiastical tradition was persevering in Nubia. We find that in the 9th century an organized Christian kingdom prospers in Nubia, the influence of which overlaps into the contiguous territories<sup>(167)</sup>. The kingdom possessed an organization of the traditional Byzantine type, viz. a monarchical constitution coupled with an instituted Church<sup>(168)</sup>. Glimpses into the features of this organization we get from such authorities as Michael the Syrian who describes in detail the Nubian embassy of the year 836 (=1146 A.D.) to the Caliph Al-Mutasim at Bagdad, headed by Georgios, son of the Nubian king<sup>(169)</sup>. The embassy aimed at the settlement of a fiscal dispute with the northern Islamic neighbour of the kingdom. From this account we shall retain the description of Georgios' entry into the city of Bagdad, for which we quote the relevant text from the editor's translation:

«Lorsque le prince arriva à Callinice, l'émir de Djézireh vint à sa rencontre. Les Taiyayê et les chrétiens l'accompagnaient avec honneur pour voir le prodige nouveau qui était arrivé dans leur pays. Il était monté sur un chameau avec une selle tout à fait différente des selles des autres pays. Au dessus de lui était un parasole en forme de coupole recouvert d'ornements de corail et au sommet duquel était fixée une croix d'or. D'une main il tenait un sceptre, et de l'autre il portait une croix; à sa droite et à sa gauche marchaient de jeunes Nubiens qui portaient des croix dans leurs mains; devant lui marchait aussi un évêque qui était monté et tenait pareillement une croix à la main. Toutes ces croix étaient d'or. Le reste des cavaliers et des esclaves qui l'accompagnaient étaient tous noirs»<sup>(170)</sup>.

After having been received by the emir of Bagdad, Georgios proceeds between two rows of soldiers wearing a crown composed of a tiara topped by a cross. The simi-

<sup>(167)</sup> MONNERET DE VILLARD, in his *Storia della Nubia Cristiana*, pp. 195 *sqq.*, points in this connection to a Nubian-Christian penetration of Central Sudan in the 12th and 13th centuries. In the following section we shall have to refer to much earlier influences.

<sup>(168)</sup> See the list of Nubian kings supplied by G. ROEDER, 'Die christliche Zeit Nubiens und des Sudans', in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, vol. XXXIII, 1912, pp. 367 - 373. The chronology, however, is based on insufficient material and at points inaccurate.

<sup>(169)</sup> The name Georgios seems to be traditional in the succession of the Nubian kings. Cf. for instance the Greek and Coptic inscriptions engraved on a circular tray of white marble discovered in 1921 in the Nitrian monasteries, concerning which see the paper of F. L. GRIFFITH, 'Christian Monuments from Nubia', in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. XIV, 1928, May 23. The Greek inscription is a funeral prayer for the rest of the soul of King Georgios, which reads: ... ἀνάπαισον τὴν ψυχὴν τὸν δοῦλόν σου (sic) Γεωργίου βασιλέως etc. This Georgios lived between 1106 and 1158 according to the Coptic inscription.

<sup>(170)</sup> *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. III, pp. 92 - 93.

larities presented to the Byzantine ceremonial are striking. The prince holds the sceptre with the one hand and the cross with the other, which reminds us of the insignia of the Byzantine Basileus. He wears a crown surmounted by a cross, which is also part of the Byzantine sacred vestment. And he is preceded by three bishops (two died en route) holding the cross, while at his sides walk young people also bearing crosses. These features are supplemented by the Nubian inscription of King Mercurius at Taifa (A.D. 710), in which the King is styled *φιλόχριστος βασιλεύς*<sup>(171)</sup>.

We thus establish that the Byzantine culture and tradition have been assimilated by a people culturally and historically totally heterogeneous. Some non-Byzantine elements in Nubian tradition can also be gathered from the above description. There is the parasol carried over the King's head, which is an Oriental and Egyptian feature adopted in local custom<sup>(172)</sup>. The King is mounted on a camel instead of riding a horse as was usual even among Arab emirs on state occasions. It is to be noted also that a number of people of his retinue, riders and slaves, are negroes, a fact giving us a glimpse into the ethnological status of the Nubian population. This latter point is further clarified by another passage of the same chronicle in which are exposed the reasons that motivated the King's visit to Bagdad:

«Les rois des Nubiens, depuis les temps anciens, donnaient chaque année au roi des Taiyayê 360 esclaves Maures (= nègres, Editor), des singes apprivoisés qui savaient imiter les hommes dans leurs manières, des animaux qu'on appelle zorapheh (= giraffe, Editor), des défenses d'éléphants, et des peaux de tigres. Les rois des Taiyayê donnaient aux Nubiens un certain nombre de *Khourê* de froment, des légumes du pays d'Égypte, un certain nombre de *Kailê* d'huile d'olive et des étoffes pour vêtements précieux, et ils permettaient au roi des Nubiens d'envoyer percevoir le tribut des Nubiens qui habitaient dans le pays des Taiyayê, sans empêchement. En vertu de ce pacte et de cet arrangement, les Taiyayê ne s'emparaient point des Nubiens et les Nubiens ne dépassaient point la Syène, qui est sur la frontière du côté de l'Égypte et de l'empire des Arabes»<sup>(173)</sup>.

We note from this text that the slaves supplied by way of exchange are negroes certainly taken from among the population under the authority and the rule of the Nubian King. The tribute consists also of monkeys, wild animals, ivory, and tigers' (=leopards?) skins, supplied in exchange for commodities proper to the civilized world, viz. agricultural products and cloths. The Nubian products are perfectly

<sup>(171)</sup> MONNERET DE VILLARD, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

<sup>(172)</sup> Parasols are not an exclusively Asiatic feature as MONNERET DE VILLARD states (*op. cit.*, p. 107). They are equally found in ancient Egypt, and they survive in fresco paintings of Thebes and Memphis. Their extensive use among Negro-African States as a protecting canopy of great chiefs on ceremonial and other occasions must be traced probably to Egyptian tradition.

<sup>(173)</sup> *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, vol. III, pp. 90 - 91. Concerning the *modus vivendi* esta-

characteristic of a Negro-African economy, they all represent typical values of tropical societies. There is ample evidence that the people represented here as Nubians are Negro-African stock, eventually Nilotic or Nilo-Hamitic stock, although we cannot speculate as to their exact origins and identity. The most probable hypothesis in this connection is that they are composed of Negro-Sudanese tribes of various ethnic affinities and origins having acquired a certain degree of ethnic homogeneity under the cultural sway of Christian Nubia. The age-long slave-trade between Nubia and Egypt provided chiefly or in a large measure by Negro populations of the south and south-west indicates constant contacts and close acquaintance of the Nubian rulers with the Negro-African world of the African hinterland. Long before Arab slave-traders penetrated into the interior of Africa, the Nubian kings were perfectly acquainted with the sources of supply of this human commodity with which the great markets of Egypt and thereby those of the Middle East were being supplied without intermission from ancient to modern times<sup>(174)</sup>. It is conceivable, therefore, that the contacts between peoples along the whole upper Nile valley, whether negative, as in the case of inimical frictions and clashes or of migrations necessitated by political and economic conditions, or positive, as in the case of trade intercourse, should have resulted in a series of ethnological fermentations in the course of which the distinct personality of an ethnic group might disappear under the influence of external circumstances, while, on the other hand, the same process might give rise to new ethnic groups or differentiated ethnic units. The intervention of Byzantine cultural influences amidst such an ethnological complex undergoing continuous change brought a degree of stabilization over a section of this world by giving rise to the Christian kingdom of Nubia<sup>(175)</sup>. The importance of this kingdom must be assessed in the context of the historical and cultural past of the whole Negro-Sudanic sector of the African Continent. Between the earlier christianized Egypt and Ethiopia there intervened the immense expanse of Nubia, a country that resisted to the introduction of Christianity as late as the middle of the sixth century. Its peoples exhibit ethnic instability and fluidity and down to the

published between the Christian Nubians and the Arabs referred to by this authority, cf. A. FATTAL, *Le statut légal des non-Musulmans en pays d'Islam*, 1958, pp. 54 - 56.

(<sup>174</sup>) See above, note 39. To the references there cited add the testimony of another modern traveller, F. HASSELQUIST, *Voyages and Travels in the Levant in the years 1749, 50, 51, 52*, (transl. from the Swedish), 1766, p. 102, who witnessed the trade of Negro slaves from Ethiopia and Nubia (Dongola) at the Cairo slave-market.

(<sup>175</sup>) It is not argued that the Novadae or any other Nubian stock at Justinian's time were

times of Justinian the influence of the civilized world upon them remains imperceptible. Ethiopia could communicate with the outside world through the ports of the Red Sea, thus affording to forgo land connections with the farthest north. There thus came to subsist in North-Eastern Africa an immense cultural gap due to the geographical disconnection of Ethiopia from Egypt, which was filled up by the conversion of Nubia and the emergence of a Christian kingdom that contributed to the unification and ethnic consolidation of a great number of tribal and disparate societies. If Egypt succumbed to the Islamic invader, Ethiopia was able to preserve her Christian status probably because of the intervening Nubian block. We know that Christian Nubia withstood Islamic domination for about seven centuries after the Arab conquest of Egypt, and only in the 14th century did the last vestiges of political authority disappear as a consequence of the growth of the neighbouring Arab tribes on the one part, and the invasion, on the other part, of the Fung dynasty, the founder of the kingdom of Sennar<sup>(176)</sup>. I think the historical role of Christian Nubia can only be properly assessed in relation to the historical and cultural past of the peoples pertaining to the vast ethnic complex of Central and Western Sudan.

not possessed of any cultural tradition previous to the introduction of Christianity. Whatever their original country and their racial affinities, they do not seem to be exempt from the characteristics of a nomadic condition, either contemporary or earlier. The great number of burial grounds excavated south of Talmis (Kabâbsha) as far south as Wadi-Halfa, assigned to many periods, proves that the populations living in these areas had achieved permanent settlements. See W. D. EMERY and L. P. KIRWAN, *The Excavations and Survey between Wadi Es-Sebua and Adindam*, vol. I - II, 1935, where 25 burying grounds are surveyed. As to the royal cemetery excavated by the same archaeologists at Ballana between Abu Simbel and Adindam, supposed by them to be a Blemmyan cemetery (*Idem*, *The Royal Tombs of Ballana and Qustul*, 1938), it has to be ascribed to the Novadae before their conversion to Christianity, and in any case the Meroitic influence here is certain. See A. J. ARKELL, *A History of the Sudan*, 1955, p. 181.

<sup>(176)</sup> E. A. W. BUDGE, *The Egyptian Sudan*, vol. II, 1907, pp. 199 - 200. The northern Christian kingdom of Nubia succumbed in the year 1323. The foundation of the kingdom of Sennar, which meant the abolition of the southern Nubian Christian kingdom, is dated 1504. See O. G. S. CRAWFORD, *The Fung Kingdom of Sennar*, 1951, pp. 1, 27, and *passim*.

### III

#### THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN SUDANESE SECTOR AND SAHARA

Can we speak of Byzantine influences on the central and western Sudanese civilizations? The idea is certainly bold and has to be borne out by positive evidence before being in any way asserted. It is more proper to conceive of the question in terms of Christian cultural influences emanating from Byzantium, but exerted through and by Nubia. For such penetration of cultural currents Nubia served as the intermediate link between the Byzantine and Near Eastern world and the Negro-African peoples of the great Sudanese belt. This function must be understood in geographical as well as historical terms. The present inquiry shall limit itself to the examination of the relevant data of Negro-African ethnology besides taking into account any external testimonies available. Of course our data are by no means exhaustive, they rather purport to stimulate research in a field in which such apparently heterogeneous subjects as Negro-African ethnology and Byzantinology meet.

#### § 1. *Survival of the sign of the cross.*

The sign of the cross as a survival of early Christian practice has been observed in several parts of Sudan and Nubia, among islamized or pagan tribes. In the Egyptian Sudan, Khartoum province, the new-born child used to be marked with the sign of the cross on the forehead and the eyebrows as a protection against the evil eye<sup>(177)</sup>. Other uses of the sign of the cross as a protection for milk and other foodstuffs on special occasions have been observed, while a curious case has been reported of a boy, who had a large white cross of the Greek pattern chalked on his stomach, presenting itself to a sheikh to ask his blessing<sup>(178)</sup>. The practice of the sign of the cross has been reported by the same observer as being common in Omdurman, Gezira and Kordofan. The same practice has been reported also from Dongonab on the Red Sea<sup>(179)</sup>. So far these practices have been reported from Nubian territory within

<sup>(177)</sup> J. W. C., in *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. I, 1918, p. 61.

<sup>(178)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 62.

<sup>(179)</sup> G. Crossland, *ibidem*, p. 216.

the limits of the Christian kingdom of Nubia. Further instances have been reported from the Nuba, among the Hill Nubians, where sick persons are marked with the sign of the cross, while young Nuba girls at the point of setting out to dance spread some dust on their chest in the manner of making the sign of the cross customary to the Greek Orthodox rite. Very characteristic is the case of a little Nuba boy accused of stealing, making the sign of the cross on his chest in denial of the charge<sup>(180)</sup>.

We obtain more tangible data about the survival of the use of the cross from the central and western Sudanese sectors. It is to the genius of Frobenius we owe the first collection of indications relating to Christian survivals in the civilizations of the Sudanese kingdoms. The German expedition to inner Africa headed by this scholar brought to light in 1912 the first specimens of Byzantine-Christian art foremost of which is an antique bowl with elaborately carved decorations on its interior surface with a Byzantine cross supercarved on it. The cross has at its centre a big circle out of which extend its arms<sup>(181)</sup>. This is a remarkable feature inasmuch as it is met in early Christian art<sup>(182)</sup>, and moreover has been observed in far remote regions of Sahara. So, for instance, the style of the cross in Frobenius' bowl is basically identical to the style of the *adrinn* cross, i.e. the cross carved on the 'virginity disk' borne by girls among the native inhabitants of the Siwah oasis in Eastern Libya<sup>(183)</sup>. There follow two horse saddles with crosses on the pommel from Bussa and Gobir, quite Byzantine in style and mode of use by way of raised shields<sup>(184)</sup>. To these must be added the daggers of the Nupe, in Nigeria, in which the hilts are cross-shaped, and those of the Tuareg<sup>(185)</sup> to which we shall have to refer later. The king of the Nupe, in Nigeria, according to an ancient tradition, used to kneel before a cross fixed on the partition wall of the royal sleeping apartment at morning and evening; sacrifices were made before the same cross on two days of the week, Sunday and Thursday<sup>(186)</sup>.

<sup>(180)</sup> D. N. MAC DIARMID, in *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. IV, 1921, p. 171.

<sup>(181)</sup> L. FROBENIUS, *Und Afrika sprach*, vol. II, 1913, plate facing p. 336.

<sup>(182)</sup> Cf. O. DALTON, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East... of the British Museum*, 1901, No. 378, p. 82.

<sup>(183)</sup> W. B. CLINE, 'Anthropometric Notes on the Nations of the Siwah Oasis', in *Harvard African Studies*, vol. X, 1932 (= *Varia Africana*, V). See plates 15a, 16a and XXII.

<sup>(184)</sup> FROBENIUS, *op. cit.*, plate facing p. 344.

<sup>(185)</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 353, 355.

<sup>(186)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 352. Frobenius finds rather inexplicable the association of Thursday with the cross. But in the Greek Liturgy of the Passion Thursday is the day of the crucifixion and in Or-

A cross, moreover, was erected on the thwart of the vessel on board which the king travelled on the Benue river, a fact reminding us of the cross erected on the Imperial Byzantine ships as a matter of protection.

Several years after Frobenius, Meek was in a position to collect important data concerning the politico-sacral use of the cross in Northern Nigeria. He notably reports that one of the kings of Gobir was called Momadu Maigiche (= Momadu of the Cross). This prince made use of a cross as a talisman, of which he was robbed with the collaboration of his wife<sup>(187)</sup>. Bronnum states of the Bachama, a tribe connected with Gobir, that they have a cross as their sacred symbol<sup>(188)</sup>. A most conspicuous case is to be found in the shrine of the Obba's ancestors in Benin, i.e. the royal shrine, of which Ling Roth transmitted a photographic record in his work on Benin<sup>(189)</sup> followed by an improved one given by Amaury Talbot in his ethnographic account of the peoples of Southern Nigeria<sup>(190)</sup>. In the shrine in question are found several objects placed on a round altar pertaining to the Obba's royal status, among which four ivory tusks, two of which standing beside the altar, covered throughout with carvings of a very elaborate style, their base being fitted into large bronze heads. Between these and in the middle of the table there stands the figurine of the Obba's father (in all probability a bronze figurine) representing the king holding in his right hand an *ebere*, sort of spear-head which, however, according to C. Punch, is ornamental, not a weapon<sup>(191)</sup>, and which may easily be taken for a *λάβραρον*, and in his left hand a club in the form of a cross<sup>(192)</sup>. The king's headdress is topped by a large ring and his dress bears a striking resemblance to the attire, *ἀμφίσεις*, of a Byzantine *basileus* in campaign. In this specimen we have not just a case of cross survival, but

thodox ceremonial the commemoration of this event is liturgically represented by means of a cross on which the image of Christ's body is suspended.

<sup>(187)</sup> C. K. MEEK, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. I, 1925, p. 72.

<sup>(188)</sup> *apud* MEEK, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 73.

<sup>(189)</sup> H. LING ROTH, *Great Benin. Its Customs, Art and Horrors*, 1903, figure 84, p. 79, from a photograph taken by C. Punch on May 1891. The *Juju* altar in this photographic record can be identified with the one of Amaury Talbot's photograph taken some thirty years later (see following note). Only the disposition of the rectangular objects (bells) on the altar is slightly different, and probably some additions were included in the meantime.

<sup>(190)</sup> P. AMAURY TALBOT, *The Tribes of Southern Nigeria*, vol. II, 1926, fig. 68, facing p. 308, and vol. III, 1926, fig. 129, facing p. 486.

<sup>(191)</sup> *Apud* H. LING ROTH, *op. cit.*, p. 60, fig. 69, 70.

<sup>(192)</sup> Further specimens of the cross, *ibidem*, p. 61, fig. 70a and 71.

something more, a hint as to cultural influences of a much broader significance<sup>(193)</sup>.

The archaeological evidence for the diffusion of the cross throughout the Sudanese populations is not negligible. «There can be no doubt», says Frobenius, «but that the Cross played a predominant part in these regions as a symbol of holiness»<sup>(194)</sup>. Any systematic exploration of Negro-Sudanese art may lead to the discovery of vestiges of the cross. Such a vestige is probably distinguishable on the top end of an iron staff called a fetish-stick in the Benin collection of the Leiden Museum of Ethnology<sup>(195)</sup>. I should also point out the sign of the cross in the form of a bas-relief together with other designs of religious significance figuring at the entrance of a Dahomean shrine, as well as the insignia of a Dahomean king appearing on a pillow at the four corners of which figures the sign of the cross, both of them recorded by Herskovits<sup>(196)</sup>. Among the tribes of the Niger Delta it is easy to trace the cross as a decorative motive<sup>(197)</sup>. Not only so in lay decoration, but also in sacred art. Thus Amaury Talbot gives a specimen of an Ibo door in which the cross constitutes the central part of the decoration of each of its three sections<sup>(198)</sup>. A carving in a shrine of a Kalabari deity partly represents a sea with fishes in it and a ship strangely evoking a mediaeval galleon with masts and sails. One of the masts is topped by a cross of Byzantine style of which the arms are wider at the ends than at their base<sup>(199)</sup>. This ship carving, if seen as an isolated figure, might easily be mistaken for a miniature of a mediaeval manuscript. The preservation of the sign of the cross in shrines is certainly of the highest significance. The examples cited are not

<sup>(193)</sup> There is tremendous scope and a most promising field in the comparative study of Byzantine and Benin arts. The latter of these, from the most 'Byzantine' of the Sudanese kingdoms, has survived to our days in a remarkable tradition of works of art, of which some notable collections are to be found in several Museums throughout the world. As a matter of documentation I point out two important publications, the first by LING ROTH above cited, the second by J. MARQUART quoted below, note 195.

<sup>(194)</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 352.

<sup>(195)</sup> See description in J. MARQUART, *Die Benin-Sammlung des Reichsmuseums für Völkerkunde in Leiden*, 1913, p. 38 and plate VI, no. 1.

<sup>(196)</sup> J. HERSKOVITS, *Dahomey*, vol. II, 1938, plate 83b, and plate 54 lower left. The original Dahomean art must be distinguished from later Christian influences originating from the western coast. Thus we should carefully avoid taking into account cross emblems apparently deriving from such influences, such as the cross figuring in a bas-relief of the Agadja palace. See G. WATERLOT, *Les bas-reliefs des bâtiments royaux d'Abomey*, 1926, plate VB.

<sup>(197)</sup> For instance *cf.* fig. 130, p. 123 in H. LING ROTH, *op. cit.* (decoration of a fan).

<sup>(198)</sup> P. AMAURY TALBOT, *Tribes of the Niger Delta*, 1926, plate facing p. 26.

<sup>(199)</sup> *Ibidem*, fig. 1, p. 18.

isolated cases; they are repeated throughout the Nigerian ethnological sector, we are not, therefore, surprised to find in an Ibo shrine of a local deity, among other carvings in the form of disks, one with a plain cross the arms of which converge on a smaller circle at the centre of the disk in the manner of the bowl cross of Frobenius discussed above<sup>(200)</sup>.

The association of the sign of the cross with objects of sacred significance leaves no doubt as to the religious import of its use and eventually affords strong indications as to its origins. A detail unnoticed by ethnologists confirms this association. Among the Katab, a tribe of Northern Nigeria studied by Meek, there are found sacred swords granted to chiefs of importance and treated with a great veneration by their holders who sprinkle them regularly with the blood of a chicken or a goat. Only major chiefs were granted such swords, minor ones or village headmen were only sworn on them on the occasion of their investiture, when they were specially fetched for the purpose<sup>(201)</sup>. Now the swords in question, one of which was described by Meek who gave a drawing of it<sup>(202)</sup>, had the hilt cross-shaped. This cross-shaped hilt was cast in one piece with the sword blade exactly as the above mentioned Nupe daggers. The sacrificial character and ritual importance of these swords fully confirms Frobenius' report about the Nupe king's worshipful attitude towards the cross. Although the swords examined by Meek were of European manufacture, there is no doubt that they assume the form handed down by tribal tradition, accepted as very old, since they are believed to have been brought by the forefathers of the chief from Yemen<sup>(203)</sup>; to this tradition I shall refer under a later heading. Let it be pointed out here that archaeological evidence, following excavations conducted at Gao in 1949, has revealed the existence of the cross as an art motive in local pottery<sup>(204)</sup>.

To the preceding ethnological and archaeological remnants of the use of the cross some linguistic evidence may be adduced. Frobenius points out that in the northern region of Central Sudan the word for 'cross' is *starra*, and in Nupe the same word is *sarra*, which, he thinks, derives from the Greek *σταυρός*<sup>(205)</sup>. I think the direct deri-

<sup>(200)</sup> P. AMAURY TALBOT, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, vol. II, 1926, fig. 64, p. 286.

<sup>(201)</sup> C. M. MEEK, *Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria*, vol. II, 1931, pp. 76 - 77.

<sup>(202)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77.

<sup>(203)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 78.

<sup>(204)</sup> R. MAUNY, 'Note d'archéologie au sujet de Gano', in *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Afrique noire*, vol. XIII, 1951, p. 849 and fig. 6, p. 850.

<sup>(205)</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 351 - 352.

vation from the Greek must be excluded; the word was passed over to Sudanese idioms through Nubian which had adopted Greek liturgical terms from Byzantium. The word is already found in a tenth century Nubian text in the form *istauros* = *σταυρός*<sup>(206)</sup>.

Finally, some historical testimonies corroborate our data concerning the ceremonial use of the cross among mediaeval Sudanese kingdoms. Thus the ruler of Benin's ambassador to the court of Portugal in the year 1456 stated that his master was a vassal to a mighty king in the East, bearing the name of Ogane<sup>(207)</sup>, who invested every successor to the kingdom with a staff, a helmet, and a brass cross, these being the insignia of the kingly office<sup>(208)</sup>. Of these features, which may be considered as corresponding to an almost identical practice in the Byzantine ceremonial of the investment of a *basileus*, the bronze cross continued to be borne by the representative of the Kisra family at Karish until recent times<sup>(209)</sup>. The political significance of the cross is further established by the cruciform emblem called *kokiyo*, resembling the cross of the Tuareg shield and used as an emblem of political office. In Nigeria, from the region of Dikwa to the coast near Calabar, there occur 'staves' topped by two horizontal arms and a central projection forming a cross, which are used as emblems of authority<sup>(210)</sup>. These *kokiyo* had been imported to Benin from Bornu, but their use can be traced as far as Ethiopia<sup>(211)</sup>. The cross topped staff as an emblem

<sup>(206)</sup> E. ZYHLARZ, *Grundzüge der Nubischen Grammatik im christlichen Frühmittelalter (Altnubisch)*, 1928, p. 137: *istaurosou* (-ou, word termination). The text in which this word occurs is analyzed in A. MEILLET and M. COHEN, *Les langues du monde*, 1952<sup>2</sup>, pp. 758 - 759. An etymological relation may subsist between *starra* or *sarra* and the Hausa word for the verb 'to cross', *etare*, *ketare*, although this verb has the meaning of 'crossing over'. See C. H. ROBINSON, *Dictionary of the Hausa Language*, vol. I, *Hausa-English*, 1925, s. v. Also G. P. BARGER, *A Hausa-English Dictionary and English - Hausa Vocabulary*, 1934, s. v. 'etara, k'etara. If any such relation exists, then, while in Nupe the letter 't' has been dropped, in Hausa the letter 's' has been elided to allow the prefix 'k' to fit the stem:

<sup>(207)</sup> This king has been supposed to be Awni (=Ogane), who presented the insignia of royalty to the Benin ruler on his accession. See P. AMAURY TALBOT, *The peoples of Southern Nigeria*, vol. I, pp. 152 and 281.

<sup>(208)</sup> JOAM DE BARROS, *Asia, Primeira decada*, Lisboa, 1552, *Libro III*, ch. 4, f<sup>o</sup> 28r<sup>o</sup>. On the embassy see *ibid.*, ch. 3, f<sup>o</sup> 27v<sup>o</sup>. The cross is described as having the form of the cross of Malta. But it is forgotten that the so-called Malta cross is a posterior version of the Byzantine cross and can have no connection whatever with the form reported in the heart of a Negro-African kingdom.

<sup>(209)</sup> FROBENIUS, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 346 - 347.

<sup>(210)</sup> H. R. PALMER, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 1936, p. 146.

<sup>(211)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 154.

of authority seems to derive this quality from its use as a royal staff or sceptre held by the king on ceremonial occasions. A conspicuous case of this latter use is afforded by the above mentioned figurine of the Obba's father in the royal shrine of Benin.

### § 2. *Testimonies from Arab authorities.*

Although the famous Arab traveller Ibn Batuta (A.D. 1303 - 1378), like most mediaeval Arab geographers, commits the error of identifying the Niger with the Nile, his information about cities and peoples exhibits a great degree of accuracy inasmuch as most of the place-names of his African topography have been related to their modern equivalents. In describing the country of the Niger bent he says: «There the Nile (= Niger) descends to Tumbuktu and Gawgaw... thence to the town of Muli in the land of the Limis which is the frontier province of the kingdom of Malli; thence to Yufi, one of the largest towns of the negroes, whose ruler is one of the most considerable of the negro rulers. It cannot be visited by any white man because they would kill him before he got there. From Yufi the Nile descends to the land of the Nuba who profess the Christian faith, and thence to Donqula (= Don-gola) which is their chief town»<sup>(212)</sup>.

Now Yufi has been identified as Nupe, and Nuba as Nubians to whose Christian faith Ibn Batuta testifies. We can still reach two other conclusions from his narrative, (i) that the Negro populations of the kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria at the time of his visit (A.D. 1354) were not as yet islamized, and (ii) that the connection between this kingdom and Nubia is real despite the erroneous identification of the two great rivers. Such connection is important because it helps us to understand the cultural and religious influences that may have reached the Western Sudan from Nubia. In another passage Ibn Batuta refers to Gobir as the country of the Black Infidels (Kafirs)<sup>(213)</sup>. This term in the language of Islamic writers denotes Jews or Christians, since the pagan Negroes are generally referred to by them as idolatrous or the Pagans. Now Gobir being the centre of the traditions about eastern origins and influences, there is strong plausibility about its people still professing the Christian faith at the time of his visit. The more so because, when speaking of Bornu in the same context, Ibn Batuta does not omit to state that this country is inhabited

<sup>(212)</sup> Ibn Batuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa (1325 - 1354)*, translated by H. A. R. GIBB, 1929, p. 323. Cf. 'Voyage dans le Sudan', translated by M. G. DE SLANE in *Journal Asiatique*, 4ème série, vol. I, 1843, pp. 201 - 202.

<sup>(213)</sup> *Idem*, 'Voyage dans le Sudan', *loc. cit.*, p. 235.

by Mohammedans, implying thereby the non-Mohammedan status of the other populations.

Abou Obeid al-Bekri (A.D. 1028-1094), in his geographical compilation completed in the year 1093<sup>(214)</sup>, does not make any explicit mention of Christian Negroes in the Sudan. But, as in the case of Ibn Batuta, we find in his work some references to Negro 'infidels', contrasting with other references to 'idolatrous' Negroes. This is the case for instance with his description of the city of Silla in West Sudan, where he says that the king of this city is «constantly waging war against the Negroes who are plunged in infidelity»<sup>(215)</sup>, whereas a few lines after this statement he speaks of the inhabitants of the city of Calenbu as being idolatrous<sup>(216)</sup>. How significant is the use of the qualification 'infidels' by Islamic authors as specially referring to Jews and Christians, is made apparent by such expressions as the one contained in the so-called Mandara Chronicle, a record of the rulers of Mandara, about whom it is said that «not one of them reverted to paganism or became an infidel»<sup>(217)</sup>. Here the distinction between pagans and infidels is so explicit and so well confirmed by the fact that Arab geographers never apply the qualification 'infidels' to pagan Negroes, as to leave no doubt about the meaning of this term as used in the writings under consideration. The same Mandara chronicle offers the most explicit testimony that the pre-Islamic rulers of Mandara «were followers of Isa... and under the dispensation of the Gospel», but this testimony is specially dealt with below<sup>(218)</sup>.

Leo Africanus (A.D. 1465-*ante* 1550) who seems little acquainted with the Negro populations of Central Sudan gives two pieces of information pointing to a pre-Islamic christianity among Sudanese and Saharan populations. The one is a more general statement about the religion of certain Negro-African kingdoms, which is stated to have been Christian after it had been Jewish<sup>(219)</sup>. This remark apparently applies to Negro populations along the south border of Libya. Although

<sup>(214)</sup> Al-Bekri, *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale*, Arabic text ed. by M. G. DE SLANE, 1857. French translation by the same, 1859. A rather imperfect translation of the Description was given by M. QUATREMÈRE in *Notices et Extraits des manuscrits*, vol. XII, part I, 1831. Al-Bekri never visited the African countries described, but he derived his information from reliable sources sometimes cited and sometimes not. See preface to the Arabic text, p. 15.

<sup>(215)</sup> *Description*, French translation, p. 378.

<sup>(216)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 379.

<sup>(217)</sup> H. R. PALMER, *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. II, 1928, p. 98.

<sup>(218)</sup> See below, § 6.

<sup>(219)</sup> Leo Africanus, *Description de l'Afrique*, new edition by A. EPAULARD, 1956, p. 45.

these populations were converted to Islam by the end of the 9th century<sup>(220)</sup>, the author explicitly states that certain Negro kingdoms continued to be Christian at this time<sup>(221)</sup>. The other information is more specific and refers to the kingdom of Gaoga, between Bornu and Darfur, east of Lake Chad. Although, he says, some Negro populations are heathen, «others are Christian, like the Egyptians (=Nubians); this is the case of the people of the region of Gaogao»<sup>(222)</sup>.

Ibn Khaldun's (A.D. 1332 - 1406) account of the Negro-Sudanese peoples, contained in that part of his History dealing with the Berber dynasties<sup>(223)</sup>, is chiefly derived from Ibn Said<sup>(224)</sup>, as well as from several oral reports<sup>(225)</sup>. No explicit testimony is to be found in Ibn Khaldun's account about Christian Negro populations in Central Sudan. Such testimony as given by him concerns the Nubians, about whom he says: «The greatest part of the Nubians profess the Christian faith»<sup>(226)</sup>. He says also that the Beja tribes inhabiting the region between the Nile and the Red Sea are partly Christian<sup>(227)</sup>. When he comes to describe the regions west of Nubia, he refers to the Zaghawa (=Zaghawa) of Darfur as already islamized, while of Kanem he says that it has a large population among which Islam predominates. A reference to «the country of the infidels, a region situated behind Mali» is also found in his account of the Negro kingdoms of Sudan<sup>(228)</sup>, which is worth mentioning because by it may be denoted the kingdom of Ghana of which another geographer, Abul Fida (A.D. 1273 - 1331), speaks, stating that «according to this author (i.e. Ibn Said) the city of Ghana forms a sort of two cities, of which the one is inhabited by Moslems and the other by infidels»<sup>(229)</sup>. According

<sup>(220)</sup> A reference to the missionary activity of the Shiites of the year A. D. 881; *ibid.*, p. 45, note 336.

<sup>(221)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 45. There is no reason, as the editors do, to limit the effect of this statement to Nubia only; the text is quite explicit: «Cependant, aujourd'hui encore, il y a quelques royaumes où les Noirs sont demeurés et demeurent chrétiens».

<sup>(222)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 462. The Editor, *ibid.*, note 5, seems to doubt the value of this information solely because he disbelieves the possibility of Christian Negroes, and on no other grounds!

<sup>(223)</sup> *Histoire des Berbères et des dynasties musulmanes de l'Afrique septentrionale*, transl. by M. G. DE SLANE, vols I - IV, 1852 - 1856.

<sup>(224)</sup> Of Ibn Said (1214 - 1216 A. D.), historian and geographer, see G. BROCKELMANN, *Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur*, vol. I, 1943<sup>2</sup>, pp. 410 - 411.

<sup>(225)</sup> See for instance *Histoire des Berbères*, vol. II, pp. 106, 109, 114.

<sup>(226)</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. II, p. 109.

<sup>(227)</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. II, p. 109.

<sup>(228)</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. II, p. 110.

<sup>(229)</sup> *Géographie d'Aboulféda*, transl. by M. REINAUD, vol. II, 1, 1848, p. 221.

to the same writer the city of Koukou (Kukia) is the residence of the ruler of this region «who is an infidel»<sup>(230)</sup>. Abul Fida provides moreover another important testimony, not found in Ibn Khaldun's account, also derived from Ibn Said, according to which the Negro people named Berkamy, whose country is between Kanem, in the immediate north-eastern vicinity of Lake Chad, and Nubia (in this case Darfur), are partly islamized and partly Christians. He specifically says: «that portion of the Berkamy who border on Kanem profess Islamism, that portion of them who border on Nubia profess Christianity»<sup>(231)</sup>. Let it be noted that the territory covered by this testimony is already Negro-Sudanese land west of Nubia, in all probability being Wadai and or Bagirmi. So Ibn Said's explicit testimony is not limited to Nubian territory proper, but covers territory as far as Lake Chad.

Let us now again revert to the above mentioned testimony of Abul Fida concerning Ghana, about the ruler of which he said that he «is an infidel». How true it is that the term 'infidel' in this case means 'Christian', and that the kingdom of Ghana, one of the westernmost Sudanese kingdoms, was christianized, is proved by what may be termed the most intriguing and striking Arab testimony about pre-Islamic Christianity in the Sudan. The Arab author of the *Tarikh es-Sudan*, probably the most extensive ancient description of Central and Western Sudan, who has been identified as Abderrahman ben Abdallah ben Imram ben Amir as-Sadi, and who lived in the 17th century (1596 - circa 1655), in speaking of the Tuareg happens to quote from an earlier source, Abou-Abdallah as-Zohri. In quoting, however, from this source, he omits a substantial passage, viz. that in which it is plainly stated that the people of the Sudan of which the capital city was Ghana professed Christianity up to the year 469 of Hegira (=A.D.1076 - 1077), at which time they were converted to Islam. Now the editor of the *Tarikh*, O. Houdas, has recovered the work of as-Zohri in Arabic manuscript 1873 of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and traced the passage in question in folio 5r<sup>o</sup>, line 13 of the manuscript<sup>(232)</sup>. It should be said, to the credit of the Arab writer, that he acknowledges the fact that his quotation from as-Zohri is not integral. It rests, however, with the historian to judge whether this omission is deliberate. So in the work of as-Zohri

<sup>(230)</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. II, 1, p. 224.

<sup>(231)</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. II, 1, p. 219.

<sup>(232)</sup> See *Tarikh es-Soudan*, transl. by O. HOUDAS, 1900, p. 42, note 1. This work is supplemented by the *Tarikh el-Fettach*, a chronicle of Tekrouur by Mahmud Kati, transl. by O. HOUDAS and M. DELAFOSSE, 1913.

we obtain a reliable confirmation of the fact that Christianity was professed among Western Sudanic populations as far as Ghana.

Generally, the testimonies from Arab authorities above cited are of two kinds: (i) explicit testimonies about Christianity still predominating or partly professed during their times in Nubia and Eastern Sudan, as far as Kanem in the immediate vicinity of Lake Chad; (ii) explicit or implied testimonies about Christianity as being professed in the central and western kingdoms (Nupe, Ghana) by 'infidels'. The value of these testimonies is enhanced by the fact that their authors are in no way friendly to Christianity and would have scarcely brought to light facts liable to confer historical credit on the religion of the 'infidels'. In testifying to the Christian status of certain Sudanese kingdoms the Arab geographers merely did so under the weight of objective evidence which they could not consciously pass by, if their work was to be relied upon as worthy documentation. Even so, they afford but a minimum of evidence concerning the pre-Islamic religious status of the mediaeval Sudanese peoples. Such evidence has to be supplemented by facts of a different nature.

### § 3. *Archaeological evidence from West Africa.*

Some archaeological finds in West Africa, recognized as direct products of the mediaeval Nubian civilization, imply a commercial and cultural intercourse between Eastern and Western Sudanese countries. The recognition of trade routes along the great Sudanese belt is an established fact going back to protohistoric times, and we can actually speak of traditional trade routes in the Christian era linking the Niger valley with the emporia of the Red Sea<sup>(233)</sup>. In the year 1950 A.J. Arkell published two specimens of bronze lamps, a hanging one and a stand, found in old graves north of Kumasi, in Ghana<sup>(234)</sup>, actually in the possession of the Ethnographic Department of the British Museum<sup>(235)</sup>. The finds in question are a striking example of Christian art of the 5th to the 7th centuries directly deriving from Nubia. This latter fact is confirmed by the finding of the prototypes of both specimens in two Christian

<sup>(233)</sup> A. J. ARKELL, 'Archaeological Research in West Africa', *Antiquity*, vol. XVIII, 1944, pp. 147 - 150.

<sup>(234)</sup> 'Gold Coast copies of 5th - 7th century bronze lamps', *Antiquity*, vol. XXIV, 1950, pp. 38 - 40, and plate of photographs facing p. 38.

<sup>(235)</sup> Entered under accession numbers 1936-10-22-5 and 1936-10-22-6.

graves at Firka, in the Wadi Halfa district of Sudan, consisting of a hanging bronze lamp in the form of a dove<sup>(236)</sup> and a bronze lamb mounted on a tripod stand<sup>(237)</sup>. The comparative study by Arkell of these specimens reveals that the two hanging lamps are similar in size, both being suspended by chains of similar lengths meeting in a ring. The bird (dove) in the Ghanaian specimen is a rather coarse imitation of the Firka prototype, nonetheless it is a real imitation inasmuch as it copies such details as the feathers on the wing of the bird. The rather unintelligent imitation of the Nubian model appears in the reproduction of the spike at the tail end of both specimens, which Arkell thinks to be incomprehensible. I think the explanation lies in the fact that the native artist merely misunderstood the function of this spike which in the Nubian model serves as a third leg to form a tripod allowing the lamp to stand when put down<sup>(238)</sup>, so he reproduced it in the form of a lower tail, or rather of a meaningless appendix. As to the second lamp, the style denotes a common model, with the only exception that the Ghanaian lamp diverges from the standard tripod model by adding a fourth foot, probably, as Arkell remarks, «because the African copies with only three feet do not stand firmly»<sup>(239)</sup>. Both models are common in early Christian and Byzantine art, although, probably, we meet more specimens of the dove model than of the standing one. The Egyptian origin of the bird model may be inferred from the close resemblance between the first specimen and the Egyptian specimens published by Strzygowski<sup>(240)</sup>, Dalton<sup>(241)</sup> and Wulff<sup>(242)</sup>. The Egyptian origin of the standing model cannot be firmly established, although it is equally probable. Egyptian examples of the standing lamp do exist<sup>(243)</sup>,

<sup>(236)</sup> L. P. KIRWAN, *Oxford Excavations at Firka*, 1939, p. 31, plate VII. *Idem*, 'The Oxford University Excavations in Nubia, 1934 - 1935', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. XXI, 1935, pp. 191 - 198, plate XXI.

<sup>(237)</sup> *Ibidem*, plate X, 2, and *loc. cit.*, plate XXIII, 8.

<sup>(238)</sup> *Cf.* no. 773, plate XXXVI, in WULFF'S catalogue, hereafter cited, note 242.

<sup>(239)</sup> *Loc. cit.*, vol. XXIV, 1950, p. 39.

<sup>(240)</sup> J. STRZYGOWSKI, *Koptische Kunst (Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du musée du Caire)*, 1904, nos. 9139 - 9141, pp. 291 - 292, plate XXXIII.

<sup>(241)</sup> O. M. DALTON, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities... of the British Museum*, 1901, nos. 509 - 513, p. 102. *Cf.* plate XXVII, nos. 509, 512.

<sup>(242)</sup> O. WULFF, *Altchristliche und mittelalterliche byzantinische und italienische Bildwerke*, part I, 1909. Numerous Egyptian specimens among nos. 760 - 814, pp. 169 - 179. *Cf.* plate XXXV, no. 768, plate XXXVI, nos. 772, 773, 774, 775.

<sup>(243)</sup> O. M. DALTON, *op. cit.*, nos. 495 - 496, p. 100, plate XXVI. J. STRZYGOWSKI, *op. cit.*, nos. 9124 - 9129, pp. 286 - 289, plate XXXIII. O. WULFF, *op. cit.*, nos. 991 - 994, 997 - 999, 1012, pp. 207 - 212, plates XLVIII, L.

but they lack the top part feature of the Nubian and Ghanaian specimens, consisting of a circling ring topping the mouth of the lamp with a terminal part pointing upwards. Only, this ring is fully circling the lamp in the Nubian example and is part of the stand, whereas in the Ghanaian example it forms a semi-circle fixed on the lips of the lamp itself. The only case nearing this feature, although far from presenting a similarity in detail, is met in a North African specimen from El-Hadjeb in Algeria, in the Algiers Museum<sup>(244)</sup>, where, besides the usual side topping of the lamp, this is also topped at its central part by a cover having the form of a surmounting crown with a cross headed by a miniature dove.

The question posing itself with regard to the two specimens from Ghana is whether they are of local manufacture or imported from Nubia or a neighbouring area. The local manufacture suggests itself as more natural only because the imitation of the Nubian model is clear and this imitation is coarse, denoting an inferior degree of craftsmanship. What is established with a degree of certainty is the essential relationship between the specimens, which carries with it, one could say, irrefutable evidence of cultural influences from the Egyptian-Nubian sector covering the whole Sudanese belt, attaining the westernmost sector as far as the actual territory of Ghana. Such influences necessarily presuppose an under-structure of material communications running from east to west in several directions, as much along the border zone between Sahara and the Equatorial forest, as through Sahara itself. By such communications serving as trade routes the older Egyptian civilization and later the Christian civilization of Nubia could be carried along with the material wealth of Roman and Byzantine Egypt deep into the Negro-African world south of the Sahara. That these trade routes were active in the 5th to the 7th centuries of the Christian era is now an established fact<sup>(245)</sup>.

Leaving aside for the moment the consideration of the great trans-Saharan and trans-Sudanese routes, we must try to understand in which way the connections between Egypt and Nubia and the central and western Sudanese sectors could be established. It is significant that any such connection of Egypt with the Sudanese kingdoms had to be established through Nubia. Apart from Egypt's connections with the western ports of the Red Sea through which contacts with Ethiopia were established, the mass of Egyptian-African trade was taking an axial route determined partly by the Nile course, partly deflecting in a south-western direction to

<sup>(244)</sup> G. DOUBLET, *Le musée d'Alger (Musées et Collections archéologiques de l'Algérie)*, 1890, plate XIV, 4, p. 91.

<sup>(245)</sup> A. J. ARKELL, *A History of the Sudan*, 1955, p. 182.

Darfur, and then turning westwards in the direction of Lake Chad. An important section of this route, still made use of by the caravans in the last century, linked Assiut on the Nile to Darfur through Kharga oasis, Selima, Bir Natrum with, as terminus, Kolbé in Darfur. This is practically a desert route constantly diverging from the Nile, but safer for the caravans which thus avoided contact with a number of tribes on the Nile. Of this route, of which we have a detailed description<sup>(246)</sup>, speaks the English explorer Browne who followed it when he travelled to Darfur in the last years of the 18th century<sup>(247)</sup>. The information given by Browne is very important, because this traveller witnessed the trade between Egypt and the interior of Africa still going on in his days. This was a two-way trade consisting, firstly, of Egyptian cloths, arms, beads, coffee etc., secondly, of typical tropical commodities, viz. «slaves, camels, ivory, horns of rhinoceros, teeth of the hippopotamus, ostrich feathers, whips of the hippopotamus, hide, gum, piment, tamarinds made into round cakes, leather sacks for water and dry articles, peroquets in abundance and some monkeys and guinea-fowl, copper, white, in small quantity»<sup>(248)</sup>. Darfur was at the same time a terminus and a great transit area. The same traveller informs us that the King (of Darfur) «not only dispatches with every caravan to Egypt a great quantity of his own merchandise, but also employs his slaves and dependents to trade with the goods of Egypt, on his own account, in the countries adjacent to the Sudan»<sup>(249)</sup>. In Darfur we have the great turn-table of communications between Egypt and the Sudanese countries. Here is a country facing at the same time the Negro-African world on the west, and the Egyptian-Nubian sector on the north. To Darfur flow the products of the tropical territories and the caravans of slaves «who are brought from the roads, as they call it, that is, from all quarters except Egypt»<sup>(250)</sup>. Although this description of Darfur as a great intermediate area between Egypt and the Negro-African world refers to 18th century conditions, there is no doubt that similar conditions prevailed many centuries ago, and that the position of Darfur as a great door opening to the central and western Sudanese countries allowed cultural influences from the earliest classical times to penetrate into the geographical domain of the latter. In fact the archaeological evidence of this penetration is

<sup>(246)</sup> W. B. K. SHAW, 'Darb el Arba'in. The forty days walk', *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. XII, 1929, pp. 63 - 71.

<sup>(247)</sup> W. G. BROWNE, *Travels in Africa, Egypt and Syria from 1792 to 1798*, 1806, pp. 194 sqq.

<sup>(248)</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 348 - 349.

<sup>(249)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 346.

<sup>(250)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 343.

still incomplete because of the imperfect state of archaeological research in Central and Western Sudan. Such evidence as is available is nevertheless convincing and acquires its full significance if viewed in connection with the rest of available evidence.

#### § 4. *Historical traditions and testimonies.*

The connections of the western and central Sudanese countries with Eastern Sudan and Nubia and thereby with Egypt are attested by deeply rooted traditions among several Negro-Sudanese peoples. The oldest of these traditions points to early connections with Pharaonic Egypt. Let us point from the outset to the tradition contained in Egyptian records concerning the «magicians of the south»<sup>(251)</sup> and to its counterpart, the tradition surviving in the 15th century and contained in the *Tarikh es Soudan*, according to which 'Kagho', east of Bornu, was famous in ancient times for its magicians<sup>(252)</sup>. In fact, not only the country of Borku, but also all Negro Africa maintains to this day the reputation for magical practices and witchcraft. However, the specific reference to Gao is important because of the relation of this city with the historical origins of the Songhay Empire. It was here that Dialliaman ('who came from Yemen') the founder of the Songhay Empire killed the sacred fish worshipped, up to the time of his coming, by the Songhay<sup>(253)</sup>. Gao was confounded with Kukia (Kuku, Kuka, Kokia)<sup>(254)</sup>, a city situated according to tradition in the country of Misr. Barth searched in vain after it and Dubois, relying on oral tradition according to which Kukia was near a great river, prospered in the times of the Pharaohs, and that it was from it that the Pharaoh fetched the magicians to oppose Moses, believed that it should be sought on the Nile, in Egypt<sup>(255)</sup>. On the other hand we find references to Kukia in mediaeval Arab authors as to a city on the Niger<sup>(256)</sup>. It is true that the phonetic relation between the two

<sup>(251)</sup> F. L. SHAW, *A Tropical dependency*, 1905, p. 228.

<sup>(252)</sup> *Tarikh es-Soudan*, transl. by O. HOUDAS, 1900, p. 6. F. DUBOIS, *Tombouctou la mystérieuse*, 1897, pp. 105, 108.

<sup>(253)</sup> *Tarikh es-Soudan*, ch. i. Cf. J. BERAUD-VILLARS, *L'empire de Gaô*, 1942, pp. 5 - 6.

<sup>(254)</sup> See W. D. COOLEY, *The Negroland of the Arabs*, 1841, pp. 103 - 111.

<sup>(255)</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 107 - 108.

<sup>(256)</sup> Al-Bekri, *Description de l'Afrique septentrionale*, transl. by M. G. DE SLANE, 1859, p. 390. Idrisi, *Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne*, ed. and transl. by R. DOZY and M. J. DE GOEJE, 1866, § 10, pp. 11 - 14.

names Kukia and Kagho (Gao) lends to confusion<sup>(257)</sup>. Ya'qubi (A.D. 891) also speaks of a city distinct from that of Gâgo (Gao), the name of which is Kaukau and which is the capital of the Kaukau kingdom<sup>(258)</sup>. If this city is really distinct from Gao, it is either the so-called Kuka south-east of Gao<sup>(259)</sup>, or the bigger city Kuka on the west shore of Lake Chad<sup>(260)</sup>, and in any case it is not irrelevant to the tradition about oriental origins<sup>(261)</sup>. In his introduction to the Sudanese texts H. R. Palmer discusses in detail this important point of historical geography<sup>(262)</sup>, and although a definitive solution does not seem to have been reached<sup>(263)</sup>, two important facts are fairly established, firstly the antiquity of Kukia and its importance as a commercial city, and secondly its relation to Zaghawa. Both facts are significant for their bearing on the problem of the east-west cultural relations. As to the tradition about the Egyptian origin of the city, this should be taken only as denoting cultural connections with ancient Egypt as expressed in the worship of the fish deity represented also in the Egyptian Pantheon by Hathor. According to Dubois the Yemenite origin of Dialliaman and his arrival at Kagho points to an east-west migration which occurred in all probability in the 7th century<sup>(264)</sup>.

<sup>(257)</sup> See *Tarikh es-Soudan*, *passim*, index *s. v.*

<sup>(258)</sup> Extract *apud* H. R. PALMER, *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. II, 1928, p. 20. Cf. H. CARBOU, *La région du Tchad et du Ouadaï*, vol. I, 1912, pp. 291 - 299. This authority seems to be unaware of the city of Kuka on the west shore of Lake Chad.

<sup>(259)</sup> M. DELAFOSSE, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, vol. II, 1912, pp. 66 - 68 and map p. 119, is aware of this city which he records as Gounghia (= Bentia) and rightly establishes the relation between Gao and this city, the latter being the first, the former the second capital of the Songhay Empire. Gounghia or Kuku is about sixty miles south-east of Gao.

<sup>(260)</sup> This is the view of U. MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Storia della Nubia Cristiana*, 1938, p. 203. But the same authority, *ibid.*, note 6, seems to confound Gao with Kuka, south-west of Gao. Cf. for the relevant topography the Arab geographer Ibn Haucal who states the distances from Ghana to Sama via Kougha, from Sama to Kezm and from Kezm to Kaukau. M. G. DE SLANE, 'Description de l'Afrique par Ibn-Haucal', in *Journal Asiatique*, 3rd series, vol. XIII, 1842, p. 240. See further on this matter J. SPENCER TRIMINGHAM, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, 1962, pp. 85 - 90.

<sup>(261)</sup> See for the location of the three cities the map annexed to W. D. COOLEY'S, *The Negroland of the Arabs*, 1841.

<sup>(262)</sup> *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. II, 1928, pp. 9 - 11.

<sup>(263)</sup> T. LEWICKI, 'L' Etat nord-africain de Tāhert et ses relations avec le Soudan occidental à la fin du VIIIe et au IXe siècle', in *Cahiers d'études africaines*, vol. II, 1962, pp. 518 - 519, seems to ignore the existence of Kukia on the Chad. The latter city is also confounded with Gao by L. E. KUBBELA and V. V. MATVEOVA, *Drevnie i srednevekovye istočniki po etnografii i istorii narodov Afriki yuzhnee Sakkary Arabskie istočniki VII - X vekov*, 1960, pp. 366 - 369.

<sup>(264)</sup> F. DUBOIS, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

Egyptian history records some expeditions of Egyptian kings into Negroland<sup>(265)</sup>, and these were not without leaving some traces in the traditions of native peoples<sup>(266)</sup>. Moreover, traditions of eastern origins go well beyond Egyptian limits. Thus the Yoruba claim a descent from Canaanites of the tribe of Nimrod, an Egyptian king<sup>(267)</sup>. A specific local source hitherto unnoticed has consigned this tradition: the *Infaku'l Maisuri*, the author of which is the Fulani sultan Mohammed Bello (1779 - 1837), states that «the people of Yoruba are descended from the Kanaana and the kindred of Nimrud. Now the reason of their having settled in the west according to what we are told is that Yaarubu son of Kahtau drove them out of Irak to westwards and they travelled between Masar (=Egypt) and Habsh (=Abyssinia) until they reached Yoruba. It happened that they left a portion of their people in every country they passed»<sup>(268)</sup>. Survivals of traditional connections with the East were still persisting in the 11th century when the anonymous Arab traveller, later identified as Abou-Obeil al Bekri, speaking of the West Sudanese kingdom of Ghana says that the king bore the title of *Firaouz* ( ڤيراؤز )<sup>(269)</sup>.

The connections with the East are reasserted in another set of traditions, those relating to Kisra. This legendary figure is inextricably associated with the origins of many West Sudanese peoples, and around it centre a great number of traditions about east-west migrations. The legends of the Yoruba, Busa, Bede and other tribes refer to a great migration led by Kisra, which took place in the times of the Prophet. The starting point of the migration was «near Mecca»<sup>(270)</sup>. A Gobirawa tradition speaks of the Prophet as having applied to their ancestors for assistance against "Haiburai king of Kishra" before the battle of Badar<sup>(271)</sup>. Among the Jukun-speaking tribe of the Benue, though the name Kisra has not survived, the tradition about an eastern origin from Mecca or a country east of Mecca is current<sup>(272)</sup>, but, on the

<sup>(265)</sup> J. H. BREASTED, *A History of Egypt*, 1909<sup>2</sup>, pp. 138 - 142.

<sup>(266)</sup> G. A. WAINWRIGHT, 'Pharaonic survivals between Lake Chad and the West Coast', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. XXXV, 1949, pp. 170 - 175.

<sup>(267)</sup> F. L. SHAW, *op. cit.*, pp. 227 - 233.

<sup>(268)</sup> *Infaku'l Maisuri*, translation by E. J. ARNETT, p. 16. See below, note 328.

<sup>(269)</sup> M. QUATREMÈRE, *Notice d'un manuscrit arabe contenant la description de l'Afrique*, in *Notices et extraits des manuscrits*, vol. XII, part i, 1834, p. 656. Curiously enough this passage is not to be found in De Slane's complete translation of the *Description*. I think this is due to the fact that De Slane, after having collated several manuscripts for his edition, classed the one used by Quatremère as of secondary importance. But the omission of the passage relating to the historically so important city of Kuku in De Slane's text is a serious shortcoming of his edition.

<sup>(270)</sup> C. K. MEEK, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. II, 1925, p. 71. Cf. vol. I, 1925, p. 69.

<sup>(271)</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. II, p. 71.

<sup>(272)</sup> C. K. MEEK, *A Sudanese Kingdom*, 1931, p. 22.

other hand, among the tribes preserving the Kisra tradition it is believed that two Jukun-speaking tribes, Kororofa and Wukari, derive from descendants of Kisra<sup>(273)</sup>. The Wukari seem to be the same tribe as the one referred to earlier by Shaw as Ungara or Wangara or Wakore, who migrated from Ghana into Hausaland, and who claimed for themselves a Persian origin<sup>(274)</sup>. It is remarkable that these Nigerian traditions about eastern origins are duplicated by similar ones in Eastern Sudan<sup>(275)</sup>. Most ethnographers of the central and western Sudanese countries do not seem to attribute due importance to these traditions. Meek, who made extensive ethnographic studies relating to the peoples of Northern Nigeria, views them within the framework of the Islamic superstructure which obscures the entire pre-Islamic past of the Sudanese peoples. But the further data which he records in respect of the tribes studied by him compel us to take a different view of the matter.

Firstly, the traditions of origin from an eastern region abound in a general way among a great number of tribes of the western Sudanese sector. Thus, apart from the Wukari, the Pindiga and Kona entertain the tradition of an eastern origin of the Jukun as well as of the Kanuri peoples. The Jibu group of Jukun believe that they themselves among their brothers came from the East<sup>(276)</sup>. The Bornu-Kanuri tradition, obviously pervaded by Islamic elements, traces the origins of the Tura genealogically to the Prophet, but would have the tribal ancestors crossing over to Africa from a country north of Mecca named Pass (perhaps Palestine)<sup>(277)</sup>. The Tubu have it that their ancestor Tuba Lowal originated from Hindi (India) whence he proceeded to Cham (Syria) with an army and thence to Masr (Egypt); from Egypt he went to Yemen where he settled, but a branch of the Yemen family crossed over to Egypt and travelled westwards through Kordofan; they are the Sefuwa<sup>(278)</sup>. A more recent authority has collected the same tradition

<sup>(273)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 22.

<sup>(274)</sup> F. L. SHAW, *op. cit.*, p. 94. This authority further notes a reference, in the Indian epic of Ramayana, to Ungar which is identified with a Persian province on the northern frontier of India, and which is suggested as the place of origin of this people. Such assumption seems to me to be utterly unwarranted.

<sup>(275)</sup> H. A. MACMICHAEL, *History of the Arabs in the Sudan*, vol. I, pp. 40, 162.

<sup>(276)</sup> C. K. MEEK, *A Sudanese Kingdom*, p. 23.

<sup>(277)</sup> *Idem*, *The Northern Tribes*, I, pp. 70 - 71.

<sup>(278)</sup> *Documents scientifiques de la mission Tilho (1906 - 1909)*, vol. II, 1911, pp. 352 - 353, where the tradition is given in its details. Cf. C. K. MEEK, *ibid.*, p. 70. I suppose that Meek, who never states whether he obtains all his data from original or indirect sources, derives this story from the former authority.

with a substantial variant, viz. the substitution of a Himyarite for the Indian origin<sup>(279)</sup>.

Secondly, the tradition about eastern origins was associated with religious elements. Meek reports that among the Jukun traditions concerning Kisra there is found a story about a Jukun king who was fleeing his enemies and who, upon reaching the Benue river, by some magic act caused the waters of the river to withdraw aside thus enabling him and his followers to cross over in safety, whereas his enemies were prevented from getting across it by the waters resuming [their course<sup>(280)</sup>]. That this tradition is not a locally isolated case is proved by the fact that it was also collected by Frobenius among the Busa (Bussa) people, although in a different context. According to it, as Kisra and his people were waging war in the East and pursued the enemy, they suddenly came to a great water which parted asunder and let the foe cross over, but when Kisra and his army tried to follow suit, the waters receded over them and many were drowned<sup>(281)</sup>. The tradition was further collected in Gobir by the members of the Tilho expedition, this time in a more explicit version. The people of Gobir state that they come from the country of Kibti, or Guibti, of which the sovereigns were called *Pharaouni*. This country was inhabited by the people of Moussa (Moses) who fled the country in order to escape oppression, and in the course of their flight they were stopped by the waters of a great *goulbi* (water, river, in Hausa). Moussa stretched out his hand on the waters which parted asunder and let the people pass. When the Kibtaouas tried to cross over, Moussa stretched out again his hand and the waters covered many thousands of these. *Only those who did not engage in the waterway were saved; they are the Kibtaouas, ancestors of the Goberaouas* (my italics). This remnant of 'Kibtaouas' left their country and travelled south-west reaching, after many peregrinations, Air; from this latter place, probably under Tuareg pressure, they came to Gobir<sup>(282)</sup>. This version of the tradition confirms Frobenius' version, but goes against Meek's who probably misinterpreted the information received, for according to him the Jukun would be descended from Jews, while according to Frobenius' and Tilho's Mission's version the Gobir people descend from 'Kibtaouas' or Copts<sup>(283)</sup>. We are confronted with an

<sup>(279)</sup> A. SCHULTZE, *The Sultanate of Bornu*, 1913, p. 14.

<sup>(280)</sup> C. K. MEEK, *A Sudanese Kingdom*, pp. 22 - 23.

<sup>(281)</sup> L. FROBENIUS, *Und Afrika sprach*, vol. II, 1913, p. 356.

<sup>(282)</sup> *Documents scientifiques de la mission Tilho (1906 - 1909)*, vol. II, p. 469.

<sup>(283)</sup> More ambiguous is the interpretation of Mesa-Mesi as Messiah by Barth, adopted by FROBENIUS, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 352. This name may bear relation to Mash of the Meroitic inscriptions, which is a Libyan name for the sun-god. See H. R. PALMER, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 1936, p. 183.

assimilation of the Old Testament story of the parted waters, which cannot but presuppose an acquaintance with Jewish or Christian religious tradition. Now such acquaintance is further confirmed by another set of traditional material about the person of Jesus, which comes in support of the view assuming Christian rather than Jewish origins of these religious influences; although by this, Jewish influences in Negro-Sudanese Africa, such as those commonly accepted for the Fulbe<sup>(284)</sup>, are by no means denied. The Nupe dynasty, of which the origin is traced to Napata in Kordofan, bore the name of Issa-tshi, i.e. Issa-people in the time of Frobenius' expedition, and this name was adopted by other dynasties such as the Edegi (Nupe)<sup>(285)</sup>. Issa is the Arab name for Jesus and, therefore, it might be assumed that it has been transmitted to Negro peoples by the Arabs. But this does not explain the great number of reported occurrences of it among pagan populations, and above all its having been assumed as a dynastic name. Especially in the tradition relating to the restoration of the Edegi dynasty of Nupe the name Issa echoes some features of the sacrificial rôle of Jesus. Edegi sacrifices his maternal uncle Ma-Issa with his own consent on condition that the sacrificed man be remembered as a man of justice and that everybody who invokes his name be granted absolution of sins. So the sacrifice of Ma-Issa established Edegi's rule by introducing a moral element in the relations between the king and his subjects who could demand mercy in the name of Issa and swear on it for their innocence<sup>(286)</sup>. This moral element is very akin to Christian doctrine and is far from being an isolated case. Other data collected amongst the northern tribes of Nigeria are so strongly reminiscent of New Testament teaching as to leave no doubt that they constitute survivals of Christian influences. Dr Bronnum says of the Bachama of Northern Nigeria that, besides the use of the cross as their sacred symbol, they qualify their good spirit, Ndseandsu, as «the Mother hen that gathers its chickens underneath its wings»; and he is like a dunghill «for on him the people can lay their evil things»<sup>(287)</sup>. Many pagan tribes, even Muslim ones, abstain from work every seven days<sup>(288)</sup>. It should be noted that Nadel, who investigated Nupe ethnography at a much later date, although reporting traditions

<sup>(284)</sup> H. R. PALMER, 'The «Fulas» and their Language', *Journal of the African Society*, vol. XXII, 1922 - 1923, pp. 125 - 126. E. W. BOVILL, *Caravans of the Old Sahara*, 1933, p. 27.

<sup>(285)</sup> L. FROBENIUS, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 349 - 350.

<sup>(286)</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. II, pp. 349 - 350.

<sup>(287)</sup> Cited by MEEK, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. I, p. 73, without specification of reference.

<sup>(288)</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. I, p. 73 and note.

concerning the foundation of the Nupe dynasty by Edegi, does not report any about Ma-Issa<sup>(289)</sup>. But in the traditions collected by him Edegi still figures as conquering Nku, the town of his maternal uncle, and making himself the ruler of all Beni (or Nupa)<sup>(290)</sup>. Now between Frobenius' 1910 - 1912 expedition and Nadel's field work in the late thirties there elapsed almost three decades, enough time for many tribal traditions to fade away, especially under the compelling impact of European civilization. Despite such circumstances the surviving detail of Edegi's dynastic authority originating from his maternal uncle's village leaves no doubt as to the accuracy of the tradition as reported by Frobenius, which remains unaffected by the latter's sometimes daring interpretations. The legend about Issa among the Nupe extends to such facts as the introduction by Issa's followers of weaving and cloth making<sup>(291)</sup>.

To the traditions about Issa may also be associated the survival in Bini theology of a female deity 'Obieni' = Our Mother, echoing the Christian conception of the Mother of God<sup>(292)</sup>, but in this case the idea may as well be assigned to an Egyptian source, and moreover the deity in question must be studied in the context of the religious system of this people, which bears some resemblance to ancient polytheism<sup>(293)</sup>, before determining its nature and characteristics. This is the case also with the ritual double-axes found among many Nigerian tribes, which remind us of the Cretan double-axe worship and point again to Mediterranean influences<sup>(294)</sup>.

If we return now to the above exposed Kisra story we can perceive that it is closely related to a parallel set of traditions according to which a wave of Christianity spread westwards from North-East Africa and reached most Negro-Sudanese countries. So among the Borku of Central Sudan the tradition was recorded according to which the prophet of this people was not Mohammed, but Kisra, a Jew who died for the sins of men<sup>(295)</sup>.

<sup>(289)</sup> S. F. NADEL, *A Black Byzantium. The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*, 1942, pp. 72 - 74.

<sup>(290)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 74.

<sup>(291)</sup> P. A. TALBOT, 'Some foreign influences on Nigeria', *Journal of the African Society*, vol. XXIV, 1924 - 1925, p. 180, and *idem*, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, vol. I, 1926, p. 28, where this hypothesis is challenged on the ground of ancient Yoruba terra-cotta work.

<sup>(292)</sup> P. A. TALBOT, *loc. cit.*, p. 186, and *idem*, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, vol. II, 1926, p. 36.

<sup>(293)</sup> P. A. TALBOT, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, vol. II, 1926, pp. 29 *sqq.*

<sup>(294)</sup> *Ibidem*, fig. 63 facing p. 142.

<sup>(295)</sup> F. L. SHAW, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

It is very hard indeed to determine with accuracy the nature and origin of Kisra, but the facts about this legendary hero, as contained in the traditions of the Nigerian and Benue peoples recorded by Frobenius<sup>(296)</sup>, will help to circumscribe within more defined limits the reality hidden under these traditions. In the first place Kisra is associated with Napata or Nupeta, the ancestor of the Nupe. The linguistic affinity of this name with the Nuba of Kordofan and Nubia is clear. Secondly, both Napata and Kisra came from a land «in the East», or by «Pharaoh's river», viz. the Nile. Thirdly, the time of Kisra's migration westwards is stated to antedate Mohammed's conquest of Mecca, even though it took place in the Prophet's times. Fourthly, Kisra is represented as a king of the Persians (Parsi, Bagdadshi) who engaged in war against Anabinuhu who is said to be the king of the Ruma, viz. the Byzantine Emperor or his ally, and was defeated by him. Fifthly, as a consequence of his defeat he fled up the Nile and reached Napata (Nubia) where he met and associated with the local ruler who advised him to emigrate westwards. The tradition as further collected by Martius<sup>(297)</sup> specifies the kingdom subjected by Kisra. His conquests were consolidated in three different regions, Amar on the Benue, Borgu and the present country of the Yoruba. Kisra is said to have lived until twenty-eight years after the Hegira, i.e. until A.D. 650, and in this year he died and was buried at Bussa. Napata or Nupeta, his companion, remained at first in Gobir, but after Kisra's conquest of the land he retired to Gbarra and founded the kingdom of Nupe. He was said to have maintained relations with the East where he returned at times in order to administer justice<sup>(298)</sup>. There does not seem to exist any antagonism between Napata and Kisra; although the second is the greater figure, it is the first who assumed the rôle of ancestor and gave his name to the actual Nupe.

The question now poses itself whether the Kisra tradition can be related to historical facts, and how these facts can be related with traditionally reported ethnic movements in the Sudanese sectors. The Kisra tradition bears clearly a chronological relation with the times of the Prophet and the rise of Islam, at the same time its Persian affinities are evident, and finally the Christian features ascertained in the Nigerian cultures add a third element to be taken into consideration. The reconciliation of these facts requires us to focus our attention on the state of Egypt

<sup>(296)</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 335 - 338.

<sup>(297)</sup> *Apud* FROBENIUS, *ibid.*, p. 336. It is unfortunate that Frobenius almost never gives references to his sources, and this renders uncritical many parts of his work.

<sup>(298)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 337.

in the first half of the 7th century of our era. In the year 616 Egypt was conquered by the Persian king Chosroes II of the Sassanid dynasty. The Persian occupation of Egypt lasted until A.D. 629, when the peace treaty entered into by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius and the Persian general Sahrbaraz restored Byzantine rule over the former Asian and Egyptian provinces. It was after the Byzantine restoration under Heraclius that the first coins with the Greek inscription *ἐν τούτῳ νόμισμα* were coined and circulated in Africa<sup>(299)</sup>. The restoration of Byzantine rule in Egypt was only short-lived, as ten years later the Arab invasion put an end to it, and between the years 639-643 the Arabs consolidated their conquest of Egypt thus preparing the ground for the further conquest of the whole of North Africa and the penetration of the Sudanese countries. Now the period 616 - 643 in the history of Egypt is very characteristic because of the concurrence and inevitable conflict of Byzantine, Persian, and Islamic elements, a fact which explains the historical background of the Kisra tradition. It must be assumed that the Persian conquest of Egypt was meant to consolidate itself as a permanent domination. This is implied by the fact that the Persians had initiated permanent establishments in conquered territory<sup>(300)</sup>. The Great King meant to restore the grandeur of the ancient Achaemenid Empire. Although abiding monuments of civilization could not be erected during such a short period of occupation, vestiges of the Persian presence in Egypt were likely to survive. It has to be borne in mind that Nubia was converted to Christianity in the second half of the 6th century, and that the conversion of the Novadae was followed by a rapid and significant expansion of Christianity reaching the Ethiopian borderland on the south and the pagan tribes west of the Nile valley as far as Kordofan. On the other hand the Arab conquest did not go without serious consequences, political, social, and ethnic, on the populations of Egypt and North Africa, which, threatened with extermination, were forced either to embrace Islam or to emigrate whenever this was possible. The upsetting of ethnic conditions under the impact of Islamic conquest can be taken for granted. These historical facts realize the concurrence of the conditions presupposed for the events transmitted by the Kisra tradition; for in these conditions we have a convergence of Christian, Persian, and Islamic elements with which that tradition is imbued. The introduction of Christianity in Nubia, the Persian occupation and the Arab conquest of Egypt are initial historical facts which determined an ethnic fermentation and a migratory mo-

<sup>(299)</sup> N. H. BAYNES, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II, 1913, p. 300.

<sup>(300)</sup> P. SYKES, *A History of Persia*, vol. I, 1958<sup>s</sup>, p. 483. The Persian penetration in Egypt is otherwise attested by Coptic sources. See E. AMÉLINEAU, *Etudes sur le christianisme en Egypte au septième siècle*, 1887, pp. 39-40 and p. 40 n. 3.

vement westwards, further affecting the ethnic situation in Central and Western Sudan. From Nubia it is easy to establish contacts with Central Sudan through the geographically adjacent territories of Kordofan, Darfur, and Borku whence the Lake Chad region is easily reached. Now Bornu is in the immediate vicinity of Lake Chad and commands the natural routes leading to the west Sudanese regions. East-west contacts along the Sudanese belt are moreover facilitated by the remarkably regular configuration of the country, which favoured from a high antiquity the development of great caravan routes linking one Sudanese region to another. This great door open to the west was affording an easy issue for the pressure exercised on the populations by the Arab conquest of Egypt, but such issue was only practical mainly through Christian Nubia which remained unaffected by the Arab conquest and retained its independent status for a very long period after it. Now the ethnological data available point to these movements of population westwards as partaking of the nature of migrations, although, in the absence of written sources and as is the case with most ethnological events, it is impossible to assign specific geographical and chronological limits except on a basis of very rough estimations. We might be tempted to assign to these times the migrations of the Kanuri, Bagirmi, and Hausa<sup>(301)</sup>. Of these, Kanuri and Hausa bear a definite relation to the Zaghawa, a tribe whose domain extends from Darfur to the north of Bornu and is closely connected with Nubia as regards ethnic affinities. Moreover, this tribe, really an ethnic group, played a major rôle in the mediaeval ethnology of Central Sudan. Linguistically, Hausa and Kanuri derive from Zaghawa. One of the best informed authorities on the peoples of Central Sudan and Sahara states that «Zaghawa would appear to have been the foundation on which both the Hausa and Kanuri languages were eventually built: (a) Kanuri being Zaghawa modified by Teda and very slightly by Arabic; (b) Hausa being Zaghawa modified by Tamastek and very considerably by Arabic»<sup>(302)</sup>. This influence is due to a very great expansion of the Zaghawa, such expansion reaching Tibesti to the north, Bornu to the west, and Kordofan to the east, while other branches remained in Darfur and Wadai, the original Zaghawa country, where they were maintained as the ruling tribes according to the testimony of Maqrizi<sup>(303)</sup>. The Zaghawa are, according to Palmer, Cushites fused in

<sup>(301)</sup> P. A. TALBOT, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 30.

<sup>(302)</sup> H. R. PALMER, *loc. cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>(303)</sup> *Idem*, 'The origin of the name Bornu', *Journal of the African Society*, vol. XXVIII, 1928 - 1929, p. 41.

a great degree with Sudanese Negroes<sup>(304)</sup>. The original people of Bornu or 'Barnu', the 'Barawni', whence the country seems to have taken its name, were of the same stock as the actual Zaghawa of Wadai and Darfur<sup>(305)</sup>. Bornu is a real turntable of communications for the Sahara and the Sudan. The historical past of the peoples of these great areas has definite links with the past of Bornu and the Lake Chad region. For from these latter regions cultural influences could radiate in many directions, to the Sudanese countries to the west, as far as Fezzan to the north. But Bornu was also accessible to Nubia through Kanem, Borku, Darfur, and Kordofan. Hence the significant rôle played by the Zaghawa consisting in the diffusion of cultural elements borrowed from Nubia throughout the Sudanese countries. The archaeological and historical evidence about the Zaghawa has been aptly analyzed by Monneret de Villard in his work on Christian Nubia<sup>(306)</sup>. We shall retain from this account two important conclusions; (a) in its maximum expansion the Zaghawa 'imperium' covered such large areas as part of Bornu, Kanem, Wadai, Darfur, part of Bagirmi, Tibesti, and Borku, that is almost the whole of Central Sudan; (b) the Zaghawa controlled the two great caravan routes to the north, that from Lake Chad to Murzuk via Bilma and the Darb el Arba'in<sup>(307)</sup>.

The expansion of Zaghawa culture can be attested by both archaeological and linguistic evidence, of which only two examples can be cited here. The archaeological finds in Mound I excavated by Wulsin in 1928 near Fort Lamy, south of Lake Chad<sup>(308)</sup>, bear a striking resemblance, being almost identical, to the finds of several mounds excavated at Faragan, in central Kordofan, by Seligman<sup>(309)</sup>. The Faraga culture is pointed to as the richer of the two<sup>(310)</sup>, which is a natural consequence of its closer connection with Nubia. On the other hand, comparable archaeological material has been reported from northern and central Sahara by Foureau<sup>(311)</sup>.

<sup>(304)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 41.

<sup>(305)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 37.

<sup>(306)</sup> U. H. MONNERET DE VILLARD, *Storia della Nubia Cristiana*, pp. 195 - 206.

<sup>(307)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 204. Cf. W. B. K. SHAW, *loc. cit.* (note 246 above), pp. 63 - 71.

<sup>(308)</sup> F. R. WULSIN, 'An archaeological reconnaissance of the Shari Basin', *Harvard African Studies*, vol. X, 1932 (= *Varia Africana*, V), pp. 58 - 68 and 79.

<sup>(309)</sup> C. G. SELIGMAN, 'A Prehistoric Site in Northern Kordofan', *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, vol. VII, 1914 - 1916, pp. 107 - 114. See plates XVII - XX.

<sup>(310)</sup> F. R. WULSIN, *loc. cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>(311)</sup> F. FOUREAU, *Documents scientifiques de la Mission saharienne. Mission Foureau-Lamy*, vol. II, 1905, pp. 1032 - 1096, 1102 - 1105, 1123 - 1131. Cf. R. CHUDEAU, *Missions au Sahara*, vol. II, 1909, p. 119.

Let it be stated that the archaeological material excavated by Wulsin derives from two periods, one beginning before the Christian era and the other ending between the 10th and the 14th centuries<sup>(312)</sup>, so they may be said to cover the Zaghawa expansion and the east-west cultural penetration of the 6th century onwards. Some simple linguistic evidence corroborates this cultural penetration; the name Kâkura, Karkur<sup>(313)</sup>, which was the title of the Zaghawa rulers and kings, is found in Bornu where the word 'mai Kûra' designates in Kanuri<sup>(314)</sup>, the sovereign, and this should further be compared with the term 'kakar' (plur. 'kukâra') which designates the king's throne among the Fung, and is probably of Meroitic origin<sup>(315)</sup>. Now the location of the above archaeological finds, as well as the oriental limits of the Fung expansion, define the limits of the Zaghawa expansion in Sudan and Sahara, which is cultural as well as political. In A.D. 891, according to Ya'qubi, the ruler of Kanem (Borku) belonged to a Zaghawa tribe<sup>(316)</sup>.

Nubian and Central Sudanese relations being historically ascertainable, let us focus our attention on more specific facts attesting to the importance of the relations between Bornu and the Lake Chad region and the countries further west, in an attempt to establish the continuity, if any, of the cultural current which originated in Nubia, and also to prove the cultural pattern which prevailed among the tribal complex of the Sudanese peoples. Songhay traditions as taken account of by H. Barth and F. Dubois point to Egyptian origins and influence. Gao is the great centre of the Songhay empire, the first king of which is stated to be Dialliaman. «Son nom vient de la phrase arabe *dia min el Jemen, c'est à dire, il est venu de l'Yemen*»<sup>(317)</sup>. Dialliaman left Yemen with his brother, says the tradition, apparently because of conflict with the first disciples of the Prophet, and took the western route into the Sudan. Passing north of Lake Chad and Bornu he reaches Gao via Agades. The ethnographic relation between Gao and Agades is attested by the presence of Songhay populations along the desert limit between Gao and Lake Chad and by the

<sup>(312)</sup> F. R. WULSIN, *loc. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>(313)</sup> H. R. PALMER, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 1936, p. 101. Ya'qubi, Houtsma's edition, vol. I, 1883, p. 219, has Kâkura, Kâkara. Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 127, corrects to Karkur.

<sup>(314)</sup> H. BARTH, *Sammlung und Bearbeitung Central-Afrikanischen Vokabularien*, 3rd part, 1866, p. 226.

<sup>(315)</sup> U. H. MONNERET DE VILLARD, *op. cit.*, p. 206. 'Karkar', in Meroitic inscriptions of the 4th century means 'priest-king'; see E. A. T. W. BUDGE, *History of Abyssinia*, vol. I, 1928, p. 256.

<sup>(316)</sup> H. R. PALMER, 'The Central Sahara and Sudan in the Twelfth Century A. D.', in *Journal of the African Society*, vol. XXVIII, 1928, p. 378.

<sup>(317)</sup> F. DUBOIS, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

linguistic affinities of their respective populations<sup>(318)</sup>. Gao having been consolidated as the centre of the Songhay domination, a further political and cultural expansion westwards is achieved, which results in the foundation of Dienné, on the western Niger. Thus the eastern influence originating in Nubia asserts itself well into the western Sudanese sector. Dubois gives as the date of Dienné's foundation, on the authority of Arab sources, A.D. 765<sup>(319)</sup>. This date is corroborated by the *Tarikh es Sudan* which gives as foundation date for Dienné, the middle of the second century of Hegira<sup>(320)</sup>. I think Dubois' account of the tradition relating to Songhay origins<sup>(321)</sup> is more accurate and more illuminating than Barth's, who did not visit Dienné. From the former's account, moreover, emerge some significant facts. Dialliaman, although coming from Yemen, is at conflict with his countrymen who are already converts to the new religion. He emigrates to Sudan before the consolidation of Islam. And the original city where he settled and whence he came to Sudan was in Misr, Egypt. These facts contradict Dialliaman's close association with the Arabs. They encourage us to presume that only the superimposed Islamic version of the tradition, as it was wont with Islamic peoples, made him associated with Arabia. According to Dubois' keen interpretation of the tradition<sup>(322)</sup>, everything, including a Pharaonic tradition noted near Gao, indicates a Nubian origin and at the same time the Nubian connections of the Songhay. It is also known that the Songhay tenaciously resisted Islamic penetration and that they were not converted before the 11th century, that is several centuries after the complete conversion of Egypt and North Africa. The critics of Dubois' interpretation do not seem to be acquaint-

<sup>(318)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 110.

<sup>(319)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 115.

<sup>(320)</sup> As above (note 232), p. 23.

<sup>(321)</sup> *Op. cit.*, the whole chapter vi, pp. 103 - 116. Y. URVOY (*Histoire des populations du Soudan central*, 1936, p. 23, note 1), on the authority of Delafosse, considers Dubois' theory about Egyptian origins of the Songhay as uncritical. Now Urvoy, as well as Delafosse, completely ignore the ethnological side of the problem and pass over the traditional material sticking on written sources. Because of such exclusively modern historical outlook they cannot view the history of the Sudanese peoples beyond the written testimonies of the Islamic era, as a consequence of which we read such uncritical statements in Urvoy's work (p. 27) as this one: «Du VIIe - XVe siècle les Bargous, les Gourmas et les Haoussas de l'ouest n'ont pas d'histoire»(!). The essential facts of the pre-Islamic history of the Sudanese peoples are thus relegated to the domain of ignorance. Yet it is these facts that underlie the Sudanese traditions about oriental origins.

<sup>(322)</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 112 - 114.

ed with further evidence confirming Dialliaman's cultural and, eventually, racial disconnection from the Arabs and Islam. This evidence is afforded by an important document, the so-called 'Kano Chronicle' <sup>(323)</sup>. This source is important because it emanates from a Mohammedan writer and gives the succession of the *Islamic* Kano rulers, the first of which, named Bagoda, is reputed to have ruled between A.H. 389 - 455 (A.D. 999 - 1063). However, the list of these rulers is preceded by a short introduction recounting the life of Barbusche, once Kano's ruler, who «was of the stock of Dalla, a *black man* of great stature and might, a hunter... Dalla was of *unknown race*, but *came to the land*, and built a house on Dalla hill» <sup>(324)</sup>. So Dalla, i.e. Dialliaman, was a negro, a stranger («of an unknown race») who came to the land! The introduction speaks also of the secret place of the people of Kako, which was Kakua <sup>(325)</sup>, Dubois' Kukia met with above. Only the religious practices differ in the Kano chronicle where God is represented not by a serpent, but by a tree <sup>(326)</sup>. So the texture of the tradition is rehabilitated thanks to an Arab authority <sup>(327)</sup>!

The ethnological connection between Agades, i.e. the north-west Chad region, and Gao, and, later on, Dienné on the west Niger, is paralleled by that established between Bornu and Hausaland, as attested by the Fulani Sultan of Sokoto Bello, the author of the chronicle entitled «Infaku'l Maisuri» <sup>(328)</sup>. «The country of the Hausa»,

<sup>(323)</sup> H. R. PALMER, 'The Kano Chronicle', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. XXXVIII, 1908, pp. 58 - 98.

<sup>(324)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 63. My italics.

<sup>(325)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 63.

<sup>(326)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 63.

<sup>(327)</sup> M. DELAFOSSE, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, vol. II, 1912, pp. 60 - 62, entirely rejects the tradition about Dialliaman's Yemenite origin; he emits the hypothesis that he was a white Berber who founded the empire of Gao. This is not an impossible hypothesis, but it should be noted that Delafosse practically ignores the whole Kisra tradition, and does not pay due credit to the historical content and significance of the traditions of origin. Once, however, he traces the meaning of the tradition about the fish-tyrant (the serpent, in the original version) to a historical fact, the devastation of the country by a tribe of Sorko fishers who were subsequently exterminated by Dialliaman and his companions (*ibidem*, p. 63).

<sup>(328)</sup> The Arabic manuscript of this account, containing a geographical and historical description of the country of 'Takrur' ruled by the same Sultan Mohammed Bello, was bought by Captain Clapperton at the time of his exploration in Sahara and Sudan, and passages therefrom in translation were given in Major DENHAM, Captain CLAPPETON and Doctor OUDNEY, *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa in the years 1822, 1823 and 1824*, vol. II, 1828, pp. 444 - 457. More extracts in a more accurate translation are given in H. R. PALMER, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, above cited, pp. 270 - 276. The complete edition of the text in English trans-

says this authority, «lies to the south and west of Bornu. It consists of seven states. The language of every part is the same...Kano is a country of rivers and trees and sand and rocks and hills and bush. The inhabitants are Sudanese... It is said that a slave of the Sarkin (=Mai) Bornu, named Bawo, was the ancestor of the Sudanese of Hausa. For this reason we say that they are slaves of the Berbers who came from Bornu. The brother of Sarkin Muslimi Mohamad ul Bahir ibn Muhamad Adatu (Sarkin Muslimi Ahir) is my authority. He says that Katsina and Kano and Zakzak and Daura and Rano and Buram were all children of Bawo, and Bawo was a slave of Sarkin (=Mai) Bornu. *But the people of Gobir were free and came originally from Masar (=Misr). They are indeed the remainder of the Kibti who came westwards.* This is what I find in their Tarikh» (my italics)<sup>(329)</sup>. This is a rather modern source, since the *Infaku'l Maisuri* was written between 1810 - 1825 according to Palmer. Nevertheless it is a valuable source because it was written by a native who, despite his Islamic status, takes care to record all relevant traditional data and former testimonies. In the above extract it is said that the ancestor of the Hausa is a slave from Bornu, but it is clear that this can refer only to a ruling dynasty founded by this personage, not to the people themselves; for immediately after this statement it is said that the people of Gobir were free and came from Misr, and that they represent the remnants of the Kibti who came westwards. Before saying anything of these Kibti it is apt to point out that in another chapter concerning the land of Mali the same authority states that «its inhabitants are Sudanese who are said to be a remnant of the Kibti»<sup>(330)</sup>. Now Palmer in the case of the Hausa interprets Kibti as «Keft or Kefa =Palestinian Barbar»<sup>(331)</sup>; but in the second instance he interprets the same term, as applied to the people of Mali, as «Phoenicians, or Libyan Phoenicians, not Copts», for, he says, «in the age of the Ptolemys, Kaptur, or Keft, meant Palestine, not Crete nor Egypt»<sup>(332)</sup>. Although these remarks are exact in themselves, I cannot see how these subtle distinctions relevant to the domain of classical geography can be properly referred to traditional Negro-Sudanese accounts of origin in face of the quasi universality of agreement as regards the meaning of the name Kibti

lation or paraphrase, to which I have referred above, and to which is appended a short history of Sokoto, was given by E. J. ARNETT, *The rise of the Sokoto Fulani, being a paraphrase and in some parts a translation of the Infaku'l Maisuri of Sultan Mohammed Bello*, (Kano, Nigeria) 1922.

<sup>(329)</sup> *Infaku'l Maisuri*, pp. 11 - 12. Cf. H. R. PALMER, *Bornu Sahara*, pp. 273 - 274.

<sup>(330)</sup> *Infaku'l Maisuri*, p. 137. *Bornu Sahara*, p. 274.

<sup>(331)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 274, note 2.

<sup>(332)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 274, note 4.

=Copt. Moreover, Palmer is inconsistent in interpreting Kibti as Palestinian Barbarians in the first instance, and as Phoenicians in the instance immediately following. All this goes against the much more positive evidence of the Egyptian-Nubian-Central Sudanese connections which should put us on the path of the correct interpretation, viz. the one allowing, if not for a necessarily racial identity with the Egyptian or Nubian Copts, for close ethnological and cultural relations and affinities. For although the modern Hausa are an ethnic complex made up of multiple ethnic elements, such as Zaghawa, Saharan nomads, Nilotes etc. intermingled with autochthonous Negroes<sup>(333)</sup>, and although the theory about a north Berber origin may hold good in respect of at least some of them<sup>(334)</sup>, their immediate connections with the Chadic peoples and their ties with Eastern Sudanese ethnic groups are indubitable<sup>(335)</sup>.

With regard to the tradition referred to above about the ancestor of the Hausa being a Bornu slave, it may be added that Bornu was settled by Zaghawa tribes probably in the 6th or 7th century A.D., and that at a later epoch this country came under the domination of the Bardaoa (the Tuareg in Arab authors). The first king of Bornu was, therefore, deemed to be «a descendant of Bardaoa, a Libyan people»<sup>(336)</sup>. Now the kings of Hausa were Dagara or Dagirawa, and these were, according to Palmer, originally Zaghawa from Bornu<sup>(337)</sup>. In this fact of the subjugation of the Bornu Zaghawa we might seek the explanation of the legend according to which the founder of the primitive Hausa dynasty was a slave from Bornu.

#### § 5. *Some ethno-cultural data.*

The historical traditions and testimonies referred to, which are only a few specimens from the vast and incompletely explored ethnological field under consideration, point to the existence of widespread ethno-cultural currents throughout

<sup>(333)</sup> J. SPENCER TRIMINGHAM, *op. cit.* (above, note 260), p. 126.

<sup>(334)</sup> P. C. MEYER, *Erforschungsgeschichte und Staatenbildungen des Westsudan* (Ergänzungsheft N. 121 zu Petermans Mitteilungen), 1897, p. 25.

<sup>(335)</sup> G. P. MURDOCK, *Africa. Its Peoples and their Culture History*, 1959, p. 137. Cf. P. C. MEYER, *op. cit.*, p. 25, note 6, citing BARTH, whose opinion about a Coptic origin he considers as «keineswegs als eine absurde Angabe».

<sup>(336)</sup> Leo Africanus, *Description de l'Afrique*, transl. by A. EPAULARD, 1956, p. 480. The Bardaoa or Berdaoa are Teda according to the Editor, *ibid.*, p. 480, note 108.

<sup>(337)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 108.

the Sudanese countries allowing a certain degree of cultural unification of the otherwise disseminated and highly differentiated Sudanese peoples. To this cultural unification, due to strong influences generally emanating from the north-eastern African sector, correspond a great number of migrations and ethnological fermentations in or around the Nubian geographical sector, a really central sector on account of its direct contacts with Egypt to the north, its common Christian religion with Abyssinia to the south, and its open door to the Sudanese countries to the west. Is it possible to assign chronological limits to the process of that degree of cultural unification which impressed on the Sudanese peoples those cultural features under which they came to be known to us? Of course the answer depends on a great deal of research not only in a variety of special disciplines, but also in each one of the ethnic groups that compose the great variety of the Sudanese peoples inhabiting the great Sudanese belt from ocean to ocean. We will try here to illustrate our view concerning the degree of cultural unification attained by the most important ethnic groups of Sudan by drawing chiefly on the rich, although uncoordinated, material accumulated by Palmer on the Central Sudan and Sahara<sup>(338)</sup>.

A cultural unification occurs among archaic peoples usually by way of tribal or racial intermingling and, therefore, if we assume that Hamitic stock penetrated Negro Africa, we must be prepared to accept their fusion with native elements. Such fusion is actually perceivable in the Zaghawa who provided the Negro substratum that rendered possible the expansion of the Hamitic element as far as Central Sudan. The tribal groups of Hamitic stock that became dominant in the course of a drive sometime in the Christian era could only achieve permanent political status by means of a close ethnic association with the autochthonous Negroes. This is the reason we find such groups as the Zaghawa in many instances reported as the original inhabitants of a number of regions. In Wadai tradition «Darfur was under the dominion of the Zaghawa»<sup>(339)</sup>. But also Ya'qubi (A.D. 871) states that «the first kingdom is

<sup>(338)</sup> H. R. PALMER, *Sudanese Memoirs*, vols. I - III, (Lagos) 1928 (hereafter referred to as *Sudanese Memoirs*). The materials contained in these volumes have been digested and in a large extent reproduced in the later and greater work by the same author, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 1936 (hereafter referred to as *Bornu Sahara*). It is unfortunate that the classification of such a mass of material should be methodologically so deficient as at times to render its use a difficult matter. Moreover, imperfect or no references at all render almost impossible any recourse to, or tracing of, the original sources. Important excursuses in the second of the above works are interpolated in the listed annals of Bornu Maghumi Mais, not always in relation to the chronological period dealt with, which could form the subject-matter of special chapters. Finally, there is a great amount of overlapping, and a number of contradictory interpretations of the same data.

<sup>(339)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 102.

that of the Zaghawa who frequent a country called Kanem»<sup>(340)</sup>, while Maqrizi states that «Kanem is the seat of power; all the peoples are called Zaghawa, to whose south lies Habesh and to whose east lies Nuba, whose north is Barka and west Takrur»<sup>(341)</sup>. Another writer, Al-Muhallebi (A.D. 990), quoted by Yaqut, reports that «they (Zaghawa) mount horses bareback. The kingdom of Kaukau developed from that of the Zaghawa, who expanded and increased the wealth of the people of Kaukau in goods and flocks and large public treasuries; their chief wealth was salt»<sup>(342)</sup>. He adds that the Zaghawa kingdom is a great kingdom among the Sudanese kingdoms... The Zaghawa are numerous, and the length of their country is a distance of fifteen marches as far as the cultivated portion of the country extends<sup>(343)</sup>. In fact the term 'Zaghawa' assumes a very large connotation, since by it a great variety of north and central African ethnic groups were covered<sup>(344)</sup>.

What is the relation between Zaghawa and Tuareg? Leo Africanus (A.D. 1515) states that the Maghumi Mai (king) of Bornu was a «descendant of Bardaoa, a Libyan tribe»<sup>(345)</sup>. Bardaoa or Bardoa, Berdaoua, Berdama, is another name for Tuareg among Arab authors, but also the native Teda call the Tuareg Yeburda (=enemies)<sup>(346)</sup>. The Tuareg are said to have dominated large areas of Sahara and Central Sudan, while Yaqut reports that the rulers of Kanem were of the Barbar tribe of Zaghawa<sup>(347)</sup>. Now a closer study of the testimony of Ibn Khaldun about the Sanhaja (=nomads, Tuareg) will reveal that these have in many cases fused with local ethnic elements and formed various tribes generally considered to be distinct ethnic groups. Speaking of these Sanhaja, he says: «Having multiplied in these vast plains, they formed several tribes such as the Godala, the Lamtuna, the Masufa, the Uzla, Targa, Zaghawa and Ghadamis»<sup>(348)</sup>. This fusion points to the northern ex-

<sup>(340)</sup> *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 20. *Bornu Sahara*, p. 194.

<sup>(341)</sup> *apud Bornu Sahara*, p. 193.

<sup>(342)</sup> *apud Bornu Sahara*, p. 104, note 3.

<sup>(343)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 156.

<sup>(344)</sup> *Ibidem*, see *index s. v.*

<sup>(345)</sup> *Description de l'Afrique*, transl. by A. EPAULARD, 1956, p. 480. The desert of Berdoa according to Leo's topography occupies the territory of the central Zaghawa. See map appended to the translation.

<sup>(346)</sup> Ibn Batuta, transl. by M. G. DE SLANE, in *Journal Asiatique*, 4ème série, vol. I, 1843, p. 231. Cf. *Bornu Sahara*, pp. vii, 146 and 146 note 1.

<sup>(347)</sup> *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 6.

<sup>(348)</sup> *Histoire des Berbères* etc. (see above note 223), vol. II, p. 64.

pansion of the Zaghawa well into the Saharan domain. But nowhere is the fusion of Negro and Hamitic stocks better exemplified than in the close relation between Zaghawa and Teda, which confers on the former their Berber, i.e. Hamitic features<sup>(349)</sup>. This relationship finds expression in the fact that the actual Zaghawa and Tibbu languages belong to the same family<sup>(350)</sup>, which points to Tibesti as an area of Zaghawa expansion. I think that Ibn Khaldun's indications afford some basis for the solution of the problem of the phenomenal Zaghawa expansion; for, how does it happen that an originally insignificant tribe of Darfur raises itself to the status of an empire with such vast geographical limits, at the same time lacking the political unity and organization required for founding and maintaining such an empire? How true these latter facts are can be gathered from Ya'qubi's description of the main centre of Zaghawa expansion, Kanem, in the 9th century A.D., which runs thus: «Their habitations are merely huts made of corn stalks. *They have no kings of cities.* Their ruler is called Karkur»<sup>(351)</sup>. We can conclude that the Zaghawa chief had not as yet attained the degree of political evolution of the rulers of historical nations, in other terms he had not as yet overcome the status of a tribal chief. The same remarks hold true of the northern Zaghawa described by Idrisi<sup>(352)</sup>, who offer a still more miserable picture because of their extremely low social condition, their being naked, their eating serpents and leprosy raging among them. As said, the answer to the Zaghawa question is hinted by Ibn Khaldun's quoted testimony, according to which the several tribes known under the name 'Zaghawa', other than the original Darfur or Nubian branch, may be considered as the outcome of a process of gradual intermingling with foreign stocks. An attempt to define the Zaghawa problem might be formulated on the following lines.

(i) There does not exist a precisely circumscribed ethnic entity under the name 'Zaghawa' embracing the vast territories where we have met it represented by a supposedly uniform ethnic group.

(ii) The culture which we find so disseminated throughout the Saharan and Sudanese countries is not a properly Zaghawa culture.

(iii) Nevertheless the people called Zaghawa are the bearers of such a culture.

<sup>(349)</sup> H. CARBOU, *La région du Tchad et du Ouadaï*, vol. I, 1912, p. 209.

<sup>(350)</sup> H. A. MACMICHAEL, 'Notes on the Zaghawa and the people of Gebel Midob, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. XLII, 1912, pp. 288 - 344. See especially pp. 288 and 335.

<sup>(351)</sup> My italics. *Apud Bornu Sahara*, p. 127.

<sup>(352)</sup> *Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne*, ed. and transl. by R. DOZY and M. J. DE GOEJE, 1866, pp. 39 - 40.

(iv) What underlies the ethnic term 'Zaghawa' is an east-west migratory movement of various ethnic elements as from the 6th century onwards, probably in direct relation to an invasion of Hamitic Tuareg, accentuated in the 7th century, firstly by the expulsion of the Persians from Egypt following the issue of the Byzantine-Persian war, secondly under the impact of the Arab conquest.

(v) The rôle of the Zaghawa in the ethnological domain coincides with the geographical importance of Darfur, the 'turn-table' of the whole Sudanese belt, of which the Zaghawa seem to be at this time native inhabitants, and which allowed the Nubian culture to expand and penetrate into the Central and Western Sudan and Sahara.

(vi) In these ethnic and cultural movements the term Zaghawa in its expanded connotation means the synthesis of Hamitic and Negro-Sudanese stocks. Nowhere is this process of mutual assimilation better illustrated than by the testimonies of the Arab historians and geographers, of whom Idrisi (A.D. 1154) and Ibn Khaldun (A.D. 1332 - 1406) class the Zaghawa as Berber (Hamitic) stock, whereas Masudi (A.D. 956) counts them as one of the native tribes of Eastern Sudan<sup>(353)</sup>. Now it is known that the Zaghawa as an ethnic group are hamitized Negroes. That the so-called Zaghawa expansion corresponds really to an ethnic and cultural expansion of Hamitic and more especially Nubian elements is supported by the linguistic relationship ascertainable between Central Sudanese, Saharan, Eastern Sudanese and Nubian languages, as well as by the intrusion of Coptic words as far as Hausa. The linguistic relationship in question bears not so much on grammatical and dialectal interdependence as on the community of words of social, religious, and cultural import. Some instances of the linguistic aspect of this cultural interrelationship can be cited here.

*Zaghawa-Hausa.* Zaghawi word *sirgi* =king, which passed into Hausa *sariki* =king<sup>(354)</sup>.

*Nubia-Zaghawa-Bornu.* The Zaghawi word *kitaki* =mother, seems to derive from Meroitic *Kintakit* =*Candave* =king's mother, which passed (through Zaghawi) into Kanuri (Bornu) where we have *kintagu* =moon<sup>(355)</sup>.

<sup>(353)</sup> Cf. H. A. MACMICHAEL, *The Tribes of Northern and Central Kordofan*, 1912, p. 105.

<sup>(354)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 152.

<sup>(355)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 149, p. 125, note 1. Cf. E. ZYHLARZ, 'Das meroïtische Sprachproblem'. *Anthropos*, vol. XXV, 1930, p. 458.

*Bornu-Hausa.* Kanuri *ngurbu* = vulture, Hausa *n'gubu*<sup>(356)</sup>. Kanuri *Arkiwa* (or *Arigwa*) = North, Hausa *Arewa*<sup>(357)</sup>.

*Bornu-Hausa-Tuareg.* Kanuri *ngilaro* = ram, Hausa *rago*, Tamashek *ekrar*<sup>(358)</sup>.

*Tuareg - Hausa - Bornu - Ethiopia.* Tamashek *amadol* = the earth, Hausa *madila*, Kanuri *Matala* = royal eponym, Ethiopian *medr*<sup>(359)</sup>.

*Meroe - Nubia - Zaghawa - Bornu - Hausa - Tuareg.* Meroitic *Kerge* = noble king, Nubian *kirki* = chief, head, Zaghawi *mangil* = title of a chief, Kanuri *Ker-mai* or *Karkarma* = king, Hausa *girma* = nobility, Tamashek *aman-okel* = chief<sup>(360)</sup>.

The relative uniformity, cultural, not necessarily racial, observed throughout the Sudanese countries, is expressed in their common words pertaining to the domain of civilization, as well as in the linguistic relationship of the major Sudanese ethnic groups. Two great linguistic families cover the major part of the Sudanese sector; (a) the Nilo-Chadic group, extending from Aswan in the north to Fashoda in the south, and from a territory adjacent to Ethiopia (Tigré) in the east to the Lake Chad region in the west, covering as it does the vast Libyan desert as far as and including Tibesti, the desert north of Kordofan, Darfur, Wadai, Kanem and Bornu. With the exception of Arabic and some other minor elements, this linguistic domain is uniform<sup>(361)</sup>; (b) the Nigerian-Chadic group is a western prolongation of the Nilo-Chadic group, reaching the river Niger near Sokoto in the west, and the Songhay and Berber domains in the north; in the south it borders on the southern Nigerian linguistic group and the Cameroons<sup>(362)</sup>. The two linguistic families are closely related in several respects. This relationship induced Westermann to class them (with the exception of Nuba) as 'Languages of the Inner Sudan'<sup>(363)</sup>, while the presence in many languages of the Nigerian-Chadic group of a grammatical distinction of genders induced Lukas to give to this group the qualification of Chado-Hamitic<sup>(364)</sup>.

<sup>(356)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 142.

<sup>(357)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 143.

<sup>(358)</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 141 - 142.

<sup>(359)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 203.

<sup>(360)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 136.

<sup>(361)</sup> A. MEILLET et M. COHEN, *Les langues du monde*, 1952<sup>2</sup>, p. 753.

<sup>(362)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 189.

<sup>(363)</sup> D. WESTERMANN, *Die Sudansprachen, eine sprachvergleichende Studie*, 1911, p. 7.

<sup>(364)</sup> J. LUKAS, 'Der hamitische Gehalt der tschadhamitischen Sprachen', *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen*, vol. XXVIII, 1938, pp. 286-299. *Idem*, *Zentralafrikanische Studien*, 1937, pp. 141 sqq.

The intervention of an ethnic as well as cultural penetration of Christian Nubian elements into the Sudanese and Saharan sectors compels a reconsideration of the theory about a Zaghawa Empire as exposed by Monneret de Villard<sup>(365)</sup>. This authority conceives of a Zaghawa imperium in politico-geographical terms and speaks, therefore, of an «Impero» and «territorio Zagawa», although the testimonies we possess in this respect speak only of the presence of this people over a vast area and of cities dominated by them tribally. The anonymous Syriac source of the 11th century, which Monneret de Villard cites, only associates the Zaghawa with the Nubians, the Ethiopians and the Abyssinians (sic), but affords no indications as to a politico-geographical entity<sup>(366)</sup>. In reality the only facts proved are the existence of local Zaghawa kingdoms, or rather sultanates, of no consequent duration and major political unity, and many more instances of Zaghawa elements in a great number of Saharan and Sudanese areas. Their association with Kanem is limited to their having provided a dynasty to this state. On the other hand it is very significant that an originally unimportant tribe came to assume such a considerable place within the complex of the Sudanese peoples. This finds its justification, in my opinion, in the fact that the Zaghawa, being closely associated with Nubia through Darfur, were the chief carriers of the Nubian culture into Central Sudan and, eventually through their association with the Gobir dynasties, into Western Sudan<sup>(367)</sup>. In this their rôle of diffusion of the Nubian culture they acquire a *historical* besides their mere *ethnological* importance. Their ethnohistorical rôle affords a typical case of acculturation process with far-reaching effects. We have met the same case with the Novadae emerging as a historical people out of the acculturation of the native Nubian tribes undergoing the cultural impact of Christianity. Given the more complex ethnic composition of the Zaghawa, in whom Negro and Hamitic (Cushitic) racial elements merge, their expansion, translated into real terms, represents the cultural impact of the christianized Hamitic culture of Nubia on the native populations of Central Sudan. In the same way as the Novadae differentiated themselves from the groups affected least or not at all by the civilization, such as the Blemmyes, so the Zaghawa emerge from Darfur as a differentiated ethnic group by undergoing the influences exercised from Nubia. Now the Novadae represent the Christian-Hamitic cultural synthesis, while the Zaghawa represent its expansion

<sup>(365)</sup> *Storia della Nubia Cristiana*, pp. 195 - 205.

<sup>(366)</sup> C. KAYSER, *Das Buch von der Erkenntniss der Wahrheit*, 1889, p. 263. Cf. MONNERET DE VILLARD, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

<sup>(367)</sup> Cf. J. SPENCER TRIMINGHAM, *op. cit.*, pp. 104 - 105.

and diffusion among the Sudanese peoples. We are well acquainted with the historical facts that led, under Justinian's reign, to the conversion of Nubia, and we can obtain an insight into the historical circumstances that constrained the Christian Nubian culture into an expansion to the west, affecting profoundly the native civilizations and conferring in some measure its features on the Sudanese state system as it came to be known to us through the great kingdoms of Central and Western Sudan<sup>(368)</sup>. We know also that some Persian elements count for something in this expansion westwards, and this Persian participation in the process as seen through the Kisra traditions is also borne out by the historical facts. Of momentous consequences was the Arab conquest and the forced conversion of the peoples of the continent, which caused a general upsetting of ethnic conditions in North, Saharan, and Sudanese Africa. Such conversion did not go without resistance. In the case of Nubia, the stronghold of Christianity in Africa, the old status persisted over six centuries after the Arab conquest of Egypt. The islamization of inner Africa was delayed as well. The kingdom of Bornu, which became the stronghold of Islamic influence in Central Sudan, was not converted until the advent of Humē (Ummē), son of Abd-al-Djelil, first Muslim ruler of Kanem, in A.D. 1085<sup>(369)</sup>. At that time Nubia had not as yet succumbed to Islam. Contrary to the Christian influences

<sup>(368)</sup> Cf. A. BERTHELOT, *L'Afrique saharienne et soudanaise*, 1927, p. 424, who concludes in these terms concerning the impact of the Christian civilization of Nubia on the Sudanese world: «Après une période où l'ascendant des Libyens se marque par les expéditions de rois de Maurétanie vers le Sénégal, des Garamantes vers les pays que nous appelons maintenant Ouadaï et Bornu, on discerne une poussée des éléments nubiens, consécutive à l'invasion sémitique en Abyssinie, à l'établissement du christianisme à Méroé. Elle détermine ou facilite la constitution des États Haoussa, Sonrhā et Noupé, l'implantation au Soudan de monarchies imitées de celles de l'Asie et du Bas Empire romain, avec leur vie de cour, leurs charges décoratives, leur chevalerie. Ce changement accompli au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère précéda de peu l'arabisation du bassin inférieur du Nil suivie de celle plus récente du bassin moyen et de l'infiltration d'éléments arabes dans le Soudan où l'Islam mordait d'autre part sur le côté occidental».

<sup>(369)</sup> Y. URVOY, *Histoire de l'Empire de Bornu*, 1949, p. 26. The Bornu dynasty of Maghumi Mais founded by Sef (Saif) really begins with Dugu (A.D. 784 - 835) and is divided in two dynastic periods, the pre-Islamic or pagan (Duguwa dynasty), the last representative of which is Abd-al-Djelil (A.D. 1081 - 1085), and the Islamic, beginning with Humē (A.D. 1085 - 1095) and ending with Ali Dalatumi who reigned only forty days in 1846, year marking the end of the whole dynasty. The best list of Maghumi Mais or rulers (or kings) of Bornu is the one established by PALMER in *Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, pp. 96 - 269, which is based on abundant documentation. The first important account of Bornu and its history, including the first list of Maghumi Mais, is the one by H. BARTH, *Reisen und Entdeckungen in Nord- und Central-Afrika in den Jahren 1849 bis 1855*,

partaking of the nature of a migration of cultural elements in no way affecting the political situation of the countries involved, the Arab invader, associating in an inextricable manner the political with the religious aspect, applied constant duress and ruthless methods with a view to convert the native populations. Even so, after a cultural and in most cases political domination of almost ten centuries, the Islamic conqueror did not achieve the full conversion of the totality of the Sudanese peoples, and this failure is aptly illustrated by the small proportion of Mohammedans in relation to the number of pagan populations in modern times. In the southern provinces of Nigeria this proportion attained only 9% of the total population according to a statistical account of the first quarter of the present century<sup>(370)</sup>. Only in North Africa did Islam succeed in achieving a practically total conversion of the native populations. But it carried with it such an upheaval of the ethnic conditions prevailing there, as to have repercussions on the Negro-Sudanese world in the south, because it caused Berber tribes to emigrate southwards into the desert in an effort to avoid conquest and islamization. The southward Berber migrations had far-reaching consequences on the Saharan and Sudanese peoples. Compared to the Nubian westward current the Berber southward movements, followed by Arab infiltration, can be said to have disturbed in a much more abnormal way the ethnic situation in Sahara and Sudan, while being of lesser cultural significance<sup>(371)</sup>. On the contrary, the westward expansion of Nubian and eastern Sudanese ethnic elements before the times of the Islamic penetration was more of the nature of a diffusion and an expansion, less of a sudden invasion and a political conquest.

vols I - V, 1857 - 1858 (see vol. II, p. 633 for the chronological tables of Bornu). For other sources of the early history of Kanem-Bornu see D. WESTERMANN, *Geschichte Afrikas*, 1952, p. 103.

<sup>(370)</sup> P. AMAURY TALBOT, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, vol. IV, 1926, p. 103.

<sup>(371)</sup> «Quand les Lemtouna (=Tuareg related to the Sanhaja Berbers) eussent soumis les régions du désert, ils portèrent la guerre chez les nations nègres pour les contraindre à devenir musulmans. Une grande partie des Noirs adopta alors l'islamisme, mais le reste s'en dispensa en payant la capitation». IBN KHALDUN, *Histoire des Berbères* etc., vol. II, p. 65. In another connection the same authority speaks of the Almoravid intervention in Western Sudan in these terms: «Le royaume de Ghana était tombé dans le dernier affaiblissement vers l'époque où les porteurs de *litham* (=veil) [les Almoravides] commençaient à devenir puissants; aussi, ce dernier peuple, qui habitait immédiatement au nord de Ghana, du côté du pays des Berbères, étendit sa domination sur les Noirs, dévasta leur territoire et pilla leurs propriétés. Les ayant alors soumis à la capitation, il leur imposa un tribut et porta un grand nombre d'entre eux à embrasser l'islamisme. L'autorité des souverains de Ghana s'étant anéantie, leurs voisins les Sousou, subjuguèrent ce pays et réduisirent les habitants en esclavage». *Ibidem*, p. 110.

§ 6. *More on the Kisra tradition and the Kisra migration.*

Frobenius, who gave the amplest version of the Kisra tradition, related the name with the Sassanid Persian King Chosroes II who occupied Egypt in the year 619<sup>(372)</sup>. Some early English travellers thought that Kisra was to be connected with Christ, while some modern authorities sought a Songhay connection and have even referred the tradition either to Sonni Ali of Songhay who captured Timbuktu in the year 1468 and persecuted the Prophet's followers, or to the Mosi emperor Na'sira who in the year 1477 invaded Sana (Masina) and in 1480 devastated the city of Walata<sup>(373)</sup>. But the Kisra tradition is rooted among so many tribes<sup>(374)</sup> and its references to the east are so explicit<sup>(375)</sup>, that the attempt to connect it with a more recent political event so common in Sudanese history as the capture or devastation of a city is entirely out of place. Meek's attempt to relate the tradition to Songhay and Mandinga influences is grounded on the linguistic relationship between the Hausa word *sirgi*, *siraki* =king and Mande *kishira* =black king<sup>(376)</sup>, which is only an isolated example out of the vastly more numerous occurrences of the name Kisra in the Sudanese languages not taken into account by this authority. In Nubia for instance we have Jausara, a legendary king of the tribes called Ngazar or Njuzar<sup>(377)</sup>, Nguzar or Nkazar<sup>(378)</sup>. In Zaghawi the word Kisra means father, which corroborates Kisra's character of ancestor<sup>(379)</sup>. The prefix *ki-* as a prefix of generation exists in Meroitic and Zaghawi, so *Ki-ntakit* (*Kandaki*, *Candave*) =Queen mother<sup>(380)</sup>, Zaghawi *ki-taki* =mother.

A completely new light is thrown on the Kisra tradition by an Arabic text published by Palmer in 1928<sup>(381)</sup>, of which the importance for the interpretation of

<sup>(372)</sup> *Und Afrika sprach*, vol. II, p. 341.

<sup>(373)</sup> C. K. MEEK, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. I, 1925, p. 72, note 1. The historical events recorded by Meek are not generally precise; for those here referred to see M. DELAFOSSE, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, vol. II, 1912, p. 80, and J. SPENCER TRIMINGHAM, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, 1962, p. 74.

<sup>(374)</sup> The tradition is especially rooted among the Jukun at Wukari on the Benue, at Busa and Argungu on the Middle Niger and in Gobir in Hausaland.

<sup>(375)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 131, note 3.

<sup>(376)</sup> C. K. MEEK, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 72, note 1.

<sup>(377)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 124.

<sup>(378)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 165.

<sup>(379)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 165.

<sup>(380)</sup> E. ZYHLARZ, 'Das meroitische Sprachproblem', *Anthropos*, vol. XXV, 1930, p. 458.

<sup>(381)</sup> *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. II, pp. 61 - 63.

the tradition has not been hitherto noticed as far as I know. This text consists of a note written in the year 1922 by Mallam Sherif of Argungu, in Nigeria, the contents of which he derived from a text in the possession of Mallam Kura at Wukari, according to the statement of the author himself, in the year c. 1881<sup>(382)</sup>. In order to appreciate the importance of this source it is necessary to reproduce it *in extenso*:

(The book) «said that the tribe of Kisara appeared in the Sudan when it fled from Egypt after it had fought the Rum. So Mallam Kura said, and so the book said. The King of Rum was named Harkilla (Arkel) and these Kisara when defeated spread abroad in Egypt, and went east and west. Of those who came west, the leader was Tatari. This man arose in the sixth year of the Hijra of the Prophet (=A.D. 627), since by reason of the descent of the Sura A.L.M. the Rum (of Egypt) defeated the Persians in Egypt in that year. The Persians and their army fled to the land of Fur, now called Darfur. So said the book, and that they remained a long time in Fur, and that the path of their migrations thence was well known. I however do not know the names of their towns in Fur but they reached Jebel Kwon and Fasher, and settled in Wadai, towards the south of Wadai, and remained there for many years. Then they came to another place, called Magga (or Magge), so the book said, and thence to Balda. Balda is a great mountain, to the west of which is Asob. They remained here many years and thence migrated to the land of Yola (=Adamawa). Then they arose and passed through the Bashima and other similar tribes to Muri, to a region called Bumandá. Then they spread abroad. Some went to Jebjeb and Gwona (Gwana=Ghana?) and settled. Then some migrated to north of Keffi to a site between Bagaji and the town of Keffi. There this section remained many years, and thence went to Zaria where they established themselves and settled for three hundred years, till their town met an evil fate and broke up in fear of the attacks of the Bornuese of the stock of Tuba and Awwal. They then scattered in all directions and into many different places. Some went, among them their King, to Wukari with two of his brothers, king's sons, and the chief slave. Others of the king's sons and their people went west, according to their account. As for the pagans of the region, they were like the Kuraish (the people of Al-Lat and Al-Ozza); they were the Kengawa. The Kisara settled at Karshi but did not remain long. These pagan 'Kuraish' drove them out, and hence the country was called Karshi. The name of the town Karshi, however, was not the name of the people. Then the Kisara moved on and crossed the river Niger. One chief built the city Wawa, and another built the city of Baku. Then the pagan followers of Al-Lat and Al-Ozza (Kengawa) spread abroad and would not follow any king but their own. Another of the sons of the Kisara, King of Zaria, was called Attahir. The name was shortened in Atta. He and his people at Attagara went south (i.e. to Idah)»<sup>(383)</sup>.

Although the text is a modern one, in the sense that it was recorded by its author in modern times, one cannot fail to ascribe a great value to it inasmuch as it derives from an Arab Sudanese text referred to as existing towards the end of the last century and therefore uninfluenced by modern European education as to the historical facts of the Byzantine-Persian war. The text probably offers the most

<sup>(382)</sup> «It is now, perhaps forty-one or forty-two years ago. It was in the year when a comet appeared in the East with a long tail». *Ibid.*, p. 61. (1922 - 41 = 1881. A comet appeared in 1882).

<sup>(383)</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 61 - 63.

detailed version of the Kisra tradition to be derived from local sources. Its topographical data are important and invite the attention of Historical Geography. Its contents corroborate a correlation of Byzantine- Persian data to the origins of an ethnic movement from or through Nubia into the Sudanese countries. New elements of evidence offered in this connection add precisions allowing the setting out of a historical background to the traditions handed down by tribal memory. The new elements are: (i) a definite reference to Rum, i.e. to Byzantine Empire; (ii) a definite reference to the Byzantine-Persian war (A.D. 619 - 628) and the recovery of Egypt by the Byzantines (A.D. 628); (iii) a reference to Harkilla (Arkel), i.e. the Byzantine emperor Heraclius who waged the war against the Persians; (iv) the dispersal of the defeated Persian garrison, part of which went east and part *west*; (v) their fleeing in the first place to Darfur, a region in the immediate vicinity of Nubia; (vi) their further migration into Central Sudan; (vii) the further ramification of the immigrants in Nigeria and Western Sudan; (viii) the progressive nature of the migration.

Although Palmer, who treats rather uncritically all this material, translates 'Rum' by 'Byzantines' in the first place, in his major work on Bornu Sahara he gives another interpretation to the text by translating 'Rum' as Meroe<sup>(384)</sup>. He further neglects any connection of Harkilla with Heraclius, despite the fact that in another instance he provides supplementary evidence as to this by citing a Jukun tradition about Harkilla (Arkel) as being the king of Rum<sup>(385)</sup>. Moreover, involving himself in contradiction with his former interpretation, he admits in another passage<sup>(386)</sup> that by Rum is meant Byzantium, still he insists that the tradition might be referred to pre-Byzantine times, when Herum = Arua = Meroe. In the same way he tries to disconnect Kisara from Chosroes and reduce it to the tribal name Ngazar, Nguzar or Nkazar<sup>(387)</sup>, as well as to the Beli-Zaghawi word *hisar* = father. Such contradictions, due to the lack of a methodological treatment and the difficulty of achieving a synthesis of a great mass of materials and details (most precious, indeed), abound in the work of Palmer. The identity of the Zaghawi with the Nigerian versions of *Kisra* is only too apparent and natural, what really imports is to trace the origin of both. Given the close connections of the Zaghawa with several western Sudanese dynasties on the one hand, and their intimate acquaintance

<sup>(384)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 124.

<sup>(385)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 124.

<sup>(386)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 165.

<sup>(387)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 165.

with the Nubian culture which they helped to expand on the other hand, there is no difficulty in deriving *kisra* = father, ancestor, from *Kisra* = *Khusraw* = *Chosroes*, the historical facts about whom provide perfectly the background for a tradition of origin pointing, moreover, to the east.

The same remark may be applied to *Harkilla*, a name which Palmer tries to derive from Tamashek *Ark-el*, «the god Ark», which again he relates to the Libyan Hercules of the Greeks<sup>(388)</sup>, a rather dubious hypothesis in view of the fact that the Tuareg are rather recent comers to Sahara (5th - 7th centuries), and their assimilation of the Greek mythology at a time when Christianity had overshadowed paganism in North Africa would be difficult to conceive. As in the case of *Kisra*, an underlying historical reality must be at the origin of such words as *Ark*, which gives rise to a great number of cultural terms among hamitized Sudanese Negroes who in one or another way underwent the cultural influence of Nubia; it is for instance at the base of the formation of words denoting gods, demi-gods, heroes, kings and ancestors. Now the same word, in another strained interpretation, Palmer seeks to relate to the Greek word ὄρξ (=antelope), which in turn he erroneously identifies with ἄρξ (*ἄρκτος* = bear) of Silko's inscription<sup>(389)</sup>.

When the materials, which it has been Palmer's great merit to collect in time and rescue from oblivion, are properly classified, coordinated, and critically studied, important historical inductions will be rendered possible with regard to the great Hamito-Sudanese cultural complex in its pre-Islamic state. This would allow a complete reconsideration of the views concerning the pre-Islamic history of the Sudanese peoples by elucidating the cultural rôle of Christian Nubia with regard to them.

### § 7. *Issa tradition and Himyarites.*

Since the publication of the Sudanese Memoirs we have entered into possession of supplementary evidence shedding light over the Issa (Jesus) tradition among Sudanese peoples and affording precise details as to its historical background. This evidence is contained in the so-called Mandara Chronicle<sup>(390)</sup>, an Arab text recording the traditions about the ancestors of the kings of Mandara, a territory extending

<sup>(388)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 124.

<sup>(389)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 124.

<sup>(390)</sup> *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. II, pp. 96 - 99.

between Bornu and Adamawa in Northern Nigeria. It was written in the year 1920, according to a reference in the text, by a certain Mustafa ibn Ismail who states that he heard the story from his maternal grandfather Muallim Umr ibn Imam Ibrahim, «one of the learned of his day in Mandara». Given the importance of this text we reproduce here the most significant passages of the translation.

«This is the record of the ancestors of the Kings of Mandara, and their progress from the east hither, and their relations with the Sudanese of Mandara. There were three or some say four men, or five of the companions of Himyar who fled from the hatred of the Jews, in fear that they would be persecuted because of their religion. They were followers of Isa, upon whom be peace, and under the dispensation of the Gospel. They were among the most noble of the Himyarite youths. Dthu Nowas called on them to embrace Judaism, since the Himyarites at that time followed him. They refused and preferred death or slavery. Judaism meant the religion of the Jews. This was the reason of their leaving Yaman, and the country called Nejran. From Yaman they came to San'aa of Yaman, and thence to the city of Yathrib; thence to the Hijaz (Mecca) and Jedda, and the land of the Barbar. Then to Sawakin and Khartum and Kurdufan, Nuhut, Jebel Hilla, and Fasher. Then to Masalit, and Wâra in the land of Wadai, and Bagarmi, where they sought news of this land (Mandara). They went forward, and left here one of their number, a young man. Then they went on with their provision for the way and reached Bornu, and the region of the city of the Kanuri. They came to the place called Ishgakiwe (=Ashigashiga?) of the Sudanese, and found there as Queen a woman called Sugda or, in Arabic, 'the clear cut'. She was the daughter of the most important King of those countries»<sup>(391)</sup>.

The chronicle goes on describing how the youngest of the Himyarites married the queen of the Mandara and gave rise to the Mandara dynasty. After the death of the queen, he assumed the rule of the kingdom until his death.

«Then he died, remaining still an adherent of the religion of his ancestors. He did not stray from the path, but was a firm follower of the Gospel in all his doings, as also in those things he refrained from doing»<sup>(392)</sup>. (Follows the enumeration of his successors.)

«The number of the Emirs who have been mentioned above in this record down to the time of the coming of Islam, is twenty five. The Sudanese Emirs who succeeded them as rulers were Moslems and not one of them reverted to paganism or became an infidel. They worshipped God (be He exalted and praised) and read the Kura'an, and taught their people and children knowledge»<sup>(393)</sup>.

The orthodoxy of the writer cannot be contested; this is made clear when he says that the later Sudanese rulers were Moslems and not one of them reverted to paganism or became an infidel. This orthodoxy guarantees the trustworthiness of the tradition, for it is highly improbable that an Orthodox Moslem would under-

<sup>(391)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 96.

<sup>(392)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 97.

<sup>(393)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 98.

take to give an account of a Christian dynasty in the above terms in a writing exclusively about his own. This means that the writer merely consigned in the above text the tradition about origins current among the Mandara, as it was received by and transmitted through his grandfather. The writer was of course unaware of the historical importance of the related facts concerning the early ancestors of the Mandara dynasty and their faith. These facts can be resumed as follows:

- (i) The ancestors of the Mandara dynasty are Himyarites.
- (ii) They are confirmed Christians, followers of Isa (Issa = Jesus) firmly adhering to their faith.
- (iii) At the origin of their emigration there is a friction between them and the Jews whose influence is strongly felt in Arabia. They flee their persecution.
- (iv) After many peregrinations they reach Swakin and Khartum and thence they proceed to Kordofan. From this latter region they proceed westwards and come to Wadai and Bagirmi, whence they reach Mandara where they settle.
- (v) One of them marries the Queen of Kanuri and founds a dynasty.
- (vi) He dies in the faith of his ancestors; «he did not stray from the path, but was a firm follower of the Gospel».
- (vii) The first twenty-five rulers of the dynasty are Christians, until the coming of Islam.
- (viii) They were succeeded by a series of Sudanese Emirs who thenceforward ruled Mandara.

The importance of the Mandara chronicle cannot be over-emphasized. It is one of the most valuable testimonies about the pre-Islamic history of the Sudanese peoples especially in regard to the presence of Christianity among them. Its value is enhanced by the fact that it comes from the hand of a Moslem author, a faithful adherent of the Prophet, who, nevertheless, bases his account on received traditions. It is even strange that a Moslem writer would not conceal the Christian origins of the dynasty of his country; for this may account the fact that the christianized part of the dynasty antedates Islam and, therefore, does not affect either the prestige or the dogmatic interests of his religion. It is very remarkable that some parallel texts recording the genealogy of the Mandara dynasty, although admitting the Arab origin of the founders of the dynasty, specifying Medina as the original place, make no mention of their Christian status<sup>(394)</sup>. It is equally remarkable that

<sup>(394)</sup> These texts in Arabic have been edited by M. ROBINSON and J. - P. LEBEUF, 'L'origine et les souverains du Mandara', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Afrique noire*, vol. XVIII,

whereas the oral tradition speaks of the founders of the dynasty as Himyarites and Christians, the parallel Arabic text, which is entirely due to a Moslem hand, ignores these facts and adapts the tradition in conformity with Islamic conscience by stating the place of origin to be Medina<sup>(395)</sup>.

Apart from the plain fact of the existence of a Christian dynasty in Mandara and Bornu in pre-Islamic times, some further elucidations can be derived from the chronicle. One is the disentanglement of the interwoven Kisra and Yemenite traditions which could not be historically reconciled in the light of Arab-Persian relations. The chronicle now establishes a Christian-Himyarite emigration from Yemen to Central Sudan through Nubia, Kordofan and Darfur, a way of penetration provided by the influential position of the Christian kingdom of Nubia. Another elucidation bears on the Kisra migration which could no longer be historically reconciled with a Christian penetration in face of the Persian-Byzantine relations which were at the time negative and, therefore, could not favour the association of Persian and Christian elements in such a penetration. The evidence rather indicates that, although Persian ethnic elements penetrated into Sudan, they were not necessarily importers of Christian, but of Oriental cultural elements (not necessarily contradicting Byzantine culture), and their penetration merely fitted into the more general current fostered by Christian Nubia. The historical circumstances of the pe-

1956, pp. 227 - 255. They consist of two short notices of the rulers of Mandara, found in two distinct manuscripts. Only the first of these refers to the Himyaritic origin of the ancestors of the dynasty. The editors comment on the Himyaritic origin of the dynasty chiefly with reference to Y. URVOY, *Histoire de l'empire du Bornou*, 1949, pp. 136 - 142, to whose scepticism they adhere despite their better acquaintance with Arabic sources which they cite (*loc. cit.*, p. 243). Now, although the legend of a Yemenite origin has parallel instances among many African dynasties, the Christian status of the founders of the Mandara dynasty, rooted in local tradition and recorded, as far as I know, only in Palmer's text, is quite an independent feature which ought to receive a separate treatment on the part of the investigator. The more so because all testimonies of this kind are clouded by a mass of Islamic source material which, when it does not totally efface the vestiges of the pre-Islamic past, entirely modifies and adapts such testimonies according to requirement. More research into Mandara origins is needed, on which it is not possible to embark here. The bibliography given by the editors (*loc. cit.*, pp. 253 - 255) is very useful. Cf. also J. VOS-SART, 'Histoire du Sultanat du Mandara', in *Etudes camerounaises*, vol. IV, 1953, pp. 19 - 52. O. BLAU, 'Chronik der Sultane von Bornu', in *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. VI, 1852, pp. 305 - 330, exposes and discusses similar traditions of origin in respect of the Bornu dynasty of the Saifi line.

<sup>(395)</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 239.

netration of Persian ethnic elements have been discussed above. Those of the Christian Himyaritic penetration need some consideration.

The Himyaritic kingdom had succeeded to the Sabaeen dynasty in South Arabia in the 2nd century B.C. In the 4th century A.D. the Himyarites were overthrown by Abyssinians emigrating back to South Arabia. At this time we witness a revival of Judaism in Arabia and the establishment of a Jewish kingdom in Yemen. Frictions between Arabian Judaism and Christian Abyssinians caused an intervention of the Axumite King Elesboas, who, with the support of the Byzantine Emperor Justin the first<sup>(396)</sup>, succeeded in gaining control in Yemen in A.D. 525 and restored a Christian ruler<sup>(397)</sup> who remained in power until A.D. 572<sup>(398)</sup>. In this latter year the Persians, to whom the Jewish colonies appealed, recovered control of the Arabian peninsula thus eliminating Ethiopian domination and Byzantine influence alike. The reference to Dhu Nuwas in the text provides more specific data in regard to the historical background of the tradition. For it is under this ruler of Yemen that Jewish influence attained its climax in Arabia. To his persecution of the Christians refer the facts narrated in the Mandara chronicle. Now as Dhu Nuwas was killed in A.D. 525, after his defeat, the persecution referred to in the chronicle occurred shortly before this year, and may be identified with the one described in the Martyrium Arethae<sup>(399)</sup>, or rather the one mentioned by Tabari who, on the authority of Ibn Ishâq, refers to a collective persecution of Christians, which cost the lives of twenty thousand among them<sup>(400)</sup>. It should be noted, however, that by this time Nubia was not as yet christianized. Should it be assumed, therefore, that the Himyarite settlers were the first Christians to penetrate into Sudan, before Nubia's impact was felt? This is not an impossibility, but if the Mandara chronicle is to be relied upon in its details, the Himyarite immigrants had wandered for many years before they reached Mandara, in Arabia itself first, in Nubia and Kordofan afterwards<sup>(401)</sup>. Moreover, if under the peregrinations of the individuals specified

<sup>(396)</sup> A. A. VASILIEV, *Justin the First*, 1950, pp. 288 - 297.

<sup>(397)</sup> Procopius, *De Bello Persico*, I, 20.

<sup>(398)</sup> According to C. CONTI ROSSINI, *Storia d'Etiopia*, 1928, p. 199; according to some Arab authorities this domination lasted until A.D. 597, viz. for 72 years.

<sup>(399)</sup> *Acta Sanctorum. Octobris 24*, pp. 721 - 762. Cf. J. RYCKMANS, *La persécution des Chrétiens himyarites au VIe siècle*, 1956.

<sup>(400)</sup> Text in T. NÖLDEKE, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sassaniden*, 1879, p. 185.

<sup>(401)</sup> *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 96. Rolf Herzog, in reconsidering Nubian history, admits a Himyaritic immigration in Nubia before the advent of Islam, but does not specify

the tradition covers something like a collective migration, the period covered by it must have been much longer. In any case the Himyaritic migration into Sudan was either contemporary with the early years of the conversion of Nubia and in this case it pioneered the introduction of Christian elements in the Sudan, or chronologically followed it and as a consequence the conditions of its achievement lay in the christianization of Nubia itself.

As regards the value of the Mandara chronicle as a source, it must be remembered that, although it possesses the features of a written source, its essence, especially in regard to the pre-Islamic history of the dynasty, is traditional inasmuch as it derives from local traditions of origin. The references to such historical facts and personages as the persecution of the Christian Himyarites and the Jewish ruler of Yemen Dhu Nuwas betray a degree of modern erudition; it should nevertheless be borne in mind that (i) the account contained in the chronicle has been orally transmitted to the writer as stated in the text; (ii) the Yemenite origins are quite common in local traditions, in fact they are part of the group of traditions speaking of eastern origins; (iii) names of historical personages of a high antiquity have been preserved in local traditions, as, for example, the name Anab, Nuhu (Noah) attributed to a Jewish ancestor who came to the land with Kisra<sup>(402)</sup>. The Mandara chronicle, besides constituting an important testimony to the Christian origins and status of the founders of certain Sudanese kingdoms, establishes that the east-west cultural penetration of Negro-Sudanese countries was not the work of a unique agent, but was effected through a series of migrations and ethnic movements, motivated by specific historical circumstances and having as general background the Christian culture of Nubia. We are fairly entitled to assume that the bulk of the Christian influences on the Negro-Sudanese world were exerted by or through Nubia. It is not a fortuitous fact that both Kisra and Issa traditions, although pointing to ancestors whose countries of origin lie beyond Nubia, nevertheless make these ancestors stop in Nubia in their migratory route before resuming their course westwards. It

chronological limits: *Die Nubier*, 1957, pp. 59, 66. Note also the presence of a Syrian Jewish colony at Elephantine as from pre-Christian times. *Ibid.*, p. 59, and p. 67 for references.

<sup>(402)</sup> L. FROBENIUS, *Und Afrika sprach*, vol. II, 1913, p. 357. RENÉ BASSET, *Mission au Sénégal*, 1909 - 1913, pp. 447 - 448, dismisses the Berber tradition of Himyaritic origins as post-fabricated, but such authorities as Barth and Rodd do not seem to adopt unconditionally such a view. See H. T. NORRIS, 'Yemenis in Western Africa', *Journal of African History*, vol. III, 1962, pp. 319 - 322, who is inclined to accept the Himyaritic migration as fictitious, formulates nevertheless the reservation that «the last word has still to be said on this problem», a reservation accounted for by the ascertainment of «the widespread geographical distribution of this theory» (I would rather say «of this tradition»); *ibid.*, p. 321.

is equally interesting to note that next to Nubia, Bornu-Kanem and the Lake Chad region are the next important migratory station whence the western Sudanese countries become accessible.

### § 8. *The Tuareg of Sahara.*

The Muleththem in or the veiled people, as they are styled by Arab historians and geographers, are probably the most peculiar of all ethnic groups inhabiting a vast area included between the northern Sudanese borderland and North Africa. Although not a numerous group, they are distinguished by special cultural features from neighbouring ethnic groups and are subdivided in sub-groups clearly defined from each other. While their racial affinities with the Berbers are an admitted fact, their historical origins, if not a mystery, are concealed in a nebulous past and are the subject of a number of unverified hypotheses. Two basic sources for the mediaeval history of the Tuareg very much taken into account by modern scholars are Ibn Khaldun's description and classification of their clans and Leo Africanus' description of the desert of inner Libya. Both accounts are discussed in detail by Rodd who at the same time surveys the topographical questions raised by them<sup>(403)</sup>. The problem of Tuareg origins escapes the scope of this work, but certain points relating to the Tuareg 'problematik', relevant to the question of their contacts and connections with christianized peoples and possible Christian influences among them, may be touched upon here.

(i) The accounts of Ibn Khaldun and Leo Africanus as sources for the knowledge of the Tuareg do not shed any light on the pre-Islamic status of this people. The information provided by these authorities covers the period of the Arab conquest of North Africa and the contacts experienced by the Arabs with the nomadic tribes on their progressive advance<sup>(404)</sup>.

(ii) Ibn Khaldun's account carries the story of Libyan origins from the very remote past directly to the Islamic conquest, and is based, as regards the former,

<sup>(403)</sup> F. R. RODD, *People of the Veil*, 1926, the whole chapter xi, pp. 330 - 359.

<sup>(404)</sup> Cf. the account of an encounter with the Luata Berbers, a nomadic population, given by the Arab chronographer Abu Zakaria. Calif Omar asks questions through an interpreter regarding these people: « — Avez-vous des villes dans lesquelles vous habitez? Ils dirent: Non. — Avez-vous des lieux fortifiés dans lesquels vous gardiez vos biens? Ils dirent: Non. — Avez-vous des marchés sur lesquels vous fassiez des échanges? Ils dirent: Non ». *Chronique d'Abou Zakaria*, transl. by E. MASQUERAY, 1878, p. 15.

on traditional and legendary data such as the descent from Mazigh, son of Canaan, son of Ham. Now this transition from a legendary past to the Islamic period is operated without filling up the intervening historical gap.

(iii) In spite of common Libyan origins through Mazigh and Syria, Ibn Khaldun ascribes a different origin to the Tuareg when he tries to connect the Sanhaja, on the basis of some traditions of origin, with Yemen, thus making of them Himyarites who emigrated westwards by crossing the Red Sea<sup>(405)</sup>.

(iv) The north-south expansion implied by Ibn Khaldun's Syriac origins is contradicted by a westward expansion into Sahara arising at the south-east and traditionally implied by the Himyaritic origins.

The above contradictions in which Ibn Khaldun implicates himself are further complicated for the student by such facts as the Himyaritic settlement in Sudan dealt with above, and the Berber expansion to the south consequent upon the Arab conquest of North Africa. To which of the two ethnic movements we should assign the ethnological origins of the Tuareg is a definite problem to which no final answer seems to have been given. It is true, the Berber derivation of the Tuareg is assumed by most contemporary ethnologists, but this assumption, although greatly supported by historical evidence, does not account for many an aspect of the Tuareg 'problematik' inasmuch as, (*a*) it may only mean the aboriginal derivation of the Tuareg from the Berber stock in a general way, not the specific origins of modern ramifications from definite geographical areas; (*b*) it leaves open the question of their differentiation from the Berber stock and their stabilization into the ethnic group known to us under its present characteristics. (*c*) it does not account for the original points of their diffusion into Sahara. In other terms, it is not sufficient to assign Berber origins to the Tuareg, it is necessary to investigate such origins in the *various levels* of their historical existence, viz. remote Berber affinities, posterior differentiation, more recent ramifications and, above all, account for their cultural peculiarities. Without such a statement of the problem it is improbable that any clear account of Tuareg origins would be rendered possible out of a confused treatment of the ethnological and historical data. On the other hand, it would be possible to reconcile the north-south migratory movement with a western expansion proceeding from a south-eastern region. Without trying to formulate a theory about Tuareg origins, we may call attention to several facts borne out by some testimonies.

(405) *Histoire des Berbères* etc. (see above note 223), vol. I, pp. 184 *sqq.*, and vol. II, pp. 67 *sqq.*

As already stated, the Tuareg origins and history, like those of most Sudanese peoples, have been investigated chiefly on the basis of evidence provided by Arab sources, and one would be justified in saying that the great bulk of research has not attempted to pierce the thick cover laid upon Sudanese ethnohistory by the Islamic political and religious domination. This particularly affects an intermediate historical period of almost one thousand years (the first millenium of our era), which is probably the most critical period in the history of the Negro-Sudanese peoples, because of important events in the Near and Middle East having exerted profound influences upon the ethnological and cultural morphology of these peoples who were thus brought within the orbit of the more general currents of universal history. In this connection we are especially interested in the migrations and diffusion of the Tuareg into Sahara and in that great Tuareg branch that came to 'occupy' the vast Saharan region known as Asben Sahara.

For this we have to invoke in the first place the testimony of Mohammed Bello, the Fulani sultan of Sokoto, who may be considered as the outstanding native historian of Sudan<sup>(406)</sup>; this authority, referring to the first migrations of the Tuareg, states that:

«The country of Ahir lies next to Bornu, towards the North. It is extensive but mountainous. The inhabitants are Tuareg and also remnants of the people of Sanhaja and Sudanese. The country originally was in the hands of the Sudanese, the people of Gobir. The Tuareg overcame them in this part of the country. These five tribes of Tuareg came from Aujila (Palmer: Aowjal). Their names were Amakita (Palmer: Amakeetan), Tamakkaka (Palmer: Tamkak), Sandalu (Palmer: Sendal), Igidalan (Palmer: Agdalar) and Ajdarnina (Palmer: Ajaraneen). They took their country from the Gobirawa and settled in it. They decided to choose a Sarki in order to establish their rule and prevent their strength waning. They chose a man of the people of Stambul (Palmer: Ansatfen). Later they changed their minds and deposed him. Then they chose another. This habit has never left them»<sup>(407)</sup>.

According to this testimony the Air Tuareg (south-east division) came from Augila and occupied Air after driving out its former inhabitants who were Gobir (Hausa) Sudanese. Now the origin from Augila seems doubtful both to Barth<sup>(408)</sup> and Rodd<sup>(409)</sup>, and the latter correctly observes that Barth's designation of one of the

<sup>(406)</sup> *Infaku'l Maisuri* (see note 328 above). Almost all references hitherto made by scholars to Bello's work are to the few excerpts edited for the first time by DENHAM, CLAPPERTON and OUDNEY, *op. cit.* (note 328 above), vol. II, pp. 444 - 457. The complete edition by ARNETT is practically ignored. A new edition, London, 1951, is stated by J. SPENCER TRIMMINGHAM (*op. cit.*, p. 6) to be «uncritical».

<sup>(407)</sup> *Infaku'l Maisuri*, p. 9.

<sup>(408)</sup> H. BARTH, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, vol. I, 1857, p. 460.

<sup>(409)</sup> F. R. RODD, *op. cit.*, pp. 368 - 369.

five tribes as the «Augila tribe» is inadmissible, since the name of this locality has never served to designate a people<sup>(410)</sup>. Now both authorities do not take into account another source concerning the Air Tuareg in which the country of Augila is still referred to as the country of their origin. This is a record recovered and edited by Palmer, a passage in which runs thus:

«The kingdom of Ahir originated from four tribes, the Itaseangh (Itesam), the Jadânar-angh (Jedânaran), the Izara-rangh (Izârâran) and the Fede-angh (Ifadeyen). These tribes came from the land of Aujila and drove out the Sudanese tribes from the land of Ahir»<sup>(411)</sup>.

It may be seen that the names of the Tuareg tribes differ from those recorded in Bello's account, but both the Augila origin and the driving out of the Gobir Sudanese are facts agreed upon by both accounts. Let us now refer both accounts to a further source, the Asben chronicle (the so-called Agades chronicle) relating also to Tuareg origins. This is a record in Arabic compiled by a Hausa Mallam, but derived from Tuareg traditions. It was edited in translation by Palmer<sup>(412)</sup>. It deals with the origins of the Asben Tuareg from a genealogical point of view; the relevant passages are as follows:

«According to Ibn Assafarâni the first Tuareg who came to Asben were the Kel-Inneg under a ruler with the title Agumbulum. Other Tuareg followed, and much discord ensued. It was resolved with a view to settling differences to ask for a chief from Santamboul (=Istambul)... At the time of their settlement in Agayegi (= near Agades) the Gobirawa were rulers of Agades... War, however, soon ensued between the Gobirawa, supported by the Abalkoran, and the Itéseyen. The result of this war was that the Gobirawa went to Hausaland, while the Abalkoran went west to the land of the Amelimmiden. It is stated by the Ulema of Asben that the first inhabitants of Asben were Hausas (Dagirawa), but they were conquered by Barri-Barri. When the rule of the latter became weak, the Gobirawa (=Hausas) ruled the country. To them succeeded the Tuareg»<sup>(413)</sup>.

It is to be remarked that all three testimonies above quoted agree in the historical contacts between Tuareg and Hausa, besides attesting to the latter's domination of the Asben Sahara (Air) preceding the Tuareg invasion. Moreover, the first two testimonies agree in ascribing to this Tuareg branch an original connection with Augila, a fact accepted by C. Jean who estimates that the Tuareg immigration into Air must have taken place in the 8th century, as a consequence of population pressure in the region between Fezzan and Egypt (Augila), where they had taken

<sup>(410)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 369.

<sup>(411)</sup> H. R. PALMER, 'A Treatise concerning the people of the kingdom of Ahir and the kingdom of Bornu', in *Bornu Sahara*, p. 55, reproduced from *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. III, p. 46.

<sup>(412)</sup> H. R. PALMER, 'Notes on some Asben Records', *Journal of the African Society*, vol. IX, 1909, pp. 379 - 400. See pp. 389 - 391. Reproduced with notes in *Bornu Sahara*, pp. 63 - 87.

<sup>(413)</sup> H. R. PALMER, *loc. cit.*, pp. 389 - 390, and *Bornu Sahara*, pp. 63 - 64.

refuge from the north under the compulsion of the Arab invasion<sup>(414)</sup>. The third account does not contain an allusion to this, but it should be noted that the name *Kel-Inneg* means in Tamashek the people (Kel) of the east (Inneg.) Now Palmer remarks that *Inneg* is the equivalent of *Anag*<sup>(415)</sup>, whereby the Arabs designate races of the Nilotic Sudan, but I think by *Anag*<sup>(416)</sup> we might just as well mean the Nuba, of which they are a branch living in northern Kordofan. This is supported by evidence produced by Mac Michael<sup>(417)</sup>.

We thus possess explicit testimonies concerning the north-eastern and eastern connections of the Asben Tuareg, if not about eastern origins, as can be inferred from some of their oral traditions<sup>(418)</sup>. The same testimonies establish beyond doubt their contacts with the Gobirawa Hausa in the south, a fact that does not invalidate the theory of northern origins<sup>(419)</sup>. As stated above, the history of the Saharan Tuareg has to be considered in its various historical levels, remote origins, early history, later expansion in the Sahara, and this approach can perfectly respect their Berber origins<sup>(420)</sup> while admitting eastern contacts or even origins at a more remote chronological level. In any case the reconsideration of many aspects of their history in its context within the north and north-eastern African ethnic complex appears as necessary. Only in such a context can the hypothesis set forth by Rodd and propped up by a consistent argument, according to which the Air Tuareg entered this region from Kanem and Bornu, be held on reasonable grounds<sup>(421)</sup>.

By referring to testimonies pointing to eastern origins or contacts having existed in Tuareg history, we looked for such facts or circumstances as may eventually provide some ground for the hypothesis advanced by many students, according to which the Tuareg, at a certain period of their history, were Christians. To substantiate such a supposition it would indeed be necessary, in the absence of external testimonies, to search the internal evidence provided by Tuareg culture itself and

<sup>(414)</sup> C. JEAN, *Les Touareg du Sud-Est. L'Air*, 1909, p. 85.

<sup>(415)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 70.

<sup>(416)</sup> Not to be confounded with the Anuak, a tribe of south Nilotic Negro stock.

<sup>(417)</sup> H. A. MACMICHAEL, *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan*, vol. I, 1922, pp. 50 - 51. References to the Anag in manuscript D1, see vol. II, 1922, pp. 194 - 196.

<sup>(418)</sup> Such oral traditions have been collected by H. DUVEYRIER, one of the earliest systematic explorers of Tuareg country and ethnography. See *Exploration du Sahara. Les Touareg du Nord*, 1864, pp. 317 - 324.

<sup>(419)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 380.

<sup>(420)</sup> Cf. A. RICHER, *Les Oulliminden*, 1924, pp. 13 - 20.

<sup>(421)</sup> F. R. RODD, *op. cit.*, pp. 369 - 370 and 357.

look for any survivals that may still be apparent in it. Again it is best not to be too assertive; for the evidence pointing to a Christian past in Tuareg culture is not explicit, but indicative. The commonest feature in it that led most scholars to assume a Christian past is the widespread use of the cross as a decorative element, which especially impressed the early travellers who encountered Tuareg tribes for the first time. Now this widespread occurrence of the cross in their material culture is a fact worth noting especially in correlation to the survival of the sign of the cross and the use of it as a decorative or sacred element among the formerly Christian populations of Nubia and other Negro-Sudanese peoples such as the Gobir<sup>(422)</sup>. This correlation, in view of the historically confirmed contacts between Tuareg, Nubians and Hausa, gives a much more appreciable strength to the argument about a Christian past. The only difference is that among the Tuareg the use of the cross is a very common occurrence<sup>(423)</sup>, its most notable examples being in the handles of the daggers (tilak), the hilts of the swords (takouba)<sup>(424)</sup>, the pommels of the camel saddles and the exterior surfaces of the shields<sup>(425)</sup>. The use of the cross as a neck ornament has also been reported<sup>(426)</sup>. Further ornamental uses have been reported by Rodd<sup>(427)</sup>. It is only fair to say that such widespread use does not constitute absolute evidence of former Christian practice, because the sign of the cross is not an exclusively Christian symbol, it being possible to trace it as far back as the neolithic times in Egypt as well as in the Orient. On these grounds later scholars objected to the argument about a Christian past of the Tuareg evidenced by the use of the cross. Thus Lhote, an outstanding authority on the Tuareg of Hoggar dismisses the matter by stating that, *la croix retrouvée sur les boucliers, sur les armes, sur les objets de sellerie, dans les bijoux, n'a aucun caractère spécifiquement chrétien; elle est un motif décoratif que l'on retrouve dans l'ornementation usitée parmi les populations qui n'ont rien à voir avec le christianisme*<sup>(428)</sup>. Now Lhote's is not

<sup>(422)</sup> See above, § 1 in this Section.

<sup>(423)</sup> H. BISSUEL, *Les Touareg de l'Ouest*, 1888, pp. 93 - 94.

<sup>(424)</sup> Cf. M. H. MOREL, 'Essai sur l'épée des Touareg de l'Ahoggar', *Travaux de l'Institut de recherches sahariennes*, vol. II, 1943, pp. 105 - 168. L. G. A. ZÖHRER, 'Studie über das Schwert bei den Tuareg der Sahara', *Archiv für Völkerkunde*, vol. VIII, 1953, pp. 228 - 268.

<sup>(425)</sup> H. DUVEYRIER, *op. cit.*, p. 414. Capitaine AYMARD, *Les Touareg*, 1911, p. 15.

<sup>(426)</sup> H. DUVEYRIER, *op. cit.*, p. 414. H. R. PALMER, *Bornu Sahara*, p. 154. J. GABUS, 'Organisation et premiers résultats de la mission ethnographique chez les Touaregs soudanais', *Acta Tropica*, vol. V, 1948, p. 48 and fig. 14, p. 53.

<sup>(427)</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 275 - 277.

<sup>(428)</sup> H. LHOTE, *Les Touaregs du Hoggar*, 1944, p. 302.

really an argument; it is only a statement of personal judgment; moreover, this authority does not state who are the other North African tribes making an ornamental use of the cross. If Nubians were included among these, the case would be in favour of Christian influences among the Tuareg. On the other hand Palmer, an equally outstanding authority on the peoples of Central Sudan and Sahara, sets forth the theory that the Tuareg crosses have no original relation to Christian practice, and that their origin must be traced to «the use of the horn of an animal as a symbol which, when it became abstract, became the triangle-takarnuki in Tamashek»<sup>(429)</sup>. This hypothesis seems to be uncritical, for it does not establish the origin of the cross, but only that of the triangle which «is still the common bridle ornament». It is also not proved how, either the triangle or the cross, have originated from the horn of an animal. Schematically the derivation is not apparent. It would be safer, in that case, to trace the use of the cross to ancient Oriental and Egyptian sources. It would be equally uncritical to conclude from the mere use of the cross a pre-Islamic Christianity among the Tuareg, inasmuch as we can as well refer it to Egyptian and Libyan religious practice where the cross is a symbol of a solar cult<sup>(430)</sup>. Nachtigal has recorded a prehistoric rock glyph in Tibesti representing a shield with a cross on it<sup>(431)</sup>.

Only when treated in connection with certain collateral facts<sup>(432)</sup> might the

<sup>(429)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 154.

<sup>(430)</sup> O. BATES, *The Eastern Libyans*, 1914, p. 209.

<sup>(431)</sup> G. NACHTIGAL, *Sahara und Sudan*, vol. I, 1879, p. 308.

<sup>(432)</sup> The categorical thesis against the Christian hypothesis taken by O. BATES, *op. cit.*, pp. 208 - 209, is due, I think, to the treatment of the evidence from an exclusively archaeological point of view. The occurrence of the cross as a religious symbol in Ancient Egypt and Libya does not explain why it has not survived among other North African and Sudanese populations; nor why its use is so widespread specially among the Tuareg. As A. RICHER remarks: «Cependant, la fréquence extrême de ce signe chez les Touaregs, sa présence traditionnelle, quasi rituelle, sur certains objets, peut certainement faire penser à une survivance chrétienne» (*op. cit.*, p. 34). For no religion exhibits such a systematic use of the cross as the Christian, and the Tuareg may be said to make a really systematic use of it in their culture. Moreover, they exhibit a Christian type of its use, viz. in necklace form, taking the place of an amulet (see F. DE ZELTNER, 'Les Touareg du Sud', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. XLIV, 1914, pp. 369 - 370 and plate XXXVI), a use which has survived among modern Nubians. It is further assumed by Bates that the Tuareg are descendants of Libyans and racially homogeneous to the Berbers. But this view has been seriously challenged on anthropological grounds, and the idea of a separate Tuareg ethnological entity, independent of a Berber ethnological background, has made its way in ethnological discussions. See F. RODD, 'The origin of the Tuareg', *Geographical Journal*, vol. LXVII,

presence of the cross in Tuareg culture yield any convincing arguments with regard to this important question. These collateral facts may be stated as follows:

(i) *General*. One might object, why of all the Nilotic, Sudanese, and Saharan peoples who had the same cultural connections with the Egyptian and Oriental civilizations, only the Tuareg would have inherited and perpetuated the old symbol of the cross, of which, moreover, they alone exhibit an active and widespread use. It is true that we have met the use of the cross among other Sudanese populations, but, at least in the case of the Nubians, it is a survival of *known* former Christian practice. Moreover, it is not sufficiently apparent that a mere *symbol* of an ancient cult should have survived as an object of *systematic use* in a single culture, and that this use should also assume the features of a sacramental use (necklace use in the form of an amulet) akin to Christian practice.

(ii) *Historical*. The conversion of the Tuareg did not go without a stark resistance to the Islamic conqueror. The Tuareg appear to have been the most recalcitrant of all the Sudanese peoples, in conversion. This can be inferred from the fact that the Almoravid sect, which was founded *ad hoc*, i.e. to achieve the conversion of the Lemtuna and Goddala 'infidels', used a great measure of duress and violence to this end<sup>(433)</sup>. It is this forced conversion that gave birth, according to Delafosse, to the Tuareg tribe of Ig-ellad<sup>(434)</sup>. Even after their conversion, the great mass of the Tuareg never became good Moslems, and a lot of their practices went contrary to the dictates of the Islamic moral law. The unorthodox attitude of the Tuareg with regard to their adopted creed has been duly observed and recorded by the majority of the scholars who dealt with them.

(iii) *Linguistic*. There exists in Tamashek definite linguistic evidence of Greek-Christian elements consisting of words of religious import, the presence of which in the Tamashek vocabulary cannot be explained otherwise than as a result of some kind of religious influence exerted in either a direct or an indirect way by the Greek Christian world. The first to report such words was Barth, who collected the first scientific vocabulary of Tamashek and became closely acquainted with the phonetics of this language during his long stay in Sahara. The words in question are: (1) *Angelus*, angel, which Barth derives from the Greek ἄγγελος<sup>(435)</sup>. Duveyrier report-

1926, p. 33. Of course the question is implicated in the more general one of Hamitic origins, which is again tied up to the newly posed problem of Hamito-Semitic affinities.

<sup>(433)</sup> M. DELAFOSSE, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, vol. II, 1912, pp. 32 - 40.

<sup>(434)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 188.

<sup>(435)</sup> H. BARTH, (see above, note 408), vol. V, pp. 618, 619.

ed the same word in the more correct form *andjeloûs* (pl. *andjeloûsen*)<sup>(436)</sup>. (2) *Mesi*, God<sup>(437)</sup>, for which there is strong presumption in favour of the derivation from the Greek *Μεσσίας*, Messiah, as for 'God' there exists another word, *Amanai*<sup>(438)</sup>, or *Amanay*<sup>(439)</sup>, derived from the Jewish Adonai, and also another word *Ialla*, God, derived from Allah<sup>(440)</sup>. (3) *Iblis*<sup>(441)</sup>, or *Eblis*<sup>(442)</sup>, Devil. No derivation offered by Duveyrier, while Barth thinks it is derived from Arabic. It is more plausible to derive the word from the Greek *διάβολος*, thus obtaining, with *andjeloûs* above, a pair of opposites. That Arabic is rather irrelevant to *Iblis*, is supported by the fact that a second word for 'demon' exists in Tamashek, the word *alshin*, which is derived from the Arab word *djinn*<sup>(443)</sup>. (4) *Tafaski*, feast day (in a religious sense), reported by Cortier<sup>(444)</sup>. This word may be derived more properly from the Greek *Πάσχα*, Easter feast, than from the Hebrew original *Pesah*, passage. Cortier's derivation from the Latin *pascha*, as well as of *andjeloûs* from *angelus*, can have only secondary importance, since these words passed into Latin from Greek, after having acquired their institutionalized and ecclesiastical content under the Christianized Roman Empire. The word passed from Tamashek into Wolof, where it assumes the form *tabaski dya*. Two other words reported by Cortier, *Amerkid*, religious merit, and *abekkad*, sin, are derived by him from the Latin *merces* and *peccatum* respectively<sup>(445)</sup>. However, the relation between *Amerkid* and *merces* seems dubious, since *merces* means 'compensation', 'wages', which is remote from the meaning which the word has in Tamashek. The second derivation is practically self-evident in its relation in morphology and meaning to a standard institutionalized Christian term. A connection between Tamashek *Aghora* or *Arora*, dawn, and Latin *aurora*, is equally plausible.

The few examples of linguistic evidence cited are very significant, because they testify to certain religious influences, almost certainly Christian, having been exerted upon Tuareg culture at an undetermined time preceding their conversion, now

<sup>(436)</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 414.

<sup>(437)</sup> H. BARTH, *Travels*, vol. V, p. 618. A. RICHER, *op. cit.*, p. 36 reports the expression: *Messinah!* = my God!

<sup>(438)</sup> H. DUVEYRIER, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

<sup>(439)</sup> H. BARTH, *Travels*, vol. V, p. 618.

<sup>(440)</sup> F. R. RODD, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

<sup>(441)</sup> H. DUVEYRIER, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

<sup>(442)</sup> H. BARTH, *Travels*, vol. V, p. 619.

<sup>(443)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 619. Cf. Mission ARMAND-CORTIER (next note), p. 291.

<sup>(444)</sup> Mission ARMAND-CORTIER, *D'une rive à l'autre du Sahara*, 1908, p. 283.

<sup>(445)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 283.

buried under the thick cover of Islamic domination and culture. They are remnants of an unknown period of Tuareg history, perhaps their pre-Saharan period, and clues, albeit imperfect, to their historical origins and ethnic affinities at the point of assuming their rôle of Saharan nomads. It has to be surmised that a systematic exploration of the Tuareg vocabulary, of which we now possess adequate dictionaries<sup>(446)</sup>, may reveal a great number of foreign classical words, Jewish, Greek, Arab, Latin, the etymological study of which in connection with Tuareg ethnology will shed light on their pre-Islamic past. As a matter of demonstration I take the Tuareg word *rouz*, rice, reported by Bissuel<sup>(447)</sup>, which may have been borrowed from either Greek or Arabo-Persian; or the words *oudi* and *tikomaren*, reported by Lhote<sup>(448)</sup>, meaning respectively, butter and cheese, which at first sight seem to bear a relation to the corresponding Greek words *βούτυρον* and *τυρός*.

(iv) *Familiar and social status*. Although Moslems and, therefore, authorized to practise polygamy, the Tuareg are as a general rule monogamous<sup>(449)</sup>. Rodd, followed by Lhote, thinks he can ascribe Tuareg monogamy to a former matriarchal status, not taking into account that the latter does not necessarily entail monogamy<sup>(450)</sup>. The presence or rather survival of monogamy within a religious and ethnological milieu fostering polygamy ought certainly to attract the attention of the scholars more than it did. For it raises the question of origin of an institution persisting against the general practice of their adopted religion. The monogamy to which the Tuareg are committed acquires a further significance by the fact that it is an isolated social phenomenon in the middle of an ethnological complex of peoples practising polygamy, even though not always Moslem. Only the christianized populations of North Africa, Egypt, and Nubia may be said to have overcome this institution. Does this mean that the Tuareg had close cultural, ethnic or even racial affinities with one of these populations? Not necessarily, although such affinities are strongly to be presumed. With the monogamous practice goes the higher social status of woman prevailing among Tuareg<sup>(451)</sup>, an equally remarkable feature

<sup>(446)</sup> Cf. the monumental work of Père CHARLES DE FOUCAULD, *Dictionnaire Touager-Français (Dialecte de l'Ahaggar)*, vol. I - IV, 1951 - 1952.

<sup>(447)</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>(448)</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 234.

<sup>(449)</sup> A. RICHER, *op. cit.*, pp. 36 - 37. H. LHOTE, *op. cit.*, pp. 150 - 151. Some exceptions are found, but monogamy is the general rule.

<sup>(450)</sup> F. R. RODD, *op. cit.*, pp. 130 - 131. H. LHOTE, *op. cit.*, pp. 150 - 151.

<sup>(451)</sup> F. R. RODD, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

not paralleled among surrounding ethnic groups, neither Moslem, nor pagan, and for which historical justification is found only in religious and social systems conceding superior rights to human personality, such as Judaism and Christianity, having influenced directly or indirectly the Tuareg culture.

Again it would be uncritical to affirm, on the basis of the above facts alone, the pre-Islamic Christian status of the Tuareg. On the other hand, the higher social position of woman prevailing among them has to be accounted for by any serious student of their cultural history. The single fact that the monogamous practice differentiates the Tuareg from the Berbers of Roman-Byzantine times who were polygamous<sup>(452)</sup>, is an indication of a serious historical divergence between the two peoples at an at present unascertainable level. Some other facts are also extremely significant. According to Barth, the Arabs used to qualify the Tuareg as the 'Christians of the desert', this use being still current in his time<sup>(453)</sup>. On the other hand, a systematic enquiry conducted among the Tuareg of the Niger (Ulliminden) by A. Richer has not revealed the memory of a Christian ancestorship<sup>(454)</sup>. Ibn Khaldun states that: «Les Lemtouna, un des peuples qui portaient le litham (veil) habitaient le désert et professaient le magisme (l'idolatrie, fétichisme); mais dans le troisième siècle de l'Hégire, ils embrassèrent la foi islamique»<sup>(455)</sup>. It should be noted that Ibn Khaldun's traditional account of North African tribes is in many respects uncritical; he is notably influenced by Biblical genealogical data, on which he founds historically inexact generalizations. As in the case of his testimony about the Sudanese Negroes, here too he is contradicted by an older Arab historian, as-Zohri, who states explicitly that the Sudanese Berbers (i.e. the Sanhaja from whom the Tuareg are deemed to derive), did not abjure the Christian faith and embrace Islam until towards the year 1075<sup>(456)</sup>. Ibn Khaldun's account is further contradictory, for whereas in one connection the Berber race originates from Syria<sup>(457)</sup>, in another

<sup>(452)</sup> To the prevalence of polygamy among Berber tribes attests Procopius, *De Bello vandlico*, II, xi, 13. Recording the reaction of the Moors to Solomon, the Byzantine deputy of Belisarius, who threatened them, in case of breach of the treaties entered into, with the death of their children held as hostages, he quotes their answer which is concluded in these terms: *παίδων μέντοι ἔνεκεν ὑμῖν μελήσει, οἷς μίαν ἀγεσθαι γυναῖκα ἀνάγκη ἡμῶς γάρ, οἷς καὶ κατὰ πενήκοντα, ἂν οὕτω τύχη, συνοικοῦσι γυναῖκες, παίδων οὐκ ἂν ποτε ἐπιλίποι γυνή.*

<sup>(453)</sup> *Travels*, vol. I, p. 228.

<sup>(454)</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>(455)</sup> *Histoire des Berbères* (see above, note 223), vol. II, p. 67.

<sup>(456)</sup> *Notices et Extraits des manuscrits*, vol. XII, 1831, p. 642. Cf. M. DELAFOSSE, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, vol. I, 1912, p. 187.

<sup>(457)</sup> *Histoire des Berbères*, vol. I, p. 184.

the Sanhaja, from the «second race» of which (the Mulethemini) the Tuareg proceed, are Himyarites from Yemen<sup>(458)</sup> and are stated to have occupied the Abyssinian «rif»<sup>(459)</sup>. What does Ibn Khaldun mean by Abyssinian «rif»? Palmer's answer is: the Blue Nile or the Atbara region<sup>(460)</sup>, in any case the upper Nile and Nubia. This raises again the question of eastern, not north Berber, origins for the Tuareg. Some internal evidence provided by Palmer, unfortunately so uncritically presented as to need re-statement, will give further strength to the argument about eastern cultural, or even ethnic, connections of the Tuareg. This is the evidence relating to the notion of heroes expressed in Tamashek by the word *Irgulen*. By this word the Tuareg designate the legendary heroes of the past<sup>(461)</sup>. To this Tamashek word must be related the Kanuri word *Kurguri*, *Kurguli*, an example of which is given in a verse from an old Kanuri song quoted by Palmer:

*Ko Kura Kurkuriwama, chinna futebin Kurkurimama.*

(«Lord of the great sacred rock of Kurkuri, Lord of Kurkuri, gate of the west»)<sup>(462)</sup>.

Now *Ark*, *Arkel* designates (a) a king of Gobir (Hausa), (b) a king, *Arkaman*, in Kanem, (c) a king in Meroe, (d) Hercules in Ethiopia<sup>(463)</sup>. We have seen above (§ 4) that the name *Kakura*, *Karkur*, designates the king in Zaghawi, whence it probably passed into Kanuri, in Bornu, where the king is styled *mai Kura*, while among the Fung, *Kakar* (*Kukara*) means the throne, to which Budge ascribes a Meroitic origin<sup>(464)</sup>. So we obtain a very wide geographical and ethnic distribution of the word for hero-king-throne, from Meroe to Gobir, embracing such great ethnic groups as Ethiopians, Fung, Nubians, Zaghawa, Kanuri, Hausa, Tuareg. What is the etymology behind the word *Ark-Arkel-Irgulen*? I think Palmer's attempt<sup>(465)</sup> to relate 'ark' to the Greek ἄρκος, *aurek*, and this latter to ἄρξ of Silko's inscription, must be definitely discarded; nor is it possible to interpret ἄρξ as ὄρκος, as Palmer believes. Silko's intention in inscribing his feats was to exalt his own personality by likening himself to a «lion» (λέων) and a «bear» (ἄρξ), not to an antelope (ὄρκος).

<sup>(458)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 185.

<sup>(459)</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. II, p. 64.

<sup>(460)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 170.

<sup>(461)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, pp. 112 and 124.

<sup>(462)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 112.

<sup>(463)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 143, note 1.

<sup>(464)</sup> See above, § 4 of this section, the references cited in notes 313, 314, and 315.

<sup>(465)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, pp. 112 and 124. Palmer relies in this on Letronne, who, in reading Silko's inscription (see above, section II), misinterpreted the word ἄρξ.

Whether Ergamenes (*Εἰργαμένης*) of the Dendur inscription met with above (section II) bears a relation to *Ark*, is another question; this may be possible provided that the reading Ergamenes, instead of Eirpomenes, is correct. As for *Arkel*, it may be related etymologically and semantically to the Greek Ἡρακλῆς, Hercules, nevertheless the problem poses itself of whether the diffusion of this mythological hero throughout the Sudanese peoples is to be traced through Libya or Ethiopia. Moreover, the etymological relation to Ἡρακλῆς is seriously complicated by another intervening datum, the name *Harkilla* (Arkel) in Jukun tradition *by which the King of Rum is designated*, i.e. the Roman Emperor. Palmer, who sees Ἡρακλῆς at the etymological and semantic origin of *Arkel*, refers also to the Jukun word and tradition without suspecting any foreign connections hidden under it; so he interprets «Harkilla king of the Rûm» as Arkel king of Meroe<sup>(466)</sup>, deriving it from *Ark*, king, and *Herum*, an old form for Meroe. Now *Harkilla* suggests here not a title, but a personal name, and *Rum* a Roman, or the land of the Romans, which is confirmed by other records, such as the Kano chronicle, where it is stated that: «From Gogau to Salamta the people traced their descent from Rumá, and were called Rumáwa because they became a great people»<sup>(467)</sup>. It would be hard in this case to admit that Ruma and Rumawa are other than Rome and Romans, in this instance probably Constantinople and the Byzantines. Now, if we view the Jukun tradition in relation to the Kisra tradition and migration, the penetration of Christian influences into the Sudanese kingdoms, and the Byzantine-Persian war of the 7th century following the conversion of Nubia in the 6th century, we can as well see in «Harkilla king of Rum», Heraclius, the Roman (Byzantine) Emperor. It must not be forgotten that the restoration of the Byzantine authority in Egypt after the defeat of the Persians meant the restoration of Christianity which had received a rude treatment under Chosroes II, who seized and took away from Jerusalem the Holy Cross, symbol of universal veneration among Christian peoples.

In addition to these traditions and historical facts, it may be stated that the 7th century is of great momentum for the Sudanese peoples, on account of significant migratory movements and ethnic fermentations which may be supposed to be at the origin of those traits which characterize the mediaeval Sudanese State system, such as political theocracy, sacral kingship, and elaborate court ceremonial. It would be quite normal to assume that the ethnic and cultural origins of the

<sup>(466)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 124.

<sup>(467)</sup> H. R. PALMER, 'The Kano Chronicle', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. XXXVIII 1908, pp. 58 - 98 ( = *Sudanese Memoirs*, vol. III, pp. 92 - 132. See p. 97).

Tuareg are not foreign to these historical circumstances. It is equally legitimate to ask whether the name *Irgulen* has anything to do with the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius; for it is known that under this Emperor many Berbers were converted to Christianity, a process resuming the work initiated by Justinian with the conversion of the Tripolitanian Moors, the Nasamones as from A.D. 548, and the Garamantes in A.D. 569<sup>(468)</sup>. The Byzantine church of which the ruins still stand at Mizda, a locality of western Libya south of Tripoli, may date from these times. It is also known that Christianity never gained a firm footing among the Berber tribes of North Africa. Are we entitled then to make the supposition that the Tuareg constituted the Christian section of the Berber populations? In that case the upheaval caused by the Arab conquest, begun in the year 666, may be responsible for the reaction against Islam which materialized in the emigration of several Berber tribes into the expanse afforded by the desert. These tribes which fled the Islamic domination are reasonably supposed to have been Christian. If these tribes are the ancestors of the Saharan nomads, then Tuareg beginnings in the Saharan sector may be traced to the 7th century and considered as the outcome of historical circumstances caused by the Arab conquest of North Africa. Still the problem of Tuareg origins remains obscure, inasmuch as it has to be archaeologically and ethnologically established whether this people, as a Hamitic group, pre-existed the Christian era in North Africa, or was part of a great ethnic movement of Berber populations which «between 400 - 500 A.D. set in from the upper Nile valley through the western oases to Fezzan», as Palmer believes<sup>(469)</sup>. This authority further admits that «these people were the Tuareg. They formed in Fezzan the great confederation known as the Hawara (Hoggar) while further west they were called Sanhaja. In Bornu the Hawara were called Hawaza. Mai Arki in one *gîrgam* is said to have died at 'Zeila Hawazahan', in 'Zeila among the Hoggar Tuareg' <sup>(470)</sup>. In such a case, if their conversion to Christianity be accepted, it must have occurred in the 6th or the 7th century, and may have been independent of that of Nubia, although it may bear a certain relation to it. This would hold true also if the former hypothe-

<sup>(468)</sup> Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, VI, 3, 9 - 11: *Τριπόλεως τῆδε τῆς καλουμένης τὰ ὄρια ἐστὶ . . . ἐνταῦθ' αὖτε Μανρωδοῖσι ὄζηται ῥωμαίων ἔνσπονδοι ἐκ παλαιοῦ ὄντες ὅτι περ ἅπαντες πεισθέντες Ἰουστινιανῶ βασιλεῖ, δόγματι τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐθελούσιοι προσεχώρησαν. Cf. Iohannis Abbatis Biclaris Chronica, ed. Th. Mommsen in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi*, vol. XI, p. 212, for the adoption of Christianity by the Garamantes.*

<sup>(469)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 17, note 2.

<sup>(470)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17, note 2.

sis about their North African origins holds good, but in this case their conversion to Christianity, if true, must have an entirely distinct origin from that of the Nubians. In this latter case also it could be possible to trace ethnic affinities of the Tuareg with such known North African peoples as the *Μαζίται* or the *Ἀδσοουριανοί*, who appear from time to time in the historical scene as raiding tribes inflicting severe ravages on the cities of Libya<sup>(471)</sup>. The linguistic evidence in this respect is provided by the Tamashek term *Imajegh*, meaning 'noble', which in other dialects assumes the various forms *Amazigh*, *Imohagh*, *Imocharh*, *Imajirhen*, *Temahaq* etc.<sup>(472)</sup>, and the root *MZGh*, which is met in the names of many North African tribes in classical and post-classical times, as the *Μαζίται*, *Mazices*, or *Μαρέται*, *Maketai*, above. It is this relationship<sup>(473)</sup> that led Stuhlman to speak of 'Mazigh peoples'<sup>(474)</sup>. The problem consists in determining whether the so-called 'Mazigh peoples' constitute a homogeneous ethnic group, or the designation 'Mazigh' is a conventional one applied to a variety of peoples by ancient authorities. This was the case of the Blemmyes and Novadae dealt with above. The problem is of importance when dealing with the pre-Islamic ethnology of North Africa, and has been very well stated by Rodd<sup>(475)</sup>; although it goes beyond the scope of the present enquiry, it is not irrelevant to the questions raised by the investigation of Tuareg origins and the cultural influences that affected the inner Sudanese sector. Among such questions are the origin of the Tuareg equipment, the use of the cross, and the presence of Greek-Christian words in their vocabulary. In the face of available evidence it is

(471) Of one such raid by *Ἀδσοουριανοί* and *Ὀβννιγάδοι* against Pentapolis in the year 412 speaks Synesius in a letter, describing how, in the absence of imperial troops, he undertook on his own initiative the defence of the city. See *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. LXVI, cols 1565 - 1578. *Mazices* are not mentioned by Synesius, but they are neighbours and related to the Ausurians according to Philostorgius, *Ecclesiastical History*, XI, 8 (*Μάζικες καὶ Ἀδξωουριανοί, μεταξύ δὲ Λιβύης καὶ Ἄφρων οἴτοι νέμονται*). For the ethnic composition of Libya according to ancient authorities, see O. BATES, *op. cit.*, pp. 47 - 72.

(472) H. DUVEYRIER, *op. cit.*, p. 318. F. R. RODD, *op. cit.*, p. 457. H. LHOÏTE, *op. cit.*, pp. 158 - 161.

(473) seemingly contradicted by C. DE FOUCAULD'S derivation of *Imajegh* from *Amahar* (pl. *Imouhar*), a proper name meaning 'Tuareg', 'of Tuareg origin' (*Dictionnaire Touareg-Français*, vol. II, p. 673); but as RODD thinks this derivation does not abolish the relationship with the root *MZGh*.

(474) F. STUHLMANN, *Die Mazigh-Völker*, 1914 (Abhandlungen des Hamburgischen Kolonialinstituts, 27).

(475) *Op. cit.*, pp. 457 - 462. Cf. O. BATES, *op. cit.*, map X, p. 53.

hard to deny cultural contacts and influences having occurred sometime between the end of the Vandal war and the end of the 7th century involving the Byzantine world on the one part and the peoples of northern Africa on the other. A significant detail noted down by Gautier is that the arm-sword worn by the Tuareg is witnessed by Corippus in the 6th century<sup>(476)</sup>, and no trace of it is to be found in pre-Byzantine archaeological material<sup>(477)</sup>, which makes this authority almost conclude: «Faut-il admettre que cet accoutrement touareg est apparu à l'époque byzantine avec les tribus de grands nomades chameliers?»<sup>(478)</sup>. Palmer answers: «yes; but then we must look to the Nilotic Sudan for their previous history»<sup>(479)</sup>. To this we might add: possibly, but not necessarily. For our part we are inclined to dissociate the North African Byzantine cultural impact from the christianization of Nubia, through which Byzantine-Christian influences crept into the Sudanese world, and of which the historical circumstances and testimonies are well established. Yet Palmer's answer naturally poses the problem which ethnological investigation has as yet neither clearly stated, nor satisfactorily elucidated, viz. that of the ethnic affinities, cultural contacts, and historical relations of the Tuareg with the other major ethnic groups of Sahara and the Sudanese countries, such as the Nubians, the Zaghawa, the Teda (Tibbu), the Kanembu, the Hausa etc. To which may be added the problem of the stages of Tuareg ethnohistory.

### § 9. *The problem of the pre-Islamic Ethnohistory of the Negro-Hamitic peoples.*

Far from having reached definitive conclusions with regard to the Byzantine-Christian cultural penetration into the Negro-Sudanese world, the preceding pa-

<sup>(476)</sup> *Johannis, De Bellis Libycis*, IV, verses 1065 - 1082 = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi*, vol. III, part ii, p. 62.

<sup>(477)</sup> E. F. GAUTIER, *Le passé de l'Afrique du Nord*, 1937, pp. 327 - 328.

<sup>(478)</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 328. M. H. MOREL, *loc. cit.* (note 424, above), pp. 123 - 127, attempts to trace the origin of the Tuareg sword to the crusaders' straight sword as against the Byzantine traditional curved sword. A serious objection to this view is that the Tuareg fighting attire is much older than the times of the Crusades. Recent research has proved a remoter antiquity for the straight sword in the Lake Chad region. See P. HUARD, 'Cheval, fer et chameau au Sahara oriental', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Afrique noire (Sciences humaines)*, vol. XXII, 1960, p. 166 and fig. 8.

<sup>(479)</sup> *Bornu Sahara*, p. 169.

ges establish, it is believed, the validity of the problem of pre-Islamic ethnohistory of the Sudanese peoples, a problem equally affecting the north Hamitic ethnological sector because of the inextricable connections and relations entered into by the several peoples composing the two racial groups from the very first centuries of the Christian era. The external and mutual influences, exerted on the racial, ethnic, and cultural level, have modified to such a degree the ethnological morphology of the Sudanese and Saharan countries, as to render problematic and highly complicated the recognition and identification of their pre-Islamic ethnological past so profoundly affected by the Islamic political and cultural domination of North Africa. The student of the history of the Sudanese peoples will soon recognize that the emphasis in research has been hitherto laid on the Islamic period, more easily traceable thanks to the existence of quite a considerable mass of source material, documentary, chronographical, and traditional, of Islamic provenance. The general history of the Sudanese peoples has been investigated and viewed through these sources and within the framework of the Islamic religious, cultural, and to a great extent political domination. Although much progress has been realized in the field of North African and Saharan prehistory, a most significant period, roughly extending over the first ten centuries of the Christian era down to the conversion to Islam of the great Sudanese kingdoms, remains a *terra incognita*, summarily disposed of by historians and ethnologists; in fact more and more accent is being laid on the study of Sudanese history from the Islamic period's view-point, as against a greater neglect of the pre-Islamic historical and cultural past.

Although a few testimonies afford some glimpses into the pre-Islamic past of the Sudanese peoples, scholars neither paid due attention to them, nor were they incited to embark on systematic research into a field at first sight impenetrable and unpromising. Only thus can it be explained why such authorities as Delafosse and many of his fellow scholars have systematically turned away their attention from the pre-Islamic past and any facts pertaining thereto, and this notwithstanding the former authority's acquaintance with such testimonies as as-Zohri's, according to which the kingdom of Ghana, before its conversion was Christian, and that the Sanhaja tribes adjoined the Christian faith and embraced Islam only in A.D. 1075 <sup>(480)</sup>. What is more serious, Delafosse's method and outlook, and that of

<sup>(480)</sup> See above, notes 232 and 456 in this section, and M. DELAFOSSE, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, vol. I, p. 187. This testimony is no more taken into account by R. MAUNY, 'Etat actuel de la question de Ghana', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Afrique noire*, vol. XIII, 1951, pp. 463 -

a generation of scholars after him, implied the elimination of oral traditions as historical sources in the absence of written ones. Now the consequences of such a method are particularly negative in ethnological investigation, where the source material is so dissimilar to that of History; for in the case of the peoples under consideration both, Ethnology and History, are inextricably involved with each other, with a predominance of the former over the largest part of the field. It is the great merit of Frobenius to have made a due case of the traditions collected among the Nigerian tribes, and to have correlated them to major historical and cultural facts. If his treatment was not entirely critical, his methodological outlook was sane. The traditions to which he drew attention proved to be reliable source material; those about eastern origins especially have been corroborated by subsequent researches and testimonies, such as those of Meek and Amaury Talbot on the peoples of Nigeria. But the previous attitude of the scholars towards traditional material resulted in an irreparable loss, in that most of the traditions of origin have been allowed to fade away without having been more thoroughly rescued. This is evidenced by a comparison of ethnological accounts of Nigerian tribes since Frobenius. During the time of the latter's expedition in inner Africa (1910 - 1912) the Kisra and Issa traditions were very lively among a great number of tribes throughout the Niger and Benue valleys, and these traditions were still current during the third decade of the present century, when Amaury Talbot and Meek recorded the ethnography of the southern and northern tribes of Nigeria. Now, not a mention of these traditions is found in Nadel's account of the Nupe of Nigeria, which embodies the results of field researches carried out in the years 1934 - 1936<sup>(481)</sup>. It is very fortunate, therefore, that part of this traditional material has been incorporated in a number of written records, the collection and publication of a great number of which may be said to be Palmer's most important contribution to Saharan and Sudanese ethnohistory. It is strange to ascertain that the sources thus made accessible to the scholar have not as yet been made use of in the required way. For this may account the rather exclusive interest in the Islamic period of Sudanese history on the part of the scholars, but also the rather confused method of presentation of this material by

475, who dismisses as uncritical Delafosse's theory of a Judeo-Syrian penetration. Now DELAFOSSE speaks of a pre-Christian migration (*op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 207 - 226) and a post-Christian penetration (*op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 22 - 32), and although for the former no serious evidence is adduced, the latter finds an adequate echoing in the oral traditions of origin.

(481) S. F. NADEL, *A Black Byzantium. The Kingdom of Nupe in Nigeria*, 1942.

Palmer himself. It is certain that a presentation and rearrangement of this material on methodical and critical lines would render it of much greater usefulness to scholars.

The premises of the problem of the Sudanese and Saharan pre-Islamic ethnohistory can be resumed in a few propositions suggested by the specific questions encountered in the course of the present enquiry.

(i) The rise of the great Sudanese kingdoms is a historical phenomenon the origins of which cannot be traced back to times anterior to the early centuries of the Christian era. No Sudanese kingdom of those which attained a major form of political organization, as against a tribal one, seems to have existed before the 5th century A.D. (482).

(482) The following are the most recently established chronological data concerning the Sudanese kingdoms anterior to A.D. 1100. They are taken from the following authorities: J. SPENCER TRIMINGHAM, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, 1962 (see pp. 234 - 244). R. CORNEVIN, *Histoire des peuples de l'Afrique noire*, 1960. D. WESTERMANN, *Geschichte Afrikas*, 1952. They are chiefly based on the first authority's tables.

1. *Kingdoms of Senegal and Ghana.*

A.D. 750 - 800, Soninke State of Wagadu.

A.D. 770, Ghana in existence.

A.D. 800 (?), Soninke dynasty of Ghana founded.

2. *Mali.*

9th century A.D., foundation of the Keyta dynasty of north Mali.

*Circa* A.D. 1050, conversion to Islam of the Mali dynasty.

3. *Songhay (Songhai).*

7th century A.D., Primitive core of Songhay dynasty in Gungia (CORNEVIN, p. 252).

A.D. 700 - 1335, Dja (Djia) dynasty (WESTERMANN, p. 91).

*Circa* A.D. 840, Gungia mentioned.

A.D. 860 (?), foundation of *Za*, oldest Songhay dynasty (TRIMINGHAM, p. 237).

A.D. 872, Ya'qubi reports Kaukau as the greatest Negro kingdom.

A.D. 980, Songhay dynasty is islamized.

4. *Kanem-Bornu.*

*Circa* A.D. 800, Kanem founded.

*Circa* A.D. 850, Saef ruler of Kanem (WESTERMANN, p. 161).

A.D. 872, Kanem distinct of Zaghawa.

9th - 10th century A.D., Kanembu constituted as a State (CORNEVIN, p. 327).

A.D. 1085, Hume, first Muslim ruler of Kanem.

5. *Hausa States.*

6th - 7th century A.D., Gobir (?).

A.D. 999 - 1063, Bagoda, first *sarki* of Kano. H. BAUMANN traces the foundation of Kano to an earlier date than the first *sarki's* accession (999 A.D.), (*Les peuples et les civilisations de l'Afrique*, 1948, p. 313).

6th - 10th century A.D., Consolidation of Hausa in Gobir (WESTERMANN, p. 134).

A.D. 1150, Gobir Hausa occupy Air.

(ii) The great Sudanese kingdoms of the Middle Ages are not the exclusive achievement of the autochthonous Negro stock of tribal status, but the outcome of the impact and contact of foreign ethnic and cultural influences that found their way into the Central and Western Sudanese countries. These influences can in a general way be related to major historical events and circumstances within the Byzantine world and the Middle East countries; their memory has been preserved in local traditions of origin.

(iii) The conversion of the Novadae and Blemmyes of the upper Nile valley and the foundation of the Christian kingdom of Nubia gave rise to a political and cultural entity of a Byzantine pattern at the door of the vast Sudanese belt, which exerted definite influences on the central Sudanese peoples by way of Kordofan, Darfur, Wadai, Bagirmi, and Kanem, thereby spreading over the western Sudanese peoples by way of Bornu, Gobir, the Benue and lower Niger valleys. Sudanese ethnohistory from the 6th century to the Islamic penetration cannot be understood without reference to the historical presence of Christian Nubia exercising a two-fold rôle, either by exerting direct influences on the autochthonous Sudanese civilizations, or by affording a favourable background for the diffusion of such influences amongst the Sudanese peoples.

(iv) The data at hand indicate a very important east-west ethnic and cultural migration by way of Nubia having taken place within the very rough chronological limits of the 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries. This migration, which may be understood as an ordinary migratory movement and at the same time as a process of progressive cultural diffusion, may be responsible for the formation of the great mediaeval Sudanese kingdoms and the moulding of the distinctive features of the Sudanese state system by the introduction of Oriental and Byzantine cultural elements and patterns of political organization amalgamated with the purely native Negro cultures.

(v) The migration in question appears as independent of the north-south Berber expansion consequent upon the Arab conquest and islamization of North Africa, which had its own effects on the ethnic morphology of the Lake Chad region. A state of confusion still prevails in research with regard to the ethnological and cultural effects of the two currents of ethnic and cultural diffusion, the east-west and north-south.

(vi) To the above two great ethnic and cultural currents is inextricably related the problem of ethnic identification and elucidation of the respective rôles of three major human groups, the Zaghawa of northern Darfur, the Teda (Tibbu)

of Tibesti, and the Tuareg of Sahara. All three groups play a significant part outgrowing their original status as geographically and tribally smaller groups; moreover, they are at times so intermingled, as to become indistinguishable from each other. The ethnic classification of the Zaghawa and Teda as Hamitic or Negro stocks has to be established.

(vii) Although most of the evidence points to the Tuareg as stemming out of the north Berber branch, their distinct features and culture, as well as their cultural and eventually historical connections with eastern Sudanese groups, such as the Zaghawa, leave an open question for ethnologists to deal with. The primitive Tuareg migrations and expansion into the desert should be dealt with in close connection with this problem. A scrutiny of all possible sides of their special cultural features may reveal an unsuspected historical past almost entirely thrown into obscurity and oblivion by the superimposed religion and culture of Islam.

We have already referred to the features of the Sudanese state system as bearing a striking resemblance to the Byzantine and Oriental political organization, as in the case of divine kingship, centralized political control, elaborate court ceremonial, and a highly hierarchized administration involving a numerous body of officials. It is these great political units that mark the course of Sudanese history from the Middle Ages down to the modern times, by which the Negro-Sudanese world came to be involved, albeit loosely, in the more general cultural currents of universal history, thus differentiating itself to a marked degree from the great mass of tribal societies of Negro Africa. In this connection it may be said that the great Sudanese kingdoms achieved a degree of historical status midway between the tribal status and the political organization of the more advanced historical groups. Their deficiency in relation to the more advanced forms of political organization is best illustrated by the very fluid notion of defined political territory. It would be very hard indeed, either for the rulers of a Sudanese empire, or for the student of historical geography, to demarcate with any degree of accuracy the 'frontiers' of such an empire at any time of its historical existence. This lack of a sufficient degree of territorial fixity accounts also for the relative fluidity of these states or 'empires', oscillating between the status of half-ethnological groups and that of half-historical entities<sup>(483)</sup>. The above noted similarities in political organization bear sometimes on such striking details, as cannot be accounted for otherwise than by a transplantation of cultural elements from the very great centres of civilization.

<sup>(483)</sup> Cf. J. SPENCER TRIMINGHAM, *op. cit.*, pp. 34 - 37.

This is the case for instance with the custom, followed by the kings of Bornu, of staying hidden behind a screen, the so-called *fanadir* or *dagil*, during public occasions<sup>(484)</sup>, a custom practised also in the court of the Sassanid kings of Persia<sup>(485)</sup>. The same custom is known to have existed in several Sudanese kingdoms<sup>(486)</sup>. As concerning the Kisra tradition Persian influences are not of course to be excluded, but it should be noted also that with regard to the more common features of the royal imperial institution, these were transplanted from Byzantium in the very door of the Sudanese countries by the conversion of Nubia in the 6th century and the rise of the Nubian kingdom modelled on the Byzantine political and ecclesiastical institutions. Now given the earliest known dates of the great Sudanese kingdoms, which all seem to be posterior to the rise of the Christian kingdom of Nubia, and the great duration of the latter's cultural tradition, there should be no doubt about the part it played in diffusing the Byzantine and Oriental cultural elements into the Sudanese world as far as the western African sector.

The extent and ways as well as the specific agents of this diffusion for the most part escape our knowledge. The migration of cultural elements westwards cannot be conceived without parallel and important ethnological modifications all along the countries concerned, to which the Arab conquest of North Africa further contributed. The Islamic domination, direct or indirect, of practically the whole North African, Saharan, and Sudanese sectors and the ethnic upheaval it entailed naturally obscured the ethnic and historical evolution which preceded it. How obscured this ethnic and historical past became is exemplified by the case of a significant group, the Teda (Tibbu). The Teda ethnological problem has not as yet found its solution. It is still debated whether this ethnic group is constituted by a hamitized (or even semitized, according to Basset) Negro-Sudanese substratum, or, on the contrary, by a Berber stock which underwent a strong Negro admixture. The problem is best posed by Dalloni's statement that «des Toubous modernes ne sont pas des nègres mais ils sont aussi très différents des Berbères»<sup>(487)</sup>, which does not offer any clue to its solution. To the present day no less than fifteen hypotheses have been

<sup>(484)</sup> Documents in H. R. PALMER, *Bornu Sahara*, pp. 166 and 195.

<sup>(485)</sup> C. HUART, *La Perse antique*, 1925, p. 177. In fact a custom surviving from ancient Persia; see Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistes*, IV, 26.

<sup>(486)</sup> S. LAGERCRANTZ, *Contribution to the Ethnography of Africa* (= *Studia ethnographica Uppsaliensia*, I), 1950, pp. 334 - 346.

<sup>(487)</sup> M. DALLONI, *Mission au Tibesti, II* (= *Mémoires de l'Académie des sciences*, vol. LXII, 1936), p. 407.

advanced with regard to Teda origins<sup>(488)</sup>, and a still greater number of opinions<sup>(489)</sup>. However, the Teda problem is now receiving a scientific treatment<sup>(490)</sup>. But no treatment of either the Teda or the Zaghawa problem is to achieve an adequate solution, which would not distinguish between the *superimposed historical and cultural morphology* as against the *purely ethnological morphology founded on tribal status* upon which the historical forces have exerted a modifying and formative influence. Stated in different terms, this would mean that the attempt to trace the origins of a historical ethnic group is methodologically deficient, if by origins it is just meant linking a given people to an original tribal unit. Although a tribal unit underlies the historical entity under consideration, the latter is no longer the exclusive outcome of the original stock, inasmuch as historical forces, which in the usual way stem from outside, have contributed to its formation. Thus there is not much historical meaning in ascribing to such ethnic groups as came to our notice under the generic names of Blemmyes, Novadae, Zaghawa or Teda, a descent from a specific ethnological unit, when the groups in question no longer represent the ethnological substratum from which they stemmed, but an entirely new historical morphology to which the original substratum served, so to speak, as raw human material.

The formation of these new historical groups goes with all the modifications in the ethnic composition of populations, caused by foreign interventions in Sahara and Sudan during a period which may be styled as Christian pre-Islamic. The deficiency in our knowledge of these modifications may be made good to a certain extent by the scientific study of the palaeoethnological material, such as the use of metals and of domestic and burden animals. The introduction of the camel as a carrier in Sahara is certainly not unrelated to the intervention of foreign agents in this geographical sector<sup>(491)</sup>. Recent researches establish the continuity of the material culture over vast areas within Sahara and Sudan as well as the existence of very great possibilities of diffusion of cultural elements<sup>(492)</sup>. Documentary evidence made available, which happens to be still abundant as regards Arabic material,

<sup>(488)</sup> See J. CHAPPELLE, *Nomades noirs du Sahara*, 1957, pp. 12 - 16.

<sup>(489)</sup> Enumerated by P. HUARD and M. CHARPIN, 'Etude anthropologique des Teda du Tibesti', *Mémoires de l'Institut français d'Afrique noire (Série B: Sciences humaines)*, vol. XXII, 1960, pp. 180 - 187.

<sup>(490)</sup> P. HUARD and M. CHARPIN, *loc. cit.*, pp. 179 - 199.

<sup>(491)</sup> E. F. GAUTIER, *Le passé de l'Afrique du Nord*, 1937, pp. 110 *sqq.*

<sup>(492)</sup> P. HUARD, 'Contribution à l'étude du cheval, du fer et du chameau au Sahara oriental', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'Afrique noire (Série B: Sciences humaines)*, vol. XXII, 1960, pp. 134 - 178.

collaterally sheds light on the history and diffusion of this material culture<sup>(493)</sup>. Fairly indicative of some extreme attainments of diffusion is the legend of Bushongo origins, according to which Bumba, a creator and cultural hero at the same time, was a white man, and the oldest habitat of the tribe was located very far in the north-north-west, which points to the Chari basin and suggests, therefore, a possibility of cultural contacts with the southern Chadie region<sup>(494)</sup>. In addition to these aspects, the study of the various local forms of art, conducted on comparative lines, should provide many an elucidation to problems encountered in the matter of cultural diffusion and culture contacts. Of all the forms of art developed among the Sudanese peoples, that of Benin has been the subject of extensive treatment<sup>(495)</sup>, although its comparative study remains to be done. Last but not least, the survival of Greek words in Sudanese languages should inspire a thorough investigation of the linguistic evidence in respect of the diffusion of Byzantine and other foreign cultural elements in Sudanese cultures<sup>(496)</sup>.

<sup>(493)</sup> For instance, T. LEWICKI, 'L'Etat nord-africain de Tâhert et ses relations avec le Soudan occidental à la fin du VIIIe et au IXe siècles', *Cahiers d'études africaines*, vol. II, 1962, pp. 513 - 535.

<sup>(494)</sup> See E. TORDAY and T. A. JOYCE, *Notes ethnographiques sur les peuples communément appelés Bakuba ainsi que sur les peuplades apparentées. Les Bushongo*, 1910, pp. 20 - 21 and 43.

<sup>(495)</sup> Bibliography of Benin Art in R. E. BRADBURY, *The Benin Kingdom and the Edo-speaking Peoples of South-Western Nigeria* (= *Ethnographic Survey of Africa. Western Africa*, part xiii), 1957, pp. 168 - 170.

<sup>(496)</sup> Of the fifteen Kanuri words collected by H. R. PALMER (see 'The origin of the name Bornu', *Journal of the African Society*, vol. XXVIII, 1928 - 1929, pp. 37 - 38) only seven can be retained, the present writer's opinion, as possessing a sufficient degree of morphological and semantical relation to Greek. These are:

<i>Logo</i> , petition,	Greek	<i>Λόγος</i> .
<i>Nuskin</i> , I die,	»	<i>νοσεῖν</i> .
<i>Pé</i> , cow,	»	<i>βοῦς</i> .
<i>Dunoa</i> , strength,	»	<i>δύναμις</i> (*).
<i>Ngila</i> , good, happy,	»	<i>ἄγγελος</i> (ecclesiastical meaning).
<i>Kiare</i> , old man,	»	<i>γέρον</i> .
<i>Wo-ngin</i> , I know,	»	<i>γι(γ)νώσκειν</i> .

The other words are extremely doubtful, the more so because Palmer ascribed erroneous meanings to their Greek counterparts. He took for instance *πάσχω* as meaning 'I feed'; *πειράομαι* as meaning 'pass over', 'cross'; *κλαίω* as meaning 'I lock' (apparently mistaking it for *κλείω*, but in this case the corresponding Kanuri word might be retained). We have already met *andjelus* in Tamashek, and *starra* (*στανρός*) in Central Sudan. Given the presence of Greek words in the Sudanese linguistic complex, it may also be that the word *shatanna*, Satan, reported by Lu-

In the present enquiry emphasis has been laid on the historical occurrence of Christian influences on the Sudanese civilizations, generally deemed to have been exerted through, and as a consequence of, the conversion of Nubia. But it is in no way meant by this that these influences are either exclusive or even predominant among others. The east-west cultural current carried with it a great number of oriental elements which found favourable soil and afforded the basis for a new cultural departure in the history of the Negro-Sudanese peoples. It is apt to point here to the importance of the Jewish penetration into North Africa. Here the influences are probably less markedly cultural than racial. The presence of Jewish racial and cultural elements within the North African and Saharan ethnic groups, as distinct from the Jewish colonies themselves, is an equally insufficiently explored subject, despite some attempts to elucidate this presence rather uncritically conducted<sup>(497)</sup>. Pre-Islamic Arab influences must also be given an equal consideration, while the problem of Meroitic influences requires extensive investigation.

Actually the Islamic period of the history of the Negro-Sudanese and Saharan peoples has received most of the attention of scholars, and its investigation has benefited from critical methods of research and a fairly rich documentation. The Islamic past of North and Sudanese Africa in fact forms a central axis around which the history of the Sudanese peoples is being reconstructed. The very critical accounts

kas (*op. cit.*, p. 167; see sub-note to this note), derives from the Greek *Σατανᾶς* rather than from the Arab *Sheitan*. The further investigation of the Kanuri vocabulary would almost certainly reveal a greater number of such derivations of which any affinity with ecclesiastical terminology would point to Nubia as the intermediate field of acculturation.

(\*) According to J. LUKAS, *A Study of the Kanuri Language*, 1937, p. 195, *dúnò* = strength, *dúnòà* = strong.

<sup>(497)</sup> For instance, J. J. WILLIAMS, *Hebrewisms in West Africa*, 1930. Hasty inductions and generalizations from data contained in the ethnographic accounts, by Meek and Amaury Talbot, of the peoples of Nigeria, but very suggestive as regards the importance of the subject and the necessity of further research. The Jewish presence in West Africa must be intimately related to the Judaized populations of North Africa. A recent hypothesis concerning the origin of the latter makes of them Berber stock religiously assimilated as a consequence of influences exerted by Jewish communities dispersed in North African centres pre-Islamic times. See H. Z. HIRSCHBERG, 'The problem of the Judaized Berbers', *Journal of African History*, vol. IV, 1963, pp. 313 - 339. Still an acculturation of such a degree by the sole means of radiation of the culture of Jewish communities which, moreover, never used to practise proselytism, is questionable. The legends concerning Judaized Berbers cannot in any way be discarded as an element of historical testimony, however unprecise they may be. What imports in the present instance is the pre-Islamic status of these communities.

of this history recently offered by scholars, such as those by Trimingham<sup>(498)</sup>, confirm this view. On one point, however, the present writer feels he should take exception to this authority's methodological approach to the history of the Sudanese peoples. In the preface to his latest work, Trimingham states that «no attempt to present or interpret life in West Africa in the past will have validity without reference to the present»<sup>(499)</sup>. In view of the fact that Islamic domination imposed an entirely new orientation, cultural and political, to the history of the Berber and Sudanese peoples, at the same time virtually eclipsing their former ties with the historical world of non-Moslem tradition, Christian or Oriental, Trimingham's methodological approach cannot be retained. Of that important historical past only scraps remain, a few of which, still surviving in tradition, have been on occasions rescued by ethnographers. Much more survives of the ethnological past, i.e. of the more archaic forms of social organization, customs and beliefs, which by reason of their antiquity cannot be easily eradicated by any invading culture which has to make more or less considerable concessions and/or adaptations to its own structure if it has to maintain itself among the invaded societies<sup>(500)</sup>. The great problem thus posed by the interpenetration of cultures is one of disentangling the respective *apports* of each of them. This would lead to a true science of cultural stratification, a true parallel to a similar method used in archaeological investigation.

<sup>(498)</sup> J. SPENCER TRIMINGHAM, *Islam in West Africa*, 1959, and *A History of Islam in West Africa*, 1962, already cited.

<sup>(499)</sup> *A History of Islam in West Africa*, preface, p.v.

<sup>(500)</sup> The recently published work of MARIE-JOSÉ TUBIANA, *Survivances préislamiques en pays Zaghawa* (Travaux et mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, vol. LXVII), 1964, will prove this point. The sacrificial ritual of the Zaghawa has been least affected by any Islamic influence, despite the very early penetration of Islam into their geographical domain and the extensive islamization undergone by them.



## APPENDIX I

### EPIGRAPHICAL TEXTS

#### § 1.

*Ethnic situation in the upper Nile valley  
and the Red Sea geographical domain.*

*Monumentum Adulitanum*<sup>(501)</sup>.

... μεθ' ἃ ἀνδρείως τὰ μὲν ἔγγιστα τοῦ βασιλείου μου ἔθνη εἰρηνεύεσθαι κελεύσας ἐπολέμησα καὶ ὑπέταξα μάχαις τὰ ὑπογεγραμμένα ἔθνη. Γάζη ἔθνος ἐπολέμησα, ἔπειτα Ἀγάμαι καὶ Σιγύην, καὶ νικήσας τὴν ἡμίσειαν πάντων τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐμερισάμην. Αὐὰ καὶ Τιαμῶ τοὺς λεγομένους Τζιαμῶ καὶ τοὺς Γαμβηλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐγγὺς αὐτῶν καὶ Ζιγγαβηνὲ καὶ Ἀγγαβὲ καὶ Τιαμαὰ καὶ Ἀθαγαοὺς καὶ Καλαὰ καὶ Σαμινὲ ἔθνος πέραν τοῦ Νείλου ἐν δυσβάτοις καὶ χιονώδεσιν ὄρεσιν οἰκοῦντας, ἐν οἷς διὰ παντὸς νιφετοὶ καὶ κρήναι καὶ χιόνες βαθεῖαι, ὡς μέχρι γονάτων καταδύνειν ἄνδρα, τὸν ποταμὸν διαβάς ὑπέταξα, ἔπειτα Λασυαὶ καὶ Ζαὰ καὶ Γαβαλὰ οἰκοῦντες παρ' ὄρεσι θερμοῦν ὑδάτων βλύζουσι καὶ καταρρότοις, Ἀταλμῶ καὶ Βεγὰ καὶ τὰ σὺν αὐτοῖς ἔθνη πάντα. Ταγγαῖτῶν τοὺς μέχρι τῶν τῆς Αἰγύπτου ὀρίων οἰκοῦντας ὑποτάξας πεζεύεσθαι ἐποίησα τὴν ὁδὸν ἀπὸ τῶν τῆς ἐμῆς βασιλείας τόπων μέχρι Αἰγύπτου ἔπειτα Ἀρνινὲ καὶ Μετινὲ ἐν ἀποκρήμυσι οἰκοῦντας ὄρεσιν. Σεσέα ἔθνος ἐπολέμησα, οὗς καὶ μέγιστον καὶ δυσβατώτατον ὄρος ἀνελθόντας περιφρουρήσας κατήγαγον καὶ ἀπελεξάμην ἐμαντῶ τοὺς τε νέους αὐτῶν καὶ γυναῖκας καὶ παῖδας καὶ παρθένους καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν αὐτοῖς κτῆσιν. Ῥαυσῶν ἔθνη μεσόγαια λιβανωτοφόρων βαρβάρων οἰκοῦντα ἐντὸς πεδίων μεγάλων ἀνδρῶν καὶ Σωλατὲ ἔθνος ὑπέταξα, οἷς καὶ τοὺς αἰγιαλοὺς τῆς θαλάσσης φυλάσσειν ἐκέλευσα. ταῦτα δὲ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ὄρεσιν ἰσχυροῖς πεφρουρημένα αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἐν ταῖς μάχαις παρὼν νικήσας καὶ ὑποτάξας ἐχαρισάμην αὐτοῖς πάσας τὰς χώρας ἐπὶ φόροις. ἄλλα [τ]ε πλεῖστα ἔθνη ἐκόντα ὑπετάγη μοι ἐπὶ φόροις. καὶ πέραν δὲ τῆς ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης οἰκοῦντας Ἀρῶβιτας καὶ Κιναιδοκολπίτας, στρατεύματα ναυτικὸν καὶ πεζικὸν διαπεμφάμενος καὶ ὑποτάξας αὐτῶν τοὺς βασιλεῖας, φόρους τῆς γῆς τελεῖν ἐκέλευσα καὶ οὐδέεσθαι μετ' εἰρήνης καὶ πλέεσθαι, ἀπὸ τε Λευκῆς κόμης ἕως τῶν Σαβαίων χώρας ἐπολέμησα. πάντα δὲ ταῦτα τὰ ἔθνη πρῶτος καὶ μόνος βασιλέων τῶν

<sup>(501)</sup> Data refer to the 3rd century A.D. For the chronology, see JEAN DORESSE, *L'empire du Prêtre-Jean*, vol. I, 1957, pp. 116-119. Text from D. H. MÜLLER, *Epigraphische Denkmäler aus Abessinien*, 1894, pp. 4-5. For bibliography and philological notes, see the new edition in W. DITTENBERGER, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones selectae*, vol. I, 1903, no. 199, pp. 284-298, with variant readings and ancient scholia.

πρὸ ἐμοῦ ὑπέταξα. δι' ἣν ἔχω πρὸς τὸν μέγιστον θεόν μου Ἄρην εὐχαριστίαν, ὅς με καὶ ἐγέννησε, δι' οὗ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τὰ ὁμοροῦντα τῇ ἐμῇ γῆ ἀπὸ μὲν ἀνατολῆς μέχρι τῆς λιβα-  
νωτοφόρου, ἀπὸ δὲ δύσεως μέχρι τῶν τῆς Αἰθιοπίας καὶ Σάσου τόπων ὑπ' ἐμαντὸν ἐποίησα,  
ἃ μὲν αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἐλθὼν καὶ νικήσας ἃ δὲ διαπεμπόμενος καὶ ἐν εἰρήνῃ καταστήσας πάντα  
τὸν ὑπ' ἐμοὶ κόσμον κατήλθον εἰς τὴν Ἀδούλην τῷ Διὶ καὶ τῷ Ἄρει καὶ τῷ Ποσειδῶνι  
θυσιάσαι ὑπὲρ τῶν πλ[ω]ϊζομένων. ἀθροίσας δὲ μου τὰ στρατεύματα καὶ ὕψ' ἐν ποιήσας  
ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῷ τόπῳ καθίσας τόνδε τὸν δίφρον παραθήκην τῷ Ἄρει ἐποίησα ἔτει τῆς ἐμῆς  
βασιλείας κζ̄.

## § 2.

*Ethiopian ascendancy in the upper*

*Nile valley in the 4th century.*

*The trilingual inscription of Axum<sup>(502)</sup>.*

Ἀειζανᾶς βασιλεὺς Ἀξωμιτῶν κα[ὶ] Ὀμηριτῶν καὶ τοῦ Ῥαιιδᾶν καὶ Αἰθιόπων καὶ Σα-  
βαιετῶν καὶ τοῦ Σιλεῆ καὶ τοῦ Τιαμῶ καὶ Βουγαιετῶν κ(αι) το[ῦ] Κάσου, βασιλεὺς βασι-  
λέων, υἱὸς θεοῦ ἀνικητοῦ Ἄρεως, ἀτακτησάντων κατὰ καιρὸν τοῦ ἔθνους τῶν Βουγαιετῶν  
ἀπεστ(ε)ίλαμεν τοὺς ἡμετέρους ἀδελφούς Σαῖαζανᾶ καὶ τὸν Ἀδηφᾶ[ν] τούτους πολεμῆσαι,  
καὶ παραδεδωκότων αὐτῶν ὑποτάξαντες αὐτοὺς ἤγαγον πρὸς ἡμᾶς μετὰ καὶ τῶν θρεμμά-  
των αὐτῶν βοῶν τε  $\nabla$ PIB καὶ προβάτων  $\Omega$ ΚΔ καὶ κτηνῶν νοτοφόρω[ν,] θρέψαν-  
τες αὐτοὺς βόεσιν τε καὶ ἐπισιτισμῶ ἀνών[ης], ποτίζοντες αὐτοὺς ζῆτω τε καὶ  
οἴνω καὶ ὑδρεύμασιν πάντας (ε)ἰς χορτασίαν οἴτινες ἦσαν τὸν ἀριθμὸν βασιλ[εῖ]σκοι ἐξ σὺν  
τῷ ὄχλῳ αὐτῶν τὸν ἀριθμὸν  $\Delta$  YK ἀννωνευόμενοι καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν ἄρτους σιτίλους  
 $\mathcal{M}$   $\Sigma$   $\nabla$   $\mathcal{B}$  κ(αι) οἶνον ἐπὶ μῆρας... ἄχρεις οὗ ἀγάγουσιν αὐτοὺς πρὸς ἡμᾶς. το[ῦ]τους  
οὖν δωρησάμενοι αὐτοῖς πάντα τὰ ἐπιτήδεια κ(αι) ἀμφιάσαντες αὐτοὺς μετοικήσαντες]

<sup>(502)</sup> Text from D. H. MÜLLER, *Epigraphische Denkmäler aus Abessinien*, pp. 16-17. Cf. W. DITTENBERGER, *Oriens Graeci Inscriptiones selectae*, vol. I, 1903, no. 200, pp. 298-307, which closely follows Müller's text. The inscription is trilingual, not bilingual as Müller supposed it to be, the two other versions being in Sabean and Geez. See JEAN DORESSE, *L'empire du Prêtre-Jean*, vol. I, 1957, p. 145. Ethiopian domination of the Novadae is better expressed by the next inscription dedicated by the same monarch, which is in Geez and stands as witness to the king's conversion to Christianity. It is given in translation by DORESSE, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 146-148. The figures in the text, denoting the quantities of spoils seized, although definitely Greek, have not been fully identified.

κατεστήσαμεν (ε)ἴς τινα τόπον τῆς ἡμετέρας χ[ώ]ρας, καλούμενον Μάτλια. καὶ ἐκελεύσαμεν αὐτοὺς πάλιν ἀνωγειέσθαι παρασχόμενοι τοῖς ἐξάσιν βασιλείσκοις βόας ΜΒΖΡΜ ὑπερ δὲ ε[ὐ]χαριστίας τοῦ μαι γεννήσαντος ἀνικήτου Ἄρειως ἀνέθηκα αὐτῷ ἀνδριάντα χρουσοῦν ἐν[α] καὶ ἀργ[ύ]ραιοι ἐνα κ(αὶ) χαλκοῦς Γ ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ.

## § 3.

*Christianized Nubia.**Silko's inscription* (<sup>503</sup>).

Ἐγὼ Σιλκῶ, βασιλίσκος Νουβάδων καὶ ὅλων τῶν Αἰθιοπῶν, ἦλθον εἰς Τάλμιν καὶ Τάφιν, ἅπαξ δύο ἐπολέμησα μετὰ τῶν Βλεμόων, καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἔδωκέν μοι τὸ νίκημα. μετὰ τῶν τριῶν ἅπαξ ἐνίκησα πάλιν καὶ ἐκράτησα τὰς πόλεις αὐτῶν. ἐκαθέσθην μετὰ τῶν ὄχλων μου τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἅπαξ, ἐνίκησα αὐτῶν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἠξίωσάν με. ἐποίησα εἰρήνην μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ὤμοσάν μοι τὰ εἶδωλα αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπίστευσα τὸν ὄρκον αὐτῶν ὡς καλοὶ εἰσιν ἄνθρωποι. ἀναχωρήθην εἰς τὰ ἄνω μέρη μου. ὅτε ἐγεγονέμην βασιλίσκ(ος) οὐκ ἀπῆλθον ὅλως ὀπίσω τῶν ἄλλων βασιλέων ἀλλ' ἀκμὴν ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν. οἱ γὰρ φιλονικοῦσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ, οὐκ ἀφῶ αὐτοὺς καθεζόμενοι εἰς χώραν αὐτῶν, εἰ μὴ κατηξίωσάν με καὶ παρακαλοῦσιν. ἐγὼ γὰρ εἰς κάτω μέρη λέων εἰμί, καὶ εἰς ἄνω μέρη ἄρξ εἰμί. ἐπολέμησα μετὰ τῶν Βλεμόων ἀπὸ Πρίμ(εως) ἕως Τέλμεως ἐν ἅπαξ. καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι Νουβάδων ἀνωτέρω ἐπόρησα τὰς χώρας αὐτῶν, ἐπειδὴ ἐφιλονικήσουσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ. οἱ δεσπότη(αι) τῶν ἄλλων ἐθνῶν, οἱ φιλονικοῦσιν μετ' ἐμοῦ, οὐκ ἀφῶ αὐτοὺς καθεσθῆναι εἰς τὴν σκιάν, εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ ἡλίον ἔξω, καὶ οὐκ ἔπωκαν νηρὸν ἔσω εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτῶν. οἱ γὰρ ἀντίδικοί μου, ἀρπάξω τῶν γυναικῶν καὶ τὰ παῖδια αὐτῶν...

(<sup>503</sup>) See above, II, for editions and discussion. Further edition, with bibliography and philological notes, in W. DITTENBERGER, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones selectae*, vol. I, 1903, no. 201, pp. 303-310. We do not follow exclusively the readings of any one of the editions.



## APPENDIX II

### THE CANONICAL JURISDICTION OF THE PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA

The following Tables attempt to provide a working classification of the data contained in the little known work of George Skalieres, *Τὸ Πατριαρχεῖον Ἀλεξανδρείας. Τὸ κλίμα καὶ ἡ δικαιοδοσία αὐτοῦ*, Athens, 1927. It should be noted that Skalieres is often uncritical in handling his materials and sometimes indulges in unwarranted assumptions hardly supported by evidence. However, from his work one should retain the toponymical material which is worth bringing to the notice of scholars interested in ethno-toponymical studies, to whom it might afford a pretext for fruitful investigations. Especially valuable must be the author's Greek-French-Arab index of geographical names appended to his work (pp. 63-88). His original contribution is likely to consist in this correlation which should be helpful to students of historical geography.

The names of the episcopal sees are also provided with their modern equivalents, mostly Arab, but in Greek transliteration, a fact which minimizes their availability to scholars unacquainted with Greek. For such a correlation the student will be partially helped by the lists provided by E. Amélineau, which are fairly complete as regards the Egyptian provinces (146 Greek names), but not necessarily concurring with those contained in Skalieres' work, since the latter refer exclusively to episcopal lists. (See *La géographie de l'Égypte à l'époque copte*, 1893.) Only in a very few cases we have reproduced the modern equivalents as a matter of indication.

Of course Skalieres' lists are derived from ancient, post-classical and mediaeval known sources, but it was beyond the practical scope of this appendix to provide an apparatus of sources. Suffice it to mention here the collection of *notitiae* edited by Gustav Parthey, *Hieroclis Synecdemus et Notitiae Graecae Episcopatum*, 1866, but it should be pointed out that Skalieres' lists are comprehensive and include more modern extensions of the Alexandrian Patriarchate's African jurisdiction.

For the sake of Africanists eventually unacquainted with the Greek *notitiae episcopatum*, it is pointed out that the names of the episcopal sees are in the genitive, only those of the metropolitan sees in our list are given in the nominative.

## A. DIRECT JURISDICTION OF THE PATRIARCHAL SEE OF ALEXANDRIA

### I. PROVINCE OF EGYPT FIRST

Metropolitan See:

*Ἐρμόπολις*

Episcopal Sees:

1. Μετήλεως
2. Βούτου, Βουτοῦς, Κόστου
3. Ψενακοῦς
4. Κοπρεῶνος, Κοπριῶν
5. Σάτιος
6. Λεοντοπόλεως τῆς κάτω
7. Ναυκράτεως
8. Νικίου, Προσωπίδος
9. Ἀνδρῶν πόλεως, Ἀνδροῦς
10. Λητοῦς πόλεως, Ζηνωνοπόλεως
11. Φάτνης, Πάθνης
12. Ὀνούφιος τῆς Λύχων
13. Ταύας, Ταούας
14. Ἀρσινόης, Κλεοπατρίδος
15. Μαρείας, Μαρεώτιδος
16. Μενελάου, Κανώβου
17. Σχεδίας
18. Τερενούθιος, Θερμούθιος
19. Σώνδρου, Σωσάνδρας
20. Φαρίας, Φάρου
21. Ἀφροδίτης πόλεως
22. Νιτρίας

### II. PROVINCE OF EGYPT SECOND

Metropolitan See:

*Κάβασα (τὰ)*

Episcopal Sees:

1. Φρόντιδος, Φραγμαῶνος
2. Παχνευμούνεως, Παχνεμόης
3. Κυνῶν πόλεως κάτω, Κυνοπόλεως
4. Βουσίριδος
5. Παράλου ἐλεαρχίας
6. Παράλου κλίματος
7. Βολβιτίνης, Ῥηχομηρίου

8. Διοσπόλεως, Διὸς πόλεως τῆς ἐλάσσονος
9. Σεβεννύτου
10. Ἐόεως

## III. IMPERIAL PROVINCE THE FIRST

Metropolitan See:

*Ἄβαρις. Πηλούσιον*

Episcopal Sees:

1. Σεθρόης, Ἑρακλέους πόλεως
2. Ἑρμουπόλεως
3. Θμούεως καὶ Μένδητος
4. Ῥινοκολούρων
5. Πεντασχοίνου, Ζηνωνοπόλεως
6. Ὀστρακίνης
7. Φάκου, Φακοῦ
8. Κασίου, Κασιώτιδος
9. Ἀφθαίας, Δάφνης
10. Ἑφαιστου πόλεως
11. Πανεφύσεως, Πανεφύσου
12. Χάσματος
13. Γέρρων, Χαβρίου χάρακος
14. Ἰτάνου, Ἰταγέρου
15. Ἰνυσοῦ, Θιμισσοῦ, Θενήσου
16. Σαλαδίας, Σέλης
17. Βαράθρων, Σιρβωνίδος Ἑκρήγματος

Archiepiscopal Sees:

1. Τάνεως
2. Ταμιάθεως

## IV. IMPERIAL PROVINCE THE SECOND

Metropolitan See:

*Λεοντόπολις*

Episcopal Sees:

1. Ἀθρίβεως
2. Ἡλιοπόλεως, Ἡλίου πόλεως
3. Βουβάστιος
4. Φαρβαίθου
5. Φακούσης, Ἀραβίας
6. Περιουκίδος Σκηνηῶν καὶ Μανδρῶν
7. Ἀχαιῶν, Ἀρχάνδρου, Ἀρχαίων πόλεως
8. Βαβυλῶνος
9. Φαγρωριοπόλεως, Φαγρωρίου, Ἀρσινόης

## V. PROVINCE OF ARCADIA, ALSO CALLED HEPTANOMIS

- Metropolitan See: Ὁξύρυγχος
- Episcopal Sees:
1. Ἡρακλείας, Ἡρακλεουπόλεως ἄνω
  2. Κυνῶν πόλεως ἄνω, Κυνοῦς
  3. Νεΐλου πόλεως
  4. Κροκοδείλων πόλεως, Ἀρσινόης, Θεοδοσιουπόλεως
  5. Ἀφροδιτοπόλεως
  6. Μέμφιδος
  7. Κλύσματος

## VI. PROVINCE OF THEBAÏS FIRST

- Metropolitan See: Ἀντινόου πόλις, Ἀντινοεία
- Episcopal Sees:
1. Ἐρμοπόλεως μεγάλης
  2. Θεοδοσίου πόλεως
  3. Κοσσῶν, Χουσῶν, Κουσῶν
  4. Λύκων πόλεως, Λυκοπόλεως
  5. Ὑψηλῆς
  6. Ἀνταίου πόλεως, Ἀνταιουπόλεως
  7. Ἀφροδίτης πόλεως, Ἀφροδιτοπόλεως
  8. Ἀπόλλωνος πόλεως μικρᾶς
  9. Πανοπόλεως, Χέμμεως
  10. Διὸς πόλεως, Διοσπόλεως μικρᾶς

## VII. PROVINCE OF UPPER THEBAÏS SECOND

- Metropolitan See: Ἡτολεμαῖς
- Episcopal Sees:
1. Κοπτοῦ, Ἰουστινιανουπόλεως
  2. Τεντύρων, Τεντύρεως
  3. Διοσπόλεως μεγάλης, Θηβῶν
  4. Λάτων πόλεως, Λατοπόλεως
  5. Ἀπόλλωνος πόλεως μεγάλης
  6. Καινῆς πόλεως, τῆς ἀρχαιοτάτης Κῶ
  7. Ἐρμωνθίδος
  8. Φιλῶν καὶ Ταχομψοῦς
  9. Ὀμβρων, Ὀμβων, Ἀμβωνος
  10. Συήνης
  11. Ἀφροδιτοπόλεως, Παθυρίδος, Ἀνάσσης μεγάλης
  12. Μυδῶς Ὀρμου

13. Ἐλεφάντων πόλεως, Ἐλεφαντίνης
14. Ἴβεως
15. Τρεμιθοῦντος, Τριμοθοῦντος
16. Ἐρβίτων

Archiepiscopal See: 1. Ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης, Βερενίκης

#### VIII. PROVINCE OF LOWER LIBYA MARMARICA

Metropolitan See: *Δάρνη, Δαρνίς, Δαρδανίς*

Episcopal Sees:

1. Παραιτονίου
2. Ἀμμωνος πόλεως, Ἀμμωνίας
3. Μαρμαρικῆς
4. Αὐγίλων
5. Ζαγυλίδος, Ζυγρίδος, Ζυγρῶν
6. Βαλίθωνος, Ἀμμωνος Ἄκρας
7. Ἀντιπύργου
8. Ἀντιφρῶν, Ἀντίφρων
9. Ἐδονίας, Πηδωνίας
10. Περιοικίδος τῆς ὑπαίθρου μεσογαίας, Μάγρου τόπου

#### IX. PROVINCE OF UPPER LIBYA ALIAS PENTAPOLIS OR CYRENAICA

Metropolitan See: *Πτολεμαῖς*

Episcopal Sees:

1. Ἀπολλωνίας, Σωζούσης
2. Κυρήνης
3. Τευχείρων, Ἀρσινόης
4. Βάρκης, Ἀδριανουπόλεως
5. Ἐσπερίδος, Βερενίκης
6. Ἐρυθρῶν, Ἐρυθρίτιδος

#### X. PROVINCE OF LIBYA TRIPOLITANIA

Metropolitan See: *Τρίπολις*

Episcopal Sees:

1. Ἀβροτόνου, Σαβάθρων, Σαβράτων
2. Οἶας
3. Λέπτως τῆς μεγάλης, Νεαπόλεως
4. Ὀλβίας, Ὀλβιατῶν
5. Βορείου ἄκρου

6. Λωτοφαγίδος νήσου
7. Λιμναίων καὶ Μανδρόρων
8. Κιδαμῆς

#### XI. PROVINCE OF BYZAKIA, BYZANTIS (TUNISIA)

- Metropolitan See: *Καρθαγένη, Καρχηδών*
- Episcopal Sees:
1. Σίβδης, Σούβου
  2. Κίλλης
  3. Ἰτύκης
  4. Λέπτεως μικρᾶς
  5. Οὐσίλλης
  6. Μακομαδῶν
  7. Καστελλῶν, Κάστρων Κορνηλίου
  8. Ἴππῶνος διαρρύτου, Πεζώνης
  9. Μάμμης
  10. Μαδούρων, Μαδασούβων
  11. Κουλούλεως
  12. Κάψης, Κάμψης
  13. Ἀδρυμήτου, Ἡρακλείας, Ἰουστινιανῆς
  14. Σετικήσεως, Σουφιτήλων
  15. Κοσσύρας νήσου
  16. Μελίτης νήσου

#### XII. PROVINCE OF NOMADIKĒ OR NUMIDIA (EASTERN ALGERIA)

- Metropolitan See: *Σίτιφρις, Σίταφα*
- Episcopal Sees:
1. Καλάμων
  2. Τεβέστης
  3. Ἴππῶνος βασιλικῶ
  4. Ταφρουρῶν, Κασταβαγῶν, Κασκάλων
  5. Βαδέας, Βαδίας, Κόλλοπος μεγάλου
  6. Μιρέου, Μιραίου
  7. Λάρητος, Λαρίβου
  8. Βεδείρου
  9. Ἰγιλγίλης
  10. Τιπάσης
  11. Βαγάζης

12. Κίρτης, Κωνσταντίνης

13. Ἴκασίου

14. Σαλδῶν

15. Ῥουσικιάδης

### XIII. PROVINCE OF MAURITANIA FIRST (WESTERN ALGERIA)

Metropolitan See: Ἰόλη, Καισάρεια

- Episcopal Sees:
1. Ῥινοκορούρων, Ῥουσοκκόρου
  2. Τενίσσης
  3. Λύγάλων
  4. Βίδης
  5. Σίγης
  6. Λανιγάρας
  7. Λιμένος μεγάλου, Ἀρσεναρίας
  8. Τουβουσούπτου, Τουβουσίπτου
  9. Ζουγαβάρρεως
  10. Ὀππίδου, Ὀππιδίου

### XIV. PROVINCE OF MAURITANIA SECOND (TANGIER)

Metropolitan See: Τίγγις

- Episcopal Sees:
1. Σεπτοῦ, Ἑπτὰ Ἀδελφῶν, Ἀβίλης
  2. Μεσοποταμίου, Καισαρείας
  3. Φοίβου ἄκρας, Φοίβου πέδου
  4. Τιτάνου, Τευτανίου
  5. Σάλων
  6. Καρικοῦ Τείχους
  7. Ὀλεάστρου
  8. Λίξου
  9. Ταινίας Λόγγας
  10. Βάδεος
  11. Γυμνησίας μείζονος νήσου
  12. Γυμνησίας ἐλάσσονος νήσου, τῆς Ἰάμνης
  13. Πιτυουσῶν νήσων
  14. Μακάρων νήσων
  15. Κέρνης ἢ Κερνεάτιδος νήσου

## XV. PROVINCE OF SARDON OR SARDOUS (SARDINIA)

- Metropolitan See: *Κάλαις*
- Episcopal Sees:
1. Γουρούλιος
  2. Σαρδοπάτορος, Ἱεροῦ, Σάρδου
  3. Ὀσαίας, Ἀριστιανῆς
  4. Σόλκων
  5. Νάρων, Χρυσοπόλεως
  6. Σαραπάλεως, Σαραπάλων
  7. Ὀλβίας, Ὀλβης, Φαυσιανῆς
  8. Βώσης, Βόσσης Λίμνης
  9. Ταρραίνης, Τάρρας

## XVI. PROVINCE OF SPAIN BYZANTIAKĒ

- Metropolitan See: *Σεπτόν*
- Episcopal Sees:
1. Κάλπης
  2. Μαλάκας, Μαλάκης
  3. Ζακάνθης, Οἰνούσσης, Καινῆς,  
Νέας Καρχηδόνος, Καρθαγένης
  4. Βάστης, Βαστητανίας
  5. Ταρτησοῦ
  6. Σαγουνδίας, Σεγουντίας
  7. Γαδείρων
  8. Ἄστης
  9. Ὀνόβης
  10. Ὀσσονόβων
  11. Ἀσίνδου
- Archiepiscopal Sees:
1. Κορδύβης, Κορδούβης
  2. Ἴσπάλιος

APPENDIX I. ARCHIEPISCOPAL SEES NOT INCLUDED  
IN THE ABOVE LISTS

1. Σάτης
2. Ἄρης
3. Φαρανίτιδος, Φαραᾶς
4. Ἴππῶνος βασιλικοῦ
5. Κωνσταντίνης

6. Ἴκωσίου
7. Τήγγιος
8. Ταινίας Λόγγας

APPENDIX II. CHURCHES ESTABLISHED IN EMPORIA  
UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF EXARCHS,  
BISHOPS, OR ARCHIMANDRITES OF THE  
ALEXANDRIAN SEE

a. *East Africa*

1. Τονίκης, Ἐμπορίου (Kismayu, Chisimaio)
2. Ῥαπτοῦ ἄκρου (Formosa)
3. Ἀμείκου, Ἀμείβου (Manda, Island? Tanganjika?)
4. Ἐσσήνων Ἀρτέμιδος (Melindi)
5. Μηναῖ νήσου (Pemba)
6. Μενουθιάδος νήσου (Zanzibar)
7. Μυρίκης, Μυρσιάκης νήσου (Mafia)
8. Πρασιῶν, Πράσου ἀκρωτηρίου (Delgado)

b. *West Africa*

1. Θυμιατηρίου
2. Σολόεντος, Σολοῦντος
3. Γύττης
4. Ἄκρας
5. Μελίτης
6. Ἀράμβυος
7. Λίξου ποταμοῦ
8. Μερκουρίου, Μερκουριάδος
9. Ῥυσσαδίου ἄκρου
10. Χρεμέτου ποταμοῦ, Χερετίδος
11. Ἐσπέρου Κέρατος
12. Νότου Κέρατος

B. AUTONOMOUS CHURCHES OF ETHIOPIA AND ARABIA UNDER  
THE CANONICAL JURISDICTION OF THE PATRIARCHATE OF  
ALEXANDRIA

a. *Ethiopia south of Egypt constituted by northern and middle Ethiopia*

I. PROVINCE OF LOWER NUBIA OR NORTHERN ETHIOPIA

- Metropolitan See: Ἱερά Συκάμιος  
Episcopal Sees: 1. Τάφεως, Θάπιδος  
2. Τάλμεως  
3. Ψέλχιδος, Ψέλκιδος, Δωδεκασχοίνου  
4. Πρήμιδος μικρᾶς  
5. Πίστρης  
6. Βώγχιος  
7. Ἴσιδος πόλεως  
8. Δήρης, Δείρης

II. PROVINCE OF UPPER NUBIA OR  
MIDDLE WESTERN ETHIOPIA

- Metropolitan See: Νάπατα (τὰ)  
Episcopal Sees: 1. Πρήμιδος μεγάλης  
2. Μερόης  
3. Βερενίκης τῆς παγχρύσου  
4. Σόβων, Σοβάρων  
5. Θεῶν Σωτήρων  
6. Σαταχθῶν, Σατάχθων  
7. Σεναραβιῶνος  
8. Σάπτης, Σαπαϊκῆς

III. PROVINCE OF MIDDLE EASTERN ETHIOPIA

- Metropolitan See: Ἀἷξουμις, Ἀἷξούμη  
Episcopal Sees: 1. Κολόης  
2. Μάστης  
3. Ἀδύος  
4. Γονδρῶν  
5. Ἀδησσοῦ  
6. Δάρων, Δώρων κώμης  
7. Δέρβης

8. Βαβῶν, Βάβων
9. Γαρβάτου ὄρους
10. Ἀγκωβαρίτιδος
11. Σαγάλλων

b. *Maritime Ethiopia constituted by Adulis, Aualitis, Barbarike, Azania and Bakalitis*

IV. PROVINCE OF ADULIS OR ADULITIKĒ

- Metropolitan See: Ἀδουλις, Ἀδούλη
- Episcopal Sees:
1. Αἰγιαλοῦ μεγάλου
  2. Σαβαστρικοῦ στόματος
  3. Πτολεμαΐδος θηρῶν
  4. Σαββάτων

V. PROVINCE OF AVALITIS OR AVALITIKĒ

- Metropolitan See: Δείρη, πόλις ἐν ἄκρῳ
- Episcopal Sees:
1. Μοσύλου ἐμπορίου
  2. Ἀκκανῶν, Ἀκαννῶν
  3. Αὐαλίτου ἐμπορίου, Αὐλῆς

VI. PROVINCE OF BARBARIKĒ

- Metropolitan See: Μάλεων (ἡ)
- Episcopal Sees:
1. Σελευκείας
  2. Μόνδου, Μύνδου ἐμπορίου
  3. Ἐλέφαντος ἄκρου
  4. Διοσκουρίδου νήσου

VII. PROVINCE OF AZANIA AND BAKALITIS

- Metropolitan See: Ῥαπτά (τὰ)
- Episcopal Sees:
1. Ἀρωμάτων ἄκρου
  2. Ζίγγιδος ἄκρας
  3. Κοβῆς
  4. Ἀποκόπων
  5. Ὀπώνης ἐμπορίου
  6. Βατραχείας

7. Σεραπίωνος ὄρμου καὶ ἄκρας  
8. Ἐσσιῶν

c. *Inner and Southern Ethiopia*

See above, A. APPENDIX II. a. *East Africa*

The Churches therein recorded are understood to be under the direct jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

d. *Autonomous Churches of Arabia*

1. Ἡ τῶν Ἀτταίων  
Metropolitan See: Κάραδα (τὰ)
2. Ἡ τῶν Κατανιτῶν  
Metropolitan See: Ἀδήδου κόμη
3. Ἡ τῶν Ἐλισάρων  
Metropolitan See: Σακατία
4. Ἡ τῶν Ἰώνων  
Metropolitan See: Νάγαρα (τὰ)
5. Ἡ τῶν Σαβαίων  
Metropolitan See: Σαβαί
6. Ἡ τῶν Ὀμηριτῶν, Ἀμεριτῶν  
Metropolitan See: Μαδόκη
7. Ἡ τῶν Χατραμιτῶν, Χατραμωτῶν  
Metropolitan See: Σάββαθα (τὰ)
8. Ἡ τῶν Αἰλανιτῶν  
Metropolitan See: Ἀίλα
9. Ἡ τῶν Σκηιτῶν  
Metropolitan See: Μαδιάμη

Episcopal or Archiepiscopal Sees in Arabia dependent on the above, but without specification of appurtenance

1. Ἡ Αἴλου κόμης (in middle Yemen)
2. Ἡ Μάρας » » »
3. Ἡ Σωσίππου λιμένος (in south Yemen)
4. Ἡ Ἀραβίας ἐμπορίου, Ἀδάνων (in Aden)

## A D D E N D A

### *Byzantine character of Nubian culture* (p. 34 and note 160)

The unveiling of this aspect of Nubian culture is in process. Byzantine art in Nubia is likely to secure an eminent place within the general frames of Byzantine cultural history, not only by its intrinsic value, but also by the preservation of early forms and patterns as late as the 11th century, when Byzantine art forms had crystallized in new patterns. A striking instance of such conservatism is furnished by the frescoes of a church recently (1961) discovered at Western Faras, the ancient city of Pachoras, about twenty miles north of Wadi Halfa. These frescoes are eminent iconographic specimens of Graeco-Byzantine art modelled after the classical principles of symmetry and proportion. See CASIMIR MICHALOWSKI, 'New Discoveries at Faras in Nubia', *Archaeology*, vol. XV, 1962, pp. 112-120. What has gone unnoticed with regard to these frescoes is the relationship they bear with early Byzantine iconographic patterns, especially of Justinian's age. The reader should be warned in this connection that the dating of the monument, originally in the 7th century, has been rectified on the basis of a revised reading of the epigraphic evidence. The adjusted chronology is by four centuries later, which means that we have before us late 10th or early 11th century iconographic art. See 'Further note on Christian Faras', *loc. cit.*, vol. XVI, 1963, p. 59. This chronology corroborates our view concerning the survival of early classical forms of Byzantine art in Nubia.

### *Concerning Coptic art* (p. 35)

Two points relevant to our subject are noticeable in the work of KLAUS WESSEL, *L'art copte*, 1964.

Firstly, the process of assimilation of the Greek tradition in Christian Nubia and the relative part of originality in its art, due exclusively to Christian contributions. Wessel believes, as against Strzygowski, that Christianity did not affect seriously the basic forms of Greek art, he admits, nevertheless, that in iconography Christian art in Egypt produced original forms which in their turn influenced its own source, Byzantine art (p. 150).

Secondly, Wessel deals with Kaufman's argument concerning the relative contributions of Constantinopolitan and Coptic art to the formation of the later forms of Byzantine art, an argument opposed to the views of Maspero and Gayet who believe that Coptic art owed everything to the Byzantine stock. Wessel considers that Coptic

art is incontestably a part of Byzantine art (pp. 151-155); he thinks, however, that in the long run, owing to religious and political isolation, Coptic art progressively developed peculiar characteristics (p. 155). This is especially true for the later periods, the strongest influences having been exerted by the palaeo-Byzantine art.

I have not had access to another publication relating to Coptic art, reproducing the collection of an exhibition held at Essen: *Koptische Kunst. Christentum am Nil*, 1963, which is known to me only through a reference in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, vol. LVII, 1964, p. 571.

*Archaeological and palaeoethnological evidence* (pp. 51 ff.)

The researches of Paul Huard in Saharan and Chadian archaeology and palaeo-ethnology are fundamental for the elucidation of many a problem relating to the cultural influences which radiated through the vast regions of Sahara and Sudan. These researches are still in progress. The latest results are contained in a recent paper, 'Nouvelle contribution à l'étude du fer au Sahara et au Tchad', *Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N.*, Série B, vol. XXVI, 1964, pp. 297-396. I can only resume here a few points relevant to the views expressed in the present work.

Byzantine political penetration in North Africa did not go beyond the Roman *limes* as fixed in the first century of our era. The Byzantines were never seriously interested in the Saharan trade; hence their technological influence on the Berbers of Fezzan is not noticeable (p. 318). The Tuareg sword with a cross-shaped hilt does not seem to have its origin in North African Byzantine influence (p. 320). A similar problem is posed with regard to the origin of the coats of mail, which are part of the military equipment of several Sudanese tribes, for instance the Hausa and Fulbe.

On the other hand, the military equipment of the central and western Sudanese is shown to have prevailed as well in the Nile valley, and its transmission can be followed all along the way to Chad and further west. Huard admits that this line of transmission originates in the Christian kingdom of Nubia in the 6th century (pp. 343, 348). Byzantine military equipment of the 5th and 6th centuries has survived to the modern era, as witnessed by the explorer Bruce who saw coats of mail clothed in a deerskin, borne by the negro riders of the king of Sennar in 1772. The rôle of the Zaghawa in the diffusion of this military equipment in the west may have been considerable (p. 348).

The spear with long iron head reached the lake Chad region early. The so-called Saracen iron helmets with pointed head are of Byzantine origin and one of them has been found in Tibesti. They were known and made in Wadai. The coats of mail survive amongst the Fulbe of north Cameroons. Huard thinks that a search among

the dwelling-places of the older dominant families might result in discoveries of such equipment (pp. 383-384).

With special reference to Bornu, ethnography reveals the eastern origin of its culture. The Bornu Sahara region affords the clearest ground for the study of culture contacts during the middle ages, and can be described as the turn-table for cultural transfers in both directions (pp. 386-387).

The cross decorated oval saddle pommels noted by Frobenius among the Nupe have their counterpart in the same objects found in the graves of the Nobadian princes at Ballana and Qustul, which have been dated in the 5th and 6th centuries of our era. The same type has been figured on a terra-cotta figurine belonging to one of the pre-Islamic cultures of Chad (p. 387).

As regards Baumann's theory of a direct influence of Byzantine art on the military equipment in western Sudanese culture, Huard thinks that such influence must be considered as an indirect one (pp. 387-388).

The author concludes that the introduction of Mediterranean iron south of the Sahara and in the Nigerian-Chadic borderland was accomplished sometime between the 3rd century before our era and the 4th after it. The receptivity to cultural forms of Mediterranean origin, which may be responsible, amongst other things, for the adoption of such characteristics as the state ceremonial, a feature of the great political systems of antiquity and the middle ages, is corroborated by archaeological evidence. The pre-Islamic status of several cultural features is acknowledged as a fact by Huard who thus poses the problem of the elucidation of the cultural history of the Sudanese peoples *ante* Islam practically in the same terms as exposed in this work (pp. 389-391).

*Historical traditions and testimonies* (pp. 55 ff.)

After completing the chapter on historical traditions and testimonies I came across the little known work of JEAN FERRANDI, *Le centre-africain français*, 1930, from which I draw the following testimony deriving from oral tradition:

La population de l'Ennedi comprend des éléments sédentaires, ou plutôt semi-nomades: les Bideyats, et des éléments purement nomades: les Goranes et les Gaëdas.

Les Bideyats se divisent eux-mêmes en deux grandes fractions: ceux de l'Ennedi septentrional, vivant au contact des Goranes et des Gaëdas, et ceux de l'Ennedi méridional, appelés des Billias et relevant du sultan du Zaghaua-Kobé.

Ces Bideyats, que les Arabes appellent Tezaouïa, et les Goranes «Ana», pré-

tendent avoir été chrétiens et avoir eu un passé très glorieux. Le Ouadaï aurait été peuplé de leurs ancêtres et Abéché même, avant que Mohammed Chérif en ait fait la capitale de son royaume, était un village bideyat. (p. 208.)